Research for Policy and Evaluation Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan

Faculty / Affiliated University College	Faculty of Social Science	
Degrees Offered	MA	
Date of Last Review	None - new program proposal	
Approved Fields	None	
External Consultants	Wallace Clement	Professor, Carleton University
	Lori Turnbull	Professor, Dalhousie University
Internal Reviewer	Samuel Trosow	Associate Professor, UWO, Faculty of Law
	Martin Nord	PhD student, FIMS
Date of Site Visit	December 11, 12, 2019	
Date Review Report Received	January 9, 2020	
Date Program/Faculty Response Received	January 30, 2020	
Evaluation	**Approved to Commence**	
Approval Dates	SUPR-G: March 25, 2020 SCAPA: April 1, 2020 Senate:	
Year of Next Review	Year of next cyclical 2027-2028 This section will be completed by SGPS	

In accordance with Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), adopted on May 11, 2011, revised June 22, 2012, this Final Assessment Report provides a summary of the cyclical review, internal responses and assessment and evaluation of Graduate Program delivered by the Faculty of Social Science

This report considers the following documents: the program's self-study, the external consultants' report and the responses from the Department/School 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 main objective of the proposed MA Research for Policy and Evaluation (MRPE), a professional master's program, is to equip students with advanced policy and practice-relevant research and communication skills in the social sciences. The goal is to conduct mandated research in applied settings including the public, private, and non-private sectors.

These objectives are consistent with the University's Strategic Plan and the program would take advantage of research expertise across the departments in the Faculty of Social Science. The proposed program aims to blend the research methodology of various academic disciplines to create versatile research practitioners who are able to adapt to public, private, and non-profit work environments and projects.

The proposed program comprises two terms of full-time course work and one internship term with projections for an initial cohort of 15, increasing to a steady-state of 30. The program is intended to attract students with work experience and students progressing directly from undergraduate programs.

Significant Strengths of the Program

The proposed program builds on the strengths in the Faculty of Social Science in the area of Research Methods and Methodology. The proposal identifies an outstanding group of instructors who will all bring value to the program.

Given its structure and objectives, the proposal fills a specific labour market niche in the policy area, providing broad research skills needed for evaluation. It is has been carefully differentiated from other programs in the Faculty, such as the Masters of Public Administration

Areas of Concern Identified.

Reviewers' Recommendations and Program Response

	Reviewers' Recommendation	***Program/Faculty Response***
Recommendations requiring implementation: (4,6,7,8,9,		
	2. endorse the required internship, focused in the third term but with preparation throughout the year-long program.	"*We appreciate that the reviewers see the advantages of the required internship as integral to the program, especially the continuity as a 3-term course throughout the program "*
	3. adopt a policy statement that aims to build inclusive backgrounds and perspectives within the student body, including a blend of recent graduates and those drawn from the work force.	"*We will certainly implement this recommendation. While the latter part of this suggestion is a long-term strategy that will benefit from consultation with program graduates, in the short term we will add a policy statement to the description of the program that aims to build an inclusive student body in terms of background and perspective. On a practical note, we will include a statement about this on our admissions page, implemented by the Program Director and NEST Administrative Assistant in the coming weeks.* " *NEST is the Network for Economic and Social Trends, a research hub in the Faculty of Social Science
	4. Internship Coordinator should be a full-year appointment with intensive involvement in the full-year Internship course. Internship coordinator should know the students and the markets for internships and they should be aware of specific opportunities in the public, private and third sectors, plus work with MITACS to help subsidize internships	"*We agree that the internship coordinator will be a full-year appointment with intensive involvement in the internship, including the full-year course. The Dean's office and Program Director will begin the search for the internship coordinator in March 2020 with the expectation that we will fill this position in the spring. In addition to relationship building with internship hosts, that person will be responsible for developing numerous protocols for the program – e.g., internship matching, employer agreements,*

		feedback mechanisms – and assisting with the internship course during the year."
	5. direct efforts to building program-based scholarships to attract bright students and enable students with financial challenges	"*We agree and plan to encourage donor funding of scholarships. The Program Director will work with the Faculty of Social Science Development Officer to begin this process in the summer of 2020. Students with financial challenges will be a priority along with attention to inclusivity/diversity as per item 3. "*
	6. hold retreat before classes begin in September to help build the cohort and clearly explain the unique features of the program and curriculum	*"We appreciate the suggestion to hold a retreat with the incoming class before the start of classes in September. The Program Director and Internship Coordinator will explore this possibility during the summer of 2020, and will determine whether it is feasible, depending on arrival dates for incoming students."*
	7. launch Brown Bag series to include faculty and professionals in the field	*"We agree that engagement of this sort is highly beneficial. Rather than launching a new brownbag series for students involved in the program, we will utilize the colloquia organized by the Network for Economic and Social Trends (NEST) and the six Centres within NEST for the recommended purpose of engaging faculty and the community in the program and providing a forum for exchange with the faculty and the wider community. The new program will be an important component of NEST and its Centres, and we will fully engage MRPE students in NEST activities, rather than launching a separate series for them. The Program Director, who is also the Director of NEST, will be responsible for ensuring that this is the case. "*
	8. set up contact person from supporting faculty for the	*"We will consider the possibility of setting up a*

	student's internships, so they have the opportunity for advice and guidance while off campus	*contact person from supporting faculty for the students' internships. This will require discussion among the program planning committee and the course instructors who will be teaching in the program. We anticipate holding a meeting for this purpose in April/May 2020."*
	9. revisiting of the course titles, descriptions and the program's degree title by the faculty now engaged in directing and delivering the program.	*"At the meeting of planning committee members and course instructors in April/May 2020, we will discuss the possibility of revamping the course titles and descriptions as recommended. In terms of the program's degree title: Masters in Research for Policy and Evaluation, this title was determined through extensive consultations over a number of months (planning committee, department chairs, Dean's office) and we would suggest that this title best represents what the program will be providing – a focus on* ***research*** *that can be applied to* ***policy*** *and to program* ***evaluation****."*
	10. consider whether a gradate diploma Type II (for those enrolled in other graduate programs) and/or a Type III (for those in the workplace not requiring Internship experience) would add value to the overall program now or in the future	*"The idea of adding a set of graduate diplomas to the program is appealing and will be discussed by the Program Director and Dean's Office once the first cohort of students have completed the program. As the evaluators suggest, these diplomas can be added at any point, and it would seem wise to start with the Master's program, before expanding. We will also review lessons learned when we eliminated such a graduate diploma associated with the Masters of Management of Applied Science (MMASc)."*

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.

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility
3.adopt policy statement that aims to build inclusive backgrounds and perspectives within student body, including a blend of recent graduates and those drawn from the work force	Include the statement in all materials and outreach for the program and include in program specification going forward to for final approval	• *Associate Dean-Graduate* • *Program Director*
4. Internship Coordinator should be full-year appointment with intensive involvement in the full-year Internship course.	Ensure job description of internship coordinator addresses the need for full-year support and appoint the internship coordinator	• *Dean* • *Associate Dean-Graduate* • *Program Director*
5. hold retreat before classes begin in September	explore this possibility and determine whether it is feasible, depending on arrival dates for incoming students.	• *Program Director* • Internship Coordinator
6. launch Brown Bag series	utilize the existing colloquia organized by the Network for Economic and Social Trends (NEST) and its six Centres	• *Program Director*
7. set up contact person from supporting faculty for the student's internships	program director to consult with Dean (regarding potential workload implications) and faculty members	• Dean • *Department Chair* • *Program Director* • Program Faculty Members
8. revisit course titles	explore the possibility of revamping the course titles and descriptions as recommended	• *Program Director* • Program Faculty Members
9. Adjust NEST mandate to include the goal to "train the next generation of applied public policy researchers."	will be revised to include the goal of training the next generation of applied researchers.	• *NEST* Director • NEST Administrative Assistant