

YORK UNIVERSITY

Final Assessment Report – Executive Summary

Sociology (BA, IBA)

Glendon College/Collège universitaire Glendon

Cyclical Program Review – 2012 to 2021

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

Program(s) Reviewed:

BA, iBA Glendon College

Reviewers appointed by the Vice-Provost Academic:

Dr. José López, 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

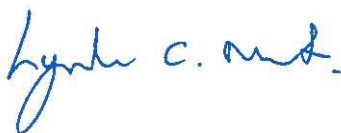
Date of the Site Visit: January 12-13, 2022

Review Report received: February 4, 2022

Program Response received: April 4, 2022

Principal's Response received: May 9, 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 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 in Glendon College. Meetings related to the undergraduate program in Glendon College included the following people and groups:

- Vice-Provost Academic Lyndon Martin
- Principal Marco Fiola and Associate Principal Academic Audrey Pyée
- Department Chair Andrew Dawson
- Full-time faculty
- Part-time course directors
- 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 Department of Sociology in Glendon is one of the original 8 departments of the College, founded in 1968 as a bilingual (English-French) faculty of York University. The department offers honours degree BA and IBA programs in sociology, as well as a minor option, and a 90-credit BA option. Many of the department's faculty are also active members of the Graduate Program in Sociology in the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies (LA&PS) or other graduate programs.

The reviewers described the Department as having a clear mission statement and objectives and that it is "committed to offering a distinctive curriculum that highlights the plethora of theoretical approaches across, and within, the two languages in which it teaches (French and English) and amongst Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies. The program is guided by humanistic, interpretive, critical and hermeneutic orientations in order to offer students a pluralistic understanding of the discipline." The program is also described as serving three main constituencies: 1) students majoring in sociology

who intend to pursue graduate studies, 2) students requiring a first degree to pursue professional or vocational training, and 3) liberal arts students seeking a sociological perspective on self and society. Across all three of these groups the department seeks to foster the capacity for critically engaged disciplined thinking with regard to fundamental social issues.

The reviewers indicate that the modes of delivery and the assessment of student achievement are highly appropriate, but they also recommend that the department explore the offering of “a small selection of dedicated high quality online courses” to provide more flexible options for students. The department is also described as committed to experiential education, exemplified in part by the number of community partnerships in which the full-time faculty are engaged, both globally and locally. As indicated in their recommendations below, the reviewers suggest that reflecting on additional experiential education opportunities might benefit students in all years of the program.

The reviewers also note that during the period covered by the review, there has been a marked decline in the total number of applications and enrollments in the program. They speculate that this decline may in part be a result of the overall decline in the number of global admissions at Glendon but also due to possible causes such as the “generalized trend towards the offer of undergraduate degrees in areas of study that cut across traditional social science disciplines”, a preference for programs that are designed to prepare students for more specific labour market opportunities, and the impact of the bilingual certification requirements on program length. The reviewers state that, despite the negative enrollment portrait, “the self-study reveals not only that the sociology program is a strong and innovative program, it, also, identifies a number of opportunities that can guide it in its effort to reverse the decline in enrollments”. These opportunities include actions focused on improving student recruitment via development of the program website, renaming of courses, and the showcasing experiential learning opportunities; hiring of faculty in the areas of Indigenous Studies and sociological theory; enhancing the student experience through events for students and staff; the development of a Certificate in Community-Engaged Research in collaboration with the Keele campus; and the development of a program of faculty workshops focused on pedagogical innovation and anti-racism and decolonization in the classroom. These opportunities raised by the program are in addition to strategies in development at the level of the college itself as part of its revisioning exercise and should be developed in concert with the goals of that exercise.

The reviewers also highlight the high level of enthusiasm and appreciation for the program expressed by its students, noting that “The department’s collegial and collaborative nature as well as its welcoming and supportive attitudes towards students are convincingly documented in the self-study, and also surfaced in our discussions in the context of the virtual site visit.” The reviewers made note of the student surveys that showed a consistent response rate of excellent, very good or good and indicated that the program had sharpened students’ ability to write clearly and effectively, enhance the development of effective speaking skills, and had contributed to their ability to think critically and analytically and to understand people of other backgrounds.

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 the program consider the meaning of experiential learning and consider what additional opportunities might be developed.	That the program work with the Glendon Experiential Education Coordinator to explore and develop opportunities.	Department Chair, Experiential Education Coordinator, Director of Advancement and Alumni Relations	Explore and develop options in 2023 with options to be offered as of Fall 2023 or 2024.
2.	That the program explore for-credit experiential learning opportunities.	See recommendation 1.	Department Chair, Experiential Education Coordinator, Director of Advancement and Alumni Relations	Explore and develop options in 2023 with options to be offered as of Fall 2023 or 2024.
3.	That the department communicate to students the job-relevant skills acquired in sociology courses and showcase career opportunities and successful alumni.	The program should update the website, and direct students to departmental social media for information about career opportunities, and further training options. The Department should make additional connections with the many organizations in Toronto that students could work with.	Department Chair, Glendon Career Centre	Updates and opportunities to be available starting in Winter and Summer 2023.

4.	That the program consider the advantage and risks associated with attracting students through subject pathways, and consider focusing on the strengths of the program's openness and critical data literacy for a changing labour market.	The program should reflect on the program structure and the needs of students for openness vs. prescriptive requirements, particularly in light of the core curriculum being introduced at Glendon.	Associate Principal Academic, Department Chair	Discussions to take place in Winter 2023 and beyond
5.	That the Department proceed with hiring strategies as resources become available.	The Department should develop its hiring plan, supported by data.	Department Chair, Principal	Discussion with Principal to begin in Winter 2023.
6.	That fourth-year French language courses continue to be diversified and language support be provided in the introductory courses.	The Department should meet with the Office of the Principal regarding specific language supports required.	Office of the Principal, Department Chair, Director, Centre de formation linguistique	Discussion with Office of the Principal to take place in Winter 2023.
7.	That the program explore offering a small selection of online courses to enhance flexibility for students.	Department faculty should participate in the Glendon-wide discussion of the criteria for determining the mode of delivery for courses.	Department Chair, Associate Principal Academic, Committee on Academic Standards, Teaching and Learning, Glendon Faculty Council Curriculum Committee	Discussions to take place in 2022/2023.
8.	That part-time faculty members be encouraged to participate in the discussions about the transformation of the program.	The Department may invite participation of part-time faculty members in ongoing discussions about program revisions, or to find alternate methods of engagement.	Department Chair	Efforts to engage participation underway in Winter 2023 and ongoing.