FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
Executive Summary
Cyclical Program Review

Degree Program:	Masters of Health Sciences
Components:	Community, Public and Population Health; Health Informatics; and Kinesiology
Dean:	Dr. Carol D. Rodgers, PhD
Date:	August 21, 2023

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.

In academic years 2021-2023, a program review was scheduled for Masters of Health Sciences. This is the second program review for this program. A timeline of the review is provided below.

Program Review Timeline	Date
Program Review start date:	Oct.12, 2022
Self Study submitted/approved:	Jan. 5, 2023
Site Visit:	Apr 25-27, 2023
External Reviewers Report received:	May 4, 2023
Program Response received:	May 31, 2023
Decanal Response received:	July 5, 2023

Based on the self-study, the reviewers were asked to consider the fields of study, course options, and administrative aspects of the program. The reviewers noted that

Ontario Tech University could offer a unique experience to students with excellent opportunities for recruitment and funding. The reviewers indicated that the program was a key stage in its development, with the next phase requiring core faculty with high quality research programs, and competency to teach and supervise graduate students. The reviewers encouraged leaders and stakeholders to be bold and progressive as they continue to grow this program.

The site visit took place on **April 25-27th, 2023**

The review consisted of two external reviewers. During the virtual site visit, the reviewers met with members of the Faculty as well as key stakeholders at the University; including Dr. Lori Livingston, Provost; Dr. Carol Rodgers – Dean of Health Sciences, Dr. Meghann Lloyd– IAT Chair; Dr. Nick Wattie, Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies; staff from the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies; Sarah Rasile, Director, Student Success (Student Life); Emily Tufts – Associate University Librarian; members of the internal assessment team and a number of faculty, staff, and students.

The external reviewers identified 10 recommendations identifying specific steps to be taken to improve the program. The reviewers highlighted areas of improvement around program structure and faculty workload. The prioritized list of recommendations is available in the Implementation Plan.

A Final Assessment Report (FAR) has been prepared to synthesize the reports and recommendations resulting from the review, identifying the strengths of the program as well as the opportunities for program improvement and enhancement. The Implementation Plan (IP) presents a timeline of the follow-up and resource requirements addressing the recommendations from the external reviewers' report. Both documents, accompanied by this Executive Summary (ES), will be delivered to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (USC/GSC) to be reviewed and approved October 24, 2023.

Governance	Document(s)	Type of review	Date
Faculty Council	IP	Feedback	*October 4, 2023*
Resource Committee	IP	Resource review	*August 21, 2023*
USC/GSC	FAR, ES, IP	Approval	*October 24, 2023*
Quality Council	FAR, ES, IP	QAF requirement	
Academic Council	ES, IP	For information	
Board of Governors	ES, IP	For information	
Corporate Website	ES, IP	QAF requirement	

Due Date for 18-Month Follow-up Report: January 3, 2025

Date of Next Cyclical Review: 2029-2031
  Timeframe for associated site visit: Fall 2030

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
July 3, 2023
Master of Health Sciences
Program Review
Dean: Carol D. Rodgers, PhD

The Implementation Plan is a critical outcome of the Cyclical Program Review process. The Dean solicits feedback on the Implementation Plan through Faculty Council and the plan is reviewed by the Provost, through the Resource Committee, to examine resource implications and allocations. A Final Assessment Report (FAR) and Executive Summary are prepared synthesizing the program review reports and responses, following review of the Implementation Plan by the Resource Committee. The plan proceeds through Ontario Tech's governance process and is posted on the corporate website.

The table below presents a timeline of the follow-up and resource requirements addressing the recommendations from the external reviewers' report.

Recommendation *(corresponding # from reviewers' report)*	Action Item(s)	Specify role of person responsible	Timeline for action and monitoring	Resource Requirements
1. The three fields of study should be revisited. Specifically, the Community, Public and Population Health needs rebranding with a view to establishing a stronger, more attractive title (e.g., Health Innovation and Technology; Health Innovation and Leadership). While colleagues are working hard to move the Health Informatics field forward, we suggest that it be eliminated and that the one member appointed in the Faculty of Health be moved to the Kinesiology field.	Revisit the three fields of study to ensure that they align with faculty expertise and are each viable focus areas to retain. Where appropriate, rebrand field[s].	Associate Dean – Graduate Education and Research GPC Graduate Faculty	Begin Fall, 2023 - this will ultimately be linked to the course-based degree. Unlikely that finalized focus areas will be confirmed until Winter 2025.	

3	Not all students are best served by completing a Master's thesis, and the major research project pathway is not a solution because it is a mini-thesis, half-measure solution for those who do not succeed in research. We suggest two-degree pathways, namely, A 5-term thesis route (i.e., similar to the existing program but requiring one less course).	Reduce the current MHSc thesis route course requirement by one course. Explore the development of a course-based Masters' degree with a capstone experience/practicum requirement [vs. research project pathway]	Associate Dean – Graduate Education and Research GPC Graduate Faculty	Fall, 2023 – course reduction process initiated [complete for 2024 entry cohort] Course-work based degree – ideal 1st cohort Fall 2026.	Course work degree development will require significant support from CIQE through the "new program" process.
4	Faculty leaders need to work with central communication officials to ensure that the program is effectively marketed to prospective students. International students may also be interested in the program given the different degree pathways.	Continue to stress the importance of effective program marketing to central communication and other senior administration officials.	Dean	Ongoing	Central communications – support program marketing
6	The Graduate Seminar should be re-formatted to reduce the number of sessions and add other activities to heighten pan-Faculty engagement (e.g., Graduate Student Conference, Dean's Speaker Series, social events) should be explored.	Re-format the graduate seminar	Associate Dean – Graduate Education and Research	Currently in progress. Implementation of graduate research conference, planned for Spring 2024. Altered seminar content – pilot modules [Fall/Winter 2023/24]/discussions related to student issues impacting mental health [balancing TAships etc.; supervisor expectations]. Fall 2023 – will be F2F format to create more opportunities for engagement/socialization.	

| 7 | Consider revising or replacing the research methods required course to offer students a high-level overview of the research process, and different methodologies, including a review of the Ethics of conducting research with human participants, and leading to the preparation and submission of their ethics application. | Conduct a course mapping exercise – assess overlap between courses; learning outcome attainment

Revise current required course to reduce overlap and reflect broader overview of research process etc. | Associate Dean – Graduate Education and Research

Course Instructors | Fall 2023 – completed by Spring 2024. Revised required course delivered Fall 2024. | TLC course mapping/learning outcomes |

*The Dean shall be responsible for monitoring and reporting on the Implementation Plan.

Recommendations not Addressed and Rationale

#	Recommendation not Addressed	Rationale
2	In place of Health Informatics as a field of study, we suggest the establishment of a Research Centre for Health Innovation and Simulation that will build on the existing expertise across Faculties, leading to greater research synergy in this area of institutional strength.	This is outside the scope of this review. The establishment of research Centres has an established procedures and policies in place at Ontario Tech.
5	If reduced to two fields (Kinesiology and CPPH) with two, degree pathways (thesis- and course-based), and enrolments increase as anticipated, the appointment of a Graduate Director for each field of study is warranted.	Currently no need to move in this direction. Reconsider if course-based degree yields anticipated high enrolment[s].
8	Student space with assigned desks is needed for MHSc students in the thesis pathway. This is important for strengthening the graduate and research culture and team building. This also has the potential to shorten time to completion.	While it is agreed that this would be optimal and we will continue to look for opportunities that current space limitations on campus make this quite challenging with respect to individual assigned spaces.
9	Graduate students conducting qualitative research should be provided with the appropriate software support (e.g., NVIVO).	This is a central administrative issue. We have, and will continue to advocate for this through appropriate channels [SGPS; IT Quarterly Touchpoint meetings etc.].
10	While outside the scope of our mandate, we believe that the institution should implement a workload formula that acknowledges and supports graduate supervision and supports colleagues' contributions.	As noted, – outside the scope of the mandate.

Due Date for 18-Month Follow-up Report: January 3, 2025

Date of Next Cyclical Review: 2029-2031