

YORK UNIVERSITY

Final Assessment Report – Executive Summary

SOCIO-LEGAL STUDIES

Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies and
the Faculty of Graduate Studies

Socio-Legal 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 Socio-Legal Studies
PhD Program in Socio-Legal Studies

Reviewers appointed by the Vice-Provost Academic:

Dr. Gillian Balfour, Associate Professor, Sociology, Trent University
Dr. Bryan Hogeveen, Associate Professor, Sociology, University of Alberta
Dr. Aaron Lorenz, Dean, School of Social Science and Human Service, Ramapo College of New Jersey
Dr. Sonia Lawrence, Associate Dean, Research, Director Graduate Law Program, Director Institute for Feminist Legal Studies, Osgoode Hall Law School, 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 18-19, 2016
Review Report received: December 16, 2016
Program Response received: March 16, 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 Socio-legal 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 Socio-Legal Studies (SLST) Graduate Program is nestled in the Department of Social Science. The program admitted its first cohort of Masters students in 2008 and the first PhD students were admitted in 2010. The reviewers state, "The SLST program contributes notably to the Faculty and to the University and should thus be commended for its part in enhancing the national and international reputation of York University." They note further that, "Students are exposed to historical and comparative perspectives centred in an approach that takes seriously a broad and inclusive definition of the law."

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Recommendation 1: We urge the Program to thoroughly think through and examine the comprehensive examination requirement.

Program members and Director to develop revised comprehensive exam requirement and submit to FGS Curriculum Committee for approval, to the Program Council, and Academic Standards Curriculum and Pedagogy (if necessary). LAPS Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies and Dean of FGS will be informed.

Fall 2018

Recommendation 2: We suggest that the Program develops more and diverse ways to recruit students into the PhD and MA programs.

Program members and Director to report progress and outcomes of its proposed efforts to Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies and FGS
Sept 2018 and 2019

Recommendation 3: We call upon the faculty to develop a Program level professional development strategy for MA and PhD students.

The Program's curriculum committee will develop a proposal and submit to FGS Council for discussion.
Fall 2018

Recommendation 4: Given the centrality of interdisciplinarity to SLST and to the larger Department in which it is situated, we urge the Program to broaden the contemporary view of this foundational principle by seeking collaborations and connections from every corner of the York University campus.

The program Council will plan a retreat to address the role and qualities of interdisciplinarity and submit a report to the Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies by December 2018

Recommendation 5: We call upon the Program to both continue its efforts and to develop new initiatives to combat student concerns about systemic racism and feelings of isolation.

No action required: the program is committed to establishing an equity committee and is encouraged to work with the Department of Social Science for a broader reach.