

YORK UNIVERSITY

Final Assessment Report – Executive Summary

Sociology, Undergraduate

Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies

Cyclical Program Review – 2012 to 2020

This Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a synthesis of the cyclical review of the programs listed below.

Program(s) Reviewed:

BA and Honours BA

Reviewers appointed by the Vice-Provost Academic:

Dr. José Lopez, Professor, School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies,
University of Ottawa

Dr. Tracey Adams, Professor, Department of Sociology, The University of Western
Ontario

Dr. Sandra Whitworth, Professor Emeritus, Department of Politics, York University

Cyclical Program Review Key Milestones:

Cyclical Program Review launch: September 16, 2020

Self-Study submitted to Vice-Provost Academic: September 15, 2021

Date of the Site Visit: January 12-13, 2022

Review Report received: February 4, 2022

Program Response received: April 13, 2022

Dean's Response received: May 30, 2022

Implementation Plan and FAR confirmed by Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance,
January 2023



Submitted by Lyndon Martin, Vice-Provost Academic, York University

This review was conducted under the York University Quality Assurance Procedures,
August 2020.

SITE VISIT: January 12-13, 2022

A virtual visit of all York's Sociology programs occurred on January 12th and 13th 2022. It included both undergraduate and graduate programs offered by Department of Sociology in the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies (LA&PS) on the Keele campus as well as the undergraduate program offered by the Department of Sociology at Glendon College. Meetings related to the undergraduate program in LA&PS included the following people and groups:

- Vice-Provost Academic Lyndon Martin
- LA&PS Dean JJ McMurtry
- LA&PS Associate Dean Programs Sean Kheraj and LA&PS Associate Dean Teaching and Learning Anita Lam
- Department Chair Mark Thomas
- Undergraduate Program Director Michael Nijahawan
- Full-time faculty
- Part-time course directors and teaching assistants
- Undergraduate students
- York University Associate Dean of Libraries, Jack Leong, and Director of Content Development and Analysis Patti Ryan
- Administrative Staff

OUTCOME:

The Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance received the Program and Decanal responses to the recommendations and has approved an implementation plan.

A report on the progress of the initiatives undertaken in response to recommendations in general and as specified in the implementation plan will be provided in the Follow-up Report which will be due 18 months after the review of this report by the York University Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance (in July 2024).

The next Cyclical Program Review will begin in the Fall of 2028 with a site visit expected in the Fall of 2029 or Winter of 2030.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND STRENGTHS:

The Sociology Department in the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies (LA&PS), located on the Keele campus, describes itself as follows: "York University is widely recognized as home to one of the largest and most diverse offerings of sociology among Canadian universities, and one of the most innovative with respect to curriculum. In all areas of activity — research, teaching and service — York Sociology is engaged in 'sociology that matters'."

The department offers honours degree options leading to the BA or IBA, a minor option, and a 90-credit BA option. The undergraduate curriculum reflects five core areas of

Sociology: Social Inequalities, Global Sociology, Cultural and Political Sociology, Social Theory, and Research Methods.

The review report notes that overall, the department's undergraduate programs have few identified areas of concern. The program is strong and has a clear mission statement and set of objectives. In particular, the review report notes that the department's "curriculum not only reflects the current state of the discipline but is innovative and cutting-edge in its commitment to decolonization, critical engagement, public sociology, and social justice." They note that innovations can be seen throughout the program in the courses offered as well as in the content of those courses – particularly with regard to efforts to globalize and decolonize curricula. They also highlight admirable and innovative initiatives including the Jane Finch Social Innovation Hub and the Resource Centre for Public Sociology, and they note that the department's commitment to research methods, theory, and social inequality clearly reflect disciplinary priorities in Canada and internationally. The reviewers also view the department as "already distinct and innovative, and what remains is to (re)define fields to capture these strengths, so that department strengths and innovations can be better marketed to potential students (at both the undergraduate and graduate levels)."

Students who met with the reviewers praised the wide range of courses offered and the program's flexibility, as well as its research focus and commitment to social justice and critical thought. Students are eager for experiential educational opportunities that connect their education and skills with 'real world' applications.

The reviewers note that the department has a strong and dynamic faculty with a wide range of expertise but that faculty renewal will be important in the coming years due to expected retirements and changes in the department's objectives and mission that may require new expertise. They also state, however, that enrolment trends remain a concern and the department will need some new resources to implement its vision. The reviewers advance a few related recommendations intended to support the program's achievement of this vision.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The chart below lays out the implementation plan approved by the Joint Sub-Committee at its meeting in January 2023.

	Recommendation	Action	Responsible for Follow-up	Timeline
1.	That SOCI 1000 be reviewed.	That SOCI 1000 be reviewed and that the department consider suspending the course in 2023-2024 pending results of the review and exploration of other mechanisms for enhancing student skills where necessary.	Department Chair, Undergraduate Program Director	Review course outcomes in Winter 2023.
2.	That the department establish clear streams at the undergraduate level and communicate these and departmental strengths consistently to students.	That the department work on a renewed communication strategy for highlighting core areas of the programs, including collaboration between the graduate and undergraduate programs.	Department Chair, Undergraduate Program Director, Graduate Program Director, Director, Strategic Communications (LA&PS), others as necessary	Develop strategy in Winter and Summer 2023.
3.	That the program identify and communicate to students job-relevant skills acquired through the study of sociology, including existing experiential education opportunities.	In addition to a communications strategy, the department should explore how to incorporate work-integrated learning into the program to ensure the development of career-related skills.	Director of LA&PS Experiential Education Office, Department Chair, Undergraduate Program Director, Associate Dean Programs	Consult and develop strategy in Winter and Summer 2023.
4.	That more community-engaged learning be developed.	That the department continue to explore EE opportunities and focus its attention on exploring the	Director LA&PS Experiential Education Office,	Consult and develop strategy in Winter and Summer 2023.

		addition of work-integrated learning and career-relevant skills to the curriculum.	Director, Resource Centre for Public Sociology, Department Chair Undergraduate Program Director, LA&PS Associate Dean Programs	
5.	That the department and LA&PS explore what online course offerings are appropriate.	That the department continue with its principles for the allocation of online teaching and participate in ongoing planning with the Dean's Office.	Department Chair, Undergraduate Program Director, Associate Dean, Programs, Director, Strategic Enrolment Management	Review online teaching allocations at the end of the 2022-2023 academic year.
6.	That the department plan for faculty renewal when possible.	That the department prepare multi-year hiring plans for faculty renewal.	Department Chair, Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs	Ongoing
7.	That the department review its program learning outcomes as fields and priorities are refined.	That the department continue to review alignment between its program offerings and program learning outcomes.	Undergraduate Program Director, Associate Director, Faculty Curriculum	Conduct initial review by Summer 2023, and ongoing