

Final Assessment Report

Submitted by SUPR-G to SCAPA

Program:	Microbiology and Immunology Graduate Program
Degrees Offered:	MSc, PhD, MD/Phd
Approved Fields:	Cellular and molecular biology of microorganisms. Cellular and molecular biology of the immune system.
Date of Site Visit:	November 8-9, 2011
Evaluation:	<i>Good Quality</i>

Summary:

Two external reviewers (and two internal reviewers) took part in an extensive review and visit of the graduate program. This program has very strong and well-respected leadership at the chair and graduate chair level. The graduate chairs (chair-and co chair) have taken an active roll in assessing and guiding graduate students in their experiences. Research productivity and funding is very good, though some recent departures in the department have left a noticeable gap in the area of Immunology/Virology. A key recommendation by the reviewers is the growth of this area in the form of new hires.

There is a large cohort of students, and despite the physical separation of some of the labs, cohesion among students is high and morale is good as well. Students publish at the masters and doctoral level. Students are well supported, though there was concern that the free tuition provided by Schulich was not transparent in the awards letters and would not be continuing in the coming years. The Dean's response to this issue partially clarified but did not directly address the concerns that students and faculty have.

Physical resources were judged to be very good, though there were serious concerns about the relatively high cost of maintaining mice, and the external appraisers felt that the costs were the highest in the country. The department's response to the reviewers agreed, but the dean's response disagreed. This remains an open issue.

There was also a concern that the one graduate administrator was not able to keep up with the demands of this large program. It seemed evident that some additional support staff is needed.

Overall, this is a very well-regarded and healthy graduate program, and the external appraisers were impressed.

Recommendation:	Responsibility
Review of animal cost with consideration to reduce costs or introduce subsidy	Dean; Department Chair
Virology / Immunology program; Growth and new faculty hires	Dean; Department Chair
New Investigator mentoring	Department Chair
Clarity and consistency in funding or tuition offsets for students.	Dean, Associate Dean Graduate Affairs
Increased administrative support	Dean and Department