Updated Oct 2022

Ongoing Improvement Progress Report

Instructions and Report Template

As part of the protocols outlined in Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), to facilitate the continuous improvement of academic programs between review cycles, in connection with the Final Assessment Report (FAR) and Implementation Plan, a monitoring process will include an Ongoing Improvement Progress Report. The outcomes of this report will be considered as part of the program's next cyclical review.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the operationalization of the implementation plan following a Cyclical Program Review (or the review of a New Program). This should include a brief summary of actions taken by the Program and the Dean's Office since the completion of the review (usually about three years), as well as an update on the stage of implementation for all applicable items. These include:

- whether the action item(s) are in progress, complete or no longer applicable (with a brief explanation);
- the timelines of each item and how they are progressing or expected to progress, particularly if they are diverting from original timelines in the FAR and Implementation Plan, and;
- a short description of any other program developments and improvements that have taken place following the review.
- For new programs only, an evaluation of the initial administration and resourcing of the program.

The following report template has been created for the program to report on progress made regarding recommendations presented in the Implementation Plan, and any other relevant program developments and enhancements.

- The program will complete the template and submit it to the faculty Dean's Office for sign-off.
- The program will then submit the completed Ongoing Improvement and Progress Report to the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement (OAQE). Reports are due by June 30.
    - The OAQE will present all Ongoing Improvement and Progress Reports to SUPR- U/G. Any follow-up questions/concerns, will be communicated to the program and Dean's Office by the OAQE.

Ongoing Improvement Progress Report

Program / Faculty Information

Program	Sociology & Criminology, BA	**Faculty / Affiliated University College**	King's University College
Approval Dates of the Review	SUPR-U: April 27, 2022 SCAPA: May 4, 2022 Senate: May 13, 2022	**Year of the Next Review**	2029-2030
Link to the Programs Final Assessment Report (FAR)	*https://www.uwo.ca/pvp/vpacademic/iqap/academic_programs/iqap_reports/kings_undergrad/2022%20Kings%20Sociology%20and%20Criminology%20Program%20Review.pdf*		
If applicable, submission of follow-up report(s)	*Good Quality with Report in Three Years, April 2025*		

	Name	**Signature**	**Date**
Program Chair/Director	Liam Kennedy		June 16, 2025
Dean (or delegate)	Josephine Gemson		June 22, 2025

Progress Update on the Implementation Plan

Recommendation #1	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Develop a certificate made up of the department's social research methods and statistics courses to be awarded to students who complete these courses with the potential addition of an applied student research project.	The curriculum committee in consultation with the IQAP committee will deliberate on this recommendation and will jointly come up with an implementation plan, as needed.	Curriculum committee IQAP committee Department Chair	By December 2022

Recommendation Implemented

X Yes □ No □ Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? □ Yes □ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

We submitted the letter of intent for this certificate, entitled 'Theory-to-Action: Applied Social Research,' in fall 2024. The 'Theory-to-Action: Applied Social Research' certificate will provide students with the theoretical and practical tools to design, conduct, interpret, and critically evaluate quantitative and qualitative social research. This certificate program will ensure students gain valuable experience applying their knowledge as they carry out their own independent and/or group research projects.

The major modification was approved by the Educational Policy Committee in March 2025 and Academic Council in April 2025. The certificate includes our research methods courses, advanced sociological and criminological theory courses, and SOC2108 'Decolonizing Social Science'. As part of this certificate, we have introduced SOC4446 'Committing Sociology'. This course requires students to design and complete an applied social research project under the supervision of full-time faculty.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

At our May 1, 2025 department meeting we voted to make SOC4446 'Committing Sociology' a required course for both Sociology and Criminology HSP students beginning in September 2026. This will support uptake with the certificate. We continue to explore the addition of courses (e.g., SOC3342 Power and Resistance: Disrupting Research) that would align with the certificate's objectives.

Additional Comments

If applicable

Recommendations #4 and #5	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
The sociology program takes active steps, and be provided with sufficient resources, to re-balance its curriculum to include a broader range of sociological courses and themes.	The curriculum committee in consultation with the IQAP committee will initiate discussion and deliberation regarding the reorganization of the Sociology curriculum. As a formal plan is established, proposed changes will be submitted through Western's internal approval processes.	Curriculum committee IQAP committee Department Chair	Discussion & deliberation by December 2022 Submissions to approval bodies by June 2023

Recommendation Implemented

X Yes □ No □ Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? □ Yes □ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

In order to add more structure and definition to the Sociology curriculum and modules, beginning in the 2025/2026 academic year both Sociology Majors and HSP students will be required to take our new SOC2248 'Social Problems'. This is a 0.5 credit course that replaces the old SOC2140 'Social Problems,' a 1.0 credit course. SOC2248 offers a survey of issues and theories in the study of social problems with particular attention to their effects on contemporary Canadian society. Making this a required course for Sociology Majors and HSP students will help ensure appropriate progression through the program while the shift to a 0.5 credit course provides students with additional timetable flexibility.

Elsewhere, we have changed several 1.0 credit courses to 0.5 credit courses (e.g., SOC2200 to SOC2211 'Sociology of 'Race' and Racism'; SOC2259 'Sociology of Deviance' to SOC2257 'Deviance and Social Control'; SOC2235 to SOC2285 'The Family'; SOC2239 to SOC2289 'Social Inequality') to increase student choice and provide timetable flexibility. This provides multiple benefits. It will enable students to explore and engage with a broader range of courses, while reallocating full-time faculty teaching capacity. This strategic move will provide full-time faculty members with more opportunities to develop new courses, both enhancing existing strengths and developing other substantive areas.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

Additional Comments

If applicable

Recommendation #7	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Requiring a writing course from another department or mandating a writing element within the first-year sociology course.	The curriculum and IQAP committees and a representative from the Writing Program at King's will meet to examine the possibility of a writing module to be embedded in the program and/or other feasible solutions.	Curriculum committee IQAP committee King's Writing Program	Discussion & deliberation by December 2022 Submissions to approval bodies by June 2023

Recommendation Implemented

X Yes □ No Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? □ Yes □ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

Starting in 2025/26, we will re-allocate existing departmental discretionary funds to hire a research and writing support consultant to serve all sections of SOC1020/1021E 'Introduction to Sociology'. This consultant will prepare and deliver tutorial material (i.e., locating, evaluating, and citing sources; reading with purpose; integrating research into writing; drafting; grammar, sentence structure, and paragraphing; thesis and argumentation; revision & editing) for all sections, prepare and upload skills-based resources (i.e. reading and writing for sociology) for the online section of SOC1020, and provide one-on-one student feedback/consultation/mentorship during scheduled office hours and via e-mail. This consultant will support all students registered in SOC1020/1021E. With this research & writing support in place, the Department voted to mandate a writing requirement for each section of SOC1020/1021 beginning in 2025/26.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

Additional Comments

If applicable

Recommendation #8	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Ensure adequate departmental administrative support for the operations of the program.	Consider the recruitment of a dedicated administrative support position for Sociology and Criminology or identify opportunities for sharing of additional administrative support across other units.	Department Chair Academic Dean's Office	By December 2022

Recommendation Implemented

□Yes No **X** Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? □ Yes **x** No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

The Academic Dean's Office allocates departmental administrative support, and currently our academic department assistant supports another academic unit in addition to Sociology - Criminology. Our Department remains the second largest unit at King's. The dedication and support of the academic department assistant has been tremendous and invaluable to the operations of the department.

Next Steps (if applicable) *What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?*
Additional Comments *If applicable*

Recommendations #9 and #3	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
Consider appropriate mechanisms to support instructors in the development of experiential learning course components, to ensure appropriate placements into experiential learning courses, and to support student success when engaged in experiential learning opportunities.	The Department will meet with the newly hired Experiential Learning (EL) Coordinator to determine feasible and actionable strategies to ensure clear and intentional enrollment in EL intensive courses, and to better support instructors developing EL courses.	Curriculum committee IQAP committee Department Chair Experiential Learning Coordinator	By December 2022
Recommendation Implemented X Yes □ No Partially If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? □ Yes □ No			

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

The Department has increased the number of experiential learning offerings since 2022. At present, SOC2211 'Sociology of 'Race' and Racism,' SOC2279 'Unequal Cities,' SOC3390 'Decolonization I,' SOC3391 'Decolonization II,' and SOC4446 'Committing Sociology' are designated as experiential learning courses.

These courses receive financial support via the Departmental discretionary budget.

We noted previously that we believe there are more inclusive and robust measures of student academic potential than GPA when determining eligibility to enroll in an experiential learning course. Our department website lists experiential learning courses so that students are registering in courses with clarity about expectations.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

Additional Comments

If applicable

Recommendation #10	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
Ensure sufficient faculty resources for Sociology and Criminology.	Consider additional faculty hires with a teaching focus on social problem solving through social movements, interventions and social policy making to maintain the institution's commitment to small class sizes and student mentorship and to reduce the ratio of part-time to full-time faculty as resources permit.	Vice-President and Academic Dean Department Chair	By September 2025

Recommendation Implemented

☐ Yes **X** No □ Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? □ Yes **X** No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

Since May 2022, there have been 2 new full-time tenure-track hires along with 2 retirements. We are supported by a strong complement of part-time faculty. Acknowledging budget constraints across the sector, we will continue to request full-time tenure-track hires.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

Additional Comments

If applicable

Recommendation #11	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
The department promote its sociology HSP module more and actively recruit promising students, especially in their second year in the program.	The Chair with support from the department promotion committee, Academic Program Advisor and King's Communications will organize a communication plan with various strategies to promote the Sociology HSP module among our second-year students.	Department Chair, Promotion committee, Academic Program Advisor, and King's Communications	For September 2023

Recommendation Implemented

X Yes □ No □ Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? □ Yes □ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

The Department is engaging in more direct and intentional recruitment efforts. Some concrete examples are provided below:

1. Targeted in-person classroom visits and promotion. In Winter 2025, the Department Chair visited all four sections of SOC2240 and SOC2271 (required second-year theory courses) to promote the Sociology HSP. During these information and Q&A sessions, the Chair drew from current student feedback to highlight some of the key benefits and opportunities of the HSP (e.g., seminar-style classes that build community, facilitate peer networking, and open up possibilities for collaboration with faculty on research; preparation for graduate / professional school; skill development) and answered student questions. These targeted classroom visits will be conducted annually.
2. Targeted emails to eligible students: each spring, following adjudication, the Academic Program Advisor along with the Chair and members of the Student Support Subcommittee, will send personalized emails promoting the value of the Sociology HSP and Criminology HSP to all eligible prospective students prior to student registration in fall/winter classes.

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Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

Additional Comments

If applicable

Recommendation #13	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**

Honours Seminar course size and cancelations needs to be addressed.	Determine the parameters for a feasible pilot initiative that could open up 4th year HSP courses to 3rd year students or select students from Majors and Double Majors to register in the fourth-year seminar courses.	Curriculum committee IQAP committee Department Chair	For September 2023

Recommendation Implemented

X Yes □ No □ Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? □ Yes □ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

Beginning in September 2025, Honours Double Major students will be required to complete 0.5 credits at the 4000 level. This should ensure that we do not need to cancel 4000-level courses in the short term.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

We continue to explore ways to ensure the medium and long-term sustainability of the HSP programs and part of this is ensuring 4000-level courses that students require in order to graduate are not at risk of cancellation. To this effect,

- Pending approval, beginning September 1, 2026, SOC4446 'Committing Sociology' will be required for *both* Sociology and Criminology HSPs. We view SOC4446 as a capstone course for both programs, wherein students apply the theory and methods training they've received in the first 3+ years of the programs and conduct their own applied research projects under the supervision of full-time faculty. Not only is making this a required course for both Sociology and Criminology students pedagogically sound and in sync with our PLOs, this change will ensure the course meets the enrolment threshold set by the Academic Dean's Office.
- Streamlining and new offerings. Again, pending approval and beginning September 1, 2026 the three 4000-level advanced theory courses SOC4404, SOC4405, and SOC4409 will be withdrawn. Two new required 3000-level theory courses for Sociology and Criminology students (capped at 25 students each) will be introduced instead and open to non-HSP students. Notably, these changes better align our HSP programs with other universities that require theory courses only in the 2nd and 3rd year of the programs.
- Development of a new 4000-level course. This course is being considered in response to ongoing student feedback and will focus on translating skills and knowledge post-graduation and professional development/career readiness.
- Reducing the overall number of 4000-level courses offered each year from five 0.5 credit courses to three or four 0.5 credit courses will ensure the courses offered each year will meet the enrolment thresholds established by the Academic Dean's Office. This will ensure these courses are not at risk of cancelation.

Additional Comments

Existing modular registrations do not justify us offering five 4000-level courses each year. This is the context for these proposed modular changes which will be proposed in summer 2025 to take effect September 1, 2026.

Note: The total number of expandable text boxes will be dependent on the number of prioritized recommendations appearing in the program's most recent Final Assessment Report (FAR).

Continuous Program Enhancement
What additional initiatives or changes has the program been working on in relation to continuous program improvement? We will move from using SPSS in our advanced quantitative methods course to R. R has many benefits over SPSS: a) R is a commonly accessible programming language that easily translates to other languages and statistical tools (SPSS uses its own unique language, but more often students are trained to use the drop-down menus so are not learning to code); b) R is widely used in industry as well as academia so will provide valuable labour market skills; c) R supports a wider range of methods (almost anything is possible) than SPSS and will better prepare students for graduate level training; d) R is open-source, while SPSS is paid.