

York University

Final Assessment Report – Executive Summary

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies
Faculty of Graduate Studies

MA program in Development Studies, 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

MA Program in Development Studies

Reviewers appointed by the Vice-Provost Academic:

Dr. John Cameron, Associate Professor, International Development Studies, Dalhousie University

Dr. Jane Parpart, Professor Emeritus, International Development, Gender and African History, Carleton University

Dr. Anne Rubenstein, Associate, History, 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 24-25, 2016

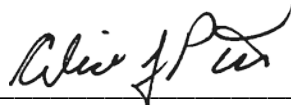
Review Report received: January 9, 2017

Program Response received: June 5, 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



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 Development Studies 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 had the following commented about the Development Studies program, "The MA in International Development Studies (DVST program) is a very well-designed program that offers an impressive balance between theoretically-rigorous critical analysis, basic skills in research methods, practical field research and professional development training. We are particularly impressed that a relatively small group of core faculty members have been able to consistently mount such a strong MA program as well as the very strong undergraduate (IDST) program."

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Recommendation 1: That the equivalent of one additional faculty position be added to the core complement of DVST and IDST faculty members in order to address the curricular gaps identified in this report. We encourage the DVST and IDST programs to pursue joint appointments with other programs in the Department of Social Sciences, as proposed in the DVST and IDST Self-Study Reports.

One professorial appointment to the Department of Social Science, with responsibilities to Development Studies & Business and Society, has been made with July 1, 2018 start. Future proposals will be considered on a yearly basis. IDST/DVST should submit a request for hire(s) based upon the Dean's four pillars – enrollment and retention numbers, curricular clarity, collaboration, and curricular innovation.

Summer 2018 and ongoing

Recommendation 2: That the DVST program carefully monitor the impacts of the loss of TA positions on admissions and degree completion rates.

Program to prepare a report addressed to Dean of FGS and Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies outlining the impact of practices relating to TA assignments on recruitment and degree completion.

September 2018

Recommendation 3: That the Faculty of Graduate Studies provide alternative sources of funding to the DVST program to mitigate any negative impacts from the loss of TA positions for DVST students.

No action required: See recommendation 2.

Recommendation 4: That the Faculty of LAPS, in close consultation with the DVST program, implement a system to encourage faculty members who are associated with the DVST program but based in other units to play a more active role in the supervision of DVST student research.

Program to develop report to be submitted to the Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies that outlines collegial process for distributing supervisions and aligning admissions with faculty capacity and expertise.

September 2018

Recommendation 5: That the DVST program establish clear norms on the role that MRP and Thesis supervisors and secondary supervisors are expected to play, especially at the research design stage and in preparing DVST students for field research.

Program to revise internal document to reflect FGS guidelines, September 2018.

Recommendation 6: That the DVST program establish clear written procedures for the governance of the DVST program.

Program to participate in Department of Social Science governance review, which will result in a revised document to be submitted to the Dean's Office and FGS.

Fall 2018

Recommendation 7: That the DVST program work in collaboration with the Department of Social Science, the Faculty of LAPS, and the Faculty of Graduate Studies to develop a model of governance for both the International Development Studies undergraduate program and the DVS graduate program at York so that the needs of the two programs can be addressed together.

No action required: see Recommendation 6.

Recommendation 8: That the DVST program identify and implement strategies to increase the support provided to DVST students in the search for internship placements and pre-departure preparation for their internships. Such support could take the form of an internship coordinator, which would require additional financial resources.

The program has identified 4 initiatives and will inform FGS and Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies about how these have been operationalized.
Fall 2018

Recommendation 9: That the DVST program implement the proposed strategies for professional development outlined in Section 7.2.2 of the Self-Study Report, but maintain its current balance among critical analysis, field research and professional development.

Program to develop a proposal for non-credit professional workshops, including detailed costs, and submit to Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies. FGS will be consulted on how the proposed changes affect the status of the graduate seminar and revised course approvals will be sought as necessary.
Fall 2018

Recommendation 10: That the DVST program work with the Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of LAPS and Faculty of Graduate Studies to allocate additional resources to address the parallel curricular gaps in the IDST and DVST programs.

No action required: See recommendation 1

Recommendation 11: That the DVST program identify the specific gaps in field research training and develop a strategy to address those gaps through the combination of revisions to the field research methods course and through increased roles for primary and secondary supervisors in research supervision, particularly at the research design and field-research preparation stages.

The program's GDLES and SLO's are to be reviewed as curriculum revisions are undertaken with revisions as necessary. A proposal for a new course will include role in GDLES and SLO's as well as resource implications to be submitted to the Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies. Normal FGS approval processes for course changes will be followed, and a complete curriculum map will be submitted to FGS and included in the 18-month follow-up report to the Joint Subcommittee on Quality Assurance.

Fall 2018

Recommendation 12: That the DVST program develop a policy on language skills for field research which requires students to acquire adequate language skills for their field

research or to choose field research locations where they are already competent in local languages, and to only use translators in exceptional circumstances.

The program's decision will align with GDLES and SLO's, and the program will inform the Dean's Office of its decision.

Fall 2018

Recommendation 13: That the DVST program consider creating a policy to enable students to conduct field research and to fulfill the internship requirement in Canada.

The program's decision will align with GDLES and SLO's and the program will inform the Dean's Office of its decision and submit revised GDLES and SLO's if necessary to FGS and the Vice Provost Academic.