

# **YORK UNIVERSITY**

Final Assessment Report – Executive Summary

## **Sociology, Graduate (MA, PhD)**

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:**

MA, PhD

**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, 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: August 4, 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 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> 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 in Glendon College. Meetings related to the graduate program in LA&PS included the following people and groups:

- Vice-Provost Academic Lyndon Martin
- Dean and Associate Vice-President Graduate Studies Thomas Loebel
- LA&PS Dean JJ McMurtry
- LA&PS Associate Dean Research and Graduate studies, Ravi de Costa
- LA&PS Associate Dean Programs Sean Kheraj
- LA&PS Associate Dean Teaching and Learning Anita Lam
- Department Chair Mark Thomas
- Graduate Program Director Eric Mykhalovskiy
- Full-time faculty
- Part-time course directors and teaching assistants
- Masters and PhD students
- York University Libraries 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 Graduate Program in Sociology offers full- and part-time PhD and MA programs (launched in 1966 and 1968 respectively). The programs offer fields of study in Critical Social Theory, Cultures and Identities, Global Sociology, Nature/Society/Culture, and Processes, Practices, and Power. The programs' objectives, which the reviewers found to be clearly articulated, include the following: sustaining and enhancing excellence in research training, building faculty reputation for critical scholarship, interdisciplinarity

and theoretically-rich social research, maintaining a strong graduate program, and fostering a supportive community of diverse scholars.

The reviewers indicate that the structures of the graduate programs in Sociology are reflective of the discipline generally and that the program learning outcomes have been mapped well to the degree level expectations and are aligned with the program requirements.

The reviewers said of the master's program, "The diversity of courses, from which students can select their required methods courses, and non-required theory courses, as well as elective courses, is truly impressive and is a significant strength of this program". Their report also notes, "Graduate students benefit from strong staff and faculty resources supporting their progress through the program. The faculty CV's provided reveal many productive faculty actively engaged in research."

In the self-study, the program identified several areas of improvement which the reviewers note are likely to strengthen program quality. Relevant across the MA and PhD were plans to revise program fields of strength, improve communications and messaging, establishing a clear framework for supervisory relationships, and address anti-Black and other forms of racism in the program and department. The reviewers add their own recommendations, outlined below, that draw upon many of the same areas.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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

|    | <b>Recommendation</b>  | <b>Action</b>   | <b>Responsible for Follow-up</b>  | <b>Timeline</b>  |
|----|--|---|---|--|
| 1. | That the current initiative to rethink the MA program continues.   | The program should consider renewal of the MA program when the new GPD begins term in 2023. A plan should be established by the end of that academic year.  | Graduate Program Director,<br>Program Executive,<br>LA&PS Associate Dean Graduate | Plan in place for program renewal by end of 2023-2024. |
| 2. | That prospective students be advised about program options.  | This is already a regular practice; no further action required.   | n/a   | Ongoing  |
| 3. | That work to clarify the supervisory relationship continue and that information about scheduled leaves be available when planning supervision. | The Chair should provide information to the GPD about planned leaves in advance to assist with the planning of supervision. GPD to ask non-unit program members for their forward availability each year. | Department Chair,<br>Graduate Program Director                                    | Winter 2023 and ongoing                                |

|    |   |  |  |   |
|----|---|--|--|---|
| 4. | That plans to revise the comprehensive examinations continue.   | The review of comprehensive exams should continue.   | Graduate Program Director,<br>Program Executive                                  | Winter 2023 and ongoing   |
| 5. | That work to establish clear fields of expertise continue.  | The program should continue work to clearly identify and communicate program goals and key research strengths.<br>Changes/closure of fields to proceed through required governance processes.              | Graduate Program Director,<br>Program Executive                                  | Discussion through 2023 and formal changes to fields to be completed by end of the 2023-2024 academic year.         |
| 6. | That the program consider reducing the course load from 8 to 6 for those students in the doctoral programs who completed their MA program in sociology at York. | The program should review this recommendation once a new candidacy/comprehensive exam process is implemented and running smoothly.<br>Decision to be documented within two years of the updates of fields. | Graduate Program Director,<br>Program Executive,<br>Program Curriculum Committee | Discussions to begin in 2023-2024, and a decision to be taken no later than the end of the academic year 2025-2026. |
| 7. | That the program consider alternatives to a thesis for completion of the PhD program.   | Complete   | N/A  | Complete  |