



King's Childhood and Youth Studies
Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan
May 2023

Faculty / Affiliated University College	King's University College	
Degrees Offered	B.A.	
Date of Last Review	2014-2015	
Modules Reviewed	Honours Specialization (Childhood and Youth Studies) Major (Childhood and Youth Studies) Minor (Childhood and Youth Studies)	
External Reviewers	Dr. Kristine Alexander, Institute of Child and Youth Studies, University of Lethbridge	Dr. Tara Collins, School of Child and Youth Care, Toronto Metropolitan University
Internal Reviewers	Dr. John Mitchell, Associate Academic Dean, Brescia University College	Angela Liu Undergraduate Student, Huron University College
Date of Site Visit	February 9 & 10, 2023	
Date Review Report Received	February 17, 2023	
Date Program/Faculty Response Received	Program: February 28, 2023 Faculty: April 12, 2023	
Evaluation	Good Quality	
Approval Dates	SUPR-U: June 28, 2023 ACA: September 6, 2023 Senate (for information): September 15, 2023	
Year of Next Review	2030-2031	
Progress Report	June 2026	

Overview of Western’s Cyclical Review Assessment Reporting Process

In accordance with Western’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a summary of the cyclical review, internal responses, and assessment and evaluation of the Childhood and Youth Studies Program delivered by King’s University College.

This FAR considers the following documents:

- the program’s self-study brief;
- the external reviewers’ report;
- the response from the Program; and
- the response from the Academic Dean, King’s University College.

This FAR identifies the strengths of the program and opportunities for program enhancement and improvement, and details the recommendations of the external reviewers – noting those recommendations to be prioritized for implementation.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the FAR that have been selected for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, specifies any action or follow-up that is required, and defines the timeline for completion.

The FAR (including Implementation Plan) is sent for approval through the Senate Undergraduate Program Review Committee (SUPR-U) and ACA, then for information to Senate and to the Ontario Universities’ Council on Quality Assurance. Subsequently, it is publicly accessible on Western’s IQAP website. The FAR is the only document from the undergraduate cyclical review process that is made public; all other documents are confidential to the Program, King’s University College, and SUPR-U.

Executive Summary

Established in 1999, the Department of Childhood and Youth Studies (CYS) provides interdisciplinary opportunities for the study of childhood and youth within educational, legal, and policy contexts. The program constructively questions existing assumptions about children and young people and explore the practical possibilities for advancing their participatory rights and dignity as persons.

Students of the CYS program engage in policy and legal debate, learn to advocate for the effective agency of young people, and explore the histories and current structures of childhood institutions in Canada and around the world. They prepare themselves to pursue careers in education, social services for children and youth, the law and its allied professions, health care, social work, advocacy, policy analysis, government, and the social sciences.

In 2021-22, modular enrolments were at 195, with the program's total Full-Course Registration at 465, the latter up by 28% over 2020-21 numbers.

From 2020 to 2022, the Self-study was informed by consultations with over forty colleagues and professionals – including the College's administrative, recruitment and development teams and leaders in governmental and non-governmental agencies. The program equally held dedicated discussions with, and surveyed, students and alumni.

The external reviewers shared a positive assessment of the CYS Program indicating that *“The CYS curriculum at King’s offers students high-quality opportunities to engage with and contribute to this vibrant and interdisciplinary field of study. Much of this success is the result of the careful process of reflection and revision that the department has undertaken in recent years.”* The reviewers offered six recommendations for further enhancement.

Strengths and Innovative Features Identified by the Program

- Interweaving interdisciplinary fields into the program results in: 1) the majority of students (70-85%), becoming professionals serving families, children, and youths; 2) students becoming more reflexive of their personal histories which helps them connect with children in varied difficult situations.
- A collaboration with the Landon Pearson Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights, enables the CYS program to operate a nationally recognized youth engagement program called “Shaking the Movers” (STM) which provides students with experiential learning opportunities in the community.
- International partnerships with Malmo University (Sweden) and Winchester University (U.K.) provide opportunities for international exchanges.
- Students have the opportunity to develop, present, and implement research proposals to professionals operating in a wide-spectrum of services for families, youths, and children.

- Effective 2022, a pathway agreement with the Faculty of Education provides an opportunity for CYS students to earn priority placement in the Primary-Junior certification program.
- First-year student-acceptance jumped from 30 in 2020-21 to an eight-year high of 68 in 2022.
- The program is the home of the Society for the History of Children and Youth (SHCY) – a communication hub, a record storage facility, and an online scholarly magazine with weekly multi-media features.
- Students report a high degree of satisfaction with their educational experience and a strong connection with CYS faculty.

Concerns and Areas of Improvement Identified and Discussed by the Program

- Allocation of adequate resources to senior year project courses is necessary for continued program success.
- Lack of dedicated staff and departmental offices impede the program's effective functioning, including its ability to collect student data.
- Average class size is 37 and among the largest at King's for programs that primarily use essay designated forms of assessment.
- In 2022-23, only 25% of CYS's courses were be taught by permanent faculty – however, this will increase following planned hiring.

Review Process

As part of the external review, the review committee, comprising two external reviewers, an internal reviewer and a student reviewer, were provided with Volume I and II of the self-study brief in advance of the scheduled review and then met virtually over two days with the:

- Vice-Provost (Academic Programs)
- Director of Academic Quality and Enhancement
- President, King's University College
- Academic Dean, King's University College
- Associate academic Dean, King's University College
- Director of Enrolment Services & Registrar
- Director of Libraries, Cardinal Carter Library
- Manager, Academic Planning and Analysis
- Chair, Childhood and Youth Studies Department
- Administrative Staff
- Program Faculty
- Program Students

Following the virtual site visit, the external reviewers submitted a comprehensive report of their findings which was sent to the Program and Dean for review and response. Formative documents, including Volumes I and II of the Self-Study, the External Report, and the Program and Decanal responses form the basis of this Final Assessment Report (FAR) of the King’s Childhood and Youth Studies Program. The FAR is collated and submitted to SUPR-U by the Internal Reviewer with the support of the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement.

Summative Assessment – External Reviewers’ Report

External reviewers shared that *“CYS is a highly-successful program, of which King’s can be proud. We were impressed by the enthusiasm, energy, and commitment demonstrated by administration, staff, faculty, students and alumni. We commend the department’s dedication and efforts to enhance quality by supporting the learning outcomes and academic and professional trajectories of its students.”*

Strengths of the Program

- Following extensive participatory consultations, the program has been substantially revised to ensure greater impact through improved alignment with academic requirements as well as student and alumni requirements.
- Continual increase in the numbers of applicants to the program each year, along with high course enrolments.
- Curriculum is enhanced by:
 - grouping the courses into two main program pillars: *rights and advocacy* and *law and policy*;
 - enhanced experiential learning through two new courses: CYS 3355F/G Rights-Based Community Engagement and CYS 3351F/G Facilitating Advocacy with Children;
 - international student exchanges with Malmo University (Sweden) and Winchester University (U.K.);
 - Shaking the Movers (STM) is an experiential learning opportunity which provides students with the opportunity to collaborate with community partners;
 - interdisciplinary courses like “Childhood and Death”, cross-listed with Thanatology;
 - Student-produced Ted Talks, policy reports and case briefs, and participation in mooting builds oral communication skills, bring the advocacy and policy streams together to simulate the work students might do in the future in such fields as law and non-governmental organizations;

- a new course on race and Indigeneity in child and youth studies.
- Flexibility of the CYS program provides students with varied pathways and supports their pursuit of graduate studies and relevant careers in various fields. For instance, new pathway to the Faculty of Education.
- Student and alumni surveys demonstrate great satisfaction overall with the program, in particular the achievement of learning outcomes and small class sizes.

Areas of Concern or Prospective Improvement

- Consider the following revisions to the curriculum:
 - Creating internships for students in the second and fourth years of the program as students and employers value experiential learning;
 - Providing global exposure in the curriculum beyond the two European university exchanges;
 - Provide additional research, teaching assistantships and experiential learning opportunities – as requested by students.
- Continue work to improve EDID as a cross-cutting priority across the program structure, curriculum and teaching/learning experiences.
- Consider further ways to remove financial and other barriers that many students experience when considering international exchanges. Focus on providing material support to equity-deserving groups.
- Several of the alumni surveyed identified a desire for more content on disability.
- Monitor the growing numbers of students in this increasingly popular program to ensure adequate faculty complement.
- Need for dedicated administrative support for the Chair and the department.
- Consider relocating faculty and staff offices to a central location, with a dedicated seminar room.

Summary of the Reviewers’ Recommendations and Program/Faculty Responses

The following are the reviewers’ recommendations in the order listed by the external reviewers. Recommendations requiring implementation have been marked with an asterisk (*).

Reviewers’ Recommendation	Program/Faculty Response
<p>Recommendation #1* Consistently support and prioritize EDID in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring of faculty; • Curricular development; and • Student supports and learning. <p>This requires resources and buy-in at all levels of CYS including students, staff, faculty, and administration.</p>	<p>Program: The program will support and prioritize EDID in hiring processes by following and contributing to the improvement of the College’s guidelines for equal opportunity and non-discrimination in APT matters.</p> <p>The program will continue to teach diverse approaches toward children’s identity, belonging, social inclusion, equity rights, human dignity, economic opportunity, well-being, health, and security by: 1) planning curriculum review meetings each spring; and 2) seeking funding for a faculty retreat to be held every three years to address integration equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonialization into the program’s curriculum and practices.</p> <p>The program will continue to advocate for resources for students – one example of this action is CYS’s current advocacy for a 50% increase in the financial support for international seminars, and a means-based support fund.</p> <p>Faculty: At both a strategic and operational level, the Dean’s Office prioritizes EDID in the recruitment, retention and promotion of faculty across all academic units. EDID is one of the main priorities of the approved multi-year hiring plan. Simultaneously, the Dean’s Office is working with the Director of EDID at King’s along with other colleagues, to implement EDID best practices in hiring processes, which includes, training for faculty search committees.</p> <p>The program is encouraged to continue working with the Academic Dean’s Office to conduct regular curricular reviews and design strategies that reflect the program’s core commitment to exploring power dynamics and institutionalized inequities in childhood/youth identities and experiences. The Dean’s Office acknowledges and supports the Department’s plans for faculty professional development in EDID.</p> <p>The Dean’s office remains committed to enhancing students access to Academic Advising, which may include increased opportunities for faculty mentoring.</p>

<p>Recommendation #2* Create new and additional opportunities and supports for experiential learning including two new required internship courses in the second and fourth year of the program. These courses would provide needed earlier exposure to potential professional and academic pathways and critical professional experience. No matter which program stream CYS students pursue, every student should have the opportunity to access and complete at least one internship course.</p>	<p>Program: Internships would benefit students; however, the program does not currently have any administrative resources (i.e., office, administrative or advising staff) necessary to operate internships. To implement this recommendation, King’s would either have to develop and fund a college-wide internship office, or its departments would have to develop the administrative capacity to operate placement programs.</p> <p>Faculty: The Academic Dean’s Office acknowledges and appreciates the spirit of this recommendation. In collaboration with all academic departments and programs, the Academic Dean’s Office will be presenting the 10th Academic Plan, which will identify major strategic academic priorities for King’s for the next 3 to 5 years. The plan identifies experiential learning, internships and both academic and professional pathways as a key strategic priority for King’s.</p>
<p>Recommendation #3 Hire more full-time faculty (with attention to EDID) to ensure parity with other departments and lessen the number of contract instructors to teach the program’s curriculum.</p>	<p>Program: The program welcomes this recommendation and will continue to follow King’s processes advocating for additions to complement.</p> <p>Faculty: Recommendations related to faculty hiring are not prioritized in implementation plans since they are outside of the scope of the IQAP review process. Moreover, there are alternative strategies related to program design that may address course section management and the reliance on part time faculty. CYS is encouraged to work with the Academic Dean’s Office (Academic Planning and Analysis Manager) to implement strategies that may alleviate reliance on contract instructors.</p>
<p>Recommendation #4* Increase dedicated administrative support for the department chair to organize and implement CYS program objectives including onboarding and training of contract instructors, event organization, community building activities and initiatives, etc.</p>	<p>Program: The CYS Program is only an administrative unit or working team in name. It has no physical presence on the campus and no administrative support nor academic advising staff. These personnel report to the Academic Dean’s Office.</p> <p>Faculty: The Academic Dean’s Office (ADO) acknowledges and appreciates the spirit of this recommendation. To that end, the ADO is engaged with CYS and with all academic departments to discuss strategies for increasing administrative support to all academic units and to reorganizing existing resources to support and enhance departmental-level autonomy over program management and development.</p>

<p>Recommendation #5 Add formally the identification of the student’s chosen program pillar (Advocacy or Law/Policy) to degree parchment and student grade transcripts. This will support student pathways and employment prospects.</p>	<p>Program: The recommendation appears to be based on misunderstanding of the CYS module, or to be offered without an adequate understanding of the structural dynamics. Presently, no CYS student chooses between a “law and policy” or a “rights and advocacy” stream. All students must take a minimum number of courses from course sets (pillars) labeled “law and policy” and “advocacy and rights” to ensure that they have a balanced introduction to the field: (1) the institutions of childhood and youth, as well as (2) the reform agenda for increasing children’s participatory rights. For this recommendation to be implemented, the program would have to be much larger; and the College (and Western) would need to concur with CYS faculty that it is sustainable to develop two separate, interrelated modules.</p> <p>Faculty: The Academic Dean’s Office agrees with CYS that this recommendation is not feasible at this time.</p>
<p>Recommendation #6* Dedicate institutional resources to ensure and support the creation of research centre and robust scholarly community (including students in CYS). This includes a common room for students and program events to create and sustain the community.</p>	<p>Program: The program supports both of these recommendations.</p> <p>Faculty: The Academic Dean’s Office supports in principle the establishment of a Research Centre related to CYS, should the department wish to pursue this recommendation. An institution-wide review of current policies and procedures related to the creation and management of research centres at King’s is envisioned as part of the forthcoming strategic planning process. The 10th Academic Plan, which the Dean will be presenting for approval no later than Fall 2023, will identify the creation of research clusters associated with research centres as a key strategy to enhance the visibility of research at King’s, and to foster increased engagement with the wider university community and beyond.</p>

<p>Recommendation #4 Increase dedicated administrative support for the department chair to organize and implement CYS program objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dean’s Office to continue engaging with the program to discuss strategies for 1) increasing administrative support; and 2) reorganizing existing resources to support departmental-level autonomy over program management and development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Dean • Chair 	<p>By December 2023</p>
<p>Recommendation #6 Dedicate institutional resources to ensure and support the creation of research centre, and a common room for students to create a robust scholarly community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current policies and procedures related to the creation and management of research centres – envisioned as part of the forthcoming strategic planning process. • Identify the creation of research clusters associated with research centres as a key strategy to enhance the visibility of research at King’s, and to foster increased engagement with the wider university community and beyond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Dean 	<p>By September 2024</p>