

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Under Nipissing University’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) and the Ontario Universities Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), all programs are subject to a comprehensive review at least/at minimum every eight years to ensure that they continue to meet provincial quality assurance requirements and to support their ongoing rigour and coherence. This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on June 29, 2023 and ratified by the Quality Council on May 5, 2023

In academic years 2019-2020, a program review was scheduled for English. This was the 2nd program review for this program. The timeline of the review was as follows.

PROGRAM UNDER REVIEW

PROGRAM	SENATE APPROVAL DATE	PREPARED BY
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ENGLISH	SEPTEMBER 18, 2020	PROVOST & VICE PRESIDENT

A. REVIEW TIMELINE

SELF-STUDY REVIEW TIMELINE	DATE
1. Self-Study Presented to AQAPC	October 10, 2019
2. Site Visit Conducted	March 12-13, 2020
3. Reviewer’s Report Received	April 14, 2020
4. Department’s Response Received	April 30, 2020
5. Dean’s Response Received	July 9, 2020

A. REVIEW SUMMARY

Two external reviewers conducted the review. During the in-person site visit, the reviewers met with the following groups and individuals:

- Provost & Vice President
- English faculty members
- Internal Review Committee
- Centre for Teaching and Learning
- Dean of Arts & Science
- Harris Learning Library – Executive Director & Librarian
- Registrar
- English students

- English contract instructors

The academic programs offered by the Department which were examined as part of the review included:

- Bachelor of Arts Honours Specialisation – English
- Bachelor of Arts Specialisation – English
- Bachelor of Arts in English (Major)

The follow program strengths were noted:

The program's key strength lies in its strong commitment to accessibility and student-centered learning, particularly for students from northern Ontario, Indigenous backgrounds, mature learners, and transfer students. Faculty are dedicated to meeting students at their individual starting points and supporting their development in essential skills such as reading, writing, cultural understanding, and critical thinking. This inclusive, non-elitist approach goes beyond simply delivering content, emphasizing meaningful skill-building and significantly enhancing the overall student experience.

Summary of review team recommendations:

The recommendations emphasize strengthening the English Studies program through expanded curriculum offerings, resource support, and strategic planning. A key priority is increasing courses in First Nations literatures to support the university's commitment to Indigenization, alongside maintaining program integrity when faculty take on external roles by ensuring adequate teaching replacements. Restoring funding for student-focused activities and enhancing support for English as a Second Language and foundational courses are also highlighted to improve the student experience.

Additionally, the department is encouraged to explore innovative delivery options, such as summer and online courses, and to better align its offerings with institutional enrolment trends and interdisciplinary needs. Clearer communication about enrolment data and financial impacts is recommended, along with proactive planning for anticipated enrolment growth tied to broader labour market trends. Finally, future hiring should prioritize both increased faculty capacity and greater diversity, including new scholars who can bring fresh perspectives and expand the range of courses offered.

Further recommendations regarding maintaining departmental strengths were also made. The recommendations emphasize preserving the department's key strengths, particularly its commitment to small class sizes taught by full-time faculty, which enhances the quality of student learning and should be actively maintained. They also highlight the importance of supporting faculty research productivity, especially given their strong output despite heavy teaching loads. Integrating this research into teaching is seen as a major asset, demonstrating a balance between scholarship and pedagogy that aligns with the university's mission and commitment to high-quality education.

Additionally, recommendations were made regarding possible alterations to the classroom. The recommendations highlight the need to improve transparency, communication, and student preparedness within the department. An institutional review of grading patterns is suggested to address concerns about potentially stricter marking standards. The department should also enhance its website and digital communication tools to make information more accessible and user-friendly for students.

Further, the department is encouraged to pursue innovative partnerships, particularly in theatre and performance, even if this requires seeking new collaborators. Teaching practices should be adjusted to better prepare students for advanced seminars by incorporating more interactive and varied learning methods in earlier years. Strengthening student engagement through clubs and events is also recommended, along with expanding course offerings in areas like Film Studies and digital media, ensuring

such subjects are fully integrated into the program without restrictive boundaries.

Recommendations regarding program structure were also made by the external reviewers. The recommendations suggest maintaining the current program structure, as it effectively balances traditional literary frameworks with contemporary content and teaching practices. Rather than redesigning the curriculum, the department should continue integrating modern perspectives, such as popular culture, multimedia, and thematic approaches, within existing courses. Greater emphasis should be placed on connecting historical texts to contemporary issues, blending “traditional” and “innovative” course elements, and expanding topical and creative writing offerings to attract broader student interest.

To address declining enrolments, the department should strengthen recruitment messaging, highlight diverse career pathways, and preserve small class sizes as a key advantage. Additional strategies include offering flexible assessment models (e.g., dual grading rubrics), expanding experiential learning options, incorporating more theoretical content across courses, and continuing interdisciplinary teaching collaborations. Finally, improved planning and communication with administration are recommended to better support new initiatives and ensure their successful implementation.

Finally, additional recommendations were made in regard to the Academic Writing course. The recommendations emphasize maintaining a first-year Academic Writing course and clearly communicating its importance to new students. They also call for the creation of a representative committee to review the course’s role, including who should be required to take it, how it fits within Arts requirements, and whether it should be tailored to different disciplines (e.g., Arts, Science, Social Sciences, Nursing). Additionally, the committee should clarify the course’s administrative and budgetary relationship with the Department of English Studies.

Status:

Due date for 2 Year Follow-up Report: 2022

Date of next Cyclical Review: 2027

B. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Below are the recommendations that require specific action as a result of the Review, along with the identification of the position or unit responsible for the action in question. Notwithstanding the position or unit identified as being responsible for specific recommendations, the Dean of the Faculty has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the recommended actions are undertaken

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE MEMBER/UNIT	PROJECTED COMPLETION
To explore a cross-appointment with English Studies and Indigenous Studies (recs. 1 in report)	Unit & Dean	June 2021
To develop diversified curricula so that it supports, among other things, 12 month studying opportunities and multiple annual entry points in to the programme (recs. 5,8,13,16,17,19,20,21,24,25 in report)	Department Chair	Annual
To understand the connection between English Studies and University budgeting organize a budget workshop available to the Department (rec. 6 in report)	Dean & Finance	June 2021
To strengthen the connection between English Studies and University strategies for support of research Department plan for implementation of the University's Strategic Research Plan (rec. 10 in report)	Chair & Dean	June 2021
To explore grading standards and models across Nipissing (recs. 11,22,23 in report)	Dean & Teaching and Learning Committee, Senate	June 2021
To increase pedagogical diversity in English Studies explore pedagogical models not currently used by the programme. (rec. 14 in report)	Unit	Annual
To explore the role, function and opportunity of ACAD courses in various programmes. (recs. 27,28 in report)	Provost & Dean	June 2021

