

## ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

---

### ACTION REQUESTED:

Recommendation   
Decision   
Discussion/Direction   
Information

DATE: 24 March 2020

FROM: Graduate Studies Committee

SUBJECT: Master of Arts, Master of Education, and Graduate Diploma in Digital Technologies Program Review 18-Month Follow-Up Final Assessment Report

---

### COMMITTEE MANDATE:

In accordance with Article 1.1(b) of By-law Number 2, Academic Council “has the authority to establish academic standards and curricular policies and procedures of the University and to regulate such standards, policies and procedures, including determining academic quality, which includes determining the contents and curricula of all programs and courses of study.

As set out in the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) Terms of Reference, GSC is responsible for approving Final Assessment Reports (FARs) and action plans arising out of the cyclical review of undergraduate programs and report to Academic Council on...the implementation of recommendations from previous reviews.

### MOTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

***That, pursuant to the recommendation of GSC, Academic Council hereby approve the 18-Month Final Assessment Report for the Master of Arts, Master of Education, and Graduate Diploma in Digital Technologies Program Review, as presented.***

### BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

Eighteen months after the completion of a program review the Faculty is asked to report on the progress to date for all items outlined in the Final Assessment Report and Action Plan. The 18-Month Final Assessment Report (18-Month FAR) notes any items which have been completed and those that are still in progress, and provide a rationale and/or revised timeline for items which may be behind schedule from the timeline noted in the original Action Plan.

**RESOURCES REQUIRED:**

The Faculty's plans to address any remaining resource needs are outlined in the 18-Month FAR. 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 approval by Academic Council, the summary documents will be presented to the Board of Governors for information and posted to the University's website

**SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:**

- Program Review 18-Month Final Assessment Report



**FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**February 7, 2020**

**Master of Arts, Master of Education, Graduate Diploma in Digital Technologies**

**18-Month Follow-Up**

**Dean: Dr. Robin Kay**

Under Ontario Tech University'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. 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 who prepare a report and recommendations on ways that it may be improved based on a review of the program's self-study and supporting material, and a two day site visit involving discussions with faculty, staff and students and a tour of the facilities.
3. Development of a plan for improvement by the program and proposed timelines for implementation.

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 2017/18 a program review was scheduled for the Master of Arts, Master of Education, Graduate Diploma in Digital Technologies, with a site visit in May 2018. The program has submitted to the Provost's Office a comprehensive chart outlining the progress they have made relative to the action plans resulting from the review. A summary of this progress is provided on the following pages. The summary report is reviewed by the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council, and is subsequently reported to Academic Council and the Board of Governors.

**Next Scheduled Program Review: 2024 - 2026**

Action Items	Process Status	Comments
<p><i>In the absence of institutional course evaluation processes for graduate programs, we recommend that the faculty develop ways to receive ongoing feedback on course quality.</i></p>	<p><i>Complete</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A program evaluation is sent out each term to gather feedback on the quality of the program - Feedback from the term is discussed and addressed in the graduate program meeting</i></li> <li>• <i>Faculty created an online feedback survey form and use it on a voluntary basis</i></li> <li>• <i>If faculty members do not use the online feedback survey (above), they must create and use their own feedback forms</i></li> <li>• <i>Some form of graduate course evaluation is required for performance reviews at the end of the year</i></li> <li>• <i>The Ontario Tech School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) is working on a standard review form for graduate courses</i></li> </ul>
<p><i>The university engage the expansive expertise of the Faculty of Education in innovating and developing online and blended learning more broadly, especially given the focus on “Education for the 21st Century” in the institution’s strategic research plan.</i></p>	<p><i>Complete</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>We worked with the Student Engagement Office to develop a series of 3 workshops on collaborative online learning for all Ontario Tech University’s graduate students, with the goal being that any student who takes all 3 would be eligible to earn a certificate of participation/completion.</i></li> <li>• <i>Currently, we are starting discussions with the newly formed continuing education department at Ontario Tech U to offer a certificate for teaching in online learning environments</i></li> </ul>
<p><i>The creation of several learning outcomes that respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and that Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing are meaningfully integrated across areas of study</i></p>	<p><i>In Progress</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>We are currently re-configuring our course clusters and once completed we will consult with Ontario Tech Indigenous Education and Cultural Services about what learning outcomes to add</i></li> <li>• <i>We have tried to introduce Indigenous content into our program, but the Ontario Tech Indigenous Education and Cultural Services did not feel that our online format was a suitable format for teaching/supporting the learning goals associated with Indigenous knowledge/content</i></li> </ul>
<p><i>Reconsideration of the curriculum cluster and addition of a cluster reflecting Social Justice issues and Indigenous worldviews in a digital context.</i></p>	<p><i>In Progress – expected completion June 2020</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>We have been developing an Ed.D. proposal and delayed changing the course clusters so that the Master and Doctoral programs would be aligned</i></li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now that the proposal is near completion, we have begun the process of re-aligning course clusters and intend to complete this process by June 2020</li> <li>• We plan to include an Equity, Inclusion and Diversity cluster that incorporates Indigenous worldviews in a digital context if permitted by the Ontario Tech Indigenous Education and Cultural Services</li> </ul>
<p><i>Exploration of ways to provide greater flexibility in course design and structure. For instance, faculty may consider reducing time in synchronous sessions and offering more opportunities for asynchronous participation. Students would also benefit from more regular and consistent delivery of foundation courses.</i></p>	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All instructors have been made aware of the recommendation to incorporate opportunities for additional asynchronous participation</li> <li>• We surveyed our students and the overwhelming majority prefer the synchronous format</li> <li>• We also examined the best asynchronous online Master of Education programs in North America. Graduation rates varied from 60 to 80%. Our graduation rate is over 95% and students emphasize that the synchronous social contact is an important feature</li> <li>• Core foundations course offered regularly and we survey students to ensure we have enough course spots</li> </ul>
<p><i>The course route includes an opportunity for consolidation of learning through the inclusion of a strategy to allow for application and synthesis of new understandings.</i></p>	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A portfolio course, synthesizing program knowledge and understanding, was revisited and discussed by the faculty</li> <li>• Numerous issues were noted including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the 2.5 to 4 year time frame to complete the course and students not being able to comprehensively collect, review samples of their work</li> <li>○ the challenge of integrating 9 courses into a single portfolio in a meaningful way</li> <li>○ the challenge of running a portfolio course that had enough students enrolled because of our flexible entry and open pathway to completing the program</li> <li>○ the challenge of a small faculty reviewing numerous portfolios</li> <li>○ the overwhelming desire of students, after being surveyed, to take an additional course where they do something new, as opposed to reviewing 9 previous courses to create a portfolio</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The faculty decided that the independent directed study course was an authentic alternative for students to consolidate and apply their knowledge</li> </ul>
<p>The expectations of the 'project' route become clearer. The term 'project' connotes a practical component and should possibly be renamed in case further graduate work is considered.</p>	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current project and thesis options are well articulated in the new online graduate handbook at <a href="https://meduoit.weebly.com/programs.html">https://meduoit.weebly.com/programs.html</a> with both written and video descriptions</li> <li>The term "major research paper" (MRP) was considered instead of project, but the grad faculty felt the MRP might be too restrictive and did not add more clarity</li> <li>Changing the term would create a considerable amount of administrative work (e.g. webpages, redoing videos, handbooks) and the benefits of this change were not seen as worthwhile</li> </ul>
<p>The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) support the graduate Master students with a variety of online services such as professional development workshops and grant writing activities. These supports are usually provided face-to-face and thus, many education students do not participate. There is a need for these services to be provided online.</p>	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Grad Program director had multiple conversations with Student Engagement (Assoc Dean of SGPS, Aziz Douai) and was assured that they were trying to increase the availability of online services.</li> <li>There are now 7 online workshops offered through <a href="#">Mitacs</a></li> <li>There is a marked imbalance in the courses offered FTF compared to online, and we would like to see more online workshops available, but this is outside of our direct control</li> <li>We will continue to push for an online format</li> </ul>
<p>The faculty capitalize on the expertise and resources provided by the library. The librarians have worthwhile suggestions to consider (e.g., inclusion of library guest lectures and research skills in related courses) that may be beneficial to students.</p>	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All instructors are encouraged to direct their students to the librarians for research resources, and where applicable, have a librarian visit the class</li> <li>We have included guest librarians in our research methods course to discuss the range of library resources available to graduate students</li> </ul>
<p>A mechanism (e.g., course credit or course release) be created to recognize faculty supervising students in the graduate programs in order that the burden of supervision is equitably shared and students have greater selection.</p>	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unfortunately, this is a collective agreement issue and at this stage, Ontario Tech U does not give credit to faculty for supervising students</li> <li>We have put in a program to balance graduate supervision by encouraging ALL faculty to teach in the graduate program and to supervise students</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Our efforts have been relatively successful with a marked increase in supervision across our faculty</i></li> <li>• <i>We have also started a program to support ALL faculty in promoting and communicating their research through websites, faculty research pages, research gate, and social media – this effort is intended to increase access to ALL faculty research for students</i></li> <li>• <i>We have rotated instructors into the introductory research methods course to increase their access to students in a research focussed environment</i></li> </ul>
<i>An admissions system be implemented that would ensure more efficient and equitable distribution of labour across all faculty members.</i>	<i>Complete</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>All faculty who teach in the graduate program are now required to reviewed graduate applications each term – this is part of their service component in their performance reviews</i></li> </ul>
<i>A focus be placed on key partnerships that add value to the Education Graduate Programs, are sustainable in the long term, and where both institutions research and infrastructure strengths can be strategically combined. At the international level, the partnership for a doctoral program with the Technological University of Dublin seems a worthy endeavour. Partnerships with other Ontario Tech faculties may also be feasible and sustainable.</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The partnership with Dublin was pursued and unfortunately a combined doctoral program was not feasible</i></li> <li>• <i>We developed an Ed.D. proposal involving multiple Ontario Tech faculties including nearly 40 professors outside our department and four CRC chairs – It is about to be submitted to external reviewers (Spring, 2020)</i></li> <li>• <i>We are currently working on a partnership with a Chinese recruiting firm to bring graduate students into our program – we are constructing a program to (a) bring students here physically in a cohort and (b) support online applications. The next meeting is Feb 12, 2020</i></li> <li>• <i>Dr. Li is also pursuing partnership leads in India and Brazil</i></li> </ul>