

University of Winnipeg MA in Cultural Studies Submission for IARP

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The MA in Cultural Studies began offering classes in 2009, without a secure source of funding initially promised, and with minimal staffing commitments from the University. Since then, we have managed, through the diligent work of our faculty and of the administrative staff of the English Department and the Faculty of Graduate Studies, to offer a program at a consistently high level, attracting students from across Canada and beyond, and bringing students back into the classroom who had previously considered their academic careers complete. While we are justifiably proud of our accomplishments, we look with some trepidation toward a future in which the program continues to be dependent on others' good will. We thank the IARP Steering Committee for the opportunity to speak to the strengths of the program and to the areas in which we see further opportunities and requirements for support and/or development.

SECTION 1: ENTERING UWINNIPEG

As the only graduate program in Cultural Studies in Western Canada, the MA in Cultural Studies has a large pool of potential students on which to draw. In 2015-16, one out of every three of our incoming students came from out of province; we would like to increase this number to at least one out of every two. In order to do this, we require a dedicated budget for recruitment. As of now, the Cultural Studies Graduate Program Chair controls a discretionary budget that can only be used for activities directed toward current students. A discretionary budget with fewer strings attached would enhance opportunities for recruiting students from beyond the walls of the institution. Recruitment also requires administrative work that currently devolves to the Graduate Program Chair. This is a tenable situation only if the goal of the program is to maintain current patterns of recruitment. In order to create new pathways into the university for traditionally underrepresented groups, UWinnipeg would do well to increase staffing in the Graduate Studies Office, splitting the position of "Enrolment and Budget Officer" to two positions, one focused on recruitment and student support, and one geared toward admissions and budgetary matters. Another potential approach would be to make the current Graduate Student Tutor position a permanent one.

That said, MA programs offer significant opportunities for local recruitment as well. With only a handful of graduate programs, UWinnipeg has not yet taken full advantage of the potential to bring former students back to the University for further study. The students in the MA in Cultural Studies come from a wide range of backgrounds. Some come directly from BA degrees, while others are returning to university years after completing their previous degrees. We hear increasingly from applicants who are working in education that school administrators are recommending our program to teachers who already hold BAs and BEds. Other students enrol part-time in order to enhance their employment prospects in the fields in which they are working. Each year, the more students we graduate into these communities, the more applicants we seem to get from them.

The program (especially the Curatorial Practices Stream) has already seen some overlap in students with the PACE Arts Management diploma; this is an area that could be strengthened by making the MA program more visible as an option for continued study for students in the PACE program.

The MA in Cultural Studies could be further strengthened by the development of an undergraduate program in Cultural Studies, which could be comprised almost entirely of courses that are already being offered by various departments. A clear pathway to the MA program would undoubtedly increase enrolments, and a BA in Cultural Studies (which would be one of only two in Western Canada) could potentially attract students who would not otherwise consider UWinnipeg. This has, we believe, the potential to offer new and exciting pathways into UWinnipeg with little additional cost to the University.

Part of what distinguishes Cultural Studies from more traditional disciplines, and thus what makes it an attractive option for potential students, is that it is a media-intensive discipline. Our faculty teach classes in film studies, visual art, art history, graphic narratives, and a range of other topics, many of which require reliable, high-quality audio-visual equipment. With a dedicated smart seminar classroom, our faculty could plan courses knowing precisely the capabilities and nature of the space in which they teach. In terms of space, we would also like to see our students, many of whom work as Teaching and Research Assistants, given dedicated office space in which to work and to meet with students, rather than having them compete with other graduate students at the university for space in the library.

Experiential learning has been an integral part of the Curatorial Practices Stream of the MA in Cultural Studies since its inception through its required practicum course. The Texts and Cultures stream has placed students in internships previously; there is certainly the potential for a more formally articulated practicum course in the Texts and Cultures stream, which could be modelled on the sorts of practicum courses currently being run, for example, in the English and Women's and Gender Studies Departments.

That said, practicum courses tend to be labour-intensive, both for the students and for the faculty members administering them. Given that the University's Experiential Learning Network has recently hired an administrator, perhaps that person could take on the responsibility of facilitating the administration of the university's various practicum courses, at present and in the future. With or without this external support, it is clear that, as the Cultural Studies program grows and develops, it will become necessary at a certain point to hire an administrator, likely only a 1/2-time position to begin with, in order to manage the day-to-day administrative work of the program. While the program has functioned reasonably well thus far while being administered for the most part by the Graduate Program Committee Chair, this is not a feasible approach for even a modestly larger program.

The MA in Cultural Studies strongly supports the University's commitment to Sustainability and Indigenization. Though graduate programs are exempt from the University's new Indigenous course requirement, the Cultural Studies Graduate Program Committee makes every effort to ensure that courses are offered every year that reflect the University's commitment to providing an education that reflects and honours the histories and cultures of Canada's Indigenous

peoples. The creation, in conjunction with the WAG, of the Chair in Indigenous Arts in North America is an important step in achieving these goals. The MA program hopes sincerely that this 3-year position will be converted into a permanent one.

The MA in Cultural Studies program believes strongly that engaging early-career faculty in the program will be beneficial both to the program and to the faculty members. Graduate seminars allow faculty members to teach in areas directly related to their areas of research, and small class sizes help to reduce what can be a daunting workload for early-career faculty. Early-career faculty bring current theoretical and methodological approaches to the classroom, assuring that the program delivered to the students remains up-to-date with the state of the field.

A strong MA program that is well supported financially can also support early-career faculty by supplying a qualified pool of potential Research and/or Teaching Assistants. The current funding model offers a reasonable amount of support for Research and Teaching Assistants, but is designed in such a way that it is difficult to increase the pool of student funding (and thus faculty support). We would like to see a forward-looking funding model that is designed to attract new, high quality students, rather than a retrospective model that bases funding on previous levels of enrolment.

SECTION 2: EXPERIENCING UWINNIPEG

The MA in Cultural Studies has the potential to provide faculty members in Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines with a key component in their applications for tri-council grants: graduate students. Graduate student support is becoming increasingly important in the success of tri-council grants. The MA in Cultural Studies would like to be more directly engaged with the Office of the V-P (Research), in promoting Cultural Studies graduate students as research assistants in a range of disciplines. In addition, the MA in Cultural Studies would like to see the implementation of a funding model similar to the U of Manitoba's GETS (Graduate Enhancement of Tri-Council Stipends) program (see Appendix 1). A strong funding model like this one will attract high-quality students, enhancing individual faculty members' research projects, giving them crucial opportunities to supervise graduate students, and enhancing the University's reputation locally, nationally, and internationally.

The MA in Cultural Studies is a truly multidisciplinary program. Since it started offering courses in 2009, the program has featured courses taught by faculty in English; History; Women's and Gender Studies; Modern Languages and Literatures; Theology; Political Science; and Writing, Rhetoric, and Communications. In addition, courses have been taught in the program by professionals within the city's arts community, and by internationally recognized visiting professors from as far away as Australia. As a multidisciplinary program, the MA in Cultural Studies is ideally suited to build collaborations and dialogue between departments and faculty members, between the University and the community. That said, to be truly multidisciplinary and intersectoral, the program requires more autonomy in staffing than it currently has. Up to now, the program has been dependent either on piggybacking on other departments' courses or on the English department supplying stipends to support the release of faculty members from their local departmental commitments. It is difficult to build a strong, diverse program while begging for cooperation at every turn.

Given the Board of Trustees' recent ratification of the new Colleges, Institutes, and Centres policies, the MA in Cultural Studies, in combination with the Cultural Studies Research Group, could form the nucleus of a cross-departmental program that provides both literal and figurative space in which faculty members from numerous disciplines could work (in terms of both teaching and research) collaboratively. As of now, the university makes important and welcome gestures towards multidisciplinary, but remains mired in a discipline-centred model of administration.

The MA in Cultural Studies has developed relationships with a number of institutions throughout the city's arts industry, through our practicum program and through our long-term relationship with the WAG. Initiatives such as extending the practicum to the entire program would help to continue to develop those relationships and would offer opportunities to engage with communities outside of the University further. All of the above initiatives, however, will require administrative support to be successful in the long term.

The MA in Cultural Studies also values collaborations within UWinnipeg. With the library's recent push to engage more directly with the university community through the hosting and sponsoring of guest speakers, the MA in Cultural Studies program has found recent collaborations very rewarding. We thank the library for their support in bringing interesting and dynamic cultural programming to campus. We would like to continue to develop a more direct relationship with library staff; however, because the MA in Cultural Studies is currently housed within the English Department, its contact with the library in terms of budgets and resources is mediated by that relationship. We would like to see the library create a dedicated budget line for topics and courses related to the MA in Cultural Studies, which would be administered not through the English Department's Library Committee, but through the Cultural Studies Graduate Program Committee. In general, as the University moves toward a stronger commitment to multidisciplinary, we believe that it will be necessary to develop a model of a library/program relationship that is not so department-centred.

SUCCESS AT UWINNIPEG

Over the first 6 years of the program, we have maintained a policy of steady, cautious growth, maintaining the small class sizes and close connections between faculty and students that are definitive aspects of the UWinnipeg experience. We believe that our graduation numbers speak for themselves. The MA in Cultural Studies has a strong track record of graduating its students on time; our students find employment in a range of fields and continue on to further graduate study.

Total Students 2009-15:	45 Full-Time
	13 Part-Time
	7 Withdrawals
	51 Students Completed (88% Success Rate)
	7 International Exchange Students (6 Completed)

Because of their small sizes, a number of our classes fall below the threshold for distribution of SET forms. This means that a number of our faculty receive no structured feedback from students. While we respect the statistics-based reasoning for not administering the quantitative aspects of the evaluations, it is unfortunate that the qualitative responses must also be lost.

Perhaps a secondary form designed for small classes with only the qualitative questions on it might be created.

We believe that the time is approaching that we make a concerted effort to increase the size of the program to approximately 20 students per year. This will likely engender a small increase in staffing costs (primarily related to the need to offer two sections of GENG-7103, the required research methods course). This cost would easily be offset, we believe, by tuition paid by the larger cohort. A larger program will allow us to offer our students more diverse options for classes and, by increasing class sizes, a more dynamic classroom experience. As with other planned developments, this increase will mean an increase in administrative work, which will at some point necessitate the hiring of at least a ½-time administrative staff.

Since the program's inception, faculty in the MA in Cultural Studies have made it a priority to train students in different modes of knowledge mobilization and to support students in sharing their work with the community at large. Our Curatorial Practices students end their practicum placements by curating exhibits at the various museums and galleries at which they have been placed. Faculty members often incorporate public research colloquia into their syllabi, giving students opportunities to share their work in a less daunting environment, while demonstrating to them the extent to which the creation and sharing of knowledge is fundamental to the discipline. Thanks to funding for conference travel from the UWSA and from the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Cultural Studies students regularly travel both nationally and internationally to present their research. That said, the funding for student research is insufficient to fully support travel to conferences, which is an impediment to students who do not have the financial means to fund their own travel. If the University wishes to make university education available to underrepresented groups, an important part of that will be increasing funding opportunities not simply for tuition, but also for activities like conference attendance, which are not officially required, but are an integral aspect of graduate student experience and training.

Our students have taken part, both as contributors and as facilitators, in a number of important symposia on campus, some of which have been connected directly to courses and some of which have been organized by the University's Cultural Studies Research Group. These opportunities for professionalization and for exposure to high-level academic work from across and beyond the university are crucial to our students' development as scholars and as thinkers. Up to now, these symposia have been supported by funds from outside the program. We would like to see money made available to support these sorts of symposia on a semi-regular basis. By drawing faculty from various institutions to our campus, these symposia also serve as powerful advertising and recruitment tools for the program.

In addition, a number of our faculty have collaborated with students on publications, co-editing collections such as *Fairy-Tale Films Beyond Disney* (Routledge 2016) and *Seriality and Texts for Young People: The Compulsion to Repeat* (Palgrave 2014), the latter of which was the culmination of a graduate course in which students took part in an international symposium, and solicited, selected, and edited the work of a group of highly-respected scholars for publication.

While we are confident that our students receive a high-quality education through the MA in Cultural Studies, we grow increasingly anxious about the overwhelmingly money-centred tenor of discussions of the usefulness of university education. An MA in Cultural Studies is not designed to produce millionaires. On the contrary, the program is designed to train students to become thoughtful, engaged critics of the culture in which we live. While this may not be a consistently lucrative outcome, we believe strongly that it is a crucial one, and one that the university should be celebrating and promoting.

Furthermore, because of the diverse nature of the educational backgrounds and employment goals of our students, it is difficult, perhaps even inadvisable, to try to find a one-size-fits-all metric for measuring student success. We believe in judging the success of our students based on their individual goals and aspirations on entering the program. In aid of this, we are developing a set of entrance and exit surveys that will enable us to judge the effectiveness of our approaches to students, both individually and as a cohort.

In short, we have great confidence in the quality of the program that we offer to students, and look forward to opportunities to further enhance that program, and with it, the reputation of the University as a whole. Cultural Studies is an exciting field that is perfectly suited to an urban campus that prides itself on training and developing a student body that is socially conscious, critically astute, and poised to make a real difference in today's society. We look forward to continuing to pursue this admirable set of goals in the years to come. The Cultural Studies Graduate Program Committee thanks you for this opportunity.

APPENDIX 1: UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA GRADUATE ENHANCEMENT OF TRI-COUNCIL STIPENDS (GETS) PROGRAM

Faculty of Graduate Studies

Graduate Enhancement of Tri-Council Stipends (GETS) Guidelines

Preamble

The GETS program was established in 2011 to:

- improve the funding of our (Master's and doctoral) graduate students;
- reduce the cost of supporting a graduate student from a qualifying Tri-Council grant; and
- increase the training of HQP and thereby increase our graduate student population.

Terms of Reference

1. The funds paid to a graduate student from a Tri-Council grant can be “matched” as follows:
 - a. Grantees funding one student from a Tri-Council grant: GETS will share the cost of funding at a match of 1.5:1; see Table 1 (row 1)
 - b. Grantees funding more than one student from the same Tri-Council grant at the same time (*i.e.*, based on submission date): GETS will share the cost of funding each student at a match of 2.5:1; see Table 1 (row 2)
 - c. Grantees funding an additional student(s) from the same grant at a later time within the same fiscal year: GETS will share the cost of funding an additional student(s) at a match of 2.5:1; see Table 1 (row 2). The GETS match for the first student will remain at 1.5:1; see Table 1 (row 1)

Table 1. Annual Cost Sharing Contributions

No. of Students	Master's			Doctoral		
	Tri-Council	GETS	Total	Tri-Council	GETS	Total
1	\$7,000.	\$10,500.	\$17,500.	\$8,400.	\$12,600.	\$21,000.
2 or more	\$5,000.	\$12,500.	\$17,500.	\$6,000.	\$15,000.	\$21,000.

Supervisors may choose to pay a graduate student more than the respective total shown in Table 1, however, the GETS program will only match to the amounts shown. The contribution from the GETS funds must be paid to a graduate student as a stipend[†].

2. The types of grants that are eligible for GETS support are indicated in Table 2.

Table 2. Eligible Grant Types

Agency	Grant Type
SSHRC	Connections / Insight / Insight-Development Partnership / Partnership-Development
NSERC	Strategic, CRD, Discovery, Create
CIHR	Strategic, Operating, Foundation, Project Scheme
CHRP	Strategic, Operating

[†] A stipend is taken herein to comply with CRA bulletin IT-75R4. Accordingly stipends are “amounts paid or benefits given to persons to enable them to advance their education.”

3. Limits on duration of funding:
 - a. Master's student: first two (2) years of the student's graduate program
 - b. Doctoral student: first four (4) years of the student's graduate program
 - c. A student that completes a Master's at the University of Manitoba or who transfers to a doctoral program without completing a Master's: first five (5) years based on admission to the Master's program; 3 years beyond Master's.Total duration of support for any graduate student may not exceed five (5) years.
4. "Matching" funds will be provided on a fiscal year-by-year basis and are subject to availability. However, multi-year funding requests subject to the "limits on duration of funding" (bullet '3' above) are permitted.
5. Full-time and part-time graduate students are eligible for support.
6. A complete application is required, per student/per FOP, in order for a request to be considered. If awarded, fiscal funds must be spent in the fiscal competition year applied for.
7. A student must be registered and in good standing before commencing GETS support. Funds can be committed in advance for a student that has been offered admission but has not yet started his/her graduate program.
8. Each principal investigator (PI) must complete a GETS application form (located on the FGS website) in order to obtain funds and each must provide a FOP from which the (new) Tri-Council grant funds will be paid to the student. GETS funds will be paid to students by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. PI's Tri-Council's grant must be valid at the same time as the requested funding duration dates.

Addendum

The GETS program is a partnership between the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the student's academic advisor providing stipend support. The responsibilities of the academic are as follows:

1. Submit a complete and accurate GETS application to the Faculty of Graduate Studies; the application form is available at http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate_studies/forms/index.html
2. Submit the appropriate paperwork to the Awards Assistant in a timely manner to ensure that the student receives payment promptly. Ideally the paperwork should be submitted two weeks before the funding start date. Depending on the nature of the payment to the student, the appropriate paperwork may include any or all of the below listed items:
 - a. A copy of the Scholarship, Fellowship Bursary form showing payment of the grant portion from the grant FOP listed in the GETS application.
 - b. If retroactive, a FAST printout showing the payments and commitment to the student from the grant FOP listed in the GETS application.
 - c. A FAST printout to verify that the PI is assigned to the grant FOP listed in the GETS application.
3. Communicate with appropriate departmental staff regarding payment from the grant FOP and/or any other paperwork required as per point 2.
4. Notify the Awards Assistant if the payments to the student from the grant FOP are changed, as this may impact GETS funding eligibility.
5. Notify the Awards Assistant if the student's status changes, as this may impact GETS funding eligibility.
6. Notify the student of the grant/GETS funding details.
7. Recognition of the GETS program in the acknowledge of research support, i.e., "This research was supported in part by the University of Manitoba, Graduate Enhancement of Tri-Council Stipends (GETS) program."
8. Applications for fiscal 2015-16 will be accepted on an ongoing basis from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, *i.e.*, there won't be application deadlines for fiscal 2015-16.
9. Application must be received from the PI via the online system 3-4 weeks prior to the start of funding date to allow for processing time.

As part of this partnership, the responsibilities of the Faculty of Graduate Studies are as follows:

1. Reply to inquiries in a timely manner.
2. Send out GETS funding notices to the applicant 3 to 4 weeks after receipt of application. Please note that the processing time may vary depending on the volume of applications received.
3. Submit payment form for the GETS portion of the funding.
4. Make changes to GETS portion of student funding as required.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies thanks you in advance for your cooperation and participation in the GETS program.

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