



## Proposed Major in Japanese Studies Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan

<b>Faculty / Affiliated University College</b>	Huron University College
<b>Degrees Offered</b>	BA
<b>Modules Reviewed</b>	Major in Japanese Studies
<b>External Consultants</b>	Ikuko Komuro-Lee, Associate Professor, Department of East Asian Studies, University of Toronto  Yasuyo Tomita, Assistant Professor, Department of East Asian Studies, University of Toronto
<b>Internal Reviewer</b>	Karen Danylchuk, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Programs, Faculty of Health Sciences
<b>Date of Site Visit</b>	April 9, 2019
<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Approved to Commence</b>
<b>Approval Dates</b>	SUPR-U: June 10, 2019 SCAPA: September 11, 2019 Senate:
<b>Year of Next Review</b>	2026-27

### Executive Summary

The Japanese program, Department of French and Asian Studies, at Huron University is a unique program within the Western University system, whereby minors (but no major) in Japanese and Japan Studies are offered at Huron University, and first and second-year courses in Japanese are taught at the Constituent University through the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures. Western does not (and cannot as per the affiliation agreement) offer programs in Japanese. Due to the small class size at Huron, rigorous language training is offered, along with study abroad, internships, and research-based learning. The proposed Japanese major module is a natural extension of the existing module at Huron, offering more choices of elective and senior research courses in both the Japanese language and culture. At the present time, students who wish to major in Japanese must major in East Asia Studies, yet anecdotal evidence from the last cyclical review suggests that there are more students in the East Asia major who would rather major in Japanese than those who would like to study the whole of East Asia.

The review of the proposed new program, “Major in Japanese Studies”, occurred on April 9, 2019 and consisted of a series of meetings with the Vice-President, Academic, and Dean of Huron University; the President of Huron University; Program Assistant of French and Asian Studies (FASS), Huron University, along with the Coordinator of Teaching and Research; Huron University Director of Library and Learning Services, as well as a member of Research and Instructional Services; the Vice-Provost of Academic Programs, along with the Vice-Provost of Academic Planning, Policy, and Faculty; the Japanese teaching faculty; and a number of current students in the Japanese Minor Program.

The external consultants reported that they “reached a satisfying conclusion that the proposed major program meets all required criteria from Western’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process document.” They noted that the proposed program appears to be consistent with the mission and strategic plans of both Western University and Huron University; the program’s requirements and learning outcomes are appropriate in relation to the Western Degree Outcomes; and the degree nomenclature is appropriate. As noted by the President of Huron University, central to the academic mission of the Japanese Program are internationalization of Huron’s campus, exploration of a non-Western perspective, and enhancement of the liberal arts. Through exchange programs and other collaborative programs, the Japanese program has the potential to advance partnerships with prestigious international universities. Further, given East Asia Studies attract a plurality of female students, the introduction of a Japanese Major should help Huron address its gender imbalance (with more male than female students).

The reviewers suggested that it is rational to offer a Japanese Major due to societal demand, as well as the consistently high enrolment in the current Japanese language courses, and the fact that the proposed program is an extension of the current minor program that has demonstrated a healthy growth in recent years. They attribute the uniqueness of the program in Canada to its comprehensiveness and focus on language and research on Japanese language and culture, which ultimately prepare students to achieve a high proficiency in Japanese communication.

The consultants provided several constructive suggestions and recommendations, the majority of which were considerations for the future. Their most consistent recommendation was that more course content in both language and culture-based courses, including assignments and essays, should be required in Japanese. The majority of the reviewers’ suggestions and recommendations were supported by the Coordinator of Japanese Studies, albeit for the future. As noted by the Coordinator, the external consultants provide “valuable comments and recommendations that will help us improve the proposed major program in future.” They have the resources to implement these suggestions at the appropriate times, but believe that the first few years should be directed towards monitoring and analyzing student feedback and adjusting the original plan in order to best address the students’ wants and needs.

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

The following program strengths are identified in both the program proposal and the External Consultants’ Report:

- The uniqueness of the program given there are not many institutions that offer a comprehensive Japanese program in Ontario or Canada - there are many that offer language courses, but these are embedded within East Asia Studies programs
- Strong student demand as evidenced by healthy enrollment numbers in current Japanese courses (i.e., more than 280 students including intersession and summer courses) and the foundational courses becoming full early in the registration period

- Sufficient number of faculty members (i.e., two tenure-track and two full-time sessional) who are experienced language instructors with excellent skills to teach multi-level Japanese courses
- Quality experiential learning opportunities, including community-based language learning, internships in Japan, and exchange programs at universities in Japan
- Adequate physical (e.g., classroom, library) and financial resources
- Strong librarian support to assist in course design and student interaction

### Summary of the Reviewers' Key Recommendations and Department/Faculty Responses

1. The primary concern of the external reviewers was that more of the coursework, in particular, the essays in the senior courses in Japanese literature and culture, should be completed in Japanese. Further, they recommended that, in content-based language learning courses, more content should be taught in Japanese. This would provide the students with more confidence in using the language, and also more uniqueness to the program. Although the Department agrees with the consultants on the importance of developing research and writing skills in Japanese and English, it believes that offering the option to conduct research and write essays in Japanese is a more sensible approach. This option is consistent with other Western language departments, such as the Department of French, that allows the students majoring in French linguistics to write their graduate thesis in either French or English. The Department is willing to adopt the external reviewers' suggestion in the future, if it is deemed appropriate.
2. Similar to the first recommendation was that culture-related courses should offer more breadth of topic and that they should be offered in both English and Japanese. The Department has recently doubled its culture-related course offerings, taught in English, and will explore in the near future ways to further enhance these course offerings.
3. The reviewers recommended that the linguistic courses become mandatory in the future to provide the students with a deeper understanding of the Japanese language and to make the program more unique. The Department plans to make the newly DAP-approved *Introduction to Japanese Linguistics* mandatory in the future. Before making it a required course, however, the Department would like to consider student feedback and assess its effectiveness in relation to the overall goal of the program.
4. The reviewers recommended that instructors regularly rotate (e.g., every three years) their assigned courses in order to allow all instructors to understand and teach all language courses offered in the program. This rotation would not only support the faculty members' professional development, but minimize pedagogical challenges during faculty member leaves and sabbaticals. The Department agrees with the philosophical and pedagogical rationale, and will implement this practice in the near future provided there are no issues related to overload teaching, timetabling, etc.
5. The reviewers recommended more active collaboration with library resources for students' research and course design. The Department noted that this recommendation is in line with its future plan, in particular, with the research-based (essay) courses.
6. The reviewers noted the benefit of involving part-time instructors with specialized foci, such as visiting scholars from Japan. The Department is currently investigating options

in this regard, namely, involving part-time visiting instructors from its exchange partner institutions in Japan, and also from within Canada, both in and out of province.

7. The external reviewers suggested that a certain number of guaranteed spots should be reserved for students in the major to study in Japan on exchange. The Department noted that every module student who desires to go on exchange (with the exception of those who fail to qualify due to poor academic performance) can and has been accommodated. Although the situation may change with the increased number of students, priority will be given to the students in the major program.

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

No additional opportunities outside of those cited above were suggested.

## Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. The Department Chair, in consultation with the Affiliated University College Principal will be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan.

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
1. Add more breadth of topic in culture-related courses and offer a variety of culture-related courses in both English and Japanese	Department to explore ways to further enhance these course offerings		
2. Make the linguistic courses mandatory	Department to consider student feedback and assess effectiveness of new linguistics course (in relation to the overall goal of the program) before making the new course, or other linguistic courses, mandatory		
3. Rotate courses amongst instructors	Department to consider workload and timetabling		
4. Increase active collaboration with Huron Library	Librarians to become more involved in course design and assistance in research-based courses		
5. Involve more part-time visiting scholars in course delivery	Department to investigate exchange-partner universities in Japan, as well as regional visiting scholars		