# Health Information Science
# Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan

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| **Faculty / Affiliated University College** | Faculty of Information and Media Studies<br>(with the Faculty of Health Science) | |
| **Degrees Offered** | MHIS<br>PhD | |
| **Approved Fields** | None | |
| **External Consultants** | Erna Snelgrove-Clarke, Associate Professor, Associate Dean, Faculty of Health Associate Professor, School of Nursing, Dalhousie University | Marina Morrow, Professor & Chair School of Health Policy and Management. York University |
| **Internal Reviewer** | Jamie Baxter, Professor, Associate Dean Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, Social Science, UWO | Aaron Lee, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Music |
| **Date of Site Visit** | April 29/30, 2019 | |
| **Evaluation** | Good Quality with Report in 18 months<br>Due March 2021 | |
| **Approval Dates** | SUPR-G: September 16, 2019<br>SCAPA: October 2, 2019<br>Senate (FYI only):<br>This section will be completed by SGPS or Associate University Secretary | |
| **Date of Next Review** | Year of next cyclical review 2026-2027 | |

In accordance with Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report provides a summary of the cyclical review, internal responses and assessment and evaluation of Graduate Program delivered by the Faculty of Information and Media Studies and the Faculty of Health Science. This report considers the following documents: the program's self-study, the external consultants' report and the responses from the Program and Faculty. The Final Assessment Report identifies the strengths of the program, opportunities for program enhancement and improvement and details and prioritizes the recommendations of the external consultants and prioritizes those recommendations that are selected for implementation.

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

The Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan is sent for approval through SUPR-G and SCAPA, then for information to 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 and Implementation Plan is the only document resulting from the

Graduate cyclical review process that is made public, all other documents are confidential to the Program/School/Faculty and SUPR-G.

**Executive Summary**

The graduate program in Health Information Science offers Master's and Ph.D. degrees. It is offered jointly by the Faculties of Information and Media Studies (FIMS), which administers the program, and the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS). The Program provided the External Consultants a brief outlining the Program's self-study. This is the Program's first cyclical review. The External Consultants met with both Deans, both Associate Deans Graduate, several faculty and students (both MA and PhD) involved in the program, as well as administrative staff from both Faculties. The Consultants toured student spaces and libraries. The External Consultant report provides an analysis and evaluation of the Health Information Science Program summarized below. The program responded to the core recommendations as outlined below.

**Significant Strengths of the Program**

The following program strengths are identified in the self-study and the External Consultants' Report

The External Consultants agree with the Program that the following are key strengths of the Health Information Science program:

- Interdisciplinary – core involvement of two faculties (FIMS, FHS) and expertise from a wide array of departments including Law, Women's Studies and Computer Science outside of the core Faculties;
- Highly engaged faculty representing wide breadth and depth of knowledge
- Flexible student-focused program design
- The learning outcomes emphasize a critical approach to health information
- The value added over similar programs at other institutions is the focus on knowledge translation; positioning the program competitively;
- The program trains people much needed in the community of health and health care providers;
- The program blends academic and professional expertise;
- The students benefit from excellent library resources including a FIMS Graduate Library.

Overall, the reviewers were very positive about the program, yet were somewhat concerned that that some of its strengths (e.g., flexibility, interdisciplinarity) also present challenges.

**Summary of the Reviewers' Key Recommendations and Department/Faculty Responses**

Although the Consultants have recommendations for the Program (see below), none represents a serious flaw in the Program or its administrative structure. One of the key recommendations though is to review course release for the Director, with the Program response being to keep the Associate Dean Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies from FIMS in the role of Director until at least 2020. This seems prudent given that there are three relatively new senior leaders. The Faculty of Information and Media Studies has a new incoming Dean and new Associate Dean Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, while the Faculty of Health Sciences has a new Associate Dean Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. All of the people in these new roles met with the External Consultants. As the brief refers to various roles involved in the administration of the Program over the years (e.g., Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, Program Coordinator, Graduate Chair, Director) the one-year review should very clearly lay out the roles and responsibilities for administering the program – see Table 1 item 1, Table 1 item 1.

| **TABLE 1** | | |
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| | **Reviewers' Recommendation** | **Program/Faculty Response** |
| 1. Recommendations requiring implementation | 1. Increase course release for Director to reflect workload | Associate Dean Graduate FIMS is Director, review in spring 2020 |
| | 2. Require learning outcomes in syllabi | Though a good idea, Senate through GEC should require these campus-wide to ensure compliance |
| | 3. Clarify how comps differs from proposal when proposal-option comps is chosen | Director will monitor over next two years. |
| | 4. Offer a course on research design to the MHIS students (re: qualitative methods in particular) | Allow MHIS students into existing FIMS research design course |
| | 5. Require the Knowledge Translation course 9623 as core to the PhD | Director will take up with the Program Committee for consideration |
| | 6. Focus on recruitment | Measures already underway for 2020-21 intake |
| 2. Supplementary recommendations for program improvement | 7. Require Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act compliance of syllabi | Senate through GEC should require campus-wide |
| | 8. Track MHIS major research project (MRP) supervisions and completion rates | Already being done. |
| | 9. Form an Advisory Board | Unclear |
| | 10. If any key faculty leave, they should be replaced quickly | Dean's discretion |
| | 11. Consider program expansion to meet community needs | Monitor community needs |
| | 12. Better prepare the HIS students for TAing in FIMS | Training in place is sufficient (GTA workshops from FIMS, GTA workshops from CTL, extensive GTA guidebook for course in question. |

# Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. The Graduate Program Chair and/or Department Chair/Director, in consultation with SGPS and the Dean of the Faculty will be responsible for enacting and monitoring the actions noted in Implementation Plan. The details of progress made will be presented in the Deans' Annual Planning Document.

**TABLE 2 (in the order they appear in Consultant's Report)**

| Recommendation | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| 1. Provide appropriate workload relief for director | Deans FHS, FIMS |
| 2. Require learning outcomes in syllabi | Director, Program Committee, course instructors |
| 3. Clarify how comps differs from proposal when proposal-option comps is chosen | Director, Program Committee |
| 5. Offer a course on research design to the MHIS students | Director, course instructors |
| 6. Require the Knowledge Translation course 9623 as core to the PhD | Director, Program Committee |
| 7. Focus on recruitment | Director |

**Other Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement**
In addition to the recommendations noted above, the review process may have identified other considerations to enhance or enrich the program. List any such considerations.

The suggestion to track MHIS MRP students (Table 1 item 8) comes from a broader suggestion to pay close attention to the distribution of supervision. Some faculty listed as participants in the program wondered why they were not being asked to be involved on student committees.