



**Graduate
Studies**

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

Final Assessment Report (FAR) and Implementation Plan

Periodic Program Review (PPR)

Graduate Program in Policy Studies (PhD)

Last Updated: April 19, 2022

*Renaming in process

In August 2021, the university announced that it would begin a renaming process to address the legacy of Egerton Ryerson and build a more inclusive future. Let's write the next chapter together.

ryerson.ca/next-chapter

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 **Policy Studies (PhD)**. 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 PhD Policy Studies program was launched and began admitting students in 2009. It is Canada's first and only interdisciplinary doctoral program in the field of policy studies. To date, 29 students have earned the PhD Policy Studies. The Program was designed with the goal of preparing graduates for academic teaching and policy research positions in the academic sector and a wide range of policy research and related positions in the public, non-profit, and private sectors. This is relevant because public employment makes up about 18 percent of total employment in Canada. The program prepares students for a role in social development and democratic governance at all levels from the local to the global.

The program offers three formal tracks: 1. Public Policy and Administration; 2. Immigration, Settlement and Diaspora Policies; and 3. Social Policy. The program is based in the Faculty of Arts, drawing upon professors in the Faculty as well as across the university. There are more than 80 Program Faculty members. The program is governed by the Graduate Program Council (GPC), which operates under bylaws approved by program faculty, the Faculty of Arts, the Yeates School of Graduate Studies, and the University's Senate.

Students are required to take a total of six core and elective courses, complete a Comprehensive Requirement, defend their Dissertation Proposal and publicly defend their Dissertation. The courses are

designed to provide students with core policy studies knowledge and how to critically apply that. The curriculum relies on two main foundational courses, one on Policy Theories (PD 9001) and one on Research Methods (PD 9002) to set the foundation for policy studies theories and research, and independently pose and address important policy questions. Coursework is designed to provide the foundation of theoretical knowledge about policy studies, hone methodological skills, and gain proficiency in one of three policy tracks.

The Comprehensive Requirement is the major milestone to ensure students have a deep and thorough knowledge of the Policy Studies field and their own area of policy specialization, demonstrating a solid foundation to undertake research and to contribute to scholarship and practical policy making.

The Dissertation Proposal ensures that before original research is undertaken, students demonstrate an understanding of existing knowledge, the ability to critically draw upon theoretical frameworks and approaches to guide development of important research questions. Students need to show their ability to contribute to the scholarly field and improved policy and governance.

The Dissertation Defense, with critical insight from an external reviewer who is an expert in their field, provides a final confirmation of the student's ability to apply theory, knowledge, and skills to carry out original research that informs academic scholarship and practice of public affairs and policy making.

Periodic Program Review and Peer Review Team Policy Studies (PhD)

The graduate program in **Policy Studies (PhD)**, Faculty of Arts, 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.

Two external and one internal arm's-length reviewers were selected from a set of proposed candidates. The Peer Review Team (PRT) for the Periodic Program Review (PPR) of the graduate program in Policy Studies (PhD) consisted of Dr. David Siegel (Emeritus Professor of Political Science, Brock University), Dr. Mara Sidney (Rutgers University-Newark Department of Political Science), and Dr. Haomiao Yu (Department of Economics, Ryerson University).

The PRT site visit was conducted virtually on January 18, 19 and 21, 2022. The PRT report was communicated to the Associate Dean, YSGS on February 2, 2022, and the response to the report from graduate program and Dean was communicated on March 11, 2022.

Program Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities

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

Strengths

The program is interdisciplinary with an emphasis on covering the basics of theory and methodology. This foundation has enabled students to produce original research on policy issues of public importance. The program also has strong faculty members from a variety of disciplines. Another advantage is the attractive location in Downtown Toronto. It attracts a steady and high level of applications each year. Whereas the program is still very young, its recent placements are very encouraging. It seems likely the program could have a successful future with proper resources.

Weaknesses

The PRT believes that the resources allocated for the program and the student support are rather limited. In particular, due to the poor financial support, it has been hard for the program to convert admitted students into matriculated students. Also, program students had to continue to work part- or full-time. This has postponed the completion of their coursework, comprehensive exams, and/or thesis completion. Furthermore, there is no dedicated space for students, which is essential for any PhD program. The PRT understands the scarcity of the resources that universities have. However, for the program to fulfill its potential, and to be successful, the program needs proper resources.

Opportunities

The program has aimed to attract additional students from beyond the three streams. The PRT believes that this program is a hidden gem that has much to offer Ryerson. It attracts high- quality and diverse students interested in migration, social justice, and other issues that fit well within Ryerson's mission. Universities are recognizing the value of interdisciplinary knowledge-building as a key contribution to society. The program could be a significant tool to attract and retain faculty members who want to work with graduate students undertaking interesting research. Ryerson should highlight this program as being very topical. However, this program is not currently being pushed to the forefront in ways that would help Ryerson build on its reputation.

Summary of PRT Recommendations, Graduate Program and YSGS Responses, and Program Implementation Plan

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.

PRT Recommendations	PhD Policy Studies Program Response	Proposed Program Action	Faculty of Arts Dean Response	Program Timeline and Responsibility/Lead	YSGS Response
<p>1. Student Resources. The program should have adequate resources to continue to attract high-quality students, and to facilitate progress-to-degree. Resources include funding packages, and regular access to RA, TA, and course teaching opportunities. Access to appropriate work space also should be provided.</p>	<p>This was included in our Development Plan. The program undertook an external scan of other programs completed in Dec 2021 in anticipation of the PRT report. University of Toronto and York University both offer better funding packages.¹</p>	<p>Work with the Faculty of Arts Dean’s Office to identify ways to offer more secure TA packages to students that would allow our funding offers to be closer to \$25,000-\$30,000 for four or five years.</p>	<p>Funding: In recent years, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts has committed significant funding to all Faculty of Arts graduate programs. In light of ongoing budget cuts and the current financial climate, we do not anticipate increasing support at this time. However, the Associate Dean, Graduate Studies will work with the program’s GPD to help the program forge ties with Arts department chairs with the goal of creating additional TAGA opportunities. At present, we cannot guarantee TA packages nor can we commit to 5th year funding for any PhD programs. Nevertheless, we will remain attentive to the needs of the program.</p> <p>Space: Given our downtown location, the Faculty of Arts and the University as a whole face considerable challenges in securing additional space for faculty offices, research space, and graduate student space. We are committed to prioritizing suitable space for this PhD program.</p>	<p>GPD develops a proposal with the Faculty of Arts Dean’s office by August 2022.</p>	<p>Regarding student funding, it is important to be aware of the current constraints on revenue from graduate programs while still raising awareness of this concern.</p> <p>YSGS is continually advocating for increased institutional funding of graduate students. Unfortunately, the recent tuition fee reduction imposed on universities and the freezing of additional graduate positions by the province has made increases in funding difficult. Despite this, the university has made substantial investments in graduate studies in recent years. For example, central funding for fourth year PhD students and the Ryerson Graduate Scholarships have been established in the last three years. YSGS has also established scholarships for Black and Indigenous students, and it has transferred all of its carry-forward funding to graduate programs across the university.</p> <p>YSGS is impressed with the level of research funding obtained by the</p>

¹ PhD Policy Studies program offers a basic package of \$21,000 for four years, York University offers about \$24,000 and the University of Toronto about \$26,500, both for five years.

PRT Recommendations	PhD Policy Studies Program Response	Proposed Program Action	Faculty of Arts Dean Response	Program Timeline and Responsibility/Lead	YSGS Response
					<p>faculty members involved in the program and it encourages the program to continue working on increasing stipend and research assistant support to graduate students.</p> <p>Regarding student workspace, this is outside of YSGS' purview, but YSGS supports the Faculty response. YSGS is happy to work with the Faculty and the Program on finding solutions to this important need.</p>
<p>2. Administrative resources. The program should have adequate administrative resources.</p> <p>a. There should be designated space for the program, including office space for the director and graduate program administrator, and office space and a lounge for students.</p>	<p><i>See specific responses below.</i></p> <p>This is included in our Development Plan. The GPD and GPA have offices near each other. The emphasis of the recommendation is about creating a program hub including formal and informal study space. Currently, the program has no allocated space in the Faculty of Arts or Graduate School.</p>	<p><i>See specific actions below.</i></p> <p>Request the Faculty of Arts Dean's office undertake an analysis of our needs and include it in a space plan of the Faculty of Arts.</p>	<p><i>See specific responses below.</i></p> <p>Space is incredibly limited in the Faculty of Arts; we are struggling to locate new office space for our rapidly expanding Faculty. That said, we will work with the GPD to undertake an analysis of student space needs and include this in the space plan for the Faculty of Arts.</p>	<p><i>See specifics below.</i></p> <p>1. GPD meets with the Faculty of Arts Dean and Graduate Dean by May 31, 2022 to seek to identify a common space that can be used in the next year for shared office space and lounge in Jorgenson Hall or other campus facilities in 2022-2023.</p> <p>2. GPD makes a formal <i>space plan</i> request (by August 1, 2022).</p>	<p>YSGS is agrees the the program is lacking in dedicated space for its students. YSGS will work with the Faculty and the Program to advocate for additional space. It is hoped that the universities evolution to a hybrid work environment will open up additional space for graduate students in this program and others that have similar needs.</p>

PRT Recommendations	PhD Policy Studies Program Response	Proposed Program Action	Faculty of Arts Dean Response	Program Timeline and Responsibility/Lead	YSGS Response
b. An assistant director should be added to assist the program director.	The Executive Committee ² considered this recommendation and believes it only makes sense in conjunction with establishing a Policy Centre (see Development Plan).	Formally present the Policy Centre concept to the Faculty of Arts Dean for consideration.	We wish to address the development of a policy centre and its staffing as an autonomous issue. At the moment, there is no plan to create assistant director positions for any other graduate program. To conflate the two issues (the PhD Program and a policy centre) may create unnecessary challenges/ obstacles.	GPD set up a meeting with the Faculty of Arts Dean to consider creation of a Policy Centre (by May 31, 2022).	YSGS notes that such an assistant director position does not exist in any graduate program at the University and YSGS is not supportive of creating such a position. YSGS supports the Faculty response on staffing in any potential Policy Centre.
c. The graduate program administrator position should be increased to one full-time equivalent.	This is included in our Development Plan.	Make formal request for Faculty of Arts to increase GPA from half to full FTE	We will work with Human Resources to undertake a review of the position and take the appropriate measures.	1. GPD request review to be undertaken in Winter/Spring 2022 2. Request position be made full-time by Fall 2023	YSGS supports the Faculty response. YSGS notes that graduate program administrators are typically responsible for two graduate programs. In some cases, this would be a master's program and a doctoral program in the same discipline.
3. Curriculum. The program should review the current curriculum and streams, giving serious consideration to eliminating the streams.	Development Plan calls for curriculum review and is underway including consideration of eliminating or modifying tracks.	Complete curriculum review by May 2022 and present recommendations to Program Council	The Dean of Arts looks forward to reviewing and discussing the Program Council's recommendations.	Curriculum Committee will make a recommendation to Program Council by May 2022	YSGS notes that such a change would likely be considered a major modification and encourages the program to review the policies and procedures related to this in Senate Policy 127. YSGS is happy to work with the program in developing a proposal for this change.
4. Governance Structure. The program should review the existing committee structure to ensure it operates efficiently. The governance structure also should operate intentionally to generate a sense of ownership and	Development Plan calls for streamlining program governance.	Executive committee will review bylaws with the aim of streamlining program governance	The Dean of Arts looks forward to reviewing and discussing the Program Council's streamlining recommendation.	Executive Committee will make recommendation to Program Council by May 2022	YSGS notes that the governance structure is dictated by Senate Policy 45 and is happy to work with the program in revising their governance structure. It is especially supportive of any changes that "generate a sense of ownership and investment among

² The Executive Committee is the general policy making body of the program and has the authority of the Graduate Program Council when not in session. It is made up of the GPD, three program faculty members, one from each stream, and one graduate student.

PRT Recommendations	PhD Policy Studies Program Response	Proposed Program Action	Faculty of Arts Dean Response	Program Timeline and Responsibility/Lead	YSGS Response
investment among faculty, and to create routes to program leadership. It is possible that some standing committees could be eliminated while other committees could gain responsibilities. Or, more flexible, short- term working groups could be created to respond to emerging issues as needed.					faculty.” This could have the effect of increased support for the program from its members.