



**Graduate
Studies**

Office of the Vice-Provost and Dean
Yeates School of Graduate Studies

Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

Periodic Program Review (PPR)

Immigration and Settlement Studies (ISS)

Last Updated: April 08, 2021

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

In accordance with the University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the graduate program in Immigration and Settlement Studies (ISS). This report identifies the peer review identified strengths of the program, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The report also includes an Implementation Plan that identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the final assessment report; who will be responsible for providing any resources entailed by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations and who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The MA Program in Immigration and Settlement Studies (ISS) has been in existence since 2004. It is an interdisciplinary program housed in the Yeates School of Graduate Studies (YSGS). Currently, ISS draws on faculty expertise from across campus, including the Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Community Services, Ted Rogers School of Management, the School of Urban and Regional Planning, and the School of Fashion. Faculty from a wide range of academic disciplines are teaching ISS courses, and ISS-affiliated faculty members from across campus act as student advisors and supervisors. The program works closely with the Ryerson Center for Immigration and Settlement (RCIS) and the Canada Excellence Research Chair in Migration and Integration (CERC) to enhance the connection between excellence in education and world-class research.

ISS is designed as a one-year full-time program, although it also offers a part-time option. Full-time students must enroll in the program for a minimum of three terms to complete the degree requirements. Part-time students must enroll in the program for a minimum of six terms or two academic years.

All students must complete 4 required courses covering the Canadian immigration and settlement experiences, immigration law, policies and politics, and research methods. In addition, students must take at least 3 elective courses on a variety of topics, such as the changing multicultural mosaic in the Greater Toronto Area, immigrant voices in Canadian literature, the economics of immigration, women and immigration and settlement, race and ethnic relations, or refugee issues. The program serves the needs of both research- and professionally-oriented students; therefore, they must complete a 150-hour Field Placement and write a Major Research Paper under the supervision of an affiliated faculty member. Guest speakers, fieldtrips, events, and other activities expose students to the wider academic and settlement communities and experiential learning opportunities.

The ISS program meets societal needs by providing graduates with enhanced in-depth knowledge of the history, theories, methodologies, policies, and other societal issues related to immigration and settlement in Canada. It also critically analyzes the historical and ongoing connections between immigration, settlement and Indigenous displacement and genocide. Graduates possess academic and practical skills, including technical, critical thinking, communication, and transferrable professional skills they can apply in the workplace and further education. The most recent ISS Alumni Survey shows that 82.8 % of the sampled alumni are employed on a full-time basis in several key employment sectors,

including public service, universities and colleges, the NGO/non-profit sector as well as the private and legal sectors, and consulting/self-employment. One in ten ISS graduates moved on to get a PhD and about 3 % went to law school.

The program's strengths include a high society need for the program, an accelerated one-year time frame that enables students to complete the program in an efficient manner, the availability of both full-time and part-time options, the program's mix of academic and practical orientation, the connections to world-class research institutions, the outstanding level of faculty expertise in immigration and settlement across campus, and the strong networks ISS entertains to the settlement sector, government, and other organizations that facilitate field placements and employment. Weaknesses include that only two faculty members are formally appointed to ISS, the tight one-year timeframe creates anxieties and stress among full-time students, the program is limited to admitting very few international students, and student funding is low and admissions letters do not reflect the full extent of funding opportunities. Opportunities exist in continuing to recruit affiliated faculty from across campus and multiple disciplines and faculties, possibly developing a PhD program, further integrating on-campus research in the ISS Program structure and activities (e.g. CERC, RCIS), further recognizing Indigenous experiences related to immigration and settlement and advancing reconciliation, responding to calls for addressing structural racism, enhancing students' international experiences, strengthening the theoretical foundations in the course curriculum, rewarding the top 1-2% students with top available marks, and initiating discussion about permitting students to choose between the MRP or Field Placement and adding a two-year full-time option with a thesis requirement to the program.

The recommendations highlight the immediate, high-priority need to hire and/or cross-appoint additional ISS faculty. Actions of medium priority include increasing student funding, expanding international student intake, initiating periodic curriculum reviews, enhancing the coverage of migration theories in the curriculum and updating the Field Placement seminar, deepening the research-education relationship with RCIS and CERC, improved the consistency of contents and delivery of course sections taught by different instructors, establishing task forces to examine the feasibility of a PhD program, offering a two-year full-time option, permitting students to choose between the MRP and Field Placement, and responding to structural racism. Lower level priorities include recruiting a more gender/sexual-orientation diverse student body, rewarding top students with top marks, and asking the province to count part-time students as full FTE.

PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW AND PEER REVIEW TEAM

Immigration and Settlement Studies (ISS)

The graduate program in Immigration and Settlement Studies (ISS) submitted a Self-Study Report to the Yeates School of Graduate Studies that outlined program descriptions and learning outcomes, an analytical assessment of the program, program data including data from student surveys and the standard data packages. Course outlines and CVs for full-time faculty members were also appended.

The PRT site visit was conducted virtually on January 18-21, 2021. The visit included interviews with the University and Faculty Administration including the Provost and Vice-President Academic, Vice-Provost and Dean Yeates School of Graduate Studies (YSGS); Associate Dean YSGS, Graduate Program Director of the Graduate Program, and meetings with Faculty, a group of current students, and support staff.

The Peer Review Team (PRT) for the Periodic Program Review (PPR) of the graduate program in Immigration and Settlement Studies (MA) consisted of Dr. Margaret Walton-Roberts, Wilfrid Laurier University, Dr. Victor Satzewich, McMaster University, and Dr. Carolyn Johns, Ryerson University.

The PRT report was communicated to the Associate Dean, YSGS on February 8, 2021, and the response to the report from graduate program was communicated on February 17, 2021.

PROGRAM STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Peer Review Team identified program strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, outlined below.

Strengths

The ISS is relatively unique in Canada, and as a result its applicant pool is generally strong in terms of number and quality (though variable). The faculty associated with the program represent 9 impressive interdisciplinary and scholarly quality. The curriculum includes a range of components that support both applied and critical thinking skills, including MRPs and placements. The employment record of ISS graduates is strong, and the alumni network offers novel opportunities for further strengthening the reputation and placement features of the program. The review team was also impressed with the dedication and commitment of both the Program Director, Dr. Harald Bauder, and Program Administrator Igor Rosic, towards both the program in general and to students in particular. They are to be commended for the hard work associated with carrying the bulk of heavy administrative duties and responsibilities attached to the program.

Weaknesses

While the ISS is a flagship graduate MA program for Ryerson, and reflects the immense investment Ryerson has made in immigration through the RCIS and CERC, it risks losing its competitive advantage due to some persistent and emerging weaknesses. The student financial awards are not competitive with one-year MA programs in similar policy fields. While there are many GTA and RA opportunities for students once in the program, it would serve the program to have these funding options more formally presented at the admission stage so that they do not lose better students to other programs or universities.

The ISS also depends upon the tacit good will of chairs and deans in terms of permitting faculty to teach in the program, and the small number of officially cross appointed faculty limits the ability to coordinate and review curriculum content and delivery.

There are a few areas where curriculum development would be advisable. This includes quantitative research methods, and technical aspects of immigration law and policy.

In addition, the field placement requirement as it is currently organized creates some weaknesses in terms of the student experience, with students typically organizing their own unpaid placements in the second or third semester. The placement is mandatory, and only some are paid. Moreover, some students are informally pitted against each other finding placements. This suggests an inequity in the

program in terms of how internships are secured, the quality of the experience and the compensation received. This may have an impact on overall student morale.

Opportunities

There are several opportunities to consolidate the strength of this program. In terms of faculty engagement, more official cross-appointments would permit consistency in terms of the content taught between sections. More active faculty engagement in governance and an annual retreat for faculty associated with the program would facilitate effective curriculum review and development by drawing in the scholarly strengths of the associated faculty more formally.

More formal association between the ISS, RCIS and CERC would allow for more effective resource planning in terms of the financial supports offered to incoming students, and would also consolidate the research synergies that exist between Ryerson's teaching and research strengths in immigration and settlement. Perhaps this could be considered related to the program's governance structure.

There are several opportunities for enhancing the placement aspect of the program. This includes hiring a facilitator to seek out paid placement opportunities through government, non-government, and alumni networks, and assist students to secure placements. The review committee also felt hiring a practitioner in residence to teach the immigration, law and policy course would serve the need to include deeper technical and timely knowledge of immigration policy. The practitioner might also contribute to securing placements in the government, non-government and corporate sectors.

PRT RECOMMENDATIONS

The PRT made a total of 11 recommendations listed below.

- Recommendation 1:** The University should formally cross appoint one additional full time faculty member to the ISS program.
- Recommendation 2:** The program/YSGS should include GRA/GTA funding in its letter of admission to make the offer competitive with other universities and programs.
- Recommendation 3:** The program should update content and delivery of the Seminar and Field Placement course (IS8100) to reflect state of the field and workplaces, and further resource the placement process with a placement coordinator who has extensive government/non-government/corporate experience and networks in the sector.
- Recommendation 4:** The program should consider establishing a way for placement organizations to provide feedback about student placements.
- Recommendation 5:** The program should undertake a curriculum review of (a) the IS 8904 and (b) IS 8903 to ensure these courses meet program objectives and learning outcomes.
- Recommendation 6:** The program should consider ways to introduce more flexibility in how students fulfill requirements.
- Recommendation 7:** The program should strengthen its governance structures and establish a curriculum committee that meets on a regular basis to discuss curriculum related issues
- Recommendation 8:** The program should consider ways to ensure more consistency in required course content when more than one section is taught in the same term.
- Recommendation 9:**
- a. The program should consider ways to encourage the broader group of affiliated faculty members to take a more active role in MRP supervision.
 - b. The program should consider ways to help students match their research interests for their MRP with those of faculty supervisors
- Recommendation 10:** The program may want to consider collecting data on times to completion, how frequently students withdraw from the program, and alumni data.
- Recommendation 11:** The program should consider ways to capitalize on the international reputation of the program by admitting more international students.

Summary of PRT Recommendations with Graduate Program and YSGS Responses + Implementation Plan

PRT Recommendation	PRT Rationale	ISS Response	Implementation Plan	Timeline/Responsibility	YSGS Response
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>The University should formally cross appoint one additional full time faculty member to the ISS program.</p>	<p>The program has been sustained with two cross-appointments and the good will of Deans and Chairs. An additional cross appointment of faculty is needed to secure curriculum quality and innovation (external action).</p>	<p>General agreement, although the previous PPR recommended hiring <i>three</i> cross-appointed faculty. Since then YSGS was successful in cross-appointing one more faculty member.</p>	<p>ISS will continue working with YSGS in implementing this recommendation.</p>	<p>ASAP/ISS, Dean of YSGS, Dean of TRSM, and Provost</p>	<p>YSGS has been strongly advocating for additional cross-appointments for all its interdisciplinary programs. It has been successful in obtaining several of these, including one for the ISS program. YSGS agrees that an additional cross-appointment to the program is important and will continue to advocate for this.</p> <p>Other venues to increase participation in the program and its quality is to consider forming a group that includes the Graduate Program Director, the Associate Dean, Programs from YSGS, the Vice Provost and Dean of YSGS, and the Deans of all Faculties involved in the program. This group could meet at least once a year to review the involvement of their faculty members in the program and the adequacy of resources allocated for the program. This would also help address recommendations 2, 8, 9, and 10.</p>

PRT Recommendation	PRT Rationale	ISS Response	Implementation Plan	Timeline/Responsibility	YSGS Response
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>The program/YSGS should include GRA/GTA funding in its letter of admission to make the offer competitive with other universities and programs.</p>	<p>The program remains attractive, but for Ryerson to maintain their competitive advantage in this area and attract the highest quality students, student funding offers need to be improved (external action).</p>	<p>Agreement; RA funds allocated to ISS could possibly be allocated to incoming students. Additional funding could possibly come RCIS and CERC.</p>	<p>ISS will work with YSGS, stakeholders (e.g. CERC, RCIS) and faculty with access to grant funding.</p>	<p>2021-2023/ISS, Dean of YSGS, stakeholders, ISS affiliates with research grants</p>	<p>YSGS notes that student funding from centralized sources has significantly increased but advocating for increased student funding and/or reduced tuition costs remains one of its main priorities. It should be noted that GA (what the reviewers refer to as GTA funding) commitments are at the discretion of the departments/schools delivering courses and that these commitments are typically not finalized at the time of offers for graduate admission.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>The program should update content and delivery of the Seminar and Field Placement course (IS8100) to reflect state of the field and workplaces, and further resource the placement process with a placement coordinator who has extensive government/non-government/corporate experience and networks in the sector.</p>	<p>Updating the curriculum is internal to the ISS program, but resourcing the placement officer requires additional resources (both internal and external).</p>	<p>Agreement; ISS will form a Curriculum & Placement Standing Committee to oversee the necessary changes</p>	<p>ISS will form a Curriculum & Placement Standing Committee.</p>	<p>ASAP/ISS (& YSGS)</p>	<p>YSGS agrees that the student experience is important and supports ways to improve this experience through better quality placements with improved equity in the types of placements obtained.</p>

PRT Recommendation	PRT Rationale	ISS Response	Implementation Plan	Timeline/Responsibility	YSGS Response
<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>The program should consider establishing a way for placement organizations to provide feedback about student placements.</p>	<p>There does not appear to be any mechanism for the program to solicit feedback from placement organizations about student preparation for placements, and potential gaps in knowledge or skills (internal).</p>	<p>Agreement</p>	<p>Curriculum & Placement Standing Committee</p>	<p>ASAP/ISS</p>	<p>YSGS agrees with this recommendation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>The program should undertake a curriculum review of (a) the IS 8904 and (b) IS 8903 to ensure these courses meet program objectives and learning outcomes.</p>	<p>(a) Some students indicated that research methods could be strengthened to include more quantitative skills; also should be offered in Fall to provide foundations for MRPs earlier (internal). (b) The immigration law and policy course should be reviewed and strengthened to include more practical knowledge related Canada's immigration laws, policies, programs, administration and operations. Ideally this would involve hiring a practitioner in residence who could teach and support placement operations. The program can address this with internal changes in how courses are delivered, but additional funds may be</p>	<p>Agreement; the Curriculum & Placement Standing Committee to oversee the necessary changes</p>	<p>Curriculum & Placement Standing Committee</p>	<p>ASAP/ISS</p>	<p>YSGS will support the development of any curriculum revision and reminds the program to consult Policy 127 when developing any revisions.</p>

PRT Recommendation	PRT Rationale	ISS Response	Implementation Plan	Timeline/Responsibility	YSGS Response
	necessary to hire a practitioner in residence (internal and external).				
Recommendation 6 The program should consider ways to introduce more flexibility in how students fulfill requirements.	Providing students with the option of undertaking a placement or MRP would help address concerns about the intensity of a one-year program of study. Providing students with a two-year thesis option would allow some students to further build their research skills (internal).	Agreement; the Curriculum & Placement Standing Committee will explore the option to allow students to choose between the MRP or Field Placement, and to add a two-year thesis option.	Curriculum & Placement Standing Committee	ASAP/ISS	YSGS will support the development of any curriculum revision and reminds the program to consult Policy 127 when developing any revisions. It should be noted that such a change is considered a major modification. YSGS is happy to work with the program in developing a major modification proposal.
Recommendation 7 The program should strengthen its governance structures and establish a curriculum committee that meets on a regular basis to discuss curriculum related issues	A broader curriculum committee or an annual retreat would provide the necessary forum for discussion about the contents of courses, exchanges regarding curriculum and pedagogical approaches used by faculty. It could also provide an additional opportunity to create a sense of community between the faculty members, those core and more remote to the program. Student representation in governance should also be considered (internal).	Agreement; a Curriculum & Placement Standing Committee will be established	Curriculum & Placement Standing Committee	ASAP/ISS	YSGS notes that program governance structures need to adhere to Policy 45. It is typical for curriculum committees to be a standing committee of the Graduate Program Council. Retreats to discuss curriculum and pedagogy are great ideas. In both cases, it is important to involve student representation.

PRT Recommendation	PRT Rationale	ISS Response	Implementation Plan	Timeline/Responsibility	YSGS Response
Recommendation 8 The program should consider ways to ensure more consistency in required course content when more than one section is taught in the same term.	<p>There is inconsistency in required course content and requirements when two sections are taught in the same term by different instructors. This issue might be best addressed via recommendation 5 above (internal).</p>	<p>General agreement, although instructors enjoy academic freedom. Measures can include cross-appointed faculty teaching both sections of a course, devise a mechanism through which different instructors can coordinate course contents.</p>	<p>An additional faculty appointment (Recommendation 1) would have the responsibility to teach two courses, i.e. 2 sections of one course, in ISS; Curriculum & Placement Standing Committee</p>	<p>Additional faculty appointment: ASAP/ISS, YSGS, and Provost; Curriculum & Placement Standing Committee: ASAP/ISS</p>	<p>YSGS agrees with the importance of equity between multiple sections of a course and recommends that instructors take this into consideration when they are involved in the delivery of the same course.</p>
Recommendation 9(a) The program should consider ways to encourage the broader group of affiliated faculty members to take a more active role in MRP supervision.	<p>MRP supervisory loads are unevenly distributed across the 70 'core' faculty attached to the program (internal).</p>	<p>Agreement; the implementation of Recommendation #6 may alleviate pressures on students to find supervisors.</p>	<p>Program will correspond with faculty and students</p>	<p>Ongoing/ISS</p>	<p>YSGS agrees that MRP supervisions should be distributed more broadly among affiliates. It supports the program in the implementation of recommendation #6.</p>
Recommendation 9(b) The program should consider ways to help students match their research interests for their MRP with those of faculty supervisors	<p>Some students reported frustration and difficulties associated with finding an appropriate MRP supervisor (internal).</p>	<p>Agreement; facilitate student-supervisor matches</p>	<p>Annual "Find Your Supervisor" workshops</p>	<p>Ongoing/ISS</p>	<p>YSGS encourages the ISS program to organize a workshop or other events that facilitate better matching students with supervisors who are located in different faculties and departments across campus.</p>

PRT Recommendation	PRT Rationale	ISS Response	Implementation Plan	Timeline/Responsibility	YSGS Response
Recommendation 10 The program may want to consider collecting data on times to completion, how frequently students withdraw from the program, and alumni data.	The review team did not have access to times to completion and withdrawals from the program (academic or administrative). It is not evident that the program has alumni data (internal and external).	Agreement	Collect corresponding data	Ongoing/ISS, YSGS	YSGS will work with the program, the University Planning Office, The Registrar's Office and Alumni Relations to track this data and shared it with the program.
Recommendation 11 The program should consider ways to capitalize on the international reputation of the program by admitting more international students.	The program receives a considerable number of applications from international students but is only able to admit one per year. International students may help to internationalize the program, and may also be a revenue generator (external).	Agreement	Admission of 3-4 international students annually	2021/ISS, YSGS	YSGS has been advocating for institutional support for international graduate students. YSGS welcomes the plan to admit more international students into the program.

A report on the progress of these initiatives will be provided in the Follow-up Report which will be due in one year from the date of Senate approval.