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- whether the action item(s) are in progress, complete or no longer applicable (with a brief explanation);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

Occupational Therapy M.Sc. / Faculty of Health Sciences

Program	Occupational Therapy M.Sc.	**Faculty / Affiliated University College**	Faculty of Health Sciences
Approval Dates of the Review	SUPR-G: February 28, 2022 SCAPA: March 9, 2022 Senate: March 18, 2022	**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_grad/OTAnnual%20Report%20Final%20Assessment%20Reports%202021-22%20Western%20University%20Graduate.pdf		
If applicable, submission of follow-up report(s)			

	Name	**Signature**	**Date**
Program Chair	Liliana Alvarez		April 30, 2024
School Director	Lynn Shaw		May 1 2024
Dean (or designate)	Laura Murray		May 7, 2024

Progress Update on the Implementation Plan

Recommendation #1	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Consider whether current admissions process maximizes the likelihood of diversity.	Once this 3-year cycle is complete, the Admissions Committee will review the admissions process based on the data available, including reviewing the current 70/30 split.	Admissions Committee	By August 2023

Recommendation Implemented

☐ Yes ☐ No ■ Partially

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

Progress

The three-year cycle is now complete. As part of our recently revised program evaluation plan, the admissions committee is in the process of developing an admissions evaluation process that addresses whether current strategies maximize likelihood of diversity. The divergence from the originally proposed timeline derives from the fact that the implementation of a CASPER and Sub-GPA combined score also coincided with the launch of a revised curriculum in the program, effectively limiting our ability to distinguish the independent impact of those initiatives. However, the admissions committee has developed specific strategies to increase the diversity

of the student body and the profession, and support applicants from historically underrepresented populations. Specifically, the program has now increased the reserved spots for International applicants from to six (from the two previously documented in our IQAP report), and for Indigenous applicants to five (from two).

In addition, the MScOT program has approved the consideration of two additional English Language Proficiency Tests (the PET and Duolingo Test) which together with the existing ones (TOEFL and IELTS) will increase accessibility for International students. The minimum required scores for all four tests have been set at an equivalent level according to the tests own research reports, and this will improve consistency and fairness in the admission process of international applicants.

Next Steps (if applicable)

The admissions committee will continue to develop an evaluation plan to assess the impact of the current calculation of the combined CASPER and Sub-GPA score, as well as monitor and evaluate the impact of the increase in reserved spots.

Additional Comments

Not applicable

Recommendation #2	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
Consider perhaps a 4-year curriculum review cycle.	The use of a 4-year curriculum cycle will be added into the Terms of Reference for the Curriculum Committee when these are reviewed.	Director, Curriculum Committee	By August 2022

Recommendation Implemented

■ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

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

Progress

A 4-year overall curriculum review cycle was approved by the curriculum committee and added to the curriculum committee terms of reference. The next overall curriculum review cycle is scheduled to be completed in 2025/2026. Furthermore, the curriculum committee has approved and integrated into its terms of reference a 3-year rolling review cycle of course syllabi and course outlines, which will allow all course syllabi and outlines to be reviewed once every three years to prevent curriculum drift and ensure alignment with course and program learning outcomes.

Next Steps (if applicable)

The curriculum committee will conduct an overall curriculum review in 2025/2026. Course syllabi and outlines will be reviewed on a three-year cycle, with all courses within the same curriculum theme group reviewed in the same year to ensure consistency and scaffolding across courses.

Additional Comments

Not applicable

Recommendation #3	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
To get a better sense of how the program prepares for students for post-graduation activity, take efforts to improve response rate to alumni survey and track	Once in place, the School of Occupational Therapy's Graduate Administrative Assistant will work in collaboration with Western Alumni to devise better ways to track program alumni.	Director, Associate Director	By August 2022

program graduates.			

Recommendation Implemented

■ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

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

Progress

The curriculum committee oversaw the design and implementation of program surveys after the completion of year 1, after year 2, and at 6 months post-graduation for alumni. Survey results are discussed by the curriculum committee, and action plans developed to address any outstanding gaps.

In 2024, the School of Occupational Therapy's 50th year, the Faculty of Health Sciences is launching the Occupational Therapy Alumni Award of Distinction, which will recognize an alumnus who is making a significant impact in support of equity-oriented social change, and harnessing the transformative power of occupation.

Next Steps (if applicable)

The School of Occupational Therapy has undergone a recent (2023) change in its governance structure, which led among other changes, to the designation of a Program Evaluation and Data Infrastructure Lead. This role is part of the service responsibilities assigned to a faculty member in the School. This role will oversee the integration of post-graduation survey outcomes into the program evaluation plan.

Additional Comments

Not applicable

Recommendation #4	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Ensure program delivery is consistent with Universal Design principles applied to accessibility.	Within future Curriculum Committee meetings and Town Hall discussions (regular mechanisms for student input; next meetings are scheduled for Oct.19th, 2021, Year 1 and Oct.26th, 2021, Year 2), the program will seek clarification as to any discrepancies students are reporting and will clarify the processes used to provide accommodations as well as the steps taken that align with Universal Design Principles.	Curriculum Committee	By April 2022

Recommendation Implemented

■ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

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

Progress

The program clarified with students the process to access Institutional and School support services, and the available resources to support student accommodations and universal design process. As a result, the program implemented a multifactor action plan to address this recommendation. The plan includes:

- *A full time Academic Program Coordinator was hired to provide student support, and to develop and monitor information sharing practices that ensure students have access to information pertaining to accessible education and other institutional supports. The*

Academic Program Coordinator fulfills the responsibilities of a student academic advisor and first point of contact for student resources and academic/wellbeing concerns. This role is shared across the three rehabilitation professional programs, and as such, provides opportunities for the sharing of best practices across Schools.

- *We developed an Academic Relief process, which allows students to apply for academic relief on compassionate, medical, or religious grounds and can be completed when such circumstances will result in missed deadlines or missed exams or activities. This information is now provided prior to the start of the program, reviewed during orientation activities, and available to all students on their class site which is maintained in the Institutional learning management system.*
- *We developed the Early Support Plan process to assist those students identified as having significant difficulties (i.e., at risk for failure) in either the academic or clinical aspects of the program. This process allows the student and faculty member to develop an action plan to support the student and monitors and documents the action plan and outcomes.*
- *Faculty have engaged in Universal Design professional development training including Accessibility Workshops and the Digital & Online Teaching Community of Practice developed by the Center for Teaching and Learning.*
- *The Faculty of Health Sciences updated a classroom in the Health Sciences Building with accessible technology to support in-person and online learners simultaneously*, for use by the MScOT program.
- *The Graduate Chair consulted with Western's Accessible Education office regarding the course delivery schedule and timing of fieldwork and in-classroom courses to integrate their feedback into planned changes to accommodate class growth.*

Next Steps (if applicable)

The recently formed MScOT committee will continue to review the program policies and procedures on an ongoing basis, to ensure that accessible education and universal design principles are incorporated across program delivery and operations.

Additional Comments

N/A

Recommendation #7	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Review student feedback with students at the beginning of Term or Year would be helpful. Students do appreciate the opportunity to discuss the issues as they recognize that not all feedback can be implemented but would like to be a part of the process for discussion.	The Curriculum Committee will implement a mechanism within this academic year to address student feedback. This communication will occur through the Year 1 and Year 2 Coordinators, with key items also to be added to the agenda of the Town Halls.	Curriculum Committee, Year Coordinators	By April 2022

Recommendation Implemented

■ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

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

Progress

The curriculum committee oversaw the implementation of a student feedback and discussion strategy, that has now been implemented and maintained since 2022. Student Curriculum representatives (elected by the student council) are invited to share student feedback twice a year with the Curriculum Committee. Student reps gather feedback via an online survey in which all students are invited to participate. The student reps then share their feedback with the curriculum committee. The committee chair discusses the feedback and communicates action strategies in relation to the student feedback with the students during Townhall Meetings scheduled each fall term (end of October/early November) and winter term (end of March/early April) with the Year 1 and Year 2 classes respectively. Furthermore, as part of the new governance structure (2023), the School has formed a student engagement committee. This committee seeks to connect with students, and create opportunities for student effective involvement in the program to enhance the student experience.

Next Steps (if applicable)

As part of the revised School Governance Structure, the scheduling and preparation of the Town Hall meetings will now be under the leadership of the Student Engagement committee. The curriculum committee will continue to have a standing item in the agenda pertaining to student feedback and communication of action plans in response to the feedback.

Additional Comments

Not applicable

Recommendation #8	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
To better understand the need for and effect of EDI activities, more information at a university level (demographics of student and faculty) is needed in order to address issues of EDI within the program.	The School of Occupational Therapy will work with the Faculty's recently appointed EDI-D coordinator and the SGPS to examine data related to the diversity of the program's students. The program will equally reach out to the Office of the Vice-Provost EDI to follow-up on the Western wide census results.	Director, Associate Director	By December 2022

Recommendation Implemented

☐ Yes ☐ No ■ Partially

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

Progress *After consultation with the Faculty's Associate Dean Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, it was determined that EDID data are not available on a School level via the data collected by the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies or vis the Western-wide census. The Ontario Rehabilitation Sciences Programs Application Service (ORPAS) has implemented an EDID survey as part of the admission process. The program is in the process of determining whether and how this data can be accessed by the admissions committee, while protecting student privacy and confidentiality in their application process. Moreover, the FHS EDIDA Committee is currently conducting a survey of FHS students, faculty, and staff regarding their access to EDI activities and further training and information needs.*
Next Steps (if applicable) *Once the access to the ORPAS data is determined, the admissions committee will design a process of reviewing these data over time and considering its implications for admissions processes.*
Additional Comments *The program is planning to develop a mechanism to access and review this data for the 2025 admission cycle.*

Recommendation #10	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
A key element of the program is experiential learning, however there is no access to standardized patients or simulated lab space (medicine may have a standard patient program but it is not accessible to	Given the Faculty's commitment to support increasing simulation space and technology needs among its schools, the School of Occupational Therapy will stipulate its simulated technology and space needs (e.g. standardized patients) to the Dean.	Director, Associate Director, Dean of Health Sciences	By August 2022

the School of OT and there is very limited lab space).			

Recommendation Implemented

■ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

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

Progress

The MScOT program approved the redesign of OT9580 Fieldwork: Knowledge in Action (Level 1) course, to become a Simulated Fieldwork Experience course where students are provided with simulated experiential learning opportunities in a variety of settings. As part of this process, the program secured access to the Nursing Simulation Labs in the Health Sciences Building (HSB) including three Nursing Simulation Labs in HSB with nine hospital beds in each lab, and additional equipment including type 2 and 3 wheeled walkers, manual wheelchairs, and Aids for Daily Living equipment. Moreover, the program collaborated with the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry to gain access to their Simulated Patient program. As a result, the MScOT program now hires simulated patients from this program for all simulated learning experiences in this fieldwork course, which involves nine patients per simulation day. Simulated patients are recruited by the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and receive comprehensive training to offer detailed post-scenario feedback to learners based on their experience/impressions. Feedback addresses a learner's professional manner, technical style, and communication skills and focuses on the session's objectives. The School of Occupational Therapy has committed the necessary funding to support the hiring of these simulated patients to meet the needs of the program.

This fully simulated fieldwork course was first lunched in the Winter of 2024, and feedback from students is being collected for review and further improvement.

Next Steps (if applicable)

The fieldwork team is in the process of collecting and reviewing students feedback as the first iteration of this simulated course comes to an end. Feedback from students and clinicians will be used to further improve the learning experience.
Additional Comments *In addition to the involvement of simulated patients, the course also involves over 20 practicing occupational therapists outside of the faculty complement, who provide students with clinical instruction and feedback for each simulation case.*

Recommendation #17	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
Enable OT students to be eligible for OGS or provide alternative funding opportunities to help address student concerns over costs incurred for placements.	The Program and Faculty will explore other donor based awards to support the students in OT.	Director, Associate Director, Dean of Health Sciences	By December 2022
Recommendation Implemented ■ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? ☐ Yes ☐ No			
Progress			

The program confirmed that as per Western University's guidelines, professional Masters students will not be eligible for OGS. As such, the program proceeded to identify other funding opportunities that could support the funding of the occupational therapy students. The program now provides the following funding opportunities for Occupational Therapy students:

- ***Arlene Shimeld Bursary.*** *($500) Awarded annually to a full-time student in the MSc Occupational Therapy program who demonstrates financial need and meets OSOTF guidelines. Preference will be given to students in year 1. The School of Occupational Therapy Awards Committee identifies the most deserving individual. This bursary was established through Foundation Western in honour of Arlene Shimeld by Marilyn Ernest Conibear.*
- ***Occupational Therapy Award.*** *(2 awards, each of $1,150) Awarded annually to a full-time graduate student pursuing a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy degree based on financial need and academic achievement (minimum 78% average).*
- ***Occupational Therapy Student Bursary.*** *(4 to 6 awards, each of $500) Awarded annually to a full-time graduate students pursuing a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy degree based on financial need.*
- ***Marilyn Conibear Bursary.*** *($500) Awarded to a full-time graduate student in the MSc Occupational Therapy program who demonstrates financial need and meets OSOTF guidelines. Preference is given to students in year 2. The School of Occupational Therapy Awards Committee identifies the most deserving individual. This bursary was established through Foundation Western by Marilyn Ernest-Conibear.*
- ***Ronald & Gladys Richardson Bursary in Occupational Therapy****. ($900) Awarded annually to a full-time graduate student in any year of the MSc Occupational Therapy program who demonstrates financial need. This bursary was established with Foundation Western by Mr. Ronald O.B. (HBA '43) and Mrs. Gladys Richardson (BA '40 Faculty of Arts & Humanities), and Mrs. Maureen Richardson-Wood (BSc '81 OT) and Mr. Craig Wood (BA '81).*
- ***Distance Clinical Placement Bursary in Occupational Therapy.*** *(2 awards, each of $425) Awarded to a full-time graduate student in the Occupational Therapy program who is participating in a clinical placement, based on financial need. Applicants must demonstrate that they have to pay for accommodation in a Canadian placement location for the period of their clinical/fieldwork course in addition to the cost incurred in maintaining their university-location housing. The Occupational Therapy program will select the recipient and at least one member of the selection committee must hold membership in the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.*
- ***OTDBASE Distance Fieldwork Bursaries in Occupational Therapy****. (2 awards, each of $900) Awarded to a full-time graduate students in the Occupational Therapy program who are participating in a clinical placement, based on financial need. Applicants must demonstrate a need to fund their accommodation in a Canadian placement location for the period of their*

clinical/fieldwork course in addition to the cost incurred in maintaining their university location housing. The Occupational Therapy program will select the recipient and at least one member of the selection committee must hold membership in the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. These bursaries were established by a generous gift from Marilyn Conibear through Foundation Western.

- ***Marilyn Ernest Scholarship**. ($900) Awarded annually to a graduate student in the Occupational Therapy program entering the second year of the program based on the cumulative total of the fieldwork courses OT9580 and OT9581 and the cumulative total of academic courses completed in terms 1 and 2 of the program. Recipients will be selected by the Director of the School of Occupational Therapy acting on the advice of the Fieldwork Coordinator and the Awards Committee of which at least one representative will hold current membership in the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. This award was established through a generous gift from Professor Marilyn (Ernest) Conibear.*
- ***Norman and Leah Orenstein Award**. ($650) Awarded to a graduate student with a strong academic record entering the second year of studies in the MSc Occupational Therapy program or a student in the final year of the Master of Physical Therapy program, who has a history of interest in community service with the elderly. Each school's awards committee will identify the most deserving individual. An application is not required. This award was established in 1987 by Ms. Mina Orenstein and Mr. Reuben Orenstein.*

Next Steps (if applicable)

Not applicable

Additional Comments

Not applicable

Recommendation #18	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline

Additional funding for Indigenous students might encourage students to apply	In its aim to bolster bursary and scholarship opportunities for Indigenous students and equity-deserving groups, the Faculty of Health Sciences, in consultation with the new Assistant Dean EDIIA, will prepare a proposal regarding funding options to be discussed at Faculty Council and the GEC.	Dean of Health Sciences	By December 2022

Recommendation Implemented

☐ Yes ☐ No ■ Partially

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

Progress

The faculty has appointed an Assistant Dean EDIDA, who is in the process of conducting a needs assessment across the faculty. As such, no funding opportunities for Indigenous applicants have been put in place at this time. The MScOT program has taken specific actions to identify relevant funding opportunities at the Institutional level that can support Indigenous applicants as well as other equity deserving applicants. Specifically, Western's Indigenous Student Centre helps to coordinate financial supports and employment opportunities that help ease the financial burden on Indigenous students and their families. A Financial Aid Coordinator in the Centre assists students in navigating access to the various financial resources that are available to Indigenous students. These include the National Indigenous Scholarship Program, for incoming Indigenous students who plan on attending Western University's main campus; and the Local First Nations Scholarship Program, for First Nations students from local territories. Both programs are managed together with Western's Office of the Registrar. It is important to note that in our most recent application cycle (2024) the program recorded a 100% increase in the number of Indigenous applicants compared to the 2023 cycle; and a 23% when compared to the 2022 cycle, making 2024 the year in which the program has received the highest number of Indigenous applications.

Furthermore, Western and FHS have developed two funding mechanisms to support international applicants to the MScOT program. These include three OT specific awards for International applicants valued at $2500 per year (supported by FHS); and an additional

Discount for international undergraduate students at Western wishing to go into graduate education in occupational therapy, valued at 25% of the value of their tuition.
Next Steps (if applicable) *The admissions committee will work collaboratively with the Assistant EDIDA to identify opportunities for funding to support Indigenous applicants and other equity deserving applicants to the program.*
Additional Comments *Not 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
The program is increasing the number of available spots from the current 75 students cohort to up to 95 students to be admitted in the Fall of 2024. As such, we have embarked in a systematic, rigorous, and collaborative process to identify and implement a plan to support sustainable and quality growth. This plan included consultation with SPGS, FHS, and the office of Accessible Education to develop a new program schedule that ensures adequate fieldwork opportunities for all students, and supports students with accommodations in completing the requirements of the program. In addition, we recently (2023) revised the School of Occupational Therapy's governance structure, which led to important positive changes to the MScOT program delivery and operations, including the development of an MScOT committee to support the graduate chair in developing evidence-based policies and procedures. We have also revised our program evaluation plan to develop a timetable of program evaluation tasks and reporting mechanisms to ensure ongoing monitoring and documentation of program enhancement. Finally, we have recently completed (April 2024) our self-study

document, as required by the academic accreditation process of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists. Our on-site accreditation visit is expected to take place in November of 2024.