Psychology
Graduate and Undergraduate Review
Year 2 (2017) - FAR Implementation Report
(reviewed 2014/15)

Recommendation #1

That the University provide the Department with one full-time IT support staff.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers this recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee's jurisdiction. ARC expects that the Department will proceed through normal channels of advocacy for these resources.

Implementation Plan
Recommendation not accepted.

Comments 2016:
Although not accepted because it lies outside the Committee's jurisdiction, it may be of interest to the Committee to know that this recommendation is complete. A full-time Systems Analyst, Psychology was hired effective April 25, 2016.

Recommendation #2

That the Department and Faculty recognize the workload placed on administrative staff and address workload-related problems by (a) establishing clear and consistent administrative practices and policies, (b) providing sufficient training when new tasks are given to staff, and (c) terminating the practice of downloading responsibilities without providing the resources necessary for handling those responsibilities.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee believes that the Department, in consultation with the Dean, is best positioned to determine appropriate strategies to move forward on this issue.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for resources:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences, University Administration
Responsible for implementation:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2015/16

Actions	Responsibility	Year One*	Year Two	Year Three
Action #1 Meet with staff to anticipate concerns	Chair	C		
Action #2 Have positions re-evaluated by HR	Chair, Dean	T	C	
Action #3 Meeting with Department academic advisor and staff involved with academic integrity to clarify process	Associate Dean Undergrad	C		
Action #4 Ensure collaboration between Associate Chair and staff on all matters related to budget	Chair, Associate Chair	C		
Action #5 Assess collaborative programs and withdraw from those no longer relevant	Chair, Associate Dean Undergrad	C		
Action #6 Address staff IT concerns (eg meet with IT and establish protocol for when printers fail)	Chair	T	T	

Comments 2016:
The situation will continue to be monitored in case further actions are required.

Comments 2017:
Two staff positions were upgraded. Having full-time IT support has helped with #6. Two major issues remain with respect to downloading of work. Neither of these can be addressed by the department, however.
a) Building on Action #3, the Department has addressed the additional workload associated with academic integrity, including hiring additional staff support and working with the Dean's office to streamline academic integrity forms and processes.
b) Related to Actions #4 and #6, the Department is working with Finance, ORS, IT, and the Dean's office to address the increased workload associated with Workday and the training required.

Recommendation #3

That the Department develop and implement a plan for significantly improving the academic advising available to undergraduates.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

*On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee believes that the Department is best positioned to determine appropriate strategies to move forward on this issue.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2015/16

Actions	Responsibility	Year One*	Year Two	Year Three
Action #1 Increase resources available to support advising.	Chair, Dean, IT	C		
Action #2 Review effectiveness of academic advising in the department.	Chair, Associate Chair, Undergrad Committee	C		
Action #3 Develop a required second-year course on careers in psychology.	Chair, Assoc Chair, Undergrad Committee	T	T	
Action #4 Develop an Annual Graduate School Workshop	Chair, GPD	C		
Action #5 Develop a workshop for students who do not wish to pursue graduate school	Chair, Assoc Chair	T	C	
Action #6 Revise the Departmental Undergraduate Manual	Assoc Chair	T	C	

Comments 2016

- *Resources*: In our reply to the reviewers, we noted that increased resources would be helpful. Although we were unable to obtain further advising resources, we did acquire an in-house IT person. This individual will be a valuable resource for "improvements in the program information provided to students online."

*On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)

- *Review of advising*: As suggested by the Dean, the undergrad committee reviewed advising over this past year. During these discussions, as suggested by UPC, we asked students for their feedback. All fourth-year students were surveyed about information they felt would have been useful to have early in their studies, both regarding the psychology program at Brock, as well as post-graduate career and educational opportunities. The comments we received from students will be addressed with the following initiatives.

- *Initiatives*: These initiatives will enhance the information that is offered to students, as well as offer that information at the most optimal points in students' time at Brock.

    - "Roadmap to Careers in Psychology" course. We have developed a new second-year course (for which we are still working out details) that would be required for all psychology students. The course generally covers: investigation of possible career paths in psychology and related fields, overview of the career-related transferable skills that can be gained by completing a psychology degree, and resources that will facilitate career exploration. Course content would also involve a review of the program options in the Psychology Department at Brock, along with their requirements and purpose. Finally, the course would include an experiential learning component in the form of a career-relevant volunteer placement. Instituting this course in second year ensures that students receive the information they need to make optimal choices regarding their course and program options (e.g., students must choose at the end of second year whether to take courses that will lead to the honours program or 4-year BA with major). In addition, the roadmaps course ensures that students are trained early on in how to explore career options and then tailor their experiences at Brock to best match their future goals.

    - Graduate school workshop. This year, we conducted an information session for students considering graduate school. The session was organized by our Department Administrator. The Department Administrator and several faculty members spoke about the nature of graduate school, gave advice on the application process, and answered questions from students. We have conducted such a workshop in the past, but not on a consistent basis. We plan to make the workshop a yearly event.

    - Workshop for those not pursuing graduate school in psychology. For the first time, the Department Administrator is planning a workshop for students not moving into a psychology graduate program. Topics covered will include further educational experiences one might apply for with a BA in Psychology, other than a psychology graduate program (e.g., college programs for those with degrees, Master's degrees not in psychology), as well as potential career paths.

    - Undergraduate manual. The department has an undergraduate manual that explains key aspects of the program to students and gives tips on navigating the program, career options, and academic success. We are working on a major revision of the manual, ensuring all information is up-to-date and presented in as

*On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)

user-friendly a manner as possible. To ensure the latter, we will create a WEB page for this manual that is easily searchable. The manual (and the Roadmap to Careers in Psychology course noted above) should reduce the number of inquiries to our Department Administrator, allowing her more time to spend on advising appointments, organizing the various workshops, and keeping the major's manual updated.

Comments 2017

• "Roadmap to Careers in Psychology" course (PSYC 2P01). This course will be launched in 2017-18 with a cap of 80 students to increase the manageability of the course in the first year of its implementation; effective 2018-19 this cap will be increased and the course will be required of all psychology majors.

• The Academic Advisor organized two workshops in 2017-18, one for students not intending to pursue graduate school and the other for those intending to do so.

• A WEB version of our undergraduate manual was completed in the summer of 2016.

• The Academic Advisor now offers drop-in advising.

Recommendation #4

That the Department continue to support its seminar system.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers the recommendation to be consistent with existing practice and no additional action is required.

Implementation Plan
No additional action required.

Comments 2016:
Though no additional action is required the department is pleased to report the successful implementation of our third year course (3F01, Facilitating Critical Thinking in Groups) designed to train course facilitators for 1F90.

Recommendation #5

That the Department review the information it provides to students about the cooperative and collaborative programs.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)
Responsible for approving: Department, Dean of Social Sciences

*On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)

Responsible for resources:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for implementation:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2015/16

Actions	Responsibility	Year One*	Year Two	Year Three
Action #1 Enhance the flow of information between the Department and Co-op	Chair, Assoc Chair	C		
Action #2 Ensure students are referred to the Co-op Office for the most up-to-date information	Chair, Assoc Chair	C		
Action #3 Assess collaborative programs and withdraw from those no longer relevant	Chair, Assoc Chair	T	C	

Comments 2016:

- *Co-op.* As noted above, the Co-op office has recently begun to send the Psychology Department regular updates, which should help to ensure the accuracy of communication between students and faculty and staff regarding the co-op program. For detailed information on the co-op program, we will refer students to the Co-op office, as that office continues to have the most up-to-date information.

- *Collaborative programs.* As noted above, the burden of administering the department's many collaborative programs has exceeded our departmental resources, making it impossible to adequately administer the myriad of collaborative options offered. Thus, the department decided to reduce the number of collaborative options, choosing the biggest and best. We are left with two collaborative programs: St. Lawrence-Behavioural Science Technology; Durham-Social Service Worker), both of which now have a single, four-year BA-with-major option. Having fewer and more straightforward collaborative programs will allow the department to better advise students on these options, and will make it easier for students to understand how these programs work.

Comments 2017:

- The Dean's office has added administrative assistance to oversee collaborative programs. Nonetheless, for pedagogical reasons the Department voted not to renew the St. Lawrence-Behavioural Science Technology program. The remaining programs are

*On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)

streamlined to include a single, four-year BA-with-major option (a change we made the previous year). All of these actions reduce the complexity of our offerings, allowing the department to better advise students on the existing options, and making it easier for students to understand how our programs work.

Recommendation #6

That the Department work with its Liaison Librarian to develop a plan to coordinate the work of the Library with the needs of the Department.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (2nd Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2016/17

Actions	Responsibility	Year One*	Year Two	Year Three
Action #1 Initiate discussions with library staff	Chair	C		
Action #2 Develop a plan to coordinate the work of the library with the needs of the department	Chair	T	D	

Comments 2016:
We have initiated discussions with members of the library staff and will continue to develop a plan over the next 12 months.

Comments 2017:

Our library representative was on leave this academic year and so no further action was taken.

Recommendation #7

*On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)

That the Department consider revising its requirements at the [Doctoral] graduate level.*

*While not part of the Recommendation, the reviewers included the following comment:

We suggest that the Department reduce its course requirements at the graduate level, keep its FARS courses in place, and reduce the number of Advanced Study Papers (ASPs) from three to one as planned. The number of graduate courses currently required is not well justified and is high compared to other research-oriented graduate programs, thus likely limiting the time students spend on research.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. It is expected that the Department will consult with the Dean of Graduate Studies when considering these changes.

Implementation Plan (2nd Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department, Dean of Graduate Studies
Responsible for resources:	Department, Dean of Graduate Studies
Responsible for implementation:	Department, Dean of Graduate Studies
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2016/17

Actions	Responsibility	Year One*	Year Two	Year Three
Action #1 Consider Implementing a comprehensive exam	Chair, GPD, ADGSR, Grad Committee	T	C	
Action #2 Consider reduction in course requirements	Chair, GPD, ADGSR, Grad Committee	T	C	
Action #3 Consider reduction of the number of Advanced Study Papers	Chair, GPD, ADGSR, Grad Committee	T	C	

Comments 2016:

*On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)

The department is in the midst of ongoing meetings to discuss the implementation of a comprehensive exam, the reduction in course requirements, and the reduction or elimination of ASPs. We intend to keep FARS. To date we have:

- collected information about course requirements in other PhD programs in the province
- collected information about comprehensive examinations in other PhD programs in the province
- collected feedback (both written and in informal meetings) from current students about proposed changes
- had a working group (comprised of faculty, graduate students, and our graduate administrative assistant) develop a proposal for a comprehensive exam
- discussed options at multiple graduate committee and department meetings
- administered a survey to faculty and graduate students to decide on goals for comprehensive exam; these goals will impact the format of such an exam

Comments 2017:

Changes to the graduate program have been approved by ARC. These include

- a reduction in the number of required courses for PhD students (2 fewer)
- removal of advanced studies papers
- addition of comprehensive exams

Following Senate approval, the three PhD students who had begun the program in September 2016 all embraced these changes. Moving forward, the new program requirements will apply to all incoming PhD students, beginning Sept. 2017.

Recommendation #8

That the Department and Faculty resolve remaining issues regarding graduate funding.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside the jurisdiction of the Committee. The Committee expects that the Department will determine and use strategies as necessary to resolve these issues.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation not accepted.

Recommendation #9

That the Department consider incorporating a requirement for a qualifying or comprehensive examination with a formal, oral defense in the Ph.D. program prior to the dissertation defense.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (2nd Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department, Dean of Graduate Studies
Responsible for resources:	Department, Dean of Graduate Studies

*On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)

Responsible for implementation:	Department, Dean of Graduate Studies
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2016/17

Actions	Responsibility	Year One*	Year Two	Year Three
Action #1 Consider implementation of a qualifying or comprehensive exam	Chair, GPD, ADGSR, Grad Committee	T	C	

Comments 2016:
Please see response to #7 as these issues are interdependent.
Comments 2017:
Following Senate approval, the three students who entered the PhD program in 2016 have opted for a comprehensive exam in lieu of Advanced Study papers (see notes above).

Recommendation #10

That the Department work with the Faculty to develop a plan for future space needs

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (2nd Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for resources:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for implementation:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2016/17

Actions	Responsibility	Year One*	Year Two	Year Three
Action #1				

*On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)

Develop a strategic plan for future space needs	Dean, Chair, Department	H	T	

Comments 2016:
The department has not yet addressed this issue but will do so the in the spring/summer of 2016. We will need to house a full-time IT support person, an ILTA and (in January 2017) a new CRC faculty member.
Comments 2017:
We have identified office space for our full-time IT support person and our new CRC faculty member. We will continue to face space needs when a faculty member moves from DALS to Psychology and when we hire tenure-stream faculty members (most of whom will require more lab space than those who are retiring). Ongoing consultations with the Director of Space and Planning at Brock University are in place to assist units to fulfill their space needs.

Recommendation #11

That the Department develop a strategic plan for growth and faculty replacement

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (2nd Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for resources:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for implementation:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2016/17

Actions	Responsibility	Year One*	Year Two	Year Three
Action #1 That the department develop a strategic plan for growth and faculty replacement	Dean and Associate Deans, Chair, Department	H	H	

Comments 2016:

*On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)

We have not yet discussed long-term planning.

Comments 2017:
The Department provided extensive documentation to the Dean (now Provost) and Interim Dean outlining the need for three tenure-stream positions, given upcoming retirements. These positions were placed on the Priority 2 list for the faculty for the 2017/2018 budget year. The Department notes grave concerns about maintaining excellence in our undergraduate and graduate programs; we anticipate 20-25% of our department retiring over the next 3 years and already approximately 30% of our undergraduate courses are taught by CUPE instructors. The Interim Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences is in discussions with the Dean of Math and Science about sharing a tenure-track position in Neuroscience. The Interim Dean is also engaged in ongoing discussion with all departments in FOSS regarding their Priority 2 tenure-track needs.

Recommendation #12

That the Department develop a Normal Department Workload Standard document, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science, that would enable the Chair to have some flexibility in using course release to compensate faculty members under special circumstances.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers this recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside the jurisdiction of the Committee and has implications with respect to the Brock University/Faculty Association Collective Agreement.

Implementation Plan
Recommendation not accepted.

Recommendation #13

That the Department make an explicit plan to deal with growing tensions.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation
ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for resources:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for implementation:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2015/16

*On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)

Actions	Responsibility	Year One*	Year Two	Year Three
Action #1 Increase the number of department meetings to two per month.	Chair, Department	C		
Action #2 Eliminate the use of email to discuss important issues.	Chair, Department	C		
Action #3 Conduct a survey of current and past students to assess the department climate.	Chair, Department	C		
Action #4 Interpret and discuss the findings of the student survey.	Chair, Department	T	C	
Action #5 Improve department lounge space to enhance interaction among faculty, staff, and students.	Dean, Chair, Facilities Managemen t	C		
Action #6 Create a September "Welcome" event to facilitate positive relations among faculty, staff, and graduate students.	Chair, Department	C		
Action #7 Create an informal research talk series.	Chair, Department	C		

Comments 2016:

To date we have:
1) Held two (rather than one) department meetings/month (for most months, pending holidays), allowing for time to discuss issues in a more relaxed atmosphere.
2) Reduced (eliminated) the use of e-mail to discuss important issues, reducing the potential for miscommunication and encouraging in-person discussions
3) Conducted a survey of current and past graduate students to assess the department climate. Although much of the feedback was very positive, some concerns were raised. We have responded to those concerns in several ways:

i) A committee comprised of faculty and graduate students met to discuss survey results

*On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)

ii) The Dean and Associate Dean of Graduate studies met with students over lunch and came to two department meetings to discuss concerns with faculty members

iii) On May 5th the department is having a retreat to discuss excellence in graduate education; this will emphasize how to create optimal climate

4) Renovated the lounge in psychology to create a space in which people can interact more comfortably

5) Held a 'Welcome' event in September that included events to facilitate positive relations among faculty, staff & graduate students

6) Initiated an informal talk series to create a fun atmosphere in which faculty and graduate students can discuss ongoing research.

Comments 2017:

1) We held a retreat in May 2016 that focused on departmental climate.

2) Other initiatives (more frequent departmental meetings; reduced e-mail; informal talk series) continue.

3) We have also been more intentional about regularly sharing (via emails, meetings, poster board announcements, semi-annual departmental newsletters, etc.) various types of 'good news' around the department, including with respect to graduate student, faculty, and staff successes at Brock and beyond.

4) Nonetheless, tensions remain in the department; most focus on the tension between research and teaching and the place of graduate student training.

*On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)