Ongoing Improvement Progress Report

Instructions and Report Template

As part of the protocols outlined in Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), to facilitate the continuous improvement of academic programs between review cycles, in connection with the Final Assessment Report (FAR) and Implementation Plan, a monitoring process will include an Ongoing Improvement Progress Report. The outcomes of this report will be considered as part of the program's next cyclical review.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the operationalization of the implementation plan following a Cyclical Program Review (or the review of a New Program). This should include a brief summary of actions taken by the Program and the Dean's Office since the completion of the review (usually about three years), as well as an update on the stage of implementation for all applicable items. These include:

- whether the action item(s) are in progress, complete or no longer applicable (with a brief explanation);
- the timelines of each item and how they are progressing or expected to progress, particularly if they are diverting from original timelines in the FAR and Implementation Plan, and;
- a short description of any other program developments and improvements that have taken place following the review.
- For new programs only, an evaluation of the initial administration and resourcing of the program.

The following report template has been created for the program to report on progress made regarding recommendations presented in the Implementation Plan, and any other relevant program developments and enhancements.

- The program will complete the template and submit it to the faculty Dean's Office for sign-off.
- The program will then submit the completed Ongoing Improvement and Progress Report to the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement (OAQE). Reports are due by June 21, 2024.
    - The OAQE will present all Ongoing Improvement and Progress Reports to SUPR-U/G. Any follow-up questions or concerns will be communicated to the program and Dean's Office by the OAQE.
    - It should be noted that as per the requirements of the province's Quality Council, progress reports will be posted on the reports page of the OAQE website.

Ongoing Improvement Progress Report

Health Studies, BHSc / Faculty of Health Sciences

Program	Health Studies, BHSc	**Faculty / Affiliated University College**	Faculty of Health Sciences
Approval Dates of the Review	SUPR-U: May 12, 2021 SCAPA: May 19, 2021 Senate: June 11, 2021	**Year of the Next Review**	2028-2029
Link to the Programs Final Assessment Report (FAR)	https://www.uwo.ca/pvp/vpacademic/iqap/academic_programs/iqap_reports/fac_of_health_science_undergrad/2021%20Health%20Studies%20Program%20Review.pdf **The dates for the next cyclical review stated on this Senate approved FAR is 2027-2028; this is incorrect, the next review for this program will take place in 2028-2029 as indicated in Western's program review schedule.*		
If applicable, submission of follow-up report(s)			

	Name	**Signature**	**Date**
Program Chair/Director	Prof. Rachel Forrester-Jones	Rachel Forrester-Jones	May 29 2024

Dean (or designate)	Prof. Jayne Garland		September 3, 2024

Progress Update on the Implementation Plan

Recommendation #1	**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
Recommendation Implemented ☐ Yes ☐ No + Partially If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? + Yes ☐ No			

NB: Director Dr. Dan Belliveau left Western to become Dean of Science at St. Francis Xavier University in 2020 at which point Dr. Andrew Johnson took over as Acting Director until 2021 when Dr. Rachel Forrester-Jones became Director in Sept 2021. These successive changes – together with lockdowns due to Covid-19 (and Omicron in 2022) disrupted the ability for the School to enact changes in a timely fashion. Nevertheless, many changes in line with the implementation plan have taken place within the timescale, as stated below:

*Progress and **specific actions (in bold):***

Cross-unit and cross-faculty teaching to maximise Western resources:

New master's course

- *In Sept 2022, we began developing a new Advanced Health Care Practice (AHCP**) MHSc in Health Equity and Sustainability** in line with current pressing health issues such as equitable access to health care and global challenges to health including climate change, war and disasters. The aim was also to widen our market base to those working full-time, and in countries other than Canada. This online MHSc is a cross-unit offer (electives are taught by **other Schools in the Faculty of Health Sciences** (FHS) (e.g. School of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CDS)) as well as **cross-Faculty e.g. (electives in global health are provided by Schulich School for Medicine and Dentistry)**. **Launched in Sept 2023**, the **Health Equity and Sustainability MHSc** attracted 20 students from across Canada and further afield (e.g. UK). Now in its second year over 30 FCE students have registered for 2024/5.*

New School of Public Health and Certificate in Public Health

- *In January 2022, **Directors from SHS, Nursing and Schulich** (with input from Social Sciences) embarked on an ambitious journey to develop a School of Public Health. A **Certificate in Critical Global Health is due to be launched in January 2025**, and a BSc or specialization in Public Health is currently being developed which will include a range of SHS courses.*

Efficiency Changes to Rehabilitation Science Specialization

- *Historically, the BHSc **Rehabilitation Science** specialization has been taught by limited duties faculty members which is costly financially and administratively. The FHS Dean and SHS Director also recognized the need for expertise in teaching rehabilitation science and so in 2021 SHS Director met with FHS rehabilitation science schools - Physical Therapy,*

*Communication Sciences and Disorders, and Occupational Therapy - to discuss this deficit. To this end, from 2024/5 the **Rehabilitation Science schools will teach nearly all the Rehabilitation Science specialization courses**.*

Additional Comments

Recommendation #2	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
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

Recommendation Implemented

☐ Yes ☐ No + Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? + Yes ☐ No

Progress

Expand the capacity for more senior student to undertake supervised research projects:

- *Appointing four new Assistant Professors (3 Tenure Track) in 2022 afforded us the opportunity to expand our capacity for more 4th year students to undertake supervised research projects. HS4990/1 Independent **Study** allows students to embark on either a 0.5 or 1.0 FCE research project. This can either be their own project (directed by a faculty supervisor) or a joint project involving several students (the latter has become a popular option in the last two years). A list of faculty expertise (with ideas for specific independent study areas) is expected to provide further options for students in 2024/2025.*

What specific actions have been taken? See above.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

- *In 2024/5 we will investigate the feasibility (including workload implications and student preference) for a **Senior Project course.** Separate from the Independent Study, this Senior Project would be a year-long, 1.0 FCE, thesis project whereby students would receive seminars and lectures designed to facilitate instruction on topics related to carrying out independent research. We have the opportunity to cross-list this new course with Kinesiology 4490E (Senior Research Project). If we are to adopt this new course, the current Independent Study course would change to being more like a directed literature/scoping review.*

Additional Comments

Recommendation #3	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
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

Recommendation Implemented

+ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

We have introduced more essay-based courses at the 3000 and 4000 level (e.g. HS3093 **Clinical Ethics**, HS3092 **Impacts on Climate Change to Health** and HS4093 I**ndigenous, Black and Immigrant Health and Wellbeing**) which are all essay-based courses or a mixture of assignments (e.g. mid-term multiple choice and end of term essay). Our new 2800 Introduction to Research Methods also have an essay component. We are therefore confident that we have a good balance between MCQ-based and essay-based assessments at the higher levels – though with an enrolment of 400+ students each year, this is not an easy task.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

Additional Comments

Recommendation #4	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**

Review student advising capacity in the SHS compared to university-wide norms and adjust strategies and/or resources accordingly to enhance student access.	Underway: Discussions with Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) leadership	Director, SHS and FHS leadership	Capacity review and plan in place by July 1, 2022.

Recommendation Implemented

☐ Yes ✚ No ☐ Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? ☐ Yes ✚ No

Progress

We have approximately 1,700 students and two academic advisors, with one 'floating' program manager (UG academic student service) between SHS and Kin). A ratio of 1 academic advisor to 850 students does not compare well with university-wide norms (e.g. in humanities) and due to increasing volume of student queries, this also means that our academic advisors are unable to pursue further market-enhancing opportunities (e.g. more detailed and frequent open house days; one-to-one bespoke interviews with students at pivotal points in their academic trajectory; specific academic advice for international students – which can be very different to domestic student advice for several reasons).

What specific actions have been taken?

We have removed all introductory one-to-one meetings with students to free up academic advisor time.

We have a 'chat-box line' open Monday to Friday to answer student queries with the intention of removing broad stroke questions from academic advisors.

We have introduced a weekly Friday SHS Newsletter which goes to all students in SHS with details about academic rules, regulations, opportunities and events.

We have requested one more academic advisor be employed to for example, cater for first year students, thereby freeing up the other two academic advisors to concentrate on 2nd year and upper year students.
Next Steps (if applicable) *What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?* *No further follow-up since this is an FHS decision.*
Additional Comments *If applicable*

Recommendation #5	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
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.	Underway: Discussions with Health and Rehabilitation Sciences graduate program	Director, SHS; Graduate Chair, Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (HRS) grad program; FHS Leadership	Revised processes in place by July 1, 2022 for September 2022.
Recommendation Implemented ☐ Yes ☐ No **+** Partially			

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

The allocation of TAs per course has, since 2021 been the purview of the Health and Rehabilitation Sciences graduate program. Due to limited numbers of thesis-based graduate student enrolments, it is not always possible to ensure that courses are staffed withTAs with appropriate expertise/knowledge of the content area.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

Allocation of 'appropriate' TAs will improve if more grad students with the appropriate expertise are enrolled in Health and Rehabilitation Sciences.

Additional Comments

If applicable

Note: The total number of expandable text boxes will be dependent on the number of prioritized recommendations appearing in the program's most recent Final Assessment Report (FAR).

Continuous Program Enhancement

BHSc Health Sciences – curriculum transformation:

- *Two specializations **(Health and Aging and Health Promotion**) of our BHSc offer were not recruiting students relative to our other specializations (Health Sciences, Health Sciences with Biology, and Rehabilitation Sciences). This created inefficiencies. We therefore decided to **remove these two specializations** to pivot to new opportunities for new types of offerings (i.e. Certificates in Health and Aging and Public Health [see above)].*

- *Regarding our overall BHSc degree, the SHS decided to **underpin our curriculum with the Six Dimensions of Health and Wellbeing** (physical, mental, interpersonal, ecological, sociocultural, sociopolitical) to better structure and market our offer. This means that when students graduate, they will have received instruction in each of these dimensions.*

- *The SHS re-evaluated and refreshed our 23 program level outcomes to 8 more relevant outcomes in line with the Western Degree Outcomes.*

All introductory courses (1000 level) were re-evaluated, and the following changes were made:

- *HS 1110 was changed to better reflect core introductory topics in Health and Wellbeing (**now HS1111 How to Achieve a Balanced and Meaningful Life**)*

- ***Anatomy** (HS2300) was moved from 2nd year to first year (HS1300) with the rationale that a) it was helpful for students to enter 2nd year with grounding in the topic; represents a more internally consistent 1st year foundation (course now taught in KIN & NURSING); b) there was a Faculty-wide appointment to teach anatomy; c) anatomy fitted with the 'physical' dimension of our six dimensions of health and wellbeing*

- *The need for a **writing course** was highlighted and decided it would be best met via interventions in 1st /2nd year courses - a faculty member has been assigned to lead discussion/practice moving forward.*

Summary of New 1st year (all courses are 0.5 FCE)

Required HS Courses
• ***HS 1001A/B: Personal Determinants of Health***
• ***HS 1002A/B: Social Determinants of Health***
• ***HS 1111A/B: How to Achieve a Balanced & Meaningful Life (NEW)***
• ***BIO 1201/2A/B: General Biology I + II***
• ***Functional Gross Human Anatomy HS1300A/B (NEW)***
• ***Plus, a suite of electives***

All 2nd year courses were re-evaluated, and the following changes made:

- ***Health Policy*** *(HS3400) was moved to HS2400. Rationale: a) it was deemed important that ALL students should have knowledge of Health Policy; b) to support the development of upper year health policy courses (which also aligned with our new Certificate in Critical Global Public Health).*

- ***Research Methods in Health Sciences*** *(2801) changed to* ***HS2800 Health Sciences Research.*** *After evaluating this course, we decided that an understanding of health sciences research processes is critical for student success in upper year courses and for future career paths yet 2801 did not provide an adequate knowledge base or understanding of the purpose and process of health sciences research. We therefore decided to change the course to a full course (1.0 rather than 0.5) to provide a holistic picture of the health research journey including process, utilization, basic quantitative and qualitative methods, types of analysis and how to best translate knowledge from findings. It will add a fundamental skill set to students' knowledge base. We also renamed it* ***HS2800 Health Sciences Research.*** *This course is very different from 2801 that concentrates on quantitative research methods only. This change aligns with recommendation* ***#1 revision of research methods course to reflect full range of methods used in HS research***

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Summary of New 2nd Year (all courses are 0.5 FCE apart from 2800 which is now 1.0)

Required HS Courses
• ***HS 2250A/B: Health Promotion***
• ***HS 2400A/B: Health Policy (NEW)***

- ***HS 2610F/G: Introduction to Ethics in Health***
- ***HS 2700A/B: Health Issues in Childhood & Adolescence***
- ***HS 2711A/B: Health Issues in Aging***
- ***HS 2800A/B: Research Methods in Health Sciences (NEW)***
- ***Plus, electives***

Changes to upper year courses (3000 and 4000 level courses):

- ***Introduced NEW electives*** HS3093 **Clinical Ethics**, HS HS3092 **Impacts on Climate Change to Health** and HS4093 I**ndigenous, Black and Immigrant Health and Wellbeing** in keeping with current and emerging debates within the field of Health Sciences. All these courses were introduced in 2022.

- *Using the **introduce-reinforce-proficient model,** we have begun to **transform our upper year courses**, placing a range of courses into 'buckets' that speak to our 6 dimensions, from which students can pick several electives. Currently we have two buckets – Ecological, and Methods.*

- *In line with the changes to 2801 (now called 2800) we changed the name of HS 3811 Introduction to Qualitative Methods to HS3811 Qualitative Health Research in Practice to better reflect its content which has always been at a higher level than would be suggested by the title 'introduction'. With the explicit inclusion of qualitative research methods in our new second-year methods course (2800), HS311A/B is no longer the 'introductory' course. The new title also better denotes the practical*

activities this course has always provided including practical experience of qualitative methods such as open-ended group and individual interviewing.

Statistical programming course in third year (recommendation #1)

- ***A new tenure track position was filled ready to start in 2024*** *with the expectation of a new upper year stats course. However, this person chose not to join Western at the last minute, so this course has not been realized. However, we have agreed to the following:*

  - A NEW Special topic Quantitative Analysis of Social Factors for Population Health *will be taught from 2025/6*

- HS 3801 Measurement and Analysis in Health Sciences (blended course) has now been cross-listed with Kinesiology 3032 and as from 2024/5 will be a required course in the BHSc curriculum to ensure that students have competency in this topic. The course has operated well in a "blended format" for several years (even before COVID, in fact).