

UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR
UNIVERSITY PROGRAM REVIEW (UPR)
FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: Liberal Arts and Professional Studies
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS
April 2024

Executive Summary of the Cyclical Program Review of the Liberal Arts and Professional Studies (LAPS) Programs

In accordance with the University's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external review and the internal responses of the Liberal Arts and Professional Studies undergraduate programs in the Department of Interdisciplinary and Critical Studies and the Office of the Dean.

In addition to identifying the strengths of the programs, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, the report prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation and sets out a plan (including the agent(s) responsible for addressing the recommendations and deadline dates) for follow-through. Timelines for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations are built into the process, with areas reporting mid-cycle on their progress to the Senate Program Development Committee, or earlier where there are significant concerns requiring urgent follow-up.

The Liberal Arts and Professional Studies 2021-2022 Self-Study (covering the preceding eight years), submitted to the Office of Quality Assurance on October 13, 2023, included: 1) a summary recommendations and actions from the last review; 2) descriptions and analyses of the programs, their learning outcomes, curriculum structure, and student experience; 3) information on enrolments as well as financial, physical, and human resources; and 4) the program data including the standard data package provided by the Office of Quality Assurance. Included in the appendices to the Self-Study were faculty member CVs, the Leddy Library report, worksheets, and aeronautic leadership videos.

The Liberal Arts and Professional Studies programs were reviewed by Maggie Quirt (Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, York University), Lori J. Brown (College of Aviation, Western Michigan University), and Randy Bowers (Faculty of Engineering, University of Windsor). In addition to assessing the Self-Study, the Review Team conducted a virtual two-day site visit on November 28-29, 2023 which included meeting with faculty and students, the Aeronautics Leadership Program Manager, the Head of the Department of Interdisciplinary and Critical Studies, the Associate Dean, Student Experience and Inter-Faculty Programs and the Associate Dean, Academic and Student Success of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, and the Associate Vice-President Academic.

In their report (January 9, 2024), the Review Team noted that the Liberal Arts and Professional Studies programs are consistent with the University of Windsor mission statement and its strategic plan. The reviewers confirmed that admissions requirements and the mode of delivery of the programs (consisting of a blend of in-person and online course options) are appropriate for a liberal arts and professional studies degree. While the reviewers commended the overall aim and direction of the Liberal Arts and Professional Studies programs, they noted that the absence of program objectives, well-defined program learning outcomes, structured curriculum mapping, and internal assessment framework impeded their ability to provide a full assessment of the appropriateness of program requirements and assessments methods. The Review Team underscored the need to establish these foundational pieces in order to re-envision the curriculum and offer less complex and more structured Liberal Arts and Professional Studies programs that recognize students' prior academic work, while maintaining breadth as the hallmark of the programs and graduating students who can synthesize research across disciplinary boundaries. While the programs provide for broad flexibility in course selection, there is a need for more equitable access to courses offered by other Departments. A Liberal Arts and Professional Studies-specific course focused on the theory and methodology of interdisciplinary scholarship also would provide more cohesiveness to the programs and help students better understand the value of breadth and interdisciplinarity.

Although the programs do not have dedicated faculty, given that the programs consist of courses from multiple Departments and disciplines, the Review Team noted the dedication, expertise, and accomplishments of the faculty members administering and providing student advising support for the programs. The move to disaggregate the programs, with the Honours and General degrees administered by the Department of Interdisciplinary and Cultural Studies and the Aeronautics Leadership option administered by the Office of the Dean, will further focus efforts on the student experience overall.

The Head of the Department of Interdisciplinary and Critical Studies and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences submitted their response to the External Reviewers' Report (February 4, 2024 and April 8, 2024, respectively), addressing the recommendations, identifying follow-up actions, and providing clarification or corrections, as appropriate. The Senate Program Development Committee (PDC) Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan (April 2024) considered all the above documentation. The Executive Summary and Implementation Plan, along with any response from the area on the final recommendations, were submitted to Senate in May 2024.

Final Recommendations and Implementation Plan (in priority order)

Final recommendations were arrived at by the Program Development Committee, following a review and assessment of the External Reviewers (ER) report, the response from the Department of Interdisciplinary and Cultural Studies, and the response from the Dean of the Faculty.

Recommendation 1a: As the Department completes curricular and program updates to the General and Honours LAPS programs, that it develop 3-4 high-level program objectives that convey the goals of the programs, along with an appropriate assessment plan to evaluate these objectives on a regular basis. [ER Recommendation 1]

Agents: AAU Head, AAU Council

Completion by: Spring 2026

Recommendation 1b: With regard to the LAPS Aeronautics Leadership program, that the Dean's Office review the program with a view to renaming and rebranding the program to better suit the needs of Aeronautics students. [ER Recommendation 1]

Agents: Dean of the Faculty

Completion by: Spring 2026

Recommendation 2: That the Department develop distinct program-level and course learning outcomes, accompanied by curriculum mapping and an appropriate assessment plan to evaluate these outcomes on a regular basis, for both the LAPS General and Honours degree options. [ER Recommendation 2]

Agents: AAU Head, AAU Council

Completion by: Spring 2026

Recommendation 3a: That the Department develop specializations in the General and Honours LAPS programs that recognize a student's prior experience in another program. [ER Recommendation 3]

Agents: AAU Head, AAU Council

Completion by: Spring 2026

Recommendation 3b: With regard to the LAPS Aeronautics Leadership program, that the Dean's Office develop a ground-based Aeronautics Management (non-flight option) for aeronautical students facing challenges in continuing the flight program. [ER Recommendation 3]

Agents: Dean of the Faculty

Completion by: Spring 2026

Recommendation 4a: As part of its curriculum review and renewal exercise, that the Department reduce the complexity of the LAPS degree structure overall to improve the student experience. [ER Recommendation 4]

Agents: AAU Head, AAU Council

Completion by: Spring 2026

Recommendation 4b: With regard to the LAPS Aeronautics Leadership program, that the Dean's Office address students' concerns within the Aeronautical Leadership program by replacing irrelevant courses with more pertinent ones, such as Aviation Safety, Safety Management Systems, Aviation Human Factors, Advanced Aerodynamics, Aviation on Law, Line Oriented Flight Training, Turbine Transition, Jet Orientation, and Advanced Aircraft Systems. [ER Recommendation 4]

Agents: Dean of the Faculty

Completion by: Spring 2026

Recommendation 5a: That the Department advocate for LAPS students' equitable and timely access to courses in other programs so that prerequisite and enrolment challenges are minimized. [ER Recommendation 5]

Agents: AAU Head, AAU Council

Completion by: Fall 2025

Recommendation 5b: With regard to the LAPS Aeronautics Leadership program, that the Dean's Office advocate for LAPS Aeronautics Leadership students' equitable and timely access to courses in other programs so that prerequisite and enrolment challenges are minimized. [ER Recommendation 5]

Agents: Dean of the Faculty

Completion by: Fall 2025

Recommendation 6: With regard to the LAPS Aeronautics Leadership program, that the Dean's Office 1) develop and assess aeronautical safety goals to ensure continuous improvement of the safety culture and program; and 2) enhance the aeronautical leadership program's safety measures by providing evidence of a well-documented safety risk management plan encompassing all pillars of safety management systems (SMS) and demonstrating ongoing safety promotion efforts. [ER Recommendation 6]

Agents: Dean of the Faculty

Completion by: Fall 2026

Recommendation 7: With regard to the LAPS Aeronautics Leadership program, that the Dean's Office explore membership in esteemed national and international aviation organizations like the University Aviation Association and Women in Aviation. [ER Recommendation 7]

Agents: Dean of the Faculty

Completion by: Fall 2025