

FOR INFORMATION

PUBLIC

OPEN SESSION

TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

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PRESENTER: See above
CONTACT INFO:

DATE: May 5, 2026 for May 12, 2026

AGENDA ITEM: 9

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Annual Report on the Reviews of Graduate Collaborative Specializations: 2025-26

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 12, 2026)**

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 13, 2025.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Seven external reviews of collaborative specializations, commissioned by their lead Dean, are being submitted to AP&P for information. These were the reviews of the Collaborative Specialization in Development Policy and Power led by the University of Toronto Scarborough; the Collaborative Specialization in Developmental Biology led by the Temerty Faculty of Medicine; the Collaborative Specialization in Diaspora & Transnational Studies, the Collaborative Specialization in Genome Biology & Bioinformatics, the Collaborative Specialization in Jewish Studies, and the Collaborative Specialization in Women & Gender Studies led by the Faculty of Arts & Science; and the Collaborative Specialization in Engineering Education led by the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering. The submission to AP&P consists of a table containing a summary of the review outcomes.

All seven reviews confirmed the appropriateness of the program requirements and the vitality of the collaborative specializations overall. The MOAs for the Collaborative Specialization in Development Policy and Power, the Collaborative Specialization in Developmental Biology, the Collaborative Specialization in Diaspora & Transnational Studies, the Collaborative Specialization in Engineering Education, the Collaborative Specialization in Genome Biology &

Bioinformatics, the Collaborative Specialization in Jewish Studies, and the Collaborative Specialization in Women & Gender Studies were all recommended for renewal.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for information.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

Annual Report on the Reviews of Graduate Collaborative Specializations: 2025-26

University of Toronto
Annual Report on Graduate Collaborative Specialization Reviews, Cycle 5, 2025-26
 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>Development Policy and Power</p> <p>Lead Faculty: University of Toronto Scarborough</p> <p>Date of Summary Assessment Report: April 13, 2026</p>	<p>Anthropology (MA, MSc); Environmental Science (MEnvSc); Geography (MA); Political Science (MA); Public Health Sciences (MPH) (<i>Field: Social and Behavioural Health Sciences</i>); Social Justice Education (MA, MEd); Sociology (MA); Women and Gender Studies (MA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirements are well aligned with intended learning outcomes and appropriate across participating degree programs Students engage in IDS1000H and the DPP seminar series, supporting interdisciplinary learning, critical engagement, and research skill development Strong academic performance and high completion rates indicate students are achieving intended outcomes and the curricular structure is functioning as designed Participating programs can integrate requirements without extending time to degree Coursework-only programs meet the 30% UTQAP requirement; research paper-based programs incorporate requirements within degree expectations Some professional programs require more deliberate advising, but structures remain compliant and manageable Overall, requirements are coherent, achievable, and appropriately integrated across participating units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicators of vitality are broadly positive, with steady enrolment over multiple years and representation across most participating programs Reflects sustained interest in the specialization's interdisciplinary focus Faculty involvement is consistently strong, including shared delivery of core course, guest lectures, and seminars Student feedback underscores intellectual value and distinctiveness of the program experience Suggests the specialization continues to meet a meaningful academic and professional need Enrolment fluctuations correlate with administrative transitions; participation from some programs has been more variable year to year but does not diminish overall vitality Highlights importance of stable administrative processes, clear advising pathways, and consistent cross-unit communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear intellectual identity: offers a critically grounded, interdisciplinary approach to development policy not available elsewhere at the university Students describe the program as a high value component; shared course and seminar structure supports scholarly exchange, academic coherence, and a robust educational environment Variability in advising clarity and cross-unit communication can lead to inconsistent advising and unpredictable experiences Proposed response to variability: standardized topic approval steps and structured progression reviews to create common checkpoints and shared expectations Absence of systematic tracking of student progression and supervisory alignment that the CS plans to address through structured progression reviews and standardized approval mechanisms to support more predictable oversight CS plans to solve variability in enrolment and uneven participation linked to administrative transitions and inconsistencies in communication/recruitment by improving documentation of administrative workflows, 	<p>MOA is recommended for renewal.</p>

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Collaborative Specialization & Lead Faculty	Participating Programs & Degrees	Appropriateness of Collaborative Specialization Requirements	Vitality of Collaborative Specialization	Other Strengths or Challenges Identified	Review Outcome
				strengthening annual planning, aligning outreach with recruitment cycles	
Developmental Biology Lead Faculty: Temerty Faculty of Medicine Date of Summary Assessment Report: April 6, 2026	Biochemistry (MSc, PhD); Biomedical Engineering (MAsc, PhD); Cell & Systems Biology (MSc, PhD); Immunology (MSc, PhD); Laboratory Medicine & Pathobiology (MSc, PhD); Medical Science (MSc, PhD); Molecular Genetics (MSc, PhD); Physiology (MSc, PhD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program requirements are clear and aligned with advanced training in developmental biology • Requirements are transparently communicated to students and participating departments and graduate units • Specialized coursework, seminar participation, and research activities thoughtfully complement home program requirements; adds value for students • No significant challenges related to CS program requirements were identified through consultation with faculty and trainees • Ongoing review of CS program requirements through program committee meetings and recurring student surveys ensures requirements remain responsive to student needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participating graduate students continues to increase • 86 students have completed the CS and graduated from their home program over the past 7 years (26 Master’s (including 1 MAsc); 60 PhD) • The collaborative specialization has 68 faculty members associated with the program, 21 added since the last review • Participating graduate units and hospital research institutes are committed to continued financial support for the CS • Described as a “flagship collaborative graduate program” by the Chair of a participating graduate unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program is regarded as successful, unique, and of high calibre • Described as “a crucial program” that connects developmental biologists across the University • The Faculty intends to continue institutional support for the collaborative specialization and will explore options for additional funding over the next year • Potential increase in per-student departmental fee being considered 	MOA is recommended for renewal.
Diaspora & Transnational Studies Lead Faculty: Faculty of Arts & Science Date of Summary Assessment Report: April 13, 2026	Anthropology (MA, MSc, PhD); Art History (MA, PhD); Cinema Studies (MA); Comparative Literature (MA, PhD); Criminology and Sociolegal Studies (MA, PhD); Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies (MA, PhD); English (MA, PhD); Geography (MA, MSc, PhD);	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven detailed program-level learning outcomes are articulated; given students complete two 0.5 FCE courses, outcomes need to be scaled back accordingly to align with the scope of the collaborative specialization • Student feedback notes core course “lacked sufficient foundational grounding”; faculty highlight “difficulty of incorporating a range of methods while maintaining course focus” • Advisory Committee encouraged to consult further with students and consider community-building and professional development opportunities and revisions to course content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some graduate programs find the CS very appealing for its simplicity and clarity, and participate robustly • Of the 39 participating degree programs, 20 had no CS completions in the preceding 8 years; 14 had completion rates in the single digits • Evidence of some enrolment attrition with this collaborative specialization • Advisory Committee is encouraged to review engagement/applicability of current participating units and their degree programs, examining factors that may be contributing to student attrition • Advisory Committee to review current participating units/programs, delist long-inactive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies will evaluate future feasibility of the CS, given strategic decision-making regarding allocation of resources required to sustain the Collaborative Specialization • Although required under the Collaborative Specialization Guidelines, this CS has operated without an advisory committee. This requirement will be addressed by regularly bringing together representatives from across participating partner units. Rotating membership may be considered to manage committee size • The advisory committee will be an important sounding board in the revision of learning outcomes 	MOA is recommended for renewal.

University of Toronto
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Collaborative Specialization & Lead Faculty	Participating Programs & Degrees	Appropriateness of Collaborative Specialization Requirements	Vitality of Collaborative Specialization	Other Strengths or Challenges Identified	Review Outcome
	Germanic Languages and Literatures (MA); Germanic Literature, Culture and Theory (PhD); History (MA, PhD); Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations (MA, PhD); Political Science (MA, PhD); Religion (MA, PhD); Slavic Languages and Literatures (MA, PhD); Social Justice Education (MA, MEd, EdD, PhD); Sociology (MA, PhD); Spanish (MA, PhD); Women and Gender Studies (MA, PhD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CS is encouraged to curate a list of foundational and advanced research papers, books, and other sources Students in course-based Master's programs achieve the minimum 30% coursework requirement through a variety of ways; the CS is encouraged to maintain a current list of acceptable/approved courses in partner units to improve student navigation Implementation plan arising from this review will include developing scope-appropriate course-level and specialization-specific learning outcomes; constructing a resource library; developing community-building strategies; maintaining approved course lists; developing and disseminating clear thesis/MRP criteria for determining fulfilment of CS requirements 	units, and explore opportunities to introduce graduate students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The committee will also support consideration of new community-building elements and regular evaluation of the engagement of program partners 	
Engineering Education Lead Faculty: Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering Date of Summary Assessment Report: August 5, 2025	Chemical Engineering and Applied Chemistry (MAsc, PhD); Civil Engineering (MAsc, PhD); Curriculum and Pedagogy (MA, PhD); Higher Education (MA, MEd, PhD); Mechanical & Industrial Engineering (MAsc, PhD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are required to complete the common learning activity, TEP1204H: <i>Instructional Design in Engineering Education</i> Learning outcomes are in addition to those supported by a student's home program. In addition to the common course, students complete elective course requirements, research in the area of the specialization, participate in a seminar program, and attend other community building and professional development events Student completion rates are high; requirements can be accommodated within home program elective space Master's students undertake a thesis with a focus on engineering education, supervised by a faculty member affiliated with the specialization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CS has been very successful in attracting high quality students, with current enrolments beyond original target It has benefitted from a strong and continuing engagement of a core group of faculty members in ISTEP, as well as the broader group of supervisors involved, bringing a richness of research diversity to the specialization Allows participating faculty to pursue research directions and attract great graduate students that would otherwise not be possible and enables the transcendence of siloed disciplinary research specializations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative Specializations are wonderful opportunities to pilot interdisciplinary initiatives and pursue innovative strategies Engineering Education has met with good success since its launch. The program has grown in scale and broad interest and is meeting the needs and interests of its constituents – from students to faculty Changes to existing core courses should be considered to include more instruction of project development, research methods and engineering education as a discipline/practice. This is reflective of the evolution of the specialization and a stronger understanding of student learning needs CS should consider ways to expand its list of electives, such as a specific research methodology course 	MOA is recommended for renewal.

University of Toronto
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctoral students undertake a dissertation with a focus on engineering education, supervised by a faculty member affiliated with the specialization 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of thesis supervisors may constrain enrolment in the collaborative specialization. ISTEP is encouraged to continue its proactive advertising and outreach efforts to appoint new tenure stream faculty in the institute, which will increase capacity for supervision 	
<p>Genome Biology & Bioinformatics</p> <p>Lead Faculty: Faculty of Arts & Science</p> <p>Date of Summary Assessment Report: April 13, 2026</p>	<p>Biochemistry (PhD); Biomedical Engineering (PhD); Cell and Systems Biology (PhD); Chemical Engineering and Applied Chemistry (PhD); Computer Science (PhD); Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (PhD); Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology (PhD); Medical Biophysics (PhD); Medical Science (PhD); Molecular Genetics (PhD)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Collaborative Specialization in Genome Biology and Bioinformatics (GGB) launched in response to rapidly rising use of genomic and other big datasets and emergence of computational tools for data analysis • Offers students theoretical and technical knowledge and engagement with current research at U of T and affiliated research institutes • Requirements include internship outside primary research home, Toronto Bioinformatics User Group seminar participation/presentation, research/networking activities, and a GGB-related research project • Beginning Fall 2026, students will take a newly developed course, emphasizing critical thinking and synthesis across disciplinary boundaries • Components are in addition to coursework and progression requirements of the primary degree program • Graduate outcomes indicate value to those who enrol • Core course, GBB1001, identified as a vehicle for cohort-building, but likely limited to first-year registrants; need to explore additional community-building opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past enrolments robust and stable (17–18 students/year); current program modest in size (4 students in Fall 2024; 9 currently enrolled, 2 graduating soon) • Eight students have graduated since the last review (2017–18), an average of ~1 student per year • Enrolment and completion data show marked attrition; some participating units have enrolments but no completions • Reasons for attrition should be carefully examined; some PhD students may perceive the CS as a “burden” or “extra requirement” rather than value adding • CS lists 10 participating units across 3 faculties; however, several units have no students registered since 2017 • Executive Committee encouraged to re-engage interest with participating units or consider discontinuing participation • 9 new faculty joined in the last two years; their graduate students may represent future enrollees • Implementation plan for the Director and Executive Committee arising from this review is to reach out to participating units, re-familiarize them with the GBB-CS, and identify how best to advertise to prospective students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the perspective of current students, the CS is of considerable value • Offers experiential learning through an internship component and cross-unit elements that support formal and informal collaboration • Somewhat surprising that enrolment is not more robust • Opportunity to explore additional avenues to increase awareness of the CS and its benefits; aim to support long-term sustainability of the specialization 	<p>MOA is recommended for renewal.</p>

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Jewish Studies Lead Faculty: Faculty of Arts & Science Date of Summary Assessment Report: April 13, 2026	Anthropology (MA, PhD); Art History (MA, PhD); Classics (MA, PhD); Comparative Literature (MA, PhD); Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies (MA, PhD); English (MA, PhD); European and Eurasian Studies (MA); Geography (PhD); Germanic Languages and Literatures (MA); Germanic Literature, Culture and Theory (PhD); History (MA, PhD); Information (PhD); Law (LLM, MSL, SJD); Linguistics (PhD); Medieval Studies (MA, PhD); Museum Studies (MMSt); Music (MA, PhD); Music Performance (DMA); Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations (MA, PhD); Philosophy (MA, PhD); Political Science (MA, PhD); Religion (MA, PhD); Slavic Languages and Literatures (MA, PhD); Sociology (MA, PhD);	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Collaborative Specialization in Jewish Studies(CSJS) provides interdisciplinary training in Jewish Studies for MA and PhD students across a wide range of disciplines • Long-standing specialization with clearly defined academic requirements and associated learning outcomes • Offered through the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies, which provides administrative oversight and academic guidance • Students complete a core methods seminar, graduate-level Jewish Studies courses, and (MA) an oral exam to showcase knowledge • PhD students required to present at the Jewish Studies graduate student conference • In programs with a major paper/thesis, research must include a substantive Jewish Studies component • Overall, clear academic requirements and well-articulated learning outcomes, ensuring graduates achieve these benchmarks • Students are welcome at multiple academic events hosted by the Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSJS has robust enrolment, particularly in units such as Religion and History; 69 students currently enrolled • Beyond a small number of units, many listed participating units have no students selecting the CSJS • Of 48 degree programs, 14 had no completions in the preceding 8 years; 16 had only one completion • Evidence of enrolment attrition; programs with robust enrolment have relatively few completions; Example: PhD in Religion has 11–16 students annually enrolled, but ~2 graduates with CSJS notation over the same period • Executive Committee encouraged to review engagement/applicability of participating units and examine factors contributing to student attrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are generally positive about their experience; completion is perceived as beneficial to their careers • Students suggest improvements: enhanced Year 1 orientation, additional professionalism opportunities, and greater engagement with guest speakers; the CS is encouraged to consider these enhancements • Executive Committee to consider feasibility of implementing recommended enhancements 	MOA is recommended for renewal.

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	Women and Gender Studies (MA);				
Women & Gender Studies Lead Faculty: Faculty of Arts & Science Date of Summary Assessment Report: April 13, 2026	Adult Education and Community Development (MA, MEd, PhD); Anthropology (MA, MSc, PhD); Cinema Studies (MA); Classics (MA, PhD); Comparative Literature (MA, PhD); Counselling and Clinical Psychology (MA, PhD); Counselling Psychology (MEd, EdD); Criminology and Sociolegal Studies (MA, PhD); Curriculum and Pedagogy (MA, MEd, PhD); Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies (MA, PhD); East Asian Studies (MA, PhD); Educational Leadership and Policy (MA, MEd, EdD, PhD); English (MA, PhD); French Language and Literature (MA, PhD); Geography (MA, MSc, PhD); Germanic Languages and Literatures (MA);	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Collaborative Specialization in Women and Gender Studies (CWGS) completed a comprehensive self-study outlining Master’s and Doctoral requirements and examining ability of coursework-only Master’s students to meet CS requirements • Though current CWGS requirements were articulated in the self-study, the associated learning outcomes were not included; Executive Committee should regularly review and share them through core courses and online materials • Some coursework-only programs cannot meet the 30% specialization-specific course requirement, or it is inordinately challenging. The Executive Committee should engage with these units to better understand barriers to participation • Implementation plans arising from this review include the Director and Executive Committee developing specific learning outcomes in the immediate future • Executive Committee to remove units where the 30% threshold cannot reasonably be achieved to avoid misleading prospective students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Units strongly support the value and intellectual importance of the CWGS; however, of 81 eligible programs, 41 have had no enrolment over the past 8 years • Similar enrolment trends were also noted in the 2017–18 UTQAP review, indicating an ongoing matter • Evidence of student attrition; of 40 programs with enrolment, only 23 (58%) have had students complete requirements • Most programs show marked attrition, with only 1–2 graduates over 8 years; points to a need for re-evaluation of infrequent unit participation and student attrition • Director and Executive Committee to re-familiarize participating units and identify how best to advertise the CWGS • Executive Committee to re-evaluate participating units/programs and investigate attrition, with possible removal of units with no engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CWGS has long occupied an important niche for graduate students in women and gender studies • Enrolment and persistence appear lower than in past years (possibly due to introduction of WGSI graduate programs) • Presents an opportunity to revisit the breadth of participating units • Opportunity to enhance engagement with current students • Need to evaluate reasons for student attrition 	MOA is recommended for renewal.

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	Germanic Literature, Culture and Theory (PhD); Health Administration (MHSc); Health Policy, Management and Evaluation (MSc, PhD); Higher Education (MA, MEd, EdD, PhD); History (MA, PhD); Information (MI, PhD); Kinesiology (MSc, PhD); Language and Literacies Education (MA, MEd, PhD); Law (LLM, SJD); Medieval Studies (MA, PhD); Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations (MA, PhD); Philosophy (MA, PhD); Planning (MScPl, PhD); Political Science (MA, PhD); Public Health Sciences (MPH, PhD); Religion (MA, PhD); Social Justice Education (MA, MEd, EdD, PhD); Social Work (MSW, PhD); Sociology (MA, PhD); Spanish (MA, PhD)				