

Final Assessment Report
Submitted by SUPR-G to SCAPA

Program:	Microbiology and Immunology	
Degrees Offered:	MSc, PhD	
Approved Fields:	Cellular and Molecular Biology of Microorganisms Cellular and Molecular Biology of the Immune System	
External Consultants:	Dr. Jennifer Gommerman Professor, Department of Immunology and Chair, Immunology Graduate Studies Program University of Toronto	Dr. Kevin Coombs Professor, Department of Medical Microbiology and Assistant Dean (Research) Rady Faculty of Health Sciences University of Manitoba
Internal Reviewers:	Dr. Catherine Nolan Associate Dean (Graduate Studies), Don Wright Faculty of Music	Mr. Pierre Thibeault PhD student Department of Physiology & Pharmacology
Date of Site Visit:	November 13 – 14, 2017	
Evaluation:	<i>Good Quality with report in two years (February 2020)</i>	
Approved by:	<i>SUPR-G on February 12, 2018</i> <i>SCAPA on March 7, 2018</i>	

Executive Summary

The cyclical review of the Microbiology and Immunology graduate program was a positive experience for all involved. The interactions of the external reviewers, internal reviewers, leaders, faculty members, students, and staff were collegial and constructive. The external reviewers noted that learning outcomes were clearly mapped out in the brief, though they note that there is room for improvement in rigour in the PhD program.

Research in field of Cellular and Molecular Biology of Microorganisms falls into two subfields: virology (primarily HIV) and bacteriology. The reviewers note that, in practice, the department is characterized by three research areas: bacteriology, virology, and immunology. The reviewers also note the need for strategic recruitment to sustain the department’s strength in immunology, possibly through transdisciplinary hires to enhance communication across the units within the department in light of recent and anticipated faculty losses.

The external reviewers’ report gives considerable attention to the department’s responses to issues identified in the previous review (2011), including the need for recruitment of new faculty members in virology and improved mentorship of junior faculty, both of which have been addressed since the previous review. The reviewers describe the department as “strong and vibrant.”

Significant Strengths of Program:

- Quality of faculty research
- Research clusters
 - Centre for Human Immunology
 - Western HIV Investigators Group
 - Bacterial Pathogenesis Group
 - Cancer Group
 - Probiotic Group

- Biotherapeutic Group
- Quality of student research
- The relatively new 1-year Project and Course-Based MSc option

Suggestions for improvement & Enhancement:

- More administrative support for the graduate program
- More lab space
- Improvement in animal protocols
- Greater clarity on PhD course requirements
- Greater rigour in PhD Candidacy Exam
- Greater interaction between basic scientists and clinical staff in field of host-pathogen interactions
- Improved gender balance in faculty
- Better communication across various levels of governance: University, Schulich, and Department
- Introduction of rotations as a way to introduce new students to the program
- Greater professional development opportunities for students

Recommendations required for Program sustainability:	Responsibility	Resources	Timeline
Clarify PhD course requirements	Graduate Chair Graduate Committee		September 2018
Increase rigour in PhD Candidacy Exam	Graduate Chair Graduate Committee		September 2018
Encourage more professional development engagement opportunities for PhD students	Graduate Chair Graduate Committee Department Chair	Own Your Future Program	September 2018 and ongoing
Plan faculty recruitment strategies to address gender imbalance and viability of the field of immunology	Department Chair Dean	Budget	Ongoing
Enhance student recruitment strategy, including a exploring rotation option	Graduate Chair Schulich Graduate Office	Budget	September 2018 and ongoing
Investigate concerns related to animal protocols	Graduate Chair		Ongoing
Improve communication between various levels of governance	Graduate Chair Course coordinators		Ongoing
Increase collaborations between basic scientists and clinicians	Department Chair		Ongoing