

Change to Graduate Program/Graduate Diploma Academic Requirements Proposal Form

CRITICAL DISABILITY STUDIES

The following information is required for all proposals involving a minor modification to graduate program/graduate diploma academic requirements. Provide evidence of consultation, where appropriate. To facilitate the review/approval process, please use the headings below (and omit the italicized explanations below each heading).

1. Graduate Program/Graduate Diploma:

M.A. & Ph.D. Program in Critical Disability Studies

2. Effective Term/Calendar Year of Proposed Change(s):

Fall 2022

3. Proposed Change(s) and Rationale:

The description of and rationale for the proposed modification(s) should provide information with respect to each of the following points:

a. A description of the proposed modification(s) and rationale, including alignment with academic plans.

Two proposed minor changes:

1. To change GS CDIS 5120 3.0 Critical Disability Law from a required course to an elective. Incoming doctoral students who have not taken a disability related law course will be encouraged to take this course as an elective. Osgoode offers LAW 4905 every Fall, which is cross listed with CDIS 5120 3.0, and they reserve five enrolment spots for CDS students. The change is a response to the 2020 -2021 CDS cyclical program review to address content barriers and curriculum relevancy for all student research areas in disability. This change will support timely graduation for MA students. This change aligns with ***Objective 1.1: High quality, relevant, courses and programs that contribute to students' academic success, timely graduation, and life-long learning*** and mainly ***Action/Strategy 1.1.5: Facilitate and support development of high quality in- demand new or substantially revised graduate and undergraduate programs*** with York University's Academic Plan, Strategic Mandate Agreement, and with the Faculty of Health mission.

Rationale:

The program's executive council, and the extensive conversations and student feedback from the 2020-2021 Cyclical Program Review.

Findings of first-year cohort focus group on law course:

- The impact of the law course in the program overall may be a key barrier to program completion—timing, content, and pedagogy make a “perfect storm” for derailing first-term student success and derailing early progress on MRP-related work.
- Law course causes students to fall behind with the rest of their coursework.
- Law course causes significant stress.
- Contrary to other required courses, it does not move student MRP projects forward.
- Law course reflects how lawyers are trained, rather than providing methods and framework for law reforms and critiquing the law that is necessary in Critical Disability Studies. This critique echoes observations of our colleagues in Socio-Legal Studies.
- Students unanimously reported a significant disciplinary tension pervading all aspects of the course, including reading choices, pedagogy, and approaches to access and accommodation.
- Students unanimously reported feeling penalized for applying the frameworks, methods, and principles they were learning in the other required courses. “It undoes our other learning.”

Selected Quotes from Evaluation and Survey data:

“Improvement is urgently needed in the disability law course in terms of curriculum, class delivery format and assigned tasks... this course must be made elective. I am really concerned and experiencing anxiety about my grade in this course.”

“Making it an elective would be an improvement I think.”

2. Revise CDS' admission requirements regarding the number of recommendation letters for admission files. CDS will change the requirement from three letters of recommendation to two moving forward.

Rationale: Reference letters, though naturalized and routine to academic admission cycles, may conceal bias that skews the composition of the graduate student body. Moreover, their use should be weighed against the faculty labour required to write

them (in multiple formats for multiple audiences) and acknowledge that reference requests tend to fall unevenly on some faculty more than others. We have also observed that many applicants invest care and time in application preparation and currently a file is deemed incomplete just for missing one recommendation letter, when two were successfully obtained. For these reasons, CDS has elected to reduce the number of reference letters required for graduate applications from three to two. It will be a requirement that one of these reference letters be academic and the other can be either academic or professional.

These modifications will not affect current MA or PhD students; this modification would only effect incoming graduate student recruitment as of Fall 2023. The goal is to remove recruitment barriers for students of all backgrounds and reduce implicit bias, especially for mature applicants who have been out of postsecondary studies for some time and are more likely to have professional experience. The CDS faculty are aligned with principles of disability justice. CDS will continue to test cultural boundaries and knowledges while maintaining our commitment to excellence, equity and social justice.

This modification is aligned with several objectives related to York University's Academic Plan, Strategic Mandate Agreement, and with the Faculty of Health IRP.

***Objective 1.2:** Growth and Diversification of our Graduate Students and **Action/Strategy 1.2.1:** Identify and implement strategies to attract diverse and highly qualified graduate students.*

b. An outline of the changes to requirements and the associated learning outcomes/objectives, including how the proposed requirements will support the achievement of graduate program/graduate diploma learning objectives.

Additionally, please append the graduate program's existing learning outcomes as a separate document. APPENDED

CDS provides multiple ways in which our program learning outcomes can continue to be made even with the proposed change to the status of CDIS 5120 Critical Disability Law from required to elective course. Other courses (listed) will ensure that our students are able to develop their scholarship, knowledges, and critical analyses while still adding to the field's knowledges. Students demonstrate mastery of the outcome through major course essays/papers (in CDIS 5100, CDIS 5110, CDIS 5120, and electives) and their M.A. Major Research Paper (CDIS 6001). Electives such as CDIS 5095 Intersectionality, Disability and Health, HLTH 5040: Health, Law and Ethics as well as other electives will also support the achievement of graduate program learning objectives.

MA learning outcomes

1. Analyze disability through human rights and social justice, social policy, critical theory, and/or social movement frameworks.	CDIS 5110 3.0 Methodology; CDIS 5100 6.0 Disability Studies: An Overview;
2. Apply critical ways of thinking about disability in various domains such as community, scholarly, policy, fine arts, clinical practice, and education.	Critique & close reading practices are practices in many courses (CDIS 5110 3.0 Methodology; CDIS 5100 6.0 Disability Studies: An Overview; CDIS 6001 Major Research paper)
3. Identify ways in which knowledge production can be harmful for people and communities.	CDS students develop an understanding of knowledge production can be harmful through reading, in-class discussions, course papers & MRPs. CDS faculty continue to increase their knowledges of troubling research practices through readings and conversations. Our citational practices are exemplified in our syllabi where we bring literatures into conversations with each other (Indigenous, disability studies, anti-racist and feminist literature). CDIS 5095 Intersectionality, Disability and Health
4. Build on ways of thinking about disability that strengthens communities and intervene in social inequality.	our courses including CDIS 5100 6.0: Disability Studies: An Overview, CDIS 5110 3.0: Methodology provide the opportunity to write, research, and engage with the troubling aspects of our current world (e.g., climate change, racism, transphobia)
5. Identify and articulate complex problems in accessible ways by connecting with and/or learning from stakeholder communities.	CDS core courses provide students with foundational and current literatures in the field of CDS. Seminars and invited speakers also provide a way to connect with communities that have in the past been used with no research returning to the communities.

PhD learning outcomes

1. Contribute to new ways of thinking about disability, through and beyond human rights and social justice, critical theory, and social policy frameworks.	<p>CDS students develop their thinking beyond the school itself through the PhD seminar discussions, comparative analyses of texts; literature gap searches; being in dialogue with or across theorists and theories (e.g., Butler, Foucault, Fanon)</p> <p>CDS students are oriented to the multiple theories and theorists through which we can perceive our field in a critical and reflexive manner. Once core courses are completed through engagement with their</p>
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	comprehensive committee members, and supervisor and dissertation committee members
2. Situate their research in relevant disciplines and domains within and beyond Disability Studies.	the interdisciplinary perspective in CDS means that students and faculty are in a teaching & learning environment, which includes members from other disciplines
3. Contribute to debates on the politics of research methodology and to the development of critical and inclusive research methods	Students contribute to debates through their comprehensive exam, dissertation proposal and their ethics review package. After doctoral level research the student is prepared to debate and engage in conversations demonstrating also, their curiosity Students at all levels are encouraged to publish their writing.
4. Innovate and build on ways of thinking about disability that strengthen communities and intervene in social inequality.	Students develop the outcome through core course(s) and electives (in-house or across other faculties). The doctoral seminar GS CDIS 6100 6.0, Doctoral Seminar in Critical Disability Theory and Research engages students in a year long conversation & intersectional analysis recognizing the structural oppression & inequalities (e.g., race, class, gender, poverty, dis\ability, status)
5. Identify complex problems and develop appropriate research question by connecting with and/or learning from stakeholder communities.	Through CDIS 6100 6.0 & other required & elective courses students, comprehensive exams, proposals, and dissertation research & writing bringing forward questions that need to be answered, and proposing research linked to community are developed. Progress through degree is monitored on an annual basis via annual report of academic progress.

c. An overview of the consultation undertaken with relevant academic units and an assessment of the impact of the modifications on other programs/graduate diplomas.

Where and as appropriate, the proposal must include statements from the relevant graduate program/graduate diplomas confirming consultation/support.

Number of letters

GPDs across York University have been considering changes to number of recommendation letters \ FGS sent an article from the Chronicle of Higher Education *Is*

It Time to Eliminate Recommendation Letters? (Hint: Yes) An excel sheet was also appended \ Letter of recommendation number by program.

Change CDIS 5120 to elective

The change in GS CDIS 5120 3.0 Critical Disability Law as a required course while retaining it as an elective has no substantive impact on the program as students will still have the opportunity to take the course as an elective.

Consultations and feedback from 2020 -2021 Cyclical Program Review:

On the Student Survey, 60% of master's students rated the coursework as reasonable, 27% rated it as excessive, and 13% said it was not excessive, but needed to be modified in some way. Eight students brought up the law course when asked to identify "the ONE thing. that most needs improvement." Further, when asked about how course requirements should be modified, 6 out of 18 respondents brought up the law course and questioned its value as a required course. This data is not a surprise, as the program has struggled over whether the disability law course should be mandatory for the past eight years.

d. A summary of any resource implications and how they are being addressed.

Attention should be paid to whether the proposed changes will be supported by a reallocation of existing resources or if new/additional resources are required. If new/additional resources are required, the proposal must include a statement from the relevant Dean(s)/Principal.

There are no resource implications of the changes being made.

e. A summary of how students currently enrolled in the graduate program/graduate diploma will be accommodated.

Changes to CDIS 5120 will not affect current students: only new incoming students starting as of Fall 2022. Any MA and PhD student admitted prior to Fall 2022 will continue to have law as a required course. It will be available to incoming students as an elective.

The admission process will only impact Fall 2023 and future graduate recruitment cycles.

4. Calendar Copy:

Using the following two-column format, provide a copy of the relevant graduate program/graduate diploma requirements as they will appear in the [FGS Academic Calendar](#).

Please note: Senate requires that **FULL** Calendar copy be provided. Please include the entire graduate program/graduate diploma section, not just text that is being revised. Please clearly and visibly indicate how graduate program/graduate diploma information has been changed using strikethrough (left column), bold, underlining, colours, etc. (right column).

Existing Graduate Program/Graduate Diploma Information (Change From):	Proposed Graduate Program/Graduate Diploma Information (Change To):
<p>Critical Disability Studies</p> <p>The MA and PhD degrees of the Graduate Program in Critical Disability Studies offer a comprehensive curriculum covering diverse scholarly perspectives. The program structure and environment encourage advanced research, new scholarship and provides opportunities to contribute to the field. Both programs enable a multidisciplinary group of students to explore disability in relation to social policy, social justice, human rights issues, and social, historical and cultural movements in Canada and internationally. In particular, the programs provide graduate students with the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> v critically understand existing policies and practices relating to disability, as well as Canadian and international laws and instruments governing human rights and protections for people with disabilities; v present theories of human rights as a basis for understanding existing legal, economic and social rationales for inclusion in relation to systemic barriers and oppression; v situate key debates in disability studies in both historical and contemporary contexts, including understanding how issues relating to disability are interpreted and advanced in both an academic setting and in public and private policy and programming; v recognize the importance of racialization, poverty, gender, sexuality and class issues as they intersect with disability; v foster critical studies of activism and activist histories; 	<p>Critical Disability Studies</p> <p>The MA and PhD degrees of the Graduate Program in Critical Disability Studies offer a comprehensive curriculum covering diverse scholarly perspectives. The program structure and environment encourage advanced research, new scholarship and provides opportunities to contribute to the field. Both programs enable a multidisciplinary group of students to explore disability in relation to social policy, social justice, human rights issues, and social, historical and cultural movements in Canada and internationally. In particular, the programs provide graduate students with the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> v critically understand existing policies and practices relating to disability, as well as Canadian and international laws and instruments governing human rights and protections for people with disabilities; v present theories of human rights as a basis for understanding existing legal, economic and social rationales for inclusion in relation to systemic barriers and oppression; v situate key debates in disability studies in both historical and contemporary contexts, including understanding how issues relating to disability are interpreted and advanced in both an academic setting and in public and private policy and programming; v recognize the importance of racialization, poverty, gender, sexuality and class issues as they intersect with disability; v foster critical studies of activism and activist histories;

- v influence public policy at federal, provincial and local levels and contribute to movements for social justice and human rights;
- v contribute to an evidence-based body of knowledge on people with disabilities at the international, national and local level in the health, education, social policy and legal sectors; and,
- v apply qualitative and quantitative research skills to policy research and longitudinal studies.

The PhD program is geared towards students who wish to further develop their critical understanding of disability both as an independent issue and as an issue that raises fundamental questions relating to the meaning of equality, legal distinctions of classes of people, issues of difference as a social, historical and cultural category, applied human rights, the social and legal construction of inequality, and the implications of inclusion as opposed to add-on programs and services. The MA program can be completed either on a part-time or full-time basis. The PhD program can be completed on a full-time basis.

Please consult the online application materials at <https://cds.gradstudies.yorku.ca/programs/>. Prospective applicants may contact the Graduate Program Office for Critical Disability Studies, 313 Stong College, gradcds@yorku.ca

MASTER OF ARTS PROGRAM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The program is open to graduates of recognized universities. Applicants must possess a completed honor's bachelor's degree (generally a four year degree) with a minimum B+ average or equivalent in the humanities, social science or a related applied program (no specific undergraduate major is required). The program will undertake a case-by-case determination of considering admission of "non-standard" applicants whose average is below the minimum standard of B+. This will be considered when an applicant states that they have been subject to discrimination related to their disability affecting their grades while completing their undergraduate degree.

Applicants must provide:

- v a recent research paper or report to indicate ability in writing and conducting research;
- v a statement of interest showing evidence of commitment to advanced work in studies in disability. The statement should include a discussion

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- v a statement of interest showing evidence of commitment to advanced work in studies in disability. The statement should include a discussion

of the applicant's background, interests, skills and career goals, with a proposed program of study; ~~va c.v. and three~~ recommendation forms; and, v for students whose first language is not English, a minimum Test of English as a Foreign Language score of 600 (paper based) or 250 (computer based) or a York English Language Test score of 1 is required.

Applicants are assessed on the basis of academic achievement and potential and/or demonstrated capacity or potential for advanced work in an applied area. The submitted research paper or report and the statement of interest will provide a basis for evaluating that potential.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Candidates for the Master of Arts (Critical Disability Studies) degree must fulfill the following requirements. Three course equivalents at the graduate level, including a major research paper as follows:

1. Core courses

- a) **Critical Disability Studies 5100 6.0: Disability Studies: An Overview;**
- b) **Critical Disability Studies 5110 3.0: Methodology; and,**
- c) ~~Critical Disability Studies 5120 3.0: Law.~~

2. Elective courses

3. Major Research Paper

Students in the MA must complete a major research paper that tests students against the educational objectives of being able to form a researchable question. The research paper addresses the question through an appropriate theoretical framework, review and synthesis of the literature, analysis of primary and secondary data sources and formation of a set of conclusions. It trains students in the formulation and writing of a specific research project and gives them the experience of working independently under faculty supervision. Students develop a research topic given their interests in specific areas and are supervised by faculty members with related experience.

The major research paper is evaluated by the student's major research paper supervisor and advisor through written and oral presentations at which the student's ability to answer questions related to the major research paper is assessed. The major research paper is evaluated on the extent to which the student proposes researchable question, and their ability to address it through an appropriate theoretical framework, review and synthesis of the literature, analysis of primary or secondary data sources and formation of a set of conclusions. The length of the paper is 50 pages with an upper limit of no more than 65 pages, excluding references.

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2. **Three elective courses**

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PROGRAM ENTRY The MA program can be completed on a full- or part-time basis. Entry is fall term.

PROGRAM LENGTH The expected degree completion time for full-time master's students is 3 terms. For those students who complete degree requirements earlier than 3 terms, they must register and pay fees for a minimum of the equivalent of 3 terms of full-time study. All requirements for a master's degree must be fulfilled within 12 terms (4 years) of registration as a full-time or part-time master's student in accordance with Faculty of Graduate Studies' registration policies.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The program is open to qualified students who want to obtain advanced scholarly training in the interdisciplinary study of Critical Disability Studies and who have demonstrated academic excellence in a related field of study. To be considered for admission, candidates must:

- v have completed a master's degree with a minimum A- average or equivalent; equivalence is demonstrated by five or more years of voluntary or paid work experience in a senior position in government, administrative position in an NGO, teaching or administrative position in a university, college or high school, within the area of social justice, human rights and disability;
- v provide a statement of interest demonstrating commitment to advanced work in disability studies. The statement should include a discussion of the applicant's background, interests, skills and career goals, along with a proposed program of study and specific research interests;
- v demonstrate ability in writing and research by submitting a recent research paper or report that the applicant has written for a course or in an employment context; and,
- v provide a *c.v.*, ~~three letters of reference~~, preferably ~~two~~ from university faculty members. Equivalencies (letters from non-university faculty) are considered for applicants who have been out of school for more than five years.

For students whose first language is not English, a minimum Test of English as a Foreign Language score of 600 (paper based) or 250 (computer based) or York English Language Test score of Band 1 is required.

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FIELDS IN THE PROGRAM

Within the broader scope of critical disability studies, faculty members offer research and teaching strengths in the following fields:

1. Human Rights and Social Justice. This field covers the key philosophical, historical and legal concepts surrounding the development and implementation of ideas and policies pertaining to human rights and social justice. It includes a broad understanding of international and national human rights standards as well as cross-cultural interpretations of what is meant by social justice and legal rights obligations. The meaning of human rights and social justice are considered within the context of their applicability to people with disabilities. This field also examines diversity pertaining to cross-cultural, class, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age and poverty issues as they relate to disability. There is a focus on the ways in which diversity issues in the context of broad socioeconomic factors impact experiences of people with disabilities and how equity struggles within a diverse society inter-connect with one another.

2. Critical Theory. This field covers key critical concepts and texts both within disability studies as well as articulated by post-structuralism, Marxism, racial formation theory, queer theory, and feminist theories, among others, which have significantly influenced disability studies.

3. Social Policy. This field examines social policy development affecting disability and equity issues within a Canadian and international context regarding their impact on national, regional and local policies affecting people with disabilities. The impact of grass roots organizing, and activism are also included as an important area of study, looking at how disability advocacy has influenced the development of social policies at different times and places both historically and in contemporary society.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The PhD program is a full-time program of advanced graduate study. It is expected that most students will complete the program in four years. However, students can change their status to be registered on a part-time basis unless otherwise approved for accommodation purposes.

All PhD candidates are required to develop a plan of study providing an integrated, coherent rationale for their studies as they relate to coursework, the comprehensive examination and the dissertation. The plan of study must demonstrate the use of critical theory in disability studies as well as an interdisciplinary approach that charts new areas in

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1. Courses

Core Courses

Students are required to take one full core course, over two terms in the first year of study:

Critical Disability Studies 6100 6.0: Doctoral Seminar in Critical Disability Theory and Research.

Electives

In addition, students are required to complete any three half-courses from among the program's electives. Although approval from the Program Director is required, students are encouraged to take courses from other graduate programs to fulfill their elective requirements. No specialization is required, as students obtain general competencies from engagement in all three fields. It is expected that students complete their elective requirements over the first three terms of study.

√Note If, prior to admission, students have not taken a graduate level methodology course, **Critical Disability Studies 5110 3.0: Methodology** is required in addition to the three electives for a total of four electives.

√Note **Critical Disability Studies 5120 3.0: Law** is primarily offered to master's students; however, it is accessible to PhD students who have not previously taken a law course. If prior to admission, students have not taken a Law course relating to issues of disability, **Critical Disability Studies 5120 3.0: Law** is required in addition to two electives for a total of three electives.

2. Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination is a pedagogical exercise that requires candidates to engage in written and oral focused academic inquiry on a topic or problem of interest that extends the bounds of coursework and moves toward the conceptual work of the dissertation.

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2. Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination is a pedagogical exercise that requires candidates to engage in written and oral focused academic inquiry on a topic or problem of interest that extends the bounds of coursework and moves toward the conceptual work of the dissertation.

<p>This process consists of three 25-page papers, one of which covers the scope and history of the field, its central themes and debates, and the key theoretical and methodological issues and the other two which cover specialized areas within the field.</p> <p>The oral comprehensive examination is set at the completion of the three written papers. The examination committee includes the three faculty members who supervised the 3 papers as well as the Graduate Program Director. The oral component consists of a two-hour examination wherein the examiners discuss the students' comprehensive knowledge of the three areas of their papers.</p> <p>The comprehensive examination is assessed using one of the following categories: pass, pass with conditions, or unsatisfactory. Candidates who receive an unsatisfactory rating on the examination have one opportunity to retake the comprehensive examination within six months of the date of the first examination. A second failure results in the withdrawal of the student from the program. Successful completion of the written and oral exam qualifies the candidate to begin the dissertation proposal.</p>	<p>This process consists of three 25-page papers, one of which covers the scope and history of the field, its central themes and debates, and the key theoretical and methodological issues and the other two which cover specialized areas within the field.</p> <p>The oral comprehensive examination is set at the completion of the three written papers. The examination committee includes the three faculty members who supervised the 3 papers as well as the Graduate Program Director. The oral component consists of a two-hour examination wherein the examiners discuss the students' comprehensive knowledge of the three areas of their papers.</p> <p>The comprehensive examination is assessed using one of the following categories: pass, pass with conditions, or unsatisfactory. Candidates who receive an unsatisfactory rating on the examination have one opportunity to retake the comprehensive examination within six months of the date of the first examination. A second failure results in the withdrawal of the student from the program. Successful completion of the written and oral exam qualifies the candidate to begin the dissertation proposal.</p>
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