



Jewish Studies
Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan
May 2024

Faculty / Affiliated University College	Huron University College, Faculty of Arts and Social Science King's University College, Religious Studies	
Degrees Offered	B.A.	
Date of Last Review	2015-2016	
Modules Reviewed	Major Minor	
External Reviewers	Dr. Kalman Weiser, Modern Jewish Studies York University	Dr. Naftali Cohn, Department of Religions and Cultures Concordia University
Internal Reviewer	Dr. John Mitchell, Associate Academic Dean, Brescia University College	Shaurya Singh Karky BESc, Mechanical Engineering
Date of Site Visit	March 6 & 7, 2024	
Date Review Report Received	March 28, 2024	
Date Program/Faculty Response Received	Program: April 19, 2024 Faculties: April 19, 2024 & May 23, 2024	
Evaluation	Good Quality	
Approval Dates	SUPR-U: June 26, 2024 ACA: September 4, 2024 Senate (for information): September 13, 2024	
Year of Next Review	2031-2032	
Progress Report	June 2027	

Overview of Western’s Cyclical Review Assessment Reporting Process

In accordance with Western’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a summary of the cyclical review, internal responses, and assessment and evaluation of the Jewish Studies Program delivered by Huron University College and King’s University College.

This FAR considers the following documents:

- the program’s self-study brief;
- the external reviewers’ report;
- the response from the Program; and
- the response from the Academic Deans of Huron University College and King’s University College

This FAR identifies the strengths of the program and opportunities for program enhancement and improvement, and details the recommendations of the external reviewers – noting those recommendations to be prioritized for implementation.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the FAR that have been selected for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, specifies any action or follow-up that is required, and defines the timeline for completion.

The FAR (including Implementation Plan) is sent for approval through the Senate Subcommittee on Program Review – Undergraduate (SUPR-U) and ACA, then for information to Senate and to the Ontario Universities’ Council on Quality Assurance. Subsequently, it is publicly accessible on Western’s IQAP website. The FAR is the only document from the undergraduate cyclical review process that is made public; all other documents are confidential to the Jewish Studies Program, Faculty of Arts and Social Science at Huron, and Religious Studies at King’s and SUPR-U.

Executive Summary

The Jewish Studies Program is a joint undertaking by Western University's affiliated University Colleges, Huron University College and King's University College, and administered at Huron. The program, which came into existence in 2008, aims to provide students from across the greater Western campus with the opportunity to study Jewish culture, history, philosophy, theology, and Hebrew (both Biblical and modern). For the 2022-23 academic year, there were 4 students enrolled in the Jewish Studies Major and 4 students enrolled in the Jewish Studies Minor. At Huron alone, 102 students enrolled in courses within the Jewish Studies program, with a further 53 students enrolled in courses that count for credit toward the Jewish Studies Major or Minor. A further 178 students were enrolled in courses offered at King's University College and Western University that count for credit toward the Jewish Studies modules.

The self-study aimed to take stock of the current state of the program and serve as a foundational document in envisioning and planning the program's future. Feedback was sought from associated faculty and administration, current students and recent alumni, and community stakeholders. The Centre for Teaching and Learning supported a curriculum mapping exercise.

The external reviewers shared a positive assessment of the Jewish Studies Program. They offer seven recommendations with considerations for further enhancement.

Strengths and Innovative Features Identified by the Program

- Program is enriched by its interdisciplinary and inter-campus nature, small classes which heightens students' engagement, guest lecture series that attracts international scholars, student exchange opportunities with Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel, and internships and research opportunities with the local Jewish community.
- Curriculum encompasses: 1) the intersection of Jewish and Indigenous experiences, allowing for exploration of decolonization, indigenization, equity and diversity issues; 2) global engagement; and 3) interdisciplinary areas of study that aim to break down disciplinary barriers and develop agile creative thinkers.
- Faculty members are experts in their areas of study and are encouraged to apply their learning to shape the courses.
- Experiential learning is embedded in courses as part of the program's core pedagogical approach.
- Partnerships are in place (and being further developed) with the Western Faculty of Education to help train teachers for Jewish Day Schools in London and Toronto.
- Planning is underway to develop other areas of inquiry and exploration, for example, the study of genocide, the intersection of the arts and religion, society

and culture, with the aim of preparing learners to critically examine the world and their place therein.

Concerns and Areas of Improvement Identified and Discussed by the Program

- The breadth and interdisciplinary nature of this program results in a lack of oversight and coherence in the program structure which makes it difficult to accurately assess student achievement and implement program-level learning and Western Degree outcomes.
 - Lack of oversight translates into a deficiency in goal-setting across the program.
- Women in Judaism is underrepresented in the curriculum; which can be addressed by the development of a gender in Judaism course.
- The withdrawal of Western's Department of History in the program has contributed to an imbalance toward program instructors with specialization in Religious Studies and led to a relative paucity of courses in certain areas that might draw more students to the program (e.g., history, cultural studies).
- Pathways into the program which could lead to increased enrolment remain unclear; diversifying student intake is necessary for broadening the program.
- It is unclear whether the Hebrew classes are appealing to the students as they once did as enrolments in this area have decreased in recent years.
- Opportunities for the Jewish Studies program to contribute to other academic programs at Western have been underexploited.
 - It is hoped that further partnerships will be developed in the coming years, both academic and non-academic.

Review Process

As part of the external review, the review committee, comprising two external reviewers, an internal reviewer and a student reviewer, were provided with Volume I and II of the self-study brief in advance of the scheduled review and then met in-person over two days with the:

- Vice-Provost (Academic Programs)
- Director of Academic Quality and Enhancement
- President, Huron University College
- Provost and Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, Huron
- Registrar, Huron University College
- Director, Library and Learning Services, Huron
- Associate Academic Dean, King's
- Coordinator, Jewish Studies, Huron
- Chair, Religious Studies, King's
- Administrative Staff, Huron and King's

- Program Faculty, Huron and King's
- Program Students

Following the site visit, the external reviewers submitted a comprehensive report of their findings which was sent to the Program and Deans for review and response. Formative documents, including Volumes I and II of the Self-Study, the External Report, and the Program and Decanal responses form the basis of this Final Assessment Report (FAR) of the Jewish Studies Program. The FAR is collated and submitted to SUPR-U by the Internal Reviewer with the support of the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement.

Summative Assessment – External Reviewers' Report

External reviewers shared that the *“program makes a very favorable impression thanks to the strength and commitment of its faculty, the diversity and small size of courses it currently offered, the extensive library collections and rich research and learning resources available to students, the program’s positive reception by current students, and the overall support it receives from Huron College.”*

Strengths of the Program

- The overall quality of course content and delivery, which comes in a variety of conventional and more innovative formats, for instance courses not only use texts as primary sources for analysis but also much use of television, film, and new media.
- Funding is provided to ensure that all students have access to experiential elements of the curriculum, for instance, students who cannot afford the trip to Bosnia can receive funding.
- Methods of delivery and assessment are varied and expose learners to experiential and engaged learning opportunities which are invaluable for taking learning beyond the classroom and into the community.
 - The Hebrew Café and Israeli folk dancing offer outstanding value-added extracurricular components to the Hebrew classes.
 - Initiative that brings Jewish films and film makers to campus for students to view and discuss in coordination with the London Jewish community.
- Curriculum addresses critical issues, for instance the course on antisemitism, complemented by small classes and guidance from seasoned instructors, create an atmosphere that fosters the exchange of ideas, including divergent and contentious ones.
- Recent speaker series that included talks on Haudenosaunee and Indigenous subjects as well as courses focusing specifically on the Bible and decolonization.
- The Program Coordinator’s significant contributions to the enhancement of the program’s structure, content and overall management has led to a high degree of

student satisfaction, overall quality of syllabi, stability and increased interest in the program.

Prospective Improvements for the Program to Consider

- Continued efforts should be made to draw Western faculty teaching Jewish Studies classes into more active participation in the program. (*Embedded in Recommendation 1*)
- Given the diverse nature of the program: 1) students in the major and minor need to have a clear sense of the progression of Jewish history and thinking from antiquity to the present and background knowledge of the program; 2) students may need greater background knowledge; 3) structural barriers and feelings of dissatisfaction hinder faculty members from working more effectively as a team. (*Partially Embedded in Recommendations 1 & 3*)
- Expand course offerings to include areas of contemporary interest such as gender, ecology and sustainability, racial and sexual diversity, a full year of Jewish History which could encompass Jewish Culture, and an introductory Hebrew class for students with no prior background to boost enrollment. (*Embedded in Recommendations 2 & 4*)
- The program is currently missing a logic and rationale for the overall structure of the curriculum and the program. (*Embedded in Recommendation in 3*)
- Clarify program learning outcomes especially for Literacies and Interdisciplinarity, Communication, Resilience and Global and Community Engagement, Critical Thinking and Creative Thinking, Professionalism and Ethical Conduct. (*Embedded in Recommendation in 3*)
- Strengthen relationships with alumni across Canada to assist in recruiting students, especially module-takers. (*Embedded in Recommendations 4, 5 & 6*)
- Excellent attributes of the program seem not to be sufficiently advertised. There is therefore potential for increasing enrollments in the program through better advertising of its strengths. (*Partially Embedded in Recommendation in 6*)
- Members of the London Jewish community typically feel little invested in the program given changes over the past decade and that Jewish students are not likely to settle in London after graduation. (*Embedded in Recommendation in 7*)
- Link King's Jewish Studies website to Huron's website which is more easily navigated; one clear program website is likely to improve enrollment.
 - It would be beneficial to include on the website a schema or brief description of the scaffolding of the program to make clear how courses build upon one another and reflect different eras or themes in the Jewish experience.

Summary of the Reviewers’ Recommendations and Program/Faculty Responses

The following are the reviewers’ recommendations in the order listed by the external reviewers.

Reviewers’ Recommendation	Program/Faculty Response
<p>Recommendation #1 Building Community Undertake steps to “bring in” and more fully engage faculty across the three relevant institutions.</p>	<p>Program (Huron): The program director has struggled to implement community building initiatives due to the decentralized structure of the program. A concerted effort towards community building will be undertaken by both faculty and students. Beginning in Fall 2024, the program will address this shortcoming by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. supporting a student-led Jewish Studies club, which will host a pub or trivia night for students and faculty; B. convening faculty meetings at least 1x/term to discuss emerging and ongoing opportunities, issues, and concerns; C. hosting extracurricular social events (with faculty and students) at the beginning and end of each school year; D. inaugurating an annual Jewish Studies lecture; E. inviting faculty to participate in the suite of Jewish Studies extracurricular activities. <p>Faculty (Huron): The Dean’s Office is enthusiastic and supportive of the program’s plans to build and bolster community.</p> <p>Faculty (King’s): While recognizing that the programmatic and enrolment centre of gravity for Jewish Studies is at Huron, King’s welcomes 1) continued cooperation, particularly via King’s faculty teaching in Jewish Studies; and 2) opportunities to collaborate and co-sponsor events such as an annual Jewish Studies lecture, involving the Department of Religious Studies and/or one of our research centres as appropriate (for instance, the Centre for Philosophy and Culture, Centre for Interreligious Learning and Dialogue).</p>
<p>Recommendation #2 Offering more Diverse Courses Broaden course offering by exploring the possibility of including existing courses and establishing a criterion for inclusion.</p>	<p>Program (Huron): The program plans to introduce more interesting courses for students. In the first two years of his appointment, the program director has created a new course (JS Jewish Studies 2145 JEWISH HUMOR: FROM BIBLE TO BORAT) and intends to develop further courses focusing on the modern and contemporary period (e.g., Jewish movies, Jewish books, Yiddish art and culture, Zionism) as well as develop course “suites” focusing on select areas (e.g., the Holocaust, Gender, Nature and Animals, Sephardic Jewry).</p> <p>Faculty (Huron): Dean’s Office is happy to support the program in its efforts.</p> <p>Faculty (King’s): King’s supports a review of current course offerings connected with Jewish Studies and looks forward to conversations about course diversification.</p>

<p>Recommendation #3 Enhancing the ways in which the program structure and curriculum are described Clarify the program’s learning objectives and curricular logic to convey a more thorough understanding of the skills it imparts to students.</p>	<p>Program (Huron): Indeed, the program should be rendered more clearly and its course offerings easier to find for students. As such the program will review which program offerings can be removed to render its structure, pedagogical and curricular aims more comprehensible and logical. Ongoing program rationalization will enable students to track their progression and development from first to fourth year.</p> <p>Recent revisions of the program structure resulted in three courses at King’s (JS2345, JS2346, JS2347) that are required for the Major and Minor, but irregularly offered, to be moved to the pick lists of optional courses. In their place, Religious Studies 2286 has been added to the suite of required courses.</p> <p>In 2025-2026 it is envisioned that JS1250 will be moved to the second- or third-year level to allow for a more sophisticated treatment of the subject. The first year slot thereby opened up may be granted to a new introductory course that will help introduce Jewish Studies to potential students (projected title: The Jewish Experience).</p> <p>Faculty (Huron): This is an excellent recommendation and the program has an equally strong plan to address it, which is endorsed by the Dean’s Office.</p> <p>Faculty (King’s): King’s supports clarification of program structure. Revisions of modules involving King’s Religious Studies courses is currently under review at King’s, in the hope that modular revisions will be submitted jointly.</p>
<p>Recommendation #4 “Selling” the Program Explore ways of enhancing recruitment by promoting synergies with other programs to show the transferability of knowledge and critical skills to other areas of endeavor, including work and graduate studies.</p>	<p>Program (Huron): This recommendation is timely and helpful as the program considers ways to increase enrollment in courses and, in particular, in modules.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruitment initiatives include regular outreach to current Western students and at all Huron Open Houses. The program director will reach out to King’s to enhance faculty engagement in program advertising in 2024-2025. 2. Continue cultivating relationships with other departments at Huron University College; explore options of “packaging” Jewish Studies major or minor with other majors in ways that promote synergies that can be readily explained to students as useful for intellectual growth and employment. Numerous pathways will be explored, including pairing Jewish Studies with MOS and with Human Rights studies (King’s). <p>As a consequence, Jewish Studies will host a career guidance event, bringing professionals working in areas where a background in Jewish Studies has proven beneficial.</p> <p>Faculty (Huron): The Dean’s Office is supportive.</p> <p>Faculty (King’s): King’s supports these efforts to enhance the profile of the program. The Academic Dean’s Office supports King’s faculty engagement as appropriate.</p>

<p>Recommendation #5 Alumni Outreach Explore ways of creating closer ties with alumni, especially those in Toronto, with the aim of advertising the program more widely.</p>	<p>Program (Huron):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Huron’s advancement and recruitment teams continue to work towards establishing and strengthening connections to enhance program stability. In 2024, the London Jewish Community Foundation signed an agreement to support the program. The creation of an endowed Chair in Jewish Studies (funded at least in part by Huron) would signal to community and alumni that the program is internally supported and worthy of financial support. <p>Faculty (Huron): Contacting alumni is challenging for this program, as the majority of alumni are Western graduates. Western was until recently a partner in the program, now the program is housed exclusively at Huron and King’s. Like everything else about a program housed in three and then two institutions, producing an alumni list is more complicated than it would usually be. To address this problem, Huron will reach out to colleagues at Western and King’s to explore producing a consolidated list.</p> <p>Faculty (King’s): King’s will work with Huron on outreach to the alumni and the wider community.</p>
<p>Recommendation #6 Recruitment Consider sending a representative on a recruitment drive to select high schools in the GTA that have traditionally been feeder schools for Huron.</p>	<p>Program (Huron): Huron’s recruitment team and the Jewish Studies Program have been in regular discussions as to recruitment. In 2022-2023, the program director personally visited CHAT and as of spring 2024 plans to visit King David High School (Vancouver) to deliver a lecture and spread awareness of the program. Recruitment outreach to other high schools in major urban centers across Canada (Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal) is ongoing and should be strengthened and coordinated.</p> <p>Faculty (Huron): The Dean’s office echoes the Program’s comments.</p> <p>Faculty (King’s): This recommendation appears to be specific to Huron.</p>
<p>Recommendation #7 Community Relations Enhance the relationship with the London Jewish community by focusing the messaging around the notion that investing in the Jewish Studies program is an investment in Jewish life everywhere.</p>	<p>Program (Huron): Much work has recently been put in to bolstering the program as a provider of invaluable cultural opportunities for the London Jewish community. The Jewish Studies program intends to continue to co-host events and share projects with community. Students will be encouraged to fully participate in the Jewish London’s recently launched young leader’s program. The idea of an experiential course wherein students will work with Jewish London (e.g., to develop the London Yizkor Project) is also being considered.</p> <p>Faculty (Huron): The Dean’s Office applauds these efforts, which have truly been superlative and will continue to support work in this area.</p> <p>Faculty (King’s): King’s is grateful for the leadership of the Jewish Studies Program Director, and looks forward to further collaborative initiatives.</p>

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. In each case, the Program Coordinator, and the Deans of the associated Faculties are responsible for enacting and monitoring the actions noted in Implementation Plan.

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
<p>Recommendation #1 Building program community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and facilitate a student-led Jewish Studies club which will host a pub or trivia night for students and faculty. • Convene faculty (f/t and p/t) meetings at least 1x/term to discuss emerging and ongoing opportunities, issues, and concerns. • Host extracurricular social events (with faculty and students) at the beginning and end of each school year. • Initiate an annual Jewish Studies lecture. • Invite faculty to participate in the suite of Jewish Studies extracurricular activities (e.g., movie nights, Café Ivrit). 	<p>Program Coordinator</p>	<p>By April 2025</p>
<p>Recommendation #2 Offering more diverse courses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop additional courses on the modern and contemporary period (e.g., Jewish movies, Jewish books, Yiddish art and culture, Zionism). • Develop course “suites” focusing on select areas. (e.g., the Holocaust, Gender, Nature and Animals, Sephardic Jewry). 	<p>Program Coordinator</p>	<p>Courses to be phased by 2026-2027</p>
<p>Recommendation #3 Enhancing the ways in which the program structure and curriculum are described</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review program offerings to render program structure, pedagogical and curricular aims more comprehensible and logical. • Enable students to better understand and track their progression and development from first to fourth year. • Consider a focused web presence for the program where program structure can be outlined. 	<p>Program Coordinator</p>	<p>By Sept 2025</p>

<p>Recommendations #4, 5, 6 & 7 Enhancing recruitment and community relations</p>	<p>Recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage King’s faculty and leadership to collaborate on recruitment initiatives and program advertising. • Work with other departments within Huron and King’s to develop synergies that could result in including Jewish Studies major or minor with other majors, for instance, pairing Jewish Studies with Management and Organizational Studies (MOS) and with Human Rights studies (King’s). • Host a career guidance event, inviting professionals working in areas where a background in Jewish Studies has proven beneficial. • Huron will reach out this summer to colleagues at Western and King’s to explore producing a consolidated list of Jewish Studies alumni. • Strengthen and further coordinate ongoing recruitment outreach to high schools in major urban centers across Canada - Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal. <p>Community Relations Continue to co-host events and share projects with the London Jewish Community, for instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite the community to share in film screenings on campus. • Encourage students to participate in the young leaders’ program launched by Jewish London. • Explore developing an experiential course that will allow students to work with Jewish London. 	<p>Program Coordinator</p>	<p>By Sept 2025</p>
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