



**FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
February 2017
Master of Arts in Criminology
Program Review
Dean: Dr. Brian Cutler, Interim Dean
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 2015-2016, a program review was scheduled for the Master of Arts in Criminology 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. Laura Huey (University of Western Ontario), Dr. Vincent Sacco (Queen's University)

Internal Reviewer: Dr. Bernadette Murphy (University of Ontario Institute of Technology)

Site Visit: June 6-7, 2016

The MA in Criminology program provides students with a solid foundation of advanced knowledge in criminological theory, sophisticated research methodologies, complex quantitative and qualitative applications, and contemporary substantive issues in criminology. The program trains both mid-career and pre-career students for careers in analysis and research in criminal justice agency settings. It also prepares students for advanced graduate work at the PhD level.

Significant Strengths of the Program

- Several current and emergent fields are uniquely covered by faculty, topics that are under-represented in other graduate programs

- Attention paid by faculty to the creation of new knowledge, including encouraging students to attend conferences and publish thesis results
- Location of the program and relationships to the wider community
- In contrast to many programs, students are required to develop competency in sophisticated quantitative analysis and are taught practical skills vital in an information economy
- High quality thesis and major paper assignments due to clear and rigorous standards
- Intensive supervision and mentoring of graduate students

Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement

- More elective courses (particularly gender studies and mental health courses)
- Core study of victims/victimology
- Connection with campus life at the north location.
- Demands of graduate supervision not evenly shared by members of faculty
- Recognized excellence of the faculty and need for an increased research profile of the program through the addition of a Canada Research Chair (I or II)
- Increased financial support for students.

The External Review

The review of the MA in Criminology program took place over two days, June 6-7, 2016. The reviewers had a discussion with a group of faculty members about the strengths, challenges and opportunities for the MA in Criminology. They also had a lengthy discussion with a group of current graduate students from the program, as well as three former students. The graduate students provided a sense of their time within the M.A. program, why they chose it, what was good and any challenges they encountered.

Additionally, the reviewers' toured facilities at the downtown location, including the library, teaching classrooms, graduate student space, faculty offices at 55 Bond Street East and the Indigenous Centre. The reviewers briefly saw the North Campus buildings en route to meeting with the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The review was overwhelmingly positive. External reviewers commented on the success of the programs, the high quality and sophisticated content of both the curriculum and student theses/major papers, and the outstanding level of mentoring provided by faculty.

Summary of Recommendations and Responses

Reviewer Recommendation 1:

Develop a program brand or 'identity': Although this program has several strengths and is, in many respects, one to be emulated, a significant deficit is that it lacks a coherent identity and thus does not stand out from other programs in Criminology or Sociology (with a criminology focus). In order to continue developing in a way that attracts quality students, faculty need to develop a brand or program identity that is both unique from competing programs and offers something that potential students would highly value.

Faculty Response

In keeping with both the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities' Strategic Mandate and that of UOIT, the Master of Arts in Criminology program has a clear concentration in the area of social justice

and “real world” problems. It was a key determinant in the proposal for a PhD in Criminology and Social Justice. Thus, in developing the PhD program, the Program has already taken steps to more acutely, and publicly identify these focal areas (e.g., the formation of research groups and launching lecture series with public-visibility and collaborations in mind).

Students report choosing to come to UOIT because of the social justice focus and variety of faculty research in that area. This program distinguishes itself because of the variety of opportunities available to students in terms of breadth of available social justice research and real world/community involvement and impact. Many of the faculty are well recognized authorities in the areas of hate crime, mental health, youth justice and intimate partner violence and provide students with an abundance of experience working with and in the community to evaluate, problem solve and contribute to policy. The Faculty will ensure that through recruitment and marketing efforts our brand is clearly stated and well advertised through the website, Graduate View Book, and recruitment materials. The recent addition of a PhD in Criminology and Social Justice will reinforce this messaging.

Note that the reviewers repeatedly praised the faculty for the level and quality of mentorship that has been provided to students. This aspect of the Master’s program is another important branding message that will continue to be emphasize as part of the program’s identity. New recruitment material for both the Master’s and PhD indeed highlight “focused mentoring.” This is clearly a selling point for the program and will be given prominence in all marketing material.

Reviewer Recommendation 2:

Increasing the program profile: A lot of students seek Professors’ advice in choosing graduate schools, if those Professors are unaware of your program, and its relative merits, yours will not be on the list. Educating faculty members at other schools is one way. Developing more innovative recruitment strategies is another.

Faculty Response

The Criminology program has only recently engaged in a more concentrated effort to increase the program profile through more targeted recruitment efforts. This has included more “edgy” poster and postcards and hosted tables at Criminology conferences. However, in keeping with the Office of Graduate Studies’ new initiatives the program will supplement these efforts with a greater presence on social media - particularly Facebook, Twitter, and possibly through graduate student blogs. In addition, the program will utilize high profile outlets to raise the program’s profile. For example, the Criminologist is the widest read newsletter in North America as it is sent to virtually every member of the American Society of Criminology. A full-page advertisement of the program would presumably have substantive impact. Finally, the program will engage faculty, current students, and alumni in recruitment efforts targeted to colleagues and peers at other universities who may not have a Master’s program or who have limited admission quotas. The faculty have already seen the benefits of this recruitment, with many of the current graduate students and interested future applicants having arrived through such professional networking initiatives.

Reviewer Recommendation 3:

Increasing the public and academic profile of junior faculty: Some effort should be expended in assisting junior faculty to raise their own public and professional profiles through various channels.

Faculty Response

Raising the profile of junior faculty is key. The Faculty strives to create an academic environment in which junior faculty members can succeed. They are provided modest teaching workloads, professional development funds, other forms of support (e.g., Office of Research Support, Teaching & Learning Centre), and a great deal of encouragement to excel in research, teaching, and service. Further, junior faculty members are encouraged to engage in cross-institutional and/or national research networks, media interviews or releases on exciting work they are undertaking, participation in public forums and speaking events. The Faculty also support the role senior faculty should play in mentoring junior faculty members to publish, present at conferences, apply for grants, and supervise graduate students. These efforts will also raise the profile of the exceptional junior faculty. The new PhD program also serves to encourage grant acquisition and senior faculty mentorship of junior faculty in the context of supervision of students' dissertation work and research assistantships.

Reviewer Recommendation 4:

Further increasing the quality of the research component of the program through a CRC: We are not suggesting any inadequacies or deficiencies on the part of the existing faculty but rather that the addition of a CRC would help to enhance the prestige of the program and further build UOIT's reputation in Criminology both nationally and internationally.

Faculty Response

The Program will recommend a CRC the next time the university administration solicits CRC proposals.

Reviewer Recommendation 5:

Continue to create an introductory level quantitative methods course.

Faculty Response

The first year quantitative course has been changed to be two sections, one an introductory course and the other an intermediate course.

Reviewer Recommendation 6:

Include a practical component in the Qualitative Methods course.

Faculty Response

The first year Qualitative Methods course has been revised to include a more practical component and a second more advanced course Quantitative 2 has been added that is almost entirely practical in nature.

Reviewer Recommendation 7:

Explore the possibility of offering electives in Mental Health and Gender Studies, perhaps in conjunction with Health Sciences.

Faculty Response

Currently there is only one elective course available to the students within the program. Each year faculty come forward to propose courses, and students vote on which course they would like to see offered. To date a course on Mental Health or Gender has not been offered as one of the possible offerings. However, we now have a number of faculty who could propose such courses. It will then

be up to students to decide if their preference would be one of these over other possibilities. Further investigation into the possibility of students being able to take their elective in other Faculties will occur.

Reviewer Recommendation 8:

Consider the addition of an advanced course in victimology.

Faculty Response

Victimology research is incorporated within existing coursework. In addition, a faculty member may propose a victimology course to be offered as an elective. It is the preference of the Faculty to not increase the number of required courses in the program, as they are satisfied with the current course requirements and do not wish to risk extending times to graduation.

Plan of Action

The table below presents a timeline of the actions planned to address the recommendations from the external report.

Proposed Action	Timeline	Person/Area Responsible
Develop clear branding	2017-2019	Graduate Committee and Office of Graduate Studies
Increase program profile	2017-2019	Graduate Committee and Office of Graduate Studies
Increase profile of junior faculty	Ongoing	Graduate Committee, Senior Faculty, Dean's Office, Research Services
Mental Health/Gender Studies Optional Courses	2017-2019	Graduate Committee

Due Date for 18-Month Follow-up on Plan of Action: March 2018

Date of Next Cyclical Review: 2023-2024