



**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 Psychology (MA | PhD)

Last Updated: November 3, 2021

*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.

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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 **Psychology (MA|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

Psychology is one the largest departments in the Faculty of Arts, and over the past 10-15 years the Department has undergone substantial growth. In 2007, graduate programs were launched including MA and PhD programs in 2 streams: Clinical Psychology and Psychological Science. The Department now has 30 full-time, core graduate faculty members and has among the highest incoming GPA for graduate students at Ryerson. Faculty members are highly productive scientists, having held approximately \$30 million (more than \$20 million as principal or co-principal investigator) in external grants from CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC, NIH, and other sources throughout their careers. In 2010, the Department partnered with St. Michael's Hospital to establish a Psychology Training Clinic, and in 2012, the Institute for Stress and Wellbeing Research was launched.

The graduate program has a number of important strengths. Since the inception of the program, our graduate students have been extremely successful at securing external graduate fellowships at the MA and PhD levels, including three recipients of the prestigious Vanier Tri-Council fellowship. Few students withdraw or leave the program, and most students are very productive researchers with hundreds of publications in scholarly journals and presentations at conferences. Courses typically have high enrolment, but course offerings are challenging to coordinate in order to meet the demands of students in both the Clinical and PS programs for courses in their areas of interest. Since 2009, 56 doctorates have been awarded, and graduates have gone on to work as full-time clinical psychologists, consultants, policy advisors, and tenure-track faculty. Our alumni also report feeling well-prepared for their careers

as a result of the graduate program, though current students report challenges with some program milestones (e.g., the comprehensive exam) and significant variability in the student-supervisor relationship.

Some important challenges and opportunities for the graduate program are identified in Section 8, such as reducing students' tuition costs, improving funding for graduate students due to the high cost of living in Toronto, improving recruitment and retention of PS students to the program and at the doctoral level, and improving access to professional development opportunities and nonacademic employment opportunities. Our development plan specifically addresses concerns related to funding and tuition. Further, recruiting new faculty as Canada Research Chairs and endowed chairs may also increase access to professional development opportunities and widen the Department's professional network for students to access.

Periodic Program Review and Peer Review Team

Psychology (MA | PhD)

The graduate program in **Psychology**, 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 Psychology consisted of Dr. Penny Pexman (University of Calgary), Dr. Jennifer Connolly (York University), and Dr. Paul Moore (Ryerson University).

The PRT site visit was conducted virtually on January 22, 28, and 29, 2021. The visit included interviews with the University and Faculty Administration including the Provost and Vice-President Academic, Faculty of Arts, Associate Dean, 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 PRT report was communicated to the Associate Dean, YSGS on February 25, 2021, and the response to the report from graduate program and Dean was communicated on Aug 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

- Exceptional faculty complement and student body
- Rigorous training in clinical and Experimental Psychology
- Excellent student completion rates
- Experiential lab spaces, research support, and clinical training that compliments in-class learning
- Planned expansion of undergraduate program with important implications for further development of the graduate program
- Dedicated, engaged alumni and a high rate of employment in the field

Weaknesses

- Student tuition is high relative to GTA institutions creating potential inequities for Ryerson students
- Lacking diversity in student body and faculty complement
- Planning for the expanded psychology undergraduate program has yet to be articulated
- Electives availability, especially in Psychological Science
- Ad-hoc problem-solving, treating challenges case-by-case rather than strategizing for clarity and consistency

Opportunities

- World class psychology training that addresses the complex challenges of its high-density urban setting
- Greater diversity and inclusivity within the faculty complement and student recruitment, as well as the curriculum, towards addressing Indigenous initiatives, systemic discrimination and poverty, and other forms of social marginalization
- Significantly expanded undergrad program can support graduate training and funding, opening more opportunities for teaching and teaching support, but this must be carefully planned to avoid having undergraduate teaching overwhelm research capacity and quality
- Evaluate PhD Comps expectations and experiences for greater clarity and consistency, and to ensure greater benefits for all students

Summary of PRT Recommendations, Graduate Program and YSGS Responses, and 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 Recommendation	PRT Rationale	Psychology Response	Dean Arts Response	Action Plan	Timeframe/Responsibility	YSGS Response
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>Prioritizing diversity and inclusion within the Department and across more of the graduate curriculum</p>	<p>The Psychology Department and its graduate programs should challenge the status quo to advance Indigenous initiatives and build community and urban partnerships with a view for prioritizing diversity and inclusion and awareness of the impacts of social marginalization, to complement its foundation of academic excellence.</p>	<p>Our program has already begun to implement this recommendation (even before receiving the PRT report), and will continue these efforts going forward. We have made a commitment to prioritizing equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice (EDIJ) across all of our activities. Some examples of recent initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formation of a new EDIJ Committee in 2020 to champion relevant initiatives across our department and programs ▪ A commitment to hiring more faculty members from diverse backgrounds as we move ahead with several new hires over the next few years, including a recently advertised CRC position ▪ A commitment to accepting more students from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds, with an emphasis on Black and Indigenous students (e.g., around 40% of our incoming MA class come from racial groups of colour, including students who are Black and Indigenous) 	<p>We commend and support the Department's and Graduate program's efforts. The Faculty of Arts has created new internal research grants and curriculum redevelopment grants to assist, prioritize and enhance EDI across the Faculty. We have also recently financially supported the Psychology Department's initiative to bring in a speaker for EDI training.</p> <p>This has been a priority in the Faculty for many years and will continue to be. We encourage the Department and Program to reach out to sources of knowledge and expertise within the Faculty, including the Dean's Advisors, Dr. Knight and Dr. King, the Yellowhead Institute.</p>	<p>The Program will continue the initiatives started (see Program Response), including the Diversifying Psychology event.</p> <p>The Program will develop and offer the noted new courses.</p> <p>The Program will consult with the Dean to explore possible relief time or course release for the Chair of the EDIJ committee.</p>	<p>The Psychology department and the Faculty of Arts will continue to work together towards these goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Program will offer the new courses on Prejudice and Discrimination (PS8523) in W2022 and on Culturally-Informed Clinical Practice (PS8308) in 2022-2023. ▪ The Department will recruit faculty from diverse backgrounds over the coming years. ▪ The Program will hold the Diversifying Psychology event annually. ▪ The Program will reach out to the expertise and sources of knowledge within the Faculty. 	<p>YSGS commends the Program and Faculty on the many initiatives already underway and is happy to help in any way it can to continue and enhance such initiatives.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Encouraging all faculty members to review and revise their courses from an EDIJ lens. We also hired an external consultant to provide 6 hours of training to faculty members (in May 2021) on how to practice anti-racism and anti-oppression approaches in the classroom.▪ The addition of a required course on Culturally-Informed Clinical Practice (PS8308) in our clinical MA program▪ Adding electives focusing on EDIJ-related topics, including a new course on Prejudice and Discrimination (PS8523) that will be offered in the coming year.▪ Introduction of an annual “diversifying psychology” event in 2020 to attract potential graduate applicants from diverse backgrounds to the field of psychology (and to Ryerson University, in particular). On the morning of our 2021 diversifying psychology event, we will be holding another event to share EDI-related research by students/faculty in our department, training for grad students and faculty on EDI in research, and student-led sessions targeting students from underrepresented groups.				
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		<p><i>Resource Implications:</i> At this time, there is much that we can do to continue our efforts to diversify our program, students, and faculty members. At the same time, some initiatives will cost money, including bringing in outside speakers to speak about EDI-related topics (both within and outside of our curriculum), supporting research on EDI-related topics, support for students from underrepresented groups, and possible relief time or course release for the Chair of the EDIJ committee.</p>				
<p>Recommendation 2 Undertake a review of the parameters of the Comprehensive paper to ensure it continues to meet its objectives in the program</p>	<p>Within an unusually strong program, PhD Comprehensive papers had historically been a singular stumbling block for some student progress, and had gained an outsized reputation as a relatively stressful, inconsistent and undefined process. This is not unusual for any PhD program, and informal measures have begun to alleviate the</p>	<p>This issue has been on our radar for a long time, and we plan to implement this recommendation. We will initiate a discussion during the 2021-2022 academic year with our graduate executive committee on how we can improve our comprehensive requirement. The process will include consultations and discussions with our graduate students and faculty members. Any changes will be approved by the graduate program council. <i>Resource Implications:</i> No additional resources are needed to implement this recommendation.</p>	<p>The Faculty of Arts looks forward to reviewing the proposed changes when they are ready.</p>	<p>The Program will initiate and hold discussions with and survey students, faculty, and graduate executive committees. Depending on the scope of approved recommendations, modifications will be implemented accordingly (e.g., clarifications to process can be provided sooner than substantial modifications to the</p>	<p>The graduate Executive Committee will initiate discussions with the Department Program Committees, faculty, and graduate students during the 2021-2022 academic year. Depending on the scope of proposed modifications, revisions will be implemented according to relevant policies. Substantial modifications will be discussed with the Dean's offices.</p>	<p>YSGS is pleased to see that this recommendation is already being worked on and is happy to provide guidance and support as needed. The Program needs to be aware of the classification of curriculum modifications defined in Senate Policy 127 and the corresponding consultations and approvals needed for each type of curriculum modification.</p>

	problem, but it still merits a careful, open evaluation and ongoing advising for greater clarity and consistency.			format of the milestone).		
Recommendation 3 Plan for a wider range of elective courses, in particular for Psychological Science	Program administrators explore with Senior Administration how they might offer a wider range of elective courses to their students, including the possibility of facilitating enrollment in courses at GTA universities when the topics are contemporary and cutting edge.	<p>Our program has already begun to implement this recommendation through several initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First, we have introduced a number of new elective courses into our curriculum (effective Fall 2021), including Prejudice and Discrimination (PS8523), Psychology of Addictive Behaviours (PS8713), Multilevel Modelling (PS8714), Structural Equation Modelling (PS8715), and Supervision, Consultation, and Evaluation (PS9307). PS9307 is a required course for clinical psychology students and an elective for psychological science students. In addition, we will have further discussions with faculty members and students to ensure that our available electives cover the most relevant, contemporary, and cutting-edge topics. New faculty hires with diverse expertise will provide opportunities for new courses that we cannot currently 	<p>While the Dean’s office appreciates the desire for diversity of electives, any changes are dependent upon budgetary limits and considerations.</p> <p>Following consultation and discussion within the program, we expect that electives which are less popular or no longer necessary will be retired/not offered.</p> <p>Regarding the collaboration with York University, please be sure to include the Faculty of Arts’ Dean and Associate Dean in discussions.</p>	<p>The Program will explore how we might offer a wider range of electives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Program will discuss elective options with students. The Department will consider diverse expertise that may support relevant new courses when hiring. The Program will continue forming a course-sharing arrangement with York University. The Program will explore funding options to increase our graduate course offerings. 	<p>The Program has begun to implement this recommendation.</p> <p>Program administrators will explore with the Dean of Arts how to offer a wider range of elective courses.</p> <p>The Program will continue forming a course arrangement with York University (2021-2022), with support from YSGS and the Dean of Arts.</p>	<p>YSGS supports all the actions proposed. It further recommends reviewing the current elective list to determine whether some should be retired and new ones added to make the interest in the elective list more uniform.</p> <p>Student exchange/course sharing with York University is an interesting idea that should be fully investigated. This would also require support from the Registrar’s Office, who should be consulted before arrangements are finalized.</p>

		<p>offer with our existing faculty complement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We are also in the process of negotiating an arrangement with York University (pending approval from our respective schools of graduate studies) that will allow 3 students from our program to take courses at York University at no charge (up to 3 students from York will be able to take courses in our program as well).▪ Finally, we currently offer 19 classroom courses per year, of which around 6 or 7 are electives. We will request funding to increase our number of graduate courses by 2 per year. <p><i>Resource Implications:</i> Additional funding will be required to support 2 additional graduate courses per year.</p>				
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<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>Expand staffing for research support at least proportionate with planned expansion of faculty and programs</p>	<p>While the current staff support of psych research and labs is impressive, this must be expanded as the number of faculty members and psych labs expands, especially in light of new, probationary faculty having likely greater need.</p>	<p>We agree that this recommendation is important for the sustainability of our program. Our research activity has increased substantially since we first hired our full time Research Operations Administrator in 2010 (Carson Pun has held this position since 2012). We now have many more graduate students, faculty members, and research grants. In addition, the anticipated growth in our undergraduate program over the next few years will lead to a doubling of undergraduate theses conducted annually, and significant increases in our faculty complement, research funding, and research staff. These changes have direct benefits for our graduate students, including increases in funding from their graduate supervisors and anticipated increases in GA funding to support our undergraduate growth.</p> <p>At the same time, these changes mean that Psychology will require additional research infrastructure support for our growing department; we also need to catch up as a result of our growth over the past decade (e.g., several current faculty members have outgrown their space).</p>	<p>As you noted, the Faculty has hired a second Research Accounts Support Officer to support research and research growth in the Faculty of Arts.</p> <p>We are working with the Chair of Psychology and the Facilities Management Department at Ryerson to locate, lease, and renovate additional research space.</p> <p>The Dean of Arts and Chair of Psychology are in discussion about Departmental/Program staffing needs.</p>	<p>The Program will request one additional FTE to support our Research Operations Administrator.</p>	<p>The Dean of Arts and Chair of Psychology are in discussion about Departmental/Program staffing needs.</p>	<p>Research support staffing is outside the purview of YSGS, but we are supportive of finding ways to ensure adequate support of research activities that stays proportionate with growth in research.</p> <p>Keeping in mind that postdoctoral fellows often play a large role in supporting research activities and that YSGS now also supports postdoctoral activities, it is happy help the program find ways to increase and enhance the role of postdoctoral fellows in research programs.</p>
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		<p>The addition of a second Research Accounts Support Officer in the Faculty of Arts will provide important financial support for Psychology researchers. However, there is also a need to expand the research infrastructure within the Department.</p> <p><i>Resource Implications:</i> Given the continued expansion of our research infrastructure, we request one additional FTE to support our Research Operations Administrator. Details of these requests will be discussed between the Chair of Psychology and Dean of Arts.</p>				
<p>Recommendation 5 Establishing an office or other support of statistical consulting for grad students and faculty alike, prioritizing quantitative modeling in Psychology where the need is clear</p>	<p>Ryerson-wide or the Faculty of Arts should support the Psychology Department (and potentially other grad students and faculty) by establishing an office of statistical consulting beyond the duties of faculty teaching and supervision, with special attention to the needs of advanced currency in</p>	<p>The lack of adequate statistical support for our students and faculty members has been a limitation since the launch of our program in 2007, and unfortunately one that sets us apart from similar programs at other universities. Implementing this recommendation is important for the sustainability of our program. There are many different ways that this recommendation could be implemented. Some ideas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing course release to a faculty member with the required expertise to free up 	<p>The Dean of Arts will consider the various options presented and discuss this with the Department Chair.</p>	<p>The Program will explore and discuss funding options to attain adequate statistical consultation support.</p>	<p>The Psychology department will initiate discussions with the Dean of Arts office this year (2021-2022). .</p>	<p>Statistical consulting services is something that many graduate programs could benefit from. Such services could provide senior graduate students and postdoctoral fellows some valuable mentoring experience and additional funding. YSGS is therefore motivated to collaborate with the Program and Faculty in finding ways that provide such services</p>

	Psychological quantitative modeling.	<p>time to provide consultation across the department.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide funding to one or more senior graduate students (in lieu of TA funding) to provide support across the program. Develop a statistical consultation service to provide support across the Faculty of Arts or across the University. <p><i>Resource Implications:</i> We request funding for adequate statistical consultation support for our graduate students and faculty members.</p>				for the benefit of all graduate programs that may need it.
Recommendation 6 Lower tuition and increase funding to align with other nearby PhD programs	While it may seem a minor, marginal difference from an administrative perspective, every student and alumni was astutely aware they paid more tuition, and often received less funding, than PhD students at other universities nearby.	Over the years, our program has scanned the graduate training landscape across the province on a number of occasions. Although our levels of funding (e.g., scholarships, stipends, etc.) for graduate students are close to average (compared to other psychology MA/PhD programs), our students are among the most financially strained in the province because (1) Toronto has the highest cost of living in the province, and (2) Ryerson has among the highest levels of tuition (for Psychology MA and PhD programs) across the province. The contrast is particularly noticeable between Ryerson and our GTA neighbours. York and U of	The Faculty of Arts provides funding support to graduate programs through scholarship/RA funding and TAGA, as well as travel grants and special events grants. We are committed to supporting graduate students but do not have the capacity to do more at this point. We support Psychology's effort to lower tuition for graduate students but making changes to tuition lies outside of the Faculty.	The Program will request that program students' tuition be reduced and explore alternative options to bring training costs in line with local competing universities.	The Department will work with the Faculty of Arts and YSGS to identify funding opportunities and options over the next few years.	The University has provided substantial additional funding for graduate education in the last few years. These include the RGS, 4 th -year PhD funding, distribution of the YSGS BIP to programs, and the COVID tuition voucher. YSGS will continue to advocate for lower tuition fees for graduate students, understanding that graduate students typically have larger personal expenses than undergraduate students and have more

		<p>T have among the lowest tuition rates in the province, and they are our greatest competitors when it comes to attracting top applicants. Strong applicants routinely turn down our offers because of anticipated financial challenges.</p> <p>The university has done a number of things to lessen the financial burden on graduate students, including (1) introducing additional scholarship funding (e.g., RGS), (2) providing one-time funding to students whose progress was delayed due to COVID-19, and (3) providing RGF funding for fourth year students. In addition, our faculty members have increased their annual support for graduate students by 45% compared to 2 years ago.</p> <p>These initiatives have allowed our program to increase the minimum levels of funding that we provide, for which our program is grateful. At the same time, our students continue to pay a significant proportion of their funding toward tuition, leaving little to cover the costs of living in the GTA. Many of our students struggle to cover their expenses. Our survey of student mental health and wellbeing found that funding was one of the top two sources of</p>				<p>employment options to choose from over graduate studies.</p> <p>It is important to be aware of the current constraints on revenue from graduate programs while still raising awareness of this concern so that it can be addressed when additional revenue is made available.</p>
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		<p>stress for our students (the other was workload). Difficulty making ends meet is especially challenging for Psychology graduate students (compared to those in most other graduate programs at Ryerson) because our program is a combined MA/PhD program and most of our students are with us for at least 7 years. Furthermore, financial constraints disproportionately affect marginalized and historically excluded communities, which has obvious implications for access to education and our diversity goals.</p> <p><i>Resource Implications:</i> Therefore, in order to implement this recommendation, we request that our students' tuition be reduced to bring training costs in line with those at York University and the University of Toronto.</p>				
<p>Recommendation 7 The School of Grad Studies and Faculty of Arts should create a grad student "research costs fund"</p>	<p>Existing conference travel funding for grad students was appreciated and considered sufficient, but other research costs for grad students had no similar means of support (beyond the inequitable means of</p>	<p>Graduate student research often has a number of associated costs including participant recruitment (e.g., paying participants; paying for advertising), publication costs, and equipment costs (e.g., purchasing "consumables" for EEG research). Some faculty members are able to cover these costs, but others are not. The program has been able to support a small number of research projects</p>	<p>As you note, we support graduate student travel and events through internal Arts grants. Due to budget restrictions (and cutbacks), creating a pool of funding to support graduate student research would take away from existing graduate students funding opportunities.</p>	<p>The Program will explore potential sources of funding to develop a resource to support graduate student research costs.</p>	<p>The Department will work with the Faculty of Arts, and YSGS, to identify additional sources to support student research over the coming years.</p>	<p>As noted in the YSGS reponse to recommendation 6 above, the University has provided substantial additional funding for graduate education in the last few years. YSGS remains supportive of all means to improve the student's experience in the</p>

	<p>relying informally on supervisors' grants).</p> <p>At very least, current grad student travel funding streams should clarify that conference travel is just one type of eligible research cost among others.</p>	<p>through donor-funded grants (from Harry Rosen; Jackman Foundation). However, these funds support only a small number of students, and we only have commitments for a limited time.</p> <p><i>Resource Implications:</i> In order to support this recommendation, we request that a pool of funding be created to support graduate student research (analogous to funding from Arts and YSGS to support graduate student travel to present at conferences).</p>				<p>program and support their career development.</p>
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