



**Proposed Major in Human Rights
Studies
King’s University College
Final Assessment Report &
Implementation Plan**

Faculty / Affiliated University College	King’s University College
Degrees Offered	BA
Modules Reviewed	Major in Human Rights Studies
External Consultants	Bonny Ibhawoh, Professor (cross-appointed), Department of History and the Centre for Peace Studies, McMaster University; David Webster, Professor of History, Bishop’s University
Internal Reviewer	Geoff Read, Vice-President, Academic and Dean of Arts and Social Sciences, Huron University College
Date of Site Visit	April 15, 2019
Evaluation	Approved to Commence
Approval Dates	SUPR-U: June 10, 2019 SCAPA: October 2, 2019 Senate:
Year of Next Review	2026-27

Executive Summary

The external consultants, Dr. Bonny Ibhawoh of McMaster University, and Dr. David Webster of Bishop’s University, visited King’s University College’s campus on 15 April 2019. They had a very full agenda and met with stakeholders from the many departments providing teaching support to the new program. These included colleagues from the following departments and programs at King’s: English, French and Writing; History; Philosophy; Political Science; Religious Studies; Social Justice and Peace Studies; and Sociology. The consultants also met with colleagues from Western’s Department of Women’s Studies and Feminist Research as well as the Vice-Principal and Academic Dean of King’s and King’s staff from several units including academic advising and the library. Further, the consultants lunched with students from several different departments associated with the proposal. This agenda made for a very busy day but certainly provided the consultants with all the information they needed to conduct a thorough review of the proposed program.

The external consultants' reception of the proposed program is quite enthusiastic. As they note, the faculty who will teach in the program are of a high quality, the program will offer a unique "Humanities" focus on Human Rights, the multi-disciplinary nature of the program will provide students with a depth and breadth of knowledge of the subject, and "Human Rights" is a natural fit for King's, consistent as it is with the institution's historical and present combination of higher education in the Humanities with its Catholic mission of social justice. In sum, they offer unequivocal support to the proposed program.

The consultants offer seven recommendations on how the proposed program might be improved. The key one is clearly that students in the program should have substantial exposure to Indigenous content. As they note, particularly for a program in Human Rights this seems like an obvious inclusion; while recognizing that the expertise of the core faculty in the program may make covering such material challenging, they suggest two ways in which the program might bridge this gap. They also make several other less critical recommendations detailed below.

Significant Strengths of the Program

The following program strengths are identified in both the program proposal and the External Consultants' Report

- Consistency with King's social justice tradition and mission.
- Multidisciplinary approach.
- Humanities focus.
- Introductory and capstone courses will provide coherence.
- Outstanding faculty with expertise in the area of Human Rights across disciplinary divides.
- Student interest appears to be high.
- Inclusion of experiential learning.

Summary of the Reviewers' Key Recommendations and Department/Faculty Responses

1. Consult with First Nations Studies at Western and with SJPS at King's about adding Indigenous rights content and perspectives.

The King's History Department (from which this proposal emanates) undertakes to work collaboratively with First Nations Studies at Western and Social Justice and Peace Studies at King's to ensure that Indigenous rights content and Indigenous perspectives will be adequately covered within the program. The external consultants' recommendations do not suggest that a course dedicated to Indigenous rights is necessarily required; rather, it seems feasible that such content could be integrated into the proposed architecture of the program.

2. Use, where possible, an interdisciplinary team-teaching approach in HRS core courses.

The King's History Department affirms its commitment to doing exactly this in both the introductory and capstone courses.

3. Consider questions of governance. A coordinator and an interdisciplinary advisory committee is one possible structure, but others could also be considered.

The Department commits to appointing a coordinator from among the History Department full-time faculty. The possibility of an interdisciplinary advisory committee will also be considered going forward.

4. Consider adding one or more electives from Disability Studies and First Nations Studies.

The Department commits to working collaboratively with these potential partners and references the possibility of courses being cross-listed with Disability Studies while noting that likely some students will do double majors in Human Rights and Disability Studies. The Department also raises the prospect of collaboration with Migration Studies at Western.

5. When resources permit, consider adding a third foundations course on international human rights, but otherwise retain the existing focus on interdisciplinary, interdepartmental cooperation with any new courses created by existing departments, rather than moving to create a large number of new HRS courses.

The Departmental is non-committal, emphasizing that precisely because they wish to maintain the co-disciplinary and collaborative nature of the program they would hesitate to offer a third required Human Rights course. They do commit to considering this idea.

6. As HRS grows, consider additional resources (such as a staff person) to support experiential learning.

The Department notes that the King's administration has committed to increasing support for the program as warranted by its enrolment numbers.

7. As HRS grows, consider hiring a faculty member either in HRS or in an allied department such as History, able to coordinate the program and teach theoretical and practical approaches to human rights in Canada and connect Canada to broader themes of global human rights.

The Department responds that this would be highly desirable if the program's success warrants it and King's chooses to prioritize Human Rights in this way.

Other Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement

- The consultants mention that the program may wish to emphasize its connections to Catholic human rights discourses and traditions more strongly. The History Department responded with enthusiasm and some concrete ideas to this idea.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. The Department Chair, in consultation with the Affiliated University College Principal will be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan.

Recommendation	Responsibility
1. Incorporate coverage of Indigenous rights and Indigenous perspectives into the program.	The Chair of the King's History Department; the Coordinator of Human Rights (once appointed)
2. Consider the governance structure of the new program	The Chair of the King's History Department; the Academic Dean