

Faculty / Affiliated University College	Health Sciences	
Degrees Offered	MA, MSc, PhD	
Date of Last Review	2012-2013	
Approved Fields	Integrative Biosciences in Kinesiology Management and Leadership in Kinesiology Psychological Basis of Kinesiology Sociocultural Studies of Kinesiology	MSc, PhD MA, PhD MA, PhD MA, PhD
External Reviewers	Marijke Taks Professor and Vice-Dean Faculty of Health Sciences University of Ottawa	Patricia Vertinsky Professor and Distinguished University Scholar School of Kinesiology University of British Columbia
Internal Reviewers	Grant Campbell, Associate Dean – Information & Media Studies, Member of SUPR-G	Danielle Spice, PhD Candidate, Developmental Biology
Date of Site Visit	November 30, December 1, 2021	
Date Review Report Received	December 21, 2021	
Date Program/Faculty Response Received	Program Response received January 24, 2022 Dean's Response received February 1, 2022	
Evaluation	Good Quality with Report due April 2023	
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), adopted on May 11, 2011, and revised June 22, 2012, this Final Assessment Report provides a summary of the cyclical review, internal responses, and assessment and evaluation of the Kinesiology Graduate program delivered by the Faculty of Health Sciences.

This Final Assessment Report (FAR) report considers the following documents:

- the program's self-study,
- the external consultants' report,
- the response from the Kinesiology Graduate Program Chair, and
- the response from the Dean's Office, 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 consultants, noting those recommendations that require attention.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the Final Assessment Report 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 Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan are sent for approval through SUPR-G and SCAPA, then for information to Senate and to the Ontario Universities' Council on Quality Assurance. It is publicly accessible on Western's IQAP website.

The FAR, including the Implementation Plan, is the only document from the Graduate cyclical review process that is made public; all other documents are confidential to Western's Faculty of Health Sciences, the Kinesiology Graduate program, the School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies, and SUPR-G.

Executive Summary

Western's School of Kinesiology advocates the benefits of physical activity to society by providing a multidisciplinary approach to discovery, dissemination, and application of knowledge about human movement and its effects. Graduate programs in Kinesiology (formerly named Physical Education) were established in 1981, offering master's and doctoral degrees in Bio-science and Sociocultural fields. Presently, the Graduate Program in Kinesiology offers thesis-based Master of Arts (MA), Master of Science and doctoral (PhD) degrees in four fields: MA and PhD in **Management & Leadership in Kinesiology**, MA and PhD in **Sociocultural Studies in Kinesiology**, MA and PhD in **Psychological Basis in Kinesiology**, and MSc and PhD in **Integrative Biosciences in Kinesiology**. As of September 2020, enrollment included 127 full-time (81 masters and 46 doctoral) and three part-time (1 master's and 2 doctoral) students.

To inform the self-study for this program review, input was collected from current graduate students and alumni via surveys in spring 2020. Additionally, a suite of focus group sessions was held with current graduate students, graduate faculty, and graduate office administrative staff.

The external reviewers shared a positive assessment of the Kinesiology graduate programs. They offer some considerations and several recommendations for further enhancement.

Strengths and Innovative Features Identified by the Program

- Mandatory Research Methods and/or Statistics Courses for the thesis-based Master's degree
- Mandatory school-wide seminar course (fall and winter)
- Internship Program in Management & Leadership
- Option to participate in collaborative programs and specializations such as: Musculoskeletal Health Research and Global Health Systems in Africa
- Research Centers and Groups designed to facilitate the research efforts of graduate students and their supervisors, such as: Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging (CCAA); Fowler Kennedy Sport Medicine Clinic; International Centre for Olympic Studies (ICOS); Sport and Social Impact Group (SSIRG)
- Professional Development opportunities such as: semi-annual seminar series with the Department of Physiology & Pharmacology; Kinesiology Graduate Students Association (KGSA) Research Day; Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) Research Day; and the Three Minute Thesis (3MT)
- The "WriteClub" which seeks to gather students (and interested faculty) to support each other's scientific writing skills
- The Thames Hall renovations

Concerns and Areas of Improvement Identified by the Program

- Course offerings for the course-based Master's program require attention. In particular, it was noted that there are not enough courses, and not enough of a range of courses to meet the needs of the diverse range of graduate students in the Program
- Program requirements could be made clearer (as identified by a focus group)
- Remaining concerns about modernizing lab facilities and improving graduate student access to lab and office space (which should be resolved following a move to Thames Hall)

A suite of minor changes (short and long-term) is highlighted in the brief (p.41). These proposed changes result from the reflections and deliberations of program members and relevant stakeholders during the self-study process. These program adjustments have been shared with faculty members as part of the KSAC meetings and largely include updates to program guidelines, tracking graduate student recruitment, and planning for upcoming graduate program retreats.

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 of the School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
- Associate Vice-Provost of the School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
- Vice Provost of Academic Planning, Policy and Faculty
- Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences
- Associate Dean, Graduate & Postdoctoral Programs, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Director of the School of Kinesiology
- Graduate Program Chair
- Kinesiology Graduate Affairs Committee (KGAC)
- Research Officer, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Graduate Program Staff
- Program faculty members
- Graduate students
- Associate Chief Librarian

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 Kinesiology 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

As part of their report summary, the external reviewers’ indicated that they were *“impressed with the quality and commitment of the faculty of the School of Kinesiology and the efforts of its Director, the Graduate chair, and a variety of other supports for the program.”*

Strengths of the Program

- The quality and level of competence of the faculty members (via their CVs and site visit discussions);
- High-level quality of student research observed via the completed theses, student presentations at national and international conferences, and publications in high-level domain journals; and
- While some overall challenges were noted, there are excellent examples of blended courses that have been specifically and carefully organized to benefit both course-based and research focused students.

Areas of Concern or Prospective Improvement

- The breath of courses offered per semester appears insufficient, hindering some course-based masters students to finish their program in an appropriate time;
- Understaffing of graduate programs may be hindering the delivery of courses at their full potential;
- Thesis-based graduate students and faculty indicated that blended courses did not deliver the intellectual stimulus that was expected;
- The current format of the seminar course seems to be smorgasbord of visiting speakers or lectures with no shared discussion or attempt to focus on particular topics or research questions;
- There appeared to be an unequal distribution of faculty workload related to major research papers and supervision of course-based students; and
- Graduate students expressed that they would welcome the inclusion of a formal “proposal stage” (e.g., proposal defense).

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	Program/Faculty Response
<p>1. Clearly the graduate programs are under resourced: new faculty (or faculty assigned from other related parts of the University) will be needed to sustain the ongoing quality of graduate programs, and guarantee their continuous enrolment uptake.</p>	<p>Program: The Kinesiology Graduate Program (KGP) appreciated the review team's recognition of the engagement of Primary KGP members in supporting a high-level training environment. Accordingly, in meeting the above recommendation, the School of Kinesiology looks forward to discussions with the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) Dean's Office in developing new faculty lines to sustain – and grow – the KGP. To facilitate this process, the Kinesiology Graduate Affairs Committee (KGAC) will identify areas within the KGP requiring increased resources (e.g., new faculty lines in Health and Exercise Psychology, Exercise Physiology, Motor Control, Biomechanics, Sociocultural Studies, and Management & Leadership) and present that report to the Kinesiology School Affairs Committee (KSAC) and the School of Kinesiology Selections Committee for approval and recommendation to the FHS Dean's Office. FHS is required to submit a 3- year budget plan in May 2022. Thus, the School of Kinesiology will submit requests for faculty lines to be included in this budget submission.</p> <p>Faculty: Many considerations need to be taken into account in making faculty complement decisions given the resource/financial implications for all Schools and programs in the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS). FHS remains committed to replacing faculty lines within its Schools when a faculty member leaves or retires. Indeed, in 2017, the Kinesiology faculty complement was 26 FTE and, on July 1, 2022, the faculty complement will be 27.5, with the addition of 3 Assistant Professors outside the window of the IQAP review. FHS has been able to maintain its faculty complement over the last few years through strategic enrolment growth in the Faculty. The Faculty is committed to supporting past and future growth through incremental resources when approved through the budget process.</p>
<p>2. We encourage the School to restructure/develop the course-based master's program to be completed within 1 yr. (12 months), including rethinking a capstone project that can be successfully</p>	<p>Program: The course-based master's program requires eight half-credit graduate-level courses and a major research paper (MRP) with associated oral presentation. At present, the KGP strives to offer six graduate courses (not including graduate seminar) in each of the fall and winter terms and attempts to provide two courses in each of the KGP content areas. There is therefore a sufficient absolute number of courses to permit degree completion (including MRP) within a one-year period and several students have completed within this time. That said, the KGP recognizes that course offerings across each semester do not always align with individual students' graduate-level goals. For example, for a course-based MSc student to complete their degree within 12-months it would be necessary for them to take kinesiology graduate courses designed for students in the course-based MA stream (and vice versa). A direct method to address this challenge is to provide graduate courses in the spring and/or summer semester(s) – something the KGP does not currently offer. Accordingly, it is proposed that the</p>

<p>managed within this year.</p>	<p>KGP provide spring and/or summer graduate offerings, and to ensure that the breadth of courses is sufficient for students in both the MSc and MA streams. Contingent on resources being allocated (see response to Recommendation 1) for spring and/or summer courses, the KGP would move forward with a 12-month course-based master's degree. Offering spring/summer graduate courses in each stream would ensure a sufficient corpus of classes in each stream and an equitable distribution of course-load (including completion of the MRP) to permit degree completion within 12-months.</p> <p>The external reviewers equally recommended 'rethinking' the milestone major research paper (MRP) – and associated oral presentation – in the course-based master's degree. We propose that the MRP continue to serve as a milestone for this program. Given that asynchronous delivery has proven to be an efficient method for the presentation in that it does not require the scheduling of a seminar room or coordinating the schedule of the primary and secondary readers to be concurrently available for evaluation, the KGP proposes to move forward with an asynchronous MRP presentation plan as an efficient means supporting 12-month degree completion without sacrificing this important milestone.</p> <p>Faculty: Regarding resources within FHS, there is a Design Ed team and Program Manager (Academic) who are available to support curriculum mapping, curriculum change and course development across FHS graduate programs; the School of Kinesiology graduate programs will be encouraged to utilize these resources when developing their implementation plan and when developing additional course-based offerings, should those be identified as a need in their plan. We support the School of Kinesiology offering courses in the spring and/or summer semester(s), noting that other FHS course-based graduate programs are already doing so (e.g., Applied Health Sciences). Completing an FHS graduate curriculum mapping is anticipated to promote increased awareness not only of graduate courses already offered in the spring and summer, but also of how milestone, knowledge synthesis projects are structured and managed across FHS graduate programs; accordingly, this mapping may additionally assist in identifying ways to efficiently utilize the School of Kinesiology faculty workload.</p>
<p>3. There needs to be more flexibility with graduate funding, especially for thesis students. One avenue to pursue this could be to reclassify all course-based master students as Category 2 and reassign more TA</p>	<p>Program: The KGP believes a more important response to this recommendation is a mechanism to increase funding, or enhance students' funding knowledge, for thesis-based master's students. A solution could be to offer thesis-based (and doctoral) trainees with financial support letters that specify support from the thesis supervisors research grant(s). At present, Mercury Financial Support letters (for students without an external scholarship) specify base financial support (i.e., 2 terms of GTA and/or graduate fellowship = \$6806.80) and do not provide information related to yearly funding from a supervisor's research grant. Of course, for some students the dollar amount from the supervisor would be nil, whereas for others the amount would be substantial. Certainly, we recognize that while this approach does not increase funding for our thesis-based master's trainees it does support transparency and consumer-knowledge of the financial commitment of master's-level training. In moving forward with increasing financial support for master's thesis students, the KGP believes that faculty must</p>

<p>hours to the thesis-based master students.</p>	<p>recognize the importance of securing – and using – external grants to support the training of highly qualified personnel.</p> <p>Faculty: The Program provided a detailed response to this recommendation. The Faculty is happy to work with the Program to continue to explore options that may further enhance the funding of its thesis students.</p>
<p>4. Greater support from the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Schools within it, as well as the rest of the University.</p>	<p>Program: The external reviewer report queried why, “[...] there was not more substantial support for kinesiology graduate programs and courses from faculty in the other 5 Schools of the Faculty of Health Sciences” (p. 4). We believe this issue could be addressed via the Office of the FHS Associate Dean (Research: AD-R), FHS Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPSC), and Academic Studies Review (GASR) Committees. GPSC and GASR are chaired by the AD-R and include attendance by the graduate chair from each school. An immediate KGP goal would be to request that GASR undertake a pan-faculty review and curriculum mapping of relevant (i.e., nonprofessional) graduate courses. This exercise would inform graduate chairs of synergies between graduate courses in the different schools; information would then be presented at FHS Faculty Council. At present very few, if any, graduate students from the School of Nursing or Health and Rehabilitation Sciences program enrol in kinesiology graduate courses and this may – in part – relate to lack of awareness of the range and type of courses offered in the KGP (and vice versa). A greater understanding of the diversity of courses offered across FHS may increase enrolments and serve to support temporal sequencing required to implement a 12-month course-based master’s program (see Recommendation 2 above).</p> <p>Faculty: The Faculty of Health Sciences is perplexed by this rather broad-reaching recommendation. Of course, greater support (aka resources) would always be welcomed. However, the implication of this recommendation is that there is insufficient support from FHS and the rest of the University for graduate education. FHS is fully committed to supporting all of its Schools and programs, within its allocated budget. Next to salaries and benefits, financial support for graduate students represents the largest expenditure in the FHS budget. The Dean’s Office agrees with the overall Kinesiology response of encouraging the acquisition of external funding that provides for graduate student support; FHS and Research Western provide numerous supports through to faculty members seeking external grants. In the current financial context in which base operating funding is constrained by provincial policy, FHS takes the approach of using creativity and collaboration to ensure high quality education within our budget allocation.</p> <p>The leadership structure of FHS fosters collaboration across Schools via regular meetings of School Directors and senior FHS administration (i.e., FHS Leadership Team Meetings). Collaboration across FHS graduate programs and Graduate Program Chairs is further supported by two committees chaired by the FHS Associate Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS). As noted in item 2 above, we support the Program’s proposal to</p>

	<p>conduct a mapping of FHS-wide, relevant graduate curriculum to increase awareness of the number and range of courses offered as well as to identify an effectual timetable for these courses (e.g., which semester(s) would work best across programs). Indeed, the Program Manager (Academic) has already begun mapping graduate curriculum in terms of the inventory of courses; the Associate Dean (GPS) will work in concert with the Program Manager (Academic) and the GPS and GASR committees to complete this curriculum mapping by spring 2022.</p>
<p>5. To sustain a fine graduate program, we think it is important to facilitate a greater sense of community among graduate students and professors, including more involvement in KGSA from both students and faculty members and greater support at the level of the Faculty of Health Sciences.</p>	<p>Program: The KGP agrees entirely. For all students interviewed as part of the external review, COVID contributed to a real, and in some cases complete, loss (or development) of community. The normal social events delivered by the Kinesiology Graduate Student Association (KGSA) have been significantly curtailed in spite of some earlier pandemic-related initiatives (i.e., a Zoom board-game and social writing club had early high attendance; however, the success of these events decreased as the pandemic continued). It is, however, important to note that pre-COVID, the KGSA served as an important resource in scheduling social events and fostering community among graduate students. The KGP is confident that in an optimistically endemic COVID environment the KGSA will once again serve as an important community building resource.</p> <p>Without a doubt, the KGP community is equally aware that the campus-wide distribution of student, staff and faculty offices and research laboratories has represented a barrier for community development and note this existed long before onset of the Thames Hall renovation. Moreover, all the different buildings housing the School of Kinesiology have not provided purpose-designed space facilitating social interaction and community building. As the KGP moves into the renovated Thames Hall (winter/spring 2022) there is optimism that the physical space will promote a greater sense of community. In the renovated Thames Hall, KGP seminars will host après social events (e.g., coffee and cookies) – something the program has not been able to previously offer because the School of Kinesiology did not control the presentation/social space. As well, the renovated Thames Hall contains numerous break out and open spaces to promote community building. An invigorated Thames Hall will provide a first and important catalyst in (re)developing belonging and ownership for all participants in the KGP.</p> <p>Faculty: Since the onset of the pandemic, instilling a sense of community among graduate students and faculty has been particularly challenging as many COVID safety measures unfortunately impede offering the number and types of social and group activities typically available to members of the School of Kinesiology and more broadly, the Faculty of Health Sciences. FHS has invested in some innovative approaches to support the student experience and student connections during the pandemic. For example, the Engage FHS app was designed to help students interact with their FHS peers; whereas there has been more utilization of this app by undergraduate students, graduate students have been made aware of the app.</p>

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. In each case, the Director 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.

Reviewers' recommendations related to staffing are not typically prioritized in the implementation plan as they are outside the scope of the review. As such, the number of recommendations prioritized for implementation has been reduced. Others are not included below as they are already being actioned as explained in the program and faculty responses.

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
<p>Recommendation #2: Part 1: Restructure/ develop the course-based master's program to be completed within 12 months.</p> <p>Part 2: Rethink the capstone project in light of 12-month program.</p>	<p>Ensure that the curriculum supports offering the course-based master's program over a 12-month registration period. As part of this curricular development, determine the required resources to support the development and facilitation of spring/summer courses. Begin offering courses in the spring/summer term for MA and MSc streams. As needed, utilize the FHS' curriculum mapping resource to support the development of additional courses.</p> <p>Develop an asynchronous MRP presentation plan.</p>	<p>KGP Office with approval from KGAC and KSAC. FHS Dean's office</p> <p>KGAC with approval from KSAC</p>	<p>Offer one course in 2022 spring/summer term. Offer at least one MA and one MSc stream-specific courses in spring/summer 2023.</p> <p>By April 2022</p>
<p>Recommendation #3: Greater flexibility with graduate funding, especially for thesis students.</p>	<p>Enhance students' funding knowledge by offering thesis-based program students with financial support letters that specify support from the thesis supervisors research grant(s). Explore options that may further enhance the funding of its thesis students.</p>	<p>KGP Office administration with input from individual faculty supervisors</p>	<p>By Dec 2022</p>

<p>Recommendation # 5 Enhance a sense of communication among Students and faculty members</p>	<p>Invigorate existing community-building opportunities and develop new opportunities to promote a sense of community among students and faculty within the Kinesiology graduate program, optimizing use of the new Thames Hall space to support this initiative. Develop a calendar of these community-building opportunities.</p>		<p>By April 2023</p>
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Other Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement

- For the course-based graduate programs, consider the many good examples of online graduate programs, that may or may not include in-person meetings, as viable options to accommodate student schedules and geographies (p.6 external reviewer report).
- Given the shared knowledge base of the various Schools in the Faculty regarding varied career and research options, the external reviewers felt it was perhaps an opportunity to collaborate beyond the boundaries of each of the schools.