



**Graduate
& Postdoctoral
Studies**

Office of the Vice-Provost and Dean
Yeates School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies

Final Assessment Report (FAR) and Implementation Plan

Periodic Program Review (PPR)

Graduate Program in Communication and Culture (MA and PhD)

Last Updated: April 10, 2026

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

In accordance with the University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the graduate program in **Communication and Culture (MA and PhD)**. This report identifies the peer review identified strengths of the program, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The report also includes an Implementation Plan that identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the final assessment report; who will be responsible for providing any resources entailed by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations and who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Joint Graduate Program in Communication and Culture (ComCult), established in 1999 as a collaboration between Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) and York University, offers a unique interdisciplinary approach to the study of communication and culture. The program provides Master of Arts (MA) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees, allowing students to pursue research in three streams: *Media and Culture*, *Politics and Policy*, and *Technology in Practice*. With access to resources and faculty from both institutions, ComCult fosters an innovative and flexible learning environment that supports both academic and professional pathways.

BACKGROUND: The program's interdisciplinary structure enables students to engage with complex societal issues by integrating theoretical and applied research. The *Media and Culture* stream examines the intersection of media and cultural studies through themes such as visual culture, environmental communication, posthumanism, and digital media. *Politics and Policy* explores the interplay between the state, civil society, and media systems, covering topics such as globalization, political economy, media democracy, and cultural policy. *Technology in Practice* investigates the impact of communication technologies on cultural production, focusing on areas like media history, socio technical perspectives, and digital learning. Despite its strengths, ComCult faces structural challenges due to its joint administration, affecting governance, faculty allocation, and community cohesion. The program has

evolved through periodic reviews and student feedback, leading to recent initiatives focused on equity, professional development, and research-creation methodologies.

STRENGTHS: ComCult's primary strengths lie in its interdisciplinary approach, faculty expertise, and research excellence. Students benefit from cross-institutional collaboration, diverse research opportunities, and access to prestigious funding sources such as SSHRC and Mitacs. The program's flexible design allows for self-directed study, contributing to strong graduate outcomes, including placements in academia, policy-making, and creative industries. Faculty members are highly regarded for their scholarly contributions and mentorship, further enhancing the program's reputation.

WEAKNESSES: Key challenges include difficulties in program navigation due to its interdisciplinary scope, limited structured community-building efforts, and inconsistent advising experiences. The joint nature of the program presents administrative complexities, including faculty availability and course scheduling across two universities. Additionally, students have expressed a need for enhanced career support, particularly for non-academic pathways. Funding limitations and rising costs further impact accessibility, particularly for students from underrepresented backgrounds.

OPPORTUNITIES: The program has identified several opportunities for growth and enhancement. The development of an Indigenous stream within ComCult aligns with institutional commitments to Indigenization and reconciliation. Expanding professional development workshops, formalizing peer mentorship structures, and increasing support for racialized students and faculty present significant opportunities for improvement. Enhancing research-creation methodologies and fostering external partnerships can further strengthen the program's academic and professional impact.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: The program's recommendations focus on strategic improvements in curriculum, student support, and community engagement. Key recommendations include:

- **Developing an Indigenous Stream:** Establishing Indigenous-focused courses and strengthening ties with the Indigenous Faculty Council.
- **Enhancing Support for Racialized Students and Faculty:** Expanding mentorship networks and implementing equity-driven initiatives.
- **Expanding Research-Creation Support:** Increasing funding and resources for artistic and practice-based research.
- **Formalizing the Peer Mentorship Program:** Creating structured mentorship opportunities for new students.

- **Expanding Professional Development Workshops:** Offering targeted training for academic and non-academic career pathways.
- **Updating the Student Handbook:** Improving accessibility and clarity of program information.
- **Enhancing the Program Website:** Showcasing student achievements and fostering a more inclusive digital presence.

These initiatives reflect the program's commitment to continuous improvement, equity, and student success.

ComCult remains a leading graduate program in communication and cultural studies. By addressing its challenges and leveraging opportunities for enhancement, the program is well-positioned to maintain its reputation for excellence while fostering a more inclusive and supportive academic community.

PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW AND PEER REVIEW TEAM

The graduate program in **Communication and Culture (MA and PhD)** submitted a Self-Study Report to the Yeates School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies that outlined program descriptions and learning outcomes, an analytical assessment of the program, program data including data from student surveys and the standard data packages. Course outlines and CVs for full-time faculty members were also appended.

Two external and one internal arm's-length reviewers were selected from a set of proposed candidates. The Peer Review Team (PRT) for the Periodic Program Review (PPR) of this graduate program consisted of Mary Francoli (Carleton), Stuart Poyntz (SFU) and Asmaa Malik (TMU).

The PRT site visit was conducted on-site on June 6, 2025. The visit included interviews with the University and Faculty Administration including the Provost and Vice-President Academic, Faculty Dean, Faculty Associate Dean, Vice-Provost and Dean Yeates School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (YSGPS); Associate Dean Programs YSGPS, Graduate Program Director of the Graduate Program, Director Graduate Program Administration, and meetings with Faculty, a group of current students, administration, and support staff. The PRT report was communicated to the Associate Dean, YSGPS on August 6, 2025, and the response to the report from the graduate program and Faculty Dean was communicated November 9, 2025 .

PROGRAM STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Peer Review Team identified program strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, outlined below.

Strengths

- Interdisciplinary and Innovative Curriculum.
- Praxis-Based and Experiential Learning.
- Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).
- Strong Student and Administrative Support.
- Preparation for Diverse Career Pathways.
- Vibrant Community and Reputation.

Weaknesses/Challenges

- Challenges in Student Supervision.
- Uneven Faculty Engagement in Program Service and Teaching.
- Funding Limitations for Graduate Students.
- Curricular Gaps and Student Concerns about Course Delivery.
- EDI and Curriculum Representation Gaps.
- Administrative Burden on the Program Director.

Opportunities

- Consider initiatives to support student recruitment into the program, such as the development of a 4+1 pathway from TMU undergraduate programs, or through the alignment of faculty research funding with offers of admission
- Explore curricular changes that will address student challenges that are specific to interdisciplinary study

SUMMARY OF PRT RECOMMENDATIONS, GRADUATE PROGRAM AND YSGPS RESPONSES, AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

PRT RECOMMENDATIONS	PRT RATIONALE	ComCult PROGRAM RESPONSE	PROPOSED PROGRAM ACTION	RESPONSE FROM DEAN OF YSGPS ¹	PROGRAM TIMELINE AND RESPONSIBILITY/LEAD
Recommendation 1 The reviewers recommend that the PD be granted an additional course release (for a total of 2) or that an Assistant GPD be appointed.	We have noted throughout this report the heavy burden carried by the GPD – more like a Chair than a Program Director – and the ongoing success of the Program is dependent on this role. To support this role, and to encourage other faculty to take on this role, it is strongly encouraged that the GPD receive an additional course release, or that a mechanism be created to appoint an Assistant GPD.	We agree that the PD workload is unsustainable. The self-study highlighted that the PD's responsibilities are comparable to those of a Chair role.	Advocate to YSGPS for an additional course release for the GPD; alternatively, develop a proposal for an Assistant GPD role to distribute workload.	We recognize the significant role of program leadership in ensuring the continued success of this program, as well as the often competing demands placed on the Graduate Program Director. We are committed to ongoing conversations regarding workload. Assistant GPD positions do not exist at TMU. We encourage the GPD to engage ComCult students and faculty as leaders of working groups. Additionally, we will examine how process improvements across all graduate programs can reduce administrative burdens.	The Graduate Program Director (GPD) will continue consultations with the YSGPS Vice-Provost & Dean on workload challenges and ways to encourage faculty engagement in program governance.

¹ As ComCult is an interdisciplinary program housed in the Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, this report does not have a response from a Faculty Dean, and only includes the response from the Vice-Provost and Dean, YSGPS, who is also the Dean of Record.

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Recommendation 2 The reviewers recommend that the Program continue to expand and develop training initiatives to support students' post-graduate career planning.	While initiatives currently exist in the Program to support post-graduate career preparation, students are clearly asking for more opportunities on this front, via ongoing networking and alumni engagement initiatives, skills development and other initiatives, to support successful career transitions for both academic and non-academic options.	The program recognizes the importance of preparing students for a diverse range of career paths. The self-study outlined current career panels, workshops, and alumni connections. Recommendation 2 is externally oriented: focuses on <i>connections</i> (alumni, employers, networking).	Build on existing alumni networks to create regular networking events; formalize professional development workshops; explore partnerships with TMU Career, Co-op and Student Success Centre.	We are supportive of the program's efforts to engage alumni in program initiatives and to explore partnerships with the TMU Career, Co-op and Student Success Centre. In addition to program-specific initiatives, we encourage the program to communicate YSGPS-based initiatives available to students, including the Graduate Leadership Institute, GRADskills workshops, and teaching development opportunities offered through the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching.	We will formalize alumni networks and co-create an event to aid career planning. Lead: GPD with the TMU Alumni Association and support from the GSA (Graduate Student Association). Timeline: Convene a student/alumni working group by Summer 2026; launch the first alumni networking event and career panel by Winter 2027; Milestones: Establish alumni contacts list (2025); co-design first alumni networking event (Fall 2026); launch the first alumni networking event and career panel in Winter 2027; evaluate effectiveness with student feedback.

Recommendation 3 The reviewers recommend that the Program consider the development of a small set of workshops (perhaps with 2-3 scaffolded sessions) to better prepare students for the rich, if sometimes challenging, opportunities interdisciplinary learning can provide.	The diverse disciplinary backgrounds of students entering the ComCult Program present both opportunities and challenges. It clearly brings richness and diversity to student learning, and yet, the specific theoretical and conceptual history of Communications and Cultural Studies can be intimidating for new students. Better preparation prior to entering the context of interdisciplinary learning would clearly be of benefit to students from outside the fields of Communication and Cultural Studies.	The program noted challenges for students entering from non-ComCult backgrounds. The self-study suggested a more structured onboarding. Recommendation 3 is about onboarding and student success: helping incoming students from varied disciplinary backgrounds build foundational knowledge in Communication and Cultural Studies.	The ComCult Executive Council will discuss establishing a working committee to design short preparatory workshops on theory, methods, and interdisciplinarity, offered at program entry, and integrate them into the orientation week or the early part of the first term.	We are aware of the challenges faced within interdisciplinary programs due to the diverse backgrounds and varying levels of preparation among students, and support the program's efforts to ensure that students receive sufficient training to be successful in the program. If the program determines that mandatory workshops are the best course of action, it will be essential to collaborate with the Associate Dean (Programs) to propose curriculum modifications in accordance with Policy 127.	Lead: Orientation Ad Hoc Committee (Executive Council), chaired by the Graduate Program Director. Timeline: Winter 2025: Strike the ad hoc working group under the Executive Council and identify faculty contributors. Spring 2026: Develop three draft workshop modules and review alignment with existing orientation activities. Fall 2026: Pilot workshops during orientation as non-credit sessions and collect structured participant feedback. January 2027: Review pilot results and determine whether workshops should be recurring or required components. January 2027: Submit any necessary curriculum proposals to YSGPS by February deadline in accordance with TMU Policy 127 (Course and Program Modifications). Fall 2027: Implement the approved version of the workshops and integrate them into the standard orientation or curriculum framework.
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PRT RECOMMENDATIONS	PRT RATIONALE	ComCult PROGRAM RESPONSE	PROPOSED PROGRAM ACTION	RESPONSE FROM DEAN OF YSGPS ¹	PROGRAM TIMELINE AND RESPONSIBILITY/LEAD
Recommendation 4 The reviewers recommend development of a 4+1 pathway to better support graduate recruitment of TMU's best undergraduate students.	To strengthen existing recruitment efforts, the reviewers recommend that the Program explore the development of 4+1 pathways to support the recruitment of the best TMU undergraduate students into the COMCULT Program. These frameworks are now common across universities in Canada and offer a means of strengthening recruitment efforts, while offering local opportunities for students already committed to TMU.	The program is committed to strengthening recruitment and agrees that a 4+1 pathway would provide an excellent opportunity to attract outstanding TMU undergraduates. As a joint program with York, any such initiative would need to be developed collaboratively to ensure admissions requirements remain consistent across both institutions. The Admissions Standing Committee (Executive-Council) is the appropriate body to initiate this work, given its responsibility for maintaining common standards and practices across the joint program.	Strike a working committee through the ComCult Executive Council to discuss if the 4+1 pathway is appropriate and feasible for both TMU and York universities; liaise with YSGPS at TMU / FGS at York to discuss feasibility.	We strongly support initiatives that will strengthen the program's capacity to recruit undergraduate students. A 4+1 model is a valuable approach to encourage undergraduate students to pursue further studies. Furthermore, given the joint nature of this program, it may attract students from both York University and TMU. We will work with the program to engage in planning and consultation with the Vice Provost Academic and the Registrar's Office, alongside targeted undergraduate programs. We encourage the program to consider piloting a model with one specific undergraduate program.	The Admissions Committee (Standing Committee Exec Council) will explore a pilot 4+1 scheme. Lead: Admissions Standing Committee with the GPDs; support from the YSGPS Vice-Provost and Dean, York's FGS. Timeline: Establish a working group in Fall 2025; review target TMU / York majors and draft 4+1 framework by Spring 2026; consult undergrad departments in 2026–27; pilot one 4+1 admissions pathway in Fall 2027. Milestones: Report on feasibility (mid-2026); formal proposal (January 2027); marketing materials for pilot (2027); first cohort admitted (Fall 2028).

PRT RECOMMENDATIONS	PRT RATIONALE	ComCult PROGRAM RESPONSE	PROPOSED PROGRAM ACTION	RESPONSE FROM DEAN OF YSGPS ¹	PROGRAM TIMELINE AND RESPONSIBILITY/LEAD
Recommendation 5 The reviewers recommend that the Program find ways to better align available faculty research funding with offers of admission, thereby providing better support for graduate student funding.	While we would not encourage the Program to make admissions dependent on alignment with available faculty research funding, the reviewers recommend that the Program develop a framework to align available faculty research funding with the pool of graduate applicants, with the aim of expanding the resources available to support graduate student funding.	Funding is a key challenge. The self-study highlighted issues of low baseline funding, the reduction of program funding for those students who obtain external funding, and gaps in international student funding.	Explore possibilities for a framework that will connect students with externally funded faculty projects; encourage faculty to integrate grad student support for ComCult grad students in grant applications.	Establishing strong and consistent funding for graduate students plays a central role in their academic experience and success. We also support efforts to ensure funding is distributed equitably. We support the program's efforts to secure funding for incoming graduate students by exploring ways to enhance graduate student funding packages through involvement in faculty research projects.	Lead:GPD, in collaboration with the Scholarships and Awards Standing Committee (Executive Council) Fall 2025: Conduct a survey of all ComCult-affiliated faculty to identify current and pending research grants that could support graduate students. Develop a secure internal database listing research areas, timelines, and potential positions. Winter 2026: Create and share a "Faculty Research Opportunities List" that highlights active research areas and funding opportunities. Make it available to prospective and admitted students to support supervisor matching. Fall 2026: Host a workshop on "Integrating Graduate Student Support in Grant Applications," co-facilitated with YSGPS/Office of Research Services. Establish an annual report to the Executive Council on funded students (2027).

PRT RECOMMENDATIONS	PRT RATIONALE	ComCult PROGRAM RESPONSE	PROPOSED PROGRAM ACTION	RESPONSE FROM DEAN OF YSGPS ¹	PROGRAM TIMELINE AND RESPONSIBILITY/LEAD
Recommendation 6 The reviewers recommend that the program review both the number of mandatory courses and the weighting of the paper/thesis/project in the MA degree, with an eye toward reducing the number of required courses and increasing the weighting of the paper/thesis/project.	While the number of required courses in the MA degree meets provincial requirements; it is also possible to reduce this number by increasing the weighting assigned to paper/thesis/project in the MA degree. We recommend this in order to create additional time for students to develop and complete their self-directed projects, while aiding time to completion of degrees in the program.	The self-study also acknowledged pressure on MA students' timelines due to coursework requirements. Recommendation 6 is about <i>program structure</i>: streamlining formal degree requirements to improve time to completion. Note that Recommendation 3 (Preparatory Workshops) is intended as a non-credit orientation initiative and complements Recommendation 6 (Curriculum Review) by supporting student readiness without increasing program workload.	Create a <i>curriculum review ad hoc committee</i> (Executive-Council) to consider reducing the required number of courses in the MA and increasing the weight of the major research paper/thesis/project to free student time for completion.	We support the program's efforts to reconsider the coursework requirements and associated weighting of the paper/thesis/project milestone. This will also ensure students are able to complete the program within the expected time limits. The program should ensure that the Program-Level Learning Outcomes form the foundation for any curriculum revisions, to ensure that the removal of any courses does not adversely impact students' ability to meet these learning outcomes. Depending on the nature of the proposed changes, this revision may be considered a major modification. The program is encouraged to consult with YSGPS as it moves through this process.	An ad hoc Curriculum Review Committee (Executive Council) will consider reducing MA course load and raising thesis/project weighting. Lead: Curriculum Ad Hoc Committee (Executive Council), chaired by a faculty member and GPD. Timeline: Form committee by Winter 2026; consult faculty and students and draft revisions by Fall 2026; review alignment with learning outcomes and Policy 127 (major modification) by January 2027; submit curriculum change proposal to TMU Senate by February 2027; implement new requirements in Fall 2028. Milestones: Meeting notes (2026); curriculum proposal (January 2027); approvals secured (2027–28); revised calendar copy published (Fall 2028).

Program Recommendations

In addition to the six recommendations from the PRT team above, the PRT indicated their agreement with the seven recommendations from the program contained in its Self-Study. They state: “the reviewers see all of the recommendations as valuable, strategic and worth pursuing. They will serve to address some of the concerns noted in this report and noted by students” (p.16). The Program will continue exploring the feasibility of implementation of its own recommendations from the Self-Study. These are copied from the Self-Study.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION	RATIONALE	PROPOSED PROGRAM ACTION	RESPONSE FROM DEAN OF YSGPS	PROGRAM TIMELINE AND RESPONSIBILITY/LEAD
Recommendation 7 Develop an Indigenous Path within ComCult	In response to student and alumni surveys that speak to a need for more attention to Indigenization in the program, in addition to related requests from the Indigenous faculty council, the program recommends establishing a pathway within the program that aligns with the needs of Indigenous education, calling for at least one additional course.	Develop Indigenous alternatives to core courses. Review the Major/Minor Modifications process for adding new courses. Strengthen relationships with the Indigenous Faculty Council.	YSGPS and the program leadership have engaged in conversations regarding this proposed stream. YSGPS supports the extensive work done by the program to thoughtfully develop an Indigenous studies stream in collaboration with the Indigenous Faculty Council. To ensure such a stream is viable moving forward, we encourage the program to consider introducing a single Indigenous-focused course that could be taken in place of an existing core required course or as an elective for program students. From there, YSGPS is committed to exploring the development of additional courses that could build up into an Indigenous Stream within the program.	Building on ongoing consultations with TMU’s Indigenous Faculty Council (IFC), the program will develop Indigenous-focused courses as the foundation for a potential Indigenous Studies Stream within ComCult. This initiative will proceed in parallel with the curriculum review outlined in Recommendation 6. Lead: Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee (Executive Council), in collaboration with the IFC and chaired by the GPD. Timeline: Winter 2026: Meet with YSGPS to continue conversations about Indigenous-focused course content, and explore the possibility of a course that could be offered as a pilot, upon which further courses could be developed.

Recommendation 8 Enhance support and inclusion for racialized students and faculty	Based on student multiple sources of evidence, including the student survey, alumni survey, faculty survey and equity survey, the program recommends the identification and creation of concrete strategies for fostering greater diversity and inclusion within the program and enhanced support for the diversity already extant in the program.	Explore the creation of a racialized student and faculty-led BIPOC network, supported by TMU's Social Innovation and Activism Fund. Analyze results from the Program's Equity Committee's subcommittee. Develop and implement strategies based on the findings of the Equity Survey.	We strongly support the efforts and initiatives proposed by the program to support racialized students and to solicit feedback from students as a way to inform these initiatives. We encourage the program to think about the full student experience within the program, including the experience of students in the admissions process, and as program alumni.	Lead: GPD and Graduate Students Association (GSA), in collaboration with the Ad Hoc Equity Committee (Executive Council). Winter 2026: Continue the annual Equity Survey and share the findings with students, faculty, and the Executive Council. Identify priority areas for immediate action. Spring 2026: Analyze survey results and prepare a short Equity Strategy Report with recommendations for support mechanisms and programming. Fall 2026: Launch a BIPOC peer and faculty network, supported through TMU's Social Innovation and Activism Fund, and begin implementing identified supports such as mentorship pairings and cohort events. 2027–2028: Maintain annual surveys to monitor progress and assess the impact of implemented supports. Share an interim progress report with YSGPS by Fall 2027. Review of effectiveness and recommendations for next phase (2028)
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PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION	RATIONALE	PROPOSED PROGRAM ACTION	RESPONSE FROM DEAN OF YSGPS	PROGRAM TIMELINE AND RESPONSIBILITY/LEAD
Recommendation 9 Expand support for research-creation methodologies	Evidence for the program's need to strengthen support for emerging trends in student research, prominently including expanded support for research creation methodologies, can be identified in both student and alumni surveys in addition to results from a student-led town hall and pre-existing surveys ComCult students participated in as part of a nationwide review of graduate programs.	Initiate discussions with other arts-based Graduate Program Directors and Deans. Investigate potential funding opportunities for an artist-in-residence program.	Engagement with other graduate programs that foreground research-creation methodologies is a worthwhile endeavour to strengthen graduate student experiences and learning, as well as faculty research. We strongly support the program's initiative to engage with programs such as the PhD in Media and Design Innovation, as well as a variety of Master's programs within The Creative School.	Lead: GPD, in consultation with arts-based Graduate Program Directors and the TMU Research Office. Timeline: Winter 2026: Consult with other arts-based graduate programs across TMU and York to identify partnership opportunities and shared interests in research-creation. Fall 2026: Develop and submit a funding proposal for a pilot artist-in-residence program, potentially through internal research funds or external grants. Fall 2027: Launch the first residency and organize a joint student–faculty research-creation showcase to highlight outcomes. Winter 2028: Integrate related credit or exhibition opportunities into the program structure, based on the outcomes of the pilot and partner feedback..

Recommendation 10 Formalize the peer mentorship program	The need to improve wayfinding and student support within the program is evident in student concerns voiced in surveys and town halls, expressing a sense of confusion related to navigating program structures and possibilities as well as a need for more support related to possibilities for arts-based methodologies, all with a distinct felt need for this to come in the form of peer-mentorships – i.e. from the perspective of recent peer-exemplars.	Form a student working group to lead program design. Establish application and participation processes for peer mentors. Identify senior students interested in mentorship roles. Develop guidelines and strategies for effective peer support.	We support the program’s desire to provide students with peer-led support networks; while beneficial for incoming students, it also provides senior students with valuable leadership opportunities. We also support the program’s engagement with the GSA in this initiative.	Lead: GPD, in collaboration with the Graduate Students Association and a student working group. Program Admin for ongoing support. Winter 2026: Establish a student working group to co-design the mentorship framework, building on informal peer support practices already in place. Spring 2026: Develop clear mentor application and participation processes, eligibility criteria, and training guidelines. Summer 2026: Recruit and train the first cohort of peer mentors. Fall 2026: Launch the formal peer mentorship program as part of orientation and the first-term support structure. Winter 2027: Gather participant feedback and make adjustments for the next intake cycle. Fall 2027 and onward: Continue annual recruitment, training, and evaluation, with support from the GSA and administrative staff.
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Recommendation 11 Expand professional development workshops	Evidence for the program’s need to provide students with better skills for academic and non-academic career pathways is especially apparent in alumni surveys voicing retrospective reflections on how the program could have better prepared them for the non-academic job market.	Identify key areas for professional development (e.g., REB applications, non-academic careers). Convene a student working group to assess needs. Develop and co-create workshop content in collaboration with students based on their feedback. Recommendation 11 is internally oriented — focuses on <i>skills training</i> (workshops, co-curricular learning). Note that Recommendation 2 focuses on career networking and alumni engagement; Recommendation 11 complements this through in-program professional-development workshops that prepare students to participate in those networks.	In addition to ComCult-specific workshops, we strongly encourage the program to consider leveraging the offerings provided by YSGPS, including the Graduate Leadership Institute and GRADskills workshops. Furthermore, we encourage the program to liaise with the Career, Co-op, and Student Success Centre to ensure that students are taking advantage of the available mentorship, counselling, and workshops.	Lead: GPD, in collaboration with the Graduate Students Association (GSA), the YSGPS GRADskills team, and the Graduate Leadership Institute (GLI). Winter 2026: Convene a student working group to identify professional-development priorities and skill gaps. Areas may include research ethics and REB applications, research-creation documentation, grant writing, public scholarship, and non-academic career readiness. Spring–Summer 2026: Develop a workshop framework outlining session topics, learning outcomes, and facilitation models (faculty-led, alumni-led, or student-led). Fall 2026: Pilot two co-curricular workshops: one academic (e.g., conference presentation or publishing strategies) and one professional (e.g., resume and portfolio development). Collect and analyze participant feedback.
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PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION	RATIONALE	PROPOSED PROGRAM ACTION	RESPONSE FROM DEAN OF YSGPS	PROGRAM TIMELINE AND RESPONSIBILITY/LEAD
				Winter 2027: Refine workshop design based on feedback and establish a recurring professional-development calendar aligned with YSGPS offerings (GRADskills, GLI, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching). Fall 2027–2028: Deliver three to four workshops, updating topics to reflect emerging research, creative, and professional trends. Conduct annual assessments of participation and learning outcomes to inform YSGPS reporting.
Recommendation 12 Update the student handbook	Student surveys expressing confusion and the need for more adequate wayfinding, especially when entering the program, but also at later stages, call for an updated resource that will improve clarity and accessibility of program-related information.	Request budget allocation for handbook revision. Convene a student working group for input. Hire a student research assistant to assist with revisions. Identify common pain points, areas of confusion, and frequently asked questions. Develop clear, student-friendly language and design for effective communication.	We encourage the regular updating of the student handbook, given its importance in directing students through the program and to available resources. We are committed to engaging in discussions with the program regarding the resource needs for this project.	Lead: GPD. Request budget for a student assistant Spring-Fall 2025; convene student Town Hall in October 2025; produce first revised draft by Winter 2026; finalize and publish new handbook by Fall 2026. Review and revise (ongoing).

Recommendation 13 Maintain and enhance the program website	Evidence for the need to improve visibility of student achievements and promote diversity in recruitment comes from student surveys and equity surveys where expressions wishing for more visibility for diversity are apparent, along with calls for showcasing the rich layers of diversity that already exist in the program.	Secure funding for ongoing website maintenance. Hire a student research assistant to update content. Collect and showcase alumni profiles. Highlight student projects to demonstrate program impact. Develop an inclusive and celebratory digital presence.	We strongly support the program's efforts to ensure the digital presence of the program is current and compelling. Particularly within interdisciplinary programs, the digital presence of a program plays an important role in establishing a strong program community. Ongoing efforts to generate new content for the website can also play an important role in generating interest among prospective students.	Lead: GPD, supported by a Communications Working Group (Executive Council) and a student research assistant. Winter 2026: Form a Communications Working Group to review current website content, identify communication goals, and define recruitment and alumni engagement objectives. Spring–Summer 2026: Develop a concise Program Communications Strategy outlining target audiences, key messages, and content priorities (e.g., alumni stories, faculty research highlights, student projects). Secure modest funding (YSGPS) for a student research assistant to support content development and maintenance. Fall 2026: Begin publishing alumni profiles, student project spotlights, and faculty research features that reflect the diversity and creativity of the ComCult community.
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PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION	RATIONALE	PROPOSED PROGRAM ACTION	RESPONSE FROM DEAN OF YSGPS	PROGRAM TIMELINE AND RESPONSIBILITY/LEAD
				Winter–Spring 2027: Implement a website refresh with updated imagery, streamlined navigation, and inclusive design, in collaboration with TMU’s Communications and CCS teams to ensure accessibility and branding compliance. Fall 2027: Add recruitment-focused enhancements, including testimonials, “Why ComCult?” messaging, and clear application guidance aligned with the admissions cycle. 2028: Maintain and update content regularly, conducting a mid-cycle review of web analytics to assess engagement, reach, and recruitment impact.