

Final Assessment Report
Submitted by SUPR-G to SCAPA

Program:	Family Medicine
Degrees Offered:	Master of Clinical Science Program (MCISc) in Family Medicine PhD in Family Medicine
Approved Fields:	none
Date of Site Visit:	June 7, 2013
Evaluation:	<i>Good Quality with report due in September 2015</i>

Summary:

The graduate program in Family Medicine, which is located within the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry, has offered a Master of Clinical Science degree (MCISc) since 1972, and in 2008 introduced its PhD program. The program recruits domestic and international family physicians who want to expand their knowledge and research skills at the graduate level. It is unique in Canada because it is geared to practicing family physicians; it is mostly offered on-line and most enroll part-time; and it is relatively small by design. This poses some challenges in terms of a review because there are few comparable graduate programs.

The review was exceptional in that only one external was able to attend. He describes the program as “widely recognized and unique”, with an international reputation. His review culminates with two key recommendations that summarize the concerns he notes throughout his report. The first is the need for a clearly laid out succession plan that expands the faculty available to supervise students, and supports the sustainability of the program. The second is for program modifications that would improve completion rates. Within both of these recommendations is a third – the need to improve supervisory practices.

These concerns are addressed in the Chair’s response to the review. In addition, the Chair’s response identifies points within the external reviewer’s report that warrant clarification. Based on the external reviewer’s report and the Chair’s response, the following is recommended:

Recommendation:	Responsibility
Create a succession plan with adequate supervisors. One option is to consider and mentor clinical faculty who are enrolled in the program so that some, when they complete, can participate as faculty in these programs	Chair of Program Chair of Department of Family Medicine
Create a plan that addresses the sustainability of the PhD program	Chair of Program Chair of Department Dean of Faculty
Increase and improve completion rates a) Facilitate timely academic progress through the program b) Hold annual progression meetings with students and create a written plan that each student agrees to c) Establish goals and timelines around student progress particularly at the thesis stage d) Encourage student visits to Western for a period of time to work on research during the thesis stage	Chair
e) Establish monthly meetings between supervisors and students f) Establish and put practices in place to maintain a strong community to help students stay connected to their research and the program during the thesis/research paper stage e.g., encourage electronic exchanges among students and faculty	Supervisors Chair of Program/Supervisors