

**Disability Studies**  
**Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan**  
**March 2026**

<b>Faculty / Affiliated University College</b>	King's University College	
<b>Degrees Offered</b>	Bachelor of Arts (BA)	
<b>Date of Last Review</b>	2016-2017	
<b>Modules Reviewed</b>	Major in Disability Studies Minor in Disability Studies	
<b>External Reviewers</b>	Dr. Jay Dolmage Professor University of Waterloo	Dr. Michelle Owen Professor University of Winnipeg
<b>Internal Reviewer</b>	Vicki Sweeney, Associate Dean, Huron University College	Morgan DeCampos Undergraduate Student English Language & Literature
<b>Date of Site Visit</b>	December 8 & 9, 2025	
<b>Date Review Report Received</b>	January 21, 2026	
<b>Date Program/Faculty Response Received</b>	February 27, 2026	
<b>Evaluation</b>	Good Quality	
<b>Approval Dates</b>	SUPR-U: April 21, 2026 ACA: May 5, 2026 Senate (for information): May 15, 2026	
<b>Year of Next Review</b>	2032-2033	
<b>Progress Report</b>	June 2028	

## **Overview of Western’s Cyclical Review Assessment Reporting Process**

In accordance with Western’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a summary of the cyclical review, internal responses, and assessment and evaluation of the Disability Studies Program delivered by King’s University College.

This FAR considers the following documents:

- the program’s self-study brief;
- the external reviewers’ report;
- the response from the Program; and
- the response from the Academic Dean, King’s University College

This FAR identifies the strengths of the program and opportunities for program enhancement and improvement, and details the recommendations of the external reviewers – noting those recommendations to be prioritized for implementation.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the FAR that have been selected for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, specifies any action or follow-up that is required, and defines the timeline for completion.

The FAR (including Implementation Plan) is sent for approval through the Subcommittee on Program Review – Undergraduate (SUPR-U) and the Senate Committee on Academic Curriculum and Awards (ACA), then for information to Senate and to the Ontario Universities’ Council on Quality Assurance. Subsequently, it is publicly accessible on Western’s IQAP website. The FAR is the only document from the undergraduate cyclical review process that is made public; all other documents are confidential to the Program, King’s University College, and SUPR-U.

## Executive Summary

The Disability Studies program began as a handful of courses in the Department of Interdisciplinary Programs in 2012. In 2014, Disability Studies was formalized as a Minor module, with the Major module following in 2016. The Disability Studies program aims to change how students imagine disability through an engaging and innovative education that empowers leaders who are both motivated, and able to facilitate systemic change. This is accomplished through accessible pedagogy focused on inquiry-based learning methodologies with ample opportunity for praxis; bringing the work of the classroom out into the broader London Community.

The Disability Studies program at King's University College (King's) is structured into three informal thematic streams designed to support students as they prepare to enroll in classes each term. These include *Changing Systems and Structures*, *Changing Imaginations and Representation*, and *Approaching Disability Studies with a Focus on Intellectual and Developmental Disability*. The program is designed to be accessible to a variety of students, including those that are first generation university students and mature students. Running over 20 half credit courses, the 2023-2024 academic year had a total enrolment of 124 students across the Major and Minor modules.

The self-study was informed by a student focus group and a series of alumni surveys receiving a total of 92 responses. Equally, full-time faculty members and sessional instructors reviewed the program's learning outcomes and subsequently undertook a curriculum mapping exercise.

The external reviewers shared a positive assessment of the Disability Studies Program. They offer four recommendations with considerations for further enhancement.

## Strengths and Innovative Features Identified by the Program

- Deep and sustained community engagement, including long-term partnerships with disability organizations, paid guest lectures by disability advocates, public panels, and disability arts programming.
  - Hosting public theatre performances of disability focused plays like *Awkward Hug*, *Destiny USA* and *Project Qyzra*.
- Inquiry-based, praxis-oriented pedagogy that emphasizes applying theory to real-world contexts through case studies, community-engaged projects, policy analyses.
- Courses work to bring conversations of intersectionality into the classroom, where interrelations between ableism, eugenics, and anti-Blackness are made.
- Many syllabi have an option for students with lived experience to propose alternatives to existing assignments wherein they can research and examine their own experiences with disability, inclusion/exclusion, and ableism, while still accomplishing the assignment's core learning objectives.

### **Concerns and Areas of Improvement Identified and Discussed by the Program**

- Imbalance across curricular pathways, with a heavier concentration of courses in the *Changing Imaginations and Representations* stream.
- Reliance on 3000-level courses as terminus experiences due to the program's lack of a formal 4000-level capstone.
- Limited formal experiential learning opportunities, including the absence of a sustained internship, co-op, or regularly offered community-embedded placements,
  - o Inability to sustain earlier innovative experiential initiatives (e.g., field trips, ACCESS Project, City Studio participation) due to staffing shortages, budget constraints, and faculty leaves.
- Perceived redundancy and repetition of foundational content, especially around models of disability, reported by students in upper-year courses.
- Gaps in decolonization and Indigenous expertise. Need for relationship-building and external support to deepen this work responsibly.
- Alumni and students seeking stronger connections between coursework, labour-market skills, and post-graduation opportunities.

### **Review Process**

As part of the external review, the review committee, comprising two external reviewers, an internal faculty reviewer, and an internal student reviewer were provided with Volume I and II of the self-study brief in advance of the scheduled review and then met in-person over two days with the:

- Vice-Provost (Academic Programs)
- Director of Academic Quality and Enhancement
- President of King's University College
- Interim Vice President Academic Dean
- Interim Associate Academic Dean
- Associate University Librarian
- Dean of Students (Student Affairs)
- Department Chair
- Academic Planning and Analysis Manager
- Director, Information Technology Services
- Registrar (King's)
- Administrative Staff
- Program Faculty
- Program Students

Following the site visit, the external reviewers submitted a comprehensive report of their findings which was sent to the Program and Dean for review and response. Formative documents, including Volumes I and II of the Self-Study, the External Report, and the Program and Decanal responses form the basis of this Final Assessment Report (FAR) of the Disability Studies Program. The FAR is collated and submitted to SUPR-U by the Internal Faculty Reviewer with the support of the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement.

### **Summative Assessment – External Reviewers’ Report**

External reviewers noted that they were “*quite impressed with the DS department at King’s University. The faculty is doing a great job and the students enjoy their classes.*” [...] “*This is a very valuable and thriving program, unique in the region, the province and the country. We look forward to tracking its continued growth.*”

### **Key Strengths of the Program**

- The Disability Studies program is exemplary in terms of its modern modes of teaching and assessment. Core faculty and sessional instructors are doing a terrific job with the curriculum, and contract faculty feel very well-supported by the department and Chair.
- An impressive number of graduates go on to attain further education and credentials: in health, education, physical therapy, rehabilitation, and social services.

### **Prospective Improvements for the Program to Consider**

- Consider streamlining scheduling - some courses and opportunities are not offered as frequently as they might be, given staffing, timing, and other constraints.
- Support for instructors to build more flexible and experiential pedagogy and strengthen these opportunities via a structured internship and/or field trips in the program.
- Work with the local school boards and the Faculty of Education at Western University to see how the program can help prepare future and current teachers.
- Support with setting up a student club that would bring them together outside of class.

**Summary of the Reviewers’ Recommendations and Program/Faculty Responses**

The following are the reviewers’ recommendations in the order listed by the external reviewers.

Reviewers’ Recommendations	Program/Faculty Response
<p><b>Recommendation #1</b>  <b>Class Scheduling and Size:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider experimenting with 90 min classes 2x a week.</li> <li>- Work toward greater consistency with required course scheduling to meet degree requirements, including the 4000 level Research course.</li> <li>- Consider scheduling in two- year increments.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Program:</b> The program has begun piloting adjustments to class scheduling and long-term course planning to improve consistency and student progression. In 2025-26, Disability Studies 1010A/B is being offered in a revised format (2-hour lecture plus 1-hour tutorial), with encouraging early results. Building on this pilot, we will identify two additional 2000-level courses to adopt either 2 x 90-minute or 2 x 60-minute formats in 2027–28, followed by two 3000-level courses in 2028–29. These changes will be implemented in consultation with faculty and monitored through student evaluations and targeted post-course focus groups.</p> <p>To improve consistency in required course scheduling, including the 4000-level Research course, the Disability Studies Chair is developing a five-year course rotation plan to provide greater predictability for students and instructors. In parallel, discussions within the newly formed School of Policy, Law &amp; Social Change (SPLSC) are exploring the possibility of a unified 2000-level research methods course and 4000-level capstone model. Given the interdepartmental coordination required, this initiative is anticipated to unfold over a three- to five-year timeframe.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Academic Dean’s Office supports the program response and will continue to collaborate with the program to ensure consistency and responsiveness in course scheduling.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #2</b>  <b>Explore and (if possible) Expedite the Pathway to an Honours Degree:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider how this pathway may further open doors to students interested in graduate or professional programs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Program:</b> During the initial formation of Disability Studies, informal discussions assessed the feasibility of an Honours Specialization (HSP); however, given limited faculty resources at the time (one full-time faculty member and one new hire), we felt the most viable honours pathway for students was through a double major structure. This approach allowed students to graduate with an honours degree while preserving program sustainability and intentionally strengthening interdisciplinarity at the College.</p> <p>In recent years, enrolment patterns at King’s indicate that students increasingly prefer double majors over HSPs, and several programs have experienced declining HSP enrolment, in some cases pausing admissions. In this context, without a broader institutional reconsideration of how HSPs are structured, resourced, and incentivized, the creation of a standalone Disability Studies HSP is not</p>

	<p>feasible in the near term. We will continue to monitor enrolment trends and institutional direction and remains open to revisiting this discussion should conditions shift.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Academic Dean’s Office supports the program response, emphasizing judicious exploration of an HSP within the context of broader academic planning that emphasizes interdisciplinary collaboration.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #3 Experiential Learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Seek additional resources to increase sustainability and frequency of Experiential Learning opportunities in- and outside of class. For instance, via an Experiential Learning Coordinator.</li><li>- Explore a partnership with Social Justice and Peace Studies regarding their full-year internship.</li></ul>	<p><b>Program:</b> To enhance sustainability beyond individual courses, we hope to reconstitute our Program Advisory Committee over the next two years to include community partners, improving information flow and strengthening relationships that can support placement and project-based opportunities. While the creation of a dedicated Experiential Learning Coordinator would require new institutional resources and is not currently feasible, we have been trying to work strategically within existing structures to expand access to placements.</p> <p>This year, an informal pathway has been opened for Disability Studies students into the Social Justice and Peace Studies (SJPS) full-year internship, and the Program will actively promote this opportunity beginning Spring 2026. In addition, the Program has connected with a Child and Youth Studies (CYS) spring course that places students in London-area primary schools to support outdoor education initiatives. Several Disability Studies students have already applied, and outcomes will be reviewed following the summer term. Over the next five years, we will continue to explore placement opportunities, particularly in collaboration with SJPS and CYS, leveraging existing courses to increase experiential access without duplicating infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Academic Dean’s Office supports the program response. Enhanced support for experiential learning across departments and programs is part of King’s institutional strategic framework. The Academic Dean’s Office supports and encourages further collaboration among programs as described by the program.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation #4</b>  <b>Program Promotion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with local schoolboards and the Faculty of Education to determine how the program can help prepare teachers.</li> <li>- Integrate Disability Studies courses into other program plans.</li> <li>- Engage 1st year students, prospective high school students and students at Fanshawe College to advise on the program pathway and potential career opportunities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Program:</b> The program agrees that targeted promotion and strategic integration are essential to sustained enrolment growth. This will require support from Marketing &amp; Recruitment, which the program hopes to grow over five years. Regarding teacher preparation, CYS and SJPS have direct-entry pathways to Education, and early discussions are underway. The Program has initiated conversations with Social Work and Management and Organizational Studies (BMOS) to identify curricular gaps around accessibility and inclusion, alongside cross-listing discussions with CYS. The program aims to expand college articulation agreements, building on the Fanshawe Developmental Services Worker (DSW) Program partnership, with guest lectures beginning March 2026. High school engagement through "DS @ King's Nights" has doubled participation, with continued growth expected.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Academic Dean’s Office will support the program in engaging with prospective partners to enhance program promotion and to explore pathway opportunities.</p>
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### Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. In each case, the Program Chair, and the Dean of the Faculty are responsible for enacting and monitoring the actions noted in Implementation Plan.

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
<b>Recommendation #1: Class Scheduling and Size</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pilot revised scheduling formats for 2000 and 3000-level courses.</li> <li>2. Develop and implement a five-year course rotation plan.</li> <li>3. Explore unified research methods and capstone structure within SPLSC.</li> <li>4. Improve timetable coordination and reduce overlap.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Program Chair Program Faculty</li> <li>2. Program Chair</li> <li>3. Program Chair Department Chairs School Director</li> <li>4. Associate Dean's Office</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 2000-level courses by Sept 2027 3000-level courses by Sept 2028</li> <li>2. By Sept 2027</li> <li>3. By Sept 2028</li> <li>4. By Sept 2026</li> </ol>
<b>Recommendation #2: Explore and (if possible) Expedite the Pathway to an Honours Degree</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitor institutional HSP enrollment trends and policy direction annually.</li> <li>2. Reassess feasibility of an honours pathway within SPLSC framework (e.g., student interest, examining pathways to graduate offerings).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Program Chair Associate Dean's Office</li> <li>2. Program Chair SPLSC Director</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing with check-in at June 2028 progress report</li> <li>2. By Sept 2031</li> </ol>
<b>Recommendation #3: Expand Experiential Learning Opportunities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reconstitute Program Advisory Committee with community partners.</li> <li>2. Formalize and promote Disability Studies pathway into SJPS internship.</li> <li>3. Evaluate participation in CYS outdoor education placement course.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Program Chair</li> <li>2. Program Chair SJPS Chair</li> <li>3. Program Chair CYS Chair</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. By Sept 2028</li> <li>2. By Sept 2026</li> <li>3. By Sept 2026</li> </ol>

