



**FOR INFORMATION**

**PUBLIC**

**OPEN SESSION**

**TO:** Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

**SPONSOR:** Professor Nicholas Rule, Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

**CONTACT INFO:** (416) 978-3948, [vp.academicprograms@utoronto.ca](mailto:vp.academicprograms@utoronto.ca)

**PRESENTER:** See above.

**CONTACT INFO:**

**DATE:** May 6, 2025 for May 13, 2025

**AGENDA ITEM:** 18

**ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

Annual Report on the Reviews of Graduate Collaborative Specializations: 2024-25

**JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

“The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) [Terms of Reference](#) (Sections 3 and 4.9) states that “The Committee...has general responsibility...for monitoring, the quality of education and the research activities of the University. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Committee works to ensure the excellent quality of academic programs by...monitoring reviews of existing programs...The Committee receives annual reports or such more frequent regular reports as it may determine, on matters within its purview, including reports on the ...[r]eviews of academic units and programs.”

**GOVERNANCE PATH:**

1. **Committee of Academic Policy and Programs [For Information] (May 13, 2025)**

**PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

Governing Council approved the [Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units](#) in 2010. The *Policy* outlines University-wide principles for the approval of proposed new academic programs and review of existing programs and units. Its goal is to align the University’s quality assurance processes with the Province’s Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) through establishing the authority of the *University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process* (UTQAP).

The scope of the UTQAP includes collaborative specializations (see 6.2.2). In line with the [QAF](#) definition, the University understands a collaborative specialization to be “an intra-university graduate field of study that provides an additional multidisciplinary experience for students

enrolled in and completing the degree requirements of one of a number of approved masters and/or PhD programs. Students meet the admission requirements of and register in the participating (or ‘home’) program but complete, in addition to the degree requirements of that program, the additional requirements specified by the Collaborative Specialization. The degree conferred is that of the home program. The completion of the Collaborative Specialization is indicated by a transcript notation indicating the additional specialization.” The learning outcomes of a collaborative specialization are in addition to those supported by the home program.

In the fall of 2015 the [Guidelines](#) governing these offerings were revised, establishing the lead Dean of the collaborative specialization as the review Commissioning Officer; previously the Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies commissioned collaborative program reviews. Because of the unique nature of collaborative specializations, their review process focuses on the quality of the “additional multidisciplinary experience” that collaborative specializations provide, over and above the experience associated with the home program. Reviews emphasize elements that are critical to determining ongoing quality of collaborative specializations at the University of Toronto, including:

1. Clarity and appropriateness of requirements
2. Evidence of successful attainment of learning outcomes
3. Evidence of ongoing need and demand
4. Continuing support of participating programs and supporting units (e.g. renewal of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA))

The Annual Report on the Reviews of Graduate Collaborative Specializations was previously submitted to AP&P on May 8, 2024.

## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

Four external reviews of collaborative specializations commissioned by their lead Dean were conducted in 2024-25. These were the reviews of the Collaborative Specialization in Education, Francophonies and Diversity, led by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education; the Collaborative Specialization in Food Studies, led by University of Toronto Scarborough; the Collaborative Specialization in South Asian Studies, led by the Faculty of Arts & Science; the Collaborative Specialization in Women’s Health, led by the Dalla Lana School of Public Health. The submission to AP&P consists of a table containing a summary of the review outcomes.

All four reviews confirmed the appropriateness of the program requirements and the vitality of the collaborative specializations overall. The MOAs for the Collaborative Specialization in Education, Francophonies and Diversity; Collaborative Specialization in Food Studies; Collaborative Specialization in South Asian Studies were all recommended for renewal. The MOA for the Collaborative Specialization in Women’s Health is also recommended for renewal following improvements self-identified in the self-study.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no financial implications.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This item is for information.

**DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:**

- Annual Report on the Reviews of Graduate Collaborative Specializations: 2024-25

**University of Toronto**  
**Annual Report on Graduate Collaborative Specialization Reviews, Cycle 6, 2024-25**  
 Collaborative Specializations Reviews are Commissioned by the Dean of the Lead Faculty

**Collaborative Specialization (CS) Definition:** "an intra-university graduate field of study that provides an additional multidisciplinary experience for students enrolled in and completing the degree requirements of one of a number of approved masters and/or PhD programs. Students meet the admission requirements of and register in the participating (or 'home') program but complete, in addition to the degree requirements of that program, the additional requirements specified by the Collaborative Specialization. The degree conferred is that of the home program. The completion of the Collaborative Specialization is indicated by a transcript notation indicating the additional specialization." ([Quality Assurance Framework](#))

The learning outcomes of a collaborative specialization are in addition to those supported by the home program.

Collaborative Specialization & Lead Faculty	Participating Programs & Degrees	Appropriateness of Collaborative Specialization Requirements	Vitality of Collaborative Specialization	Other Strengths or Challenges Identified	Review Outcome
<p><b>Education, Francophonies and Diversity</b></p> <p><b>Lead Faculty:</b> Ontario Institute for Studies in Education</p> <p><b>Date of Summary Assessment Report:</b> March 28, 2025</p>	<p>Curriculum and Pedagogy – MA, PhD</p> <p>French Language and Literature – MA</p> <p>Language and Literacies Education – MA, MEd, PhD</p> <p>Social Justice Education – MA, MEd, EdD, PhD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Collaborative Specialization’s learning outcomes are designed to be complementary to those of the student’s home program, enriching their academic experience and exposing them to various intellectual traditions and methodologies</li> <li>All courses offered through the CS are carefully designed to ensure students achieve the established learning outcomes</li> <li>All students enrol in a common learning activity: CRE1001H <i>Education, francophonies et diversite</i>, providing a unifying academic experience</li> <li>Master’s level students complete an additional 1.0 FCEs in elective coursework in the area of the CS and attend at least three sessions in the CREFO Conference Series. If enrolled in an MA or MEd program with a thesis or MRP, students write their paper related to the focus of the CS and present it at the CREFO Conference Series</li> <li>Doctoral level students complete an additional 1.0 FCEs in elective coursework in the area of the CS, attend at least three sessions in the CREFO Conference Series, prepare a thesis related to the focus of the CS, present it at the CREFO Conference Series</li> <li>The current CS program requirements for both master’s and doctoral programs are appropriate and aligned with policy requirements and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent enrolment growth year over year, highlighting the ongoing need for the CS</li> <li>MA in French Language and Literature a recent addition to the CS (effective September 1, 2024); expecting enrolments in September 2025</li> <li>Retention rates have been remarkably strong, with most, if not all, students on track to successfully complete their studies within the expected timeframe</li> <li>Sustained engagement of participating programs and core faculty reflects their commitment to the CS objectives and its value to their respective disciplines</li> <li>No challenges identified related to the vitality of the CS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The supporting unit for the CS, Centre de recherches en éducation franco-ontarienne (CREFO, secures annual funding from the Government of Ontario to provide French postsecondary education that plays a vital role in ensuring the stability of the CS</li> <li>CREFO is a tight-knit community of faculty and staff, committed to supporting the CS. In September 2024, they launched a more comprehensive recruitment campaign to attract a broader pool of prospective students and raise awareness about the CS including increased outreach, participation in campus-wide events and recruitment fairs in Canada and internationally, and hosting information sessions to showcase the unique opportunities offered by the CS</li> <li>Faculty have expressed some concern related to diminishing faculty complement due to recent and upcoming retirements; need to ensure new hires reflect the evolving fields of Francophonies</li> <li>Additional concerns raised related to the visibility of the CS among students as according to the self-study, many students discover its existence late in their academic journey</li> <li>Overall, CS is seen as an enriching program that benefits from strong faculty engagement. Further efforts are needed to improve its visibility, institutional integration, and ensure long-term sustainability related to faculty resources.</li> <li>The CS Director and faculty could consider exploring possible growth of the CS by identifying additional</li> </ul>	<p>MOA is recommended for renewal.</p>

**University of Toronto**  
**Annual Report on Graduate Collaborative Specialization Reviews, Cycle 6, 2024-25**  
 Collaborative Specializations Reviews are Commissioned by the Dean of the Lead Faculty

Collaborative Specialization & Lead Faculty	Participating Programs & Degrees	Appropriateness of Collaborative Specialization Requirements	Vitality of Collaborative Specialization	Other Strengths or Challenges Identified	Review Outcome
		<p>guidelines for these types of offerings. All participating programs have confirmed their ability to accommodate the CS requirements</p>		<p>programs that could potentially join in order to enrich the academic offerings and create additional pathways for students to engage with CS topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students also suggested expanding or strengthening certain topics, such as financial literacy, decolonization, and linguisticism in the classroom, which could be accomplished within courses</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Food Studies</b></p> <p><b>Lead Faculty:</b> University of Toronto Scarborough</p> <p><b>Date of Summary Assessment Report:</b> April 28, 2025</p>	<p>Anthropology – MA, PhD            East Asian Studies – MA, PhD            Environmental Science – PhD            Geography – MA, MSc, PhD            History – MA, PhD            Information – MI            Medieval Studies – PhD            Museum Studies – MMSt            Nutritional Sciences – MSc, PhD            Public Health Sciences – PhD            Sociology – MA, PhD            Spanish – PhD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Collaborative Specialization’s requirements are appropriate for the tri-campus, multiple graduate department demand for a focused pedagogy in food studies and in alignment with policy requirements for these types of offerings</li> <li>• Flagship Culineria Research Kitchen holds regular experiential learning events and demonstrations</li> <li>• Course content is consistently updated to reflect the span of participating units from the social sciences, sciences, and humanities</li> <li>• All students participate in the common learning activity FST1000H <i>Comparative Research Methods in Food Studies</i>, as well as the <i>Culineria Seminar Series</i> (SRM3333H/SRD4444H) that includes talks by international scholars in food studies, industry and food security/ justice leaders. PhD students also take a second course, FST2000H <i>Food, Culture, and Society</i></li> <li>• Major research projects are also a significant factor in CS requirements to bridge food studies methodologies with students’ own program of study. Master’s students enrolled in a participating program with a thesis or MRP must complete their paper related to the focus of the CS. Doctoral level students must write their</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultations with students and alumni reveal positive satisfaction with the program, particularly the hands-on experience within the Culineria Research Kitchen</li> <li>• The program achieves its scholarly goals of teaching real world problems related to food, health, and economies</li> <li>• 32 students have enrolled in the CS since 2018: 11 who have completed, 14 in progress, 7 who did not complete. The summary assessment report notes that annual enrolments have slightly declined in the past few years. Challenges related to the reliance on home graduate units accepting students interested in the food studies field</li> <li>• Further development of undergraduate food studies programs, including a proposed joint major in food studies with Centennial College in the future may create a pipeline of highly competitive students entering from various disciplines with an eye on food studies</li> <li>• Additional recruitment potential through the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences following the administrative transfer of the undergraduate Minor in Food Studies July 1, 2024</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary assessment report identified some challenges among students fitting the requirements of the collaborative specialization into the elective space of their home degree program. This is particularly the case for course-based Master’s programs. Potential solutions include proactively helping Master’s students navigate their curriculums and assisting them with finding elective courses with Food Studies content</li> <li>• The tri-campus nature of the program makes scheduling a challenge across the three campuses. The Collaborative Specialization has identified potential strategies to improve this: holding many seminars at St. George, using hybrid strategies, creating unique and engaging in-person experiences at the Culineria Research Kitchen. There are also plans for a yearly symposium in the Culineria Research Kitchen, and to provide a small stipend for student research projects in the kitchen</li> <li>• To measure CS effectiveness, core faculty are aiming to articulate the learning outcomes more directly and transparently to students. Additional plans to schedule annual check-ins with each student to gauge their progress and satisfaction in the offering</li> </ul>	<p>MOA is recommended for renewal.</p>

**University of Toronto**  
**Annual Report on Graduate Collaborative Specialization Reviews, Cycle 6, 2024-25**  
 Collaborative Specializations Reviews are Commissioned by the Dean of the Lead Faculty

Collaborative Specialization & Lead Faculty	Participating Programs & Degrees	Appropriateness of Collaborative Specialization Requirements	Vitality of Collaborative Specialization	Other Strengths or Challenges Identified	Review Outcome
		dissertation on a topic in food studies, approved by the specialization committee			
<b>South Asian Studies</b>  <b>Lead Faculty:</b> Faculty of Arts & Science  <b>Date of Summary Assessment Report:</b> April 1, 2025	Anthropology – MA, MSc, PhD Comparative Literature – MA, PhD Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies – MA, PhD East Asian Studies – MA, PhD English – MA, PhD Geography – MA, PhD History – MA, PhD Music – MA, PhD Political Science – PhD Religion – MA, PhD Social Justice Education – MA, MEd, EdD, PhD Women and Gender Studies – MA, PhD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Collaborative Specialization in South Asian Studies introduces students to major theoretical contributions in the study of South Asia from a wide array of disciplines to provide an effective forum for an interdisciplinary and critical study of South Asia</li> <li>• Students achieve CS learning outcomes via the common, required half course, SAS2004H <i>Issues in South Asian Studies</i>. Students also participate in the related lecture and seminar series where PhD students must present their findings to the community</li> <li>• CS requirements are appropriate and effective. Participating units with Master’s programs that are course-based meet the 30% requirement through completion of SAS2004H and an additional course as approved by the Director</li> <li>• The summary assessment report commends the flexible design of the CS’ requirements that enables a broad range of students to be able to complete the CS in a timely fashion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The summary assessment report notes that the CS is “thriving”. Internal seminars and events offer a vibrant intellectual ecosystem. Growing collaborations with other units such as the Centre for Critical South Asian Humanities at UTM, the new Chair in Tamil Studies (UTSC) are contributing positively to the health of the CS</li> <li>• Between 2016/17 - 2019/20, the number of MA students enrolled in the CS averaged 8 and the number of PhD students averaged 32. More recently (2020/21-2023/24), these averages have been 8 and 37, respectively</li> <li>• It is recommended that data on time-to completion as well as initial labour market outcomes for students enrolled in the program be monitored and tracked, to both demonstrate and help ensure that the SAS CS continues to positively impact student success</li> <li>• Engagement with units no longer actively engaged with the CS to determine whether they should be retained as participating units or not, which is already underway, is commendable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation with CS constituents has surfaced the following suggestions for future directions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increasing diaspora-related programming in response to greater student interest;</li> <li>○ Increasing student participation;</li> <li>○ Clarifying program requirements with an eye to ensuring flexibility</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The self-study details future plans that will further strengthen the program, such as adding student-focused lectures from visiting speakers, designated communal space for students, and a proposed minor modification to the program to clarify workshop requirements for graduate students</li> <li>• An ongoing challenge is the restrictive criteria of some student awards, which has meant that some have not been awarded. The Dean’s Office will connect SAS CS leadership with Advancement to review the terms of these awards</li> </ul>	MOA is recommended for renewal.
<b>Women’s Health</b>  <b>Lead Faculty:</b> Dalla Lana School of Public Health	Anthropology – MA, MSc, PhD Dentistry – MSc, PhD English – MA, PhD Health Policy, Management and Evaluation – MSc, PhD Immunology – MSc, PhD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The specialization requirements for the Collaborative Specialization in Women’s Health (CSWH) are well-aligned with the program’s learning outcomes</li> <li>• Core course CHL5109H <i>Gender and Health</i> as well as the Student Research Seminar Series provide a solid foundation in interdisciplinary approaches to women’s health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CS demonstrates strong academic vitality, evidenced by increasing student enrollment and engagement from diverse disciplines</li> <li>• CS addresses a critical need for interdisciplinary training in women’s health, with consistent demand from students and active participation from faculty across 16 units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CSWH boasts several strengths, including a robust mentorship program, interdisciplinary learning opportunities, and strong ties with researchers and practitioners at the University and affiliated hospitals</li> <li>• The program’s commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion is evident in its curriculum and faculty composition</li> </ul>	Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is recommended for renewal following self-identified improvements in the Collaborative

**University of Toronto**  
**Annual Report on Graduate Collaborative Specialization Reviews, Cycle 6, 2024-25**  
 Collaborative Specializations Reviews are Commissioned by the Dean of the Lead Faculty

<b>Collaborative Specialization &amp; Lead Faculty</b>	<b>Participating Programs &amp; Degrees</b>	<b>Appropriateness of Collaborative Specialization Requirements</b>	<b>Vitality of Collaborative Specialization</b>	<b>Other Strengths or Challenges Identified</b>	<b>Review Outcome</b>
<b>Date of Summary Assessment Report:</b> April 3, 2025	Kinesiology – MSc, PhD Medical Science – MSc, PhD Nursing Science – MN, PhD Nutritional Sciences – MSc, PhD Occupational Therapy – MscOT Pharmacology – MSc, PhD Psychology – MA, PhD Public Health Sciences – MPH, PhD Rehabilitation Science – MSc, PhD Religion – MA, PhD Social Work – MSW, PhD Women and Gender Studies – MA, PhD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doctoral students benefit from additional requirements, such as completing a dissertation on a topic relevant to women’s health, presenting their research and engaging with a mentor from a different discipline, further supporting their interdisciplinary training</li> <li>• Feedback from students and faculty indicates that these requirements effectively enhance critical thinking, interdisciplinary collaboration, and comprehensive understanding of women's health issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The specialization has successfully integrated experts in reproductive health, intersectionality, and Indigenous women's health, enriching the curriculum and research opportunities</li> <li>• Challenges include maintaining engagement from units with lower enrollment and ensuring sustainable funding. Plans to address these challenges involve targeted outreach, enhancing promotional efforts, and securing additional financial support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges include the need for increased involvement from some units and improving alumni engagement post-graduation</li> <li>• Future plans include expanding the annual Information Session, conducting an environmental scan to identify potential new mentors, and building a comprehensive alumni network to maintain connections and support ongoing engagement</li> </ul>	Specialization’s self-study