

***Eight-Year Program Review IBHE Report Summary: see attached Resources page***

## **PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT SUMMARY**

- 1. Reporting Institution:** Eastern Illinois University
- 2. Program Reviewed:** B.A. in Sociology
- 3. Date:** 18 December 2023
- 4. Contact Person:** Donald H. Holly Jr.
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- 5. OVERVIEW**

The education of students is Eastern Illinois University's primary mission. The University takes particular pride in its long tradition of excellence in teaching and commitment to diversity and inclusion. Through free and rigorous inquiry, Eastern Illinois University prepares students to become responsible citizens and leaders. Our department likewise aims to deliver a high-quality, student-centered undergraduate education that creates life-long learners and prepares students to contribute positively to a changing and diverse world.

Since our last review of the Sociology program in 2016, our department has added a major in Criminology and Criminal Justice. We are now the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology. Historically, the social analysis and understanding of crime, criminal behavior, and its root causes fell under the broad umbrella of Sociology; the discipline of Criminology only emerged as a distinct discipline in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The connections between Sociology and Criminology remain strong and pertinent today. Since our last review, our country has witnessed the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement as a response to incidents of police brutality, the increased policing of the homeless and mentally ill, and surging crime rates associated with opioid-addiction epidemic, COVID-related unemployment, and inflation—all of which intersect squarely with traditional Sociological areas of inquiry (i.e. race and ethnicity, social movements, structural inequality, drugs, healthcare, and society) and beg a sociological understanding. Mindful of this, we intentionally developed a Criminology and Criminal Justice program that would be informed by the sociological imagination—that is, with consideration for how individual-decisions are informed (and best understood) by broader social forces and structures. The flip-side of this is that our Sociology students are compelled to engage and analyze crime and the Criminal Justice system as they would any other social problem.

Accordingly, a unique dimension of the Sociology program at EIU is its interdisciplinary curriculum. Students majoring in Sociology share three core courses with our Criminology major (Introductory Sociology, Research Methods, and Statistics), and are very likely to take several Sociology/Criminology cross-listed electives in their academic career (e.g. Introduction to Criminology, the Sociology of Deviant Behavior, Sociological Analysis of Crime and the Criminal Justice System, Policing Society: a Sociological Analysis, The Correctional Process: A Sociological Analysis, and Sociological Analysis of Juvenile Delinquency). Sociology majors will also take at least one Anthropology class: "Introduction to Anthropology" (a required core class for the major). They are also allowed to substitute an Anthropology course for one Sociology elective if they wish. The upshot of this is that it's quite easy for our students to double major in Criminology and Sociology—and many do: 34 students—or 20% of our majors—are currently double-majoring in Sociology and Criminology. With such opportunities to learn to think critically and creatively about social problems from a variety of perspectives, along with rigorous skill training in research methods and statistics, our program prepares students to enter a complex, diverse, and

rapidly changing world and employment environment.

The Sociology curriculum is informed by six key learning outcomes: students should be able to 1) recognize key sociological concepts, 2) identify characteristics of the sociological imagination, 3) discern theoretical perspectives, 4) indicate key concepts of social stratification, 5) distinguish methods of social inquiry, and 6) recall foundations of quantitative methods and statistical literacy. These outcomes are addressed and reiterated to students as they progress through a comprehensive curriculum composed of seven core (22 credit hrs.) and seven elective (21 credit hrs.) courses. Students begin the core sequence in introductory surveys of Sociology and Anthropology, with their respective attention to society and culture, before moving on to foundational structural (Social Stratification) and theoretical (Sociological Theory) coursework. Second and third year students take our sequenced research methods and statistics courses, which provide a solid grounding in qualitative and quantitative research design, analysis, and interpretation. By the time students take our capstone seminar, Current Issues in Sociology in their senior year, they have been exposed to our entire core curriculum. This is when we conduct an “exit” assessment of student learning outcomes. These results are compared to original assessments administered in Social Stratification<sup>1</sup>.

The Department consists of ten tenured and tenure-track faculty, and one adjunct instructor. As a consequence of our interdisciplinary approach, *all* contribute to some extent to the Sociology program. Our faculty are accomplished teachers, committed to service to their department, university, community, and profession, and are active researchers. They have been widely recognized for their exemplary work with the highest honors bestowed by EIU; just since our last review in 2016, department faculty have received a dozen ACA awards, three Hanner Excellence in teaching awards, an Alan and Carlene Baharlou Distinguished Service Award, a Graduate Dean’s Award for Excellence in Research and Creative Activity, a Distinguished Faculty Award, two Student Distinguished Faculty Awards, an Outstanding Undergraduate Research Mentor Award, and Faculty Laureate. Additionally, they have received over a dozen grants, produced 65 publications and two books, and delivered nearly 100 professional presentations. These accomplishments are all the more impressive when one considers that during this time a State budget impasse and a global Covid-pandemic made it impossible for faculty to attend conferences or travel for research. Our faculty are committed to service, and hold leadership and committee positions at all levels of the university, and in community, state, national, and international organizations. Just to spotlight a few of these accomplishments: one of our Sociology faculty is the Director of our Faculty Development and Innovation Center; another recently served for six years as the President of the International Research Committee on Sociology of Disasters and is currently associate editor of the International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters; and another is an assistant editor for the Journal of Veteran Studies and current president of the Illinois Sociological Association. The Illinois Sociological Association has held its annual meeting at EIU for the last two years. The meeting has given our students a tremendous opportunity to present Their research, and to date, some two dozen of our students have done so.

## 6. MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Description and assessment of any major changes in the program/disciplinary context*

The addition of the Criminology major has fundamentally impacted enrollment in Sociology. The Sociology major has long serviced students with an interest in Criminology and Criminal Justice. Before we established the Criminology and Criminal Justice major in 2017, students interested in a career in law enforcement or administration, and related fields, typically paired a major in Sociology with a minor in Criminology and Criminal Justice. The current head of the US secret service and Eastern alumnus, Kimberly Cheatle, for instance, graduated in 1992 with a B.A. in Sociology. Since establishing the Criminology major, we have witnessed a migration from Sociology to Criminology and Criminal Justice (see table below). Over this period the number of Sociology majors has decreased by more than 50%. While significant, we should keep in mind that the trend does not document a sea-shift in attitude or interest away from Sociology so much as the newfound opportunity to specialize under the broader umbrella of Sociology. As evidence of this, our overall enrollment as a proportion of the University total enrollment has remained remarkably stable over time. The average percentage of Sociology

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<sup>1</sup> As Introductory Sociology and Introduction to Anthropology are general education courses that enroll many non-majors, and are apt to have been taken by some of our majors before transferring to EIU, we have elected to use Social Stratification for baseline assessment. In Fall of 2023, only one student in Social Stratification (n=32) was not majoring in Sociology.

and Criminology “first” majors at EIU over the last seven years (2017-2023) is 2.29%<sup>2</sup>; this is even a quarter of a percentage better than it was (2.02%) during the peak seven-year enrollment period at EIU (2004-2009). Moreover, since we have added the Criminology and Criminal Justice major, many students have elected to double major in Sociology (see table below). Today nearly half of our current Sociology majors are what EIU refers to as “second majors”, and counting them, we are currently serving 78 Sociology majors (and 217 majors overall).

	1st SOC MAJOR	1st CCJ MAJOR	TOTAL 1ST MAJORS	S-CCJ MAJORS RATIO TO ENROLLMENT	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	2nd SOC MAJOR	2nd CCJ MAJOR	TOTAL 2ND MAJORS	TOTAL all MAJORS
FA00	181	0	181	1.70%	10637	N/A	N/A	0	181
FA01	171	0	171	1.62%	10531	N/A	N/A	0	171
FA02	199	0	199	1.78%	11163	N/A	N/A	0	199
FA03	221	0	221	1.92%	11522	N/A	N/A	0	221
FA04	248	0	248	2.13%	11651	N/A	N/A	0	248
FA05	235	0	235	1.94%	12129	N/A	N/A	0	235
FA06	224	0	224	1.81%	12349	N/A	N/A	0	224
FA07	234	0	234	1.92%	12179	1	0	1	235
FA08	234	0	234	1.94%	12040	1	0	1	235
FA09	249	0	249	2.08%	11996	4	0	4	253
FA10	272	0	272	2.34%	11630	3	0	3	275
FA11	278	0	278	2.49%	11178	2	0	2	280
FA12	278	0	278	2.67%	10417	0	0	0	278
FA13	314	0	314	3.21%	9775	2	0	2	316
FA14	284	0	284	3.19%	8913	7	0	7	291
FA15	246	0	246	2.89%	8520	7	0	7	253
FA16	188	0	188	2.54%	7415	3	0	3	191
FA17	137	26	163	2.32%	7030	5	4	9	172
FA18	99	76	175	2.33%	7526	7	13	20	195
FA19	54	123	177	2.27%	7806	7	6	13	190
FA20	52	153	205	2.38%	8626	8	10	18	223
FA21	48	167	215	2.50%	8608	13	11	24	239
FA22	45	158	203	2.29%	8857	28	13	41	244
FA23	42	127	169	1.92%	8804	36	12	48	217

While we still serve the same percentage of the university population today as we did years ago, we have done so with fewer faculty and fewer faculty-hours assigned to instruction. In academic year 2021-2022<sup>3</sup> our department offered 66 courses/sections to a total of 1805 students; 22 of these courses/sections served the general education curriculum (756 students)<sup>4</sup>. In the 2023 calendar year<sup>5</sup>, however, because of fewer faculty and increased non-instructional assignments, our department was only able to offer 53 courses/sections (1458 students), with 16 of these courses/sections serving general education curriculum to 539 students. Our diminished capacity to offer general education courses (-29%) significantly limits our ability to introduce students to Sociology, which is especially pertinent from the perspective of recruiting students to a major that is typically “discovered” in college (in those gen-ed classes).

<sup>2</sup> In comparing our majors as a percentage of total enrollment, only students that have declared Sociology or Criminology as their “first” major are considered. This underestimates the number of our majors since some students will have Sociology or criminology listed as a second major, but it avoids the problem of double-counting persons as majors.

<sup>3</sup> Summer session not included.

<sup>4</sup> Note that “students” may be double counted as they could be enrolled in multiple SOC courses in a single semester.

<sup>5</sup> Summer session not included.

The good news is that we are currently conducting a faculty search for a Unit B instructor to shore up our general education offerings, and two other searches that will contribute to the Sociology program. One of these is for Assistant Professor of Social Work, and the other, an Assistant Professor of Criminology. Both positions are strategic hires aimed at supporting an anticipated Bachelor of Social Work program at EIU. The Social Work position will contribute directly to this program while also offering courses (family and society, social welfare) that will serve our Sociology students. With targeted expertise in restorative justice, reentry, and crimmigration, the Criminology position aims to address the widening overlap between policing and social work (i.e. mental health). These developments are sure to impact our Sociology program, with results that will need to be studied and unpacked in the next assessment.

*Description of major findings and recommendations, including evidence of learning outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement.*

As discussed in the overview, the Sociology program is guided by six learning outcomes which are addressed and reiterated throughout the core curriculum: 1) recognize key sociological concepts, 2) identify characteristics of the sociological imagination, 3) discern theoretical perspectives, 4) indicate key concepts of social stratification, 5) distinguish methods of social inquiry, and 6) recall foundations of quantitative methods and statistical literacy. Our baseline assessment takes place in Social Stratification, which is typically taken by students in their sophomore year. We have elected to conduct our initial assessment in Stratification rather than in Introductory Sociology since assessment in Introductory Sociology would inadvertently include many students that are not our majors and that are only taking the course to fulfill a general-education requirement. Additionally, if we used Introductory Sociology as our baseline assessment course we would miss those Sociology majors who transfer to EIU with Introductory Sociology already on their transcript. With few exceptions, only our majors enroll in Social Stratification. It is also not a course that is typically taken by our transfer-students elsewhere. Our exit assessment occurs in our capstone seminar, Current Issues in Sociology, which students enroll in only after they have completed the entire core curriculum (Introduction to Anthropology, Introductory Sociology, Social Stratification, Research Methods, and Statistics).

At the time of our last review we had no formal assessment instrument. We now have a 36-item assessment instrument that dovetails with our six learning objectives, tracks with Bloom’s taxonomy, and that can be administered electronically. The instrument consists entirely of multiple-choice questions and is broken into six sections: 1) key concepts and definitions, 2) sociological imagination, 3) sociological theory, 4) social stratification, 5) social inquiry, and 6) quantitative methods and statistical literacy.

Assessment area	SOC 2721 (stratification)	SOC 4700 (current issues)	Percentage change
Key concepts	79.27%	79.01%	-.26
Sociological imagination	59.50%	70.11%	+10.61%
Sociological theory	56.51%	75.33%	+18.82%
Social stratification	76.33%	80.85%	+4.52%
Social inquiry	73.25%	76.89%	+3.64%
Statistical literacy	57.99%	75.40%	+17.41%

The summary results from our last assessment report, submitted in the fall of 2022, are indicated above. The report summarizes data collected between Fall 2018 and Spring of 2022. Note that no data was collected in 2020 and in the Spring 2021 semester due to disruptions caused by the Covid pandemic. The pandemic is sure to have negatively affected student learning in many ways, some of which are sure to be reflected in this data. That said, our students still cleared our 70% benchmark in each assessment area, and averaged 76.27% across all assessment areas. The greatest improvement in student scores occurred in theory and statistics. This is perhaps not surprising as our students are unlikely to have had much exposure to either prior to taking our respective theory and statistics courses in their junior/senior years. It is likewise unsurprisingly that students do so well with “key concepts” in our initial assessment, since by then all students would have already taken Introductory Sociology (a prerequisite to Social Stratification), very likely Introduction to Anthropology (typically taken as freshmen), and perhaps the elective general education course “Social Problems”. It is not clear why scores did not improve between the initial and final assessments in this category. Maybe with initial scores so high there, the ceiling for student improvement is lower than in other assessment areas. Also, by their senior year, students may have forgotten original definitions and have a more nuanced and conceptual understanding of these terms. Still, this could be an

area for us to flag for improvement by way of the reinforcement of core-concepts in our capstone course (Current Issues). All other assessment areas saw marked improvement from initial to final assessments—ranging from 3.64% to 18.82%—with an average improvement of 11%.

*Description of actions taken since the last review, including instructional resources and practices and curricular changes.*

In response to the 2008 IBHE review, we developed a one-credit Sociology Professional Seminar (SOC 2000) aimed at introducing our freshmen majors to our department, the discipline, and to opportunities within and beyond EIU (e.g. study abroad, student conferences, career pathways). The course was a success from the perspective of pedagogy, but it failed to reach many of the students it was designed for and at the time in their academic career when it would be most beneficial. The Professional Seminar would work exceptionally well if all of our majors started at EIU as freshmen, but more than 40% of new EIU students are transfers<sup>6</sup>. Many of these students had already taken Introductory Sociology, Social Problems, and a few Sociology electives at community colleges, and thus were already familiar with the discipline. They were also beginning their academic coursework here as juniors. The upshot was that we had transfer students taking the gateway-to-the-field “Professional Seminar” course while simultaneously enrolled in theory or statistics, and upper-division Sociology electives. In short, the Professional seminar course was not serving them. There were also administrative challenges related to scheduling and staffing a 1 credit class. For these reasons, we dropped the course from the curriculum in 2018.

Since our last IBHE review, our department increasingly built and offered on-line versions of what were previously face-to-face only courses. This initiative was also aimed at reaching new students in the context of the aforementioned enrollment decline. In the process, many of our faculty completed the lengthy Online Course Development training program and became proficient in on-line instruction. Our required statistics course, for instance, switched from in-person lab component to an innovative digital format. Our efforts on this front would prove prescient when the global Covid pandemic struck and we had to pivot to on-line delivery. But the pandemic also taught us the value of in-person learning and student-cohort communities. It also spotlighted inequities with regard to access to technology and internet bandwidth. Our student body, which consists of 30% students of color and 50% first generation, was hit especially hard. Since then, we have scaled back our online offerings, particularly those that primarily serve underclassman. We have also worked hard to (re)foster a sense of community among our students. Our former defunct computer lab, for instance, has been refurnished into a student learning hub. It is now an active and vibrant space where club-meetings, studying, and social gatherings occur.

Other post-IBHE review revisions include enhancements to our internship course to make it a more robust, reflective, and engaging experience for students, ongoing efforts to clean up our catalog so that it accurately reflects current course offerings, and modification to our capstone course so that it can be used to fulfill the University requirement of a senior seminar; this last revision is especially impactful for our program since we have so many double-majors (see above). Finally, we recently removed the *core* GPA requirement for Sociology majors. Previously, Sociology majors needed to have a 2.0 GPA average in the program’s core courses (Intro to Anthropology, Intro Sociology, Social Stratification, Research Methods, Statistics, and Current Issues) and a 2.0 GPA average in all Sociology courses (which would include the core and electives). The requirement of a 2.0 GPA in the core created some problems, again, for our transfer students. Since many of them were bringing in our introductory courses (but not their grade), they had fewer opportunities to affect their core GPA here; if they had difficulty meeting the core GPA requirement, they only had the option of retaking the few core classes that they had taken at EIU. Additionally, since we have so many double majors, we wanted the degree requirements for Sociology to mirror those of Criminology, and Criminology does not have a core GPA requirement.

*Description of actions to be taken as a result of this review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular changes.*

The data dive this review necessitated brought to light the number of students that have Sociology declared as their second major. Today, nearly 50% of our Sociology majors have Sociology listed as their second major. In 2016, when our last report was submitted, only 1.6% of Sociology majors had declared Sociology their second major. The growth of double majors in Sociology closely corresponds to the growth of the Criminology program. The trend could suggest that students are reluctant to narrowly specialize and are pursuing broad intellectual interests and keeping their career options open by adding majors, and presumably minors, to their transcript.

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<sup>6</sup> IHEIS fall enrollment AY 2021/22; EIU: 43% of new EIU students are transfers

If so, there are implications for the proposed Bachelors of Social Work program at EIU. Our last review mentioned the need to enhance department offerings in the area of social services and social work and just this year the University decided to move forward with an interdisciplinary Bachelors of Social Work program. This program is still in the early stages of development, but three faculty lines were approved to contribute to this program and those searches are now underway. Two of these lines, which include a director position, will be housed in the Department of Human Services, and one line will be housed in our department. Our allocated position aims to serve the BSW program and our Sociology and Criminology majors by offering courses in family and society, social work practice, international development, and immigration services. Informed by the turn to community-informed policing, restorative justice, and alternatives to criminal justice, our hope is that our Criminology students will find coursework in social work of interest and use to their career aspirations. Our approach with the new BSW program follows the design and intention of the Criminology and Criminal Justice program that we developed after our last review: to build an engaging and integrative curriculum that cross cuts disciplinary/sub-disciplinary boundaries of intellectual inquiry and practice.

## Comments from the College Dean:

The BA in Sociology remains a successful program and student enrollment numbers (including first and second majors) have increased from 61 in FA 2019 to 78 in FA 2023 (see data table in section 6). The program also attracts a diverse body of students: 30% of Sociology majors are students of color. The increase in major numbers is notable in that the department launched a Criminology and Criminal Justice major in 2017 which has grown dramatically and has attracted traditional Sociology majors. The department is also working on a proposed interdisciplinary Bachelor of Social Work program that will result in greater demand for Sociology courses in the BSW curriculum and could also attract traditional Sociology majors. A few highlights since the last review include the removal from the curriculum of the professional seminar course in the major (SOC 2000) to better accommodate the matriculation of transfer students and an initiative to increase scheduling flexibility through the development of online options for several majors courses. In addition, the department has developed a 36-item instrument to assess their courses and program and they are effectively drawing on these assessment data to inform programmatic decisions.

We recommend a decision of **Program in Good Standing**

### VPAA Decision:

- Program in good standing
- Program flagged for priority review
- Program enrollment suspended

### VPAA Explanation:

#### **45.1101 B.A. in Sociology**

The summary above details the adaptability of the B.A. in Sociology program to the needs of students and of the university. The report describes the impressive rise in the number of Criminology and Criminal Justice majors since 2017 and the correspondingly impressive rise in the number of Sociology second majors. Besides the deliberately intercalated courses within the shared curriculum of the Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology department, the Sociology program takes careful measure of its students' experience of the academic content of the program through a dynamic assessment structure.



## Resources for Completing the Eight-Year IBHE Program Review Report

### Section 5. Overview

This section will focus the review for your reader.

In no more than half a page, please explain your program's mission and its relationship to Eastern's mission (and, if applicable, to the mission of graduate education). Identify similar programs in the state; distinguish your program from them. You also should identify your program's student learning objectives and career/further education objectives, and summarize significant changes, achievements (by faculty and students and the program itself), and plans for the future.

### Section 6. Major Findings and Recommendations

*These are the standard IBHE questions:*

**a. Description and assessment of any major changes in the program:**

- (1) changes in the overall discipline or field**
- (2) student demand**
- (3) societal needs**
- (4) institutional context for offering the degree**
- (5) other elements appropriate to the discipline in question**

What, if any, internal or external events have affected your program since the last review? Have enrollments, degree production, costs, student satisfaction, job placement, etc. changed significantly? Has the discipline's governing body approved a new name for the programs it represents; updated/revised curricular requirements; identified new markets; developed new emphases? Have nationwide demographic changes or social policies affected enrollments or requirements for good or for ill?

In addition to the items included in the "Accountability" section of the VPAA website (see the left-hand navigation box at <http://castle.eiu.edu/~acaffair/>), the resources listed below may help you to respond to item 6.a:

1. The IBHE Data Bank <http://www.ibhe.state.il.us/Data%20Bank/default.htm> includes the *Data Book*, which provides statewide discipline-based data on enrollments, degree production, and costs; as well as a variety of other data on statewide enrollments, degree production, credit hour production, and costs.
2. The Institutional Research web page available at <https://www.eiu.edu/ir/> houses EIU's Data Books and the IBHE Alumni survey results, as well as a great deal of information about EIU students (ACT scores, degrees awarded, retention rates, etc.)
3. Occupational projections are available from many professional journals and organizations, as well as:



- a. the Bureau of Labor Statistics <http://stats.bls.gov/>
  - b. ISBE’s Educator Supply and Demand Report  
[http://www.isbe.state.il.us/research/htmls/supply\\_and\\_demand.htm](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/research/htmls/supply_and_demand.htm)
  - c. the Illinois Workforce Information Center  
[http://www.ides.illinois.gov/Pages/Workforce\\_Information\\_Center.aspx](http://www.ides.illinois.gov/Pages/Workforce_Information_Center.aspx)
4. Staff members in the Office of Institutional Research also are available to aid you in assembling and analyzing administrative data.

**b. Description of major findings and recommendations, including evidence of learning outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement**

While 6.b also asks you to discuss other significant findings, it is basically the assessment section of the program review. As such, the responses here are crucial to your review’s success. Departments that cannot demonstrate that their assessment programs meet the established guidelines will be expected to revise those programs within six months of the final review deadline. The IBHE’s **assessment guidelines are appended to this document.**

Since your overview already identifies your student learning objectives, focus here on the assessment program and its results. What measures are you using to assess learning? How well are students achieving the objectives identified for them? What are their specific strengths and weaknesses? What changes have you made and will you be making as a result of assessment? Emphasize direct assessment, but mention the indirect measures you are using as well. Support your generalizations with specific data/evidence. And be sure to include feedback from key stakeholders—students, alums, employers, peer reviewers, etc.—since the IBHE requires it.

**c. Description of actions taken since the last review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular**

**d. Description of actions to be taken as a result of this review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular**

6.c and 6.d are straightforward. However, by this point, you already may have mentioned the most significant actions your department has taken/is planning to take. Do not repeat yourself. Merely refer the reader to a previous section or sections.

## **Section 7. Outcome**

After consultation with the College Dean, the Provost’s Office will indicate whether the program will be deemed “in good standing” or “flagged for priority review.” The latter category is used to identify programs experiencing serious concerns—significantly low enrollments, high costs, negative accreditation findings, below-average pass rates on statewide exams, below-average employment placement rates, a continuing lack of satisfaction among students or employers, etc. Departments will be asked to examine and address the identified concern(s) and report the results in an interim review, due in 1-3 years. Typically, however, the IBHE program review results in a positive decision, and the next review is due in eight years.