



English

**Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan**

<b>Faculty / Affiliated University College</b>	Brescia University College
<b>Degrees Offered</b>	B.A.
<b>Modules Reviewed</b>	Major: English Language and Literature Major: Creativity and Literature Honours Specialization: English Language and Literature Specialization: English Language and Literature
<b>External Consultants</b>	Dr. Deborah Bowen, Redeemer University College Dr. Sarah Powrie, St. Thomas More College, University of Saskatchewan
<b>Internal Reviewer</b>	Dr. Laura Melnyk Gribble, Associate Dean Academic & Research, King's University College
<b>Date of Site Visit</b>	November 17-18, 2020
<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Good Quality</b>
<b>Approval Dates</b>	SUPR-U: February 24, 2021 SCAPA: March 3, 2021 Senate (for information only): March 12, 2021
<b>Year of Next Review</b>	Year of next cyclical review – 2027-28

### **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 undergraduate modules delivered by the **English Department** in the **School of Humanities, Brescia University College**.

This report considers and reports on the following documents: the program’s self-study, the external consultants’ report, and the responses from the Department and the Associate Dean of Science.

This Final Assessment Report (FAR):

- i) provides an Executive Summary of the Review Process, including an overview of the Department as outlined in the Self-Study brief;
- ii) identifies the strengths of the program;
- iii) identifies opportunities for program enhancement and improvement; and,
- iv) prioritizes the recommendations of the external consultants in the Implementation Plan.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the Final Assessment Report that are required for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, outlines any action or follow-up that is required, and provides the timeline for completion.

The Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan is sent for approval through SUPR-U, SCAPA, Senate and the Ontario Universities’ Council on Quality Assurance and is made available on a publicly accessible location on Western’s IQAP website. The Final Assessment Report with the Implementation Plan is the only document resulting from the undergraduate cyclical review process that is made public; all other documents are confidential to the Program/School/Faculty and SUPR-U.

**Executive Summary** (as identified in the Self-Study Brief)

**Overview**

The study of English at Brescia was one of the founding disciplines when the institution was opened in 1919. The English Department aspires to fulfill the mission of Brescia which is *to create an actively engaged student experience, educating women to think critically and to participate actively in society*. In addition, through their teaching, the four full-time faculty *value effective, innovative approaches to education that encourage and support women’s learning and enable them to develop their voices, confidence, and leadership skills*.

The English Department in the School of Humanities offers five undergraduate modules leading toward the Bachelor of Arts degree:

Major:	English Language and Literature
Major:	Creativity and Literature
Minor:	English Language and Literature Minor for Teachers
Honours Specialization:	English Language and Literature
Specialization:	English Language and Literature

The Learning Outcomes of the modules and courses are consistent with Brescia’s competencies that include: *Communication, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Inquiry & Analysis, Self-Awareness and Development, Social Awareness and Development, and Valuing*.

**Strengths/Innovations of the Program** (as identified in the Self-Study brief)

- small class sizes
- graduates who are women leaders who contribute actively and positively to society
- development of a unique major in Creativity and Literature with diverse assignments in which students combine traditional literary studies and those of a creative nature
- minor in English for prospective teachers
- excellent faculty teaching with most being named to the Dean’s Honour Roll
- library support at Brescia and on main campus
- onsite and online learning supports for students
- 1<sup>st</sup> year compulsory course for all students: *Brescia Bold: Living, Learning, Leading*, introducing the voices of women in leadership in the wider community, and skills in information technology.
- development of innovative courses such as
  - Reading Popular Culture
  - J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and friends
  - From *The Blazing World* to *The Hunger Games*: Girls, Women, Utopia, Dystopia
  - Philosophy and the Arts (cross-listed from Philosophy)
  - Monsters, Ghosts and Demons in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

- Nature and Culture in North American Literature (cross-listed from History)
- Biblical Women in Contemporary Art and Literature (cross-listed with Religious Studies)

**Challenges** (as identified in the Self-Study Brief)

- increasing enrolment in essay courses that students perceive to be more difficult than non-essay courses

**Changes under development in the Department:**

- Foundations in Western Literature to provide English students with background in classical and biblical literature.
- Experiential Learning Programs for the Humanities

**Self-Study Process**

The self-study of the department was a collective effort involving participation from the four members of the English Department. Faculty meetings were designated for the purposes of reviewing the undergraduate program and resulted in the mapping of the curriculum to the Learning Outcomes as described above.

To complete their self-study brief, the Chair sent out and collected data from 50 recent graduates, surveyed current students, reviewed data about the program from graduates through Alumni Affairs, and surveyed administratively. The four faculty members then collaboratively developed the self-study brief (Volume I).

**Review Process**

Because of the pandemic, an onsite review was not possible, and the external review occurred online through online (ZOOM) interviews over two days. During the external review, the review committee (comprised of the two external reviewers: *Dr. Deborah Bowen, Redeemer University College* and *Dr. Sarah Powrie, St. Thomas More College, University of Saskatchewan*; and one internal reviewer: *Dr. Laura Gribble, Associate Dean Academic & Research, King's University College*) were provided with Volumes I and II in advance of their visit and then met with the following over the course of the two days.

- Dr. Jeff Hutter, Acting Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, Western University
- Dr. Margaret McGlynn, Acting Vice-Provost, Academic Planning Policy and Faculty, Western University
- Dr. Laretta Frederking, Vice-Principal and Academic Dean
- Dr. Dominick Grace, Chair and Professor of English, School of Humanities
- Dr. Cheryl Jensen, Interim Principal
- Dr. Jen Pecoskie, Research Officer
- Dr. Maggie Kubow, Writing Coordinator
- Caroline Whippey, Director of Library Services
- Dr. Melanie Molnar, Associate Registrar, Student Success
- Dr. John Mitchell, Director, Advanced Learning and Teaching (ALT) Centre
- Faculty, Department of English
- Undergraduate students, Department of English

Following the review, the external reviewers submitted a comprehensive report of their findings which was sent to the Chair and the Dean for review and response. These formative documents, including Volumes I and II of the Self-Study, the External Report, and the Faculty response, have formed the basis of this summative assessment report of Brescia's English undergraduate programs.

#### **Summative Assessment – External Reviewers' Report**

The external reviewers wrote:

*This is a strong and committed department which is blessed with a group of enthusiastic and like-minded faculty. Student appreciation for both the faculty's teaching and their informal help is widespread. The students' experience is clearly excellent, to the extent that many alumnae speak about relationships with both peers and professors continuing for years after graduation. The skills and materials taught... prepare graduates well for their future careers.*

#### **Strengths of the Program**

- Small class sizes
- Positive feedback from alumnae
- Diverse course offerings
- Consistency of Learning Outcomes with Brescia's mission
- Strength of faculty – versatile and creative
- Rich learning environment

#### **Challenges for the Program**

- Inclusion of diverse and non-Western authors across the curriculum

**Reviewers’ Recommendations and Department/Faculty Responses**

<b>REVIEWERS’ RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>DECANAL/DEPARTMENT RESPONSE</b>
<p>1. <i>In first-year courses, consistently include at least one Indigenous, Transnational, or non-Western author. Seek to include literary texts that would reflect the experiences of minority communities represented at Brescia, for instance students from Islamic communities.</i></p>	<p><u>Dean:</u> A welcome recommendation. At Brescia, we are at the early stages of a campus-wide audit of our curriculum in terms of racially diverse content within courses and uniquely offered courses.</p> <p><u>Department:</u> In progress.</p>
<p>2. <i>Contact the Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogy Advisor at the UWO’s Office of Indigenous Initiatives to set up a workshop for members of the Department.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u> Under advisement.</p>
<p>3. <i>Make Canadian literature a requirement, rather than an option, within the Honours Specialization and the Specialization in English.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u> To achieve equal expertise or even competence in all areas and aspects of English literature in an undergraduate degree, even in an Honours Specialization module, is impossible. Consequently, modules in English such as those at Brescia, Western, and at many other universities combine a set of specific requirements with a set of categories in which students have some flexibility about focus, depending on their individual interests. Brescia in fact requires more from its Honours Specialization students than does Western in breadth coverage. At Western, Honours Specialization students must take 1.0 credits from ENGL 2301E, 2401E, 2501E, or 2601E (British, American, Canadian, and Global literatures, respectively). At Brescia, Honours Specialization students must take 2301E, plus 1.0 credits from among the other three broad survey courses. Neither Brescia nor Western require students to take Canadian literature, for a Specialization or a Major, but both programs give those who wish to pursue Canadian literature the option to do so. While we agree that Canadian literature is important and that students should be exposed to it (and aspects of Canadian literature are important teaching and/or research interests for</p>

	<p>Drs. Grace and Lee, who often incorporate Canadian materials into courses where appropriate and have taught Canadian-focused courses), modifying the modules to require students to take Canadian literature would limit the flexibility that is a hallmark generally of English programming at the university level.</p>
<p>4. <i>Develop the capacity to teach Global Literatures (Eng 2601) at Brescia on a regular basis, so that this course is accessible to every Brescia English student during her program. We recommend that this course is, at the very least, strongly encouraged for students in Honours Specialization and the Specialization in English.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u> Global literature <i>is</i> accessible to every Brescia student via Western... [O]ne of the advantages of the affiliate model is that students can access courses not offered at their home campus in order to fulfill their areas of interest.</p>
<p>5. <i>Turn the Medieval Literature course into one of several “early offering” courses, rather than a required course for both Honours and Specialization degrees.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u> Brescia’s English Department recognizes that some of the other English programs at the Western affiliates have eliminated a pre-Early Modern requirement from their modules. We note, however, that Western continues to require a Medieval course for the Honours Specialization and Specialization modules, and, as noted above, Brescia’s English modules are closely modeled on Western’s. Since students pursuing the Honours Specialization modules are often considering advanced studies in English after completing their undergraduate degree, and since graduate programs in English still tend to expect students to have some familiarity with literature from before the Early Modern period, it is the belief of Brescia’s English Department that continuing to require students to complete 1.0 credit in literature from before the Early Modern period is important to their development of full competence in English studies. Furthermore, Medieval literature is the specialization area of one of the four full-time faculty members (Dr. Grace). The Department could consider such a change for the Specialization module but is reluctant to do so for the Honours Specialization.</p>

<p>6. <i>Offer more courses in the summer session, possibly with the help of strategically qualified sessional instructors, in order to provide wider coverage particularly of contemporary materials.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u> Under consideration</p>
<p>7. <i>The Department should develop an online tutorial to teach students research skills specific to literary studies.</i></p>	<p><u>Dean:</u> This is a great idea and in line with the ways we are looking at more where online workshops and parts of programs should continue in the post-COVID world.  <u>Department:</u> Agreed.</p>
<p>8. <i>Make greater strategic use of adjunct faculty for specialized courses, to assist with curricular development and with meeting the recommendations and suggestions outlined in this report.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u> The Department is open to making greater use of adjunct or contract faculty, recognizing that budgetary considerations beyond its control are a factor in any such development.</p>
<p>9. <i>Incorporate HUMANITIES 3001A/B, Experiential Learning for the Humanities into the Honours and Specialization programs in English.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u> While the School of Humanities will be encouraging all Humanities students to take this course, requiring it as part of a specifically English Module would necessitate the removal of an English requirement or elective. We are reluctant to do so.</p>
<p>10. <i>“Literature and Creativity” students be encouraged to take an Independent Study course which involves a mentorship component with a writer or editor in the wider London community.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u> Agreed. Further consultation with Brescia’s Learning and Development Specialist, Experiential Education, about the practicalities of mentorships within the wider London community is in order.</p>
<p>11. <i>Standardize the formatting of faculty CVs</i></p>	<p><u>Dean:</u> Agreed.  <u>Department:</u> Agreed.</p>
<p>12. <i>Charge the Brescia Alumnae Office with keeping careful records of graduates.</i></p>	<p><u>Dean:</u> In progress.  <u>Department:</u> Agreed.</p>

**Other Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement**

In their report, the external reviewers provided three additional suggestions meant to be helpful to the Department for consideration.

<b>REVIEWERS' SUGGESTIONS</b> <b>That the Department</b>	<b>DEPARTMENT RESPONSE</b>
1. <i>Develop its capacity to teach a course in the History of the English Language, charting its growth into the geographically diverse "Englishes" of today.</i>	<u>Department:</u> The Department will explore the viability of developing and offering such a course.
2. <i>Identify Brescia courses that address Indigenous or Postcolonial perspectives and that inform the study of literary cultures and consider incorporating these existing courses within sets of program requirements.</i>	<u>Department:</u> The Academic Dean is currently collecting this type of information about diversity content across all Brescia programming.
3. <i>Develop a course in Catholic literary studies, particularly in the rich area of the 20<sup>th</sup> century novel.</i>	<u>Department:</u> Requires both a faculty member with academic expertise and an audit to gauge student interest.

**Implementation Plan**

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. The Department Chair/Director, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty/Affiliated University College Principal will be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan. The details of progress made will be presented in the Deans’ Annual Report and filed in the Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic).

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Proposed Action and Follow-up</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
1. Inclusion of at least one Indigenous, Transnational, or non-Western author in first-year courses.	Department should revise the first-year English curriculum to include at least one Indigenous, Transnational, or non-Western author.	Department of English	implement in Fall 2021
2. Develop an online tutorial to teach students research skills specific to literary studies.	Create and maintain digital research skills tutorials for English students.	Department of English	for Fall 2021
3. Encourage “Literature and Creativity” students to take an Independent Study course which involves a mentorship component with a writer or editor in the wider London community.	Consultation with Brescia’s Learning and Development Specialist, Experiential Education.	Department of English	for Fall 2022