

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Under Nipissing University's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) and the Ontario Universities Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), all programs are subject to a comprehensive review at least/at minimum every eight years to ensure that they continue to meet provincial quality assurance requirements and to support their ongoing rigour and coherence. This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on June 29, 2023 and ratified by the Quality Council on May 5, 2023

In academic years 2018-2019, a program review was scheduled for Sociology. This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> program review for this program. The timeline of the review was as follows.

### PROGRAM UNDER REVIEW

PROGRAM	SENATE APPROVAL DATE	PREPARED BY
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN SOCIOLOGY	SEPTEMBER 13, 2019	PROVOST & VICE PRESIDENT

### A. REVIEW TIMELINE

SELF-STUDY REVIEW TIMELINE	DATE
1. Self-Study Presented to AQAPC	Oct. 30, 2018
2. Site Visit Conducted	Mar. 5-6, 2019
3. Reviewer's Report Received	Apr. 15, 2019
4. Department's Response Received	May 7, 2019
5. Dean's Response Received	May 28, 2019

### A. REVIEW SUMMARY

**Two external reviewers conducted the review. During the in-person site visit, the reviewers met with the following groups and individuals:**

- Provost & Vice President, Academic
- Dean of Arts & Science
- Research Data Centre & Canadian Research Chair
- Sociology Faculty members
- Harris Learning Library Executive Director & Librarian
- Registrar
- Sociology students

**The academic programs offered by the Department which were examined as part of the review included:**

Bachelor of Arts in Sociology

**The following program strengths were noted:**

The sociology program at Nipissing University closely aligns with the institution's Strategic Plan (2015–20), particularly its focus on fostering socially responsible, engaged citizens and supporting students' intellectual and personal growth for the benefit of broader communities. The department contributes to the plan's three priorities (student experience, academic and research excellence, and community engagement) by offering rigorous coursework, supporting other programs through its teaching, and strengthening research capacity. Notably, it enhances research opportunities across Northern Ontario through the Nipissing Research Data Centre, which provides access to confidential Statistics Canada data.

**Summary of review team recommendations:**

The recommendations focus on strengthening the department's curriculum, teaching methods, and program structure. Key suggestions include conducting a faculty retreat and creating a curriculum committee to regularly review and refine course offerings, ensuring they align with departmental strengths and resources. The department should expand and diversify electives, incorporate Indigenous perspectives through hiring or cross-listing with Native Studies, and introduce innovative teaching approaches such as blended learning, experiential learning opportunities, varied assessment methods, and a capstone thesis seminar. Greater use of the Research Data Centre for course development is also encouraged.

The recommendations also emphasize enhancing collaboration and student pathways by developing double majors (e.g., with Criminal Justice and Native Studies), expanding transferable credits, and building partnerships with other institutions. Improved student support and program assessment are suggested through dedicated oversight of advising, surveys of current and former students, and tracking graduate outcomes.

Finally, significant attention is given to staffing and resources. The department should hire additional faculty, including specialists in areas like health and gerontology and more women to improve gender balance, while also reducing teaching loads to support research. Establishing an academic coordinator role is recommended to manage administrative duties, curriculum planning, and student support initiatives.

**Status:**

**Due date for 2 Year Follow-up Report: 2021**

**Date of next Cyclical Review: 2026**

## B. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Below are the recommendations that require specific action as a result of the Review, along with the identification of the position or unit responsible for the action in question. Notwithstanding the position or unit identified as being responsible for specific recommendations, the Dean of the Faculty has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the recommended actions are undertaken

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE MEMBER/UNIT	PROJECTED COMPLETION
#3 - Address faculty renewal through academic planning	Department with Dean	annually
#4 - Map opportunities for curricula collaboration at NU	Department with Dean	May 2020
#5 - Identify institutionally shared resources for expanding blended and other formats	Department with the Dean of Teaching	May 2020
#6 - Examine best practices for EL in sociology in Canada	Department may consult Teaching Chair in experiential learning.	May 2020
#7 - Develop a resource document for teaching large classes	Department with the Dean of Teaching	March 2020
#8 - Explore the possibility of interdisciplinary capstone courses	Dean of Arts and Science	March 2020
#9, 10 - Review of degree architecture	Registrar	December 2019
#1, 19 - Review needs for faculty	Department with Dean	Annually with academic planning
#18 - When next hiring, the department should clearly identify their strategy for fulfilling EDI expectations	Department with Dean	When hiring