

YORK UNIVERSITY

Final Assessment Report – Executive Summary

**Undergraduate Programs, Information
Technology (ITEC)
MA in Information Systems and Technology,
Graduate Program (MAIST)**

**School of Information Technology
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 in ITEC
BCom in ITEC
MA in Information Systems and Technology (MAIST)

Reviewers appointed by the Vice-Provost Academic:

Timothy C. Lethbridge, Professor and Vice Dean, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, University of Ottawa
Hanan Lutfiyya, Professor, Department of Computer Science, Western University
Neil J. Buckley, Associate Professor and Undergraduate Program Director, Department of Economics, York University

Cyclical Program Review Key Milestones:

Cyclical Program Review launch: September 16, 2020
Self-study submitted to Vice-Provost Academic: November 16, 2021
Date of the Site Visit: February 16, 2022
Review Report received: April 28, 2022
Program Response received: June 15, 2022
Dean's Response received: August 4, 2022

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



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

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

SITE VISIT: February 16, 2022

A virtual visit included meetings with the following individuals and groups:

- Vice-Provost Academic, Lyndon Martin
- Dean and AVP Graduate, Thomas Loebel
- LA&PS Dean, J.J. McMurtry
- Associate Dean of Programs, Sean Kheraj
- Associate Dean Teaching and Learning, Anita Lam
- Associate Dean Graduate Studies, Ravi da Costa
- School of Information Technology (ITEC) Director, Sotrios Liaskos
- Graduate Program Director, Marin Liloiu
- Undergraduate Program Director, Zijian Yang
- Full-time and part-time faculty
- Undergraduate and graduate students
- Associate Dean, Research & Open Scholarship, Jack Leong and Subject Librarian John Dupuis.

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 February 2025).

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 ITEC undergraduate program includes BA and BCom programs, the objectives of which are described as offering “training in the broad intersection of computing technologies and management, focusing on concepts, methodologies, theoretical approaches and techniques for applying information technologies to organizational and societal problems.” The BA program covers technical material (programming, networks, data) plus what the program calls “Methodology / IT Management” (system analysis and design, risk and project management, enterprise architecture). The BCom program covers these but also business aspects (MIS, accounting, marketing, organizational behavior, human resources). The reviewers suggest more clarity should be provided to students about the program objectives and how they differ from those of

Computer Science, with emphasis put on the orientation to business systems and IT divisions.

The aims of the Master of Arts in Information Technology and Systems (MAIST) are to enable graduates to critically analyze information technologies and services; to analyze, design, build, customize and optimize these; and to contribute to organizational change through them. The program can be achieved through three pathways: course-work only, a major research project option, and a thesis option.

At both the undergraduate and graduate level, the reviewers indicate that the program curriculum and structure mostly support the learning outcomes, and they offer a few suggested improvements throughout their report. The methods and criteria for assessing student achievement are also described as being appropriate and effective at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The reviewers noted that graduate students seem to take longer to complete their programs than the ideal 1-2 years, but students pointed out that many are employed elsewhere and are therefore taking the program part-time.

The reviewers also applauded the support provided by the School to transfer and mature students. As many students take time to determine what subject they want to study, the reviewers explain that providing opportunities for transfer is essential for helping students find their path.

The program identified in their self-study several areas for improvement, which the reviewers agreed will contribute to program quality. These goals concern admissions and transfer, improved 1st year pedagogy, enhanced blended and flipped-classroom instruction, increased support for full-time students and international students, and ensuring language learning supports are highlighted for students. The goals also include more technical writing practice in courses, increased lab and hands-on components, and undergraduate research and projects with professors. Student advising will be better supported, and the School will continue to foster excellence in teaching and seek to build community among instructors. The Dean has indicated his support for these goals and plans. The reviewers also briefly commented on them and offered their own set of recommendations, outlined in the next section, that draw upon many of the same areas. Action to continue implementation of the School's own plans has been included in the implementation plan at the end of this report.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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

	Recommendation	Action	Responsible for Follow-up	Timeline
1.	That the full-time faculty complement be increased.	The School should establish a three-year hiring plan.	Director ITEC, Dean, Associate Dean Faculty Affairs	Hiring plan to be submitted in Summer/Fall 2023.
2.	That students' access to required courses be ensured.	The School should conduct an assessment of enrolment demand and course allocation in collaboration with the Director of Strategic enrolment Management. A discussion of additional teaching supports should be undertaken with the Dean's Office.	Director ITEC, Undergraduate Program Director ITEC, Director Strategic Enrolment Management, Dean, Associate Dean Programs, Associate Dean Faculty Affairs	Enrolment assessment and discussion of additional teaching to be completed in Summer/Fall 2023, in time for implementation in Fall 2024.
3.	That the undergraduate curriculum be modernized.	Renewal of the ITEC BA and BCom-ITEC programs should continue, including revisions to courses and learning outcomes and improvements to pedagogy. Changes should take into account the need for greater computer lab access and support. The School should also include a teaching stream appointment focused on the first-year experience in their three-year hiring plan.	Director ITEC, Associate Dean Teaching & Learning, Associate Dean Programs, Associate Director Faculty Curriculum Associate Director Program Evaluation & Pedagogical Design, IT, Dean,	Course proposals and plans to address pedagogy developed and approved by the end of the 2023. Hiring plan to be submitted in Summer/Fall 2023.

			Associate Dean Faculty Affairs,	
4.	That a strategic plan for graduate programs be developed, including a PhD program.	A notice of intent for the development of a PhD program has been approved. The School should continue discussions about curricular innovation for both the master's and doctoral level program.	Director, ITEC, Dean's Office	Discussion and development work underway throughout 2023.
5.	That ITEC differentiate itself more clearly from Computer Science.	The School should continue with its efforts to highlight the differences between programs, both undertaken and planned. See also recommendation 3.	Director, ITEC, Associate Dean Teaching & Learning, Associate Dean Programs, Associate Director Faculty Curriculum, Associate Director Program Evaluation & Pedagogical Design, Dean, Associate Dean Faculty Affairs	Ongoing through academic year 2022-2023 and beyond.
6.	That ITEC continue to focus on the implementation of the strategic goals outlined in its self-study.	The strategic goals identified through the self-study process should continue to be evaluated and implemented as they become feasible.	Director, ITEC, Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning	Ongoing through 2022-2023 and beyond.