



Bachelor of Social Work
Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan
May 2024

Faculty / Affiliated University College	King's University College	
Degrees Offered	Bachelor of Social Work (BSW)	
Date of Last Review	2015-2016	
Modules Reviewed	Honours Specialization (HSP) in Social Work	
External Reviewers	Dr. Louise Stern, Social Work Vancouver Island University	Dr. Diana Coholic, Social Work Laurentian University
Internal Reviewer	Dr. John Mitchell, Associate Academic Dean, Brescia University College	Jenna Beecroft Psychology and Political Science, Brescia
Date of Site Visit	March 11-13, 2024	
Date Review Report Received	April 2, 2024	
Date Program/Faculty Response Received	Program: May 7, 2024 Faculty: May 7, 2024	
Evaluation	Good Quality	
Approval Dates	SUPR-U: June 26, 2024 ACA: September 4, 2024 Senate (for information): September 13, 2024	
Year of Next Review	2031-2032	
Progress Report	June 2027	

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 Bachelor of Social Work Program delivered by the School of Social Work, 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 Subcommittee for Program Review - Undergraduate (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 School of Social Work, King’s University College and SUPR-U.

Executive Summary

Established as the Department of Social Welfare at King's College in 1969, a full-time program leading to a Bachelor of Arts in Social Welfare was offered and received accreditation in 1979. Presently known as the Bachelor of Social Work, the program is accredited by the Canadian Association for Social Work Education. Students in the third and fourth years of the program are eligible for student membership in the Ontario Association of Social Workers (OASW) which is a member of the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW). These associations are part of the international community of social work practitioners. With a total enrolment of 101 students in 2023-2024, the professional Social Work program is mainly offered on a full-time basis; however, there are a limited number of spaces for extended study students (part-time).

The self-study included a full review and mapping of the Western Degree Outcomes and Program-Level Learning Outcomes. All faculty (full and part-time) outlined where and how outcomes were captured in their courses. Analysis of these data was supported by a team of graduate students. Additionally, a program exit survey and alumni survey informed the development of the self-study.

The external reviewers shared a positive assessment of the King's Social Work Program. They offer three recommendations with considerations for further enhancement.

Strengths and Innovative Features Identified by the Program

- Strong scholarship, student supervision, and service to the broader community among faculty members strengthen the program's relationship with local and regional community partners and with various social work organizations and regulatory bodies across Canada.
- Curriculum is enhanced by initiatives such as: 1) undergraduate research and publishing opportunities, conference presentations, and strong community partnerships; and 2) paid internal practicum opportunities – Support and Aid to Families Electronically (SAFE) and King's Community Support Centre (KCSC).
- Accessibility practices are built into the admission pathways – seats are reserved for part-time applicants, and applicants from marginalized groups; the Extended Study Plan, provides an alternative route to completion of the BSW program.
- Degree is recognized by the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW) as well as equivalent bodies in the United States and other countries, which allows graduates to be accredited as Social Workers.
- MOU with the University of Winchester in the United Kingdom promotes varied academic exchanges between students from Canada and the UK.
- Student feedback has enabled new initiatives such as the: 1) development of workshops to enhance practical skills; 2) provision of informal opportunities for students to interact with faculty members and better understand faculty member research programs (with possible RA opportunities); 3) development of a

Wellness and Self-Care website to prepare graduates for complex and stressful practice.

- Alumni feedback indicates that: 1) 93% percent of graduates gain employment; and 2) there is strong satisfaction with the learning environment, the quality of teaching, the accessibility of information and resources, and the interactions with faculty members.

Concerns and Areas of Improvement Identified and Discussed by the Program

- Prioritizing lens of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization as part of hiring plans.
- Incorporate more international and transnational experiences into the undergraduate curriculum.
- From an accessibility perspective, there may be merit in offering online programming within the BSW program – further possibilities to be explored.
- Consideration of including more content and initiatives in the area of Environmental Sustainability and Ecological Practice, for instance by launching a new elective on Eco Social Work.
- Continue expanding commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.

Review Process

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

- Vice-Provost (Academic Programs)
- Director of Academic Quality and Enhancement
- President, King’s University College
- Vice-President & Academic Dean (Interim)
- Associate Academic Dean
- Associate Dean of Research and Research Facilitators
- Director, School of Social Work
- Dean of Students
- Director of Libraries
- Head, Research & Information Services
- Field Education Team
- Administrative Staff
- Program Faculty
- Program Students
- BSW Students’ Association

Following the 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 Bachelor of Social Work 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 overall *“the BSW program at King’s University College is a strong, well-resourced and managed professional program, with a cohesive and committed faculty team and an engaged student body.”*

Strengths of the Program

- Nationally and internationally recognized faculty members, some holding key positions with provincial and national social work associations and organizations – which deepens relationships with affiliated agencies.

- Strong program requirements ensure accreditation standards are maintained.
- Curriculum enhanced by: 1) a writing course aimed at developing academic and professional skills; 2) small class sizes resulting in high levels of engagement and participation; 3) a mandatory Indigenous social work course and diversity of case studies; 4) an MOU with University of Winchester in the UK, which will facilitate faculty collaborations and international learning opportunities for students.
- Effective resource allocation supports the implementation of EDI initiatives, e.g. hiring a Director of EDI and Decolonization, an Indigenous faculty member, and an Equity Integration Facilitator; support groups for 2SLGBTQIA+ and BIPOC/Indigenous students.
 - Students indicated that they are very supportive of these initiatives.
- Initiatives in support of field placements for students: (1) the King's Community Support Centre (KCSC), a unique service for the city amongst the 25 agencies involved in the homelessness network; and (2) the SAFE practicum project that started during the pandemic due to young people's mental health challenges.
- Extended study plan for some students to pursue part-time study.
- Students indicated particular appreciation for: 1) the tight knit nature of the campus; and 2) Accessibility, Counseling, and Career Planning supports and services.

Prospective Improvements for the Program to Consider

- Budgetary issues could impact the management of SAFE and KCFC field placement programs, including clinical supervision. (*Embedded in Recommendation #1*)
- Students indicated that 1) evaluations could be more evenly distributed, designed to test high-level skills and suited to various types of learners; 2) a flexible attendance policy would support better work-life balance; 2) classrooms are not conducive to the pedagogical needs (movable furniture for better interaction); 3) a perception that placements are not always equitably allocated; 4) challenges in linking theoretical and practical learning heightens anxiety in entering field education settings; 5) greater student engagement in program decision making is needed. (*Embedded in Recommendation #2*)
- Continue efforts to diversity in curriculum, learning resources, and academic experiences. (*Embedded in Recommendation #3*)
- Responsibility of implementing EDID initiatives should be equitably distributed across faculty members to protect those from equity seeking groups from burn-out. (*Embedded in Recommendation #3*)
- Burnout among community social service members and an increasing number of student accommodations create challenges for many stakeholders. (*Embedded in Recommendation #3*)

Summary of the Reviewers’ Recommendations and Program/Faculty Responses

The following are the reviewers’ recommendations in the order listed by the external reviewers.

Reviewers’ Recommendation	Program/Faculty Response
<p>Recommendation #1 Support the King’s Community Service Centre (KCSC) and the SAFE practicum projects and/or work with community partners/stakeholders who can support these projects with human resources – specifically, social work supervisory positions that will manage and supervise students in field placements in these programs.</p>	<p>Program: The Clinical Supervisor’s contract for the KCSC has been renewed and is supported in the 2024-2025 operating budget. For the next fiscal year, the plan is to advocate for this position to be made permanent.</p> <p>The King’s Campus and Community Social Worker is a permanent position shared with the Dean of Students’ Office. The School is allocated 0.5 FTE of this position to offer clinical supervision to students placed with our SAFE program. This role is now vacant and is being redefined; the School is advocating for it to be converted to a 1.0 FTE from the 2025-2026 fiscal year, which will enable the expansion of SAFE and other new School of Social Work-based practicum initiatives.</p> <p>Faculty: The Faculty is supporting the renewal of the KCSC Clinical Supervisor contract for 2024–25, and supports collaboration between Social Work and the Office of the Dean of Students. Future requests within budgetary parameters and institutional priorities will be considered seriously.</p>
<p>Recommendation #2 Work toward enhancing how the School decisions, processes and changes are communicated to students so that any perceptions related to lack of transparency and inconsistency can be addressed and reduced. Consider including student representation and voting rights on the Student Council.</p>	<p>Program: The School is exploring ways to better communicate decisions and decision making processes to the student body. In the new academic year, a monthly newsletter will be implemented and a Q&A section that addresses questions raised by students during the academic year will be added to the web page.</p> <p>The students currently have both voice and vote through their representatives on all of the School committees. All motions that come forward to School Council for final vote that are not supported/asked for revisions are sent back to the respective committees to review and resubmit, ensuring that students have full input into any final decisions made by the School. To address those rare issues requiring a vote that don’t fall within the purview of any of the existing School Committees, a new Policy Committee has been added where students will have both voice and vote. Therefore, there will be no decisions taken by the School that require a vote where students haven’t had both input and vote.</p> <p>Faculty: The Faculty supports the School’s response.</p>

Recommendation #3

Continue addressing issues of diversity, representation, and inclusion within the broader program context. Specifically, we recommend that:

1. curriculum be reviewed so that EDID content, theory, and applied practice can be integrated into all courses, and not just stand-alone courses/lectures/modules that are specific to EDID content (with input from students and faculty).
2. Learning (pedagogy) and evaluation processes should take into account contemporary diversity and the inclusion of all learners and learning styles, including universal design of curriculum. This includes supporting students with academic disability accommodations while continuing to meet program requirements and competencies.
3. Continue to address and support representation in admissions, hiring practices, and curriculum development.
4. Due to the large number of accommodation requests, current supports and services/positions should be kept in place, and strategies should be developed to address these issues in the future.
5. Support the Director of EDID to work with (if possible) field placement supervisors and agencies/organizations to assist BIPOC students in the field.

Program:

1. The curriculum currently integrates EDID content, theory, and applied practice in addition to courses specifically designated for these purposes (i.e., required course on Social Work Practice with Indigenous Peoples), to ensure there is core content delivered to every graduate of the program. The School initiated a student review of the curriculum for EDID content and the faculty members will be reviewing this at an upcoming Fall retreat.
2. The School plans to invite Western's Centre for Teaching and Learning to facilitate a workshop on universal design at a spring retreat, which includes full-time and part-time faculty member.
3. Continue adhering to the practices outlined in the IQAP self-study that support representation in admissions, hiring practices, and curriculum development.
4. Maintain current support/services/positions that facilitate accommodation requests. The School has tasked the Equity and Diversity Committee with exploring ways to better support these issues in the future through the annual diversity and equity survey.
5. The Director of EDID currently supports all of King's, including the School of Social Work. Therefore, expanding their current role within the School of Social Work is not feasible regarding placement supervisors and agencies. In their role, they currently support BIPOC students by attending Educational Reviews to bring an EDID lens to the process, offers practicums to SW students, and advises the School on a case-by case basis.

Faculty: The Faculty supports the School's responses, especially the utilization of resources and connections with the Western Centre for Teaching and Learning regarding universal design in learning. The Faculty is looking at ways of promoting the Certificate in Universal Design newly developed by the CTL.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. In each case, the Program Chair, and the Dean of the Faculty are responsible for enacting and monitoring the actions noted in Implementation Plan.

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
<p>Recommendation #1 Support the King’s Community Service Centre (KCSC) and the SAFE practicum projects and/or work with community partners/stakeholders who can support these projects with human resources - specifically, social work supervisory positions that will manage and supervise students in field placements in these programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for KCSC Clinical Supervisor’s role to be made permanent. Redefine the role of King’s Campus and Community Social Worker and advocate for it to be converted to a 1.0 FTE from the 2025-2026 fiscal year. 	Director	By May 2025
<p>Recommendation #2: Work toward enhancing how School decisions, processes and changes are communicated to students so that any perceptions related to lack of transparency and inconsistency can be addressed and reduced. Consider including student representation and voting rights on the Student Council.</p>	<p>Explore ways to better communicate decisions and decision-making processes to the student body, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a monthly newsletter Add a Q&A section to the website that addresses questions raised by student during the academic year. Ensuring student voice and vote on a new Policy Committee. 	Director	By September 2024
<p>Recommendation #3 Continue addressing issues of diversity, representation, and inclusion within the broader program context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the curriculum for EDID content with a contracted group of students and follow-up with faculty members at an upcoming retreat. Invite Western’s Centre for Teaching and Learning to facilitate a workshop on universal design. Maintain current supports that facilitate accommodation requests; and work with the Equity and Diversity Committee to explore ways to better support these issues in the future through the annual diversity and equity survey. 	Director	<p>By December 2024</p> <p>By May 2025</p> <p>By April 2025</p>