

**YORK UNIVERSITY**

Final Assessment Report Executive Summary

**HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY  
STUDIES**

Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies

**Cyclical Program Review – 2009 to 2016**

This Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a synthesis of the cyclical review of the programs listed below and considers the documents provided to the reviewers and the additional documents listed below (a to f) as well as the review by the Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance.

**Programs Reviewed:**

***Human Rights and Equity Studies (HREQ) and Multicultural & Indigenous Studies (MIST):***

Specialized Honours BA  
Honours BA  
Double Major, Major/Minor, Minor  
BA

***Program Streams in Multicultural and Indigenous Studies:***

Diaspora Studies, Indigenous Studies, Racism and Multiculturalism

***Certificates:***

Cross-Disciplinary Certificate in Indigenous Studies  
Cross-Disciplinary Certificate in Anti-racist Research and Practice  
Certificate in Refugee and Migration Studies

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

Dr. Anthony Paré, Professor and Head, Language and Literacy Education, University of British Columbia

Dr. Carmela Murdocca, Associate Professor, Sociology, York University

**Cyclical Program Review Key Milestones:**

Cyclical Program Review Launch: September 2016  
Self-Study submitted to Vice-Provost Academic: November 2017  
Date of the Site Visit: January 22, 2018  
Review Report received: February 6, 2018  
Program Response received: April 4, 2018  
Dean's Response received: June 26, 2018

The Final Assessment Report was delayed because of a labour disruption. As a result, many of the recommendations had already been acted on prior to the Joint Subcommittee's deliberations. Where possible, actions taken are reflected in the Implementation Plan.

Implementation Plan and FAR confirmed by Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance, March 2019

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



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

**SITE VISIT: January 22, 2018**

During the site visit the review team met with the following individuals:

- Dr. Alice Pitt, Vice-Provost, Academic
- Dr. J.J. McMurtry, Associate-Dean, Liberal Arts & Professional Studies
- Mr. Adam Taves, Associate-Dean, Research and Collections, Library, and Ms. Norda Bell, Human Rights & Equity Librarian
- Eight faculty members representing both programs
- Eight students representing both programs
- Dr. Merle Jacobs, Department Chair
- Dr. Livy Visano, Undergraduate Program Director
- Department staff: Ms. Diana Sargla, Ms. Mavis Griffin, and Ms. Lorraine Hislop

**OUTCOME:**

The Joint-Committee on Quality Assurance received the Program and Decanal responses to the recommendations. The Institutional plans are clear and achievable and, once completed, will serve to enhance the quality of the program.

A report on the progress of the initiatives that will be undertaken in response to accepted recommendations will be provided in the Follow-up Report which will be due 18 months (September 2020) after the review of this report by the York University Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance.

The next Cyclical Program Reviews for programs in Equity Studies will be as follows: Human Rights and Equity Studies, launch in Fall of 2024 and site visit in FW 2025; Indigenous Studies, launch in Fall of 2024 and site visit in FW2025.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND STRENGTHS:**

The reviewers noted that the two programs discussed in this report were in the midst of considerable change at the time of the review. They described the changes in their report: “A proposal currently being considered by Senate would lead to the creation of a standalone program in Indigenous Studies, which in turn would lead to the dissolution of the Multicultural and Indigenous Studies program (MIST).” Senate approved the change and students were admitted in Fall 2018. In addition, the Human Rights & Equity Studies program (HREQ) had begun a substantial curricular revision within the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies (LA&PS). Senate approved these revisions in March 2019. The reviewers commented on both the current state of the programs and on their plans for change.

The programs align particularly well with key values expressed in the University Academic Plan 2015-2020: inclusivity and diversity as well as social justice and equity. The reviewers noted: “Further consistency is found in York’s Strategic Research Plan: 2013-18, where one of six intersecting themes is “forging a just and sustainable world.” They also commented that the programs’ objectives resonate with the Faculty’s Mission Statement. The reviewers noted that more needs to be done to clarify and community the objectives of the program beyond the department and said: “Curricular reform in HREQ and the creation of a new, more tightly-focused program in Indigenous Studies

## FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY STUDIES, AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS STUDIES

---

(described in Appendix O of the MIST self-study) will likely go a long way towards defining the nature and purpose of the two programs, but certain concerns must be addressed.”

Regarding the program, the report includes the following statement: “The faculty responsible for the two programs are active scholars with good publication rates and regular participation in scholarly meetings. As evident in course syllabi and interviews, the programs are up-to-date and reflect both contemporary disciplinary debate and current social realities.”

The Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance notes that, given that Indigenous Studies comprised the core of MIST, with Multicultural Studies added when Atkinson College and the Faculty of Arts merged to form the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, Indigenous Studies is not new, but rather a modified program that was approved by the York University Senate in February 2018.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSE SUMMARY:**

Below is the list of recommendations from the external reviewers, along with the program response, the Dean’s analysis and the institutional plan for the recommendations, including the parties that will be responsible and the anticipated timelines.

The reviewers stated the following about the recommendations: “These recommendations largely reflect efforts underway or planned, and are thus offered as confirmation and encouragement. The committee believes that HREQ and MIST represent unique and valuable areas of research and pedagogy, and should be supported and promoted in every possible way by the Faculty and University. However, much has changed since the formation of the programs, and curricular tinkering will not be sufficient. The revisions underway in both programs recognize the necessity of updates. Based on the programs’ self-studies and our onsite visit, we believe that the faculty, staff, and students of HREQ and MIST have the vision, commitment, and consensus required to improve their offerings, and are confident that the successful implementation of the recommendations below will make the programs even more vital, contemporary, and relevant.”

### **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The Implementation Plan below outlines the plan approved by the Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance at the March 2019 meeting.

Recommendation	Action	Responsible for Follow-up	Timeline
1 That HREQ and MIST clearly articulate a consolidated and reduced set of general objectives.	Updates to the learning outcomes of HREQ and INDG have been completed and a good deal of thought must now be given to untangling the overlapping areas. Multiple phases will ensure that students complete requirements in a timely manner.	Department in consultation with Faculty Curriculum Committee and the Teaching Commons.	First Phase complete (Indigenous Studies admitted students in Fall 2018); remaining changes complete by the end of the winter term, 2019.
2 That program learning outcomes for HREQ, pay attention to the cumulative effect of learning outcomes over the degree pathways.	Program Learning Outcomes and Curriculum Map for HREQ finalized.	Department with Faculty supports and the Teaching Commons.	Completed June 2019
3 That new or (re-tooled) general education courses be developed.	Review of General Education requirements underway at the Faculty level.	n/a	Follow-up Report, due September 2020, to document how results of Faculty review affect program.
4 That immediate and long-term improvements be made in the communications and marketing of HREQ.	Focus on recommendations above and then proceed to consider marketing and recruitment.	Department	Report on outcomes in the Follow-up Report due September 2020.