

ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

ACTION REQUESTED:

Recommendation
Decision
Discussion/Direction
Information

DATE: 23 February 2021

FROM: Graduate Studies Committee

SUBJECT: Major Program Modification – PhD in Health Sciences

COMMITTEE MANDATE:

In accordance with the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) Terms of Reference, GSC has the responsibility “to examine proposals for new graduate degree and diploma programs, major changes to existing programs and to recommend their approval, as appropriate, to the Academic Council”.

MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION:

That, pursuant to the recommendation of the Graduate Studies Committee, Academic Council hereby approve the Major Program Modification to the PhD in Health Sciences, as presented.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

The Faculty is proposing to change the delivery mode of 4 core and 1 elective courses to multiple delivery modes (online, hybrid, or in person) in the PhD program. Due to Covid-19, these courses were offered through online deliveries. Students benefited from the expertise of the faculty member adapting their content to synchronous and asynchronous delivery and commented on the advantages of the online delivery on academic, professional, and personal levels as it ensured flexibility. Going forward the Faculty would like to have the option of structuring some of the courses in each semester as either hybrid, and/or online as well as in person.

This flexibility will provide the most appropriate mode to deliver the content while maintaining the learning outcomes and will allow the course instructor to adapt to situations compromising the safety of the graduate students’ learning environment, should the need arise. The Graduate Program Committee and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Research will oversee the scheduling of Graduate courses each year to ensure that instructors are only permitted to teach their course online if they have provided strong rationale for doing so, ensuring the quality of the program will not be compromised by the method of delivery. No program objectives or program learning outcomes have been changed for online delivery.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

No specific additional resources are required. The university adopted CANVAS before the pandemic period and this platform has been identified as the most relevant platform for course delivery. Adapting the course delivery to either online, in person, or hybrid is supported by CANVAS. This program was delivered completely online during the 2020-2021 academic year. The quality of education was not affected at all by the online delivery. The faculty delivering the courses are experts in the content and in online delivery.

Sufficiency of support services and training for teaching staff

This support was made available before the university decision to move the course delivery completely online during the pandemic. TLC provided a multitude of workshops to accommodate the schedules of faculty members and additional recordings and/or individual training to enhance the competency of those delivering the courses. Therefore, the faculty members are already well prepared to continue to offer courses in an online format.

Sufficiency and type of support for students in the new learning environment

As per the above criteria, the same support was provided for graduate students. In addition, the graduate students were assigned a week early in the fall semester of 2020 to be able to attend all the relevant workshops about CANVAS. All the training sessions were recorded and uploaded on the TLC website. Accessing these learning tools and programs will be available for new graduate students. They will be strongly encouraged to complete and/or review these learning opportunities as part of their requirements for TA work.

TRANSITION PLAN:

Scheduling for Fall 2021 will include the available options.

CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL:

GSC: January 26th, 2021

Faculty Council: January 6th, 2021

Program and faculty level consultation; CIQE consultation.

NEXT STEPS:

- Once approved by Academic Council, this change will be included in the 2021-2022 Academic Calendar

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

- [Major Program Modification Proposal](#)
 - Course Changes to be completed in a batch upload:
 - HLSC 7010G - Critical Perspectives in Research and Knowledge Translation in Health Sciences
 - HLSC 7012G - Graduate Seminar in Health Sciences
 - HLSC 7014G - Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Health Data and Technology
 - HLSC 7111G - Health Policy