

Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan for the Cyclical Program Review of the Academic Programs in the Department of Public Health Sciences

In accordance with Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes (QUQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the graduate programs delivered by the Department of Public Health Sciences. This report identifies the significant strengths of the programs, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The report includes an implementation plan that identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the final assessment report; who will be responsible for providing any resources entailed by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations; who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and, timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

Summary of the Cyclical Program Review of the Academic Programs in the Department of Health Sciences

The Department of Public Health Sciences submitted a self-study to the Faculty of Health Sciences, the School of Graduate Studies and the Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) on January 27, 2014. The self-study presented the program descriptions and learning outcomes, an analytical assessment of the academic programs, and program data including the data collected by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning and the School of Graduate Studies. Appended to the self-study were a number of documents including CVs for each member of the Department of Public Health Sciences and the library report.

Two arm's-length external reviewers (Dr. Ambikaipakan Senthilselvan, Professor and Program Director Biostatistics, School of Public Health, University of Alberta and Dr. Kathy Speechley, Professor and Graduate Chair, Epidemiology & Biostatistics, Department of Paediatrics and Epidemiology & Biostatistics, Western University) and one arm's-length internal reviewer (Dr. Marcia Finlayson, Professor, Vice-Dean Health Sciences and Director, School of Rehabilitation Therapy, Queen's University) were selected by the vice-provost (teaching and learning) in consultation with the deans of health sciences and graduate studies, from nominations submitted by the Department of Public Health Sciences. The review team evaluated the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to Queen's on May 28-29, 2014. The site visit included interviews with the vice-provost (teaching and learning), vice-provost and dean and associate dean of graduate studies, dean, vice-dean and associate dean of health sciences and meetings with graduate students, librarians, research teams, staff and faculty.

In their report (June 16, 2014), the review team provided feedback that describes how the Department of Public Health Sciences programs meet the QUQAP evaluation criteria and are consistent with the university's mission and academic priorities. The review team noted the

Queen's University
Executive Summary of the Review of the Academic Programs in the Department of Public Health Sciences

In accordance with Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes (QUQAP), the Department of Public Health Sciences submitted a self-study on January 27, 2014 to the Faculty of Health Sciences, the School of Graduate Studies and the Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) to initiate the cyclical program review of its graduate programs. The approved self-study presented program descriptions, learning outcomes, library report and analyses of data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning and the School of Graduate Studies. Appendices to the self-study contained CVs for each full-time member in the Department of Public Health Sciences.

Three arm's-length reviewers (Dr. Ambikaipakan Senthilselvan, Professor and Program Director Biostatistics, School of Public Health, University of Alberta; Dr. Kathy Speechley, Professor and Graduate Chair, Epidemiology & Biostatistics, Department of Paediatrics and Epidemiology & Biostatistics, Western University; and, Dr. Marcia Finlayson, Professor, Vice-Dean Health Sciences and Director, School of Rehabilitation Therapy, Queen's University) examined the materials and conducted a site visit on May 28-29, 2014. The site visit included interviews with the vice-provost (teaching and learning), vice-provost and dean and associate dean graduate studies, dean, vice-dean and associate dean of health sciences and meetings with graduate students, librarians, research teams, staff and faculty.

In their report (June 16, 2014), the review team provided feedback that describes how the Department of Public Health Sciences' programs meet the QUQAP evaluation criteria and are consistent with the university's mission and academic priorities. The review team noted the overall quality of the graduate academic programs offered by the Department of Public Health Sciences. The review team also praised the culture of the department that values and maintains the rigorous nature of their programs while continuing to be innovative.

The review team did report on a number of challenges including: the need to consolidate programs given the growth over the last few years; the need for a systematic evaluation of introductory biostatistics courses to ensure they meet the needs of both MSc and MPH students; the development of a collaborative strategy within the context of the new budget model to enable graduate students to easily take relevant courses in other programs; and, a review of funding packages to the MSc (Epidemiology) and MSc (Biostatistics) students.

Based on all of the above documentation, a *Final Assessment Report* and an *Implementation Plan* were prepared by the vice-provost (teaching and learning) and approved by the provost (December 9, 2014).

The academic programs in the Department of Public Health Sciences have been approved to continue and are scheduled for their next review in eight years (2021-2022).

Prepared by the vice-provost (teaching and learning)
February 3, 2015

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The head of the Department of Public Health Sciences, after consultation with faculty and staff in the department, submitted a response to the review team report (July 4, 2014). The dean of graduate studies (July 17, 2014), the dean of health sciences (August 11, 2014) and the associate dean, arts and science (August 15, 2014) also submitted their responses to the provost's office. Specific recommendations were discussed, and clarifications and corrections presented.

Subsequent to receipt of the review team report and the internal responses from the department, the associate dean of arts and science, the dean of health sciences and the dean of graduate studies, the senate cyclical program review committee (SCPRC) dedicated its meetings of November 4 and November 25, 2014 to this particular discussion.

The SCPRC would like to recognize the following strengths:

- Highly committed faculty who provide excellent supervision and mentoring to their students
- Clear and appropriate learning outcomes
- Unique departmental culture that blends both professional and research-intensive practices and enriches the student learning experience
- Excellent tracking of students after graduation

The SCPRC would like to identify the following opportunities for enhancement. The department is encouraged to:

- Discontinue the three fields associated with the MSc (Epidemiology) program
- Explore different modes of course delivery, including blended and online
- Increase the practicum coordinator position to a 1 FTE in the MPH program
- Continue to explore collaborative ways to align funding and admission practices of students admitted through two different faculties
- Despite the review team recommendation, the Department of Public Health is encouraged to cautiously explore the development of a PhD-Biostatistics.

Summary of the Reviewer's Recommendations with the Department's and Deans' Responses

Graduate Program – MSc-Biostatistics

The review team recommends that the student funding policies and admission requirements for the MSc (Biostatistics) program be aligned across both departments (i.e. Public Health Sciences and Mathematics & Statistics).

The department agreed with this recommendation and will ask the joint committee overseeing this program to consider changing admission requirements and to discuss the alignment of student funding policies across both departments.

The dean of health sciences agreed with this suggestion of alignment of student funding policies and adjustment of admission requirements.

The associate dean of arts and science stated that the faculty was supportive of this approach.

The vice-provost and dean of the School of Graduate Studies responded that the joint committee overseeing the delivery of the collaborative MSc (Biostatistics) program will need to be mindful that admission is to the home unit (i.e. either Public Health Sciences or Mathematics & Statistics) and not the collaborative program directly. Therefore standards need to be determined accordingly. The SGS agreed that ways to align funding practices of students admitted through two different units should be explored.

Practicum Coordinator – MPH Program

The review team recommends that the practicum coordinator for the MPA program should hold a permanent full-time position.

The department responded that this recommendation relates to growth and will require budgetary approval. The department is in discussion with the Faculty of Health Sciences about this matter.

The dean of health sciences agreed with the reviewers' recommendation for an analysis of the feasibility of enhancing the practicum position.

The School of Graduate Studies responded that networking with faculty/staff of similar professional master's programs may be helpful in sharing resources and solutions to common issues such as finding practicums when a program expands. The SGS is willing to facilitate this networking if desired.

Collaborative Strategy

The review team recommended that the university develop a collaborative strategy within the context of the new budget model to enable graduate students to easily take relevant courses in other programs. SGS should lead this initiative to investigate the barriers and find solutions that are workable across faculties and programs. Incentives (or at least no perceived disincentives) for service teaching may be helpful.

The vice-provost and dean of the school of graduate studies responded that recently, access to graduate courses for students from different programs and incentives for departments to develop service courses has been discussed in a preliminary fashion at the Faculty of Health Sciences Graduate Council. Cross teaching is built into the budget model and when it is part of a collaborative program, a report and sample MOU has been provided by the SGS with recommendation on the attribution of resources.

Implementation Plan:

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
1. The Department of Public Health Sciences should develop and implement improved processes to monitor students' progress in the MSc (Epidemiology) program. Careful attention should be placed on setting milestones and clearly articulating expectations among students and faculty alike.	Initiate discussions with relevant faculty within the department	Head, Department of Public Health Sciences	Dean of health sciences' <i>annual report</i> to the provost 2016
2. The Department of Public Health Sciences should implement strategies to improve time-to-completion especially in the PhD program.	Initiate meeting with relevant Associate Dean (SGS), Department Head and Graduate Coordinator	Head, Department of Public Health Sciences and relevant associate dean in SGS	Dean of health sciences' <i>annual report</i> to the provost 2016 Vice-provost and dean, graduate studies' <i>annual report</i> to the provost 2016
3. To address the challenges associated with the MSc Collaborative Biostatistics program, the Departments of Public Health Sciences and Mathematics and Statistics should, as contemplated, create a formal joint committee between the Faculty of Arts and Science and the Faculty of Health Sciences that will focus on curriculum design, student funding policies, admission standards, etc.	Initiate meeting with Head of Public Health Sciences and Mathematics and Statistics	Heads, Department of Public Health Sciences and Mathematics and Statistics and relevant associate deans in health sciences and arts and science	Deans of health sciences' and arts and science <i>annual report</i> to the provost 2016

The dean of health sciences and the vice-provost and dean, graduate studies, in consultation with the head of the Department of Public Health Sciences shall be responsible for monitoring the implementation plan. The details of progress made will be presented in the deans' annual reports and filed in the Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic). Monitoring reports will be posted on the university web site.

Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan

5 Feb 2015

Approval Date

Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning)

Signature

Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences

Signature

Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Signature

Vice-Provost and Dean, School of Graduate Studies

Signature

**Final status of academic programs in the
Department of Public Health Sciences**

Approved to Continue

Date of next program review

2021/2022 Academic year

