Ongoing Improvement Progress Report

Instructions and Report Template

As part of the protocols outlined in Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), to facilitate the continuous improvement of academic programs between review cycles, in connection with the Final Assessment Report (FAR) and Implementation Plan, a monitoring process will include an Ongoing Improvement Progress Report. The outcomes of this report will be considered as part of the program's next cyclical review.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the operationalization of the implementation plan following a Cyclical Program Review (or the review of a New Program). This should include a brief summary of actions taken by the Program and the Dean's Office since the completion of the review (usually about three years), as well as an update on the stage of implementation for all applicable items. These include:

- whether the action item(s) are in progress, complete or no longer applicable (with a brief explanation);
- the timelines of each item and how they are progressing or expected to progress, particularly if they are diverting from original timelines in the FAR and Implementation Plan, and;
- a short description of any other program developments and improvements that have taken place following the review.
- For new programs only, an evaluation of the initial administration and resourcing of the program.

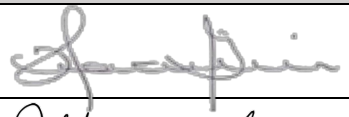
The following report template has been created for the program to report on progress made regarding recommendations presented in the Implementation Plan, and any other relevant program developments and enhancements.

- The program will complete the template and submit it to the faculty Dean's Office for sign-off.
- The program will then submit the completed Ongoing Improvement and Progress Report to the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement (OAQE). Reports are due by June 21, 2024.
    - The OAQE will present all Ongoing Improvement and Progress Reports to SUPR-U/G. Any follow-up questions or concerns will be communicated to the program and Dean's Office by the OAQE.
    - It should be noted that as per the requirements of the province's Quality Council, progress reports will be posted on the reports page of the OAQE website.

Ongoing Improvement Progress Report

Physical Therapy, MPT/ Faculty of Health Sciences

Program	Physical Therapy, MPT	**Faculty / Affiliated University College**	Faculty of Health Sciences
Approval Dates of the Review	SUPR-G: November 8, 2021 SCAPA: November 24, 2021 Senate: December 3, 2021	**Year of the Next Review**	2028-2029
Link to the Programs Final Assessment Report (FAR)	https://www.uwo.ca/pvp/vpacademic/iqap/academic_programs/iqap_reports/fac_of_health_science_grad/2021%20Physical%20Theraphy%20Program%20Review.pdf		
If applicable, submission of follow-up report(s)	*N/A*		

	Name	**Signature**	**Date**
Program Chair/Director	Heather Gillis, Chair MPT Program		April 25th, 2024
Dean (or designate)	S. Jayne Garland, Dean		June 24, 2024

Progress Update on the Implementation Plan

Recommendation #1	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
Admissions. Ensuring the diversity of the applicant pool should be a priority.	• Collect data related to student diversity • Develop outreach and recruitment strategies aimed at reaching those from a variety of backgrounds • Facilitate admission for equity-seeking groups • Increase the % of seats for Indigenous applicants • Engage Indigenous and BIPOC physiotherapists to identify the best way to promote and consider admission (and support for marginalized and Indigenous students once admitted to the program)	Western Sr Administration SGPS Dean Graduate Chair Graduate faculty	Develop plan by January 2022 Implement in Fall 2022 for all current and incoming students
Recommendation Implemented ☐ Yes ☐ No **X** Partially If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? **X** Yes ☐ No			
Progress *What specific actions have been taken?*			

Collect Data Related to Student Diversity

The Program liaised with the Ontario Rehabilitation Sciences Program Application Service (ORPAS) as they explored opportunities to collect student diversity data during 2022 and 2023. The data generated through this process was aggregate data and did not meet the needs of the program. The MPT Admissions Committee has since worked with the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) to develop and implement a survey to collect data related to applicant diversity. This survey is currently collecting data for the 2024 applicant pool with a current response rate of 57%. We have 1318 eligible applicants, 751 surveys have been started and 698 surveys completed as of April 25th, 2024.

Outreach and Recruitment

The Admissions Chair and the Chair of the MPT program have worked with OII to explore opportunities to increase our outreach to Indigenous students. This partnership has resulted in a review and update of the MPT Program website, Indigenous admissions page. Working with OII has also identified the opportunity to participate in summer camps for Indigenous students in grades 7 and 8 and to develop resources detailing a career in physiotherapy and an overview of the admissions pathway to be available in OII for interested students. These projects remain in progress. In addition, the MPT program will participate in the ENRICH program this summer which will provide 7 high school students from lower socio-economic backgrounds within the Thames Valley School Board exposure to various MPT program enrichment experiences across Western. These students will spend a half day with MPT program faculty learning about the profession of physical therapy and pathways towards admission.

The program faculty annually participate in *Rehab Days* which is an opportunity for undergraduate students at Western to explore programs in rehabilitation medicine. This half day activity exposes students to the MPT program through an immersive experiential learning opportunity with faculty. In addition, the Admissions Chair has had the opportunity to participate in high school career days to outline the opportunities of a career in physiotherapy.

Facilitate Admission for Indigenous Students and Increase the Percentage of Seats for Indigenous Students

The Admissions Committee has worked with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII) during 2022 and 2023 to review our admissions policies and processes for our Indigenous admission stream. The Manager of Indigenous Admissions and Enrollment with OII, has provided reflective feedback on our admissions policies and Indigenous applicant file review during the 2022-2024 application cycle. The OII Admissions Manager attended the 2023 Admission's Committee meetings during Indigenous applicant file review and provided feedback on applicant files. The OII Admissions Manager accepted a new position ahead of the 2024 cycle of file review and was not available for this process in this cycle. The MPT Admissions Committee has prioritized the identification of a panel of Indigenous peoples to review applicant files for the 2025 admissions cycle. The Committee has begun the process to engage our Indigenous alumni through reciprocal relationship building to support this process.

As a result of our review of our policies and procedures for the Indigenous applicant admissions stream, the Admissions Committee has increased the percentage of Indigenous students admitted to the MPT program. During the 2023 admissions cycle, the Admission Committee identified all highly qualified Indigenous applicants whose file met the criteria for offer through the domestic stream. These files were then moved into the category of first-round offers. The remaining files reviewed in the Indigenous admission stream were applicants who would have otherwise not been reviewed for admission. In the 2023 cycle, 3 of 13 files were moved directly to first round offer. This resulted in one student entering the program as a result of a first-round offer and two students being admitted to the designated Indigenous seats. In the 2024 cycle, 8 of 18 eligible files were moved directly to first-round offer. Additionally, in the 2024 cycle, the MPT Program will are expanding our student cohort from our current 85 students to 120 students. We have expanded our seats in the designated Indigenous stream from 2 to 5 seats, which represents an increase from 2% to 4% of the student cohort. We have also increased our profile of Indigenous students through the aforementioned strategy by ensuring qualified applicants are moved forward into first-round offers for teh domestic stream and beyond the designated seats in the Indigenous admissions stream.

Facilitate Admission for Equity Seeking Groups

In 2020, the School of Physical Therapy (SPT) created a new EDIDA leadership position within its Governance structure. This has been a meaningful opportunity for the MPT Program to link with other entry-to-practice physical therapy programs across Canada to review outreach and admissions processes for equity seeking groups. Our EDIDA lead has represented the SPT and the MPT Program in this

national community of practice, identifying strategies to equitably increase accessibility to physical therapy education. This has been an important opportunity to engage in a national discussion exploring approaches to authentically and equitably facilitate admission to equity seeking groups.

The EDIDA lead hosted a retreat on February 29th, 2024, with SPT faculty to review and discuss our admissions processes and reflect on future directions.

The MPT Program has increased our outreach to international communities to increase our International student admission stream. This has occurred through a review and update of our School and Program website with an enhanced page for International student admissions. In addition, we have created a direct application stream to enable applicants to apply to the program without having to utilize the ORPAS application portal. This has facilitated more continuous support with applicants throughout the process and has allowed the program to review applications as a continuous process to provide timely communications about admissions decisions. This has increased accessibility to the program by international applicants and created a diverse perspective and voice in the MPT Program. In 2022, the MPT Program was accepting 2 students through the International admission stream. We have increased the number of students admitting this stream to 7 in the 2023 cycle, and to a target of 20 in the 2024 cycle. We currently have 15 firm acceptances to this stream, including 2 students who have not previously studied in Canada, 1 of whom is from a low-income country.

Support for Indigenous and BIPOC Students in the Program

Our School EDIDA lead meets monthly with the student BIPOC group to review matters important to the group. This is an important network to facilitate communication with our students, identifying concerns, strategies to support and opportunities to provide greater support. The School EDIDA lead is also engaged in EDIDA committees at the Rehabilitation Schools and the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) level. These committees are focused on initiatives to improve the experience of the BIPOC student community. Current initiatives include an FHS EDIDA survey, Anti-Racism Foundations certificate for faculty and equity walk-through exercise-timeline and commitment.

- In May 2023, the program hired an external researcher to conduct focus groups with students admitted to the MPT program through the Indigenous designated seats and the International admission stream. Two separate focus group sessions were

conducted and explored: their decision to apply, their application experience, their experience with orientation and onboarding, and the student experience in Western's MPT program.

There were a number of themes identified by our Indigenous students through the focus groups.

1. **Decision making and selection of Western's MPT program.** Students identified Western MPT's signature pedagogy of case-based learning and the location of the School as primary reasons for their decision to apply and accept their offer of admission.
2. **Accessibility and organization of information during the application process.** Students noted that Western's MPT admission webpages could be more concise, organized and more accessible with the inclusion of frequently asked questions. This feedback was actioned by conducting a full review of the MPT webpages with a particular focus on the admissions pages.
3. **Challenges with application and ORPAS.** The ORPAS application was identified as being a barrier to application for out-of-province students. There were challenges identified with accessing information and uploading documents. The program actioned this information by facilitating the direct application stream for International students.
4. **Opportunities for better outreach to potential Indigenous applicants.** Feedback indicated the program could do more to reach Indigenous applicants in high-school and undergraduate degrees. There was additional feedback to increase the information available on the website regarding minimum subGPA and policies for file review. This was actioned through our review of the Indigenous admissions pages.
5. **Positive aspects of Western MPT application process.** Students acknowledged the value of our diverse approach to file review, considering subGPA, CASPER, applicant statement, reference letters and volunteer experience.
6. **Challenging components of the application process.** Students acknowledged the need for proof of Indigenous status but identified that this can be time consuming. Indigenous applicants are currently supported by the Manager of Admissions in OII. This feedback confirms the importance of this position to the MPT program.
7. **Communication and information.** Students highlighted the need for earlier and more consistent information following the offer of admission. The program has actioned this by increasing access to information through our online learning platform starting in June of the incoming year. In addition, we have increased our onboarding activities in the first week of the first term to ensure a robust process of orientation to the program. Students expressed the value of the onboarding process.
8. **Sense of community.** Students identified the need for connections with other Indigenous people while in the program. The program has ensured Indigenous students are aware of OII and the many services and connections available to students.

9. **Positive experience and recommendation.** Students expressed that their experience in the program had exceeded expectations and that they have highly recommended the program to other Indigenous students based on their experience.
10. **Indigenous representation and resources.** Students identified that Western has exceptional Indigenous resources and events available to them and that these are regularly communicated to them. They emphasized the need to increase the representation of Indigenous people in physical therapy practice. This has been actioned by expanding representation of Indigenous students in the program by changes to our admissions policies and procedures.
11. **Incorporation of Indigenous health and culture in the curriculum.** Student feedback identified the need to incorporate Indigenous health daily case discussions and conversations. Students identified the importance of not segregating this topic to select lectures. This has been actioned by the EDIDA lead who has worked to facilitate the development and review of clinical cases with the Curriculum Specialist in OII. There have been barriers to realizing momentum on this item given the volume of workload OII is currently experiencing.

There were a number of actionable themes identified by our International students –

1. **Decision-making process of factors influencing decision to apply and program choice.** Students acknowledged the Western MPT program for creating an International admission stream as it is one of few in the country. Students chose Western as there was no preference for country of origin and the diverse approach to review of applicant files.
2. **Information and communication.** Students identified the need to increase the organization and available information on the webpages for interested applicants. This has been actioned by a review and update of the International admissions page.
3. **Interviews and delays in notification of admissions decisions.** Students identified the anxiety associated with the interview process and the additional anxiety associated with waiting on admission decisions. The MPT Program has actioned this by facilitating the booking of interviews at times of convenience for the applicant and increasing the opportunities for applicants to communicate with the program. This has been enabled by the direct phone contact provided to applicants through the MPT Program's administrative GAA and with the FHS International Recruitment and Activities manager. The MPT Program has changed our processes to provide admission decisions to applicants within 72 hours of their interview.
4. **Suggestions for improvements and better outreach to International applicants.** Students identified the opportunity for the MPT Program to partner with international recruitment agencies and this feedback has been actioned. The hiring of the International Recruitment and Activities Manager in FHS has been a significant and valued resource to the MPT Program. This role has enabled

regular communications and outreach to potential candidates across Western undergraduate programs and with international communities.

5. **Considerations for external factors and resources.** Students identified the potential need for the MPT Program to be aware of the geopolitical circumstances of International students. These factors may require the program to be adaptable and flexible to these students' needs.
6. **Positive aspects of orientation and onboarding.** International students acknowledged the MPT Program had many students who relocated to London from other communities and the value this created in generating community amongst the class cohort.
7. **Challenges related to diversity and cultural sensitivity.** Students acknowledged the need to improve faculty capacity in integrating greater diversity and diverse presentations in case-discussions. This feedback has been actioned through the EDIDA lead and through their involvement with the student equity group and the EDIDA committees at FHS level.
8. **Positive experience and recommendation.** Students overall acknowledge their Western MPT Program experience as being overall very positive and feel it creates one of the best international experiences in Canada.
9. **Enrichment through international perspectives.** Students highlighted the value of the diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives the International student community brings to the MPT Program.

The MPT Program has created new initiatives to build community within the International students in the MPT Program as well as in FHS. This has been realized through student lunches, creating leadership positions within the International student group as student ambassadors to connect current International students with incoming International students.

The FHS has introduced new scholarships for International students entering the professional programs. In the 2024 cycle, the MPT Program has awarded a 20,000.00 scholarship to a student from a low-income country and 5 2500.00 scholarships awarded on merit to students entering through the International admission stream. SGPS has also created scholarships for all Western undergraduate students who enter one of Western's professional graduate programs, that provides for a 25% relief of tuition.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

1. The MPT Program will analyze the applicant diversity survey data. This work will be supported by the School Data-driven Infrastructure lead. The program will utilize this data to inform future initiatives to build student diversity.

2. The MPT Program will continue to work with OII to identify and incorporate outreach opportunities to Indigenous applicants. We will continue to review and update the MPT Program web pages to ensure these are contemporary and fit-for-purpose to communicate accurate, transparent and welcoming information to potential applicants.
3. The MPT Program will be recruiting an all-Indigenous panel to review applicant files to the Indigenous stream and will ensure reciprocity in the relationships we establish.
4. The EDIDA lead will continue to support MPT Program faculty in developing culturally sensitive Indigenous case content through the support of OII. They will also continue to work with various committees at Western and with national entry-to-practice program EDIDA committees to support sharing of resources building diversity across the curriculum.
5. The MPT Program will continue to review our website on an ongoing basis and ensure information is accurate, transparent and timely.

Additional Comments

If applicable

Recommendation #2	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
*Equity Diversity and Inclusion. …Shape curriculum that promotes anti-bias, anti-racism and anti-oppression. There is a need to consider how to guide individuals who have experienced discrimination and/or bias and/or trauma in SPT or from recent events on how to proceed. Finally, a better understanding of the diversity of faculty and students will ensure that efforts can be made to increase representation by equity-seeking groups.	-review entire curriculum by faculty -work with EDID Group in Faculty of Health Sciences	-Dean -Graduate Chair -EDID group with Dr J Unger's leadership -PT faculty	This work is in progress with updated report, January 2022

Recommendation Implemented

☐ Yes ☐ No **X** Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? **X** Yes ☐ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

The SPT has also accepted the invitation for a project *"A Collaborative Step Forward: Sharing Resources to Enhance Learning and Promotion of Health Justice in Entry-Level Physiotherapy Curricula*" organized by J Dhir from McMaster. This project will be conducted from December 2023-June 2024 to create an online repository of health justice resources and to enhance information exchange across participating Canadian entry-level physiotherapy programs towards a collaborative step forward in addressing and building these competencies for all physiotherapy learners.

The EDIDA lead has worked with the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at Western to create a framework for mapping diversity in our program curriculum. The MPT Program is leading on this initiative and creating a model for other programs. The program has created a new platform for mapping all curriculum and the framework for mapping diversity curriculum will be readily integrated into this platform once the work is complete.

The EDIDA lead has worked to connect with the OII to build out culturally sensitive Indigenous curriculum through the support of the Curriculum specialist in OII. Forward progress on this initiative has been burdened with the workload demand on OII from programs across Western.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

1. The program will continue to work with Canadian programs to share resources to build out the diversity and cultural sensitivity that promotes anti-racism, anti-bias and anti-oppression in the MPT Program curriculum.
2. The MPT Program will continue to work with CTL to develop a framework for mapping diversity in our curriculum.
3. The MPT Program will continue to work with the Curriculum specialist in OII build culturally sensitive Indigenous curriculum.

Additional Comments

If applicable

Note: The total number of expandable text boxes will be dependent on the number of prioritized recommendations appearing in the program's most recent Final Assessment Report (FAR).

Continuous Program Enhancement

What additional initiatives or changes has the program been working on in relation to continuous program improvement?

1. Review and development of the MPT Program governance structure to ensure the work is distributed and key initiatives are supported across the various committees of the program. This is part of several measures the program is undertaking to build capacity for our increase in cohort size to 120 students in September 2024.
2. Development of a platform for mapping of MPT Program curriculum that improves accuracy and efficiency.
3. Review of end-of-term and end-of-course surveys.
4. Data-driven approach to modelling of admission decisions, including number of files pulled forward for review by external reviewers and the number of first round offers.
5. Systematic collection of data and student outcomes to determine a data informed approach to admission decisions.
6. Review of best practices for curriculum delivery building consistency in delivery. This initiative is part of building capacity and sustainability for increasing our class cohort.

7. Enhanced processes and mechanisms for monitoring and identifying students at risk enabled by the Data-driven Infrastructure lead. This has ensured the timely delivery of student support.
8. Development of new online forms submission for faculty following meetings to provide student academic, personal support and to address concerns with student professionalism to improve student monitoring and to build efficiency.
9. The development of novel, innovative and sustainable clinical experiences has been explored and capacity has been built. Examples of this are 2:1 placement models, role-emerging placements, mixed format, research aligned placements and increased outreach to international placement partners.
10. The development of new strategies for engaging clinical partners. This has included clinical instructor recognition events, faculty led clinical practice in-services, and the development of new resources to support clinical instructors.