

**YORK UNIVERSITY**

Final Assessment Report Executive Summary

**ANTHROPOLOGY**

Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies

**Anthropology, Undergraduate (BA) and Graduate  
Program (MA, and PhD)**

**Cyclical Program Review – 2008 to 2016**

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

**Program(s) Reviewed:**

Honours BA  
Specialized Honours BA  
Honours iBA  
Honours Minor BA  
Honours Minor BA in Medical Anthropology  
BA Program  
MA and PhD in Social Anthropology

**Reviewers appointed by the Vice-Provost Academic:**

Dr. Julia Harrison, Professor Emeritus, Anthropology, Trent University  
Dr. Andrew Walsh, Associate Professor, Anthropology, Western University  
Dr. Marcel Martel, History Department, York University

**Cyclical Program Review Key Milestones:**

Cyclical Program Review launch: September 2016  
Self-study submitted to Vice-Provost Academic: August 2017  
Date of the Site Visit: November 2 & 3, 2017  
Review Report received: December 2017  
Program Response received: January 2018  
Dean's Response received: April 2018

The Final Assessment Report was delayed because of a labour disruption. As a result, many of the recommendations had already been acted on prior to the Joint Subcommittee's deliberations. Where possible, actions taken are reflected in the Implementation Plan.

Implementation Plan and FAR confirmed by Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance, March 2019

Submitted by Alice Pitt, Vice-Provost Academic, York University



This review was conducted under the York University Quality Assurance Protocol, August 2013.

**SITE VISIT: November 2 & 3, 2017**

The reviewers met with Alice Pitt, Vice-Provost Academic, Michael Zryd, Associate Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Albert Schrauwers, Chair, Anthropology, Othon Alexandrakis, Graduate Program Director, Anthropology, JJ McMurtry, LA&PS Associate Dean Programs and Sandra Whitworth LA&PS Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and Research. In addition the reviewers met with the Anthropology Graduate Program faculty as a group and then with a group of Anthropology Graduate Students. Meetings were held with librarians in the Scott Library, undergraduate faculty members, including some of the long-term contract faculty in the Department, and with undergraduate Anthropology majors who were mostly upper-year students.

**OUTCOME:**

The Joint-Committee on Quality Assurance received the Program and Decanal responses to the recommendations. The Institutional plans are clear and achievable and, once completed, will serve to enhance the quality of the program.

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 (September 2020) after the review of this report by the York University Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance.

The next Cyclical Program Review will begin in the Fall of 2024 with a site visit expected in the Fall of 2025 or Winter of 2026.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND STRENGTHS:**

From the Anthropology Undergraduate Self-Study, August 2017:

“Sociocultural Anthropology is a generative and integrative discipline that begins from the premise that human beings not only act but also think about their actions. What we study is the relationship between these two aspects of human behaviour across different contexts in time and space. What gives our discipline its generative power is our distinctive commitment to refining our concepts and methods through continuous reflection on the anthropologist’s relationship to the social reality we witness and the people with whom we engage.

Our mission is to understand and convey how people around the world live their lives at the unpredictable edges of political, social, and cultural stability. Our uniqueness as sociocultural anthropologists is to engage in the critical analysis of how people are subject to, participate in, and contest the processes of living in a world that is now interconnected by new and powerful cultural, social, and technological forces.”

This Final Assessment Report notes the Department’s description of proactive measures to address the challenge of linking students’ high academic skills and motivation with their equally strong motivation to “get a good job” – by continuing to enhance the program with initiatives that build on strengths in Public (Applied) Anthropology” (i.e. the ‘professional studies’ aspect of our ‘liberal art’). “To achieve this goal we are developing a set of certificates and minor programs. These certificates highlight the innovative form of anthropological skills training we offer that supplement

other degree programs thereby making our contribution to interdisciplinarity visible in an institutionally recognized manner.”

The new certificates have been approved by Senate and were launched in September 2018.

### **Recommendations:**

The Review Report states:

York’s Social Anthropology Department is unique in the academic landscape of Canada (and in some measure, North America), and makes a distinctive contribution to the York intellectual community. Its faculty is composed of internationally recognized researchers. Anthropology students have high praise for their classroom and mentoring experiences. The Department is continually striving to improve its curricular offerings and to be responsive to developments in the field and student expectations. The Department has achieved much since its founding and warrants the strong support of the institution to continue to build on its established strengths and capacity. We offer our recommendations below to that end.

The reviewers grouped their recommendations into **List A** and **List B**. Those in the first list – **List A** – were seen as requiring the most immediate attention by the Department and university administration. The second list – **List B** – needs to be addressed in the course of the coming years, in advance of the next cyclical review.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The chart below lays out the implementation plan approved by the Joint Subcommittee at its meeting in March 2019.

Recommendation	Action	Responsible for Follow-up	Timeline
<b>LIST A</b>			
1A That the Department be given the necessary faculty renewal resources to ensure the Department has the capacity to strengthen and expand its unique role in LAPS and York more broadly.	The Department to develop a 5-year complement renewal plan that takes anticipated retirement, leaves and curriculum renewal initiatives into account.	Department	Summer 2018 and ongoing
2A That the University commit to address fieldwork funding challenges	No further action.	The LAPS Graduate Liaison Manager will monitor students	Ongoing monitoring
3A That substantive and concrete acknowledgement be given to the Department for its high levels of service teaching.	No further action.	n/a	n/a
4A That LAPS undertake a review of the impacts of the recent expansion of interdisciplinary graduate programs on the disciplinary graduate programs under its purview.	Consultations are underway.	Faculty of Graduate Studies and Provost	University-wide changes to be in place for 2020-2021
5A That the graduate program in Anthropology evaluate the impact of recent changes on time completion and recruitment of students.	No further action.	Program and Dean's Office	Ongoing monitoring
6A That students be made aware of changes to rules regarding courses that can count towards a major.	No action required.	n/a	n/a
7A That the Department continues the promising path forged by the Graduate Seminar in Ethnographic Research and	Department may apply for additional funds through Dean's Office.	Department and Dean's Office.	n/a

Professionalization			
8A That any omission of Anthropology in the University Communications Plan be rectified	Department to continue work with the Director, Strategic Recruitment.	Department, Dean's Office (LAPS) and the Director, Strategic Recruitment	Winter 2019
9A That the Department receives an Experiential Education Coordinator	Department may submit recommendation to Dean's Office.	Department; Dean's Office (LAPS)	Report outcomes in Follow up report, due (September 2020)
10A That there is substantive support for Engaging Ethnography@York.	Department and Dean's Office (LAPS) to discuss.	Department, Dean's Office (LAPS)	Fall 2018-2019
<b>LIST B</b>			
1B That the Department consider tighter coherence in research clusters between the UG and Graduate programs.	Department to consider.	Department	
2B That the current roster of graduate courses offered is kept	Program to work with Associate Dean to analyze course enrolment trends. Outcome of 1B may provide direction.	Department and Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and Research (LAPS).	
3B That the Department maintains its emerging network of potential internship placements	See 9A above.		
4B That the architecture of the York website encourages exploration of programs such as Anthropology.	Dean's Office (LAPS) continue to work with Department to review web pages.	Department and Dean's Office (LAPS)	
5B That the Department diversify its use of social media to communicate with a wider constituency.	Department to work with Director, Strategic Communications (LAPS) as required.	Department and Director, Strategic Communications (LAPS)	
6B That quantified research data from faculty CVs be incorporated as a standard	A recent decision to implement a common electronic CV university-	Vice-President Research and	

element of future York Self-Studies.	wide will improve capacity to provide quantitative data on an annual basis.	Innovation with University Deans.	
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