

FOR INFORMATION**PUBLIC****OPEN SESSION**

TO: UTSC Academic Affairs Committee

SPONSOR: Prof. Mark Schmuckler, Interim Vice-Principal, Academic & Dean
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PRESENTER: Prof. Katherine R. Larson, Vice-Dean, Teaching, Learning & Undergraduate Programs
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DATE: September 1, 2026 for September 9, 2026

AGENDA ITEM: 5

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Review of Academic Programs and Units, UTSC: Department of Historical and Cultural Studies and its Undergraduate Programs

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Under section 5.7 of the Terms of Reference of the University of Toronto Scarborough Academic Affairs Committee (UTSC AAC) provides that the Committee “shall receive for information and discussion reviews of academic programs and/or units consistent with the protocol outlined in the *University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process*. The reviews are forwarded to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs for consideration.”

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. UTSC Academic Affairs Committee [For Information] (September 9, 2026)

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

1. Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P), March 31, 2026 [For Information]. The Committee was satisfied with the Dean’s Administrative Response. No follow-up report was requested.
2. Academic Board, April 16, 2026 [For Information]. The Board was satisfied with the Report from AP&P.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The *Cyclical Program Review Protocol* “is used to ensure University of Toronto programs meet the highest standards of academic excellence” (UTQAP, Section 6.1). The *Protocol* applies to all undergraduate degree programs offered by the University, and the University’s full complement of undergraduate degree and diploma programs are reviewed on a planned cycle. Reviews are conducted on a regular basis, and the interval between program reviews must not exceed eight (8) years.

The external review of academic programs requires:

- The establishment of a terms of reference;
- The selection of a review team;
- The preparation of a self-study;
- A site visit;
- Receipt of a report from the external review team;
- The Vice-Provost, Academic Programs’ formal request for an Administrative Response;
- The formal Administrative Response, combining responses from the Dean and Vice-Principal Academic, as well as from the Chairs/Directors of the relevant programs and/or units; and
- The Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan.

In accordance with the Protocol, an external review of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies and its undergraduate programs was commissioned for the 2024-25 academic year. During the site visit held from February 12-13, 2025, the review team met with a broad range of stakeholders, including UTSC senior academic administrators, the Department Chair, and faculty, staff, and students in the Department.

The reviewers found that the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies is a distinctive and innovative academic unit with strong integration across its program areas in Classical Studies, Global Asia Studies, History, and Women’s and Gender Studies. They commended the Department’s interdisciplinary and experiential approach to teaching and learning, impressive faculty research productivity and international collaborations, high levels of student satisfaction, strong community partnerships, and a collegial and supportive culture. The reviewers also highlighted the Department’s effective leadership, recent strategic hires, and significant contributions to equity, decolonization, anti-racism, and community-engaged scholarship.

In their report, the review team recommended:

- Strengthening faculty complement planning, including supporting promotion and career progression for associate professors and teaching-stream faculty, and addressing areas of disciplinary need through future hiring opportunities
- Reducing the precarity experienced by part-time and contractually limited-term appointment faculty through improved communication, planning processes, and greater employment stability where possible

- Enhancing communication and collaboration between the Department and the Dean's Office to promote mutual understanding of academic and institutional priorities and to support innovative experiential learning opportunities
- Clarifying departmental priorities and future directions to ensure sustainable deployment of resources while maintaining the Department's core strengths and supporting strategic growth
- Addressing administrative and structural barriers affecting curriculum development and interdisciplinary teaching, including matters relating to course double-numbering and cross-unit teaching
- Enhancing the visibility of Departmental programs, faculty expertise, research strengths, and student opportunities through improved marketing and communications initiatives

In response to these recommendations, the Department has:

- Continued mentoring and support for associate professors pursuing promotion and advancement opportunities
- Engaged in strategic faculty complement planning discussions to support future program needs, disciplinary coverage, and enrolment priorities
- Expanded discussions with the Dean's Office regarding institutional priorities, enrolment planning, curriculum development, experiential learning, and strategic academic directions
- Initiated planning to streamline program offerings, reduce administrative complexity, and strengthen the coherence and long-term sustainability of departmental programs
- Begun enhancing its web presence and student-facing communications to better showcase programs, faculty expertise, and academic opportunities

The Department will also:

- Continue reviewing and refining its academic programs and long-term development plans to ensure alignment between departmental priorities, student needs, and available resources
- Continue exploring opportunities to expand experiential learning, research engagement, community partnerships, and professional development opportunities for students
- Work collaboratively with the Dean's Office to address staffing needs, support faculty career progression, and strengthen communication and planning processes
- Continue efforts to improve program visibility, student engagement, and accessibility of program information through enhanced communications and outreach initiatives
- Continue discussions regarding future program development, interdisciplinary collaborations, and strategic academic priorities

Additionally, the Dean and the Dean's Office will:

- Support faculty mentorship, promotion, and career development through departmental leadership and institutional initiatives such as the Mentoring Excellence and Diversity Advisory Committee (MEAD)
- Continue discussions with the Department regarding faculty complement, staffing needs, and future hiring priorities within the context of institutional priorities and available resources

- Support dialogue and collaboration on curriculum development, experiential learning, enrolment planning, and interdisciplinary initiatives through established campus forums and working groups
- Continue to provide administrative guidance and support for interdisciplinary curriculum development and cross-departmental collaboration
- Work with divisional partners, including Marketing and Communications, the Academic Advising & Career Centre, and Development and Alumni Relations, to enhance program visibility, student engagement, alumni relations, and advancement opportunities

The Dean's Office will continue to monitor progress through regular meetings with the Chair of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies. An interim report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will be prepared in Winter 2029. The next external review of the Department is scheduled to take place no later than the 2032-33 academic year.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no net financial implications to the campus' operating budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is presented for information only.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

1. Review Report (June 18, 2025)
2. Provostial Request for Administrative Response (October 15, 2025)
3. Administrative Response (February 11, 2026)
4. Provostial Final Assessment Report and Implemental Plan (August 15, 2026)

UTQAP Cyclical Review Report

Framework for UTQAP reviews:

UTQAP processes support a structured approach for creating, reflecting on, assessing and developing plans to change and improve academic programs and units in the context of institutional and divisional commitments and priorities.

The University of Toronto (U of T), in its [*Statement of Institutional Purpose*](#) (1992), articulates its mission as a commitment "to being an internationally significant research university, with undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs of excellent quality." Thus "quality assurance through assessment of new program proposals and review of academic programs and units in which they reside is a priority for the University...:

The quality of the scholarship of the faculty, and the degree to which that scholarship is brought to bear in teaching are the foundations of academic excellence. More generally, all of the factors that contribute to collegial and scholarly life—academic and administrative complement, research and scholarly activity, infrastructure, governance, etc.—bear on the quality of academic programs and the broad educational experience of students. ([*Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units*](#) (2010))

The University's approach to quality assurance is built on two primary indicators of academic excellence: the quality of the scholarship and research of faculty; and the success with which that scholarship and research is brought to bear on the achievement of Degree-Level Expectations.

These indicators are assessed by determining how our scholarship, research and programs compare to those of our international peer institutions and how well our programs meet their Degree-Level Expectations.

Reviews provide the opportunity to celebrate successes, identify areas where we can do better and vigorously pursue improvements.

Review Report:

Independent expert review is foundational to the Cyclical Program Review process. The Review Report addresses the Terms of Reference to provide insights and recommendations that inform the continuous improvement of the academic program(s) and academic unit(s) under review. Reflecting this commitment to continuous improvement, the final review report is considered a public document and 1) will be circulated within the unit; 2) may be posted on the unit's website; and 3) will be shared with external reviewers at the time of the next review.

Issues that are addressed through existing, specific University procedures are considered **out of scope** for UTQAP reviews (e.g., individual Human Resources issues, specific health and safety concerns). **Any such issues raised at any point during a review process** (self-study, site visit, review report) **must immediately be brought to the attention of the commissioning officer and routed through appropriate University channels for resolution.**

As Commissioning Officer, I confirm that:

- ✓ The Report addresses the Terms of Reference, which reflect the requirements outlined in the UTQAP, including the program evaluation criteria.
- ✓ I have brought to the attention of the reviewers any clear factual errors in the report and the reviewers have corrected these.
- ✓ I have brought to the attention of the reviewers any omitted UTQAP requirements.

Commissioning Officer*:

Professor Karin Ruhlandt, Vice-Principal
Academic & Dean

Report Accepted as Final on 18 June 2025

Reviewers are asked to provide a Report that:

- Responds to the Terms of Reference, which reflect the requirements outlined in the UTQAP, including the program evaluation criteria.
- Recognizes the institution's autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space and faculty allocation. Any commentary or recommendations on issues that are within the purview of the university's internal budgetary decision-making processes (e.g., such as faculty complement and/or space requirements) must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability.
- Respects the confidentiality required for all aspects of the review process.

Program(s) under review:

- Classical Studies: Minor (Arts)
- Global Asia Studies, BA: Specialist; Major; Minor
- History, BA: Specialist and Co-op; Major and Co-op; Minor

	• Religion: Minor (Arts) (suspended to new enrolments effective 2013-14) • Women's and Gender Studies, BA: Major and Co-op; Minor • Combined Degree Programs with OISE MT
Division/unit under review:	Department of Historical and Cultural Studies, UTSC
Commissioning officer:	Professor Karin Ruhlandt Vice-Principal Academic & Dean
Date of scheduled review:	February 12-13, 2025
Reviewers' names and affiliations:	• Dr. Muriel Gomez-Perez, Professor, Department of Historical Sciences, Université Laval • Dr. Kristin Stapleton, Professor and Chair, Department of History, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York

A. Summary & Overall Assessment

Please provide a summary of your findings, focusing on the assessment of the division/unit and the program(s) under review relative to the best in Canada/North America and internationally, including areas of strength and opportunities.

The Department of Historical and Cultural Studies (HCS) offers innovative programs in four interrelated areas of study: Classics, Global Asia Studies, History, and Women's and Gender Studies. The faculty who administer and teach in these programs are dynamic scholars and accomplished teachers. The department is home to very active researchers in terms of publications and grants; its high research productivity has been confirmed since the previous assessment. The department's work is truly impressive. Based on the evidence available to us, including a Fall 2024 survey, its students greatly value the education they receive. Faculty and staff report that they receive positive feedback from students, including comments that the education offered is life-changing. However, the department is dealing with many challenges at a time when financial resources are limited. These challenges include a decline in the number of majors, no doubt due in part to broad trends related to humanities education. Although many international students may choose to enroll in science programs, the department could face a reduction in international student enrollment as recent government measures aim to reduce the ratio of these students' admissions. This situation poses a great challenge as this department offers courses on the home regions of such students—especially East Africa, South and East Asia, and the Middle East. More immediately, the new UTSC emphasis on medicine and allied health studies is seen by many in the department as changing the nature of the institution and diverting resources and attention from the humanities. In this new context, faculty reported that pressure is being put on the department to make courses profitable—for example, focusing on increasing course size—whereas teachers see value in intensive engagement with students in smaller classes. Metrics that measure the effectiveness of different modes of teaching, which would allow a case to be made for the value of smaller classes, have not been developed or employed at UTSC, seemingly.

The department has discussed how best to engage in new programs such as the Certificate in Pathways to Health Professions, designed to give STEM students a firm grounding in health-related social science and humanities courses. There is concern that shifting the curriculum in that direction will undermine the existing strengths of the four programs. Indeed, the department's development plan is not to spread itself too thinly, but to concentrate and continue to strengthen existing areas of expertise. Many faculty believe that the department's mission to offer UTSC students critical perspectives on history, gender, and contemporary society—including anti-colonial, transnational, intersectional, and interdisciplinary perspectives, public history, and global humanities—is not sufficiently valued by administrators. Likewise, faculty think the stress on enrollment numbers undervalues the rigorous and time-consuming pedagogy that is a hallmark of the humanities. Some even questioned the institution's appreciation of departmental research efforts. These are serious concerns that require difficult conversations. We call for an increase in mutual understanding and respect between the department and the UTSC administration as the institution evolves. We believe a more effective collaboration can be built without requiring faculty who are clearly very dedicated to their teaching and research work to continually demonstrate the

value of their contributions. Better administrative support to build bridges between programs and disciplines will also make effective collaboration more possible.

There is certainly evidence that UTSC leaders appreciate the department's work, since two senior appointments were made in the past year. The Tamil Studies Chair received substantial community funding; the institution also made a significant commitment to the position. The recruitment of a distinguished professor in Black Canadian Studies is also an indication of the high regard in which the department is held. Both new recruits bring impressive records to the department, which their colleagues greatly appreciate. Both report that they have been warmly welcomed in the department and are enthusiastic about joining in its work. However, they also expressed concern about the need for more staff support to allow them to maximize their contributions to UTSC and the communities it serves.

UTSC has resources to assist with marketing academic programs, a Co-op program that seeks to expand its work with humanities departments by adding a Co-op coordinator in that area in 2024-25, and a community engagement office to help organize events. Many faculty and staff in HCS, however, believe that these central units are and will continue to be focused primarily on the needs of other programs. Some stated that working with these units is cumbersome and more time-consuming than simply handling matters themselves. The department's request for more staff support to manage events and research projects and for more financial support for non-Co-op forms of experiential learning derive from this assessment. These widely held departmental views deserve careful consideration within the Dean's office so that barriers that hamper the department's ability to take advantage of the work of central support units can be minimized. If these barriers persist and no provision is made for forms of support the department can use effectively, then we fear that the department's work and morale will suffer.

Faculty morale, we find, has already suffered to some extent from mixed messages received from administrators. We were told that the department received little feedback on the strategic plan it drafted in 2024 and that there has been a lack of clarity about the comparative importance of course enrollments and number of majors, minors, and specialists. The issue of administrative resistance to double-numbering or cross-listing courses came up several times and is seen as a technical problem that should be easily resolved. Double-numbering is a good way to build bridges between programs and disciplines, and makes interdisciplinarity more visible. Teaching-stream faculty reported that promotion guidelines are unclear. Part-time and CLTA faculty are satisfied with their access to internal department funding for their research. But advanced planning must be improved, because currently they are not allocated courses in a timely way and left in too much uncertainty about their expected role in the department in the medium term. Faculty noted with dismay that part-time faculty were not given contracts for the 2024-25 academic year until April 2024. Finally, the challenge of offering core courses at the A-level by senior professors still exists.

Considering all these elements above and the complexity of this department, our recommendations will focus largely on overcoming challenges, such as the need for a revised development plan with medium-term priorities, for the removal of bureaucratic barriers, and for improved communication. In an appendix we suggest possible improvements in the UTQAP process itself.

B. Findings

Based on your reading of the self-study and discussions during the site visit, please address all the Terms of Reference (appended) as follows:

- **Confirm that you have considered each of the Terms of Reference in relation to each academic program and/or academic unit listed in the Terms of Reference.**
- Comment on the program(s)/unit(s) respective **strengths, areas for improvement and opportunities for enhancement**. In so doing, please:
 - Identify the **distinctive attributes** of each program listed in the Terms of Reference
 - Identify and commend any **notably strong and creative attributes**
 - Provide evidence of any **significant innovation or creativity** in content and/or delivery relative to other such programs
- Ensure that the findings address, for each program listed in the Terms of Reference, the quality of each academic program and the learning environment of the students in each program.
- *Note: Unless a specific program or group of programs is specified, the assumption will be that findings apply to all programs listed in the Terms of Reference.*

Terms of Reference 1.1: Program Objectives and Key Features

Our reading of the self-study and conversations with faculty show that HCS has worked very hard over the seven years since its last UTQAP review to develop the curricula of the four programs in ways that support the shared goals of the department. These goals are articulated forcefully in the self-study: HCS is “strongly committed to inculcating critical, cutting-edge perspectives and skills that resonate with students and that further advance their aspirations.” The four programs “cross-pollinate” each other, since more than half of the faculty teach courses in more than one program and some courses are double numbered so as to form part of the curricula of two programs. Course titles reflect the department’s focus on “equity, decolonization, and anti-racism.” The department launched a pilot course this year on “Science, Technology, Medicine, and Empire,” designed to serve students affiliated with the Scarborough Academy of Medicine and Integrated Health (SAMIH). It is exploring the possibility of offering certificate programs around particular themes, as well as a collaboration with the Faculty of Information to create a combined degree program.

Clearly HCS faculty and staff care deeply about UTSC’s mission to be of service to its students and the communities from which they come. As the department contemplates adding certificate programs and new collaborations, serious thought must be devoted to the possible impacts. We fear that the creation of new certificates will pull department resources away from its core programs and increase the workload of faculty and staff, which is already a concern. As explained in the self-study, certificate programs are not conceived as a way to recruit new students into the major or specialist programs. In that case, might the proposed certificate programs further restrict

faculty ability to teach D-level courses, which we understand has emerged as a problem recently? In order to address questions of this sort, the department needs to agree on its curricular goals, in consultation with the Dean's office: should it prioritize growing the existing degree programs or maximizing enrollments by increasing its offerings of innovative and attractive lower-level courses? Right now, the department seems to be drifting toward the second approach, to the dissatisfaction of a number of members of the faculty. That is why more discussion and pragmatic planning are needed to obtain a clear consensus.

In regard to accessibility and inclusion, evidence from the Fall 2024 student survey indicates that HCS faculty create welcoming environments in their courses. The two students we spoke with (one a first-year WGS student and one a second-year HIS student) reported that they found their courses very stimulating and engaging. We asked about their interest in online learning options; both replied that they much preferred in-person classes. Online instruction does solve some problems of accessibility and might give students more course options. But the feeling among faculty and students that humanities courses work best in face-to-face communal settings is shared widely.

Below we comment on each of the four HCS programs.

Classics

Classics offers a minor that enrolls about 50 students and lower-level courses that attract a significant number of students seeking interesting electives. Although this program is small, with only two full-time and one part-time professors and a few sessional instructors ("currently teaching 3 courses"), enrollment figures over the past few years are truly impressive. Since 2018, one assistant professor was hired (Suleyman Dost) and introduced new courses on Late Antiquity and the ancient Abrahamic religions. As noted in the self-study, these courses also help HIS students fulfill that program's requirement to take courses on history before 1500 and satisfy distribution requirements for students outside the department, as well.

The program is distinctive for its focus on the early Islamic world in addition to classical Greece and Rome. Also distinctive is its "intentional emphasis on de-colonial approaches to the study of antiquity through courses on Orientalism, Indigeneity, and race and ethnicity." The program also has a newly strengthened tie to the Royal Ontario Museum, which opens up possibilities for experiential learning in various forms. One serious weakness of the program is its inability to offer instruction in Latin, Greek, and Arabic. The lack of language learning opportunities makes the creation of a major inadvisable even if a greater number of faculty were available to teach in the program.

The department proposes to change the name of the program to Ancient World Studies, which makes good sense given the geographical scope of the program (the region of the ancient Mediterranean, including ancient Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, and Mesopotamia), the expanded chronological range (from the Late Bronze Age to the rise of Islam in Late Antiquity), the expansive framework for analyzing questions of empire, colonialism, and the deemphasis on language learning. If this change is adopted, measures should be taken to make the program visible to potential students who continue to think in terms of the concept of "Classics." As part of the

evolution of its program, the curriculum is being revised to offer students more flexibility, as detailed in the self-study. These plans seem well considered and appropriate.

We were not able to speak with any Classics minors during our visit, and so the perspectives of the students on the program are only apparent to us by the outstanding enrollments and a number of very positive comments included in the Fall 2024 survey of students enrolled in A- and B-level HCS courses.

Global Asia Studies

Global Asia Studies “seeks to foreground through comparative and global perspectives a sense of interconnectivity within Asia and between Asia and other parts of the world.” The five full-time faculty members who form the core of the program are specialists on China and South and West Asia, but all of them emphasize the global context in which local and regional developments play out. They collaborate with colleagues in other departments, particularly in the Department of Language Studies, the Department of Arts, Culture and Media, and the Department of Anthropology. Program faculty teach courses in support of the Women’s and Gender Studies program and the History program.

Mandarin is offered at UTSC, so students pursuing major and specialist programs can satisfy the language requirement in that language. Other language learning opportunities are available on campus, such as Cantonese, Tamil, and Hindi, offered by Department of Language Studies. We were told in conversation with the faculty that the language requirement is frequently waived. Given that some degree-seeking students probably already have a command of one or more Asian languages, this may be less problematic than it first appears. Nevertheless, we hope that students are encouraged to pursue language study and that opportunities and support for language study are advertised. We suggest that a section of the program’s webpage be devoted to this.

The hiring of the Tamil Chair is an exciting development for GAS, HCS, and UTSC as a whole, since it promises to connect the institution with the Tamil diaspora community more closely and to allow UTSC to become a world center of Tamil studies. More resources for language instruction and programming support would allow the work to flourish more quickly. Advancement efforts should continue to be devoted to developing Tamil studies. As the first position endowed at UTSC via broad community support, the Tamil Chair will offer a model for future initiatives.

The GAS section of the self-study notes a declining number of majors and minors over recent years (since 2019-2020), but relatively stable enrollments in its courses. The program is prioritizing the recruitment of an expert in Global Sinophone Languages and Cultures, which it notes would be helpful as well to the English-Chinese Translation program in the Department of Language Studies. Given the pressure to increase enrollments, however, we cannot help wondering whether the program has considered the possibility of offering Japanese and Korean history/culture courses, which have proven to be very popular at many other institutions. It is quite striking that UTSC has few if any course offerings related to Northeast Asia and that the topic was not addressed in the GAS section of the self-study. No doubt this possibility has been discussed by the faculty but not prioritized—perhaps other schools in the area have Northeast Asia well covered. Still, it would have been good to be given a fuller understanding of the thinking behind the regional

emphases of the program, which the program faculty should also consider explaining more clearly on its webpage.

We were not able to speak with any students pursuing GAS degrees during our visit, and so the perspectives of the students on the program are only apparent to us by the solid enrollment figures in GAS courses. GAS faculty did note that students have expressed concern about the relatively low number of courses available to them. The faculty hope that barriers preventing Asianist faculty in other departments from teaching courses in the program will be removed. This point was made in the 2018 program assessment, and it seems that no progress has been made to resolve the problem.

History

According to the self-study, eighteen HCS faculty (fifteen full-time and three part-time, but we counted twenty faculty members on the website) teach in the history program. This program faced two challenges in recent years: 1) the need to adjust to the move of the Minor in African Studies to the Department of Global Development Studies in 2020, which implies the rethinking of teaching with a full-time tenured faculty member (Stephen Rockel) and a part-time assistant professor (Husseina Dinani), affiliated to the Women's Studies and to the African Studies programs; and 2) the need to adjust to the move of the Minor in FST, in the summer of 2024, to the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences, which included the departure of all three History professors associated with Food Studies (FST).

This program is successful and well-known by students: in the Fall 2024 survey, 63 out of 172 respondents were currently enrolled or planning to enroll in History. The self-study, however, notes that “since 2017-2018 the number of HIS Specialists has plateaued, while HIS Minors have increased and HIS Majors have declined.” History offers five programs: Specialist Program, Specialist (Co-operative) Program, Major Program, Major (Co-operative) Program, and Minor program. For purposes of recruiting more majors, the department should consider assigning experienced professors to the A-level courses, as was recommended in the 2018 IQAP report.

In the Specialist Program, students must complete 12 credits: the focus is on the C-level courses with 4.5 credits and 4.5 additional credits in History; within these additional credits, students must select classes from different regional categories so to achieve geographical breadth (a. United States and Latin America, c. Europe, d. Africa and Asia, e. Transnational). Temporal breadth across different historical periods is less emphasized but is encouraged (b. Medieval, f. Ancient World). Students may also choose the Language Stream. The Specialist (Co-Operative) Program in History and Major (Co-Operative) Program in History combine “academic studies with paid work terms in the public, private, and/or non-profit sectors.” We note that very few students choose these programs; as noted in the Summary section above, the faculty believes that other types of experiential learning are better suited to students in this program. In the Major Program in History, fewer credits are required compared to the Specialist Program (7 credits), and among the additional credits, courses on Transnational and on Ancient World are not offered. Finally, in the Minor program in History, students must complete 4 credits in History. According to the Fall 2024 survey, 65 respondents are pursuing or planning to pursue the Major and 51 the Minor.

As noted in the self-study, the curriculum “spans the history of all parts of the world.” It includes Ancient World; Africa—in the Era of the Slave Trade, from the Colonial Conquests to Independence, in the Postcolonial Era, and specific courses upon different parts of the continent; Asia—Modern Chinese History, Political Economy in China and India, Late Imperial China; different periods of Canadian History; some courses on Modern Europe during the Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries; and some courses on the Middle Ages, including in Europe and the Islamic world.

The curriculum “covers a broad range of topics,” including Religious Traditions in Africa, War and Society in Modern Africa, Women and Power in Africa, Asian Foods and Global Cities, Eating and Drinking Across Global Asia, Law and Society in Chinese History, Immigrants and Race Relations in Canadian History, Topics in Canadian Women’s History, Oral History and Urban Change in Canadian History, History of European Sexuality from Antiquity to the Present, Venice and its Empire, The Crusades, and Canadian Food History. Among the respondents to the Fall 2024 survey, 50 students stated that they enjoy the flexibility of course options. We consider this broad array of courses a strength of this department.

We note the transnational perspectives in different courses such as Drink in History, Food Systems in Historical Perspective, Colonialism on Film, Race Segregation, Protest in South Africa and the United States, Delhi and London as Imperial Cities and their Mobile Population, Gender and Sexuality in Muslim Societies, Eating and Drinking Across the Americas, The Blues in the Mississippi Delta. We note also that few thematic courses are provided for the field of Islamic history, and United States and Latin America history are listed together in one category, but in fact very few courses are offered in Latin American history. It should be noted that no professor is a specialist in this area. The emphasis on transnational perspectives and on different regions—especially East Africa, South and East Asia, and the Middle East—is explained in the self-study by the fact that on one hand “the students hail from these regions” and on the other hand such “perspectives deeply resonate with contemporary questions, such as Settler colonialism, US empire, racial capitalism, European and global fascisms, and modernity.” We see in the self-study that the program “emphasizes the critical reading, research, and writing skills,” particularly in two courses “Critical Writing and Research for Historians” and “History and Evidence.”

Interdisciplinarity is a focal point insofar as History courses are offered in many other programs (African Studies, Classical Studies, Food Studies, Global Asian Studies, and Women’s and Gender Studies). In the Fall 2024 survey, a large majority of respondents consider that their program provides enough opportunities for interdisciplinary learning. Moreover, UTSC offers five Combined Degree Programs that allow students register in two degree programs (one undergraduate and one graduate), and the Combined Degree Programs for UTSC Honours Bachelor of Arts with the Master of Teaching provides two options: 1) History (Specialist) for Honours Bachelor of Arts with the Master of Teaching; 2) History (Major) for Honours Bachelor of Arts with the same Master.

Women’s and Gender Studies

Ten professors teach in this program: one Professor, two Associate Professors, three Associate Professors, Teaching Stream (including one whose appointment is not with HCS but who

contributes one course annually and another whose appointment is split with 25% in HCS), two Assistant Professors, and two part-time Assistant Professors (one of which is in the Teaching Stream). This program is also well-known by students: in the Fall 2024 survey, 50 out of 172 respondents were currently enrolled or planning to enroll in Women's and Gender Studies.

Women's and Gender Studies offers three programs: Major Program, Minor Program, and Co-op Program. The enrollments show variability for Minors and are relatively stable for Majors; in contrast the enrollments in the Major Co-op program are very low.

This program is an interdisciplinary program that explores a range of perspectives on women, gender, queer and trans individuals, and communities. The striking interdisciplinarity of the program is why the double-numbered course codes are very useful. Students can analyze women's roles from different perspectives and disciplines and examine intersections between gender and various media and topics. As noted in the self-study, the strength of this program is evident in three respects: the intersectional approach is in all courses, the transnational/decolonial focus features in many courses, and experiential and engaged learning through social justice activism, particularly in the context of the US and Canada, is highly valued.

This program benefited from the recent hiring of two new faculty members: 1) Professor Afua Cooper and 2) Robyn Maynard, Assistant Professor of Black Feminisms in Canada. These new faculty members join a strong cohort of colleagues (Anissa Talahite-Moodley, Shana Leodar Ye, Nancy Johnston (appointed 100% in the Centre for Teaching and Learning), Connie Guberman, Anup Grewal, Hussein Dinani, Atiq Hachimi, and Jeri English (appointed 25% in HCS)). Through their expertise, this program offers different perspectives on feminism, such as Black Feminism in Canada, Canadian women's poetry, Feminism in China, Women of the Postcolony in Africa (especially in southern Tanzania), Women in Francophone Literature and from the Maghreb. But “full-time tenure-stream HCS faculty have diverse graduate appointments (two in Women's and Gender Studies Institute, one in Linguistics, one in History),” which “limits their capacity to serve in the program” as noted in the self-study, so the challenge for this program is high.

Terms of Reference 1.2: Program Requirements

The HCS faculty have devoted much thought to the curriculum of the programs they oversee. The extent to which the programs support each other is indeed impressive. The mission common to all four is to help students build the knowledge and skills they need to understand inequities in historical and contemporary societies, including how they developed and were maintained, as well as how they have been challenged and sometimes ameliorated. This mission is stated clearly in the self-study, and our conversation with two current students confirms that it is being conveyed in coursework. One student remarked, “I really like my classes; the content connects with my daily life.”

This mission also strikes us as appropriate, given the UTSC student body, as well as the institution's goals as articulated in the *Scarborough Charter* and related documents. When compared to other programs with comparable faculty complements, in our judgment the HCS

programs appear to be in some respects at the forefront of their disciplines—particularly in the degree to which they welcome interdisciplinary engagement and promote experiential learning. We have commented on other distinctive aspects of the programs in section 1.1.

One obvious barrier to the excellence of the programs lies in the relative lack of support for faculty-organized experiential learning opportunities. The Co-op program seemingly does not reliably offer HCS opportunities to deepen their disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge and skills. The faculty seems prepared to expand other types of experiential learning but need course releases and other forms of support to do this. And, as one faculty member pointed out, the emphasis on enrollment figures is at odds with the emphasis on experiential learning, since to be effective the latter requires a considerable investment of faculty time in a relatively small number of students. This contradiction should be discussed and an agreement reached on how to balance the two goals of high enrollments and intensive instruction.

Terms of Reference 1.3: Teaching and Learning

At UTSC, many forms of support are offered to students and particularly to international students, such as English Language Development Support and Facilitated Study Groups. The UTSC International Student Centre is smaller in size compared to downtown's Centre for International Experience, and we see, in the Fall 2024 survey, that students would like more resources such as internships and more mentorship programs involving senior faculty.

Despite these elements that need to be improved, a large majority of student respondents would recommend their programs to other students. Between 2020 and 2023, as noted in the self-study, there was a high level of satisfaction among HCS students, which “exceeds all other mean scores institutionally, provincially, and nationally.”

The majority of students responding to the survey are satisfied (60) or very satisfied (43) with the quality of instruction across all the programs. The aspect of the programs they most enjoyed is the course content (108). Two other aspects of the program that received favorable comment are class discussions (52) and the flexibility of course options (50). These survey results show on one hand that courses in small groups, which allow for discussion and make learning easier and more interactive, are favored by students. On the other hand, the flexibility of course options shows the dedication of Program Coordinators and Committee Chairs to organize and schedule course offerings, an element which was already highlighted in the previous external review in 2018. The self-study notes that rebranding the Classics program as Ancient World Studies will involve incorporating more flexible course options, as well.

In all the programs, there are four levels of courses. In History, for example, A-level courses provide general introductions and allow students to gain the basis for further studies in transnational and global history. B-level courses provide knowledge about specific nation-states and regions of the world. C-level courses deepen knowledge on specific themes and periods through lectures and tutorials. D-level courses are seminars where students have to study particular questions and to present their findings during discussions and in their essays. The structure of four levels appears coherent and well structured. However, the department has planned some changes to the curriculum, such as “starting new introductory and cross-disciplinary courses in 2025

(currently moving through governance)” to provide a common theoretical and methodological framework between the various programs and “systematizing the understanding of learning outcomes and skill building across course levels.” Assessment of teaching and learning in each program (beyond grading students on their work) is done informally, we gather, via conversations between instructors and Program Coordinators. The Fall 2024 survey seems to have been a one-time initiative.

Across the four programs, the faculty has proposed many innovative courses that stand out from classic approaches focused on a single region to emphasize transnational approaches for the undergraduate students. In Classical Studies, the program highlights the interfaces of late antiquity with early Islam in the eastern Mediterranean. In Global Asia Studies, students are trained in global processes shaped multiple regions. In History, transnational approaches are highly relevant to fundamental questions, such as settler colonialism and histories of race. In Women’s and Gender Studies, intersectional approaches make students aware of issues such as equity and social justice. The teaching objective in HCS is to put into practice Indigenous, anti-colonial, and anti-racist perspectives.

Ultimately, undergraduate students can access specialized research and different conceptual, methodological, and pedagogical approaches, such as qualitative and quantitative methods, oral history, critical reading, and expository writing. The large majority of students who were surveyed consider that their programs provide enough opportunities for interdisciplinary learning (transnational approaches are not one of the questions in the student survey, which is surprising). All these methods and approaches show the high quality of the teaching.

Terms of Reference 1.4: Admission Requirements

HCS programs have no particular admission requirements. The self-study and our conversations with faculty and staff indicate that the department is concerned to shape and represent the programs in ways that will resonate with UTSC students.

Student recruitment is relevant to the topic of admissions. During our conversations with faculty, hope was expressed that the university itself would find effective ways to bring the programs to the attention of potential students. During our conversation with staff in the Registrar’s office, we learned that the offices that recruit students could work with HCS faculty to create materials that could be used during recruitment events. One suggestion was the marketing staff accompany HCS field trips and produce short videos.

Terms of Reference 1.5: Resources

We understand that all four HCS programs provide enough courses for their students to complete their respective academic requirements. However, feedback from the faculty in GAS suggests that students in that program are dissatisfied with the number of courses available. The Fall 2024 survey of students seems to bear this out. And we heard from a member of the HIS faculty that pressure to increase enrollments by adding lower-level courses has resulted in fewer D-level offerings. The interest among faculty in engaging with the graduate programs in which they hold appointments

has a tendency, we understand, to pull them in multiple directions and poses some problems in planning the curriculum.

Part-time and sessional instructors contribute to all programs, but we lack the data to assess whether there is over-reliance on such instructors. We were told that the current chair has devoted considerable effort to hiring teaching-stream and part-time faculty in recent years, so as to lessen the need to hire sessional instructors. It is clear that these faculty members offer a significant number of courses required for HCS programs. It seems that teaching-stream faculty, CLTA faculty, and part-time faculty also play important roles in planning for the evolution of the curriculum. Some commented, however, that the precariousness of the CLTA and part-time faculty causes them to question whether it makes sense for them to invest in such planning.

Again, not having access to data from across UTSC, we are not able to assess how stretched resources are in HCS compared to other departments. We can just note that the faculty have concerns about their ability to continue to offer robust curricula in each of the programs and to have the capacity to review and update curricula regularly, in addition to all their other work. Given how effective the programs seem to be with relatively limited resources, we certainly hope that strategic investments can be made to strengthen them. Until that is possible, it may be necessary to more clearly identify and concentrate on core functions as opposed to taking on new initiatives or investing in less essential work. In short, the department seems to be trying to do too much. We don't see any easy answers to the question of how and where to pull back, but we are confident that conversations among the faculty and staff and between the department and the Dean's office will suggest how the department can most effectively use its resources.

In regard to physical space and library resources, the department seems fortunate. We were able to enjoy a quick tour of the department and were impressed with the artwork and faculty/staff lounge. The library staff are clearly enthusiastic participants in the life of the department, both as resources for its students and collaborators with its faculty on digital humanities and other initiatives, such as exhibitions and programming around AI. The collaboration with the library to establish a Tamil archive of special collections, print and rare private papers is a wonderful project. The proposal to hire an expert in public history is a step in the right direction, as it will consolidate a highly stimulating environment: the Scarborough Oral History Project digital archive, the development of a certificate in Digital History, and the combined degree program with the iSchool. The ongoing project of partnership with the UTSC Library and the Dragoman Renaissance Research Platform founded by Natalie Rothman will heighten the visibility of her SSHRC Insight Grant funded project on "Trans-Imperial Archives: Diplomacy, Circulation, and Entanglement in the Early Modern Mediterranean."

Terms of Reference 1.6: Quality and Other Indicators

As noted in the self-study, the number of students on the Dean's list has increased a lot, on one hand, and student course evaluations show an impressive "improvement in the quality of students attracted to the HIS Major and Minor," on the other hand. Conversation, focus groups, and meet-and-greet sessions are tools to evaluate the students' satisfaction. Some A-level courses offer tutorials, and we consider that prioritizing tutorials for all A-level courses, as noted in the self-study, goes in the right direction.

Communication skills are evaluated through various and innovative methods such as “creation of podcast manuscripts, videos and blogs, journaling, and art projects in the Classics program.” In Women’s and Gender Studies, art-based methods teaching is used in many courses. Global Asia Studies explains clearly its difference from East Asian Studies at the University’s St. George Campus and the Asian Institute. The program identifies its goals as “increasing the number of Minors, Majors and Specialists,” “integrating the study of Asian languages into coursework,” and “developing expertise in the Islamic world of Asia.”

In regard to evidence that program graduates succeed, in the self-study report only the History program offered evidence in the form of student outcomes: “in the last ten years, UTSC History students have gone on to graduate history programs at the University of California, Brown University, Queen’s University, York University, and the University of Toronto, as well as graduate programs in related fields (including Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, Geography, East Asian Studies, Political Science, and Religion) at Stanford University, U of T, Wilfrid Laurier University, the University of British Columbia, the London School of Economics and Political Science, University of Leeds, University of Glasgow, and the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, Switzerland, among others.” We suggest collecting data to show employment outcomes, as well as which graduate programs students apply to and why. Finally, we have not been given access to data from other departments at UTSC, from the two other U of T campuses, and from the Province of Ontario and Canada, so we are not able to make well informed comparative comments.

Terms of Reference 2: Faculty/Research

The self-study section on faculty and research offers convincing evidence that HCS faculty members are extremely productive and fully engaged in the various disciplines with which they identify. Two aspects are particularly striking: the global reach of faculty research and the variety of formats in which the results of faculty research are disseminated. The department certainly deserves to be proud of the quantity and quality of its publications, its international collaborations, its grants, and its awards and other forms of recognition.

Students benefit from faculty research as it is shared with them in the classroom, and as faculty bring colleagues to campus as speakers and organize conferences. Some students have also participated in experiential learning opportunities provided by faculty as part of their research projects.

We have commented in section 1.5 on HCS’s use of current faculty resources, which is difficult for us to assess. We have commented in other sections, as well, on the department’s priorities for future hiring, which seem to have been well considered and should be reconsidered regularly as the environment within which the department operates changes.

The most critical need regarding faculty and research, we think, is for the many very talented associate professors in the department to be able to complete the research projects that will allow them to be promoted. One of our strong recommendations is for the department and Dean’s office to prioritize this, particularly with course releases.

Terms of Reference 3: Relationships

HCS faculty and staff all report feeling welcomed by departmental colleagues. The departmental community seems to have a healthy morale in regard to interpersonal relations. Many faculty credited the current department chair with creating a good atmosphere in the department, including by bringing people together, both for department meetings over tasty lunches and for faculty presentations on research and teaching. Moreover, several professors pointed out to us that the department chair is innovative and offers support for developing new courses and other such initiatives.

Evidence from the Fall 2024 survey of A- and B-level courses and from our talk with two students indicates that students feel welcome in the department. It was not clear to us that the HCS student association described in the self-study has been holding meetings this academic year, however. The department offers tutorials for core courses and many opportunities for extra-curricular learning via talks and events. But the extent of student engagement in the department outside of classes is hard to assess from the information to which we had access. Neither of the two students to whom we spoke said they were involved in the department beyond taking its classes. Considering the few students we met, our comments in this section remain impressionistic.

HCS faculty report working closely with colleagues in other departments and units. The close collaboration with librarians has already been mentioned, as has GAS's interest in having Asianist colleagues in other departments offer courses within the program. Outside of UTSC, the faculty have many close collaborations, as described in self-study sections 5.3 and 5.4. The two recent senior hires in Tamil studies and Black Canadian studies will strengthen an already impressive record of social impact locally, nationally, and internationally.

Terms of Reference 4: Organization and Financial Structure

Our conversations with the chair and departmental staff convince us that departmental resources are in very good hands. We strongly endorse the proposal in self-study section 5.1.4 to relaunch the course release pilot program for Associate Professors in Fall 2025.

In regard to opportunities for increasing revenue, it is to be hoped that the work that created the Tamil Chair can be extended in other areas. Discussions among the faculty, the Chair, and the Dean's office staff to identify priority areas for fundraising are advisable, if these discussions have not yet taken place. Philanthropy and foundation grants can help seed-fund, if not endow, faculty positions. Alumni and friends of UTSC may also respond to appeals to support or endow experiential learning programs, including study abroad. The lead on this sort of effort generally must be taken by the administration and development/advancement office, but senior members of the department can play a role. And such initiatives should be guided by department and program priorities.

Terms of Reference 5: Long-range Planning Challenges

Many faculty mentioned during our visit that the current chair has helped the department establish a set of governance documents and procedures that provide much clearer guidance for managing departmental business than has existed in the past. Faculty expressed gratitude for this achievement, although some also expressed concern that the procedures are rather involved and cumbersome. One challenge will be to keep making the effort to follow the procedures after the clear initial benefits become less visible—as the problems of the old ways of doing things recede. It could be that some streamlining of processes will prove desirable. At any rate, periodical reassessment of governance and policy documents, while tiresome, is necessary for a department of this size and complexity. And on one issue, it would seem that more drafting of policy is necessary: promotion guidelines for teaching-stream faculty are still not explained clearly enough, according to some of our interlocutors.

As noted above, the department's approach to assessment of student achievement is somewhat undeveloped. Given the piecemeal but very positive evidence we have seen of the effectiveness of the programs, devising more systematic assessment practices may not be a high priority when there are so many other demands on faculty time and effort. But this might be an area in which the Dean's office or some other campus unit could step in and help, particularly if it is an institutional priority. For example, the 2018 self-study suggested the maintenance of an alumni database. This would indeed provide additional evidence about the effectiveness of the HCS programs.

The department has been authorized to hire a senior colleague in the area of Indigenous Histories of Environmental Justice and proposes future hires in Public History, Intersectional Indigenous Histories of Health and Medicine, and Global Sinophone Languages and Cultures (cross appointed with the Department of Language Studies). In addition to these strategic hires, we encourage the steady recruitment of professors at the beginning of their careers, particularly to strengthen Classics/Ancient World Studies and to cover the Latin American field. Uncertainty about funding, staffing, student demand, and the general environment for higher education in Ontario certainly presents planning challenges; faculty retirements and resignations and changing student demographics and interests may require that the department reconsider its priorities periodically, which will involve difficult conversations that must continue to be conducted in an atmosphere of transparency.

As noted above, the department would make excellent use of increased resources to support experiential learning in forms other than the Co-op experience. We recommend that this be made a priority by the Dean's office for external fund raising.

Terms of Reference 6: International Comparators

Given the unusual combination of four programs that make up HCS, it is difficult to compare it to other departments around the world. Its composition strikes us as quite unique and seems to have created the conditions for a lively, innovative academic unit. Comparing the programs themselves to other such programs internationally is more possible.

As noted above, Classics is distinctive for its geographic breadth and its thematic emphasis on empire and colonialism but is handicapped by the small size of its faculty and the lack of resources for language instruction. However, its emphasis on decolonial approaches through courses on

Orientalism, Indigeneity, Race and Ethnicity shows the high innovative teaching of this program. Moreover, Professor Katherine Blouin has co-edited and co-founded the platform *Everyday Orientalism*, published in the United Kingdom, in which students, academics, and citizens are invited to analyze Edward Said's concept in a broader framework and apply it in many contexts "beyond the 19th century "Orient." For that, she received the 2022-2023 Women's Classical Caucus Public Scholarship Award (given by an organization that "seeks to incorporate feminist and gender-informed perspectives in the study and teaching of all aspects of ancient Mediterranean cultures"). This example shows the caliber of the academic leadership in this program, which has an international influence.

Global Asia Studies emphasizes transnational comparisons and connections, which is somewhat unusual but not nearly as much as it was twenty years ago. Contrary to the claim in the GAS section of the self-study, few if any top Asian studies programs in North America have maintained an exclusive or primary focus on language and literature. Language learning is still an important part of such programs, but the narrow Cold War "areas studies" approach has been abandoned most everywhere. Much more distinctive is GAS's strong focus on China and South and West Asia. As noted above, other Asian studies programs have tended to recruit experts in Japan and Korea, given student interest and the availability of external funding for such hires. But GAS's decision to focus on China and South and West Asia makes sense given the nature of the Scarborough community and because of the interesting comparative work possible, particularly in the case of China and India.

History is the largest program in the department, and, like the others, emphasizes transnational perspectives. Several faculty members have received prestigious prizes for their research. We list only three examples among many others to demonstrate that different fields of expertise are prized. Rothman's *The Dragoman Renaissance* received the Renaissance Society of America's 2022-2023 Gladys Krieble Delmas Book Prize for Best Book in Renaissance Venetian Studies. Li Chen's *Chinese Law in Imperial Eyes* received the 2018 Joseph Levenson Book Prize for Pre-1900 China Studies, awarded by the Association for Asian Studies. Esmat Elhalaby won the Amilcar Cabral Prize from the Lisbon-based Institute for Contemporary History for his article "Empire and Arab Indology," published in *Modern Intellectual History* (2022). Moreover, several professors are key members of international research networks, which attests to the international reputations of many faculty members. Members of the department are also engaged in collaborative work from interdisciplinarity perspectives. Michael Gervers is PI for a SSHRC IG funded project "Textiles in Ethiopian Manuscripts," in which an 11-member international team is conducting research together; and Rothman is co-PI on a CNRS International Research Network initiative on Ottoman translation history.

Like other women's and gender studies programs across Canada and the United States, Women's and Gender Studies has contributed to rethinking this field, incorporating new approaches (intersectional, gender, queer, etc.) into the curriculum. This program is distinctive for having developed courses which analyze diverse feminisms from transnational and postcolonial perspectives. Coursework also addresses questions concerning citizenship, diasporas, and colonialisms. In addition to emphasizing activism, this program teaches how feminist theory can contribute to significant contemporary debates around such issues as Black Feminism, Islamophobia, anti-Asian racism, and anti-Palestinian racism. This approach can empower

students to understand how their lives connect to current issues affecting people across the world. Atiqah Hachimi is co-PI on an International Research Network project on “Arabic Sociolinguistics and Linguistic Anthropology,” with team members from France, Spain, Austria, and North Africa.

C. Recommendations

*Please make **at least three recommendations** for specific steps to be taken that will lead to the continuous improvement of each academic program/unit listed in the Terms of Reference, distinguishing between those the program/unit can itself take and those that require external action.*

Please clarify when a recommendation applies to more than one program/unit.

*Please endeavour to distinguish between observations or suggestions (which can be included in “Findings”) and formal recommendations (which should be included here). **The Dean and unit/program will be required to provide a public response to every recommendation listed in this section.***

1) Work to create a better balance between full professors and more junior professors, provide support for associate professors that will lead to their promotion, and support the work of new faculty hires with adequate staffing

The department currently only has three full professors—as noted in the self-study, but we count four on page 1 of Package B—which is a very small number for a faculty of this size. This imbalance leads to inequities in workload. The department will benefit greatly from the promotion of its talented and engaged associate professors, which will not only allow them to take on more leadership roles across campus but will also send a signal to junior colleagues and new hires that the institution is committed to helping them advance in their careers. The department and Dean’s office should work together to offer course releases and career counseling. We understand that the Office of the Vice-Principal Research and Innovation has made more funds available for research, including international research, which will also help with this effort. Moreover, as noted in our discussion of the Tamil Chair and Professor of Black Canadian Studies, HCS has a strong record of recruiting excellent colleagues, but all faculty hires require corresponding staff support to reach their greatest potential.

2) Establish clear guidelines for the promotion of teaching-stream faculty

Promotion guidelines for teaching-stream faculty should be clarified as soon as possible, so that the colleagues in this position will know how to prioritize their work.

3) Reduce the precarity of the part-time faculty

The university and department should define the teaching tasks of part-time and CLTA faculty by providing longer-term contracts as early as possible. By doing so, it will promote the visibility of courses, allow for more effective curricular planning, and strengthen the feeling of belonging to a teaching and research community, thus fostering a more cohesive unit.

4) Build a stronger mutual understanding and agreement about the relationship between institutional and department priorities

One source of faculty and staff frustration is a perceived lack of understanding and appreciation on the part of the administration of the department's mission and priorities. We saw evidence, as well, that there is frustration within the Dean's office at the department's perceived resistance to some institutional initiatives, such as the health professions certificate and the Co-op program. Of course, disagreements on priorities cannot always be resolved to everyone's satisfaction, but our conversations with various stakeholders indicate that more work needs to be devoted to building mutual understanding between the department and the Dean's office. As we stated in the overview, if barriers to the department's participation in central initiatives such as the Co-op program persist and no provision is made for forms of support the department can use effectively, then we fear that the department's work and morale will suffer. We recommend also that support be made available for forms of experiential learning involving small groups of students. This will require a serious discussion among the faculty, the Chair, and the Dean's office staff to achieve a balance between enrollments and innovative instruction.

5) Reassess the capacity of the department to continue to offer all of its degree programs as well as add new options such as certificates and combined degrees and reconsider the development plan of the department

The HCS faculty is ambitious and innovative and seeks to serve UTSC students well; those positive attributes in combination pose the danger of overextension. We recommend strong collaboration between the Dean's office and faculty to think about the future development of the department, to reconsider the links between disciplines and the complementarity of programs, and to identify three or four top priorities for investment. The department must be realistic about what it can accomplish without leading to faculty and staff burnout.

6) Identify and, if possible, remove bureaucratic barriers to the work of the department

The 2018 program review identified several barriers to the work of the department that have not yet been satisfactorily addressed. These include issues with double-numbering courses and the ability of faculty in other departments to teach core courses in some of the HCS programs. We recommend the Dean's office be asked to provide clarity on these bureaucratic matters, so they do not continue to feature among the faculty's concerns.

7) Improve marketing and communications

We recommend the production of short videos to highlight and promote HCS's faculty diversity, areas of expertise, research, publications, and profiles ("engaged teachers"), and also to promote the department as a "tight community" (in the words of one of the students who spoke with us), linked to a well-stocked and easily accessible library.

Appendix: Comments on the UTQAP process and the campus visit

The following are our reflections on how the UTQAP process and campus visit might be improved.

1) The template for reporting is rather rigid and results in considerable repetition. The external reviewers in 2018 chose not to follow the template. We decided to do our best to work within its

structure, since we were instructed to do so. But we recommend that the supervisors of the UTQAP consider revising the instructions to allow reviewers more flexibility in drafting their report.

2) When assessing the various programs in comparison with similar programs elsewhere, it would have been helpful to know which departments beyond UTSC the programs in HCS look to as aspirational peers and which institutions UTSC considers its aspirational peers.

3) During the campus visit, we spent more time with extra-departmental staff (Co-op program, registrar's office, research and innovation office) than needed. We would have found added time for meetings with faculty, the Chair, and the students helpful. Unfortunately, a snowstorm disrupted our scheduled lunch with students. We felt our ability to understand the programs was handicapped since we were only able to talk with two students, one studying HIS and one WGS, both of whom were in the early stages of their respective programs.

4) To address many of the questions we were asked to discuss in our report, we would have needed to have more data, such as admissions by program, admissions by academic track, all enrollments by program, all graduate enrollments by alumni of the programs, all hires/retirements/professors by category since the last review report. In the self-study, it is mentioned on one hand that three professors (two professors and one associate professor, teaching stream) retired, and one professor is on long-term secondment, and details are given on how hiring complies with equity, diversity, and inclusion policies. On the other hand, the “addition of five full-time, one CLTA, and six part-time faculty members” doesn't explain the expertise added among fields and areas. Moreover, we don't know, since the last review report, the field expertise that have lost professorial resources. Lacking data to assess whether HCS is overly reliant on part-time and sessional instructors, we would have liked not only to have the ratio of the number of part-time teachers to the rest of the teachers but also to know what proportion of each category of teachers teaches A-level courses. In the self-study, we have the survey of students enrolled in lower-level classes in the Fall 2024 semester, but we would have liked to have a faculty survey including questions about perceptions regarding the structure of the programs and the course offerings, the priorities of the development plan, the adequacy of coverage of important and emerging sectors in the different fields, professional and material resources, the working atmosphere, and the nature of bureaucratic barriers. Instead of a long list of faculty CVs in alphabetical order, which is impressive, it would be better have a list of colleagues organized by field of expertise to facilitate reading and analysis.

Terms of Reference (appended for reference)

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Terms of Reference

Framework for UTQAP reviews:

UTQAP processes support a structured approach for creating, reflecting on, assessing, and developing plans to change and improve academic programs and units in the context of institutional and divisional commitments and priorities.

The University of Toronto (U of T), in its [*Statement of Institutional Purpose* \(1992\)](#), articulates its mission as a commitment "to being an internationally significant research university, with undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs of excellent quality." Thus "quality assurance through assessment of new program proposals and review of academic programs and units in which they reside is a priority for the University...:

The quality of the scholarship of the faculty, and the degree to which that scholarship is brought to bear in teaching are the foundations of academic excellence. More generally, all of the factors that contribute to collegial and scholarly life —academic and administrative complement, research and scholarly activity, infrastructure, governance, etc.—bear on the quality of academic programs and the broad educational experience of students. ([*Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units* \(2010\)](#))

The University's approach to quality assurance is built on two primary indicators of academic excellence: the quality of the scholarship and research of faculty; and the success with which that scholarship and research is brought to bear on the achievement of Degree-Level Expectations.

These indicators are assessed by determining how our scholarship, research and programs compare to those of our international peer institutions and how well our programs meet their Degree-Level Expectations.

Reviews provide the opportunity to celebrate successes, identify areas where we can do better and vigorously pursue improvements.

Terms of Reference:

The Terms of Reference are intended to establish the parameters of the cyclical review process and provide the framework of the review report.

Issues that are addressed through existing, specific University procedures are considered **out of scope** for UTQAP reviews (e.g., individual Human Resources issues, specific health and safety concerns). **Any such issues raised at any point during a review process** (self-study, site

visit, review report) **must immediately be brought to the attention of the commissioning officer and routed through appropriate University channels for resolution.**

Program(s) under review:	Classical Studies: Min (Arts) Global Asia Studies, BA: Spec; Maj; Min History, BA: Spec and Co-op; Maj and Co-op; Min Religion: Min (Arts) (suspended to new enrolments effective 2013-14) Women's and Gender Studies, BA: Maj and Co-op; Min Combined Degree Programs with OISE MT
Division/unit under review:	Department of Historical and Cultural Studies, UTSC
Commissioning officer:	Professor Karin Ruhlandt Vice-Principal Academic & Dean
Date of scheduled review:	February 12-13, 2025

Template Instructions:

These terms of reference have been designed to be customized to accommodate Provostial reviews of divisions (and the programs they offer) as well as Decanal Reviews of units and their programs.

Reviewers are asked to comment explicitly upon the following:

1 Program(s)

The quality of each academic program and the learning environment of the students in each program must be addressed explicitly in the self-study and the external reviewers' report.

For **each** discrete program that is part of the review as defined in the Terms of Reference, please consider and comment on the following:

1.1 Program objectives and key features

- Consistency of the program's objectives with the institution's [mission](#) and U of T's/the division's/unit's [academic plans](#), [priorities](#) and commitments, including consistency with any implementation plans developed following a previous review
- Evidence that the following have been substantially considered in the context of the program and its associated resources:

1. [Universal design principles](#) and/or the potential need to provide mental or physical disability-related accommodations, reflecting the University's [Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities](#)
 2. Support for student well-being and sense of community in the learning and teaching environment, reflecting the work of the [Expert Panel on Undergraduate Student Educational Experience](#) and the commitment to establishing a Culture of Caring and Excellence as recommended by the [Presidential and Provostial Task Force on Student Mental Health](#)
 3. Opportunities for removing barriers to access and increasing retention rates for Indigenous students; for integrating Indigenous content into the curriculum in consultation with Indigenous curriculum developers; and for addressing any discipline-specific calls to action, reflecting the commitments made in [Answering the Call: Wecheehetowin: Final Report of the Steering Committee for the University of Toronto Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)
 4. Opportunities for removing barriers to access and increasing retention rates for Black students; for promoting intersectional Black flourishing, fostering inclusive excellence and enabling mutuality in teaching and learning, reflecting the commitments made in the [Scarborough Charter](#) and consistent with the recommendations of the [Anti-Black Racism Task Force Final Report](#)
 5. Opportunities for fostering an equitable, diverse, and inclusive teaching and learning environment, reflecting the values articulated in existing institutional documents such as the [Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Excellence](#), the [Antisemitism Working Group Final Report](#), the aforementioned reports, and future institutional reports related to equity, diversity and inclusion
- c) (Where appropriate) Unique curriculum or program innovations, creative components, significant high impact practices
- d) Initiatives taken to enhance the quality of the program and the associated learning and teaching environment.

1.2 Program requirements

- a) Appropriateness of the program's structure and the requirements to meet its objectives and program-level learning outcomes, including the structure and requirements of any identified streams (undergraduate), fields or concentrations (graduate)

- b) Appropriateness of the program's structure, requirements and program-level learning outcomes in meeting [the institution's applicable undergraduate or graduate Degree Level Expectations](#)
- c) Appropriateness and effectiveness of the mode(s) of delivery (i.e., means or medium used in delivering a program; e.g., lecture format, distance, online, synchronous/asynchronous, problem-based, compressed part-time, flex-time, multi-campus, inter-institutional collaboration or other non-standard forms of delivery) to facilitate students' successful completion of the program-level learning outcomes
- d) Ways in which the curriculum addresses the current state of the discipline or area of study and is appropriate for the level of the program

1.3 Assessment of teaching and learning

- a) Appropriateness and effectiveness of the methods for assessing student achievement of the program-level learning outcomes and degree level expectations
- b) Appropriateness and effectiveness of the plans to monitor and assess:
 - 1. The overall quality of the program
 - 2. Whether the program is achieving in practice its proposed objectives
 - 3. Whether its students are achieving the program-level learning outcomes
 - 4. How the resulting information will be documented and subsequently used to inform continuous program improvement

1.4 Admission requirements

- a) Appropriateness of the program's admission requirements given the program's objectives and program-level learning outcomes
- b) Sufficient explanation of alternative requirements, if applicable, for admission into a graduate, second-entry or undergraduate program, e.g., minimum grade point average, additional languages or portfolios, and how the program recognizes prior work or learning experience.

1.5 Resources

In making assessments related to resources here and in 1.7, reviewers must recognize the institution's autonomy in determining priorities for funding, space and faculty allocation.

Given the program's class sizes and cohorts as well as its program-level learning outcomes:

- a) Participation of a sufficient number and quality of core faculty who are competent to teach and/or supervise in and achieve the goals of the program and foster the appropriate academic environment
- b) If applicable, discussion/explanation of the role and approximate percentage of adjunct and sessional faculty/limited term appointments used in the delivery of the program and the associated plans to ensure the sustainability of the program and quality of the student experience (see [QAF Guidance](#))
- c) If required, provision of supervision of experiential learning opportunities
- d) Adequacy of the administrative unit's utilization of existing human, physical and financial resources
- e) Evidence that there are adequate resources to sustain the quality of scholarship and research activities produced by students, including library support, information technology support, and laboratory access

1.6 Quality and other indicators

- a) Evidence of the quality of the faculty (e.g., qualifications, funding, honours, awards, research, innovation and scholarly record; appropriateness of collective faculty expertise to contribute substantively to the program and commitment to student mentoring)
 - 1. The quality of the scholarship of the faculty, and the degree to which that scholarship is brought to bear in teaching
- b) Any other evidence that the program and faculty will ensure the intellectual quality of the student experience.
- c) Quality indicators related to students (e.g., grade level for admission; applications and registrations; attrition/retention rates; times-to-completion; final year academic achievement; graduation rates; scholarly output; success rates in provincial and national scholarships; competitions; academic awards; student in-course reports on teaching; and commitment to professional and transferable skills)
- d) Quality indicators related to program graduates (e.g., rates of graduation; employment six months and two years after graduation; postgraduate study; “skills match”; and alumni reports on program quality when available and when permitted by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). Auditors will be instructed that these items may not be available and applicable to all programs.)

- e) Any additional indicators of quality identified by the division or academic unit, including but not limited to data to support the assessment of progress towards fulfilling the plans, priorities and commitments identified in 1.1.a and 1.1.b
- f) How the program compares to the best in its field among peer institutions in Canada, North America and internationally, including areas of strength and opportunities

2 Faculty/Research

- Scope, quality and relevance of faculty research activities.
- Appropriateness of the level of activity relative to national and international comparators.
- Appropriateness of research activities for the undergraduate and graduate students in the Department.
- Faculty complement plan.
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of the academic unit's use of existing human resources.
In making this assessment, reviewers must recognize the institution's autonomy in determining priorities for funding, space and faculty allocation

3 Relationships

- Strength of the morale of faculty, students and staff.
- Scope and nature of relationships with cognate Faculties, academic departments and units.
- Extent to which the department has developed or sustained fruitful partnerships with other universities and organizations in order to foster research, creative professional activities and to deliver teaching programs.
- Scope and nature of the department's relationship with external government, academic and professional organizations.
- Social impact of the department in terms of outreach and impact locally and nationally.

4 Organizational and Financial Structure

- The appropriateness and effectiveness of the department's organizational and financial structure
- The appropriateness with which resource allocation, including space and infrastructure support, has been managed. *In making this assessment, reviewers must recognize the institution's autonomy in determining priorities for funding, space and faculty allocation*
- Opportunities for new revenue generation.

5 Long-Range Planning Challenges

- Consistency with the University’s academic plan.
- Appropriateness of:
 - Complement plan, including balance of tenure-stream and non-tenure stream faculty
 - Enrolment strategy
 - Student financial aid
 - Development/fundraising initiatives
 - Management and leadership.

6 International Comparators

Assessment of the department and the program(s) under review relative to the best in Canada/North America and internationally, including areas of strength and opportunities.



Oct 15, 2025

Professor Karin Ruhlandt
Vice-Principal, Academic & Dean
University of Toronto Scarborough

Dear Professor Ruhlandt,

Thank you for forwarding the report of the February 2025 external review of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies. The following programs were reviewed:

- Classical Studies: Min (Arts)
- Global Asia Studies, BA: Spec; Maj; Min
- History, BA: Spec and Co-op; Maj and Co-op; Min
- Religion: Min (Arts) (suspended to new enrolments effective 2013-14)
- Women's and Gender Studies, BA: Maj and Co-op; Min
- Combined Degree Programs with OISE MT

As indicated in our *Statement of Institutional Purpose*, the University of Toronto is committed “to being an internationally significant research university, with undergraduate, graduate and professional programs of excellent quality.” This quality is assessed through the periodic appraisal of programs and units, which considers how our research scholarship and programs compare to those of our international peer institutions and assesses the alignment of our programs with established degree-level expectations. The University views the reports and recommendations made by external reviewers as opportunities to celebrate successes and identify areas for quality improvement.

The reviewers commended the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies (HCS) as a distinctive and innovative unit with a strong sense of integration across its four program areas. They highlighted the curriculum's cross-pollination and incorporation of experiential and interdisciplinary learning. Students report high levels of satisfaction, noting engaging teaching, welcoming classroom environments, and valuable opportunities for research and co-curricular engagement. Faculty are recognized for their impressive research productivity and international collaborations, and recent strategic hires further enhance the department's reputation and community connections. Finally, the reviewers noted HCS's collegial and supportive culture, effective leadership and administration, and its productive partnerships across UTSC and beyond.

I am writing at this time:

1. to request your administrative response to this report, which should include a plan for implementing the recommendations; these plans should be captured in the enclosed table;
2. to request your feedback on the review summary component of the draft *Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan*; and
3. to outline the next steps in the process.

1. Request for Administrative Response and Implementation Plan:

In your **Administrative Response**, please address the following areas raised by the reviewers and their impact on the academic programs, *along with any additional areas you would like to prioritize*.

For each area you address, please provide an **Implementation Plan** that identifies actions to be accomplished in the immediate (six months), medium (one to two years) and longer (three to five years) terms, and who (Program Director, Chair, Dean) will take the lead in each area. If appropriate, please identify any necessary changes in organization, policy, or governance; and any resources, financial and otherwise, that will be provided and by whom.

- The reviewers noted an imbalance in HCS faculty rank distribution, with very few faculty at the Professor rank. They encouraged the Department to engage in strategic complement planning to ensure an appropriate balance of junior and senior faculty, and to prioritize enhanced coverage in Classics/Ancient World Studies and Latin American history when hiring opportunities permit. The reviewers also emphasized the importance of clarifying processes and strengthening supports for associate professors and teaching-stream faculty for promotion and career progression.
- The reviewers observed that part-time and contractually limited-term appointment (CLTA) faculty members in the Department face significant precarity, due in part to late contracts and course allocations. They recommended exploring ways to enhance the stability of these arrangements and to ensure more timely communication to support effective curricular planning and foster a stronger sense of community.
- The reviewers highlighted significant tension between the Department and divisional leadership regarding strategic planning and priorities, particularly around enrolment pressures, experiential learning, and new initiatives. They recommended encouraging open communication and collaboration between the Department and the Dean's Office to build mutual understanding and clearer alignment of priorities and expectations.
- The reviewers raised concerns that HCS risks overextension as it pursues new initiatives such as certificates and combined degree programs alongside its existing offerings. They recommended that departmental planning focus on a clear set of strategic priorities to maintain core strengths and ensure sustainable use of resources.
- The reviewers noted faculty concerns regarding ongoing bureaucratic and structural barriers to departmental operations, including issues around course double-numbering and cross-unit teaching. They recommended that the unit work with divisional

leadership to clarify and address these concerns to reduce any unnecessary obstacles to effective curriculum planning and delivery.

- The reviewers emphasized the importance of enhancing the visibility of HCS programs. They recommended more active marketing and communications to highlight faculty expertise and diversity, and the department's strong sense of community.

Please prepare this response in consultation with the unit under review. As part of this consultation, please request a brief administrative response from the unit that focuses on items within their control. Please reflect this consultation and respond to the key elements of the unit's response in your response.

Finally, please confirm the **date of the next review** and your plans for **monitoring the implementation of recommendations** until then. I will ask you to provide a brief report to me midway between the 2024-25 review and the year of the next site visit.

2. Draft of Final Assessment Report (including Review Summary)

In Winter 2026, my office will provide a draft version of the *Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan* (FAR/IP), which will include a summary of the review of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies. At that time, we will request your feedback regarding tone or accuracy of the summary component, and your response to any information that is requested in the comments. This public-facing document becomes part of the governance record.

3. Next Steps

Reviews of academic programs and units are presented to University governance as a matter of University policy. Under the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP), the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs prepares a report on all program and unit reviews and submits these periodically to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P).

The review of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies will be considered by AP&P at its meeting on **March 31, 2026. Please plan to attend this meeting and ensure that the unit leadership also attends.** Your presence is important and will allow you to respond to any questions the committee may have regarding the report, and your administrative response and implementation plan. An overview of what happens at AP&P is [available on our website](#).

I would appreciate receiving your completed administrative response and plan for implementing recommendations, along with any comments on the draft FAR/IP, by **February 20, 2026**. This will allow my office sufficient time to prepare materials for the AP&P meeting.

The review summary and the Dean's administrative response are the two key components of the FAR/IP, which will be finalized after the AP&P meeting and distributed to you, the unit

lead(s), the Governing Council secretariat, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance, and posted on our website, as required by the UTQAP.

Please feel free to contact me or Emma del Junco, Academic Reviews and Planning Specialist, should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Nick Rule". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nick" and last name "Rule" clearly distinguishable.

Nick Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

cc.

Katherine Larson, Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning & Undergraduate Programs, UTSC

Kevin Mak, Academic Programs Officer, UTSC

Lachmi Singh, Director, Academic Programs, Planning and Quality Assurance

Emma del Junco, Academic Reviews and Planning Specialist

David Lock, Academic Reviews and Planning Specialist

Stephanie Machado Fernandes, Administrator, Academic Programs



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO
SCARBOROUGH

Office of the Vice-Principal Academic & Dean

February 11, 2026

Professor Nicholas Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Division of the Vice-President & Provost
University of Toronto

Dean's Administrative Response: External Review of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies, University of Toronto Scarborough

Dear Professor Rule,

Thank you for your letter dated October 15, 2025, requesting my administrative response to the February 2025 external review of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies. I would like to extend my gratitude to the review team—Muriel Gomez-Perez, Professor, Department of Historical Sciences, Université Laval; and Kristin Stapleton, Professor and Chair, Department of History, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York—for their consultation with the department during the site visit held from February 12–13, 2025, and for their report, which was finalized on June 18, 2025, and shared with the department.

We appreciate the reviewers' recognition of the department's strong integration across its four program areas and the coherence of its curriculum. Their commendation of the high level of student satisfaction reflects the department's intentional incorporation of experiential and interdisciplinary learning, as well as the valuable co-curricular and research opportunities offered to students. The reviewers also highlighted the extensive partnerships and collaborations fostered by the department and its faculty members.

The review team has also identified several areas for enhancement, including clarifying departmental priorities and processes; strengthening supports for associate professors and teaching-stream faculty in promotion and career progression; and improving the timeliness of communications to support curricular planning and foster a stronger sense of community. They further noted the importance of continued communication and collaboration to ensure shared understanding and alignment of campus priorities between the department and my office. With this letter, I have included a table summarizing our responses to each of the reviewers' recommendations, along with anticipated timelines for implementation where applicable.

Once again, I thank the review team for their thoughtful and valuable assessment of the department and its programs. I look forward to supporting the department in implementing the recommendations of this report. The Dean's Office will continue to monitor progress through regular meetings with the Chair of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies. An interim report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will be prepared in Winter 2029. The next external review of the department is scheduled to take place no later than the 2032–33 academic year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Karin Ruhlandt". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Karin" and last name "Ruhlandt" clearly distinguishable.

Professor Karin Ruhlandt
Vice-Principal Academic & Dean

2024-25 UTQAP Review of the UTSC Department of Historical and Cultural Studies - Review Recommendations

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short, medium, long term) for each, and who will take the lead in each area. If appropriate, please identify any necessary changes in organization, policy or governance; and any resources, financial and otherwise, that will be provided, and who will provide them.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, “it is important to note that, while the external reviewers’ report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university’s internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability” (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Time Frame	Lead	Unit Response	Dean’s Response
The reviewers noted an imbalance in HCS faculty rank distribution, with very few faculty at the Professor rank. They encouraged the Department to engage in strategic complement planning to ensure an appropriate balance of junior and senior faculty, and to prioritize enhanced coverage in Classics/Ancient World Studies and Latin American history when hiring opportunities permit. The reviewers also emphasized the importance of clarifying processes and strengthening supports for associate professors and teaching-stream faculty for promotion and career progression.	1.	“Work to create a better balance between full professors and more junior professors, provide support for associate professors that will lead to their promotion, and support the work of new faculty hires with adequate staffing.”	Immediate	Chair	3 Associate Professors are being reviewed for promotion this year; 2 more are planning to request detailed consideration in the next cycle or two. The chair is in ongoing conversations with all associate professors to provide mentorship and career support.	The Dean’s Office is committed to working with departments to ensure that colleagues are supported and mentored for promotion review. Through the office of the Vice-Dean, Faculty Affairs Equity and Success, the Mentoring Excellence and Diversity Advisory Committee (MEAD) also provides important guidance on matters related to career trajectories, mentorship, coaching, and professional development for faculty and librarians.
	2.	“The department and Dean’s office should work together to offer course releases and career counseling.”	Medium	Dean	An HCS pilot program has previously provided course releases for mid-career faculty approaching the completion of a second major project. The program, which ran for the past 3 years, has benefitted all 3 of the associate professors currently undergoing promotion review. It was put on hold this year due to budgetary constraints. With decanal support we’d be happy to resume it.	My office looks forward to ongoing dialogue with the Chair regarding faculty complement, promotion, and staffing needs, particularly in light of the campus’s current fiscal environment.

	3.	“Establish clear guidelines for the promotion of teaching-stream faculty.”	Immediate	Dean	HCS looks forward to receiving the updated guidelines on teaching excellence, once available. We currently have only one teaching-stream faculty eligible for promotion.	The Dean’s Office is developing updated Guidelines for the Assessment of Effectiveness of Teaching. Pending governance approval, these guidelines are anticipated to take effect in the 2026-27 academic year.
	4.	“We encourage the steady recruitment of professors at the beginning of their careers, particularly to strengthen Classics/Ancient World Studies and to cover the Latin American field.”	Medium	Chair + Dean	HCS is deeply engaged in ongoing, strategic thinking in relation to divisional priorities and enrolment planning as they shape future complement plans. Over the past 5 years we have had significant success in recruiting phenomenal new colleagues that support departmental and divisional strategic priorities, including through the Provostial funds for Black and Indigenous faculty, the fruits of which show throughout the self-study and reviewer report. In line with departmental and stated institutional priorities on inclusive excellence as a means to expand enrolment and complement offerings, we remain committed to hiring in the field of Indigenous History and look forward to opportunities to articulate further complement plans in relation to shifting departmental and curricular priorities, and given the current budgetary context.	I appreciate the department’s identification of fields that would benefit from future hiring. My office looks forward to continued dialogue with the Chair on faculty complement, promotion, and staffing needs within the realities of the current fiscal environment, including opportunities to further leverage remaining provostial funds for Indigenous faculty hiring.
The reviewers observed that part-time and contractually limited-term appointment (CLTA) faculty members in the Department face significant precarity, due in part to late contracts and course allocations. They recommended exploring ways to enhance the stability of these arrangements and to ensure more timely communication to support	5.	“Reduce the precarity of the part-time faculty.”	Immediate	Dean	HCS would welcome opportunities to extend longer contracts to part-time faculty and stabilize their employment status. This would require decanal budgetary commitments.	The Dean’s Office remains committed to working with the Chair to assess faculty complement and staffing needs, while being mindful of the campus’s fiscal context.
	6.	“The university and department should define the teaching tasks of part-time and CLTA faculty by providing longer-term contracts as early as possible. By doing so, it will	Medium	Dean	Changes to contract length for part-time and CLTA faculty are not in the hands of the department. As stated above, we would welcome the opportunity to provide longer-term contracts to our part-	Please refer to my response to recommendation #5 for further detail.

effective curricular planning and foster a stronger sense of community.		promote the visibility of courses, allow for more effective curricular planning, and strengthen the feeling of belonging to a teaching and research community, thus fostering a more cohesive unit.”			time and CLTA colleagues. HCS views this as an important area for continued collaboration with the Dean’s office and will support efforts that promote stability, transparency, and community cohesion.	
The reviewers highlighted significant tension between the Department and divisional leadership regarding strategic planning and priorities, particularly around enrolment pressures, experiential learning, and new initiatives. They recommended encouraging open communication and collaboration between the Department and the Dean’s Office to build mutual understanding and clearer alignment of priorities and expectations.	7.	“Build a stronger mutual understanding and agreement about the relationship between institutional and department priorities.”	Medium	Chair + Dean	HCS looks forward to learning more about current institutional priorities. Our track record demonstrates deep commitment to institutional strategic directions (e.g. PIE, the Scarborough Charter, Inclusive Excellence), in both the recruitment of new faculty, innovative curriculum design, and dynamic co-curricular programming, such as the Indigenous Speaker Series. We are also actively engaged in conversation with the Dean’s Office and other academic units about strengthening the legibility of our programs and courses to students in ways that support SAMIH (e.g. highlighting existing and emerging curriculum on feminist perspectives on health; social justice and equity, history of science, technology and medicine; colonial biopolitics; racial and gendered bodies; transnational knowledge production, etc.).	My office engages departments and their leadership through a range of established forums to share institutional priorities and receive feedback on emerging needs. These include the Chairs’ Council, where topics span budget planning, curriculum development, campus safety, and research and innovation, and the Campus Leadership Forum. With respect to curricular priorities and related development, interrelated bodies such as the Campus Curriculum Committee (CCC), the Health Across Disciplines Working Group, and the Campus Curriculum Review Working Circle continue to provide venues for dialogue, consultation, and the exploration of collaborative opportunities. HCS plays an important leadership role in these spaces, and we look forward to continued partnership.
	8.	“We recommend also that support be made available for forms of experiential learning involving small groups of students. This will require a serious discussion among the faculty, the Chair, and the Dean’s office staff to achieve a balance between enrollments and innovative instruction.”	Medium	Chair + Dean	HCS is launching innovative curriculum to strengthen research- and practicum-based opportunities for program students in their second and third years e.g. through course-based participation in faculty-led research projects and through placements on- and off-campus that leverage students’ disciplinary knowledge and skills in a variety of professional settings. Such opportunities are resource intensive and often require individualized attention that	Experiential Learning (EL) is a longstanding strength and a key strategic priority for UTSC. To support the future evolution of EL on our campus, my office is undertaking an administrative review of the EL ecosystem this term. Recommendations arising from this work will help guide future practices in alignment with the division’s academic and institutional goals.

					cannot be provided in large classes. We would welcome further institutional investment in smaller class sizes that would allow us to expand EL opportunities across the board and believe we can offer divisional leadership in this area. To this end, we look forward to opportunities to create a CLTA for Tamil language and experiential learning as a template for future curricular innovation tied to SAMIH that can be extended across our programs).	We remain committed to ongoing dialogue with the Department Chair regarding faculty complement and staffing needs, particularly in light of the current fiscal environment.
	9.	“Discussions among the faculty, the Chair, and the Dean’s office staff to identify priority areas for fundraising are advisable, if these discussions have not yet taken place.”	Medium	Chair + Dean	HCS will welcome such an opportunity, particularly in relation to existing and emergent faculty research interests in, e.g. Tamil Worlds, Palestine Studies, Black Knowledges, and Indian Ocean Studies, among others.	The Dean’s Office would be pleased to facilitate a discussion between the department and the Development and Alumni Relations Office to explore and implement advancement and further enhance alumni engagement strategies.
The reviewers raised concerns that HCS risks overextension as it pursues new initiatives such as certificates and combined degree programs alongside its existing offerings. They recommended that departmental planning focus on a clear set of strategic priorities to maintain core strengths and ensure sustainable use of resources.	10.	“Reassess the capacity of the department to continue to offer all of its degree programs as well as add new options such as certificates and combined degrees and reconsider the development plan of the department.”	Medium	Chair, PCs, faculty	Conversations among HCS faculty, as well as with the Dean’s Office, are already under way toward this end. Our goal is to reduce our administrative complexity and create more streamlined and legible program options to students that leverage optimally our existing teaching capacity by consolidating offerings at the lower level while providing differentiated streams for students seeking to specialize in specific fields/disciplines/methods/professionalizing tracks at the upper level, including a more research-intensive specialist stream. The proposal currently in discussion among faculty could see our programs in Classical Studies, Global Asia Studies, and History merged into a single program with specialized thematic/disciplinary streams. It also suggests that our program in Women’s and Gender Studies formally	We commend the department’s efforts to streamline current offerings in ways that would better fulfill students’ academic and professional needs while also reducing administrative complexity. The Dean’s Office looks forward to learning more about the department’s curricular planning and future direction. Last fall, we launched a new expression-of-interest process to consider new and significantly modified program initiatives and to assess their potential resource implications, and we are working with HCS to prepare for this submission as departmental discussions unfold.

					expand its remit to incorporate Social Justice.	
	11.	“We recommend strong collaboration between the Dean’s office and faculty to think about the future development of the department, to reconsider the links between disciplines and the complementarity of programs, and to identify three or four top priorities for investment. The department must be realistic about what it can accomplish without leading to faculty and staff burnout.”	Medium	Chair + Dean	The chair is already in conversation with decanal leadership to discuss strategic directions along the lines above. Once the department has had a chance to confirm and fine-tune its plans for program modifications the chair will share these with the dean’s office for further consultations and governance implementation.	Please refer to my response to recommendation #10 for further detail.
The reviewers noted faculty concerns regarding ongoing bureaucratic and structural barriers to departmental operations, including issues around course double-numbering and cross-unit teaching. They recommended that the unit work with divisional leadership to clarify and address these concerns to reduce any unnecessary obstacles to effective curriculum planning and delivery.	12.	“Identify and, if possible, remove bureaucratic barriers to the work of the department: The 2018 program review identified several barriers to the work of the department that have not yet been satisfactorily addressed. These include issues with double-numbering courses and the ability of faculty in other departments to teach core courses in some of the HCS programs. We recommend the Dean’s office be asked to provide clarity on these bureaucratic matters, so they do not continue to feature among the faculty’s concerns.”	Immediate/medium	Dean	HCS would welcome clarity on these longstanding challenges.	In Summer 2025, the Dean’s Office introduced new administrative guidelines to support and incentivize interdisciplinary curriculum development. These guidelines aim to: (1) Build on UTSC’s longstanding strengths in interdisciplinary teaching and foster its continued development in ways that benefit all academic units; (2) Provide clarity for Chairs and administrative staff in planning and administering interdisciplinary courses, which are increasingly prevalent as disciplinary boundaries evolve; and (3) Establish administrative and budgetary parameters that encourage sustainable cross-departmental collaboration. Departments will continue to receive periodic reminders of these guidelines as part of our ongoing support for interdisciplinary initiatives.

The reviewers emphasized the importance of enhancing the visibility of HCS programs. They recommended more active marketing and communications to highlight faculty expertise and diversity, and the department’s strong sense of community.	13.	“Improve marketing and communications.”	Immediate	Dean	HCS would welcome the opportunity to work with Marketing and Communications on videos that introduce students to the vibrancy of our programs and that profile our faculty research and teaching interests. The department is also in the process of restructuring its web presence to make the class offerings and faculty specializations more visible and accessible to students. We are aware that increased marketing support for Humanities departments is a priority area for the Dean’s Office, and look forward to continued dialogue on this critical complement to academic advising.	We commend the department for its efforts to enhance the accessibility of student-facing information through its website. Our office is actively working with the Marketing and Communications team to explore additional approaches for highlighting faculty research strengths and teaching interests. The Dean’s Office will continue to advocate for the marketing and communications needs of Humanities departments with divisional partners such as Marketing and Communications and the Academic Advising & Career Centre.
	14.	“We recommend the production of short videos to highlight and promote HCS’s faculty diversity, areas of expertise, research, publications, and profiles (‘engaged teachers’), and also to promote the department as a ‘tight community’... linked to a well-stocked and easily accessible library.”	Immediate/medium	Dean	See above	Please refer to my response to recommendation #13 for further detail.
	15.	“We suggest that a section of the [Global Asia Studies] program’s webpage be devoted to [language study opportunities].”	Immediate	GAS Program Coordinator	We appreciate the reviewers’ suggestion to clarify the department’s student-facing information. The chair is in discussion with the GAS Program Coordinator to determine appropriate next steps, which will be informed by upcoming decisions about the program’s future direction.	We commend the department for its efforts to enhance the accessibility of student-facing information, including curricular and co-curricular initiatives, through its website. These improvements meaningfully support students’ ability to navigate academic requirements and other study opportunities.
	16.	“The program faculty should also consider explaining [regional	Immediate	GAS Program Coordinator	We appreciate the reviewers’ suggestion to clarify the department’s student-facing information. The chair is in discussion with	Please refer to my response to recommendation #15 for further detail.

		emphases] more clearly on its webpage.”			the GAS Program Coordinator to determine appropriate next steps, which will be informed by upcoming decisions about the program’s future direction.	
	17.	“Measures should be taken to make the [Classics/Ancient World Studies] program visible to potential students who continue to think in terms of the concept of ‘Classics.’”	Immediate	CLA Program Coordinator	We appreciate the reviewers’ suggestion to clarify the department’s student-facing information. The chair is in discussion with the CLA Program Coordinator to determine appropriate next steps, which will be informed by upcoming decisions about the program’s future direction.	The Programs and Curriculum team within my office is available to support the department in preparing and submitting proposed curricular changes, such as updates to course descriptions, to help ensure clear and accurate communication to prospective and current students as they consult the Academic Calendar and timetable for course and program planning.
Other recommendations not prioritized in the Request for Administrative Response	18.	“For purposes of recruiting more majors, the department should consider assigning experienced professors to the A-level courses, as was recommended in the 2018 IQAP report.”	Immediate	Chair	In line with the recommendations of the 2018 IQAP report, the majority of HCS A-levels are at this time already taught by experienced professors. This year, out of 12 A-levels in the department, 4 are taught by tenured faculty, 2 by highly experienced part-time faculty, and 6 by 3 sessionals (two of whom are long-term). HCS is working on reducing our overall A-level offerings and increasing further the share of continuing faculty among A-level instructors. In 2026-27 HCS will offer 9 A-levels, of which 6 will be taught by continuing faculty and 3 by long-term sessionals.	We applaud the department’s efforts to staff its A-level courses with continuing and experienced faculty members and to review its course offerings with increasing intentionality, taking into account student enrolment trends and faculty complement. The Dean’s Office will continue to support this work as part of the annual curriculum cycle and in relation to program development, budget planning, and enrolment considerations.
	19.	“We suggest collecting data to show employment outcomes, as well as which graduate programs students apply to and why.”	Medium	Dean	Data collection on graduates’ employment outcomes has long been a departmental desideratum. However, we have been told repeatedly that only DARO is allowed to collect such data, which is strictly limited and not available to us in analytically meaningful (non-anecdotal) format.	We will continue to support the department in articulating its post-graduation and alumni data needs and will engage the Development and Alumni Relations Office, as well as relevant divisional offices such as Arts & Science Co-op and the Academic Advising & Career Centre to explore potential solutions.

	20.	“Devising more systematic assessment practices may not be a high priority... But this might be an area in which the Dean’s office or some other campus unit could step in and help, particularly if it is an institutional priority.”	Long-term	Dean	We are not sure what this refers to but agree that systematic assessment (particularly of quality and innovative teaching, not just enrolment) is a laudable goal for the division. We look forward to collaborating toward this development.	Each year, the UTSC Academic Handbook is updated to ensure that policies and best practices for administering assessments, including term tests and final examinations, remain aligned with the tri-campus University of Toronto Assessment and Grading Practices Policy. Instructors are encouraged to clearly articulate assessment expectations in their syllabi to support transparency and student success.

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

1 Review Summary

Program(s) Reviewed:	Classical Studies: Minor (Arts) Global Asia Studies (BA): Specialist, Major, Minor History (BA): Specialist and Co-op, Major and Co-op, Minor Religion, Minor (Arts) (suspended to new enrolments effective 2013-14) Women's and Gender Studies (BA): Major and Co-op, Minor Combined Degree Programs with OISE MT
Unit Reviewed:	Department of Historical and Cultural Studies, UTSC
Commissioning Officer:	Vice-Principal Academic & Dean, UTSC
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	• Dr. Muriel Gomez-Perez, Professor, Department of Historical Sciences, Université Laval • Dr. Kristin Stapleton, Professor and Chair, Department of History, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York
Date of Review Visit:	February 12-13, 2025
Review Report Received by VPAP:	June 18, 2025
Administrative Response(s) Received by VPAP:	February 11, 2026
Date Reported to AP&P:	March 31, 2026

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: April 4-5, 2018

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths

- Enthusiastic and collegial faculty, staff, and students
- Students satisfied with the quality of instruction
- Department leverages the unique location of Scarborough within many programs and courses to explore relationships between the local and global
- Faculty with active research agendas, impressive international reputations and scholarly achievements, and commitment to undergraduate teaching
- Impressive tenure granting rate with system supporting the process

Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Resolving inconsistencies with information and practices surrounding faculty tenure, promotion and leaves, and providing clear guidance and mentoring for faculty members and support for new chairs
- Addressing administrative barriers that prevent faculty from teaching courses across programs, departments and campuses
- Engaging in consultation with cognate units regarding complement planning for Women's and Gender Studies, and History programs
- Increasing faculty-student interactions in response to challenges posed by being a commuter campus
- Continuing to build a cohesive unit and developing formal procedures for departmental committees
- Changing staffing resources and structures to better support the department's needs
- Reviewing and revising the curriculum to improve the coherence of courses and minimize competition across programs, and to scaffold the development of skills and content knowledge in first to fourth year courses
- Addressing the gap between courses listed in the calendar and courses that are regularly available
- Improving the co-op for humanities students or developing other experiential learning opportunities
- Providing additional writing support for undergraduate students

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

Terms of reference; Self-study, with supporting data and appendices provided in separate uploaded files; Review report template; Site visit schedule; Previous review report including the administrative response(s); Access to all undergraduate course and program descriptions; Access to syllabi for all undergraduate courses; Access to the curricula vitae of faculty; Links to the UTSC Strategic Plan 2020-25, University of Toronto Virtual Reality Tour, Interactive Campus Map, and UTSC Viewbook.

Consultation Process

Decanal group; faculty; students; administrative staff and senior program administrators as well as members of relevant cognate units, including the Arts & Science Co-op Office, the Office of the Vice-Principal Research & Innovation, the Office of the Registrar, and the UTSC Library.

Current Review: Findings and Recommendations

1. Undergraduate Program(s)

Unless otherwise noted, all bulleted comments apply to all programs reviewed.

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Department offers innovative programs in four interrelated areas of study
 - ▶ HCS programs appear in some respects to be at the forefront of their disciplines, particularly in their encouragement of interdisciplinary engagement, and promotion of experiential learning
 - ▶ History (HIS) program is successful and well-known to students, and emphasizes transnational perspectives
 - ▶ Classics program distinctive for its geographic breadth and its thematic emphasis on empire and colonialism
 - ▶ Global Asia Studies program emphasizes transnational comparisons and connections, and has a distinctive strong focus on China and South and West Asia
 - ▶ Women's and Gender Studies program is well-known to students and has contributed to rethinking the field by incorporating new approaches into the curriculum, including intersectional, transnational, and postcolonial perspectives
- Objectives
 - ▶ HIS program offers Specialist, Major, and Minor options, emphasizing geographical breadth in course selection and encouraging exposure to different historical periods
 - ▶ All four HCS programs share a common mission "to help students build the knowledge and skills they need to understand inequities in historical and

contemporary societies”; reviewers note that this mission seems appropriate and aligned with UTSC goals articulated in the *Scarborough Charter* and related documents

- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Enrolments in the Women’s and Gender Studies majors are relatively stable
 - ▶ HCS programs have no admission requirements, and the department is attentive to shaping and representing the programs in ways that resonate with UTSC students
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Faculty who administer and deliver HCS programs are dynamic scholars and accomplished teachers
 - ▶ HCS has worked very hard since its last review to develop program curricula in ways that support the unit’s shared goals
 - ▶ HCS faculty have devoted much thought to the curricula of the programs they oversee, and the extent to which the programs support one another is impressive
 - ▶ Much cross-pollination observed across HCS’s four programs, with many faculty teaching in more than one program, and courses double-numbered to comprise part of the curricula for two programs
 - ▶ Classics offers lower-level courses that attract a significant number of students seeking interesting electives; despite the program’s small size, enrolments are “truly impressive”
 - ▶ Classics program is distinctive for its focus on the early Islamic world, and its intentional emphasis on decolonial approaches
 - ▶ Classics has a newly strengthened tie to the Royal Ontario Museum, which may have positive impacts on experiential learning opportunities
 - ▶ Plan to revise the Classics curriculum to offer students more flexibility seems well-considered and appropriate
 - ▶ Core faculty in the Global Asia studies program are specialists on China and South and West Asia, but place emphasis on the greater global context and have productive collaborations with a number of cognate units
 - ▶ Majors and Specialists in Global Asia studies have access to learning opportunities at UTSC in languages including Mandarin, Cantonese, Tamil, and Hindi
 - ▶ HIS curriculum spans global history, covers a broad range of topics, and many courses offer transnational perspectives
 - ▶ HIS curriculum emphasizes reading, research and writing skills, and offers opportunities for interdisciplinary learning
 - ▶ Women’s and Gender Studies program takes an interdisciplinary and intersectional approach, with courses emphasizing transnational and decolonial perspectives; it offers valuable experiential and engaged learning opportunities connected to social justice activism
 - ▶ Faculty expertise in the Women’s and Gender Studies program offers students a variety of perspectives on feminism
 - ▶ There are four levels of courses in all HCS programs; this structure appears coherent and well-organized

- ▶ All four HCS programs provide enough courses for their students to complete academic requirements
- Innovation
 - ▶ Department exploring how best to engage in new programs such as the Certificate in Pathways to Health Professions, designed to give STEM students a grounding in health-related social science and humanities courses; HCS aims to concentrate on and strengthen existing areas of expertise
 - ▶ Department launched a pilot course this year designed to serve students affiliated with the Scarborough Academy of Medicine and Integrated Health (SAMIH)
 - ▶ HCS is exploring the development of certificate programs around particular themes, and a potential collaboration with the iSchool on a combined degree program
 - ▶ UTSC offers Combined Degree Programs that allow students to pursue both undergraduate and graduate studies, including pathways that connect the History Specialist or Major with a Master of Teaching degree
 - ▶ HCS programs introduce transnational and intersectional approaches that move beyond single-region or traditional frameworks, with innovative course offerings across all four programs
 - ▶ Student communication skills are developed using varied and innovative methods; Women's and Gender Studies emphasizes art-based teaching; Global Asia Studies distinguishes itself from UTSG offerings and identifies goals of growth, language integration, and expertise in the Islamic world of Asia
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Course titles reflect a departmental focus on equity, decolonization and anti-racism
 - ▶ "The teaching objective in HCS is to put into practice Indigenous, anti-colonial, and anti-racist perspectives"
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Students appear to greatly value the education they receive
 - ▶ Faculty and staff report receiving very positive feedback from students
 - ▶ Students interviewed report that they find their courses stimulating and engaging, and note a strong preference for in-person classes
 - ▶ Co-op streams are available to HIS students, however faculty believe that other forms of experiential learning are a better fit for students
 - ▶ Surveys indicate that students appreciate the range and flexibility of HIS course offerings
 - ▶ Student surveys indicate that HCS faculty create welcoming environments in their courses
 - ▶ Conversations with HCS students indicate that the department's mission is being conveyed through coursework
 - ▶ UTSC offers many forms of supports to students, particularly international learners
 - ▶ HSC student satisfaction appears overall very high
 - ▶ Undergraduate students have access to specialized research and a range of conceptual, methodological, and pedagogical approaches; and the majority of surveyed HCS students note that their programs provide opportunities for interdisciplinary learning

- ▶ Students benefit from faculty research, which is shared both in the classroom and when faculty invite colleagues to campus for speaking events and conferences
- ▶ Some students have participated in experiential learning opportunities through faculty research projects
- ▶ Department offers tutorials for core courses and many opportunities for extra-curricular learning via talks and events
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Number of HCS students on the Dean’s list has increased significantly
 - ▶ Course evaluations show improvements in the quality of students attracted to the HIS major and minor
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ HIS alumni have pursued graduate studies at a variety of well-regarded institutions

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Decline noted in enrolments in HCS Majors, though reviewers note this is likely connected to broader trends in humanities education
 - ▶ HIS has faced some challenges in recent years adapting to the transfer of the African Studies and Food Studies minors to other units, which involved rethinking teaching priorities and the departure of several affiliated faculty
 - ▶ Classics program is handicapped by the small faculty size and lack of resources for language instruction
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ GAS program notes declining major and minor enrolments in recent years (though it has relatively stable course enrolments)
 - ▶ HIS specialist enrolments have plateaued in recent years, majors have declined (though minors have increased)
 - ▶ Enrolments in the Women’s and Gender Studies minor have been somewhat variable, and enrolments in the co-op major are very low
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Offering core courses at the A-level by senior faculty noted as a challenge
 - ▶ Faculty desire to engage in the graduate programs where they hold appointments pulls them in multiple directions, and creates some challenges for curriculum planning
 - ▶ Faculty report concerns about their capacity to continue to offer robust curricula in each of the programs and to review and update curricula regularly
 - ▶ HIS faculty report that pressure to increase enrolments by adding lower-level courses has resulted in fewer D-level offerings
 - ▶ A noted weakness of the Classics program is its inability to offer instruction in Latin, Greek and Arabic
 - ▶ Language requirements in Global Asia Studies programs are frequently waived, though reviewers note that some degree-seeking students may enter the program with a command of one or more Asian language

- ▶ “It is quite striking that UTSC has few if any course offerings related to Northeast Asia and that the topic was not addressed in the GAS section of the self-study”
- ▶ GAS faculty report that students in the program have noted concern about the relatively low number of courses available to them, and limited progress has been made since the last review on reducing barriers that prevent faculty in other units from teaching courses in the program
- ▶ HIS offers very few courses in Latin American history, and no faculty member is a specialist in this area
- ▶ Full-time faculty in the Women’s and Gender Studies program have appointments in a variety of graduate units, which limits their capacity to support the program
- Innovation
 - ▶ Potential new certificates have not been conceived as a means to recruit new students into the majors or specialists, and may further restrict faculty capacity to teach D-level courses in existing programs
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Department could face a decline in international student enrolments, due to recent governmental measures aimed at reducing the ratio of international admissions
 - ▶ Reviewers note that a reduction in international admissions could be very challenging for HCS, which offers courses on the home regions of many international students
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Assessment of teaching and learning beyond grading appears to be done somewhat informally in each program
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ “One obvious barrier to the excellence of the programs lies in the relative lack of support for faculty-organized experiential learning opportunities”
 - ▶ The co-op program does not appear to reliably offer HCS students opportunities to deepen disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge and skills
 - ▶ Reviewers report some difficulty assessing the level of student engagement in the department outside of classes
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Only the HIS program provided evidence of strong student outcomes in the HCS self-study
 - ▶ Reviewers note a lack of access to comparative data from other units, campuses and provincial or national sources to inform their assessment of HCS outcomes

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Objectives
 - ▶ Reviewers endorse the Department’s plan to change the name of the Classics program to “Ancient World Studies”; however they note that if this name change takes effect, efforts should be made to ensure the program is still visible to potential students who “continue to think in terms of the concept of ‘Classics’”

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Reviewers note that the creation of a Classics major is “inadvisable”, due to the lack of language learning opportunities
 - ▶ Encourage students in Global Asia Studies to pursue language studies, and ensure that supports for language study are made visible on the program’s webpage
 - ▶ Given pressure to increase enrolments, the unit might consider offering courses in Japanese and Korean culture, which have proven very popular at other institutions
 - ▶ Consider enhancing clarity and communications around the current regional emphases of the GAS program
 - ▶ Consider assigning experienced professors to HIS A-level courses, to recruit more History majors
- Innovation
 - ▶ HCS should carefully consider the possible impacts of new initiatives such as certificates and combined programs on faculty and staff workload
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ “Online instruction does solve some problems of accessibility and might give students more course options. But the feeling among faculty and students that humanities courses work best in face-to-face communal settings is shared widely”
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Explore the development of more systematic practices to assess student achievement, in consultation with divisional leadership
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ HCS faculty seem prepared to expand experiential learning opportunities beyond co-op offerings, but would require course release and other forms of support to enable such initiatives; reviewers recommend strengthening supports for forms of experiential learning involving small groups of students
 - ▶ Student surveys indicate a desire for more resources, such as internships and additional mentorship programs involving senior faculty
 - ▶ Reviewers endorse plans to prioritize tutorials for A-level courses
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Reviewers recommend that HCS collect data on alumni employment outcomes, and graduate program applications

2. Graduate Program(s) – n/a

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ HCS faculty are extremely productive, and fully engaged in their various disciplines
 - ▶ High caliber of academic leadership noted in the Classics program, which has an international influence

- Research
 - ▶ HCS faculty are very active researchers in terms of publications and grants; “[the] Department’s work is truly impressive”
 - ▶ Faculty research is notable for its global reach and diverse forms of dissemination, with strong publications, international collaborations, grants, and awards
 - ▶ Several HIS faculty members have received prestigious research awards, several faculty are key members of international research networks, and many engage in collaborative work from interdisciplinary perspectives
 - ▶ Part-time faculty and CLTAs are satisfied with their access to departmental funding for research
- Faculty
 - ▶ Two senior HCS appointments were made in the past year, and both bring impressive records to the department: the Tamil Studies Chair, and a distinguished professor in Black Canadian studies (reviewers highlight these as evidence that UTSC leadership appreciates the department’s work)
 - ▶ Hiring of Tamil Chair is an exciting development, which will more closely connect the institution with the Tamil diaspora community, and allow UTSC to become a global leader in Tamil studies
 - ▶ New faculty report feeling enthusiastic about joining the department, and welcomed by colleagues
 - ▶ GAS is prioritizing recruitment of an expert in Global Sinophone Languages and Cultures, which could also be helpful for the English-Chinese Translation program in the Department of Language Studies
 - ▶ Women’s and Gender Studies program has benefited from the recent hiring of two new faculty members, who join a strong cohort of colleagues
 - ▶ Chair has devoted considerable efforts to hiring teaching stream and part-time faculty in recent years to decrease reliance on sessional instructors
 - ▶ At the time of the review, the department had authorization to hire a senior colleague in Indigenous Histories of Environmental Justice, and outlined proposed future hires in Public History, Intersectional Indigenous Histories of Health and Medicine, and Global Sinophone Languages and Cultures (cross-appointed with the Department of Language Studies)

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Faculty
 - ▶ HCS has very few full professors for the size of the faculty, which leads to workload inequities
 - ▶ Some teaching stream faculty report a lack of clarity regarding promotion guidelines
 - ▶ Faculty note concerns that part-time teaching staff were not given contracts for the 2024-25 academic year in a timely manner
 - ▶ CLTA and part-time faculty play important roles in strategic curriculum planning, though some faculty noted that the precariousness of these positions raises questions about investing in this work

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Faculty
 - ▶ Work to strengthen the balance between junior and senior faculty
 - ▶ Provide promotion supports for faculty; the unit will benefit greatly from the advancement of its “talented and engaged” associate professors
 - ▶ Work to reduce the precarity of part-time and CLTA faculty, and ensure that contracts and course allocations are provided in a timely manner; this will promote course visibility, enable more effective curricular planning, and foster a more cohesive departmental community
 - ▶ Reviewers endorse a proposal to prioritize hiring an expert in public history, which could support initiatives such as the Scarborough Oral History Project digital archive, the potential development of a certificate in Digital History, and a combined degree program with the iSchool
 - ▶ Prioritize the recruitment of junior faculty, particularly to strengthen coverage in Classics/Ancient World studies, and Latin American studies
 - ▶ HCS priorities for future hiring seem well-considered, but should be revisited regularly and transparently, as the departmental and institutional landscape evolves
 - ▶ Clarify promotion guidelines for teaching-stream faculty to ensure transparency and help colleagues prioritize their work effectively

4. Administration

Note: Issues that are addressed through specific University processes and therefore considered out of scope for UTQAP reviews (e.g., individual Human Resources issues, specific health and safety concerns) are routed to proper University offices to be addressed, and are therefore not included in the Review Summary component of the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan.

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ “Clearly HCS faculty and staff care deeply about UTSC’s mission to be of service to its students and the communities from which they come”
 - ▶ HCS community morale appears healthy, and staff, faculty and students report feeling welcomed by departmental colleagues
 - ▶ Current leadership is credited with strengthening departmental community and atmosphere, and is reported by faculty to be an innovative collaborator on developing new courses and initiatives
 - ▶ Program Coordinators and Committee Chairs appear very dedicated to organizing and scheduling course offerings
 - ▶ Library staff are enthusiastic participants in departmental life, both as resources for students and collaborators with faculty
 - ▶ An ongoing partnership with the UTSC Library and the Dragoman Renaissance Research Platform is noted as productive
 - ▶ HCS faculty work closely with colleagues in other units

- ▶ Recent hires in Tamil studies and Black Canadian studies expected to further strengthen impressive record of local, national and international social impact
- ▶ “The collaboration with the library to establish a Tamil archive of special collections, print and rare private papers is a wonderful project”
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Plans noted to expand the work of UTSC’s co-op program with humanities departments, and add a central staff position and a community engagement office to support these efforts
 - ▶ Department is fortunate with regard to its physical space and library resources
 - ▶ “Our conversations with the chair and departmental staff convince us that departmental resources are in very good hands”
 - ▶ Current HCS leadership has helped the department establish governance documents and procedures
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Programs appear to be very effective, despite relatively limited resources
 - ▶ The composition of HCS is unique, and has “created the conditions for a lively, innovative academic unit”

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Reviewers highlight ongoing frustration stemming from a lack of mutual understanding between the department and the Dean’s office regarding institutional and departmental priorities, including initiatives such as the health professions certificate and the Co-op program; they note that without improved communication and support, departmental morale and work may be negatively impacted
 - ▶ “Many faculty believe that the department’s mission to offer UTSC students critical perspectives on history, gender, and contemporary society—including anti-colonial, transnational, intersectional, and interdisciplinary perspectives, public history, and global humanities—is not sufficiently valued by administrators”
 - ▶ Some faculty question the institution’s appreciation of departmental research efforts
 - ▶ Concerns raised about faculty morale, due in part to a lack of feedback from leadership on the unit’s 2024 strategic plan, and a lack of clarity regarding course and program enrolment priorities
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ New faculty note concerns about the level of staff support available to HCS, and potential impacts on their contributions to UTSC and the communities it serves
 - ▶ Some faculty and staff note concerns that central units appear to be focused primarily on the needs of other programs; some also note that working with central units is cumbersome and time-consuming
 - ▶ Ongoing bureaucratic barriers including issues with course double-numbering and cross-departmental teaching responsibilities continue to create uncertainty and hinder the department’s work

- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Department facing many challenges at a time when financial resources are limited
 - ▶ “the new UTSC emphasis on medicine and allied health studies is seen by many in the department as changing the nature of the institution and diverting resources and attention from the humanities”
 - ▶ Reviewers note some tension between the divisional and institutional emphasis on both enrolment figures and experiential learning, “since to be effective the latter requires a considerable investment of faculty time in a relatively small number of students”
 - ▶ Faculty report that pressure is being put on the unit to make courses more profitable, for example by increasing class sizes; however many HCS faculty emphasize the value of intensive engagement with students in smaller classes (though UTSC does not appear to have developed or employed metrics that measure the effectiveness of different modes of teaching)
- International comparators
 - ▶ “Given the unusual combination of four programs that make up HCS, it is difficult to compare it to other departments around the world”

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Reviewers urge HCS faculty and divisional leadership to engage in constructive dialogue to strengthen mutual understanding and respect, and encourage more effective collaboration
 - ▶ Faculty note desire for divisional and institutional leadership to help find effective ways to make HCS programs more visible to potential students; UTSC recruitment staff could work with HCS faculty on customized promotional initiatives
 - ▶ Explore opportunities to improve HCS marketing and communications, such as producing short videos that showcase faculty diversity, expertise, research, and publications, and that highlight the department’s strong sense of community
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Dean’s office should carefully consider the department’s views and concerns about collaborating with central offices, and work to minimize any barriers to HCS taking advantage of central resources
 - ▶ Reviewers note that it may be beneficial to consider streamlining some departmental processes, and periodically assess the unit’s governance and policy documents
 - ▶ “HCS has a strong record of recruiting excellent colleagues, but all faculty hires require corresponding staff support to reach their greatest potential”
 - ▶ Work with the Dean’s office to identify and, where possible, remove bureaucratic barriers to the department’s work; provide clarity for HCS around double-numbering courses and the ability of faculty in other units to teach core courses in HCS programs

- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Department should work towards developing shared, agreed-upon curricular goals in consultation with the Dean's office, and determine whether it might prioritize growing existing degree programs, or maximize enrolments by expanding "innovative and attractive lower level courses"
 - ▶ The unit might collaborate with leadership to reach a consensus on how to balance the dual goals of high enrolments and intensive instruction
 - ▶ Additional resources for language instruction and programming in Tamil studies would allow work in the area to flourish more quickly; advancement efforts should be devoted to developing Tamil studies
 - ▶ Tamil Chair is the first position endowed at UTSC via broad community support, and could serve as a model for future initiatives
 - ▶ Reviewers note that until strategic investments can be made in resources to strengthen HCS programs, "it may be necessary to more clearly identify and concentrate on core functions as opposed to taking on new initiatives or investing in less essential work. In short, the department seems to be trying to do too much."
 - ▶ Faculty and staff should work with departmental and divisional leadership to determine how HCS can most effectively use its available resources
 - ▶ Reassess departmental capacity and development plans through close collaboration between the unit and the Dean's office, with a focus on identifying top priorities and realistic goals, to prevent faculty and staff overextension and burnout
 - ▶ Unit leadership should work with the Dean's office to identify priority areas for fundraising that might support faculty positions and experiential learning programs beyond the co-op experience

2 Administrative Response & Implementation Plan



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO
SCARBOROUGH

Office of the Vice-Principal Academic & Dean

February 11, 2026

Professor Nicholas Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Division of the Vice-President & Provost
University of Toronto

Dean's Administrative Response: External Review of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies, University of Toronto Scarborough

Dear Professor Rule,

Thank you for your letter dated October 15, 2025, requesting my administrative response to the February 2025 external review of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies. I would like to extend my gratitude to the review team—Muriel Gomez-Perez, Professor, Department of Historical Sciences, Université Laval; and Kristin Stapleton, Professor and Chair, Department of History, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York—for their consultation with the department during the site visit held from February 12–13, 2025, and for their report, which was finalized on June 18, 2025, and shared with the department.

We appreciate the reviewers' recognition of the department's strong integration across its four program areas and the coherence of its curriculum. Their commendation of the high level of student satisfaction reflects the department's intentional incorporation of experiential and interdisciplinary learning, as well as the valuable co-curricular and research opportunities offered to students. The reviewers also highlighted the extensive partnerships and collaborations fostered by the department and its faculty members.

The review team has also identified several areas for enhancement, including clarifying departmental priorities and processes; strengthening supports for associate professors and teaching-stream faculty in promotion and career progression; and improving the timeliness of communications to support curricular planning and foster a stronger sense of community. They further noted the importance of continued communication and collaboration to ensure shared understanding and alignment of campus priorities between the department and my office. With this letter, I have included a table summarizing our responses to each of the reviewers' recommendations, along with anticipated timelines for implementation where applicable.

Once again, I thank the review team for their thoughtful and valuable assessment of the department and its programs. I look forward to supporting the department in implementing the recommendations of this report. The Dean's Office will continue to monitor progress through regular meetings with the Chair of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies. An interim report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will be prepared in Winter 2029. The next external review of the department is scheduled to take place no later than the 2032–33 academic year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Karin Ruhlandt". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Karin" and last name "Ruhlandt" clearly distinguishable.

Professor Karin Ruhlandt
Vice-Principal Academic & Dean

2024-25 UTQAP Review of the UTSC Department of Historical and Cultural Studies - Review Recommendations

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short, medium, long term) for each, and who will take the lead in each area. If appropriate, please identify any necessary changes in organization, policy or governance; and any resources, financial and otherwise, that will be provided, and who will provide them.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, “it is important to note that, while the external reviewers’ report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university’s internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability” (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Time Frame	Lead	Unit Response	Dean’s Response
The reviewers noted an imbalance in HCS faculty rank distribution, with very few faculty at the Professor rank. They encouraged the Department to engage in strategic complement planning to ensure an appropriate balance of junior and senior faculty, and to prioritize enhanced coverage in Classics/Ancient World Studies and Latin American history when hiring opportunities permit. The reviewers also emphasized the importance of clarifying processes and strengthening supports for associate professors and teaching-stream faculty for promotion and career progression.	1.	“Work to create a better balance between full professors and more junior professors, provide support for associate professors that will lead to their promotion, and support the work of new faculty hires with adequate staffing.”	Immediate	Chair	3 Associate Professors are being reviewed for promotion this year; 2 more are planning to request detailed consideration in the next cycle or two. The chair is in ongoing conversations with all associate professors to provide mentorship and career support.	The Dean’s Office is committed to working with departments to ensure that colleagues are supported and mentored for promotion review. Through the office of the Vice-Dean, Faculty Affairs Equity and Success, the Mentoring Excellence and Diversity Advisory Committee (MEAD) also provides important guidance on matters related to career trajectories, mentorship, coaching, and professional development for faculty and librarians.
	2.	“The department and Dean’s office should work together to offer course releases and career counseling.”	Medium	Dean	An HCS pilot program has previously provided course releases for mid-career faculty approaching the completion of a second major project. The program, which ran for the past 3 years, has benefitted all 3 of the associate professors currently undergoing promotion review. It was put on hold this year due to budgetary constraints. With decanal support we’d be happy to resume it.	My office looks forward to ongoing dialogue with the Chair regarding faculty complement, promotion, and staffing needs, particularly in light of the campus’s current fiscal environment.

	3.	“Establish clear guidelines for the promotion of teaching-stream faculty.”	Immediate	Dean	HCS looks forward to receiving the updated guidelines on teaching excellence, once available. We currently have only one teaching-stream faculty eligible for promotion.	The Dean’s Office is developing updated Guidelines for the Assessment of Effectiveness of Teaching. Pending governance approval, these guidelines are anticipated to take effect in the 2026-27 academic year.
	4.	“We encourage the steady recruitment of professors at the beginning of their careers, particularly to strengthen Classics/Ancient World Studies and to cover the Latin American field.”	Medium	Chair + Dean	HCS is deeply engaged in ongoing, strategic thinking in relation to divisional priorities and enrolment planning as they shape future complement plans. Over the past 5 years we have had significant success in recruiting phenomenal new colleagues that support departmental and divisional strategic priorities, including through the Provostial funds for Black and Indigenous faculty, the fruits of which show throughout the self-study and reviewer report. In line with departmental and stated institutional priorities on inclusive excellence as a means to expand enrolment and complement offerings, we remain committed to hiring in the field of Indigenous History and look forward to opportunities to articulate further complement plans in relation to shifting departmental and curricular priorities, and given the current budgetary context.	I appreciate the department’s identification of fields that would benefit from future hiring. My office looks forward to continued dialogue with the Chair on faculty complement, promotion, and staffing needs within the realities of the current fiscal environment, including opportunities to further leverage remaining provostial funds for Indigenous faculty hiring.
The reviewers observed that part-time and contractually limited-term appointment (CLTA) faculty members in the Department face significant precarity, due in part to late contracts and course allocations. They recommended exploring ways to enhance the stability of these arrangements and to ensure more timely communication to support	5.	“Reduce the precarity of the part-time faculty.”	Immediate	Dean	HCS would welcome opportunities to extend longer contracts to part-time faculty and stabilize their employment status. This would require decanal budgetary commitments.	The Dean’s Office remains committed to working with the Chair to assess faculty complement and staffing needs, while being mindful of the campus’s fiscal context.
	6.	“The university and department should define the teaching tasks of part-time and CLTA faculty by providing longer-term contracts as early as possible. By doing so, it will	Medium	Dean	Changes to contract length for part-time and CLTA faculty are not in the hands of the department. As stated above, we would welcome the opportunity to provide longer-term contracts to our part-	Please refer to my response to recommendation #5 for further detail.

effective curricular planning and foster a stronger sense of community.		promote the visibility of courses, allow for more effective curricular planning, and strengthen the feeling of belonging to a teaching and research community, thus fostering a more cohesive unit.”			time and CLTA colleagues. HCS views this as an important area for continued collaboration with the Dean’s office and will support efforts that promote stability, transparency, and community cohesion.	
The reviewers highlighted significant tension between the Department and divisional leadership regarding strategic planning and priorities, particularly around enrolment pressures, experiential learning, and new initiatives. They recommended encouraging open communication and collaboration between the Department and the Dean’s Office to build mutual understanding and clearer alignment of priorities and expectations.	7.	“Build a stronger mutual understanding and agreement about the relationship between institutional and department priorities.”	Medium	Chair + Dean	HCS looks forward to learning more about current institutional priorities. Our track record demonstrates deep commitment to institutional strategic directions (e.g. PIE, the Scarborough Charter, Inclusive Excellence), in both the recruitment of new faculty, innovative curriculum design, and dynamic co-curricular programming, such as the Indigenous Speaker Series. We are also actively engaged in conversation with the Dean’s Office and other academic units about strengthening the legibility of our programs and courses to students in ways that support SAMIH (e.g. highlighting existing and emerging curriculum on feminist perspectives on health; social justice and equity, history of science, technology and medicine; colonial biopolitics; racial and gendered bodies; transnational knowledge production, etc.).	My office engages departments and their leadership through a range of established forums to share institutional priorities and receive feedback on emerging needs. These include the Chairs’ Council, where topics span budget planning, curriculum development, campus safety, and research and innovation, and the Campus Leadership Forum. With respect to curricular priorities and related development, interrelated bodies such as the Campus Curriculum Committee (CCC), the Health Across Disciplines Working Group, and the Campus Curriculum Review Working Circle continue to provide venues for dialogue, consultation, and the exploration of collaborative opportunities. HCS plays an important leadership role in these spaces, and we look forward to continued partnership.
	8.	“We recommend also that support be made available for forms of experiential learning involving small groups of students. This will require a serious discussion among the faculty, the Chair, and the Dean’s office staff to achieve a balance between enrollments and innovative instruction.”	Medium	Chair + Dean	HCS is launching innovative curriculum to strengthen research- and practicum-based opportunities for program students in their second and third years e.g. through course-based participation in faculty-led research projects and through placements on- and off-campus that leverage students’ disciplinary knowledge and skills in a variety of professional settings. Such opportunities are resource intensive and often require individualized attention that	Experiential Learning (EL) is a longstanding strength and a key strategic priority for UTSC. To support the future evolution of EL on our campus, my office is undertaking an administrative review of the EL ecosystem this term. Recommendations arising from this work will help guide future practices in alignment with the division’s academic and institutional goals.

					cannot be provided in large classes. We would welcome further institutional investment in smaller class sizes that would allow us to expand EL opportunities across the board and believe we can offer divisional leadership in this area. To this end, we look forward to opportunities to create a CLTA for Tamil language and experiential learning as a template for future curricular innovation tied to SAMIH that can be extended across our programs).	We remain committed to ongoing dialogue with the Department Chair regarding faculty complement and staffing needs, particularly in light of the current fiscal environment.
	9.	“Discussions among the faculty, the Chair, and the Dean’s office staff to identify priority areas for fundraising are advisable, if these discussions have not yet taken place.”	Medium	Chair + Dean	HCS will welcome such an opportunity, particularly in relation to existing and emergent faculty research interests in, e.g. Tamil Worlds, Palestine Studies, Black Knowledges, and Indian Ocean Studies, among others.	The Dean’s Office would be pleased to facilitate a discussion between the department and the Development and Alumni Relations Office to explore and implement advancement and further enhance alumni engagement strategies.
The reviewers raised concerns that HCS risks overextension as it pursues new initiatives such as certificates and combined degree programs alongside its existing offerings. They recommended that departmental planning focus on a clear set of strategic priorities to maintain core strengths and ensure sustainable use of resources.	10.	“Reassess the capacity of the department to continue to offer all of its degree programs as well as add new options such as certificates and combined degrees and reconsider the development plan of the department.”	Medium	Chair, PCs, faculty	Conversations among HCS faculty, as well as with the Dean’s Office, are already under way toward this end. Our goal is to reduce our administrative complexity and create more streamlined and legible program options to students that leverage optimally our existing teaching capacity by consolidating offerings at the lower level while providing differentiated streams for students seeking to specialize in specific fields/disciplines/methods/professionalizing tracks at the upper level, including a more research-intensive specialist stream. The proposal currently in discussion among faculty could see our programs in Classical Studies, Global Asia Studies, and History merged into a single program with specialized thematic/disciplinary streams. It also suggests that our program in Women’s and Gender Studies formally	We commend the department’s efforts to streamline current offerings in ways that would better fulfill students’ academic and professional needs while also reducing administrative complexity. The Dean’s Office looks forward to learning more about the department’s curricular planning and future direction. Last fall, we launched a new expression-of-interest process to consider new and significantly modified program initiatives and to assess their potential resource implications, and we are working with HCS to prepare for this submission as departmental discussions unfold.

					expand its remit to incorporate Social Justice.	
	11.	“We recommend strong collaboration between the Dean’s office and faculty to think about the future development of the department, to reconsider the links between disciplines and the complementarity of programs, and to identify three or four top priorities for investment. The department must be realistic about what it can accomplish without leading to faculty and staff burnout.”	Medium	Chair + Dean	The chair is already in conversation with decanal leadership to discuss strategic directions along the lines above. Once the department has had a chance to confirm and fine-tune its plans for program modifications the chair will share these with the dean’s office for further consultations and governance implementation.	Please refer to my response to recommendation #10 for further detail.
The reviewers noted faculty concerns regarding ongoing bureaucratic and structural barriers to departmental operations, including issues around course double-numbering and cross-unit teaching. They recommended that the unit work with divisional leadership to clarify and address these concerns to reduce any unnecessary obstacles to effective curriculum planning and delivery.	12.	“Identify and, if possible, remove bureaucratic barriers to the work of the department: The 2018 program review identified several barriers to the work of the department that have not yet been satisfactorily addressed. These include issues with double-numbering courses and the ability of faculty in other departments to teach core courses in some of the HCS programs. We recommend the Dean’s office be asked to provide clarity on these bureaucratic matters, so they do not continue to feature among the faculty’s concerns.”	Immediate/medium	Dean	HCS would welcome clarity on these longstanding challenges.	In Summer 2025, the Dean’s Office introduced new administrative guidelines to support and incentivize interdisciplinary curriculum development. These guidelines aim to: (1) Build on UTSC’s longstanding strengths in interdisciplinary teaching and foster its continued development in ways that benefit all academic units; (2) Provide clarity for Chairs and administrative staff in planning and administering interdisciplinary courses, which are increasingly prevalent as disciplinary boundaries evolve; and (3) Establish administrative and budgetary parameters that encourage sustainable cross-departmental collaboration. Departments will continue to receive periodic reminders of these guidelines as part of our ongoing support for interdisciplinary initiatives.

The reviewers emphasized the importance of enhancing the visibility of HCS programs. They recommended more active marketing and communications to highlight faculty expertise and diversity, and the department's strong sense of community.	13.	"Improve marketing and communications."	Immediate	Dean	HCS would welcome the opportunity to work with Marketing and Communications on videos that introduce students to the vibrancy of our programs and that profile our faculty research and teaching interests. The department is also in the process of restructuring its web presence to make the class offerings and faculty specializations more visible and accessible to students. We are aware that increased marketing support for Humanities departments is a priority area for the Dean's Office, and look forward to continued dialogue on this critical complement to academic advising.	We commend the department for its efforts to enhance the accessibility of student-facing information through its website. Our office is actively working with the Marketing and Communications team to explore additional approaches for highlighting faculty research strengths and teaching interests. The Dean's Office will continue to advocate for the marketing and communications needs of Humanities departments with divisional partners such as Marketing and Communications and the Academic Advising & Career Centre.
	14.	"We recommend the production of short videos to highlight and promote HCS's faculty diversity, areas of expertise, research, publications, and profiles ('engaged teachers'), and also to promote the department as a 'tight community'... linked to a well-stocked and easily accessible library."	Immediate/medium	Dean	See above	Please refer to my response to recommendation #13 for further detail.
	15.	"We suggest that a section of the [Global Asia Studies] program's webpage be devoted to [language study opportunities]."	Immediate	GAS Program Coordinator	We appreciate the reviewers' suggestion to clarify the department's student-facing information. The chair is in discussion with the GAS Program Coordinator to determine appropriate next steps, which will be informed by upcoming decisions about the program's future direction.	We commend the department for its efforts to enhance the accessibility of student-facing information, including curricular and co-curricular initiatives, through its website. These improvements meaningfully support students' ability to navigate academic requirements and other study opportunities.
	16.	"The program faculty should also consider explaining [regional	Immediate	GAS Program Coordinator	We appreciate the reviewers' suggestion to clarify the department's student-facing information. The chair is in discussion with	Please refer to my response to recommendation #15 for further detail.

		emphases] more clearly on its webpage.”			the GAS Program Coordinator to determine appropriate next steps, which will be informed by upcoming decisions about the program’s future direction.	
	17.	“Measures should be taken to make the [Classics/Ancient World Studies] program visible to potential students who continue to think in terms of the concept of ‘Classics.’”	Immediate	CLA Program Coordinator	We appreciate the reviewers’ suggestion to clarify the department’s student-facing information. The chair is in discussion with the CLA Program Coordinator to determine appropriate next steps, which will be informed by upcoming decisions about the program’s future direction.	The Programs and Curriculum team within my office is available to support the department in preparing and submitting proposed curricular changes, such as updates to course descriptions, to help ensure clear and accurate communication to prospective and current students as they consult the Academic Calendar and timetable for course and program planning.
Other recommendations not prioritized in the Request for Administrative Response	18.	“For purposes of recruiting more majors, the department should consider assigning experienced professors to the A-level courses, as was recommended in the 2018 IQAP report.”	Immediate	Chair	In line with the recommendations of the 2018 IQAP report, the majority of HCS A-levels are at this time already taught by experienced professors. This year, out of 12 A-levels in the department, 4 are taught by tenured faculty, 2 by highly experienced part-time faculty, and 6 by 3 sessionals (two of whom are long-term). HCS is working on reducing our overall A-level offerings and increasing further the share of continuing faculty among A-level instructors. In 2026-27 HCS will offer 9 A-levels, of which 6 will be taught by continuing faculty and 3 by long-term sessionals.	We applaud the department’s efforts to staff its A-level courses with continuing and experienced faculty members and to review its course offerings with increasing intentionality, taking into account student enrolment trends and faculty complement. The Dean’s Office will continue to support this work as part of the annual curriculum cycle and in relation to program development, budget planning, and enrolment considerations.
	19.	“We suggest collecting data to show employment outcomes, as well as which graduate programs students apply to and why.”	Medium	Dean	Data collection on graduates’ employment outcomes has long been a departmental desideratum. However, we have been told repeatedly that only DARO is allowed to collect such data, which is strictly limited and not available to us in analytically meaningful (non-anecdotal) format.	We will continue to support the department in articulating its post-graduation and alumni data needs and will engage the Development and Alumni Relations Office, as well as relevant divisional offices such as Arts & Science Co-op and the Academic Advising & Career Centre to explore potential solutions.

	20.	“Devising more systematic assessment practices may not be a high priority... But this might be an area in which the Dean’s office or some other campus unit could step in and help, particularly if it is an institutional priority.”	Long-term	Dean	We are not sure what this refers to but agree that systematic assessment (particularly of quality and innovative teaching, not just enrolment) is a laudable goal for the division. We look forward to collaborating toward this development.	Each year, the UTSC Academic Handbook is updated to ensure that policies and best practices for administering assessments, including term tests and final examinations, remain aligned with the tri-campus University of Toronto Assessment and Grading Practices Policy. Instructors are encouraged to clearly articulate assessment expectations in their syllabi to support transparency and student success.

3 Committee on Academic Policy & Programs (AP&P) Findings

The spokesperson for the reading group reported that the review summary accurately described the full review, and that the Dean's administrative response adequately addressed all issues identified. The reading group did not have any additional questions, comments or substantive issues for the Committee to consider.

No follow-up report was requested.

Members had no questions.

4 Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers commended the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies (HCS) as a distinctive and innovative unit with a strong sense of integration across its four program areas. They highlighted the curriculum's cross-pollination and incorporation of experiential and interdisciplinary learning. Students report high levels of satisfaction, noting engaging teaching, welcoming classroom environments, and valuable opportunities for research and co-curricular engagement. Faculty are recognized for their impressive research productivity and international collaborations, and recent strategic hires further enhance the department's reputation and community connections. Finally, the reviewers noted HCS's collegial and supportive culture, effective leadership and administration, and its productive partnerships across UTSC and beyond.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: engaging in strategic complement planning to ensure an appropriate balance of junior and senior faculty, prioritizing enhanced coverage in Classics/Ancient World Studies and Latin American history, and clarifying processes and strengthening supports for associate professors and teaching-stream faculty for promotion and career progression; exploring ways to enhance the stability of part-time and CLTA faculty arrangements and ensuring more timely communication with these groups; encouraging open communication and collaboration between the Department and the Dean's Office to build mutual understanding and clearer alignment of priorities and expectations; focusing departmental planning on a clear set of strategic priorities to maintain core strengths and ensure sustainable use of resources; working with divisional leadership to clarify and address faculty concerns regarding ongoing bureaucratic and structural barriers to departmental operations; and strengthening efforts to enhance the visibility of HCS programs.

The Dean's Administrative Response describes the division and unit's responses to the reviewers' recommendations, including an implementation plan for any changes necessary as a result.

5 Monitoring and Date of Next Review

The Dean's Office will continue to monitor progress through regular meetings with the Chair of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies.

The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs no later than Winter 2029 on the status of the implementation plans.

The next review will take place no later than the 2032–33 academic year.

6 Distribution

On August 15th 2026, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Vice-Principal, Academic & Dean of the University of Toronto Scarborough, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.