

ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

ACTION REQUESTED:

Recommendation

Decision

Discussion/Direction

Information

DATE: 25 June 2024

FROM: Graduate Studies Committee

SUBJECT: Cyclical Program Review 18-Month Follow-up – MSc and PhD in Computer Science

COMMITTEE MANDATE:

In accordance with Article 8 of the Ontario Tech University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures, eighteen months following the completion of a program review the Dean will prepare a brief follow up report and “A summary of the progress report will be approved by the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council”. This summary report will be reported to Academic Council for information and subsequently posted to the Ontario Tech corporate website.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

Eighteen months after the completion of a program review the Faculty is asked to report on the progress to date in implementing the agreed upon plans for improvement. The report is sent to the Academic Resource Committee for review and further follow-up, if required.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

The Faculty’s plans to address any remaining resource needs are outlined in the 18-Month report. Information and support will be required from various areas of the University in order to implement the plan as originally agreed.

COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY/LEGISLATION:

The Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council), established by the Council of Ontario Universities in July 2010, is responsible for oversight of the Quality Assurance Framework processes for Ontario Universities. The Council operates at arm’s length from both Ontario’s publicly assisted universities and Ontario’s government. Under the Quality Assurance Framework, academic programs must undergo a cyclical review at least every eight years following their implementation. The purpose of the cyclical program review is to critically examine the components of a program with the assistance of outside reviewers with the goal of continuous improvement. A program review’s purpose is not solely to demonstrate the positive

aspects of the program, but also to outline opportunities that will lead to improvements for the future.

NEXT STEPS:

Following the presentation to Academic Council, this summary will be posted to the University's website.

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

- 18-Month Report Summary



**18-Month Follow-Up
SUMMARY REPORT
May 2024
MSc and PhD in Computer Science
Dean: Dr. Greg Crawford**

Under Ontario Tech University's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) and the Ontario 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. Program reviews involve several stages, including:

1. A comprehensive and analytical self-study brief developed by members of the program under review.
2. A site visit by academic experts who are external to and arm's length from the program. The visit involves discussions with senior academic administrators, faculty, staff, and students.
3. Submission of an external reviewers' report including recommendations on ways the program may be improved based on a review of the program's self-study brief, discussions during the site visit and supporting material.
4. Internal responses to the external review and recommendations prepared separately by the Program and Dean.
5. Development of an Implementation Plan prepared by the Dean including resource requirements and a timeline for acting on and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations.

All programs that undergo a review must provide a report eighteen months after the completion of the review to gather information on the progress that has been made implementing the agreed upon plans for improvement.

In 2019-2021, a review was scheduled for the Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in Computer Science, with a site visit on June 27-28, 2022. The program has submitted to the Provost's Office a report outlining the progress they have made relative to the implementation plan resulting from the review. A summary of this progress is provided on the following pages.

Implementation Plan Action Item(s) <i>(corresponding recommendation # from reviewers' report)</i>			Timeline	Status*	Comments from Dean
1. The university to consider charging international students who are being funded on tri-council grants the same tuition rates as domestic students	Discussion among institutional stakeholders on how this might be managed or mitigated	By Nov. 30/2022 – preliminary discussions (in prep for 2023/24)	In Progress	The university instituted the Graduate International Tuition Scholarship. In addition, we are working with colleagues across the province to advocate for increased funding to support graduate student research and training. The university hopes to extend the scope and allocation of the Graduate International Tuition Scholarship (GITS) program as additional funding emerges.	
2. Increase number of TTT, TF; allow professors to teach at least one grad course per year	Science Dean will propose additional hires in CS (supported by Cs UPR findings)	December 2022 – Science budget proposal submission	Complete	An additional three TTT and two TF have been hired in Science, and one TTT and one TF have been hired in FBIT who will support, directly and indirectly, research and teaching in the CS graduate program; in addition, two more TTT hires are expected in Science for July 2024.	
		Deans and GMC will work			

		with others to investigate other opportunities for more grad-level teaching	preliminary 2023/24 teaching workload discussions		graduate course every two years. Any increase in these opportunities will require additional hires.
3.	Increased legal support for industry grants/contracts	Assessment of need and discussion of options	By March 2023 – preliminary meeting(s)	Complete	The Research Officer now has 2 contract officers.
4.	Extend GPD role to 3 years Create an office run by administrators for the program with a single Faculty	Deans are agreeable but will depend on the faculty agreement; this should not be enforced Review current admin supports and determine what may be shifted for clarity and consistency Create a resource for faculty and students to understand where to find such resources	N/A May 2023 August 2023	Complete Complete Complete	We extended the last GPD role to three years of coverage. As indicated, we cannot force this but will encourage it where we can. Staff support has been largely centralized in the Faculty of Science, reducing confusion and year-to-year variability. The GPD role will still rotate between Science and FBIT, preferably on a 3-year basis. A CS graduate student association has been formed and welcoming activities for new students have been organized. Besides the GPD, the association is a resource for the students.

5.	<p>Arrange regular formal/informal meetings with students</p>	<p>GPD to initiate a regular meeting with grad students each semester</p> <p>Investigate additional ways to support student meetings</p>	<p>By November 2022</p> <p>By February 2023</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>	<p>The GPD arranges a meeting with the CS graduate student association each semester.</p> <p>Besides the regular budget to support CS graduate activities such as seminars, the GPD has also explored co-organized events with other graduate programs on campus.</p>
6.	<p>Improve TA workload assignments, including alignment of student expertise with assignment</p>	<p>Review and seek to improve the processes by which TA assignments are determined and operationalized</p>	<p>By May 2023</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>TA workload assignments are somewhat complicated, as many factors are at play. Some of these arise from our commitments when making an offer to a graduate student (e.g., typically, we commit to providing a Tship across a fixed number of years). There are constraints around assignments in the relevant collective agreement (e.g., the “pool” system in the CA). Sometimes there are imports and exports of TAs from a given program/Faculty to another, although this is not always easy to predict in advance. While we ensure grad students are qualified to take on a given Tship, the ability to incorporate grad student preferences will continue to be very limited.</p>
7.	<p>Allow for grad-level co-op terms</p>	<p>Deans and GMC to discuss how this might be implemented</p>	<p>By May 2023</p>	<p>On Hold</p>	<p>While this remains a long-range goal for the program, it has not yet been formally addressed.</p>
8.	<p>Engage alumni more effectively</p>	<p>Deans and GMC to discuss</p>	<p>By May 2023</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>We now bring alumni into one of our core courses (CSCI 5020G Collaborative Design &</p>

		how this might be implemented			Research) to share their study, research and work experiences with our students.
10.	Offer alternative funding packages (e.g., more research assistantships)	Deans and GMC to discuss how this might be implemented	By June 2023	Continuous	The issue is not limited to the CS Graduate program. We are working with Advancement to include more (and better) graduate scholarships in the upcoming institutional fundraising campaign.
11.	Create an admission committee to do final approval of admitted files	GMC to meet with SGPS to discuss options	June 2023	On Hold	It is not seen as practical at this point (although we may revisit the idea in the future).

*Process Status Legend:

Complete: Accomplished action item; no further steps required.

Continuous: Initial action item complete but requires ongoing monitoring and/or enhancement.

In Progress: Progress on the action item has been initiated but is not complete at this time. Outline all steps taken in the comment's column.

On Hold: Unable to complete due to other dependent factor(s).

Cancelled: Item no longer relevant or resources unavailable.

This summary report will be sent for approval to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (USC or GSC), and will subsequently be reported to Academic Council. It will then be posted on the Ontario Tech corporate website.

Next Scheduled Program Review: 2027-2029