

Youth Justice Diploma Program
Faculty of Applied Community Studies
Comprehensive Program Review – submitted 14th May 2021
Recommendations (excerpted)

YJ Program Self-Study Recommendations: Summary and Summary List

Recomm. Number	Related Report Component	Recommendation	Status / Timeline
1.	6	Find creative ways to maximize appropriate YJ applicants, especially non-traditional students (e.g., first generation, Indigenous, previous service recipients, previous Youth in Care, and students on Agreements for Young Adults).	
2.	6	Find ways to accurately track enrollment and graduation when students take longer than four semesters to complete their diploma.	
3.	7	Review non-UT credit courses in diploma to determine how best to incorporate essential content while maximizing UT credits.	
4.	7	Explore connections with other institutions and possible pathways/articulation agreements.	
5.	8	Work with existing PAC to identify and invite additional membership to reach currently underrepresented areas of Youth Justice (e.g., Indigenous agencies, Youth in Care, etc.)	
6.	8	As needed, build practicum partnerships with agencies in Surrey, Langley, and Fraser Valley.	
7.	8	With feedback from various sources, determine an engaging, convenient, and comprehensive way to create community with YJ Alumni and employers.	
8.	8	Continue to develop and nurture meaningful, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities and service providers.	

After a considerable program update (effective September 2019) and a thorough review (by QAPA) of our ongoing processes of program assessment, feedback, collaboration, dialogue, recommendations for improvement, and implementation in December 2019, this self-study highlighted key program strengths and identified areas for ongoing improvement. Our self-study has confirmed that students, faculty, and other stakeholders view our program as relevant, current, and integrally connected to the field. As discussed in detail in this self-study, the program strengths identified include teaching, practicum opportunities, class size/cohort model, and our connection to the field/students' ability to find employment. We are unique in our student population (i.e., primarily 'non-traditional' students) and emphasize a pedagogy of preparation throughout the diploma in a community of support.

Students identified that our program outcomes, including relational skills, openness and curiosity, critical thinking, novel problem solving, and self-awareness are important to the field and are very effectively met through our curriculum and pedagogy. Our focus for improvement is a multi-dimensional approach that we think will ultimately increase the numbers of suitable applicants we have for our program (our current identified risk). This approach emphasizes increasing program connections with community, practicum partners, employers, alumni, and other institutions to continue to develop the program within a context of feedback and ongoing information sharing. By anchoring our development within these communities and connections, we will strengthen our program and, ultimately, increase the number of suitable applicants.

Previous Self-Study Recommendations List (2013)

A previous program review, completed in June 2013 and reviewed externally, resulted in the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Replace CRIM 1170 Introduction to Corrections with CRIM 2255 Aboriginal Peoples: Crime and Administration of Justice.

Recommendation 2: Pursue negotiation of transfer into the proposed Douglas College Criminology Degree at the third year level for YJW Diploma graduates.

Recommendation 3: Pursue negotiation of broader transfer credit for CFCS and YJWD courses.

Recommendation 4: Initiate a recruitment campaign to create a higher public profile for the program.

Recommendation 5: Increase connections between admission officers and the programs they represent.

Recommendation 6: Develop a part time option for YJWD.

Recommendation 7: Keep student satisfaction under regular review.

Recommendation 8: Develop a clear career pathway from Youth Justice to employment in Policing or Probation, which may include affiliation to the Bachelor of Criminology at DC.

Recommendation 9: Develop a succession plan.

Recommendation 10: Review YJW practica with the intention of delivering them in a way that is comparable to similar practica in CFCS.

Recommendation 11: Ensure planning of the CYCC intake arrangements includes consideration of the YJ Diploma.

Although a written action plan did not result from this review, the recommendations were actioned in various ways. In 2015, the Youth Justice Steering Committee was created through a MOA, formally establishing Youth Justice as a cross-Faculty program between Humanities and Social Sciences and Child, Family and Community Studies (as it then was). The Steering Committee (made up of administrators, chairs/coordinators, and faculty from both the Criminology Department and Child and Youth Care Department) considered the program review recommendations, as well as ongoing feedback from our Program Advisory Committee (PAC), current students and alumni, practicum

partners, and other stakeholders, to recommend a major program change to Youth Justice. The program's curricular framework and curricular content was updated. The change was informed by our identified desire to improve pathways for students, improve student success and satisfaction, indigenize curricular content, and build a higher public profile for the program.

Our students are not traditional post-secondary students entering Douglas College out of high school. Given our requirement that students be at least 19 years of age for their first practicum, our students come from various backgrounds: some students have been working in other fields, some have been taking courses without a specific goal, some have been working in the field of human services but require a credential in order to advance in their career or organization. Many of our students did not have positive educational experiences in K-12 and/or do not identify as "good students". Most are first generation students, who may require additional supports navigating post-secondary (e.g., registration, forms, financial aid, deadlines). Many of our students have experienced vulnerabilities in their own adolescence in areas we explore at length in the program – mental health, substance use, trauma, discrimination, criminal justice involvement – and are committed to working with youth in similar situations. A number of our students still reside in various precarious situations while attending school. We have students attending our program on band funding, employment services funding, and through agreements for young adults. The vast majority of our students also work while attending school full-time, in order to pay for their tuition, living expenses, and, in some cases, to contribute to their family. Our student population deserves extra attention, support, and effort to create feelings of belonging and self-efficacy. This is done through ongoing support from the coordinators, faculty members, and the program facilitator. The cohort model allows us to build a sense of belonging within each new group of students. Our diploma program engages and is successful at retaining these students to graduation, where they are successful in obtaining related employment and/or continuing with their post-secondary education.

The updated curricular framework and content (implemented in Fall 2019) emphasized increasing student pathways to appropriate, meaningful work and/or additional education (at Douglas College and beyond). Addressing **Recommendation 2, 3, and 8**, we maximized our university transfer credits (39/60 credits) and designated degree pathways to the Bachelor of Arts in Child and Youth Care, and Applied Criminology, and the Bachelor of Social Work degree at Douglas College. We also articulated a block transfer agreement with Royal Roads University for entrance into third year of their Bachelor of Justice Studies. Curriculum was updated to ensure field currency, with regular feedback from the PAC, students, and practicum partners. This update also included efforts to indigenize content throughout the program, increase practicum opportunities at Indigenous agencies, and included CFCS 2432 (Understanding Aboriginal Perspectives and Experiences) as a required course in first semester (addressing **Recommendation 1**). We worked closely with the Marketing and Communications Office on branding (**Recommendation 4**); one of our previous students was featured in a print and media campaign. We have also updated all website content and been involved in ongoing marketing efforts to maximize suitable candidates. **Recommendation 5, 7, 9, 10, and 11** have been addressed. It was decided by administration that pursuing a PT Youth Justice program option was not feasible (**Recommendation 6**).

The process for collecting feedback from various stakeholders and moving forward on each of these recommendations was thoroughly reviewed during the QAPA review of our program in December 2019.

External Reviewer's Report on Douglas College's Youth Justice Program

(excerpts)

Youth Justice Program Full Comprehensive Review Self-Study Recommendations

Recommendation 1: *Find creative ways to maximize appropriate YJ applicants, especially non-traditional students*

While taking into consideration the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic had and continues to have on post-secondary education, it was somewhat concerning that the number of overall applications to the program and the number of students accepted into the program had decreased over the previous few years. However, it is my understanding that the current cohort is full, which is a very positive sign. Still, I am in support of the program increasing its appeal and enhancing its recruitment strategies to non-traditional students, especially those who might have had some lived experience with the youth criminal justice system or youth social services. To do so will likely require distinct strategies and approaches than those commonly used by Douglas College to attract and recruit students. While there was an indication in the self-study that the Youth Justice Program recognized the need to continue working with the Marketing department at Douglas College, because this program is somewhat niche, it is likely insufficient to simply 'piggyback' on the College's general marketing strategy. Moreover, it can also be a challenge to require that the Youth Justice Program be solely or mainly responsible for the marketing of the program as this requires a particular skillset.

Of note, Indigenizing the curriculum was another important step in trying to achieve the goal of maximizing applicants, particularly non-traditional students. Continuing the program's outreach to Indigenous communities, continuing to have and increasing the numbers of members of Indigenous communities who serve on the Program Advisory Community, having people from Indigenous communities deliver guest lectures and take on roles as contract instructors, if not full-time faculty members, and expanding practicum opportunities where possible to those agencies that work with Indigenous peoples might also assist in increasing the number of applicants who are non-traditional students. The same can be said for those from diverse groups, such as the LGBTQ2S+ communities.

While I agree with the statement in the Youth Justice Program Full Comprehensive Review report that enhancing the Youth Justice Program's "connections with community, practicum partners, employers, alumni, and other institutions" will likely increase the number of suitable applicants to the program, as will working with Douglas College's marketing department, a more focused and likely distinct approach will be needed to reach those non-traditional and diverse students that the program covets. Some possible suggestions for increasing the profile of the program and speaking more directly to the types of students the program is interested in recruiting might be to include a section on the program's website highlighting some of the alumni of the program and current students. This information could also be included in brochures. The website might also be more direct about scholarships, grants, and bursaries tied to the program, especially those accessible to non-traditional students. If not already being done, program coordinators and current students could attend career days or local and provincial events to talk to potential students about the program.

Recommendation 2: *Find ways to accurately track enrollment and graduation when students take longer than four semesters to complete their diploma*

I agree. From the limited data provided in the Youth Justice Program Full Comprehensive Review report and my conversation with the co-coordinators of the program, a growing number of students are not completing the program within the expected two-year time frame. While the Youth Justice Program Full Comprehensive Review provides several reasonable explanations for why some students do not complete the program or are taking longer to complete the program than the expected two-years, it is very important that the program have a firm understanding of why this may be occurring and implement strategies that directly address these concerns. I have made a recommendation below that may begin to address this issue.

Recommendation 3: *Review non-UT credit courses in the diploma to determine how best to incorporate essential content while maximizing UT credits*

Based on the survey data, a large proportion of program students have gone on to pursue additional education. Given this, it is good that the Youth Justice Program is attempting to continue to find ways that do not compromise the integrity of the program while maximising the ability of program courses to count towards students completing a college or university degree. It would seem a logical option for Youth Justice Program graduates who wished to pursue additional education to be interested in the Criminology degree or the Youth & Child Care program. Given this, it would seem beneficial if Douglas College found a way that Youth Justice Program graduates could complete their degrees in a related field without having to add a lot more time, credits, and cost to do so because all their diploma in Youth Justice credits not counting towards the completion of a degree.

Recommendation 4: *Explore connections with other institutions and possible pathways/articulation agreements*

To the degree that pursuing articulation agreements does not interfere with the integrity and general purpose of the program, I agree with this recommendation. In other words, it is important for students to have the ability to complete the Youth Justice Program and have as much of the program as possible count towards continuing their education at other institutions, but this should be a secondary consideration to ensuring that the Youth Justice Program maintains the right mix of courses to achieve its learning outcomes and overall objectives.

Recommendation 5: *Work with existing PAC to identify and invite additional membership to reach currently underrepresented areas of Youth Justice*

As mentioned in relation to the first recommendation, while the current composition of the PAC appears to have sufficient representation from organisations that could provide insight to appropriately advise the program coordinators, greater attention should be placed on increasing representation on the PAC of people from Indigenous communities and service providers, as well as those representing diverse groups, such as people from the LGBTQ2S+ community who work with youth from these groups.

Recommendation 6: *As needed, build practicum partnerships with agencies in Surrey, Langley, and the Fraser Valley*

I agree. It is a constant challenge to develop additional practicum placements that meet the interests of students and provide a rich learning and practical experience, particularly given the uniqueness of the Youth Justice Program. Moreover, based on the comments from some of the students and the fact that there are two practicums that students are required to participate in, increasing the range of options and opportunities, while challenging, is a constant necessity.

Recommendation 7: *With feedback from various sources, determine an engaging, convenient, and comprehensive way to create community with YJ Alumni and employers*

This is a good initiative. Alumni can be an excellent connection between students and the field and can be an excellent resource to provide advice and possible mentorship to students while in the program. Perhaps the program might consider ways to keep alumni connected to each other by bringing them back to the College and involving them more directly with the program. One possibility might be to have alumni representation on the PAC. Moreover, given that alumni are likely to be working in the areas of youth justice and social services, there may be opportunities and interest in alumni staying connected to each other, regardless of which cohort they belonged to. The Youth Justice Program can help to facilitate these relationships through a range of initiatives, such as events in the College or having a space on the website for alumni to share their experiences and successes both professionally and while they were students in the program.

Recommendation 8: *Continue to develop and nurture meaningful, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities and service providers*

I agree. In addition to what has previously been mentioned in relation to participation with the PAC, involving Indigenous communities and service providers in ways that go beyond accepting Youth Justice Program practicum students would provide long-lasting benefits to the program and the communities served by the program and its students.

Additional Recommendations

Those coordinating and teaching in the Youth Justice Program have much more knowledge and experience with the program, the curriculum, and the interests, needs, and challenges of their students, so the following friendly recommendations are offered in that context.

1. While I understand the desire to keep the completion goal of the program two years, as a growing number of students are not graduating within this two-year timeframe, and the program values the benefits associated with maintaining a cohort model where students move through the program together, the Youth Justice Program may want to consider shifting the course load per semester from five courses to three courses. Reducing the workload and time commitment required by the program in each semester by offering just three courses may contribute to maintaining the integrity of the cohort structure to a greater degree and, in the words of the comprehensive review “build a sense of belonging within each new group of students”. Perhaps some additional research should be undertaken by the program to see if changing to three courses would make the program more attractive to potential applicants. This research might also explore whether when the

courses are offered or how they are offered is contributing to students not completing the program in two years.

2. Given that the Youth Justice Program uses faculty members from various other programs, there might be some value in having meetings with everyone teaching in the program, the program coordinators, and two or three Youth Justice student representatives to discuss the program. While I understand the challenges associated with trying to schedule meetings, having something akin to a faculty meeting once or twice per semester to discuss what is happening in the program and to address some of the issues and recommendations raised in the Youth Justice Program Full Comprehensive Review report might be productive. The meetings could also be used to discuss and strategize around emerging issues or trends and as a venue for discussing changes to the program.
3. While I think that the Youth Justice Program has a good mix of courses, there still appears to be some degree of repetition that exists within the topics discussed in some of the courses. This was raised by some students in their evaluations of the program and by my cursory review of the course descriptions on the program's website. I recommend that each course outline be reviewed by the program coordinators and discussed in the meeting(s) recommended above to minimize the amount of repetition in the subjects and topics in the course offerings. Another way to approach this issue is to undertake a curriculum mapping exercise whereby the program coordinators and faculty take the program objectives and learning outcomes and map them onto the courses currently being offered. This approach might help identify both where there is overlap and where there are gaps in the course material.
4. One of issues highlighted in the Youth Justice Program Full Comprehensive Review report was the academic preparedness of some of the students. One of the ways that the program has attempted to address this issue is to provide several literacy workshops throughout the first semester to "introduce incoming students to college culture, expectations, and some of the skills necessary for being successful in class." However, the English or Communication course requirement course for the Youth Justice Program is offered in the second semester. I would recommend moving the English or Communication requirement to the first semester, which should provide students with the necessary skills and experiences to be more successful in their course work. In addition, if credits become available as a result of Recommendation 3, the program might consider adding an academic preparation course to the curriculum. Another approach to achieving this goal might be to develop a condensed online preparatory course that students take prior to the first semester of the program. This type of course might be especially helpful to the recruitment, success, and retention of non-traditional students.

5. Another concern raised in the Youth Justice Program Full Comprehensive Review report was the requirement that applicants be 19 years old or older to allow them to participate in their first practicum. I would recommend shifting the first practicum to the second year as this would allow those 18 years old or older to apply to the program and would provide more coursework for students prior to beginning their first practicum, which should contribute to students being better prepared for their practicums. Another advantage of moving the first practicum to the second year of the program is that students will be closer to graduation and entering the job market. Therefore, there is a greater opportunity for students to transition from practicum student to employee when the practicums occur closer to graduation.
6. A minor point but given that a growing number of the program's students reported to be either continuing with their education or being interested in pursuing additional education, I would recommend adding a statement about academic preparedness to the core competencies listed in the Youth Justice Program Full Comprehensive Review report and ensuring that the development of these skills occurs in all courses.
7. Given the wide range of practicum sites students may be placed at, and to better balance the various opportunities, skills, experiences, and work conditions offered by different practicum sites, and to align more with the practices of other academic institutions, the Youth Justice Program might consider shifting the grading of the practicum courses from a letter grade to pass/fail or credit/no credit.
8. While this might not be an issue for the Youth Justice Program, given the number of students requiring practicums, and while it might be manageable if all practicums were in the second year of the program, given the emphasis and importance of the practicums to this program, consideration might be given to hiring a full-time or part-time practicum coordinator. This position could involve placing all students in their practicums, visiting all sites to ensure that the learning outcomes and expectations of practicum courses are being met, meeting with students about any challenges or issues they are facing during their practicums, and developing new practicum sites.

In conclusion, Douglas College's Youth Justice Program is a unique program that fills an important need in the field for educated and experienced people to work in youth justice and social services, while attracting a good variety of students, particularly non-traditional post-secondary students. As such, my assessment of the program is very positive. I hope that the program can succeed in implementing the recommendations of the self-study and this report and continues to thrive as it serves students' interests and the needs of the field.

If you have any questions related to anything in this review, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Irwin Cohen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "I" and a long, sweeping underline.

Irwin Cohen, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice
Director, Centre for Public Safety and Criminal Justice Research
University of the Fraser Valley

**DOUGLAS COLLEGE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW (CR)
RESPONSE FROM THE
OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC AND PROVOST**

Douglas College Administration policy A38: *Program Review* requires a follow-up plan be developed by the Vice President, Academic and Provost, in response to the Self-Study and External Report.

FACULTY (Lead Dean/Associate Dean)	<i>Health Sciences</i>	
Department / Program	Youth Justice	
Date Submitted	November 2021	
External Review Panel (ERP)	Dr. Irwin Cohen	Associate Professor, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice Director, Centre for Public Safety and Criminal Justice Research University of the Fraser Valley
Reason for Timing of Comprehensive Review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Schedule (routine) or <input type="checkbox"/> Off-cycle, due to emergent concerns (<i>specify below</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in discipline/field/licensing <input type="checkbox"/> New program development <input type="checkbox"/> Demand/enrolment/budget concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>specify</i>) 	
Date of last Comprehensive Review	2013	
RESPONSE/RECOMMENDATIONS		
SUMMARY RESPONSE	<p>The external reviewer spoke very positively of the program and the uniqueness of this diploma in Canada where it is at the interface of Criminology and Child & Youth Care – also at the interface of academic and practical education. The needs of the field and the interests of students appear to be well served by Youth Justice.</p> <p>The external reviewer was generally supportive of all the initiatives recommended in the program self-study report, however noted a lack of specific actions to achieve objectives.</p> <p>Subsequent to the external reviewer’s report, the Program Coordinators worked with the Faculty Dean and Associate Dean to ensure that specific actions could be articulated for each of the 16 recommendations. As a result of this work, three of the recommendations were not ‘accepted’ outright. Rather they will be studied further and are considered ‘under review.’</p>	
All Self-Study recommendations accepted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No [One recommendation to be studied in more detail]	

All External Report recommendations accepted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No [Two recommendations to be studied in more detail]
<p>VPA's RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>In particular, YJ should focus on the following:</p>	<p>The VPA requests that the Faculty Dean work with the Program Coordinators to finalize an implementation/action plan for thirteen (approved/accepted) recommendations from the self-study and external reviewer.</p> <p>Also, the VPA requests more detailed studies of the following three recommendations which are not currently approved to move forward.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Move the English or Communication requirement to the first semester to promote academic literacy.</i> <p>This recommendation cannot be addressed until another self-study initiative in 'course mapping' has been completed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>2. Move practicum to second year to allow students to be 18 years at admission (turning 19 prior to practicum placement).</i> <p>While this recommendation opens the program to a wider market, there are potential downside risks that need to be reviewed with the Program Advisory Committee.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>3. Hire a full-, or part-time practicum coordinator to place and supervise students throughout practicums.</i> <p>Notably, additional support for practicum placement and/or supervision can be provided via alternative models. The VPA asks the Dean to examine the alternatives.</p> <p>As per the College's routine follow-up to comprehensive program reviews, the Department is to submit its Implementation and Action Plan (IAP) to the Dean within 45 days of receipt of this Report, and to report back to the Dean one year after submission of the IAP to account for progress made.</p>
Next scheduled PR (5 – 7 years):	2026



 Vice President, Academic and Provost

February 28, 2022

 Date