Physician Assistant Studies
Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan
April 2026

Faculty / Affiliated University College	Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry	
Degrees Offered	Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS)	
Date of Introduction	September 1, 2026	
External Reviewers	Dr. Trustin Domes Academic Director, MPAS Program University of Saskatchewan	Dr. Jeff Golisky Director, MPAS Program University of Toronto
Internal Reviewers	Dr. Immaculate Namukasa Associate Dean, Graduate Faculty of Education	Maxwell Campbell, PhD Student
Date of Site Visit	March 23 and 24, 2026	
Date Review Report Received	April 13, 2026	
Date Program/Faculty Response Received	Program: April 24, 2026 Decanal: April 24, 2026	
Evaluation	Approved to Commence	
Approval Dates	SUPR-G: May 11, 2026 ACA: May 26, 2026 Senate:	
Year of First Review	2033-2034	
Progress Report	June 2029	

Overview of Western's Cyclical Review Assessment Reporting Process

In accordance with Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a summary of the new program proposal, report prepared by external reviewers, internal responses and assessment and evaluation of the proposed Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) to be delivered by the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry.

This FAR considers the following documents:

- the program's proposal brief;
- the external reviewers' report;
- the response(s) from the academic unit; and
- the response from the Dean, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry

This FAR identifies the strengths of the proposed program and opportunities for program enhancement and improvement, and details the recommendations of the external reviewers – noting those recommendations to be prioritized for implementation.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the FAR that have been selected for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, specifies any action or follow-up that is required, and defines the timeline for completion.

The FAR (including Implementation Plan) is sent for approval through the Subcommittee on Program Review – Graduate (SUPR-G), the Senate Committee on Academic Curriculum and Awards (ACA) and Senate. Following institutional approval, it is then submitted for approval to the Ontario Universities' Council on Quality Assurance.

Executive Summary

The proposed professional Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) is a two-year (six-term) full-time professional graduate program designed to prepare students for clinical practice and interprofessional collaboration in various healthcare settings. The program emphasizes advanced education in medical foundations, clinical skills, professional competencies, and research, enabling graduates to become competent and compassionate Physician Assistants (PAs).

The Pre-Clerkship Year (Year 1) is comprised of four main components; 1) medical foundations; 2) clinical skills; 3) professional competencies; and 4) research, all of which will run longitudinally throughout the year. The Clerkship Year, (Year 2) includes extensive experiential learning opportunities that are mandatory for all students and

involves immersive clinical rotations across various medical specialties, such as family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, emergency medicine, surgery, and more.

The program will primarily be delivered in-person through synchronous on-campus sessions, interactive group discussions, hands-on laboratory sessions, clinical skills training, and simulations. Some asynchronous learning materials will also be made available online to support flexible, self-directed learning.

Enrollment is targeted at 24 students per-year, with the goal to expand to and intake of 40 students per year beginning in the third cohort (2028-2029) corresponding to the accreditation process.

Innovative Features Identified by the Program

- The proposed MPAS program is set to be the first Master's level Physician Assistant program in Ontario, with current offerings in Ontario limited to Undergraduate degrees.
- Curriculum will emphasize inter-professional collaboration, particularly through the integration of the Professional Competencies component and the Schulich Interprofessional Education (IPE) day.
- Emphasis on clinical rotations and practical experience aligns with Schulich's commitment to experiential learning and preparing graduates who are ready to meet the healthcare needs of the community.
- A Competence Committee will be formed from members of the program and the decanal office. The committee will meet at the end of each term in Year 1 to review students' progress and confidentially communicate their progress to them.
- A student association will be established for each class cohort within the program to foster community building, enhance the student experience and act as the foundations for an alumni network.
- The program will host a PA Research Retreat at Western University, during which the Year 2 PAs will present their completed group research projects to their peers.

Proposal Preparation and Review Process

In preparing the brief for the proposed professional MPAS program, a comprehensive consultation process took place, involving key stakeholders both external and internal to Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry. Professionals and practicing PAs were consulted to gather insights on the evolving healthcare landscape, employment opportunities, and the competencies expected of PAs in different practice settings, in addition to program relevance and alignment with clinical practice needs.

To inform the development of the proposed program, the following key stakeholders were consulted:

- Professionals and Practicing PAs;
- Canadian Association of Physician Assistants (CAPA);
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care:
- New and Existing Canadian programs of Physician Assistant Studies;
- Faculty of Health Science Nurse Practitioner leadership;
- Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (Dean, Chief Administrative Office, Associate Dean, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, Program Administrator);
- Undergraduate Medical Education Program (Vice-Dean, Associate Director, Assistant Dean, Distributed Medical Education, Academy of Educators);
- Basic Medical Sciences (Vice-Dean, Program Chairs; Anatomy and Cell Biology, Physiology and Pharmacology, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Masters of Pathology Assistant);
- Facilities Director; and
- Collections & Content Strategies Librarian

Following approval to proceed with an external review, a review committee was struck comprising two external reviewers, one internal reviewer and one student reviewer. Reviewers were provided with the program proposal brief in advance of the scheduled review and then met in-person over two days with the:

- Vice-Provost, Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
- Associate Vice-Provost, Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
- Vice-Provost, Academic Planning, Policy & Faculty
- Director of Academic Quality and Enhancement
- Administrative Coordinator, School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
- Dean, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (SSMD)
- Assistant Dean (Program Review and Development) SSMD
- Associate Dean (Research), Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, SSMD
- Assistant Dean, McMaster University PA Ed program
- Director, Master of Physician Assistant Studies
- Associate Director, Basic Medical Sciences, SSMD
- Teaching and Learning Librarian and Collections & Content Strategies Librarian Faculty Members
- Staff Members

Following the site visit, the external reviewers produced a comprehensive external reviewer report with recommendations which was sent to the academic unit and to the Dean of the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry for review and response. These formative documents, including the new major proposal document, the external reviewer report, and the Program and Faculty responses, have formed the basis of this assessment report of the proposed Master of Physician Assistant Studies.

Summative Assessment – External Reviewers' Report

External reviewers shared that "*The proposed Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) program at Western University represents a timely and strategically important initiative that is well aligned with institutional priorities, provincial healthcare needs, and national trends in Physician Assistant education."*

Strengths and/or Unique Aspects of the Program Mentioned by Reviewers

- The faculty, both in the clinical and basic science fields, have a solid track record of innovation required to sustain the program.
- A robust pre-clerkship curriculum integrating medical foundations, clinical skills, professional competencies, and research. The inclusion of detailed curriculum mapping to competency frameworks adds clarity to the program's design.
- The inclusion of both formative and summative assessment strategies supports effective monitoring of student progression.
- The inclusion of a longitudinal research component, culminating in a group-based scholarly project, reflects an innovative approach to embedding research literacy and quality improvement within a professional graduate program.
- The proposed integration with the existing Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) infrastructure offers potential efficiencies and opportunities for shared learning.

Opportunities for Program Improvement Mentioned by Reviewers

- Further strengthen program objectives and regional human health resource planning, especially through the lens of admissions, program development, program evaluation and future work-force planning.
- More explicitly align admissions processes with the program's social accountability mandate by prioritizing applicants with strong regional connections to improve retention and workforce outcomes.
- Refinement and clarification of the admissions timeline and requirements, including: the addition of required pre-requisite courses in Anatomy and Physiology and Statistics; and the weighting of healthcare and other experiences in the adjudication process.
- In Year 2, have additional assessments beyond just a logbook in-rotational assessments (quizzes, etc.) to allow for broader assessment of core knowledge and competencies.
- Clarity on the assessment of individual competencies for the proposed Group Research project, the MPAS Interprofessional Education Course, and on how assessment data will be used systematically in program improvement.
- More regular reviews with students (formal or informal) prior to the end of the term. Feedback only at the end of the term is difficult to integrate into the program and makes degree progression challenging for students at risk.

Summary of the Reviewers' Recommendations and Program/Faculty Responses

The following are the reviewers' recommendations in the order listed by the external reviewers.

Reviewers' Recommendations	Program/Faculty Responses
Recommendation #1: Delay Program Launch. Delay program launch to Fall of 2027 with the inaugural admissions window to open in Fall of 2026.	**Program:** The program acknowledges the scale of development required and confirms sustained progress toward a September 2026 launch, as directed by MCURES. Since January 2026, an experienced and highly engaged leadership team, including an external MPAS Program Development Consultant with national PA program expertise, has advanced program advertising, course and assessment design, and an abbreviated admissions process. Strategic use of existing UME resources and strong collaboration with UME leadership and clinical stakeholders support timely implementation. Additional project management and administrative roles will be filled in May 2026 to ensure effective admissions coordination and curriculum delivery for the inaugural cohort. **Faculty:** The decanal team unequivocally supports the program's response and is confident in the ability of the program leadership to successfully launch the MPAS program for September 2026. The Dean's Office will provide all required resources and assistance to support and facilitate admissions, ongoing curriculum development, learner support mechanisms (Learner Experience Office), and faculty development related to PA education, as detailed in the program's responses to Recommendations 1, 2, 7, 8, and 10.
Recommendation #2: Create Faculty Positions and Pathways. Create faculty positions and pathways for Physician Assistant educators, administrative leaders and scholars.	**Program:** The Program Director has requested that the Dean's Office facilitate PA appointments as instructors, which the reviewers refer to as 'faculty'. However, PAs are not required as instructors for the launch of the program, because existing UME instructors (a pool of 900 faculty members in the Clinical Departments within SSMD) can fulfill all requirements for MPAS instruction. As the program grows, and the local complement of qualified PAs becomes established, the program will consult with the Dean and Vice Dean of Basic Medical Sciences regarding the appointment of experienced PA educators as administrative leaders and scholars. Nevertheless, a local PA will be appointed as a clinical skills instructor for the launch of the program (see response to Recommendation 5). **Faculty:** The decanal team supports the program's response. The Dean's Office is in consultations with the Vice-Provost of Academic Planning, Policy & Faculty regarding the appointment of PAs as Adjunct Clinical Professors (limited duties instructors) for the launch of the program (see response to Rec #5). As the program

	grows, and the local complement of qualified PAs becomes established, the program will further consult regarding the appointment of experienced PA educators as administrative leaders and scholars.
Recommendation #3: Link Program to Health Authorities. Create a deliberate link between this new educational program's outputs and the human resource needs of London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC), other health authorities in Southwestern Ontario and the Ministry of Health.	**Program:** The Dean has initiated discussions with LHSC and SJHC senior-most leadership. The Integrated Vice President of Medical Affairs and the Dean are developing a strategy on how best to align graduating PA expertise with the needs of the LHSC and other Southwestern Ontario health authorities. **Faculty:** The decanal team echoes and supports the program's response.
Recommendation #4: Better Define Director Role. The Academic Director role needs to be more defined, developed and resourced appropriately at a minimum of 0.5 FTE.	**Program:** The role description for the Program (Academic) Director has been comprehensively defined according to Western University Human Resource requirements. The role is currently defined at 1.5 days per week (0.3 FTE). The Program Director will discuss with the Dean and Vice Dean whether 0.3 FTE will be sufficient for the role once students are enrolled. To complement the 0.3 FTE commitment of the Program Director, the Dean has assembled a team to ensure the successful development and launch of the program, including the MPAS Program Development Consultant (external hire, see response to Recommendation 1), the Associate Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the Assistant Dean of Program Review and Development, and the Associate Director of Basic Medical Science. Additional roles will soon be filled to further assist the Program Director, including a Project Manager for Curriculum Development and a Program Administrator (see response to Rec #1). **Faculty**: The decanal team supports the program's response. The Dean and Chief Administrative Officer have approved the immediate hiring of a Project Manager for Curriculum Development and a Program Administrator, to further support the Program Director in the launch of the program. Institutional approval for these hires has been obtained. A MPAS Program Development Consultant has been hired since January 2026 and has been collaborating on a daily to weekly basis with the Program Director and relevant stakeholders.

Recommendation #5: Introduce PA Faculty Members into Program Design. Introduce PA faculty member(s)/educator(s) early into the program design and implementation to incorporate more of the PA lens.	**Program:** The Program Director has identified a local PA who will be appointed as a clinical skills instructor for the launch of the program. Additionally, a survey has been created and posted on the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants (CAPA) board soliciting interest in becoming involved in the Western MPAS program. As new PAs are identified for specific teaching roles within the program, they will be considered for appointment through discussion with the Dean's Office. **Faculty:** The decanal team supports the program's response. The Dean, Vice Dean of Basic Medical Sciences, and Chief Administrative Officer have approved the hiring of the identified PA as a clinical skills instructor for the launch of the program. The Dean's Office is in consultation with the Vice-Provost of Academic Planning, Policy & Faculty regarding the appointment of PAs.
Recommendation #6: Interprofessional Education. Intentionally ensure interprofessional education is occurring between PA and UME learners that goes beyond simply co-learning the same material.	**Program:** The program leadership is currently, and will continue, working closely with the leadership of UME (Vice and Associate Deans of Undergraduate Medical Education) to identify and implement opportunities for shared interprofessional education between medical and PA learners during MPAS Year 1 (2026-27). Unlike other graduate programs, it is critical that this learning is shared between UME and MPAS students because they will work in the same medical care environments and with the same patients, as a team. The program is currently collaborating with UME's Professionalism, Career, and Wellness (PCW) Curriculum Chair to develop integrated, in-person learning sessions involving both PA and UME learners for Year 1. These sessions will be scheduled within the first two weeks of the MPAS and UME program starting in September. It is expected that during Year 2 (2027-28), when PAs experience clinical rotations alongside medical learners, shared interprofessional learning will occur daily. **Faculty:** The decanal team supports the program's response and further emphasizes the unique requirement for coordinated UME/MPAS interprofessional education. This aspect of the MPAS program must occur in an integrated manner with UME to meet Canadian Association of Physician Assistants (CAPA) accreditation requirements.

Recommendation #7: Consider Human Resources into High-Need Areas. For instance: a) Program manager; b) Program administrative assistant; c) Admissions administrator; d) Clinical skills course chair; e) Clinical skills standardized patient educator; f) Medical Foundations faculty course chair; g) MPAS Professional Competencies course chair; h) Research faculty course chair; i) Learner Experience Office student support advisor specific to MPAS students; j) Distributed medical education administrator (year 2 focus); and k) Departmental faculty leads for MPAS program (year 2 focus)	**Program:** The Program Director is working closely with the Dean and Chief Administrative Officer to align hiring priorities with program development, launch, and delivery needs for Years 1 and 2. Institutional approval has been secured for a Project Manager for Curriculum Development and a Program Administrator to support admissions, as well as a Simulated Patient Educator and Anatomy Laboratory Technician. Additional recommended roles will be coordinated through established UME recruitment processes or fulfilled through sessional appointments. Discussions are underway to secure dedicated learner support, and approval for a Distributed Medical Education Administrator is anticipated as a Year 2 requirement. **Faculty:** The decanal team supports the program's response and is working closely with the Program Director on the suite of hires.
Recommendation #8 Access to Student Support. PA learners require access to student support through the Learner Experience Office (LEO).	**Program:** The program leadership is working with the Dean's Office and leadership of the Learner Experience Office to provide a PA-dedicated staff member within LEO. Additional student supports, including Health and Wellness, will be available through Graduate Student Life. **Faculty:** The decanal team supports the program's response. The Dean and Chief Administrative Officer will facilitate the appointment of a PA- dedicated staff member within LEO.

Recommendation #9 Changing the Pass Mark for Summative Assessments. Strongly consider changing the pass mark for summative assessments from 75% to no more than 70%. Introducing a competency-based (nongraded marks) framework would complement the program structure and philosophy.	**Program:** The pass mark for summative assessments is now set at 70%. The program proposal has been updated to reflect this change. A competency-based assessment framework, to complement grading, will be designed with the assistance of the Project Manager for Curriculum Development, in consultation with the Program Director and MPAS Program Development Consultant. **Faculty:** The decanal team supports the program's response.
Recommendation #10 Develop MPAS-Program Specific Faculty Development Framework Develop an MPAS-program specific faculty development framework to address faculty concerns regarding PA learner considerations and opportunities and challenges of PA integration into the healthcare system.	**Program:** For Year 1, all clinical faculty involved in teaching PA students—whether through live synchronous sessions, development of pre-existing asynchronous materials, or small group facilitation—will be informed of the presence of the MPAS cohort. Faculty will also be provided with Continuing Professional Development opportunities to ensure they are equipped to address the specific learning needs of this group. Programming on PA learner considerations and opportunities/challenges of PA integration into the healthcare system, to support faculty involved in clerkship PA education (Year 2) will be in development shortly. This programming will be made available by September 2027, when the inaugural cohort enters Year 2, and will interact with clinical faculty preceptors during clinical rotations. **Faculty:** The decanal team supports the program's response. The Dean will communicate with the Associate Dean of Continuing Professional Development and Faculty Development to indicate that development of programming related to PA learner considerations is a priority for 2027.
Recommendation #11 Clarity of Admissions Requirements More clearly articulate admissions requirements based on the needs of the program and the social accountability mandate of Southwestern Ontario, including strongly considering adding pre-requisites courses in Anatomy and	**Program:** Admission requirements, including preference for applicants who have completed university-level coursework in Human Anatomy, Human Physiology, and Statistics, and with an academic background in health, and biomedical, are now indicated in the program proposal. Given the abbreviated admissions process for September 2026, the program will delay consideration of a preference for local applicants until the launch of the second recruitment cycle (January 2027). For the second admissions cohort, we anticipate introducing a Southwestern Ontario pathway, a Black student pathway, and an Indigenous student pathway. These pathways will align with the SSMD Social Accountability mission

Physiology as well as voicing a strong preference for applicants with local roots.	and will be developed in coordination with existing UME pathways to ensure consistency, equity, and institutional alignment. **Faculty:** The decanal team supports the program's response.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. In each case, the Program Director, and the Dean of the Faculty are responsible for enacting and monitoring the actions noted in Implementation Plan.

Recommendation 9 consisted of areas in need of clarification in the proposal brief. These have been addressed, as articulated in the Program responses above. Therefore, this recommendation is not prioritized for follow-up in the Implementation Plan below.

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Recommendation #1: Delay Program Launch	• Significant progress has been made since the site visit re: course and assessment design, the admissions process and bringing together a program launch team. • Complete remaining hires. • The timing of admissions is compressed. However, it is expected that students who were not accepted to other, extremely high-demand Ontario PA or Medical programs will apply to MPAS as soon as applications open.	• Program Director • Dean's Office	Final program developments by Aug 2026; Admissions in Aug 2026; Launch in Sept 2026
Recommendation #2: Create Faculty Positions and Pathways	• Appoint a clinical skills instructor for the launch of the program • Consult regarding the appointment of additional experienced PA educators as administrative leaders and scholars once the program is running.	• Program Director • Dean's Office	By Aug 2026
Recommendation #3: Link Program to Health Authorities	• Develop a strategy on how best to align graduating PA expertise with the needs of the LHSC and other Southwestern Ontario health authorities.	• Dean's Office	By July 2026

Recommendation #4: Better Define Director Role	• Currently defined at 1.5 days per week (0.3 FTE). For the development and launch phase, the Dean has assembled a leadership team to ensure success. • Finalize hires for a Project Manager for Curriculum Development and a Program Administrator.	• Dean's Office	By July 2026
Recommendation #5: Introduce PA Faculty Members into Program Design	• Appoint a local PA to serve as a clinical skills instructor. • Identify PAs for specific teaching roles within the program, discuss additional appointment options with the Dean's Office.	• Program Director • Dean's Office	By Aug 2026
Recommendation #6: Interprofessional Education	• Develop integrated, in-person learning sessions involving both PA and UME learners for Year 1. These sessions will be scheduled within the first two weeks of the MPAS and UME program starts in September.	• Program Director • Vice and Associate Deans of UME	By June 2026
Recommendation #7: Consider Human Resources into High-Need Areas	• Finalize the sequence of approved hires (e.g., Program Manager, Program Administrator, Simulated Patient Educator, Laboratory Technician and limited duties instructors).	• Program Director • Dean's Office	By June 2026
Recommendation #8 Access to Student Support	• Provide a PA-dedicated staff member within LEO.	• Dean's Office	By June 2026
Recommendation #10 Develop MPAS-Program Specific Faculty Development Framework	• Develop programming for faculty on PA learner considerations and opportunities/challenges of PA integration into the healthcare system.	• Program Director • Associate Dean of Continuing Professional Development	By June 2026

Recommendation #11 Clarity of Admissions Requirements	• Delay consideration of a preference for local applicants until the launch of the second recruitment cycle (January 2027). • Introduce a Southwestern Ontario pathway, a Black pathway, and an Indigenous pathway as part of admissions.	• Program Director • Dean's Office	By January 2027