



Four Year Report (2024)

Educational Studies

Graduate & Undergraduate Programs

(reviewed 2019/2020)

A. Summary of Review

1. This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on May 25, 2016.
2. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Qiang Zha (York University) and David Mandzuk (University of Manitoba) and an internal reviewer, Alex Nikitkov (Brock University).
3. The site visit occurred on March 10-12, 2020.
4. The Final Assessment Report was approved by Senate on October 28, 2020.
5. The academic programs offered by the Department of Educational Studies which were examined as part of the review are listed below, with the reviewers having assigned the following outcome categories:

Program (s)	Excellent Quality	Good Quality	Good Quality with Concerns	Non-Viable
MEd	X			
MEd ISP		X		
MPCE - Masters Preparation Certificate in Education	X			
BECE - Bachelor of Early Childhood Education	X			

6. The next review of the graduate and undergraduate programs in the Department of Educational Studies will be in 2027/28.

B: Recommendations

Recommendation #1

Review the effectiveness of Brock DB (the current student information system) and Workday (the relatively new finance system) and address the challenges that staff members who use these systems are facing.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be not accepted, as a review of the effectiveness of Brock dB and Workday lies outside of its jurisdiction. The Committee recognizes the importance of addressing the challenges that staff are facing and encourages the Department to work through normal challenges of advocacy to bring this to the attention of the Offices of the Registrar and Financial Services.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation not accepted.

Recommendation #2

Review the MEd. ISP program for the possibility of increasing enrolment. Perhaps new strategies can be found to address faculty concerns about workload and capacity while still bringing in new revenue for the Faculty.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to review the possibility of increasing enrolment in the MEd ISP program to be accepted for consideration. The Committee expects that the Department will work with the Dean to develop strategies for increasing enrolment while minimizing negative impacts on workload and capacity. ARC recognizes that workload is subject to the provisions of the Collective Agreement.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Education to report by the end of academic year 2020/21

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Continue to collaborate with International Marketing and Recruitment staff to diversify international marketing and recruitment efforts.	2020	Ongoing

Action #2 Explore partnerships with Goodman School of Business to create a concurrent degree option (two graduate degrees in two years).	2020	2022
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Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:

The MEd ISP pathway was phased out as of December 2022. Despite this, the MEd Graduate Program Committee (GPC) continues to collaborate with International Marketing and Recruitment to attract high-quality international students to the general MEd program. This strategy has been working as both the number of applications from qualified international applicants and the number of international applicants in the general MEd program has increased since 2020. This is despite the fact the global pandemic resulted in numerous additional barriers for international students.

A concurrent degree option with Goodman School of Business was explored but was deemed not to be feasible.

Recommendation #3

Review the fields of specialization in the department to better reflect the areas of expertise of faculty members and the changing needs of students.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

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

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Education to report by the end of academic year 2020/21

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 As of Fall 2021, admit all students to the MEd program, rather than a field of specialization within the MEd program.	2020	Ongoing
Action #2 Review the MEd course collection considering the expertise of faculty members and changing needs of students.	2020	Ongoing
Action #3 Establish a long-term scheduling plan that enables flexible student-centered customization of their program of study.	2020	2022

Action #4 Development of personalized study plans for in-service professionals to enhance expertise in specific area of concentration without the need to complete the full MEd program.	2020	Ongoing
Action # 5 Explore possible partnerships with graduate programs across the university to consider the development of concurrent degree options.	2020	2022

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:

Beginning in 2020 the MEd GPC began revisioning the MEd program. The fields of specialization were eliminated and a general MEd program with optional concentrations embedded within it was created. This was in place by Fall 2021. Students now apply to the general MEd program, instead of to one of three Fields of Specialization, and a single Admissions Committee makes the admissions decisions for the entire program. Concentration committees were established for each of the optional concentrations. Their purpose is to review the course offerings in their concentrations and suggest relevant changes to course titles, course descriptions and the course bank annually. A Scheduling Template was created which outlines when, and in what mode of delivery (face-to-face, online, blended), each course in each of the optional concentrations and the general courses are offered. The Scheduling Template ensures that courses only overlap minimally and that students have the opportunity to take courses in their concentrations at various times and in various modes of delivery each semester. Student exit surveys have indicated that students greatly appreciate the increased flexibility the general MEd provides and appreciate the variety of course delivery modes we are using. Additionally, since the Scheduling Template was implemented, we have had fewer course cancellations due to low enrolment - although we are aiming to get to the point where we do not need to cancel any courses due to low enrolment - and fewer complaints about students not being able to take courses they would like because they are scheduled at the same times.

Beginning in September 2024 we are introducing the *Your MEd, Your Way* initiative which will allow students to complete their MEd degree entirely online, entirely in-person or a combination of online and in-person. This will give students even more flexibility when planning their individualized courses of study. Additionally, also beginning in September, 2024 we are launching our Graduate Micro-Programs, which are based on our optional concentrations. These Micro-Programs will allow education professionals who are not yet ready to commit to taking a MEd degree an opportunity to gain a micro-credential in a specific area without having to enroll in the MEd degree program. Individuals can take up to two Graduate Micro-Programs and the courses they take will count toward their MEd degree should they choose to pursue the degree option. We anticipate that this will lead to further student satisfaction, and we are hoping increased enrolment numbers.

Unfortunately, as indicated above, the fourth plank in our revisioning of the MEd program, the creation of concurrent graduate degree options, was halted by FGSPA.

Recommendation #4

Explore ways to integrate domestic and international students across the M.Ed. and M.Ed. ISP programs.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

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

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Education to report by the end of academic year 2020/21

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Phase out the MEd ISP cohort groups.	2020	2022
Action #2 Admit all qualified internationally and nationally educated students to the MEd program.	2020	Ongoing
Action #3 All courses would be open to all nationally and internationally educated students.	2020	Ongoing

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:

The MEd ISP was phased out as of December 2022. All qualified international and domestic students are admitted into the general MEd program. Every student in the MEd can enroll in any course that they would like to, provided the course is running, there is room in the course, and the course is not an exit course specific to a degree pathway (e.g. thesis or MRP). There are now both international and domestic students learning together in all of the MEd courses.

Recommendation #5

Review international student recruitment efforts, particularly in light of the effects of COVID-19 on international student enrolment.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to review international student recruitment efforts to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee recognizes that COVID-19 is affecting recruitment at many levels including the Department, Faculty, and institution as a whole. ARC expects that the Department will work with the Dean and various units across the

university, such as the Faculty of Graduate Studies, International Market Development and Recruitment to address this recommendation.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Education to report by the end of academic year 2020/21

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Add a winter 2021 and 2022 program entry option.	2020	2022
Action #2 Staff within the FOE International Program office and the Brock International Marketing and Development (IMD) unit will maintain ongoing communication to establish complementary supportive roles in recruitment and marketing and retention strategies.	2020	2023
Action #3 Adapt to online course offering when necessary and as required and monitor student retention.	2022	Ongoing

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:

The MEd GPC now has three intakes into the MEd program: Fall (September), Winter (January) and Spring (May). As noted above we are introducing the *Your MEd, Your Way* initiative which will allow students to complete their MEd degree entirely online, entirely in-person or a combination of online and in-person for each of the three intakes.

The FOE International Program Office was disbanded in 2023. Despite this the MEd GPC has continued to work with International Marketing and Recruitment itself to attract high quality international students to the MEd program.

Specifically with respect to international students these actions have been effective. In the 2019/2020 academic year, when this review was conducted, there were two international students registered in the MEd program. In 2023/2024 that number had increased by over six times to 13 international students registered in the MEd program. For the 2024/2025 academic year we already have 12 international students accepting our offers of admission for the Spring 2024 intake alone.

Recommendation #6

Explore possibilities of co-op programs, internships, or student participation in professional organizations.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be already current practice. The Committee understands that the programs under review already include many experiential components and that the Department is involved in an ongoing exploration of further possibilities.

Implementation Plan

No action required.

Recommendation #7

Re-assess whether there is the correct balance between F/T faculty members and ILTAs teaching in the M.Ed. ISP program.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside of its jurisdiction. The Committee recognizes that a “correct” balance is subject to discussion and that workload issues are the purview of the Dean and subject to the provisions of the Collective Agreement.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation not accepted.

C. Unit Summative Analysis and Evaluation**1. To what extent has the Department achieved the improvements suggested by the reviewers?**

The Department, or more specifically, the MEd GPC, has achieved all of the improvements suggested by the reviewers in the four recommendations accepted by ARC. Specifically, the MEd program was reformed to eliminate the Fields of Specialization, instead creating a general MEd program with five optional concentrations embedded within it. These optional concentrations are based on the current, and future, expertise of faculty members. The revised program is also more flexible in terms of modes of delivery and scheduling of courses. The MEd ISP was phased out to fully integrate international and domestic students into the revised general MEd program. The MEd GPC increased their recruitment efforts to attract high quality international students into the MEd program, with the program registering over six times more international students in the 2023-2024 academic year than were registered in the 2019/2020 academic year when the external review occurred.

2. What overall impact has it had on the Department’s programs?

The MEd program was completely reimagined as a result of the external reviewers’ suggestions. It has much more flexibility built into it in terms of choice and method of delivery of courses. This increased flexibility has already led to increased student satisfaction and we are hoping that once the *Your MEd, Your Way* initiative is fully in place it

will also lead to increased enrolments and increased program quality. Although no recommendations or actions referred specifically to the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (BECE) program, the BECE Program Committee modified the program to be delivered entirely asynchronously online, partly to be more attractive and more accessible to international students who wanted an early childhood educator credential in their own countries. This change has doubled the enrolment of the BECE program.

3. How is the Department adopting a process of continuous quality improvement for its programs?

We believe we have always had a process of continuous quality improvement for our programs. Since the adoption of the one Department structure in 2018 however, which created a body that was too large to provide effective academic oversight of our programs, quality improvement became a larger priority. To ensure adequate academic oversight and quality improvement we created program committees led by program directors for each of the Department's nine program areas. These program committees are composed of all the faculty members who teach in that specific program area and who are committed to the continuous quality improvement of the program. These committees meet regularly, most of them monthly, to discuss all aspects of their programs, not the least of which is how to make the program better. While most faculty members teach across different program areas and so are members of multiple program committees, having smaller, dedicated groups of faculty allow for more attention to be focused on each program area and necessary changes to be made relatively quickly and efficiently - as witnessed by the effectiveness of the MEd GPC in revising the MEd program in a few short years.

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

Our programs have always aligned with the University's strategic plan but the changes we have made have served to increase that alignment. Specifically, the changes to the MEd program as a result of this review have greatly contributed to Brock achieving its strategic priority of offering a transformational and accessible university experience. The changes directly reflect the University's, and the Department of Educational Studies', goal to deliver high-quality programs that meet the interests and needs of students, and support them to achieve their potential in life as well as the goal to expand Brock's lifelong learning opportunities for our students and members of the community. The Department has demonstrated its commitment to achieving these goals in other programs as well. As mentioned previously, the BECE program has transitioned into a completely asynchronous online program in order to be more accessible, flexible and relevant to students. We have newly established a Bachelor of Arts in Educational Studies (Honours) so that students who are interested in the broad field of education and in careers outside of traditional classroom teaching may pursue their interests. We have also transitioned our BEd in Adult Education into a Bachelor of Arts in Adult Education which is delivered entirely asynchronously online to serve the needs of professional adult educators who would like to become leaders in their field.

All of the program changes noted above also align with the University's strategic priority to build research capacity across the university. Specifically, the program evolutions nurture a culture of research and creative excellence. This is particularly noticeable in the MEd program's optional concentrations which are all current areas of intense research in the field of education. It is also noticeable in the creation of the two new BA programs which will set

the groundwork for new scholars and practitioners in educational studies and adult education in the future, fields which are greatly under-represented in Canada.

The Department's programs align with the University's strategic priority to enhance the life and vitality of our local region and beyond. Specifically, the BA in Educational Studies (Honours) has required experiential education opportunities in the community throughout the program's four years, including the capstone exit requirement, which will help the University achieve its goal of increasing and enriching opportunities for students, alumni, faculty and staff to engage with the community. All of the Department's programs support the University's goal to support regional economic, social and cultural vitality. Our Concurrent and Consecutive Teacher Education programs and our MEd program in particular are in high demand and graduates from those programs are highly employable.

Finally, all of the Department's programs reflect the University's strategic priority to foster a culture of inclusivity, accessibility, reconciliation and decolonization. Every program in the Department has both courses that focus specifically on equity, diversity, inclusivity and decolonization (EDID) and all of them have EDID principles explicitly infused into all their course offerings in order to promote social justice. For example, one of the optional concentrations in the MEd program is Social Justice, Power, and Politics in Education whose stated purpose is to foster an overall culture that promotes and celebrates inclusivity, accessibility, reconciliation and decolonization through research and education.

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

The changes made as a result of this review position the MEd program in particular very well as we move into the next review cycle. We expect the changes to have a positive impact on the program which already was rated by reviewers as excellent quality. The Department also believes the changes that were made to the BECE and BA in Adult Education programs, and the introduction of the BA in Educational Studies (Honours) program, further strengthen the quality of the programs offered by the Department of Educational Studies.

D. ARC Final Summary

In final summary of the 2019/20 cyclical academic review of the programs offered by the Department of Educational Studies, ARC has determined the following:

1. That the Reviewers' Recommendations have been addressed satisfactorily.
2. That the Department has established a direction for next steps as it prepares for the next review cycle.
3. That the Department has achieved a broad-based, reflective, and forward-looking self-assessment.