

Implementation Report for the 2021-2022 Cyclical Review of the Cultural Analysis and Social Theory Program

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INTRODUCTION

This is the first implementation report for the cyclical review of the Master of Arts in Cultural Analysis and Social Theory (CAST) program that took place in 2021-2022. The full language for each recommendation from the External Reviewers’ Report has been included, along with the corresponding information about implementation from the Final Assessment Report. For each recommendation, the unit has provided an update on the progress or action made toward the implementation of that recommendation, followed by comments from the relevant dean(s) and the Program Review Sub-Committee. Taking into account the updates provided by the unit and the comments from the dean(s), the Program Review Sub-Committee will review the report and determine if all recommendations have been implemented satisfactorily or if a subsequent report will be required.

RECOMMENDATIONS PRIORITIZED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
1. Continue emphasizing the importance of its interdisciplinary approach to the university’s goals of advancing academic excellence and equipping students with “future readiness” in the face of complex societal challenges.	CAST Program		Ongoing

Unit Update: This continues to be our program’s core emphasis in our curriculum, recruitment, and faculty complement.

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean of Arts supports this commitment and the work that will continue to be done in this regard.

FGPS Decanal Comments: Interdisciplinarity is the hallmark of this graduate program that is attractive to students, as recognized by the External Reviewers, and serves as an excellent example for Laurier.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: This recommendation was a ‘continue to do,’ rather than a ‘do something new’ recommendation and all comments support the program’s continued emphasis on interdisciplinarity. No further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
2. Reflect further on the place and shape of experiential learning in its theory-focused program objectives (see Curriculum recommendations for some specific ideas).	CAST Program		Fall 2023

Unit Update: One of the main ways we emphasize experiential learning is through our annual graduate student conference. This year we are hosting our 6th graduate student conference. It provides an incredible opportunity to mentor and train graduate students in organizing skills (experiential learning). The director establishes a graduate student conference committee in the winter semester (via our Colloquium CQ 600). The director and our program administrative assistant help students develop and distribute a call for papers, solicit applications, write abstracts and conference papers, organize the logistics of the event (ordering food, space set up and booking, working within a tight budget), facilitate and chair conference sessions, develop conference programs (including thematic sessions), edit their papers and develop their presentation skills, and all the other skills that are necessary for successfully organizing an event at this level. We have also started using the conference as a recruitment tool for the program, as we invite potential applicants, students already accepted into the program for the following year, and advanced fourth-year students. This strategy has helped us to create continuity between cohorts, which is always a challenge in a 12-month MA program.

Dean of Arts Comments: The annual graduate conference is of great value and we will support its continuation as best we can.

FGPS Decanal Comments: The annual graduate student conference sounds like a great experience for your students. Further to recruitment, perhaps the graduate student conference, specifically, could be highlighted on your program landing page (beyond the general content that is currently there). FGPS can help support enhancements to your program landing page, so please feel free to reach out.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: The annual conference described by the program and clearly supported by both deans is a concrete example of experiential learning that provides students with a range of practical skills. The response does not indicate how this conference relates to the CAST program’s learning outcomes, which is referenced in the recommendation, so the program is encouraged to review these outcomes and update them as necessary prior to its next cyclical program review. Support for this work is available through the Quality Assurance Office. No further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
3. To ensure the success and long-term viability of programs like CAST, we encourage the university administration to recognize that interdisciplinarity is not merely a pedagogical issue but also an administrative one, and therefore to actively elevate and support it. This could mean its inclusion in future academic strategies, but also requires measures to operationalize, incentivize and reward efforts to cultivate interdisciplinarity.	Dean of Arts		Ongoing

Unit Update: We have been working closely with the Dean of Arts to ensure our program receives adequate promotional resources and teaching resources. As discussed below, the Dean of Arts has provided us with an additional course stipend which we share with Communication Studies for a summer course. The Dean of Arts has also been helpful in ensuring our faculty are allocated a course stipend to teaching in our department without interference from their core undergraduate department.

Dean of Arts Comments: We continue to work with CAST leaders to support this valuable program as best we can.

FGPS Decanal Comments: Clearly, administrative support is being provided by the Dean of Arts office to the extent possible.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: Comments provided by both CAST and the Vice Dean of Arts indicate that discussions about the interdisciplinary nature of the program and how this relates to staffing courses in the program are collegial and ongoing. No further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
4. Reflect on the role of admission requirements in light of current and future challenges of approaching university education in a more inclusive manner that embraces	CAST Program in consultation with Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies		Fall 2023

more diverse and inclusive ways of knowing.			
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Unit Update: In the past few years, the CAST Admissions Committee has granted alternative admissions to select students on the basis of relevant life experiences, interest in our core curriculum, and preparedness for graduate studies. These cases are determined in consultation with the program director. In some cases, students were asked to re-register as fourth-year students to complete a directed studies course that was attached to a CAST MA course. In each case, the student had the same course work and assignments. In each case, the student proved their readiness for our program. In addition, we have become more flexible in terms of the semester some of these students enter the program and we have allowed students to study with us on a part-time course load. We believe that this approach satisfies the intent of this recommendation.

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean of Arts supports this approach.

FGPS Decanal Comments: The Program is likely aware that the FGPS has well-established and well-documented policies and procedures for alternate admissions into a graduate program should a potential student not have the stated admission requirements. Applicants who do not meet the formal requirements of the program can still be considered for admission upon the recommendation of the department/program to the AVP/Dean of FGPS.

Programs may consider applicants as an alternate admit if they feel that the prospective student has a good chance at academic success, based on other criteria, and would contribute to the diversity and quality of the incoming cohort. Programs are encouraged, in such cases, to comment on those qualities, and may include statements confirming the level of additional support the program is prepared to offer to remove any obstacles that may impede the student’s success in the program. Consideration is given by the AVP/Dean, FGPS, who may approve the admission recommendation, may request more information, or may deny the request, with rationale.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: The comments provided indicate that the CAST program has both reflected on and engaged in concrete actions that align with this recommendation. No further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date	Additional Notes
5. Create transparency for applying and incoming students about the breadth of (elective) courses offered in each field, and clarify on the webpage which courses/electives will be offered in any given academic year to avoid expectations that cannot be	CAST Program		Summer 2023	In conjunction with Recommendation #24.

met by the program within its resource limitations.				
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Unit Update: This recommendation has been completed. We have continued the practices outlined by our previous response. In addition, when advertising the program to potential applicants, we specifically list our course offerings (and name of the instructor) in the forthcoming year. The director also meets with every potential applicant, sends them the list of courses, and discusses our curriculum with potential applicants. We have worked hard to maintain transparency and to ensure that the students understand what courses we will be offering in the following year. We have also added 6 new courses this year and removed 5 courses.

Dean of Arts Comments: The one-on-one engagement with students is invaluable. The Dean appreciates the efforts to modify course offerings and curriculum.

FGPS Decanal Comments: I appreciate the practices detailed by the Program, which address the Recommendation. I suggest ongoing review of the program landing page to keep content fresh and current. Again, feel free to reach out to us to support any content changes you would like to make to your program landing page.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: Comments provided indicate that this recommendation has been completed; no further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
6. Consider ways of including community-engaged and action-oriented learning that aligns with the declared learning objectives of the program by exploring existing resources within Laurier, while paying attention to sustainable workload for CAST faculty.	CAST Program		Fall 2023

Unit Update: In addition to incorporating community-engaged learning and action-oriented learning in our bi-weekly Colloquium (CQ 600), we have the added element of our annual graduate student conference (see Recommendation #2 Unit Update). We believe that these initiatives achieve the goal of this recommendation.

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean recognizes and supports these changes.

FGPS Decanal Comments: I appreciate the response of the Program – indeed, those are two good examples. The External Reviewers report provided some interesting, novel suggestions of creative and less conventional forms of knowledge production (e.g., portfolio with capping project) that could enhance community engagement and/or action-oriented learning and therefore may be worth (further) consideration.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: The activities described by the program align with intent of this recommendation and it is considered completed. When the program learning outcomes are reviewed and updated as suggested in the committee’s response to #2, the alignment of the outcomes with current program components can be examined at that time and updated as needed.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
7. Review the skills training in the Colloquium to make it clearly relevant to both MRP and course-based students.	CAST Program		Summer 2023

Unit Update: We have revised much of our Colloquium (CQ600) curriculum, thus completing this recommendation. All our sessions are now directly relevant to our course-based students (the vast majority), with sessions covering research and writing skills, teaching skills, and job applications, in addition to our conference. Sessions specifically related to the MRP are often held after our main session and only MRP-based students are required to attend them.

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean recognizes and supports these changes.

FGPS Decanal Comments: I appreciate the efforts, although from the information provided, it is difficult to comment. I assume the approach described is effective. Perhaps seeking feedback from CAST graduate students could be used to confirm.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: Comments provided indicate that this recommendation has been completed and actions taken supported by the deans. No further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
8. Consider encouraging/teaching more diverse modes of knowledge dissemination and mobilization beyond the scholarly paper in CAST courses.	CAST Program		Summer 2023

Unit Update: This remains a work-in-progress subjected to different instructor’s teaching styles and pedagogical values. The variety of modes of knowledge dissemination and mobilization offered in our courses depends on each instructor. Some have chosen to offer more variety (such as Dr. Alicia Sliwinski and Dr. Alex Boutros), while

others choose to remain in a more traditional academic format. It is up to each instructor to determine what is relevant to their course materials and learning outcomes.

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean supports faculty exploring modes of knowledge dissemination in line with what faculty are comfortable with.

FGPS Decanal Comments: Agree, that is an entirely reasonable approach. Nonetheless, as I indicated above, the External Reviewers provide novel suggestions of creative and less conventional forms of knowledge production that are perhaps worth giving more consideration to. They could be very attractive to your graduate students. Faculty members could be encouraged to seek support from Teaching Excellence and Innovation to explore these ideas and directions.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: It sounds like this recommendation has been considered and implemented by individual instructors, where appropriate. While recognizing instructor autonomy, the program is encouraged to keep the intent of this recommendation in mind in the future and periodically collect student feedback on the suitability and satisfaction of current mechanisms for assessment of learning. No further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date	Additional Notes
9. Consider a review of the curriculum to decentre whiteness and Eurocentric traditions and knowledge systems, in line with the Scarborough Charter, the calls for action of the TRC and Laurier’s Action Plan for EDI.	CAST Program		Winter 2024	In conjunction with Recommendation #25.

Unit Update: Our department has worked hard to adapt to these demands. Most instructors now incorporate multiple texts that are not Eurocentric. We have also offered several new courses based on critical race theory and decolonial theory (also see 5, 8, 21 & 25). However, we remain limited in our capacity to fully diversify our curriculum based on the lack of faculty available to our program. The Faculty of Arts has had very few hires since this original report was originally written; nevertheless, we believe that the actions that we have been able to take satisfy the intent of this recommendation

Dean of Arts Comments: This is an important challenge that the Dean of Arts will continue to address with the program: new hires in other programs will provide for more diversity in CAST over the coming years.

FGPS Decanal Comments: I appreciate the efforts that have been made to respond to this Recommendation.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: The comments provided suggest that progress on this recommendation has been made and no further reporting will be required. The program is encouraged to leverage relevant institutional resources, such as the Office of the AVP: EDI, if they wish to further explore actions that could be taken in support of this recommendation.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
10. Consider a broader range of capstone assessment methodologies, keeping in mind faculty and support constraints. This flexibility and choice will address student needs and assist them in demonstrating achievement in different ways, while still linked to the learning outcomes of the program.	CAST Program		Fall 2023

Unit Update: Since originally addressing this concern, this has become less of an issue for the program as we have started moving most students towards a course-work based degree. This additional flexibility in degree completion options ensures that students can choose the format that best suits their personal and professional goals. Students in both formats for degree completion (MRP or coursework) demonstrate achievement of program learning outcomes by the completion of their degree.

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean recognizes and supports these changes.

FGPS Decanal Comments: I'm a little curious to know why the Program has encouraged more students to pursue the coursework option, if I understand correctly. Perhaps it is a faculty workload issue associated with supervising the MRP and the potential of offering other creative pursuits that I have referred to in previous comments, as per suggestions in the External Reviewers report.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: The committee appreciates hearing about the additional flexibility offered to students in the program through the option of a course-based degree format. If and when a review of learning outcomes and curriculum mapping exercise take place, the program can evaluate the extent to which all students in the program, regardless of degree format, are still afforded the opportunity to meet program learning outcomes based on the courses and other curriculum components that they complete.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
11. While recognizing the wider context of financial constraint within the FOA, the review committee urges consideration of an increase to the funds available to CAST for discretionary spending related to the program's curricular objectives.	Dean of Arts Office		Ongoing

Unit Update: No update. We have less funding now. For the past two years, we have used our depleted funds to run our annual graduate student conference at the end of the winter term, which we believe is the best use of the limited funding provided to the program. Implementing this recommendation is outside of the program's control.

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean of Arts continues to work with extremely limited discretionary funding, and will continue to share what resources it does have with departments as equitably as possible.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: The committee recognizes that while important, the completion of this recommendation is not within the authority of the program. Putting the resources that are available towards supporting the graduate student conference sounds like good use of these funds and aligned with the program's goals. No further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
12. Through collaboration between CAST and the Dean of Arts, work together to secure a consistent summer course offering, ideally one that would also serve students in other programs, both to increase enrolment numbers and to create a space for greater intermixing of students across programs. The review committee suggests that this could be offered in a compressed format, perhaps during intersession, as a way of reducing impact on both faculty and student time commitments.	CAST Program in consultation with Dean of Arts Office		Fall 2023

Unit Update: This recommendation has been successfully implemented. It was started on a trial basis in 2023 with a course called “Settler Colonialism,” however, last year we came to an agreement with the Communication Studies MA Program to jointly offer a spring course. Last spring a CAST faculty member hosted a course called “Theorizing Decolonization” (CQ640D/CS 640T), while this coming spring a Communication Studies faculty member will teach a course called “Art as Method” (CQ 640D/CS 640T). This course has enabled more students to enter into the Course Work stream and to finish our program in 10-months. It has also proven to be a major incentive in our recruitment of potential students (as evidenced by our larger than average enrolment last year). We will continue to advocate for a second spring/summer course offering, potentially even moving a fall/winter course into the spring to even out the student workload throughout our three semesters.

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean recognizes and supports these changes.

FGPS Decanal Comments: I recognize the excellent work by the Program to address this Recommendation. Perhaps opportunity to complete the coursework option in 10 months is something worthy of highlighting on the program landing page.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: It is great to hear that the program was able to implement this recommendation and offer a Spring term course. The recommendation is considered completed.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
13. Through collaboration from the Dean of Arts, Chairs, and the CAST Program Coordinator, develop a multi-year MOU or other mechanism to ensure a reliable source of instructors for CAST courses and secure a definitive move away from overload teaching in the program.	CAST Program and Dean of Arts Office		Fall 2023

Unit Update: Our Dean of Arts Sofie Lachapelle has been extremely active on this issue. She has prioritized faculty teaching in graduate programs. We have not experienced any resistance from chairs in our home departments concerning faculty stipends the past two years. CAST courses are now included in our regular teaching loads. This is also likely due to our much-increased enrolments in CAST courses (as noted by the FOA Decanal Reposed in 2022). We believe that positive progress has been made on this issue since the cyclical program review took place.

Dean of Arts Comments: Continued strong student enrolment in the program enables the Dean to provide resources and support. We are delighted to be able to do so.

FGPS Decanal Comments: I appreciate the efforts of all involved to address this Recommendation.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: It is encouraging to hear the progress that has been made on the intent of this recommendation to provide stability for the program. No further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
14. Leadership is needed from the Deans and senior administration to achieve greater collaboration across graduate programs within FOA and across the wider university. Overall, the reviewers felt that Laurier should find ways to facilitate broader interdisciplinary course selection by students, including the potential for cross-listed courses.	Dean of Arts Office		Fall 2023

Unit Update: The Dean and Vice Dean have established a semi-regular graduate coordinators meeting, which has helped us to develop more coordination between graduate programs in the Faculty of Arts. Also, as stated above we now offer a cross-listed spring course. Moving forward, more work needs to be done cross-listing courses and offering more summer courses. Another issue we have raised is to develop a resource that will list all the available graduate courses in the FOA for the upcoming year (right now, students search for them individually through the clunky Loris website). This recommendation represents an ongoing issue for the CAST program but positive changes have been made since the cyclical program review.

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean of Arts continues to encourage collaboration among graduate programs and sees this a valuable use of time and resources.

FGPS Decanal Comments: I am a strong advocate of cross-listing courses among graduate programs not only for efficiencies achieved but, in my experience, it tends to bring graduate students from different backgrounds and interests into the classroom which can enhance the teaching and learning environment. I support the steps that have been taken within the Faculty of Arts and encourage more coordination and to ensure that these cross-listing course opportunities are visible to graduate students on an annual basis. Perhaps this simply could be communicated by email to all graduate students in Arts prior to course registration.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: It sounds like there has been positive movement towards the achievement of this recommendation by both the program and within the Faculty of Arts. As CAST notes, this is an ongoing recommendation but no further reporting on it will be required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
15. Building on #2 and #4 above, work to eliminate or significantly reduce reliance on direct studies courses, except in cases where these directly align with faculty member's research or teaching interests.	CAST Program		Winter 2024

Unit Update: Except for students conducting a directed study that is tied to a particular course being taught, where there is minimal extra work for the professor, our program has significantly decreased the directed studies courses in the past two years. Having an additional cross-listed course in the spring makes a major difference. The current director has also actively discouraged developing new and unaffiliated directed studies. Part of this phenomenon is due to decisions made by directors of our program. The current director has worked hard to ensure that students are actively enrolling in courses offered (either in the Faculty of Arts, or elsewhere if there are summer courses available).

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean recognizes and supports these changes.

FGPS Decanal Comments: I agree with the steps that have been taken. If a graduate student expresses strong interest in a Directed Studies with a particular professor, I would think that student may be better suited to complete the MRP option.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: The comments provided indicate that the goal of reducing reliance on Directed Studies courses has been achieved and the recommendation is considered completed.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
16. Enhanced funding opportunities for graduate students, including for international students. This requires leadership from Deans and senior administration.	Dean of Arts Office, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies		Ongoing

Unit Update: This issue continues to remain a challenge for our program. We have had serious issues with international students who are exploited by our university without receiving any funding. As noted in the "Responsibility for Implementation" of this recommendation, implementing this recommendation is not within the program's control, however, we continue to advocate for equitable funding for all students in the CAST program.

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean of Arts continues to work within the funding constraints that limit our ability to extend financial support to international students. All programs are aware that if they admit international graduate students then they do so without funding. This must be made clear to all students.

FGPS Decanal Comments: The typical funding package for domestic (coursework or MRP) graduate students in the CAST program consists of 2 GTAs (2025-2026: \$12,337) and a Laurier Graduate Scholarship (\$4500). The program has three Graduate ‘Prestige’ Scholarship allocations of \$5000 to use at their discretion to enhance offers to strong applicants. Undergraduate students applying to the MRP option and who meet eligibility criteria (i.e., GPA) can apply for tri-agency funding (i.e., CGRS M). Faculty are encouraged to secure research grants and include budgets to support research assistantships and studentships, and to enhance competitiveness of graduate student funding.

Funding commitments are generally not available for international students in one-year master’s programs at Laurier as we do not receive government operating support for international graduate students. However, they do have opportunities to apply for bursary support, and to be considered for GTA positions, should the need arise, and a funding source be available through the Dean of Arts. Finally, each international student who gains admission into this one-year program is notified, at the time of offer, that Laurier provides support for the academic experience, and through health services and professional development opportunities, but they are responsible for paying all tuition and student fees for the program. This serves to ensure that incoming international graduate students can make an informed decision before accepting the offer.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: International graduate student funding is an institution-wide issue, and as the program notes, not within their power to address on their own. The comments provided by the Dean of FGPS are helpful in understanding what funding opportunities are available to international graduate students. No further reporting on this recommendation is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
17. Explore possibilities to relocate CAST mailboxes and shared office space to a single area, perhaps close to the CAST Administrative Assistant; and that steps be taken to develop an Arts-dedicated graduate student space.	CAST Program in collaboration with Dean of Arts Office		Winter 2023

Unit Update: This recommendation has been completed. Starting in September 2024 all the CAST mailboxes were moved to the 5th floor of DAWB (close to Shanna Howse (program administrator) and Greg Bird (program director)). We also have a shared office space with the Political Science MA students on the 5th floor of DAWB.

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean recognizes and supports these changes.

FGPS Decanal Comments: The Recommendation has been addressed.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: It is great to hear that this recommendation has been completed since the cyclical program review took place. No further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
18. Expose students to a wider array of CAST faculty members. This could occur, for example, by assigning CAST faculty publications in mandatory course readings or by including presentations of faculty work in progress as part of Colloquium or core courses.	<i>This recommendation has not been prioritized as it is already current practice.</i>		

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
19. Discuss ways to further optimize library support for CAST students in order to avoid potential repetition (e.g. with library instruction provided as part of TA training) and increase individual student engagement around research (e.g. making it mandatory for students to work with the librarian on the main research assignment in their core courses and/or on their MRP).	CAST Program in consultation with Library		

Unit Update: Our CAST Colloquium (CQ600) course now includes 3 mandatory workshops with our subject area Librarian Joanne Oud, which we believe addresses the core of this recommendation.

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean recognizes and supports these changes.

FGPS Decanal Comments: Encouraging graduate students to take part in ASPIRE programming (<https://students.wlu.ca/academics/graduate-and-postdoctoral-studies/aspire/skills-training.html>) or embedding ASPIRE participation as part of requirements for CQ600 may provide further opportunities.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: The committee appreciates the program’s explanation of how this recommendation has been completed; no further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
20. Reach out to Teaching and Learning, and to Community and Workplace Partnerships, to explore what supports might exist to strengthen the approach to experiential learning.	CAST Program		Fall 2023

Unit Update: Our past director Penelope Ironstone and current director have established the following workshops in our Colloquium series (CQ600). We host one workshop facilitated by the Career Development Centre: “Career Development.” And we host three workshops facilitated by Teaching and Learning: “Feedback or Feedforward? How to Evaluate Your Students,” “Inclusive Teaching: How to Engage with a Diverse Study Body,” and “Reflections on Teaching.”

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean recognizes and supports these changes.

FGPS Decanal Comments: The details that are emerging in the Program responses about the quality and improvements of CQ600 are impressive. Indeed, in relation to my previous comment, it would appear that ASPIRE programming is already being strongly leveraged.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: It sounds like the CQ600: Colloquium course is being effectively leveraged to provide CAST students with professional development support. No further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
21. Work with the Dean of Arts to support recruitment of additional faculty members to the program, in particular to address the need for more junior faculty and greater diversity.	CAST Program in consultation with Dean of Arts Office		Ongoing

Unit Update: In 2024-25, we engaged in a review of our program faculty. We contacted all listed members and asked them to confirm their commitment to the program. 2 faculty members chose to leave the program (Ian MacRae and Jasmin Zine); however, the director recruited 3 recent hires (Ehab Abdou, Colleen Daniher and Jordan Kinder are all assistant professors, i.e. “junior” faculty). At our next CAST Committee of the Whole in April 2025, we will vote on another faculty application to join our program. This re-organization has helped us address not only the two issues listed in this recommendation, because it has also helped us revive faculty interest in our program with more commitment, plus we now have more range in our faculty areas of expertise. This helps us

offer new courses and to provide more supervision options for our students. In addition, we have undergone a substantive change in our curriculum offerings this year, adding 6 new courses and removing 5 courses. We are more “diverse” and have more “junior” faculty now; however, we remain limited due to the lack of hires in Faculty of Arts (we have lost multiple faculty due to retirements that are not being replaced by new hires). In terms of the long-term sustainability of our program, the Faculty of Arts requires many more hires.

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean recognizes and supports these positive changes.

FGPS Decanal Comments: In the face of fiscal constraints, the Program has still found ways to address the Recommendation to the extent possible.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: It is clear from the comments provided that the program has taken steps to address this recommendation, which will directly benefit CAST students. The review of program faculty sounds like a particularly useful activity to engage in on a semi-regular basis. No further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
22. Consider meeting with research facilitators from the Office of Research to strategize around potential collaboration on research grants that could build on past success in this regard and potentially develop another research cluster linked to CAST.	CAST Program and Office of Research Services		

Unit Update: This remains a work in progress.

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean of Arts supports this ongoing response.

FGPS Decanal Comments: I would encourage the program to review the new Strategic Research Plan (<https://www.wlu.ca/academics/research/research-services/strategic-research-plan/index.html>). Among the numerous Research Strengths, the SRP may offer some ideas for new, potential collaborations.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: Comments provided here by the unit are brief but suggest that this recommendation has not yet fully been completed. It represents an area of more ongoing attention, so the program is encouraged to follow through on this recommendation more fully prior to its next cyclical program review.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
23. Work with the Dean of Arts to foster an overall supportive climate for research in the FOA, empowering faculty to prioritize research over teaching and service when appropriate. This could include targeted support to faculty in programs like CAST, so that they might move out of a “labour of love” scenario.	CAST Program in consultation with Dean of Arts Office		Ongoing

Unit Update: This item has been addressed by the FOA in providing an additional cross-listed spring/summer course (see 5, 8, 14 & 15). And we have restricted the number of directed studies courses students can take (see 15), both of which contribute to completion of this recommendation.

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean recognizes and supports these changes.

FGPS Decanal Comments: The Recommendation has been addressed, with support from the Dean of Arts.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: The connection between the recommendation itself and the activities described by the program are clear. This recommendation is considered completed for reporting purposes.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date	Additional Notes
24. A recommendation on transparency around course offerings for the upcoming year is included under Curriculum and is also relevant in relation to the student feedback discussed in this section.	CAST Program		Fall 2023	In conjunction with Recommendation #5.

Unit Update: This recommendation has been completed. We are now more transparent in our course offerings (see 5 above, along with other items). With our new curriculum we have also responded to student feedback. In particular, we list our upcoming courses during our recruitment cycle (and our director includes this list in all correspondence with prospective applicants).

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean recognizes and supports these changes.

FGPS Decanal Comments: See response to Recommendation #5.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: It is clear from the comments provided in relation to the previous recommendation that this has been completed; no further reporting is necessary.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date	Additional Notes
25. A recommendation on increasing the representation of BIPOC and Global South perspectives is included under Curriculum and is also relevant in relation to the student feedback discussed in this section.	CAST Program		Winter 2024	In conjunction with Recommendation #9.

Unit Update: We have made significant changes to address this issue: new faculty with new research interests and revised our course offerings (also see 5, 8, 9 & 21). Also, longstanding faculty have substantially revised their courses to address this issue.

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean recognizes and supports these changes.

FGPS Decanal Comments: The Recommendation has been addressed.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: From the perspectives provided, it sounds like this progress has been made toward completing this recommendation. No further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
26. For Deans and senior administration: re-evaluate the restrictive policy about numbers of international students permitted, moving from one to at least two international students allowed per CAST cohort.	Dean of Arts Office and Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies		Ongoing

Unit Update: Progress has been made in relation to this recommendation – last year we had two international students; however, lack of funding for international students has limited our capacity to recruit them. Similar to our response to Recommendation #16, this recommendation is an institutional, rather than program-specific issue, and is outside the scope of the program’s control to implement.

Dean of Arts Comments: See our response to #16.

FGPS Decanal Comments: Also, see response to Recommendation #16.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: The committee agrees that the program itself has little influence on the number of international students that it is able to admit. It is great to hear that there have been some international enrolments since the cyclical review took place, and it sounds like institutional conversations about this issue are ongoing. No further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
27. Consider ways of promoting the program more broadly, especially considering Canadian graduate student audiences outside Ontario.	CAST Program in consultation with Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies		Fall 2023

Unit Update: For the past few years, we have been advertising our program on various academic lists in our relevant fields of research. We have been attracting students from outside our province, including from British Columbia and Manitoba. But lack of competitive funding available for MA students, has made it difficult to attract students from outside of our region. Nevertheless, we believe that the actions that we have taken satisfy the intent of this recommendation.

Dean of Arts Comments: The Dean understands the constraints to recruiting further students and will continue to direct available resources towards this effort.

FGPS Decanal Comments: As commented on previously, please review content on your program landing page to ensure it remains fresh and current. As also mentioned previously, the FGPS can provide support for content changes you would like to make. Re funding, please see response to Recommendation #16.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: The identification and expansion of appropriate program recruitment channels should represent an ongoing activity for the programs, but for the purposes of reporting, this recommendation is considered completed.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
28. See above sections for recommendations relevant to quality enhancement.	<i>This recommendation has not been prioritized as it has already been captured in the previous recommendations.</i>		

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Unit: Overall, we are very grateful for these recommendations. They have helped us revamp the CAST program, which at this point is a thriving graduate program with much higher enrolment numbers. We are also thankful to the Faculty of Arts Deans Office – the increase in enthusiasm and support has helped not only CAST elevate our program but all MA programs across our faculty.

Dean of the Faculty of Arts: The Dean is grateful to Dr. Greg Bird and Dr. Penelope Ironstone for their leadership in recent years. They have made significant responses to the recommendations, and the Dean of Arts commits to continuing to supporting CAST and to doing what we can to ensure its continued success. The value and importance of the program are recognized.

Associate Vice-President and Dean, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Likewise, I appreciate the efforts of CAST leadership, and the Dean of Arts, in ongoing support and improvement of the CAST program. The fundamental interdisciplinarity aspect of CAST is a key core strength, and model, that is highly attractive to students, and all should be commended for their commitment to this program and overcoming the additional administrative complexities that such programs face.

Program Review Sub-Committee: The committee appreciates the comments provided by both the program and the deans on the efforts made since the cyclical program review to implement those recommendations prioritized and within the program’s scope to implement. It sounds like significant progress has been made on many of the curricular recommendations advanced by the external review committee as well as those related to communication with students. As noted in the committee’s response, the CAST program is encouraged to engage in curriculum review processes such as a learning outcomes review and curriculum mapping process in order to ensure alignment between the program’s goals and outcomes for its students and the courses and other curriculum components. No further reporting will be required in advance of the program’s next cyclical program review, scheduled for 2028-2029.

Subsequent Report Required: No