



## ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

---

**SESSION:**

Public

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

Decision  
Discussion/Direction  
Information




**TO:**

Academic Council

**DATE:**

26 November 2019

**PRESENTED BY:** Lori Livingston, Provost and Vice President, Academic

**SUBJECT:**

Formal Closure of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) and the Master of Information Technology Security - Master of Business Administration (MITS-MBA) Programs

---

**MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION:**

*That pursuant to the recommendation of the Provost, Academic Council hereby approves the closure of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) and the Master of Information Technology Security - Master of Business Administration (MITS-MBA) Programs, effective immediately.*

**MANDATE:**

- In accordance with LGC 1127, August 2005, “if, in the event of academic weakness, declining enrolment, financial exigency, or other circumstances, the Provost believes that it may be necessary to close or substantially reconfigure a Degree Program, he/she shall inform the Academic Council in a timely way of his/her concerns.” and “shall present a recommendation to the Academic Council to close or reconfigure the Program”.

**BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:**

- The Master of Business Administration program started accepting students in 2009 and during the 5 years in active status, a total number of 37 students were enrolled and 27 students graduated from the programs
- The Faculty also offered the MITS-MBA Program for students that took courses in both the MITS and MBA programs
- In 2014, in response to very low enrollment numbers, the decision was made to place the program on hold in order to evaluate the Faculty of Business and Information Technology’s (FBIT) options regarding the future direction of the programs
- In 2015 the Dean established a taskforce to study the program and the competitive landscape around MBA programs in the province

- The programs were launched with great expectations and hopes for success in attracting students from the Durham Region and GTA. However, a myriad of contributing factors lead to very limited interest in the program and small enrolment numbers. This placed a financial burden on the faculty with no clear path to higher enrolment numbers
- The programs faced fierce competition in the region from more established universities and programs
- Demand for MBA programs was declining in general
- FBIT has proposed a number of new programs and removing the MBA program is one step in this major strategic shift for the Faculty
- The program did not undergo the scheduled program review in 2017

**RESOURCES REQUIRED AND IMPLICATIONS:**

- There are no resources required to close these programs
- There is limited impact on faculty members as admissions have been placed on hold and there are no current active students. All Faculty members have been teaching full course loads in the Faculty's other programs. The very small cohort size during the active years of the programs meant that only a small number of faculty members were ever involved
- There is minimal impact to non-academic human resources, as the programs have not been active and have not accepted new students since 2014; the staff member has been focusing attention on other initiatives at FBIT
- MBA courses are not currently offered; they will remain in the Academic Calendar for now since courses are occasionally offered to engineering students and some courses may be used in future graduate programs
- There are no active students in the programs. One inactive student has not taken any courses in the past three (3) years and is past the maximum length of time allowed for the program. Inactive students must apply for readmission and admission to the original program is not guaranteed
- It is expected that this closure will allow faculty to focus on creating more specialized graduate programs with higher enrolment potential
- There are no impacts on external agencies

**CONSULTATION:**

- In accordance with the currently active Policy (LCG 1127) governing the closure of a program, the following consultation and approval path is required:
  - After notification of the need to close a program, the Dean of the Faculty in which the program resides will seek the advice of the Faculty Council
  - Whether or not agreement is reached with the Dean and Faculty Council, the Provost shall present a recommendation to the Academic Council
- Program closure was presented to FBIT Faculty Council in September 2019

**COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY/LEGISLATION:**

- The current Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP, June 2011) requires programs to be reviewed every eight years, in accordance with the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance Quality Assurance Framework
- LGC 1127 requires the Provost to make recommendations for program closure in cases of "declining enrolment, financial exigency, or other circumstances"

**TRANSITION AND NEXT STEPS:**

- The program is currently suspended and no students have been accepted since 2014; the MBA and MITS-MBA Programs will be closed immediately

- All student communication and transitioning has already been completed. The last group of students were admitted in 2013 and all but one (1) of them has graduated or formally left the program
- One (1) remaining inactive student has not taken any courses in the past 3 years and is past the maximum length of time allowed to complete the program. Inactive students must apply for readmission and readmission to the University and the student's original program is not guaranteed. An effort will be made to facilitate admission to another program if the student chooses that path. Student has been informed of inactive status and likelihood of not being readmitted
- Pending approval, these programs will be closed immediately
- Final notice of the programs' closure will be sent to the inactive student

**SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:**

- Major Program Modification – Removal of Program or Program Component Proposal Brief



## Major Program Modification – Removal of Program or Program Component

### Faculty of Business and Information Technology

#### Master of Business Administration (MBA)

#### Master of Information Technology Security – Master of Business Administration (MITS-MBA)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### a. Brief background on the existing program

The Master of Business Administration program started accepting students in 2009 and during the 5 years in active status, a total number of 37 students were enrolled and 27 students graduated from the program. In 2014, and in response to very low enrollment numbers, the decision was made to place the program on hold in order to evaluate the Faculty's options regarding the future direction of the program. A year later, the Dean established a taskforce to study the program and the competitive landscape around MBA programs in the province. Note: The Faculty also started offering MITS-MBA dual degrees for students in that took courses in both the MITS and MBA programs.

#### b. Rationale for the removal of the program or program component

The MBA program was launched with great expectations and hopes for success in attracting students from the Durham Region and GTA. However, a myriad of contributing factors lead to very limited interest in the program and small enrolment numbers. It was not uncommon to see classes with less than a handful of students in them and the numbers remained very low even after 5 years. This placed a financial burden on the faculty with no clear path to higher enrolment numbers.

The MBA program at FBIT also faced fierce competition in the region from more established universities and programs. These competitors also enjoyed higher (and dedicated) marketing budgets, large alumni networks, career services, and locations in downtown Toronto in some cases. According to the findings of the taskforce, the tuition cost of our program was higher than similar sized competitors and we also lacked adequate resources required to implement major initiatives aimed at attracting a larger number of students.

The taskforce also found that demand for MBA programs was declining in general. This could be explained by shifting preferences and greater emphasis on specialized masters programs in recent years. In light of the facts and trends in our environment, the faculty leadership team has concluded that specialized masters programs are a more promising path for the future and are more closely aligned with our strengths and competencies. FBIT has proposed a number of new programs and removing the MBA program is one step in this major strategic shift for the faculty. The Provost's office has also requested that we officially close the MBA program before going ahead with other exciting program proposals.

With the closure of the MBA program, FBIT will also close the related MITS-MBA program as it is no longer relevant. This document and its contents apply to both the MBA and MITS-MBA programs.

## 2. IMPLICATIONS

### a. Faculty members

Given that new admissions into the program has been placed on hold (since 2014), there is very limited impact on faculty members both in terms of teaching or project supervision. Even during its active years, the very small cohort size meant that only a small number of faculty members were ever involved with the program.

### b. Non-academic human resources

One staff member at FBIT is involved with all our graduate programs including the MBA. However, since the program has not accepted new students since 2014, the staff member is no longer spending time on this and is focusing their attention on other initiatives at FBIT. The impact on staff members will be minimal.

### c. Courses (impacts on courses that will remain and list courses to be removed from the Calendar)

The program is currently suspended and courses are not offered. MBA courses will remain in the calendar for now since one is occasionally offered for engineering students and some courses may be used in future graduate programs.

### d. Students (*current and prospective*)

The last group of students were admitted in 2013 and all but 1 of them has graduated or left the program. The 1 remaining student has not taken any courses in the past 3 years and has an inactive status. The student is also past her maximum length of time allowed for the program. Our policies state that an inactive student must apply for readmission and readmission to the university and the student's original program is no guaranteed. We will try (no guarantees) to facilitate her transfer to another program if the student chooses that path.

### e. Enrolments (*anticipated impacts on other programs, if applicable*)

We hope that by removing the Programs, the Faculty can focus on creating more specialized graduate programs with higher enrolment potential. The Faculty's resources will be used more efficiently and effectively.

### f. External agencies (*if applicable*)

N/A

## 3. TIMELINES

### a. Proposed Date of Program or Program Component Removal/Close

The program is currently suspended and no students have been accepted since 2014. We are proposing an official closure date of November 2019 for the MBA and MITS-MBA programs.

### b. Proposed Plan of Action

## Previous and future actions:

Action(s)	Date/timeline
Program admissions suspended	2014
Taskforce created to evaluate the future of the program	2015
FBIT asked to move forward with program closure	July 2019
FBIT prepares paperwork to end/remove program and submits draft to CIQE and Provost's office	August 2019
FBIT leadership announces decision to faculty and staff	September 2019
Provost Presents Recommendation to Academic Council	November 2019
School of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies will inform the inactive student that program is formally closed	November 2019
Program is removed/ended	November 2019