



Health Studies

Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan

Faculty / Affiliated University College	Faculty of Health Sciences, Western University
Degrees Offered	Bachelor of Health Science (BHSc) Honours Specialization in Health Sciences BSc (Hons) with Honours Business Administration (HBA)
Modules Reviewed	Honours Specializations: Health and Aging Health Promotion Health Sciences with Biology Rehabilitation Sciences Specialization: Health Sciences Majors: Health Sciences Rehabilitation Sciences
External Consultants	Dr. Stacey Ritz, BHSc Program McMaster University Dr. Robb Travers, Wilfrid Laurier University
Internal Reviewer	Dr. Tracy Isaacs, Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Date of Site Visit	March 10-11, 2021
Evaluation	Good Quality with Report in Two Years
Approval Dates	SUPR-U: May 12, 2021 SCAPA: May 19, 2021 Senate (for information only): June 11, 2021
Year of Next Review	Year of next cyclical review – 2027-28

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 undergraduate programs delivered by the **School of Health Studies** in the **Faculty of Health Sciences**.

This report considers and reports on the following documents: the program’s self-study, the external consultants’ report, and the responses from the Department and the Associate Dean of Science.

This Final Assessment Report (FAR):

- i) provides an Executive Summary of the Review Process, including an overview of the Department as outlined in the Self-Study brief;
- ii) identifies the strengths of the program;
- iii) identifies opportunities for program enhancement and improvement; and,
- iv) prioritizes the recommendations of the external consultants in the Implementation Plan.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the Final Assessment Report that are required for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, outlines any action or follow-up that is required, and provides the timeline for completion.

The Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan is sent for approval through SUPR-U, SCAPA, Senate and the Ontario Universities’ Council on Quality Assurance and is made available on a publicly accessible location on Western’s IQAP website. The Final Assessment Report with the Implementation Plan is the only document resulting from the undergraduate cyclical review process that is made public; all other documents are confidential to the Program/School/Faculty and SUPR-U.

Executive Summary (as identified in the Self-Study Brief)

Overview

With 1500 fulltime undergraduate students, the School of Health Studies is one of three undergraduate programs within the Faculty of Health Sciences, along with Nursing and Kinesiology. There are 17 full time faculty members with 12 appointed in the School of Health Studies, five joint appointments in Kinesiology, Law, Medicine, Public Health, Philosophy, and Women’s Studies, and several limited duties instructors. The School also has two Academic Counsellors, an Academic Counselling Assistant, an Undergraduate Assistant, and an Experiential Learning and Placement Coordinator.

The curriculum has been designed such that students take a common first year of foundational studies and then can mix and match electives offered in the School to design an undergraduate program specific to their academic interests. Admission standards for its programs are highly competitive and several students have held major awards, including a Fullbright-Killam Scholarship and a Rhodes Scholar. While a significant number of Health Studies graduates go on to graduate study in professional or research programs, many find employment in the private or public sectors, occupying positions such as health policy analysts, public health managers, public health inspectors, community health promoters/health promotion officers, health program evaluation specialists, workplace health consultants, pharmaceutical salespersons, resource management policy analysts and health human resources analysts. Most recently, health studies students have been recognized for their contributions related to health information as it pertains to COVID-19.

The Learning Outcomes for all programs align with the Quality Assurance Framework of Ontario and the Western Degree Outcomes.

Strengths/Innovations of the Program (as identified in the Self-Study brief)

- interdisciplinarity across all modules
- leadership in experiential learning locally, nationally and abroad
- community partnerships
- clear Strategic Priorities Plan
- recognition of faculty with numerous awards in teaching and research
- library support and administrative staff
- student satisfaction with programs
- Innovative curriculum

Strategic Planning Initiatives Going Forward (as noted in the Brief)

- Pursue and support leading interdisciplinary health research
- Advance cross-cultural perspectives and expertise
- Increase access to experiential learning opportunities
- Enhance alumni engagement
- Foster a caring environment that supports student, staff and faculty well-being
- Practice Continuous Quality Improvement in undergraduate education

Self-Study Process

In preparing for this review, the faculty in the School of Health Studies was involved in extensive review of its Strategic Priorities, held faculty and staff retreats, and reviewed and revised both the Learning Outcomes and curricula for the various programs. They also collected and analysed quantitative and qualitative data from current students and alumni.

Review Process

The external review committee (comprised of the two external reviewers and one internal reviewer) was provided with Volumes I and II in advance of their visit and then (due to pandemic restrictions) met online with the following over the course of the two days.

- Dr. John Doerksen, Vice Provost, Academic Programs
- Dr. Margaret McGlynn, Acting Vice-Provost of Academic Planning Policy and Faculty
- Dr. Jayne Garland, Dean, Faculty of Education
- Dr. Karen Danylchuk, Associate Dean, School of Health Studies
- Dr. Andrew Johnson, Acting Director, School of Health Studies
- Dr. Treena Orchard, Undergraduate Chair, School of Health Studies
- Health Science Faculty
- Undergraduate Students
- Administrative Staff
- Meagan Stanley, Teaching and Learning Librarian, Health & Medicine Disciplinary Coordinator

The review also included a virtual tour of the facilities.

Following the formal review, the external reviewers submitted a comprehensive report of their findings which was sent to the Director, the Associate Dean and Dean for review and response. These formative documents, including Volumes I and II of the Self-Study, the External Report, and the Departmental and Decanal responses form the basis of this summative assessment report of the Faculty of Health Sciences' BHSc Program.

Summative Assessment – External Reviewers' Report

The external reviewers note that:

Strongly emulating Western's values and mission, SHS is a successful example of what an interdisciplinary approach can bring to an understanding of human health. We maintain that SHS is a solid and vibrant undergraduate program that has witnessed significant growth in recent years. Application numbers and incoming averages are very high reflecting the popularity and reputation of excellence the program enjoys. Indeed, such numbers should be regarded with considerable pride given the challenges facing many academic units in Ontario universities today. With a curriculum developed and delivered by a passionate group of award-winning scholars, SHS students have the opportunity to learn about health from multidisciplinary

perspectives - as both a biomedical and as a social phenomenon. The reviewers concur that Western’s SHS remains among the top health studies/health sciences undergraduate programs in the province.

Strengths of the Program

- International reputation of programs
- Recognition that complexity and holistic nature of health requires an interdisciplinary approach
- Interdisciplinarity and excellence of faculty who engage with sense of mutual respect
- Approaches to decolonize and indigenize the curriculum
- Explicit critical and social justice orientation to curriculum
- Innovative pioneers in teaching practices; blended/flipped classrooms; community engaged learning
- Experiential learning opportunities

Challenges for the Program

- High student to faculty ratio that may impact pedagogy, assessments and counselling
- Limited opportunities for upper year student research/project work/capstones
- Perception that SHS programs are less valued than others in the Faculty
- Experiential learning opportunities for upper year students

Reviewers’ Recommendations and Department/Faculty Responses

REVIEWERS’ RECOMMENDATIONS	DECANAL/DEPARTMENT RESPONSE
<p><i>1. SHS should seek opportunities to collaborate with other programs/faculties on joint course offerings, and cross-unit teaching, to maximize use of existing Western resources -- both within FHS, but also with other programs (eg. MedSci) and Schools/Faculties (eg. SocSci, Schulich) where there is relevant expertise.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underway: Curriculum committee is exploring ways to make substantive revisions to research course(s)
<p><i>2. Undertake a collaborative priority-setting exercise to explore a number of program approaches moving forward including: consolidation, refocusing, and restabilizing in the context of the surge in admissions in</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the agenda for discussion and implementation at the next faculty retreat

<p><i>recent intakes and the COVID-19 pandemic, and articulating a signature vision for the future of SHS.</i></p>	
<p>3. <i>Expand the capacity for more senior students to undertake supervised research projects, for example by creating a senior project or honours thesis course, and/or expanding the capacity of the Independent Study courses.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions are underway about possibility of developing team projects for senior students as a major capstone
<p>4. <i>Aim to reduce reliance on MCQ-based assessment, particularly in upper- year courses.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underway in collaboration with Centre for Teaching and Learning
<p>5. <i>Review student advising capacity in the SHS compared to university-wide norms, and adjust strategies and/or resources accordingly to enhance student access.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions underway with FHS administration
<p>6. <i>Undertake a review of resource allocation and workload in SHS compared to norms in other programs in FHS and Western more broadly.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item scheduled for discussion for annual workload meetings <p><u>Dean:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student to faculty ratios are reviewed annually and are in line with other schools with the Faculty and university
<p>7. <i>Defer consideration of a new graduate program to a later date.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed. Consultation with department faculty is underway <p><u>Dean:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed. HSH faculty are heavily involved in graduate programs in FHS
<p>8. <i>Consider enhancing faculty numbers through new hires, with a focus on consolidating existing needs rather than expanding into new disciplines/areas.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions ongoing with senior administration <p><u>Dean:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty numbers in SHS have seen recent growth and is part of the annual planning process

<p>9. <i>Exercise careful and judicious management of admission in the next few years to improve student:faculty and student:TA ratios.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussions ongoing with senior administration <p><u>Dean:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• See #6 above
<p>10. <i>Evaluate student:TA ratios in SHS compared to other programs, and revise processes for TA allocation to ensure that courses are staffed with TAs with appropriate expertise/knowledge of the content area.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Under discussion with School of Rehabilitation Studies
<p>11. <i>Expand the capacity for more senior students to undertake experiential learning.</i></p>	<p><u>Department:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Options have increased significantly and discussions are ongoing <p><u>Dean:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agreed – a priority issue moving forward

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. The Department Chair/Director, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty/Affiliated University College Principal will be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan. The details of progress made will be presented in the Deans’ Annual Report and filed in the Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic).

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
The School of Health Studies (SHS) should seek opportunities to collaborate with other programs/faculties on joint course offerings, and cross-unit teaching, to maximize use of existing Western resources -- both within FHS, but also with other programs (eg. MedSci) and Schools/Faculties (eg. SocSci, Schulich) where there is relevant expertise.	Underway: Curriculum committee is exploring ways to make substantive revisions to research course(s) (statistical programming course in third year; revision of research methods course to reflect full range of methods used in HS research)	Director, SHS (with curriculum committee)	Changes in place by September 2022.
Expand the capacity for more senior students to undertake supervised research projects, for example by creating a senior project or honours thesis course, and/or expanding the capacity of the independent study courses	Underway: Investigate the feasibility of offering a major project capstone course for Honours Specialization students in the School of Health Studies.	Director, SHS (with curriculum committee)	New research opportunities for undergrads in place by September 2022
Aim to reduce reliance on MCQ-based assessment, particularly in upper- year courses.	Underway: consultation with Centre for Teaching and Learning	Director, SHS (with curriculum committee)	New assessments in some upper year courses by September 2022

<p>Review student advising capacity in the SHS compared to university-wide norms, and adjust strategies and/or resources accordingly to enhance student access</p>	<p>Underway: Discussions with Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) leadership</p>	<p>Director, SHS and FHS leadership</p>	<p>Capacity review and plan in place by July 1, 2022.</p>
<p>Evaluate student: TA ratios in SHS compared to other programs, and revise processes for TA allocation, to ensure that courses are staffed with TAs with appropriate expertise/knowledge of the content area</p>	<p>Underway: Discussions with School of Rehabilitation Studies</p>	<p>Director, SHS; Director, Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (HRS) grad program; FHS Leadership</p>	<p>Revised processes in place by July 1, 2022 for September 2022.</p>