

# Faculty of Applied Health Sciences

## Graduate Programs Review

### Four-Year Report (2017)

#### A. Summary of Review

This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on June 6, 2011.

1. The academic programs offered by the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences which were examined as part of the review were:
  - MA/MSc in Applied Health Sciences
  - PhD in Applied Health Sciences
2. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Wendy Frisby (University of British Columbia) and Peter Tiidus (Wilfrid Laurier University) and an internal reviewer, John McNamara (Department of Child and Youth Studies).
3. The site visit occurred on February 13-15, 2013.
4. The Final Assessment Report was approved by Senate on October 11, 2013.
5. The reviewers assigned the following Outcome Category:
  - Category 2, "Good Quality."
6. The next review of the graduate programs in Applied Health Sciences will be in 2020/21.

## B. Recommendations

The reviewers provided 16 recommendations.

### Recommendation #1

Increase the autonomy of the different graduate programs in AHS, while continuing to operate them on a faculty-wide level.

#### ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the Recommendation to be accepted and believes that the Program Committee, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty and Dean of Graduate Studies, is best positioned to determine appropriate strategies to move forward on this issue.

#### Implementation Plan (First Priority)

Responsible for approving: AHS Graduate Committee, Dean of AHS and FGS  
 Responsible for resources: AHS Graduate Committee, Dean of AHS  
 Responsible for implementation: AHS Graduate Committee, Deans of AHS and FGS  
 Timeline: Deans of AHS and FGS to report by end of 2013-14 academic year

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
<b>Action #1</b> The Faculty of AHS held a full-day Faculty retreat to discuss the 4 points of recommendation 1. It was discussed that although the core requirements cannot vary within the same program some autonomy has been built into the program.	2014	2014
<b>Action #2</b> The fields have a representative on the Graduate Committee and are encouraged to form their own "field-specific graduate curriculum committee" to discuss their elective offerings.	2014	2015

#### Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:

The above actions were discussed at the faculty retreat and followed up by the Graduate Program Committee. The result was that during the last 3 years a number of field-specific electives have been added in the course bank. Thus, this recommendation has been addressed.

**Recommendation #2**

Consider deleting and changing some components of the integrative interdisciplinary foundations to allow for greater program autonomy and distinctiveness.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and believes that the Program Committee, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty and Dean of Graduate Studies, is best positioned to determine appropriate strategies to move forward on this issue.

**Implementation Plan (First Priority)**

Responsible for approving: AHS Graduate Committee, Dean of AHS and FGS  
 Responsible for resources: AHS Graduate Committee, Dean of AHS  
 Responsible for implementation: AHS Graduate Committee, Dean of AHS and FGS  
 Timeline: Deans of AHS and FGS to report by end of 2013-14 academic year

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
<b>Action #1</b> The Graduate Committee to approve the deletion of AHSC P500 from the required courses pool and replace it with new seminar series course, AHSC 5P01.	2014	2014

**Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:**

The Graduate Program Committee discussed this recommendation at the retreat. The discussion resulted in replacing 5P00 with a multi-disciplinary seminar course 5P01, addressing this recommendation since 2014.

**Recommendation #3**

Brock University's budget allotment has not kept up with growth in AHS and this is severely affecting the faculty's ability to grow, be competitive, and ensure a rich experience for all graduate students. A university activity-based funding model that gives credit back to newer but high performing faculties like AHS could help to alleviate this problem.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC acknowledges the challenges faced by the Department in terms of budget resources but recognizes that budget allocation lies outside of ARC's area of responsibility. ARC expects that the Department will proceed through normal channels of advocacy for these resources.

**Implementation Plan**

Recommendation NOT accepted.

**Recommendation #4**

Develop a coherent curriculum development plan for those graduate programs emphasizing coursework and provide more opportunities for program specialization.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. It is expected that the Graduate Committee will move forward as appropriate for the different fields of specialization.

**Implementation Plan (First Priority)**

Responsible for approving: AHS Graduate Committee

Responsible for resources: Dean of AHS

Responsible for implementation: AHS Graduate Committee

Timeline: Dean of AHS to report by end of 2013-14 academic year

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
<b>Action #1</b> The MA fields of SPMA and RECL will incorporate aspects of their field specific 5P00 seminar into new elective courses.	2014	2014
<b>Action #2</b> Introduction of new elective courses especially at the 700 level.	2014	2015
<b>Action #3</b> Introduction of a Master of Public Health (MPH), a one-year, on-line degree in Public Health that is unique in the Province. The PPB was submitted to ARC in January 2015.	2014	2016
<b>Action #4</b> Introduction of a Master of Professional Kinesiology (MPK), a one-year graduate program emphasizing professional preparation of Kinesiology graduates.	2014	2016
<b>Action #5</b> The Graduate Committee to discuss, review and revise the Student Handbook to ensure all procedures, responsibilities and timelines are clear and consistent.	2014	2014

**Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:**

Each field has modified the proposed elective courses according to the recommended action. This resulted in three new 700 level elective courses been added to the course bank including Advanced Biomechanics, Social Theories of Sport and Physical Activity, Optimizing Health Through Nutrition. The Graduate Committee continues to review the Student Handbooks (Masters & Doctoral) annually to ensure that procedures, responsibilities and timelines are clear and consistent. Thus, this recommendation has been addressed. The Graduate Committee continues to oversee the development of new graduate courses.

**Recommendation #5**

More formal and transparent policies with built-in flexibility are required to accommodate both greater consistency and graduate program autonomy. A strong recommendation for faculty members was that graduate program policies should be tightened and communicated in an easily accessible and transparent way because they are 'too loose' and are therefore open to misinterpretation. This could also help reduce an over-reliance on the Administrative Graduate Coordinator.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation to be consistent with existing practice and no additional action is required.

**Implementation Plan**

No further action is required.

**Recommendation #6**

Due to the growth of the masters programs and introduction of PhD programs, the requirement of an external examiner at the Masters level is no longer necessary.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation to be consistent with existing practice and no additional action is required.

**Implementation Plan**

No further action is required.

**Recommendation #7**

Workload credit should be given to faculty with research grants who are supervising significant numbers of graduate students.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC acknowledges the challenges faced by the Unit in terms of workload for those supervising large numbers of graduate students but recognizes that this issue lies outside of ARC's area of responsibility. Under existing conditions, it is not possible to accept the recommendation as articulated.

**Implementation Plan**

Recommendation is NOT accepted.

**Recommendation #8**

Marketing needs to be more coherent and coordinated while allowing graduate programs to advertise their distinctive strengths.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. This issue would merit discussion at the Graduate Retreat.

**Implementation Plan (First Priority)**

Responsible for approving: AHS Graduate Committee

Responsible for resources: Dean of AHS

Responsible for implementation: AHS Graduate Committee

Timeline: Dean of AHS to report by end of 2013-14 academic year

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
<p><b>Action #1</b> The Faculty's communication officer will be asked to attend the relevant meetings of the AHS Graduate Committee, and work closely with the Department Chairs to create field specific promotional material.</p>	2014	2015
<p><b>Action #2</b> Recruitment meetings with eligible 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students were organized in collaboration with the Faculty of Graduate Studies.</p>	2014	on going

**Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:**

Since 2014 the Faculty's communication officer attends the relevant meetings of the AHS Graduate Committee, and work closely with the Department Chairs to create field specific promotional material. The Faculty of Graduate Studies took the lead in organizing recruitment meetings with eligible 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students in collaboration with the FAHS graduate office. The FGS and FAHS continue to organize and participate in any and all campus-wide recruitment meetings. In 2016 the Faculty of Graduate Studies has organized a virtual Open House and the FAHS will participate. Thus, this recommendation is reflected in our efforts to explore new and exciting national and international recruitment strategies for all our programs, including yearly updates of our printed and posted promotion material.

**Recommendation #9**

Maintain high admissions standards.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation to be consistent with existing practice and no additional action is required.

**Implementation Plan**

No further action is required.

**Recommendation #10**

Increase support for graduate students.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation to be consistent with existing practice and no additional action is required.

**Implementation Plan**

No further action is required.

**Recommendation #11**

Centralize university-wide support for the biosciences to control costs and to make the ordering of supplies more efficient (e.g., science stores, technical support for lab infrastructure).

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation to be worthy of consideration but recognizes that it is outside the jurisdiction of the Committee. It is expected that the Unit will use appropriate strategies as necessary to control costs and make the ordering of supplies more efficient.

**Implementation Plan**

Recommendation is NOT accepted.

**Recommendation #12**

The timely hiring and training of support staff for the animal room is essential to allow graduate students and faculty to resume and complete their research.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation to be worthy of consideration but recognizes that it is outside the jurisdiction of the Committee. It is expected that the Unit will advocate through normal channels for support staff as needed in the animal room.

**Implementation Plan**

Recommendation NOT accepted.

**Recommendation #13**

The viability of one PhD program area, Behavioural and Population Health, should be monitored for student intake and faculty commitment.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of being implemented. The Graduate Program Director is encouraged to meet with this group to strategize how to move forward. ARC is of the view that enrolments levels in the Field should be monitored closely over the next few years to ensure its sustainability.

**Implementation Plan (Second Priority)**

Responsible for approving: Graduate Program Director/Associate Dean

Responsible for resources: Dean of AHS

Responsible for implementation: Graduate Program Director/Associate Dean

Timeline: Dean of AHS to report by end of 2014-15 academic year

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
<p><b>Action #1</b> Continue monitoring student intake and encourage faculty commitment in the field of Behavioural and Population Health. The Associate Dean to work closely with current and future students in this field to apply for external funding.</p>	2014	2016

**Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:**

The FAHS Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies continues to monitor student intake and encourage faculty commitment in the field of Behavioural and Population Health. Applicants have been encouraged to apply for external funding and were provided with guidance and assistance in preparing their applications. The FGS is ready to provide the help/support that the unit requires. Since 2015-2016 the student intake in the field of Behavioural and Population Health is steady (1 in 5 PhD recruits are in this field). Today, there is a total of six (6) students in this field (years 1-4) while 3 new students have been accepted to start September 2017. Further funding strategies are discussed for all fields and we continue to monitor the intake balance.

**Recommendation #14**

Designate an AHS faculty member as the library liaison to improve communication and increase library book holdings.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

**Implementation Plan (First Priority)**

Responsible for approving: Graduate Program Director

Responsible for resources: None Required

Responsible for implementation: Graduate Program Director

Timeline: Dean of AHS to report by end of 2013-14 academic year

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
<b>Action #1</b> Designate an AHS faculty member as the library liaison.	2014	2016

**Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:**

Since 2014 there is a professional librarian acting as the Library Liaison for the FAHS, who provides adequate support to graduate students. The same librarian presents a seminar to all AHS incoming students every fall, and continues to communicate directly with graduate students or indirectly through their supervisors. Thus, there seems to be no need to appoint a faculty member as additional library support. No further action is required.

**Recommendation #15**

Consider additional Canada Research Chairs in the social science area to better balance faculty and graduate program strengths.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation to be outside the jurisdiction of the Committee. It is expected that the Unit will proceed through normal channels of advocacy for Canada Research Chairs.

**Implementation Plan**

Recommendation is NOT accepted.

**Recommendation #16**

Brock University and AHS policy regarding further growth of Masters and Doctoral programs should be reviewed.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. It was decided that two Implementation plans were needed for this recommendation.

1. Brock University, through the Dean of Graduate Studies, to review policy with regards to further growth of Masters and Doctoral programs.

**Implementation Plan (First Priority)**

Responsible for approving: Dean of Graduate Studies  
 Responsible for resources: Dean of Graduate Studies  
 Responsible for implementation: Dean of Graduate Studies  
 Timeline: Graduate Program Director to report on ongoing basis

2. Faculty of Applied Health Sciences to review policy with regards to further growth of Masters and Doctoral programs.

**Implementation Plan (First Priority)**

Responsible for approving: Graduate Program Director, Dean of Faculty  
 Responsible for resources: Graduate Program Director, Dean of Faculty  
 Responsible for implementation: Graduate Program Director, Dean of Faculty  
 Timeline: Graduate Program Director to report on ongoing basis

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
<p><b>Action #1</b>                      The policy regarding further growth of Masters and Doctoral programs has been reviewed, and the money to cover the TAship of 10 extra incoming students has been transferred to AHS's basic budget.</p>	2014	2015

**Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:**

This has been completed. The Part-time Budget has been adjusted according to the graduate intake. No further action is required.

## C. Unit Summative Analysis and Evaluation

The Unit will answer the following questions:

1. To what extent has the Unit achieved the improvements suggested by the reviewers?

The Faculty of Applied Health Sciences (AHS) held a full-day Faculty retreat to discuss the reviewers' recommendations in May 2013. Under the direction of the Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies, the AHS Graduate Program Committee reviewed the recommendations and made suggestions for changes which were approved at the Committee in a series of meetings held during Fall 2013.

The FAHS has, therefore, fully achieved the improvements suggested by the reviewers.

2. What overall impact has it had on the Unit's programs?

The recommended improvements have contributed to the quality of the programs with the addition of new courses, a clear path to graduation and well described procedures. Specifically, The Graduate Handbooks (Master and PhD) were revised and program changes were put in place for September 2014. A curriculum map has been developed for both the Master and PhD programs, which will be included in the next review. In addition, the departments of Kinesiology and Health Sciences put forward proposals for two new Professional Masters programs: Masters of Public Health (MPH) and Masters of Professional Kinesiology (MPK), which went through the approval process and started in September 2016.

3. Is the Unit adopting a process of continuous quality improvement for its programs?

The FAHS has established a transparent process of continuous quality improvement for its programs. Faculty wide retreats are regularly scheduled every 2 years and curricular meetings by expertise have been established. Recently, the Faculty organized a year 4 retreat on November 30, 2016 to evaluate the implemented changes and discuss areas that need further improvement. In this retreat the following was discussed:

- Review of MA/MSc and PhD Procedures
  - a) Admissions
  - b) Committees, Thesis and Defences
  - c) Fast-track to PhD
- Curriculum Review
  - a) Research Methods requirements and curriculum
  - b) Seminar course and flow-through
  - c) Philosophy of Science course
- Mental health and graduate studies

#### 4. How well do the programs now align with Brock University strategic priorities?

The graduate programs of the FAHS continue to align with the Brock University strategic priorities including:

- *Ensure Brock is a preferred place to work and study (building reputation; excellence in service);*
- *Support of Brock's undergraduate student-centered focus while maintaining excellence in graduate education;*
- *Foster excellence in research, scholarship and creativity;*
- *Serve the social, cultural and economic well-being of the University, as well as the local, national and global communities.*
- *Encourage trans-disciplinary initiatives.*
- *Promote internationalization.*

#### 5. How does this review and its results position the programs as the Unit moves into the next review cycle?

The AHS graduate programs have been ranked in the top priority category by the University's Academic Review and Prioritization Report. The Faculty is now working towards its next strategic plan and the results of the review provide a solid foundation (see 1 and 3 above).

#### **D. ARC Final Summary**

In final summary of the 2012/13 cyclical academic review of the graduate programs offered by the Faculty of Health Sciences, ARC has determined the following:

1. The Reviewers' Recommendations have been addressed satisfactorily.
2. The Unit has established a direction for next steps as it prepares for the next review cycle, which will include the development of a curriculum map.
3. The Unit has achieved a broad-based, reflective and forward-looking self-assessment.