



Professor Nicholas Rule, Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
University of Toronto
65 St. George Street, Room 106
Toronto, Ontario M5S 2E5

June 5, 2025

Re: Request for an Interim Monitoring Report for the 2019-2020 review of the Department of Social Justice Education and its programs.

Dear Professor Rule,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Interim Monitoring Report for the 2019-2020 review of the Department of Social Justice Education (SJE) and its programs and the administrative response to the review.

At OISE, ongoing quality improvement initiatives, and engagement of our departments and programs in an extensive process of self-appraisal for the purpose of cyclical reviews, serve as important tools to assess our performance relative to international peer institutions and monitor progress towards realization of our academic priorities. Our academic leaders and colleagues welcomed the opportunity to reflect on the previous review while considering future directions. I want to take this opportunity to thank Professor Rubén A. Gaztambide-Fernández, SJE Chair, and his colleagues for their engagement and contributions that have informed the development of this report.

Given the timing of the last UTQAP review, it is important to acknowledge that progress on some recommendations has been somewhat disrupted due to the coronavirus pandemic and related shifts in university operations, which occurred shortly following the site visit (February 2020). During that time, our departments shifted their focus to managing the transition to online learning, ensuring that programs ran effectively remotely while maintaining academic integrity and student engagement. The department of SJE has demonstrated great resilience and innovation during the pandemic, leveraging its online and distance education expertise to ensure

academic continuity. Faculty-led advancements in online teaching and learning strengthened the department's adaptability and commitment to supporting students during this period and have later informed innovative program delivery mode changes and the introduction of online and hybrid modes to the department's degree programs in addition to the in-person delivery.

Please find enclosed the Interim Monitoring Report on the progress of the implementation of recommendations from the 2019-2020 UTQAP review of the Department SJE and its programs. Please contact me if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,



Erica N. Walker
Professor and Dean
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

Cc: Professor Joseph Flessa, Associate Dean, Programs, OISE
Professor Rubén A. Gaztambide-Fernández, Chair, Department of SJE, OISE
Biljana Cuckovic, Director, Governance, Policy & Planning, OISE
Lachmi Singh, Director, Academic Programs, Planning and Quality Assurance, VPAP Office
David Lock, Academic Reviews and Planning Specialist, VPAP Office
Emma del Junco, Academic Reviews and Planning Specialist, VPAP Office

Department of Social Justice Education

UTQAP Cyclical Review, February 13-14, 2020

Review Reported to Governance, October 27, 2020.

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Implementation Plan Update	Supported by VPAP Program Innovation Fund (PIF) Y/N
<p><i>Students</i></p> <p>The reviewers noted a number of concerns related to supervisory capacity and uneven supervisory loads, observing that current student-faculty ratios, particularly in areas of growing research interest, create uneven teaching, learning and mentoring experiences. Students expressed concern over the process of finding a supervisor, noting that “many professors are at capacity in supervision” and that faculty workload leads to difficulty finding sufficient time for student mentoring and supervision.</p> <p>The reviewers observed that some students experience difficulty navigating and meeting key milestones in their graduate school experience. They recommended increased communication efforts to clarify policies, procedures and requirements.</p>	<p>Regarding <i>supervisory capacity and the uneven supervisory loads</i>, since the review, the department has hired three new faculty members all of whom have been integrated into the supervisory roles in the department. These new hires are in the areas of disability studies, Black studies, and Asian and Asian diaspora studies. The fourth hire in the area of queer studies and social justice education is underway, and a new faculty member is expected to join the department effective July 1, 2025. These hires have significantly expanded the supervisory capacity in the department. Moreover, regarding the uneven distribution of supervisory loads, the department has taken steps during the admissions process to ensure that faculty members with high supervisory loads are not required to take on additional students. Additionally, faculty with lighter supervisory loads are asked to serve on thesis committees, are advising MA and MEd students, and are also assuming added administrative roles. There are also a number of cross-appointed faculty members in other departments who are willing to supervise or be committee members for doctoral students in SJE. These strategies have greatly alleviated the challenge of supervision, particularly of full- and flex-time PhD students. However, the challenge of supervising a growing group of EdD students continues to put pressure on faculty resources. The department will continue to work with the Dean’s Office on the principled and fiscally responsible faculty renewal planning including seeking approval for additional faculty positions for the 2025-2026 recruitment cycle.</p> <p>To improve <i>student experience in navigating program requirements</i> and meeting key milestones, the department is planning to restart the first-year doctoral seminar course that had been taught in the past, now called the Doctoral Orientation Seminar. A non-credit course, the yearlong seminar will provide incoming doctoral students with clarity regarding the program requirements and expectations and provide support for meeting program milestones. In addition, the department recently revised the student handbook to ensure that recent updates and procedures for navigating program requirements are clear and that forms and online resources are easy to access. In addition,</p>	<p>N</p>

<p>The reviewers noted the limited opportunities for students to gain teaching and research experience.</p>	<p>the role of Graduate Coordinator now includes advising of EdD students to support them in navigating their programs from selecting courses and finding a supervisor, to completing forms, grants, awards, and bursary applications. This position will be upgraded to an Associate Chair for Student Experience in the future. The Master of Education students are assigned to individual faculty members for advising. Additional support is provided by a graduate liaison officer, and an FAQ sheet was developed to assist faculty members with advising MEd students. A new orientation session for incoming students was also implemented focused on 3 Ps: 1) Prepare (learn about the program requirements); 2) Participate (in courses and academic activities to meet expectations and achieve learning outcomes); and 3) Plan (how to accomplish your academic goals and aspirations). Additional resources to assist students with completing their program requirements have been developed and included on the SJE website. In the future, the department is planning to pilot a cohort-based model for EdD students, which will enhance the student experience while also helping to address the challenges related to supervision.</p> <p>Regarding <i>opportunities for students to gain teaching and research experience</i>, OISE provides students with teaching experiences through Teaching Assistantships (TA) and Course Instructor (CI) positions. Prior to OISE's transition to an all-graduate institute, these positions were more available as PhD students could teach in the now discontinued undergraduate teacher education programs (BEd/Dip.Tech.Ed.). Although limited, teaching opportunities, continue to be provided in the OISE Student Success Centre (OSSC), and beyond OISE. During 2021-2022, the Associate Dean, Programs established the Student Teaching Experience Working Group with the mandate to identify ways to enhance teaching experiences for OISE's doctoral students. The group made several recommendations including enhancing TA opportunities for OISE's doctoral students available at other undergraduate faculties and campuses and improving communication regarding these. Accordingly, OISE negotiated with Victoria College in the Faculty of Arts and Science (VIC) to hire OISE students as TAs in the VIC's Education and Society minor program. In addition to the 6 TA positions at VIC, in 2021-2022, OISE amplified its pilot project with the Department of Language Studies at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) to hire OISE students as TAs in their undergraduate programs. Accordingly, during the summer and early fall 2022, 39 TA positions and 7 CI positions at UTM were posted and distributed to OISE students. More recently, TA opportunities have been expanded within the Master of Teaching program.</p> <p>Additionally, a new Office of Student Financial Support within the Dean's Office was created in 2024 under the leadership of Vice-Dean, Academic Operations. A new Director of Student Financial Support and Operations was hired to lead a team of staff and coordinate the administration of all OISE student financial support programs in collaboration with the departments. In addition to student funding, internal awards, as well as need and merit based financial aid, this includes information and resources on teaching opportunities (TA, CI) for</p>	
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	<p>OISE's doctoral students. Previously, student funding and financial support portfolios existed cross-functionally across the Registrar's Office, Associate Dean, Programs Office, as well as within the departments. The new office consolidates these functions and creates a 'one stop shop' for student financial support within the Dean's Office, which will increase efficiency of OISE's student funding operations. During 2023-2024, the Working Group on Doctoral Student Experience, chaired by the Associate Dean, Programs, among other topics, revisited the state of affairs related to the availability of teaching experiences for doctoral students, and made further recommendations on enhancing information sharing about TA opportunities outside OISE to improve access to these opportunities for students. Since then, the new Office of Student Financial Support created a central repository of job postings on CI and TA positions on their website to ensure that OISE students are aware of these opportunities. The Office also utilizes the centrally created research-stream student listservs to promote teaching opportunities to eligible students.</p> <p>Regarding research experiences, SJE doctoral students engage in research through both formal and informal relationships with faculty and are supported by institutional, domestic, and international grants and scholarships. Through faculty advisor and thesis supervisor roles, SJE faculty guide and mentor students throughout their research program in a supportive environment. The Graduate Assistant (GA) program continues to be an important source of research experience for students.</p>	
<p><i>Programs</i></p> <p>The reviewers commented on several areas of tension between the needs and expectations of students in both research and professional programs: (i) Competition for limited spaces in shared high-demand courses; (ii) Need for courses "around which students in a particular program can cohere," e.g., seminars or research methods courses for MA and more applied courses for MEd students; (iii) EdD students expressed concerns regarding inequitable treatment and "feeling like they are not valued because they are not in a research-intensive program and not eligible for funding."</p>	<p>Related to areas of <i>tension between the needs and expectations of students in both research and professional programs</i>, the department developed and implemented a number of courses for students in different program streams to address their needs related to research and professional growth. MEd students are encouraged to enroll in SJE1903H, Major Concepts and Issues in Education, which provides MEd students with basic theories and debates in social justice education, while research-stream students (MA & PhD) are encouraged to enroll in SJE3905H, Interdisciplinary Approaches to Research: Theory and Praxis. In addition, EdD students are able to take SJE3997H, Practicum in Social Justice Education to fulfill the internship requirement and to promote a sense of cohesion and awareness about the professional and research expectations of the EdD degree. There is still a need to further clarify different expectations of the PhD and EdD programs and what is entailed in the "Dissertation in Practice" component of the EdD.</p> <p>Regarding the Research Methods (RM) courses, since 2020, OISE increased its offer of "JOI" – jointly offered quantitative RM courses open to all OISE research-stream (MA & PhD) students. In addition to JOI1287H: Introduction to Applied Statistics, there are now five more JOI courses including: JOI1288H Intermediate Statistics and Research Design; JOI3043H Development and use of Surveys in Education Research; JOI3048H Intermediate Statistics in</p>	N

<p>In response to student comments, the reviewers encouraged the department to consider ways in which courses, either existing or newly created, could provide a more inclusive space and accommodate diverse critical and theoretical perspectives.</p>	<p>Educational Research: Multiple Regression Analysis; JOI3035H Quantitative Research Practicum; and JOI3228H Mixed Methods Research Desing in Social Sciences.</p> <p>As mentioned above, the role of Graduate Coordinator now includes advising of EdD students to support them in navigating their programs. The department is considering upgrading this role to an Associate Chair for Student Experience. In the future, the department is planning to pilot a cohort-based model for EdD students, which will enhance the student experience while also helping to address the challenges related to supervision.</p> <p>All of these program innovation and quality enhancement initiatives are helping to create a more inclusive space and accommodate diverse critical and theoretical perspectives of SJE students.</p>	
<p><i>Resources/Space</i></p> <p>The reviewers recommended increasing the staff complement to coordinate professional development, mentoring relationships, and other student supports and services.</p> <p>The reviewers commented on space and infrastructure issues in the department, noting that “available space is unevenly used, renovated, and allocated between programs” and that students expressed “the strong need for access to more computers and printers with the latest research-relevant software.” They suggested improvements that could foster “a spirit of access, inclusion, collaboration, and solidarity.”</p>	<p>Regarding administrative staff complement; to coordinate professional development, mentoring relationships, and other student programming, the Department recently upgraded the role of Recruitment and Communications Coordinator to a full-time position. The role now includes supports in various areas of need, including recruitment, communications, events, and external relations. Since the review, the department has developed the position of a Manager and the hiring process is underway to fill the position. Under the general direction of the Chair, the Manager provides leadership and oversight to daily operations and manages administrative staff to ensure effective service delivery to faculty, and students in the department. Key responsibilities include assisting in the development and execution of strategic plans to align with department goals, financial management, budget planning, forecasting, and financial reporting, and space management. The Manager will also support strategic planning around recruitment and program expansion, and management of research grant accounts in compliance with financial policies.</p> <p>Related to space and infrastructure, the department underwent a major renovation of the whole space, which included a large computer room, open working spaces with some bookable private rooms, large student lounge, bookable seminar rooms and a large kitchen. These renovations are now complete, with plenty of space for students, staff, faculty, and community members. There are still some space issues to be addressed, including identifying space for the two research centres affiliated with the department (i.e., the Centre for Integrative Anti-racism Studies – CIARS; and the Centre for Media, Culture, and Education – CMCE), proper labeling and signage, the loss of space set up for students who experience mobility, visual, hearing, and other impairments. There are some design issues that unexpectedly created accessibility challenges, such as a wood patterns in the new conference room, which result in challenging visual, and accessibility issues. Moving forward, the department will establish a committee to guide space use and develop strategies to encourage efficient use of the space by students and faculty.</p>	<p>N</p>

<p><i>Departmental Integration and Climate</i></p> <p>The reviewers noted some troubling issues of climate within the department involving some relationships between faculty and students.</p>	<p>The <i>department's work on improving climate and cohesion</i> has been disrupted by the pandemic, and the need to shift academic operations online to ensure academic continuity during covid crisis. Following the pandemic, this work was further delayed by the above-mentioned prolonged renovation of the departmental physical spaces that necessitated relocation of faculty and staff throughout the OISE building creating challenges for collaboration. However, since the review, the department made some progress on this front under the leadership of the former Chair, Prof. Njoki Wane (2018-2024) who led the department during the review and several years after, and now under the leadership of a new Chair, Prof. Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández, who commenced his term effective July 1, 2024. This progress is evident through regular departmental meetings, community building events and conferences that engage faculty, staff and students such as, for example, the Black/African Feminisms conference, and the annual Decolonizing conference, which have helped to create an inclusive, democratic culture within the department.</p> <p>Following the completion of the major space renovation, and since the appointment of a new department Chair, the work on integration and cohesion is gaining momentum. The appointment of Professor Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández as Chair, effective July 1, 2024, presents an opportunity to revisit the SJE vision to ensure its alignment with the department's evolving strategic priorities. This leadership transition is expected to bring a fresh perspective to addressing challenges identified in the review and driving meaningful change. Aligned with OISE's new Academic Plan 2025-2030, and involving consultation with SJE faculty, students, and staff, the department will undertake its own implementation planning and identify its unique contributions to realizing the shared goals and objectives contained in the OISE plan.</p>	<p>N</p>
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