



Cyclical Program Review Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan for the Academic Programs Offered by the School of Policy Studies.

Programs Reviewed:

Master of Public Administration

Master of Public Administration/Juris Doctor

Professional Master of Public Administration (including optional concentration in Indigenous Governance). N.B., admissions to this program were temporarily [suspended](#) in March 2024.

In accordance with Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes (QUQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation, internal responses, and assessment of the above programs. This report identifies the significant strengths of the programs, and opportunities for program improvement.

An implementation plan is attached that identifies:

- who will be responsible for acting on and monitoring progress on the recommendations,
- any resource or governance implications resulting from the recommendations, and
- timelines for implementation of the recommendations.

[Final Assessment Report: Executive Summary](#)

Summary of Review

- 1) The previous cyclical program review of these programs took place in 2013-14 and the Final Assessment Report was completed in April 2014. The current review was originally scheduled for the 2020-2021 academic year. The first stages of the review (self-study completion and external review visit) were delayed due to the pandemic. As a result of the delay, a "bridging" report was completed to provide an update on the status of recommendations made in the last review. This report was approved by the Senate Cyclical Program Review Committee (SCPRC) on February 1, 2022.
- 2) The School of Policy Studies (SPS) produced a self-study document that was reviewed by the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science, the Vice-Provost and Dean, School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs, and the Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning). The self-study was approved on June 27, 2022.

- 3) The review team visit took place on June 1-2, 2023. The review team members were:
 - i. Dr. Kathryn Harrison, Professor, Department of Political Science, University of British Columbia.
 - ii. Dr. Nancy Olewiler, Professor and Director, School of Public Policy, Simon Fraser University.
 - iii. Dr. Amitava Chowdhury, Associate Professor, Department of History, Queen's University.
- 4) The visit included meetings with
 - i. Students from the MPA and PMPA programs
 - ii. Faculty
 - iii. Staff
 - iv. Program Chair
 - v. Research Centre Directors
 - vi. Dean and Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science
 - vii. Head of a cognate department (Political Studies)
 - viii. Vice-Provost and Dean, School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs
 - ix. Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning) (VPTL).
- 5) The review team reported on July 20, 2023. The Office of the VPTL reviewed the report and asked the reviewers to consider if there were additional recommendations they could make that were in the purview of the School to act upon. The review team submitted a further version of the report, including two additional recommendations, on August 1, 2023.
- 6) Since the majority of the recommendations in the review team report could not be acted upon by the unit alone, the VPTL asked the Faculty of Arts and Science to work together with the School in responding to the review team report. The Director, School of Policy Studies and Faculty Dean submitted a joint response on September 2, 2024 and the Vice-Provost and Dean (School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs) responded on September 30, 2024.
- 7) The Senate Cyclical Program Review Committee considered the review team report, internal responses and a draft Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan at its meetings on November 27, 2024 and February 12, 2025. The Report and Plan were approved on February 12, 2025.

Strengths and Opportunities for Enhancement

Due to extenuating circumstances impacting the School of Policy Studies, it should be noted that strengths and areas for enhancement are contingent upon the future vision of the School of Policy Studies and its role at Queen's University and within the extensive policy community. As concerted efforts are currently focused on sustainability and renewal, this section is limited to include only the most relevant and/or actionable strengths and weaknesses.

The following strengths were noted by the review team:

- Examples of the use of highly effective pedagogies, innovative technologies, and integration of exemplary research.
- Existing network of highly qualified public policy/public administration practitioners who are still active in the policy arena and can be leveraged to support teaching and provide links for students to employment.
- The recent merging of administrative resources between related units.
- An outstanding history of contributing to local, regional, and national communities

The following opportunities for enhancement were noted by the review team:

- Lack of clear vision for the future role of the School of Policy Studies.
- Faculty complement cannot sustain program in its current form.
- Risk of diminishing research capacity due to reduced faculty complement.
- Existing structure and complexities around the “School” versus “home departments” may increase reliance on adjuncts and create barriers to research collaboration.

Summary of Review Team Recommendations

The reviewers made six recommendations, summarized as follows. For the full text of the recommendations, see the Implementation Plan.

- 1) The School of Policy Studies is unsustainable in its current structure. A decision on the School’s future is imperative.
- 2) Ensure a balance in the core disciplines required in public administration/policy is maintained: economics, political science, and qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.
- 3) Other units currently providing faculty to teach in the School should be consulted as to their views and potential role in any reconfiguration or new home for the School of Policy Studies.
- 4) Endeavour to have all core courses in their programs taught by qualified tenure stream research faculty.
- 5) Each course needs to have a complete and up to date syllabus that clearly shows how the course aligns with the School’s goals, learning outcomes, includes research and practice relevant to the fields, and is taught by experts at a level appropriate for a graduate degree in public administration.
- 6) The School of Policy Studies’ current web page needs substantial revision that provides up-to-date information and eliminates misleading information.

Status

The academic programs in the School of Policy Studies have been approved to continue.

Date monitoring report due: February 2026

N.B., A second monitoring report is usually required four years after the Final Assessment Report. Due to delays in the current review, the next cyclical program review of these programs will take place before that time. In this case, a second monitoring report is not required.

Date of next review: 2027 – 2028 academic year

Prepared by Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning) November 2024 – February 2025

Approved by the Senate Cyclical Program Review Committee February 12, 2025



Implementation Plan

The review team prefaced its recommendations as follows:

Our review concludes that the School of Policy Studies cannot continue in its current form. Without a decision and active steps to address the School's future, the concept of continuous improvement seems irrelevant and hence, we've deleted it from our first three recommendations.

Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-up	Resource or Governance Implications	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
1. The School of Policy Studies is unsustainable in its current structure. Letting it continue to drift harms Queen's reputation as a significant contributor to Canadian public policy and will lead to ever-declining interest by outstanding students in pursuing the MPA and PMPA degrees at Queen's. A decision on the School's future is imperative.	<u>Actions already taken:</u> School of Policy Studies (SPS) merged administratively with the Department of Political Studies. Suspension of admissions for both MPA and PMA programs was considered. Following community consultation,	Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science		

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	<p>admissions were temporarily suspended to the PMPA program. Admissions remained open for the MPA.</p> <p>Steering Committee on Public Policy Teaching was formed.</p> <p><u>Planned Actions:</u> Proposal for a renewed public policy program to be developed.</p> <p>Begin the governance process for approval of the new program</p>	Steering Committee on Public Policy Teaching	New program development will identify required faculty resources and make recommendations to the Dean.	<p>May 2025</p> <p>Summer 2025</p>
2. Ensure a balance in the core disciplines required in public administration/policy is maintained: economics, political science, and	New program development under the Steering Committee on Public	Steering Committee on	New program development will identify required faculty resources	A new program is under development (for submission May 2025).

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qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. A merged SPS and Political Studies puts this balance at risk. A revitalized School could build on policy areas where Queen's has significant expertise such as social, economic, health, and environmental policy.	Policy Teaching includes leadership from Political Studies, Geography and Planning, and Economics, the Associate Dean (Grad Studies), FAS, and input from other units on campus.	Public Policy Teaching	and make recommendations to the Dean.	For 2025-26, and for 2026-27, the program will rely on faculty from other units (see section 4 below).
3. Other units currently providing faculty to teach in the School should be consulted as to their views and potential role in any reconfiguration or new home for the School of Policy Studies. This is particularly important in the case of the Economics department as it provides research faculty to teach core courses in SPS. We did not see any evidence that cognate units other than Political Studies and the School of Policy Studies were formally consulted in the deliberations of the two advisory committees.	<p>Include representation from Economics on Steering Committee on Public Policy Teaching.</p> <p>Formally consult with other units within FAS and across the University, including Public Health, Engineering, Law, Education, and Business.</p> <p>Reflect input of these groups in the proposal for a revitalized</p>	Director, SPS and Steering Committee on Public Policy Teaching	<p>Investment of time to consult and reflect input in the proposal.</p> <p>Resource implications attached to reconfiguration or new home for the School of Policy Studies.</p>	<p>May 2024 - March 2025</p> <p>Consultations underway as of January 2025.</p>

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	program in public policy.			
4. The School should endeavour to have all core courses in their programs taught by qualified tenure stream research faculty.	<p>Director, SPS to take on a larger role instructing core courses in the MPA program.</p> <p>Identify tenure-stream faculty members from cognate units who can contribute to core courses in a revitalized program.</p> <p>Address the balance between core and elective courses in the program.</p> <p>Consider the role of expert instructors from professional areas.</p>	<p>Director, SPS</p> <p>Steering Committee on Public Policy Teaching</p>	<p>Investment of time from Steering Committee on Public Policy Teaching.</p> <p>For 2025-26, there will be resource implications for teaching by tenure-stream faculty. Core faculty will be recruited from other units, and adjunct funding from SPS will be redistributed to other units to cover courses. No overall</p>	<p>2024-2025 academic year</p> <p>For 2025-26, the 7 core courses have already, or will be assigned to 4 tenured faculty and 2 continuing adjunct faculty members.</p> <p>Representation from multiple units will ensure good coverage of professional areas.</p>

Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-up	Resource or Governance Implications	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
	Consult with other programs at Queen's who have addressed similar issues, including the School of Urban and Regional Planning, Centre for Neuroscience Studies, and the Cultural Studies graduate program.		resource implication.	The School is consulting with faculty in identified programs through January-March 2025, as part of ongoing consultation on new program structure, which addresses balance between core and elective courses.
5. Each course needs to have a complete and up to date syllabus that clearly shows how the course aligns with the School's goals, learning outcomes, includes research and practice relevant to the fields, and is taught by experts at a level appropriate for a graduate degree in public administration.	<p><u>Action already taken:</u> Work closely with instructors to ensure that up-to-date syllabi are available for every course being taught in the program.</p> <p><u>Planned Action:</u> Consider the degree-level learning outcomes and conduct a mapping process to</p>	<p>Director, SPS</p> <p>Steering Committee on Public Policy Teaching, consulting with</p>	Time of committee members and Director, SPS needed for consideration of program-level learning outcomes and curriculum mapping.	<p>Completed by November 2024</p> <p>March 2025</p>

Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-up	Resource or Governance Implications	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
	<p>link these to course-level learning outcomes.</p> <p>Consult with Centre for Teaching and Learning in this work.</p> <p>Update future syllabi to reflect the updated learning outcomes.</p>	Centre for Teaching and Learning.		
6. The School of Policy Studies' current web page needs substantial revision that provides up-to-date information, eliminating misleading information that borders on false advertising to potential students. This requires removing the names of people who used to contribute to the program in the past and are no longer actively teaching or providing services to the School. Courses that are not being taught because there are no faculty to teach them should not be listed as available.	<p><u>Action already taken:</u> Website has been revised to ensure only active faculty and available courses are present.</p> <p><u>Planned Action:</u> Make use of staff support in new merged administrative structure to make sure websites stay current.</p>	Director, SPS	Staff resources to monitor and update websites.	<p>November 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

The Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science shall be responsible for monitoring the implementation plan. The details of progress made will be presented in monitoring reports to the Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning), submitted to the Senate Cyclical Program Review Committee for approval and to Senate for information. All monitoring reports will be posted on the university web site.

Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan	February 12, 2025
Final status of academic programs in the School of Policy Studies	Approved to Continue
Date of next program review	2027 - 2028 Academic Year

Next Steps for School of Policy Studies

A monitoring report must be submitted one year after receipt of the signed Final Assessment Report: February 2026. The provost's office will remind the School of the deadline nearer the time and provide a template for the report.