



**FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
February 2017
Master of Health Sciences
Program Review
Dean: Dr. Lori Livingston
Dean of Graduate Studies: Dr. Langis Roy**

Under UOIT's Quality Assurance Framework, all degree programs are subject to a comprehensive review every eight years to ensure that they continue to meet provincial quality assurance requirements and to support their ongoing rigour and coherence.

On the completion of the program review, the self-study brief together with the reviewers' report and the assessment team's response are reviewed by the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council, and are subsequently reported to Academic Council, the Board of Governors and the Quality Council.

In 2014-15 a program review was scheduled for the Master of Health Sciences program.

This is the first program review for this program and the internal assessment team is to be commended for undertaking this assignment in addition to an already challenging workload and within very tight deadlines. The following pages provide a summary of the outcomes and action plans resulting from the review, identifying the strengths of the program as well as the opportunities for program improvement and enhancement. A report from the program outlining the progress that has been made implementing the recommendations will also be put forward in eighteen months' time.

External Reviewers: Dr. Maria Mathews (Memorial University of Newfoundland), Dr. Phil Sullivan (Brock University),

Internal Reviewer: Dr. Sean Forrester (UOIT)

Site Visit Dates: November 18-19, 2015

The Master of Health Sciences (MHSc) program functions within an interdisciplinary health sciences research environment that provides opportunities to conduct high quality research in one of the three fields; community health, health informatics or kinesiology. The educational approach of the MHSc program fosters understanding of the fundamentals of health sciences research by providing students with the opportunities and necessary skills to design, conduct, and complete a significant research thesis or project. Therefore, graduates are well prepared to take on higher-level occupations within the health profession, seek funding for projects or research at their workplace, or to pursue a PhD in a research-oriented health sciences or related program.

Significant Strengths of the Program

- The program curriculum is diverse and organized and uses leading-edge technology
- Faculty members are knowledgeable with broad experiences, have a dedication to the program, and provide a supportive, friendly learning environment
- The caliber of the theses demonstrate that the program is making a significant contribution to the next generation of researchers
- The high competence of the administrative support provided to the program is very important to the program's success
- High level of student satisfaction and employment opportunities following graduation.

Significant Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement

- Having few elective, online, and summer courses impact program flexibility
- The program lacks emphasis on the theory behind both qualitative and quantitative research
- A loss of highly desirable candidates to other universities that are able to provide a greater amount of graduate student funding
- A young Faculty (i.e. 15 of 29 are assistant professors, 3 are full professors). Increased opportunity for faculty mentorship.
- Constant change to the senior administrative structure has impacted oversight and planning
- Administration and workload support for GPD requires re-examination
- The absence of a PhD program in health sciences, which prevents the progression of students

The External Review

The reviewers visited the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) campus on November 18-19, 2015. The reviewers participated in a tour and interviewed faculty members for the Community Health (CH), Kinesiology, and Health Informatics Management (HIM) Streams, as well as a group of eight current students plus one recent graduate. The Deans of the Faculty and Graduate Studies, Associate Deans for Undergraduate Studies and Research and Partnerships, and the Graduate Program Assistant were all interviewed.

Summary of Reviewer Recommendations and Faculty Responses

1. Develop a set of learning outcomes common to all three streams and then based on the distinctiveness of each stream develop stream-specific learning outcomes.

The need for this became evident during the completion of the internal Program Review. A mapping exercise of all three streams has been completed. The next step will be the identification of the stream-specific learning outcomes.

2. Assess learning outcomes relative to students' performance after they leave UOIT.

Once the learning outcomes for each stream have been identified, these items will be added to the Exit Survey to assess how students are performing when they leave UOIT.

3. Develop distinct stream-specific admission requirements.

While this does exist to a certain extent, admission requirements will be further reviewed and clarified.

4. The program continuously monitors and maintains high standards for admissions so that the students admitted are able to succeed and meet the learning outcomes for the program.

This is in place. The Faculty of Health Sciences adheres to the standards set out by the Office of Graduate Studies for admissions. Student progress is also documented each term in the progress report submitted to the Faculty and the Office of Graduate Studies.

5. Remove fourth year courses from the course bank to give a more realistic indicator of the courses offered/taken in the program.

This was identified by the Faculty prior to the external reviewers' visit and this task has already been completed.

6. Offer more courses in the Kinesiology stream.

A total of 21 graduate courses are being offered in the 2015-2016 academic year. Seven (7) of these courses are either required or specific to the kinesiology discipline, and an additional five (5) courses are identified as potentially of value to kinesiology students. MHSc Kinesiology students may opt to enrol in a special topics course or advanced topics course to address speciality areas. Given the above description, it appears that the needs of the students are being met. This recommendation is also resource dependent and constrained by current budgets. With that said, there would be value in having the Kinesiology graduate faculty undertake (a) a review of the MHSc Kinesiology curriculum to examine course offerings for speciality areas in kinesiology stream, and (b) the development of a five-year rolling plan for course offerings.

7. Invest resources in stipends for instructors in the undergraduate program to allow faculty to introduce and teach graduate courses that reflect the current state of the discipline.

In collaboration with the Dean, GPC and the Planning and Budget Officer, the Faculty will explore the feasibility of this recommendation in terms of current course offerings and needs, available resources, and existing workloads. The end goal will be to create a five-year rolling plan where program-learning objectives are linked to the curriculum.

8. Review the curriculum in each stream relative to other comparable programs to ensure that curriculum remains current and up-to-date.

The GPC will support a curriculum mapping exercise to be completed Summer 2016. The Faculty seek assistance from a person with expertise in quality assurance. This document will be reviewed by the GPC Fall 2016 to determine the appropriate action to be taken.

9. Assessment of learning outcomes should not only focus on the final year of study but on how the students are performing when they leave UOIT.

This recommendation is abstract and unclear in that it is not apparent as to why we should make the distinction between students in their final year versus when they leave UOIT. However, we do acknowledge that establishing closer ties with our alumni (as per Recommendation 16 below) will allow us to understand and track their post-graduation successes.

10. Implement course evaluations and/or exit interviews to provide feedback about the nature of the course and quality of instruction.

In some courses, Professors have been implementing an informal evaluation for their graduate courses in order to receive student feedback, and this practice will continue to be encouraged until the Graduate course evaluations are fully implemented by the Office of Graduate Studies in fall, 2016. The Faculty of Health Sciences created a Graduate Exit Survey in 2014. Administration of this questionnaire is on going for new alumni and updated as needed.

11. Continue to offer the Professional Enhancement Award (PERS).

The Faculty will continue to offer this program.

12. Champion the cause of Faculty of Health Sciences graduate students' presence in SSHRC funding allocation on campus.

The Faculty agrees and will take this one-step further to broaden the effort to include encouraging students to secure funding from a wide variety of external sources (e.g., CIHR, OGS, NSERC, SSHRC, and others).

13. Examine alternate ways of creating a universal course for the three streams; for example, by implementing a mandatory Seminar course for all streams.

Currently students are encouraged to attend a bi-weekly research seminar series throughout the Fall and Winter terms. Attendance is taken. Making the Seminars mandatory is a logical next step. Another approach would be to evaluate the content of the current Research Methods course and modify, as needed. This will be examined as part of the implementation plan.

14. Expand and track the number of quality assurance metrics used to demonstrate program quality.

Metrics will be expanded and annually tracked in an effort to measure program quality.

15. Involve more faculty members and students in ongoing quality assurance initiatives.

Broad consultation on program matters has always been a goal within the Faculty. For example, the Faculty of Health Sciences Graduate Program Committee membership includes faculty members from each of the program streams and faculty are consulted on key issues on an ongoing basis(e.g., Graduate Faculty Meetings, Faculty Council, etc.).

16. Create stronger ties with its alumni.

The Faculty has taken the first step to create stronger ties with alumni with the launch of the Graduate Exit Survey in 2014. Moving forward they will draw upon the expertise of the Alumni Relations Office to assist in this area.

Plan of Action

Proposed Action	Timeline	Person/Area Responsible
Develop learning outcomes for the Public Health, Kinesiology, and Health Informatics Stream and monitor via the annual Exit Survey (1, 2)	This project is currently underway, to be completed by June, 2017	Graduate Program Director; Graduate Program Committee
Develop distinct stream-specific admission requirements (3)	Begin a review to be completed by June 2017 student intake	Graduate Program Director; Graduate Program Committee

Examine the need to offer more courses in the Kinesiology stream by: (a) reviewing the MHSc Kinesiology curriculum; and, (b) developing a five-year rolling plan for course offerings (6)	Begin immediately for review by FHSc Curriculum Committee and Faculty Council by Winter, 2017 for implementation in Fall, 2017	Kinesiology Graduate Faculty Members; Graduate Program Director
Explore the financial feasibility of using a stipendiary approach to graduate course development (7)	Begin immediately with goal of having a five-year rolling plan of course offerings to be first implemented in Fall, 2017	Dean; PBO; Graduate Program Director
Review the curriculum in each stream relative to other comparable programs to ensure that curriculum remains current and up-to-date (8)	May-August, 2017 with a report to be submitted to the Faculty Curriculum Committee and Faculty Council by no later than Fall term, 2017	Graduate Program Director; Graduate Program Committee
Champion the cause of Faculty of Health Sciences graduate students' presence in external funding allocations and competitions on campus (12)	This activity will begin immediately and will be ongoing	Dean; Graduate Program Director; PBO
Create a universal course for the three streams (i.e., required Research Seminar) or the modification of the content/curriculum of the required Research Methods course (13)	Begin May, 2016 for implementation in Fall, 2017	Graduate Program Director; Graduate Program Committee; Associate Dean Research and Community Partnerships
Identify and track additional metrics to measure degree program quality (14)	Begin May, 2017 for implementation in Fall, 2017	Graduate Program Director; Graduate Program Committee; Associate Dean Research and Community Partnerships
Create stronger ties with alumni (15)	This activity will begin in May, 2017 and be ongoing	All faculty; Graduate Program Director; Program Assistant, Graduate Programs; Alumni Relations Office

Due Date for 18-Month Follow-up on Plan of Action: July 2017

Date of Next Cyclical Review: 2022-2023