



Professor Adrienne Scullion
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Review and Threatened Closure of Sociology Single Honours Undergraduate Programme at Queens University Belfast

Dear Professor Scullion

We are writing concerning the proposed closure of the Sociology single honours programme within your Faculty; we write as the British Sociological Association (BSA) and the Heads and Professors of Sociology (HaPs) in the UK, with support from the executive of the European and International Sociological Association. While negotiations are going on, it is not always helpful for bodies like ours to express their view but feel we must do so now.

Since this proposal emerged in the Institutional Size and Shape Review it has not only had a serious negative impact on colleagues in Sociology at Queen's but also it is casting a shadow on the standing of our discipline. A limited number of metrics across a limited time period have been used to single out Sociology and Anthropology for staff cuts and the phasing out of their single honours degree programmes. The document takes little account of the strengths that exist in Sociology at QUB and is shockingly dismissive of the excellence displayed both currently and over its long history. If REF 2014 results are not as desired, there is time to support staff in putting this right before the next exercise. Sociology at Queen's has always included and continues to include a range of internationally recognized strengths. Downplaying this in a public document followed by a period of continued silence about the very real strengths of sociology is a disservice not only to staff at Queen's but to the wider sociological community.

This approach seems contemptuous of the unique part that Queen's University Belfast plays in safe guarding excellence in the sociology of Northern Ireland from Northern Ireland. Sociology is a core social science discipline that surely must not be reduced to a secondary support act in such a unique high status institution in Northern Ireland. The closure of a single honours programme in Sociology at Queen's abdicates responsibility for safe guarding the future of the discipline and serving the community of potential students in Northern Ireland who might contribute to that future.

We understand that the proposal concerning ending single honours sociology at Queen's is to be reviewed in consultation with the Faculty Executive Board in September but we urge you to

seek the dropping of this proposal and to work closely with colleagues in Sociology to secure the future of the single honours programme.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Lynn Jamieson
President, British Sociological Association



Professor John Solomos
Chair, Heads and Professors of Sociology



Professor Sue Scott
BSA Director of External Affairs
European Sociological Association Vice-President



Professor John Holmwood
International Sociological Association, Executive Committee and Committee of National Associations