

**York University**

Final Assessment Report – Executive Summary

# **INTERDISCIPLINARY SOCIAL SCIENCE**

Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies

**Interdisciplinary Social Science, Department of Social Science**

**Cyclical Program Review – 2008 to 2015**

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

**Program(s) Reviewed**

BA in Interdisciplinary Social Science  
BA Honours in Interdisciplinary Social Science  
BA Honours Double Major in Interdisciplinary Social Science  
BA Honours Major/Minor in Interdisciplinary Social Science

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

Dr. Bronwen Low, Associate Professor, Integrated Studies in Education,  
McGill University  
Dr. Shannon Bell, Professor, Political Science, York University

**Cyclical Program Review Key Milestones**

Cyclical Program Review Launch: September 2015  
Self-study submitted to Vice-Provost Academic: August 19, 2016  
Date of the Site Visit: October 17, 2016  
Review Report received: November 28, 2016  
Program Response received: April 25, 2017  
Dean's Response received: May 2018

Implementation Plan and FAR confirmed by Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance,  
May 2018

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



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

**Outcome:**

An implementation plan has been approved that addresses the recommendations. The Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance concurred with the recommendation of the Vice-Provost Academic that a post-CPR review involving the Department of Social Science is required in light of the departmental omnibus statement and the Dean's statement on departmental challenges. The outcomes of this departmental review, which will be undertaken collaboratively with the Office of the Vice-Provost, the Office of the Dean of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies and the Department, will form part of the 18 month program Follow-up Report for Interdisciplinary Social Science as well as other programs housed in the Department. The Follow-up Report will provide an update on specific aspects of the implementation plan resulting from the cyclical program review as well as any further recommendations or action plans made in consideration of the Departmental Review.

The Follow-up Report will be due 18 months after the review of this report by the York University Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance (January 2020).

The next Cyclical Program Review will begin in the Fall of 2023 with a site visit expected in the Fall of 2024 or Winter of 2025.

**Program Description and Strengths:**

The reviewers noted that the program is well aligned with the mission and plans of York University and the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional studies, particularly in light of stated commitments to interdisciplinary, critical thinking, and learning and scholarship for social engagement and change. They noted in their report that, "the syllabi included in the Self-Study Report reveal that the courses are theoretically informed and engage with a diversity of topics and perspectives, historical and contemporary, across the social sciences. This richness suggests that the course work reflects contemporary currents in social studies research." The reviewers also had critically constructive comments about the objectives of the program, the assessment methods, and lack of learning outcomes aligned with the degree level expectations. These are addressed in the Review Recommendations detailed in the following section.

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Note: the review report's recommendations are provided in summarized form.

**Recommendation 1:**

- a) Support program development with arm's length facilitator and series of retreat-style meetings with relevant faculty members.
- b) Develop a robust mission statement with short and long-term goals; identify gaps between faculty members' expertise and student interests.

c) Articulate what makes a program that explicitly focuses on interdisciplinary unique and how such a focus will be embedded in curriculum and student learning. The program should explore the possibility of building around a core question that is revised every few years.

d) Insure that current students are involved in and student behavior inform discussion of program development.

e) Revise DLE's and SLO's in light of articulation of program mission and outcomes of program development discussion.

The program, in consultation with the Associate Dean Programs and the Vice Provost Academic, will develop a process for consultation, development of a program plan, development of a work plane, reporting process, and timeline.

September and October 2018: develop plan and identify facilitator; November 2018-March 2019: fulfill requirements of plan and complete report for Dean's Office. March 2019-June 2019: develop proposal for submission to Curriculum Committee by June 1, 2019.

### **Recommendation 2:**

a) Develop curriculum map for program and include information about how courses contribute to and assess learning outcomes developmentally.

b) Use 1000 level courses to develop academic skills; ensure TA's receive training.

c) Explore possibility of developing a 2000 level course to further enhance core academic skills in consultation with Libraries.

d) Identify 3000 level courses that align with student interests.

e) Review 4000 level 'capstone' courses to ensure that meet stated objectives.

A detailed curriculum map will emerge as one outcome of the initiatives related to Recommendation 1. The program has articulated the steps and proposed a work plan. The Teaching Commons will support development of detailed curriculum map. However, as a starting point, the program should develop and post pathways for students to use to navigate the program requirements as they currently exist. See recommendation 4.

**Recommendation 3:** Integrate applied and community engaged education in order to align ISS's commitment to social research for social change with innovative learning experiences and explore opportunities to collaborate with other Social Science programs and to enhance experiences for college transfer students.

The program, in consultation with the LA&PS Co-ordinator, will develop plans to provide integrated experiential learning opportunities that advance the program's learning outcomes.

Fall 2018 and ongoing as program develops the program

**Recommendation 4:** Clear information about the program requirements should be provided on the web-site and communicated through advising sessions.

No action required: the program has undertaken steps to improve information. The program development initiative (see Recommendations 1 & 2) should reduce program complexity.