



## **Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan BA in History and MA in History**

Completed by the Cyclical Program Review Committee (CPRC)

<b>Degree Programs Being Reviewed</b>	<b>Bachelor of Arts in History Master of Arts in History</b>
<b>External Reviewers</b>	<b>Dr. Chad Gaffield, University of Ottawa Dr. Jessica Stites Mor, University of British Columbia, Okanagan</b>
<b>Internal Representative</b>	<b>Dr. Alba Agostino, Child and Youth Studies, Trent University</b>
<b>Year of Review</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>
<b>Date of Site Visit</b>	<b>March 22, 23, 25 and 26, 2021</b>
<b>Due Date for Monitoring Report from the Program</b>	<b>March 1, 2023</b>
<b>Date Prepared by CPRC</b>	<b>April 13, 2022</b>
<b>Date Approved by Provost &amp; VP Academic</b>	<b>May 6, 2022</b>
<b>Signature of Provost &amp; VP Academic</b>	

The study of History allows us to understand the past and explore the diversity and complexity of human experience. Students are challenged to imagine how people have lived and thrived throughout the ages.

The BA History program explores such themes as women's history, Aboriginal history, ethnicity, work, culture (both popular and elite), political history (both domestic and international), war, business, heritage, and applied history. The program is committed to small-group learning and effective teacher-student interaction.

Students in the History MA program will have the opportunity to explore the lived experience of the people of the past — from the famous and the infamous, to the anonymous and the unsung. Students will study technological, political and social change — without temporal or geographical limits. Focus will be given to developing research, writing and communication skills that are critical to careers in our ever-changing information economy.

## **Executive Summary**

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During the 2020-2021 academic year, the Bachelor of Arts in History and Master of Arts in History programs underwent a review. Two arm's-length external reviewers, Dr. Chad Gaffield, University of Ottawa and Dr. Jessica Stites Mor, University of British Columbia and one internal representative, Dr. Alba Agostino, Child & Youth Studies program were invited to review the self-study documentation. The virtual visit took place on March 22, 23, 25 & 26, 2021.

This Final Assessment Report (FAR), in accordance with Trent University's Institutional Quality Assurance Policy (IQAP), provides a synthesis of the cyclical review of the degree programs. The report considers: the Self-Studies, the External Reviewers' Report, the Program Responses, and the Decanal Responses.

A summary of the review process is as follows: the academic unit completed two self-studies that addressed all components of the evaluation criteria as outlined in Trent's IQAP. Appendices included: Curriculum Vitae, Course Syllabi, Data Tables, Student and Alumni Surveys and a Library Statement of Support. Qualified external reviewers were invited to conduct a review of the programs that involved a review of all relevant documentation (self-studies, appendices, and IQAP policy) and participation in a virtual visit. During the virtual site visit, reviewers met with senior administration, faculty, students and staff.

Once the External Reviewers' Report was received, both the Programs and Deans provided responses to the Report. The Cyclical Program Review Committee (CPRC) reviewed and assessed the quality of the degree programs based on the four review documents and reported on significant program strengths, opportunities for improvement and enhancement, and the implementation of recommendations. CPRC identified 11 recommendations for implementation to improve the quality of the program for students.

The Implementation Plan identifies those recommendations selected for implementation and specifies the proposed follow-up and the person(s) responsible for leading the follow-up. Academic units, in consultation with the respective Dean, will submit a Monitoring Report in response to the recommendations identified for follow-up. The Report is due March 1, 2023.

### **Significant Program Strengths**

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The External Reviewers found that the BA History and MA History programs continue to implement high impact practices to provide students with enthusiastic and dedicated faculty ensuring quality intellectual experiences through interactive seminars and mentorship initiatives. These practices provide students with an education that prepares them for the graduate studies and the workforce. The strength of the Programs lie in the traditional areas of study including European and Canadian history.

### **Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement**

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As a function of continuous improvement, it is critical to explore opportunities to enhance student-centred education and the learning experience of our students. This section identifies ways in which the Programs can stay current with the discipline and contribute to student success.

## Curriculum Review

The programs are encouraged to review curriculum offerings on an annual basis to ensure that:

- Curriculum remains current with the state of the field
- Students have the opportunity to learn the historical contexts of contemporary debates
- Appropriate attention is given to learning digital modes of historical research and communication
- Course descriptions and titles:
  - reflect more recent approaches to areas of study
  - move away from chronological period and geographical regions
  - are thematic and relevant subjects that call for historical perspectives

Some consideration should take place to identify ways in which the programs could be marketed to be more innovative or distinct using existing resources.

## Complete List of Recommendations

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### Recommendation 1

**That faculty renewal be a top priority, most effectively by recruiting an Africanist and a Canadianist.**

*Ideally, each would have thematic interests that complement the current faculty. These appointments could be best housed at the Durham campus where a spirit of collegiality and initiative appears to be high, and where future growth prospects are encouraging.*

### Undergraduate Program Response

The history department would welcome faculty renewal, particularly as they have lost an Africanist and a Canadianist in mid-career transfers to other universities.

### Graduate Program Response

The Program recommends decisions on recruiting new faculty should take place following curriculum review of the undergraduate program. Hiring should focus on teacher scholars with thematic, not specific geographical areas. New faculty positions should be capable of teaching across geographical and chronological divides, and with the ability to and interest in pivoting in the medium and long term to address changing university cultures and student demographics.

### Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences' Response

The renewal of permanent (TUFA) faculty in HIST is related to resources and will be considered as part of annual staffing plan discussions with the Dean.

### Dean of Graduate Studies' Response

Any renewal or investment in history faculty will be undertaken to meet the needs of the undergraduate and graduate programs in discussion with the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences. The specific research and teaching focus of any future appointments will be developed after extensive consultation.

## **Recommendation 2**

**That the design of the undergraduate program be updated to better balance the learning of historical knowledge with the acquisition of skills in historical thinking and methods.**

*This re-design should include transparent scaffolding of how each curricular level contributes to learning outcomes.*

### **Undergraduate Program Response**

Existing course offerings are often organized around historical knowledge acquisition, but not at the expense of honing skills in historical thinking and methods. At every level (from first to fourth year), courses emphasize small group learning activities where both primary and secondary sources are extensively analyzed. Most of the senior seminars include a capstone project requiring a significant component of primary source research.

### **Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences' Response**

The Dean is supportive of this direction and looks forward to learning of the Department's progress.

## **Recommendation 3**

**a) That initiatives be launched to promote Trent's ability to offer high-quality 'discipline based interdisciplinary' undergraduate and graduate programs.**

**b) That the History programs optimize specialization opportunities such as Feminist and Gender Studies.**

*These initiatives should be supported by enhanced consultation, coordination, and communication both among professors and students, with the active involvement of the three Deans, and supported by the Provost. Similarly, we recommend that the History programs optimize specialization opportunities such as available through the Feminist and Gender Studies specialization.*

### **Undergraduate Program Response**

The Program supports any multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary initiatives that demonstrate the relevance of the study of History.

### **Graduate Program Response**

Students currently have enormous opportunities to take courses across disciplines and to incorporate faculty thesis committee members across disciplines. In addition to an MA in History, students can opt to complete Collaborative Specializations that will appear on their transcripts. The program will ensure students are aware of options available to them.

### **Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences' Response**

The Dean is supportive of this direction for the undergraduate program and encourages the Department to meet with the Dean and other Departments to discuss interdisciplinary opportunities for program integration.

### **Dean of Graduate Studies' Response**

History graduate students currently have access to a wide range of humanities (and where relevant, social science) courses, providing them with opportunities for interdisciplinary study. Opportunities such as Collaborative Specializations are available to students at the graduate level.

### **Recommendation 4**

**That the MA program be continued and seen as a priority both in advancing the research and strengths of the department.**

*The External Reviewers agreed with the recent administrative changes that include a transparent system in which teaching graduate seminars and supervising students are formally and consistently recognized in annual workload assignments.*

### **Graduate Program Response**

The Graduate Program agreed with the External Reviewers' recommendation.

### **Dean of Graduate Studies' Response**

Graduate programs are deeply embedded in the research activities of departments, and the MA in History is no exception. The School of Graduate Studies works closely with the Office of Research and Innovation to ensure our mutual goals of supporting faculty and research students are met.

### **Recommendation 5**

**That additional attention be given to supporting students as a group in developing skills for mounting research projects, and those skills that include and go beyond those that will be needed in their own work, e.g., research ethics policies, how to gain access to archival collections, how to mobilize the knowledge from research results.**

### **Graduate Program Response**

There have been some development by the program in this area. The core course has become a writing workshop. In 2020-21, the program sponsored a series of workshops focused on careers and EDI. These have included workshops on surviving graduate school/applying to doctoral programs; writing for public history sites (that is, "how to mobilize knowledge from research results"; from an MA in History to a career in politics; creating an archive from nothing at Luna Park (the Maple Leaf Gardens of Argentina) (that is, "how to gain access to archival collections"); pedagogy in a northern British Columbia salmon cannery (that is, "how to gain access to archival collections and research ethics in working with Indigenous elders); and sexual harassment in the workplace (by an officer in the Canadian Armed Forces).

There are no universal skills for mounting research projects, gaining access to archives, or mobilizing results. Suggestions from members of the Graduate Program Committee meeting to address the report suggested that there is an argument for leaving those questions in the hands of the student's thesis/MRP adviser.

### **Dean of Graduate Studies' Response**

The Dean is supportive of these initiatives. The School of Graduate Studies also provides programs with strategic initiative funds that can be used to host events of interest to the entire program (e.g., career development workshops with government or industry leaders).

### **Recommendation 6**

**That the mandatory course includes formal development of a research prospectus and greater emphasis on teaching historical methods.**

### **Graduate Program Response**

For years the mandatory course focused on teaching historiography and methods and the quality of student writing has been a problem. The emphasis has been shifting toward a writing workshop where many classes are dedicated to deep and detailed workshopping of student essays, and training students as researchers, writers, and editors. Perhaps a second course is needed on methods. One course cannot do all that is expected here – writing workshop, focus on methodologies, and tailored instruction to students on their specific MA research and specific prospectus preparations. The director is working with graduate students on this and will consult students in the process.

### **Dean of Graduate Studies' Response**

The Graduate Studies Office will provide support (when needed) to ensure that when courses are developed or modified they are well designed and meet the needs of the program and its students.

### **Recommendation 7**

**That students receive increased communication around deadlines and expectations for progress through the degree.**

### **Graduate Program Response**

The Graduate Program agreed with the External Reviewers' recommendation.

### **Dean of Graduate Studies' Response**

All graduate course syllabuses are reviewed by the School of Graduate Studies to ensure that they conform to institutional requirements with regards to deadlines and evaluations.

### **Recommendation 8**

**That greater engagement of graduate students in the intellectual community be facilitated through small initiatives, such as a speaker series or professionalization workshops.**

### **Graduate Program Response**

There is a speaker series/professionalization workshop. For almost a decade, the program ran a speaker series with 2-4 visiting speakers per academic year. That program was halted by the pandemic and replaced by the highly successful workshop series noted above.

The external reviewers noted that "The current graduate director seems to have built directly into the curriculum key opportunities for students to workshop with professionals in a variety of capacities

and fields, building and refining their professional capabilities and their understandings of the work of history-trained professionals after they complete their training.”

#### **Dean of Graduate Studies’ Response**

The pandemic disrupted normal ways of community building, but the history program moved quickly to introduce successful alternatives.

#### **Recommendation 9**

- a) That a general calendar clean-up take place to update course descriptions and titles to reflect more recent approaches to areas that are covered.**
  
- b) That course descriptions move away from chronological period and geographical region, towards a better balance with more thematic and currently relevant subjects that call for historical perspective.**

#### **Undergraduate Program Response**

The Department will undertake a calendar review that will help to highlight newer courses, including the thematically organized courses. The Department recognizes that geographically and temporally focused courses are valuable in providing a scaffold for more thematically based courses, but also themselves incorporate a wide range of themes and approaches. The Department noted that upper year students continue to demand courses constructed around a temporal and geographic focus, and noted that they continue to remain among our most popular.

#### **Graduate Program Response**

The Graduate Program agreed with the External Reviewers’ recommendation.

#### **Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences’ Response**

The Dean is supportive of these curricular recommendations and looks forward to learning of the Department’s progress.

#### **Dean of Graduate Studies’ Response**

Revisions to curriculum are supported through our Graduate Studies Committee (GSC). Periodically, graduate programs make significant changes to curriculum and GSC ensures that changes conform to degree level expectations and are consistent with program scope and aims.

#### **Recommendation 10**

**That there be increased support for library purchasing for the department, given the importance of books to undergraduate student learning and research within the discipline. In particular, areas of regular graduate supervision should be prioritized in terms of maintaining journal subscriptions and book buying when digital access is not immediate.**

*Additional funds might be prioritized to address the needs of research-skill building courses at the undergraduate level, as well.*

#### **Undergraduate Program Response**

Adequate library resources are vital to the operation of our programs.

**Graduate Program Response**

The Graduate Program agreed with the External Reviewers' recommendation.

**Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences' Response**

The Dean encourages the Department to work with the Library to address these gaps.

**Dean of Graduate Studies' Response**

The program is encouraged to work with the subject librarian to ensure that there are sufficient resources to support the needs of the graduate program.

**Recommendation 11**

**That continued and enhanced support from the Deans' offices be provided to facilitate the handling of personnel and workload issues that affect the undergraduate and graduate programs.**

*External reviewers noted they hoped that this would continue and be reflected in long-term planning to strengthen History's enduring position as a pillar of the liberal arts experience at Trent.*

**Undergraduate Program Response**

The History Department welcomes the Deans' support to create a more equitable workload distribution that considers responsibilities in all sectors of teaching, research, and service.

**Graduate Program Response**

The Graduate Program agreed with the External Reviewers' recommendation.

**Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences' Response**

The Dean is supportive of a discussion about equitable workload distribution within the History Department, which will be considered as part of annual staffing plan submissions in accordance with the TUFA Collective Agreement.

**Dean of Graduate Studies' Response**

Workload management falls within the remit of the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences, but the School of Graduate Studies provides annual summaries of graduate workloads to ensure that decisions are informed by up to date (and accurate) data on graduate teaching and supervisory responsibilities.

## Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action. The Academic Unit in consultation with their Dean will be responsible for moving forward with the recommendations to ensure that each is completed within the recommended timeframe.

The Academic Unit will submit a Monitoring Report to their Dean reporting on the action taken, completion, and/or status of each recommendation. The Dean will review the Monitoring Report prior to submitting the report to the Office of the Provost.

### DUE DATE FOR MONITORING REPORT: March 1, 2023

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-Up If no follow-up is recommended, indicate ' <u>No follow-up report is required</u> ' and provide rationale	Specific Timeline Indicate <u>specific timeline</u> for addressing or completing recommendation	Position Responsible for Leading Follow-up
<b>Both Undergraduate and Graduate Programs</b>			
<b>Faculty Workload and Renewal</b>			
<p><b>Recommendation 1</b> That faculty renewal be a top priority, most effectively by recruiting an Africanist and a Canadianist.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 11</b> That continued and enhanced support from the Deans' offices be provided to facilitate the handling of personnel and workload issues that affect the undergraduate and graduate programs.</p>	<p>Faculty renewal is part of the ongoing academic planning and budget processes, and takes place through discussions with Deans.</p> <p>No follow-up required.</p>		
<p><b>Library</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 10</b> That increased support for library purchasing for the department, given the importance of books to undergraduate student learning and research within the discipline. In particular, areas of regular graduate supervision should be prioritized in terms of maintaining journal subscriptions and book buying when digital access is not immediate.</p>	<p>Both the undergraduate and graduate programs are encouraged to discuss their needs with the library and identify potential gaps.</p>		<p>Undergraduate Chair and Graduate Director with respective Deans – to discuss with University Librarian</p>

<b>Undergraduate Program</b>			
<b>Curriculum Review</b>			
<p><b>Recommendation 2</b> That the design of the undergraduate program be updated to better balance the learning of historical knowledge with the acquisition of skills in historical thinking and methods.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 9</b> a) That a general calendar clean-up to update course descriptions and titles to reflect more recent approaches to areas that are covered.</p> <p>b) That course descriptions move away from chronological period and geographical region, towards a better balance with more thematic and currently relevant subjects that call for historical perspective.</p>	<p>A comprehensive undergraduate curriculum review should take place.</p>	<p>Timing of implementation will depend on changes.</p> <p>Review expect to be completed by March 2023.</p>	<p>Chair</p>
<p><b>Minors/Specializations</b> <b>Recommendation 3</b> That initiatives be launched to promote Trent’s ability to offer high-quality “discipline based interdisciplinary” undergraduate and graduate programs.</p>	<p>The program is encouraged to find ways to make interdisciplinary connections with social science and science programs, beyond those that have traditionally existed within the humanities.</p> <p>Encourage increased cross-listing of courses (similar to those currently with FRSC, HIST-FRSC 3711H, 3711H).</p>		<p>Chair in consultation with Dean.</p> <p>Dean to identify suitable options.</p>
<b>Graduate Program</b>			
<p><b>Recommendation 4</b> That the MA program be continued and seen as a priority both in advancing the research and strengths of the department.</p>	<p>No follow-up required</p>		

<p><b>Curriculum Review and Student Skills Development</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 5</b> That additional attention be given to supporting students as a group in developing skills for mounting research projects, and those skills that include and go beyond those that will be needed in their own work, e.g., research ethics policies, how to gain access to archival collections, how to mobilize the knowledge from research results.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 6 - Graduate</b> That the mandatory course includes formal development of a research prospectus and greater emphasis on teaching historical methods</p> <p><b>Recommendation 9</b> a) That a general calendar clean-up to update course descriptions and titles to reflect more recent approaches to areas that are covered. b) That course descriptions move away from chronological period and geographical region, towards a better balance with more thematic and currently relevant subjects that call for historical perspective.</p>	<p>Report back on any progress or actions taken to address developing additional student skills, emphasis of teaching historical methods, updating course descriptions and titles, as well as the balancing of thematic and currently relevant subjects.</p>	<p>Expect to be in place for 2023-24 Academic Calendar</p>	<p>Program Director</p>
<p><b>Specializations</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 3</b> That initiatives be launched to promote Trent’s ability to offer high-quality “discipline based interdisciplinary” undergraduate and graduate programs such as specializations.</p>	<p>Program to explore opportunities for collaborative specializations and report back.</p>		<p>Program Director</p>
<p><b>Communication</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 7</b> That students receive increased communication around deadlines</p>	<p>Report back on current process or any actions taken to improved student</p>		<p>Program Director</p>

and expectations for progress through the degree.	communication around program deadlines and expectations.		
<p><b>Engagement – Intellectual Community</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 8</b></p> <p>That greater engagement of graduate students in the intellectual community be facilitated through small initiatives, such as a speaker series or professionalization workshops.</p>	The program is encouraged to explore opportunities for new initiatives in the fall.		Program Director