18-Month Follow-Up
SUMMARY REPORT
September 8, 2023

Bachelor of Arts in Educational Studies and Digital Technology (ESDT) and Designing Adult Learning for the Digital Age (ALDA) undergraduate diploma

Dean: Dr. Robin Kay

Under Ontario Tech University's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) and the Ontario Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), all programs are subject to a comprehensive review at least/at minimum 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. The visit involves discussions with senior academic administrators, faculty, staff, and students.
3. Submission of an external reviewers' report including recommendations on ways the program may be improved based on a review of the program's self-study brief, discussions during the site visit and supporting material.
4. Internal responses to the external review and recommendations prepared separately by the Program and Dean.
5. Development of an Implementation Plan prepared by the Dean including resource requirements and a timeline for acting on and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations.

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 2020-2022, a review was scheduled for the Bachelor of Arts in Educational Studies and Digital Technology (ESDT) and Designing Adult Learning for the Digital Age (ALDA) undergraduate diploma with a site visit on September 28-29, 2021. The program has submitted to the Provost's Office a report outlining the progress they have made relative to the implementation plan resulting from the review. A summary of this progress is provided on the following pages.

	Implementation Plan Recommendation and Action Item(s) *(corresponding recommendation # from reviewers' report)*		Timeline	Status*	Comments from Dean on Progress of implementation
1.	The program should be more systematic in its program reviews with follow-through assessments of the impact of action plans with follow-up reports after intervals of one, three, and five years. The self-assessment process should receive support in obtaining the data required to conduct an evaluation (e.g., institutional analysis, surveys, focus groups, etc.)	**Action 1** - Formally collect and summarize student feedback each term and each year (more comprehensive survey)	Apr 2022	Continuous	Data is being systematically collected from the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis (OIRA) following each academic term and year to understand our students and their course-taking patterns better. Data from internal surveys are being collected and summarized to inform ongoing program improvements. A more comprehensive survey is currently being developed to include feedback on the program's specializations and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
		Action 2 - Update and revise current courses	May 2022 - May 2023	In Progress, Continuous	The Educational Studies (EDST) Director has led the EDST team through a collaborative review of current courses using feedback from student surveys and focus groups. To date, this has resulted in four courses being **replaced**, fifteen courses **updated**, and five new courses **added**. Five additional courses will undergo faculty review in Fall 2023. Beginning Fall 2024, the EDST team will choose 3-8 courses to review so that courses are being reviewed and student feedback is integrated on a regular basis.

2.	The program requires a needs assessment to determine the best fit for the target learner population (e.g., higher education, K12, early childhood, workplace learning, language learning, etc.) and target pathways and marketing accordingly.	**Action 3** - Conduct needs assessment for all specializations	Mar 2022 - Sept 2023	Complete, Continuous	The Adult Learning and Technology specialization was evaluated by student focus groups and a team of faculty and students, leading to the proposal of a revised program which was reviewed by industry leaders. This action resulted in the **replacement** of three courses and the update of another course in the specialization. Student focus groups and a team of faculty and students similarly evaluated the Early Childhood Studies specialization. This review resulted in the **addition** of two new courses and an update of another course in the specialization. A new specialization focused on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) began in Fall 2022 and has received positive informal feedback to date. To ensure ongoing improvement, specialization teams will meet once annually for informal reviews, triggering needs assessments as required. Yearly surveys will ask for ongoing feedback on all specializations.
		Action 4 - Submit an application to Institute for Performance and Learning	Sept 2022	In Progress	Application forms are currently being completed, with alignments between core courses and I4PL competency areas identified. The 2023-2024 Academic Calendar is now available to support the application, and instructor information on the official website (including research areas of expertise) will be updated for the Fall 2023 semester.
3.	Once the identity of the program is determined in terms of best fit for the target population(s), it	**Action 5** - Develop a formal process for marketing and advertising while exploring new	Jan 2022 - Fall 2023	In Progress, Continuous	The recently hired Program Assistant collaborates with work-study students to develop marketing strategies for the different specializations. To date, the Early Childhood Studies promotions have been very effective. The marketing

	requires support from the university in terms of marketing and promotion to support its rebranding.	promotion opportunities			plan for the Adult Learning specialization is nearing completion for a Fall 2023 rollout. Additional diplomas are being developed (Fall 2023) to attract enrollment from Special Education and EDI markets. The marketing team (Dean, Program Assistant, and work-study students) is continually revising the advertising plan based on enrollment data and response to program webinars.
4.	The program requires additional administrative support from or provided to area faculty for program development, oversight, input on sessional hiring, and conducting work pertaining to needs assessment, marketing, and more. In addition, administrative and advising support should be increased to reduce the intensity of faculty and staff workload.	**Action 6** - Monitor enrollment, conduct needs assessment for additional faculty and staff and submit a recommendation to Provost	Fall 2022 - Fall 2023	Complete	The faculty recently developed (and filled) a Program Assistant role to support administrative operations (e.g., data consolidation and analysis, digital marketing, etc.). Advising support was also expanded with the addition of a first-year advisor to support incoming students and increase the capacity of the advising team. As enrollment increases, administrative support will be reassessed.
5.	The University and Faculty need to address the representation	**Action 7** - Adhere to EDI guidelines and prioritize diversity when	Continuous practice	Continuous	Recent interviews for tenure track and limited-term faculty member positions prioritized candidates

of visible minorities in the program faculty and instructional staff (through preferential or targeted hiring) and in the learner community (admission pathways for inclusion). Equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization initiatives should be designed and implemented in concert with program redesign to ensure corresponding values are implemented in the courses and to ensure expertise is present in offering these specialty courses.	hiring new faculty or staff			representing visible minorities. Of these, one was hired. Job postings for sessional instructors in EDI courses have specifically requested that candidates have lived experience; as a result, several sessional instructors representing visible minorities have been hired.
	Action 8 - Create EDI specialization and review EDI content for all courses	Jan 2022 - Fall 2023	Complete	The EDI specialization began in Fall 2022 with 133 students enrolled across two sections of its foundational course, which received positive feedback. The other specialization courses were also well-attended, with positive feedback.
	Action 9 - Survey students to assess diversity in BA program	Dec 2022 - Yearly survey	Continuous	The Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IDEA) committee (see response to **Action 10**) conducted an initial survey in late 2022/early 2023, receiving 311 responses. Students' feedback was thoughtful, highlighting not only the program's areas of success but also constructive feedback on areas of potential improvement.
	Action 10 - Develop BA EDI student committee	Jan 2022	Complete	IDEA committee was formed in early 2022 with student representation from all Faculty of Education programs. Their Vision Statement includes cultivating "an inclusive teaching and learning environment and fostering deeper respect and appreciation for individual perspectives, abilities, and lived experiences". Early initiatives include lobbying the faculty to fund presentations from members of equity-seeking groups, advocating for safer naming protocols and pronoun visibility, challenging inequitable resources and policies, and beginning to develop an Equity Certificate for Faculty of Education students.

6.	The Faculty remove the program's thesis option in favour of a project-based and/or course-completion option.	**Action 11** - Make thesis optional	Jan 2022	Complete	The mandatory thesis courses (formerly EDST 4200U and EDST 4201U) have been removed and replaced with elective research-oriented courses: - EDST 4900U: Research Literacy - EDST 4901U: Research Project Given the importance of evidence-based educational practice, the program will continue monitoring and revisit whether a required course on research literacy is needed. However, the research project course will remain optional.
7.	The Faculty reorganized its course offerings and staffing in the program to reduce the reliance on sessional instructors, large class sizes, and emphasis on TA support, to increase its faculty-student ratio and faculty-sessional ratio to bring it into line with norms across Canada.	**Action 12 (same as Action 6 above)** - Monitor enrollment, conduct needs assessment for additional faculty and staff and submit recommendations for resources to Provost	Fall 2022 - Fall 2023	Continuous	As program enrollment has increased, additional tenure track and limited-term faculty members have been hired, all with teaching loads that include the Educational Studies program.
8.	The Faculty conducts a review of course offerings to modernize its program, review sequencing, establish prerequisites (e.g., making writing and inquiry courses	**Action 13** - <u>Phase 1</u> - Major program change to re-organize course and program structure	Jan 2022 - Sept 2022	Complete	The major program change took effect for the Advanced Entry program in Fall 2022, providing students with 11 new electives to add breadth and depth to their study. New and improved course numbering provides a clear vision through the program. The Minor in Educational Studies program was updated to reflect the major course structure. The Adult Learning specialization was updated in response to consultation

as required in first year), and pathways that align to target populations as per needs assessment, and to create a clear plan for learners and administrative staff in creating multi-year cycles of offerings. Coursework must address a critical focus of technology, EDID, accessibility, and emerging topics. Consideration of the revisions to the program learning outcomes to broaden them should guide this process as well.				with experts in the field. The Adult Learning diploma was similarly updated to reflect changes in the Adult Learning specialization and add needed flexibility. While all required (EDST) courses were intended to be offered online, at the request of prospective students, we are piloting a **hybrid** version of the first four courses. In Fall 2023: - EDST 1000U: Foundations of Learning - EDST 1100U: Problem & Inquiry-Based Learning In Winter 2024: - EDST 1130U: Writing & Digital Literacy - EDST 1230U: Design Thinking & Visual Design for Educational Contexts These hybrid offerings are being collaboratively developed and will be researched with regard to their effectiveness, capacity for community-building, and fulfillment of program objectives.
	Action 14 - Phase 2- Revision of courses to upgrade titles, description, learning outcomes	May 2022 - May 2023	In Progress	Twelve courses have been **added** to the program that (a) better reflect the field, (b) rapidly address changes in the field (e.g., Special Topics courses); and, (c) provide students with the opportunity to study topics of interest in depth (i.e., Directed Studies course).

				Fourteen courses have been **updated**, with five that still need updating in Fall 2023. The Educational Studies team will continue to review at least 25% of its courses per year to ensure the program remains up to date. This is particularly important given our program's emphasis on technology and the rate at which educational technologies change or become obsolete.
9.	The Faculty strike a research and outreach committee or work with a Faculty or central research unit to improve the research-teaching connection and explore creating research internships, undergraduate research awards, establishment of research chair positions for new faculty, and developing connections between learners and other research units on campus (e.g., AI, VR).	**Action 15** - Develop public repository for student theses and EEPs	May 2022-May 2023	In Progress	Discussions are underway regarding the creation of a website to showcase selected research projects. Program staff will work with students to publish their work on these and other channels (e.g., blogs on official websites, faculty journals, etc.).
		Action 16 - Develop internship course(s) including research-based placements	Mar 2022 - May 2023	Complete	Two new experiential learning courses were developed: - EDST 4980U: Work Integrated Learning I - EDST 4981U: Work Integrated Learning II The first iteration of these courses was available for registration in the 2023-2024 academic year, but initial enrollment was insufficient to offer the course. Program staff will continue to develop course procedures and timelines, establish partnerships with potential host organizations, and solicit student feedback on current experiential courses to inform the next offering of these courses.
10.	The University and Faculty work to install digital infrastructure that is required	**Action 17** - Research, promote and formalize OER	Mar 2022 - Fall 2023	In Progress	A form has been developed for collecting work, including permissions to share. A website has been created to showcase projects at events.

to support the program's pedagogical strengths and support its alignment with University Plans. Specifically, open-source tools are recommended to support learner portfolio development, data ownership and mobility (e.g., hosted WordPress), and backchannel communication. Modernizing video conferencing infrastructure both on campus and online (e.g., shifting from Adobe Connect). Work-study positions could be explored to support learners in the implementation and support of these and other institutional tools for both the program and the campus. This could benefit the campus as well as a means to recruit staff for its learning technologies unit.	practices in the BA program			Instructors will continue to be encouraged to use OER practices in their courses. The program will also continue to promote the sharing of OER projects and connect the sharing website with other faculties and/or universities.
	Action 18 - Update the video conferencing program to Zoom	Sep 2021 - Continuous	Complete	The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated an earlier shift to the Zoom platform in Fall 2020, as the external review was being completed. Some instructors experimented with the use of Google Meet at this time, but synchronous classroom sessions are now conducted exclusively in Zoom, with Google Meet reserved for office hours and other informal meetings.

11.	The University must address the outstanding items in the Gap Analysis dated 2012 to ensure the inclusion of online learners as legitimate members of the University Community and to bring its practices into alignment with its University Academic-Research Plan.	**Action 19** - Address remaining items in 2012 Gap analysis	Sep 2021-Sep 2023	Complete	Most services are now accessible to online students, including:

Most services are now accessible to online students, including:

- Student Life
- Academic Support
- Student Learning Centre, including Peer tutoring, facilitated study sessions, specialist support, workshops and special events (delivered in-person and online).
- Accessibility & Accommodations
- Career Readiness
- Equity & Inclusion
- Campus Bookstore
- Library Services
- Access Copyright
- Technology Enhanced Learning
- Student Societies
- Wellness & Support Services, including mental health counselling.
- Campus Life & Events
- Community & Social Programming
- Student Representation & Leadership
- Campus Clubs
- Student Engagement
- Student Success Support

Other identified gaps have been addressed, including the shift to a mobile-friendly Learning Management System (Canvas), improved quality of synchronous learning sessions, open voice communication channels (Google Meet & Discord), online orientation, improved technical support (official and peer support), training and tutorials for common technologies, and an emphasis on exceptional online education practices (including streaming quality).

Gaps still to be addressed include promoting consistency in the way the Canvas LMS is utilized (while

					maintaining academic freedom for instructors) and the creation of a centralized repository of help documents and videos to be provided as part of students' orientation to the program.
12.	A student representative(s) provide input on the Gap Analysis review and to ensure their input is provided on ways to solicit authentic and representative input for any internal program reviews. If undergraduate (and graduate) student representatives are not already included in program (or department meetings, when appropriate), then this should be implemented.	**Action 20** - Create student EDI committee	Jan 2022	Complete	Further to **Action 10**, the IDEA committee was formed in early 2022 with student representation from all Faculty of Education programs. The IDEA committee is a cross-program committee dedicated to equity, diversity, and inclusion. They aim to raise awareness within the Faculty of Education about biases, discrimination, stereotypes, exclusion, and racism in classrooms and decision-making. They work towards fair and equitable processes by removing biased language, increasing diversity in committees, and developing a charter of student rights. They maintain a strong presence through various university platforms, mentor students facing discrimination, advise on IDEA-related matters, and analyze demographic data annually. Insight on the Gap Analysis was sought from IDEA committee representatives, and future program analyses will take into account the committee's input and data analyses.
		Action 21 - Create student association for BA students	Sept 2022	Complete	The existing student association, BESA (Bachelor of Education Student Association) has undergone a transformation and rebranding as FESA (Faculty of Education Student Association), to embrace inclusivity for all undergraduate programs in the Faculty of Education. Working in collaboration with the Ontario Tech Student Union, FESA is currently in the process of crafting a new constitution. This constitution

				will introduce sub-societies dedicated to serving the unique needs of students in the Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Education (BEd) programs. The ultimate goals of this reorganization are to provide targeted support, enhance representation, and effectively advocate for and support all students within the Faculty of Education, fostering a more vibrant and inclusive student community.
13.	Investigate and establish partnerships within and beyond the campus to provide workplace co-ops/internships, work-study, and volunteer opportunities as part of coursework.	**Action 22a** - Develop internship course for 4-year Educational Studies program. **Action 22b** – Develop experiential learning within courses. **Action 22c** – Develop partnerships within and beyond the university.	Feb 2022 - Sept 2023	Complete	**22a.** Two new experiential learning courses (per **Action 16**) have been developed to enable opportunities for upper-year students to connect theory to practice through work-integrated learning in their communities. Course admission procedures have been established, including opportunities for students to identify potential placements of interest. The program continues to establish relationships with potential placement hosts to offer local and/or remote opportunities, and these courses will run when the BA EDST program is in its fourth year. These two courses add to the experiential learning offered by existing Engaged Educator Project courses (EDST 4300U & EDST 4301U), which enable students to undertake digital learning consultations with organizations in their community. **22b.** Experiential learning is being built into multiple courses. For example, in EDST 4150U, students are analysing data and developing projects for Durham City. In EDST 3460U, students will be developing projects for a variety of stakeholders. **22c.** We have developed partnerships with a variety of groups in the development and ongoing management of the program. We

					worked with external partners in arranging consultations with learning organizations on our new adult learning program. We have also worked with careers to provide external speakers for job fairs.
14.	Only if/when faculty capacity is available through hiring a large undergraduate course could be developed and offered to 1st and 2nd-year learners from across campus to help develop their digital, networked, and open literacies.	**Action 23** - Develop two large scale electives for the university	Feb 2022-Sept 2023	In Progress	With the inaugural cohort of our four-year program beginning in Fall 2024, we are first experimenting with large sections of our first-year courses primarily in-house. In particular, we are exploring how we can use technology to support meaningful feedback and learning activities in large groups. To create cross-program partnerships and interdisciplinary elective opportunities for our BA students, we have also made several of our courses available at registration to students of other programs (e.g., KINE, COMM, SSH): - EDST 1000U: Foundations of Learning - EDST 1100U: Problem & Inquiry-Based Learning - EDST 1230U: Design Thinking & Visual Design for Educational Contexts - EDST 2110U: Assessment and Evaluation - EDST 3110U: Critical Digital Literacies And opened most other courses mid-July to students of these programs, given space and co-/pre-requisites.

*Process Status Legend:

Complete: *Accomplished action item; no further steps required.*
Continuous: *Initial action item complete but requires ongoing monitoring and/or enhancement.*

In Progress: *Progress on the action item has been initiated but is not complete at this time. Outline all steps taken in the comment's column.*
On Hold*: Unable to complete due to other dependent factor(s).*
Cancelled*: Item no longer relevant or resources unavailable.*

This summary report will be sent for approval to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (USC or GSC) and will subsequently be reported to Academic Council. It will then be posted on the Ontario Tech corporate website.

Next Scheduled Program Review: 2026-2028