

Faculty / Affiliated University College	Health Sciences	
Degrees Offered	MCISc	
Date of Last Review	2013	
Approved Fields	Audiology Speech Language Pathology	
External Reviewers	Karen Pollock Professor Department of CSD, University of Alberta	Navid Shahnaz Associate Professor, School of Audiology & Speech Sciences, University of British Columbia
Internal Reviewers	Immaculate Namukasa Associate Dean, Faculty of Education and Member of SUPR-G	Ryan Chan PhD Student, Nursing
Date of Site Visit	February 1-2, 2022	
Date Review Report Received	February 16, 2022	
Date Program/Faculty Response Received	Program Response March 16, 2022 Faculty Response March 21, 2022	
Evaluation	Good Quality	
Approval Dates	SUPR-G: May 16, 2022 SCAPA (rating approval, and academic program change recommendation): May 25, 2022 Senate (FYI for program recommendation, approval for academic program changes): June 10, 2022	
Year of Next Review	Year of next cyclical review: 2028-2029	

Overview of Western's Cyclical Review Assessment Reporting Process

In accordance with Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a summary of the cyclical review, internal responses, and assessment and evaluation of the Communication Sciences and Disorders Graduate Program delivered by the Faculty of Health Sciences.

This FAR considers the following documents:

- the program's self-study brief;
- the external reviewers' report;
- the response from the Communication Sciences and Disorders Graduate Program Chair; and
- the response from the Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences.

This FAR identifies the strengths of the program and opportunities for program enhancement and improvement, and details the recommendations of the external reviewers – noting those recommendations to be prioritized for implementation.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the FAR that have been selected for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, specifies any action or follow-up that is required, and defines the timeline for completion.

The FAR (including Implementation Plan) is sent for approval through SUPR-G and SCAPA, then for information to Senate and to the Ontario Universities' Council on Quality Assurance. Subsequently, it is publicly accessible on Western's IQAP website. The FAR is the only document from the graduate cyclical review process that is made public; all other documents are confidential to the Program/School/Faculty, the School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies, and SUPR-G.

Executive Summary

The CSD graduate program at Western University offers only the professional, non-thesis-based, Master of Clinical Science (MCISc) degree in the Fields of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (SLP). Students are enrolled full-time in the program for six terms, including at least two full-time summer practicum placements. The MCISc Program currently provides training to approximately 32 Audiology students and 50 Speech-Language Pathology students in each intake cohort for a total MCISc enrollment of approximately 164 in the two-year program.

The program is designed to provide the full academic and clinical preparations required to meet the licensing requirements of the College of Audiologists and Speech Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO) and other Canadian regulators.

The program's self-study involved the examination of existing sources of information and records of reflection as well as new data collection via surveys (with students and practicum preceptors) and collaborative faculty reflection on program learning outcomes and curriculum via several retreats.

The external reviewers shared a positive assessment of the CSD Graduate Program. In addition to constructive considerations for further enhancement, the reviewers offer three overarching recommendations for the program.

Summary of the Self-Study

Strengths and Innovative Features Identified by the Program

- Home of the largest audiology training program in North America (as of 2019).
- Houses the H.A. Leeper Speech and Hearing Clinic, which provides clinical services to the community and clinical training in speech-language pathology and audiology.
- Facilities located within the National Centre for Audiology (NCA) which has state-of-the-art laboratories for the study of hearing.
- MCISc program provides the clinical training for MCISc/PhD students registered in the Health and Rehabilitation Sciences Combined Programs in Audiology/Hearing Science and SLP/Speech-Language Science.
- CSD foundational courses are open as field-specific and elective courses to thesis-based MSc and PhD students registered in Hearing Science and Speech-Language Science fields of the HRS program and to students in Engineering and Neuroscience graduate programs.
- Experiential learning enhanced by the development and deployment of the CARL manikin for simulation in audiology teaching, which originated as a student project here at Western in collaboration with Engineering.
- Students frequently comment positively about:
 - o Experience in the in-house clinic
 - o Quality of clinical feedback

- Clinical application courses, labs, and use of case studies
- Professors' approachability

Concerns and Areas of Improvement Identified and Discussed by the Program

- Preceptor concerns with occasional lack of professionalism, organization, or preparation for the demands of full-time work among first-year students in external practica placements.
- Student concerns related to:
 - Redundancy in Professional Practice courses
 - Lack of a course on vestibular disorders and assessment
 - Lack of clarity about the Faculty Advisor system
 - Academic load in the second term (Year 1 Winter) of the SLP program
 - Classroom size
 - Limited quiet study space

Review Process

As part of the external review, the review committee, comprising two external reviewers, one internal reviewer and a graduate student, were provided with Volume I and II in advance of the scheduled review and then met over two days with the:

- Vice-Provost, School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
- Associate Vice-Provost, School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
- Vice-Provost, Academic Planning, Policy and Faculty
- Associate Vice Provost, Academic Planning, Policy and Faculty
- Associate Chief Librarian
- Acting Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences
- Associate Dean – Graduate, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Acting Director, School of CSD
- Graduate Program Chair and former Graduate Chair
- Graduate Program Committee Members
- Graduate Program and Department Staff
- Program faculty members
- Graduate students

These formative documents, including Volumes I and II of the Self-Study, the External Report, the program response and the Dean's response, have formed the basis of this summative assessment report of the Communication Sciences and Disorders Graduate Program, collated and submitted to SGPS and the Senate Graduate Program Review Committee (SUPR-G) by the Internal Reviewer with the support of the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement.

Summative Assessment – External Reviewers’ Report

Strengths of the Program

- Faculty members are highly regarded for their expertise and cover both breadth and depth of knowledge in the professions.
- The Audiology and SLP programs at Western are in high demand, with 5 to 10 times more applicants than spaces available.
- Western's MCISc programs were reviewed by the CACUP-ASLP in 2021 and were re-accredited for a full seven years, demonstrating that they have met or exceeded all of the standards for the professions.
- Inclusion of clinical application courses, often taught by clinical faculty, which help bridge the gap between academic content and clinical practice.
- Inclusion of inter-professional courses (introduction to professional practice and critical appraisal) that include students from Audiology, SLP, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy.

Areas of Concern or Prospective Improvement

- Program members have expressed some concerns about teaching technology and inadequate IT support in Elborn College classrooms.
- Limited quiet study space and eating space for students.
- Need for additional and readily accessible counseling support, ideally within the Faculty.
- As new faculty positions become available, a commitment to increasing diversity is strongly encouraged and consistent with the university's strategic plan for a more equitable and inclusive environment institution.
- Audiology students expressed that further opportunity remains for an increased representation of the Audiology profession within case studies and content.
- Removing the barriers to increased enrollment in the combined MCISc/Ph.D programs would provide more TAs to support MCISc courses and provide valuable teaching experience for the combined program students.

Summary of the Reviewers' Recommendations and Program/Faculty Responses

The following are the reviewers' recommendations in the order listed by the external reviewers.

Reviewers' Recommendation Recommendations requiring implementation have been marked with an asterisk (*).	Program/Faculty Response
<p>1. Credit/support for clinical training for combined MCISc/PhD students*</p> <p>Although the School provides clinical training for MCISc/Ph.D. students, because these students are registered in the Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, the School of CSD is not receiving any form of credits toward their intake cohort in the professional degree programs or any financial remuneration to their operating budget. The School of CSD allocates similar resources and training to other students in the professional cohort to provide the quality clinical training required for professional competency in the field for these students in the combined program; however, they are not included in their intake cohort quota. This results in a limit on how many students can be admitted to the program, despite strong interest from applicants and supervisors. There should be a mechanism to credit the School either by counting the combined MCISc/Ph.D. degree into their professional degree intake cohort quota on a yearly basis or other means in the form of an additional budget to support the School. In addition, this may allow the Faculty of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences and the School of CSD to expand this unique program.</p>	<p>Program: Admission into the Master of Clinical Science (MCISc) degree(s) in audiology and speech-language pathology (SLP) within the School of CSD occurs via 2 pathways: (1) student applicants apply directly to the professional graduate MCISc degree program for either profession, or (2) student applicants apply via the Health & Rehabilitation Sciences (HRS) program into the combined PhD/MCISc - audiology or speech-language pathology degree program. The HRS pathway is highly desirable to student applicants because of the 5-yr combined degree option. The School currently has 15 speech-language sciences PhD students with 6 being HRS combined PhD/MCISc students. In Hearing Science, there are 14 PhD students with 5 being combined PhD/MCISc students. Currently, there are limitations in the number of students that can be admitted into the combined program each year in part because each year the School must also balance the number of PhD/MCISc students moving into the clinical program with the number of new CSD MCISc admissions. There are admission targets of 32 audiology students and 50 SLP students each year. These target limits are due primarily to instructor and clinical placement resource limitations. The School of CSD would benefit from leeway in either counting the HRS MCISc/PhD students towards our CSD MCISc student targets and/or being able to reduce the target number of MCISc students admitted in a given year, enabling higher numbers of MCISc/PhD students in a given year if academically eligible students apply.</p> <p>The faculty and administrators in the School of CSD are aware that there are at least two important factors to consider in addressing this recommendation. Firstly, PhD/MCISc students benefit from the funding package received from Western's graduate program in HRS. Secondly, alterations to enrolment streams can affect government funding received by Western University and the School of CSD for clinical student (MCISc) education.</p> <p>Faculty: The Program response provided a detailed response to this query. A review of prior application and enrolment data for the MCISc programs and Health and Rehabilitation Sciences combined PhD/MCISc programs may assist in identifying enrolment options, and the Faculty is happy to work with the Program in both identifying and appraising options.</p>

<p>2. Indigenous Engagement*</p> <p>An important program-wide objective to ensure that students in the clinical programs acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes commensurate with culturally safe and competent service delivery for people of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit heritage in Canada needs to be established. A significant initiative could also include assigning a seat or two for the indigenous people and providing community outreach efforts for the students, including clinical placements of students in Indigenous communities.</p>	<p>Program: In 2020, the FHS formalized a commitment to support, educate, and bring members of FHS together to facilitate understanding, address discrimination and harm, influence and advance systemic changes towards making the FHS a more equitable and safer place. The School of CSD continues to be guided by these ongoing and collaborative efforts within our FHS and the University at large that are intended to coordinate actions/efforts across and within Schools and Departments with regard to Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity, Indigeneity, and Accessibility (EDI/IA) policies. The School of CSD recognizes the ongoing efforts of the FHS to assist Schools in this regard. The FHS has hired an Assistant Dean EDI. This person will provide additional support to the recent hiring of Dr. Alex Levine as Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator in the FHS. In addition, the FHS Anti-Racism Task Force led by Dr. Carla Da Silva is assisting the FHS and the School of CSD in learning to better address and actively work to prevent racism and to respond to racism in meaningful ways. The School of CSD is equally working with the leaders of the other programs within the FHS to develop guidelines to help advance access to CSD programs for eligible applicants who self-identify as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or Indigenous.</p> <p>Faculty: As the Program has noted in their response, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Indigeneity and Accessibility (EDI/IA) are of paramount importance in the Faculty of Health Sciences and its constituent Schools. The Faculty supports the School of CSD's plans to formalize both admissions and recruitment procedures that will enhance Indigenous applicants' access to its programs. Additional Western- and Faculty-wide supports may further assist in addressing this recommendation. First, an admissions reflection exercise has been developed by the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) to help programs reflect on and assess their admission processes to determine if there are opportunities to increase EDI/IA when reviewing applications and making admission decisions. The Program has already agreed to participate in this reflection exercise. The FHS Associate Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will be collating reflection responses from all FHS graduate programs and following participation in a SPGS/Graduate Associate Deans retreat, share FHS and Western-wide findings at subsequent FHS graduate program committee meetings. Second, there is a FHS Indigenous Committee currently working on identifying opportunities to attract and retain Indigenous students in the Faculty, as well as to build relationships and foster connections with Western Indigenous Initiatives and local and surrounding Indigenous communities. Third, both Western (within the People, Community, and Culture theme of the new strategic plan) and the Faculty of Health Sciences aim to bolster bursary and scholarship opportunities for Indigenous students as well as those from other equity-deserving groups.</p>
<p>3. Student Experience</p> <p>It is not clear how Western's Accessible Education collaborates with the CSD academic and clinical team to provide CSD students with accommodations that are appropriate</p>	<p>Program: <u>Improving accessible education:</u> The School of CSD Clinical Education Coordinators (CEC's) and the Graduate Program Chair met with representatives of AE at Western in the fall term 2021 to inform them about the clinical practice settings and competencies expected of registrants wanting to practice as Audiologists and SLP's within Canada (as regulated healthcare professionals). The School has discussed the various areas of practice for SLPs in addition to providing an overview of practice settings (e.g., hospitals, private practice, children treatment centres). An overview of services within Western's in-house H.A. Leeper Speech & Hearing Clinic has also been provided that outlines a first and often second or third</p>

to their varied learning contexts and requirements, including clinical placements. Individuals within the Centre for Accessibility who have specialized expertise and experience within students in health-professional, practicum-based programs would be a vital asset and support for the School of CSD.

Another issue raised during our conversation with the students was that the orientation in its current format, which is arranged and conducted by the student council, does not provide adequate support and program information for the incoming students. The student support committee within CSD can collaborate actively with the student council to arrange the orientation sessions, preferably in a few meetings at the beginning of the school year to connect with other students, meet their professors, staff, and get to know their way around the School and campus. Orientation is also a chance for the School to start getting to know their students and to provide an overview of the program structure, expectations, and where to access resources and supports.

placement opportunity preparing students for their subsequent placements in the community. This conversation was initiated following several requests for clinical practicum accommodations. Together with staff from AE the School is trying to determine how best to support the students and determine a process of finding appropriate accommodations that are implementable in the context of each student's unique learning needs and which will ensure that they develop the knowledge, skills and competencies expected for the profession. The School has worked closely and iteratively with staff, students, and the acting manager in AE to develop accommodations for students within current clinical placements.

Effective Jan 1, 2022, the School has informed CSD students of the need to receive their written AE requests for clinical placements well in advance so that the CEC's can coordinate with placements to implement AE accommodations that facilitate the development of the skills required of SLPs and audiologists in clinical practice. Deadlines have been specified for each term and would typically be 3 months in advance of the placement start date. The School has updated the student handbook providing relevant information on processes to acquire AE. The School's OWL site (Homeroom) has been updated so that information is better organized, updated and outlines processes. Written guidance to students through our recently hired Academic Program Coordinator who is developing knowledge and skills in processes associated with AE has also been provided.

The School aim's to meet again with the AE Manager and staff to continue discussions on effective and efficient pathways which will reduce the time spent developing accommodation plans. The School also continues to seek successful and satisfactory clinical training experiences and optimal learning outcomes for students in conjunction with plans developed with our colleagues in the AE office.

CSD Orientation: The desire from students for changes to the fall orientation that precedes entry into the program has been noted. Alterations to the CSD student handbook are being made to ensure updated and more complete School and program-based knowledge is provided. The CSD acceptance letter for students entering the School in the fall of 2022 has been revised to provide more information to inform acceptance decision-making. The School will develop the fall 2022 orientation day(s) keeping in mind students' request for more information about the program, the timelines, the city, services at Western, and the student support committee role so that overall program expectations are clear.

Faculty: The Program provided a detailed response to this recommendation and the Faculty is supportive of its plans. Graduate programs, and professional graduate programs such as those in CSD, would benefit from more central involvement in terms of accessible education/ academic accommodation to ensure a high-quality student experience.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. In each case, the Chair of the Graduate Program, in consultation with the SGPS and the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences is responsible for enacting and monitoring the actions noted in Implementation Plan. The number of recommendations prioritized for implementation has been reduced as they are already being actioned as explained in the program and faculty responses.

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
<p>Recommendation #1: Credit for clinical training for combined MCISc/PhD students.</p>	<p>Discussion of options and determination of a plan, informed by review of prior application and enrolment data, for enrolment consideration that can be implemented in time for the Fall 2023 admissions cycle.</p>	<p>Acting Director – School of CSD Graduate Program Chair FHS Associate Dean (Graduate and Postdoctoral Programs) FHS Assistant Dean (Graduate Programs)</p>	<p>By September 2022</p>
<p>Recommendation #2: Admission of Students identifying as Indigenous as well as those from other equity-deserving groups</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remind reviewers at admission consideration meetings of eligible applications from self-identified First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and Indigenous students who are ranked within the pool of applicants being considered for offers of admission. 2. Formalize a School-based policy to assign a seat or two for eligible applicant(s) who self-identifies as Indigenous. 3. Continue to work with the Dean’s Office of FHS and the SGPS to develop a formalized plan of action regarding strategies for recruitment, including making future and current students aware of the considerations, admission scholarships, bursaries and internal and Western-wide supports available for Indigenous students as well as those from other equity-deserving groups. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Graduate Program Chair 2. Graduate Program Chair School of CSD Council 3. Acting Director – School of CSD 	<p>By March 2023</p>