

# Year 1 (2024) - FAR Implementation Report

## Master of Sustainability (SSAS)

## Master of Sustainability, Co-op

### Graduate Programs

(reviewed 2022/23)

#### Recommendation #1

**Enhance Stream C of the MSSAS program.**

#### ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to explore the expansion of a course-based option (scheme C), to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee believes that the program is best positioned to determine appropriate strategies to move forward.

#### Implementation Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Centre
Responsible for resources:	Centre
Responsible for implementation:	Centre
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2023/24.

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Action #1 Explore the expansion of a course-based option for Scheme C	Centre	C		
Action #2 Set meetings to consult with other units affected by change and seek input from other programs	Centre	T		
Action #3 Submit a major modification form for the Master of Sustainability program, Scheme C (course-based option)	Centre	T		

#### Comments 2024:

*Actions #1-3:* This year the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre graduate program sub-committee and administrative team explored options for a course-based option to our Master of Sustainability Program (Scheme C). This represents a Major Modification for our SSAS program. We note that our Final Assessment Report was approved in mid-March 2024. Since that time, we have organized meetings with different units across campus (i.e., Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences; Associate Dean,

\*On Target (T), Delayed (D), Complete (C), Complete and Ongoing (O)

Research and Graduate Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences; the Dean/Associate Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs) to consult with them and seek their support in making this change to our program. We have also met with other units who have successfully launched similar course-based master’s programs at Brock (e.g., Graduate Program Director, Master of Education, Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Education). Lastly, we met with two staff members from the Centre of Pedagogical Innovation to ensure suggested changes to Scheme C were considering all pedagogical best practices for course-based program options, such as ensuring students have the chance to consolidate their course-based learning towards the end of the program.

**Recommendation #2**

**Improve the Co-op experience for MSSAS students.**

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted for consideration by the Centre. The Committee encourages the Centre to work with the Dean’s office and the Co-op Office to determine appropriate strategies to move forward on this issue.

<b>Implementation Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Priority)</b>	
Responsible for approving:	Centre and Co-op Office
Responsible for resources:	Centre and Co-op Office
Responsible for implementation:	Centre and Co-op Office
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2023/24.

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Action #1 Meet with the Director and staff in Co-op and Experiential Education, the Graduate Program Administrative Team, the Graduate Program Director, and faculty involved in the program, to discuss known challenges with the co-op component of the program (Scheme A)	Centre/Co-op, Career and Experiential Education*	T		
Action #2 Identify actionable items to address challenges with the co-op portion of our program	Centre/Co-op, Career and Experiential Education*	T		
Action #3 Co-create more efficient and effective practices to enhance the student experience	Centre/Co-op, Career and Experiential Education*	O		

\*These actions, along with the comments below, have been reviewed and approved by Dr. Rajiv Jhangjani, Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning and Julia Zhu, Interim Director, Co-op Career & Experiential Education.

**Comments 2024:**

*Actions #1:* On April 22, 2024, we met with a large team from the Co-op, including the Interim Director, to discuss the co-op experience for students, faculty, and staff. Several faculty and staff in the ESRC, including the ESRC Graduate Program Director, Centre Administrator, Program Coordinator and Acting Director were involved in this 2-hour meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to share information about employer development practices, strategies, preparation course learning objectives (i.e., SSAS 5N90), event strategies, program-specific information, Centre strategies, and partnership/industry connections the Centre has fostered. The meeting was an important opportunity to enhance team members’ understanding of the Master of Sustainability co-op program (Scheme A: Coursework, Major Research Paper, and Co-op) and reinforce knowledge regarding the program and the Centre’s established community partnerships.

*Action #2:* One outcome of the meeting on April 22 was a list of actionable items for both parties to work through together to address challenges with the current program.

*Action #3:* An ongoing activity is to continue meeting to co-create more efficient and effective practices to enhance the student experience. This includes developing a living document/scheme that will keep the ESRC and CCEE connected throughout the year. Over the next year, we will be developing term-by-term checklists, process mapping and timeline mapping, and touch points/opportunities for both parties to collaborate and engage with students in the program (e.g., at orientation, the annual career panel, etc.). These activities ensure that we will build stronger connections between the Centre and co-op throughout the year.

**Recommendation #3**

**Make better use of Affiliate faculty, especially during admissions and assignment of supervisors.**

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee also understands that workload decisions are outside of the Centre’s jurisdiction and that the implementation of this recommendation is closely related to recommendation #6.

**Implementation Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Priority)**

Responsible for approving:	Centre
Responsible for resources:	Centre
Responsible for implementation:	Centre
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2023/24.

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Action #1 Enhance calls across the university for faculty affiliates to increase participation in the Environmental	Centre	O		

Sustainability Research Centre generally, and specifically for admissions and supervision of graduate students				
Action #2 Identify strategies and strengthen participation from existing faculty affiliates in admissions and supervision of graduate students.	Centre	T		

**Comments 2024:**

*Action 1:* We have been and will continue to work with the Office of Research Services and other units, on campus, including the Faculty of Social Sciences Marketing & Communications Liaison Manager, to provide a call for university faculty affiliates to increase awareness around program affiliation and participation in our programs. Within the past twelve months, personalized reach out to faculty and one public call for faculty affiliates have yielded three additional applications from faculty affiliates across campus. In the months ahead, we also plan to discuss this action at our Spring Graduate Program Committee meeting (May 28) to receive feedback from them on how we might enhance their participation and have a follow up ESRC Home Unit meeting to discuss the feedback and identify implementable strategies for increasing participation. As a result, this action has been labelled as an ongoing activity in our Centre.

*Action 2:* Over the past year, our Centre has also met to discuss strategies to strengthen participation from existing faculty affiliates in admissions and supervision of students. We have recently added three faculty affiliates who have indicated interest in supervising students for the 2025-26 admissions cycle. Over the past eight months, our Centre has also encouraged core and participating faculty to participate in open house and other recruitment events. We have also continued to develop relationships with academic advisors across campus to increase awareness of program. We have further developed and shared social media content to enhance program awareness.

**Recommendation #4**

**Explore opportunities for offering the program virtually.**

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted for consideration by the Centre.

<b>Implementation Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Priority)</b>	
Responsible for approving:	Centre
Responsible for resources:	Centre
Responsible for implementation:	Centre
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2023/24.

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Action #1 Meet and consult with the Graduate Program Sub-committee	Centre	O		
Action #2 Meet and consult with the current and former students, as well as student ambassadors in the program	Centre	O		
Action #3 Submit a major modification to the Master of Sustainability degree program and adapt to online course offerings when necessary and as required and monitor student retention	Centre	T		

**Comments 2024:**

*Action 1:* At our quarterly meetings with the Graduate Program Committee, we consulted on options for offering our program virtually. We have also met with other units on campus (Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences; the Dean/Associate Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs; the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation) to discuss options for virtual offerings.

*Action 2:* Decisions to offer online courses in our program, in addition to face-to-face courses, were made in consideration with students in the program. A survey of the student body was conducted in April 2024 for this purpose.

*Action 3:* As a first step toward developing a major modification to our program, we recently attended a *Building Successful Graduate Programs* webinar, hosted by The Chronicle of Higher Education, to learn more about online graduate course offerings. The webinar also included content on micro-credentials and other opportunities and resources for graduate teaching and learning. We have since consulted with other units offering online master's programs at Brock (e.g., Graduate Program Director, Master of Education, Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Education) as well as staff in the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation to learn more about the feasibility of virtual program offerings at Brock. We plan to submit a major modification to course delivery modes for consideration at the May 13, 2024 meeting of the Academic Review Committee.

**Recommendation #5**

**Expand Indigenous content, Indigenous students, and Indigenous Faculty.**

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation, as part of their overall efforts under Brock's Strategic Plan Pillar #4: *Fostering a culture of inclusivity, accessibility,*

*reconciliation, and decolonization.* The Committee also understands that any specific implications for the hiring of indigenous faculty fall outside of its purview.

<b>Implementation Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Priority)</b>	
Responsible for approving:	Centre
Responsible for resources:	Centre
Responsible for implementation:	Centre
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2023/24.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Year One</b>	<b>Year Two</b>	<b>Year Three</b>
Action #1 Add to annual retreat and assign a sub-committee to lead implementation of this recommendation	Centre	C		
Action #2 Update the Centre’s Strategic Plan (2024-2029) to include explicit actions that address this recommendation	Centre	T		
Action #3 Meet with the Human Rights and Equity office and attend three training sessions co-organized by the Human Rights and Equity Office and the Centre	Centre	T		

**Comments 2024:**

*Action 1:* At our annual retreat on June 28, 2023, we discussed incorporating this recommendation into the Centre’s strategic directions for the next five years. During the retreat, we assigned a sub-committee to lead implementation of this recommendation. We also reviewed our current mission, objectives, and activities outlined in our Strategic Plan (2018-2023) and identified those that could be added/updated to ensure better accountability for this recommendation.

*Action 2:* In Fall 2023 and Winter 2024, the Centre undertook updates to the ESRC Strategic Plan (2024-2029) to include actions to facilitate implementation of this recommendation. The unit then consulted with Brock’s Human Rights and Equity office to explore resources for faculty and staff training opportunities. Together, we identified Centre goals, objectives, and next steps for implementing this recommendation.

Additionally, we have recently consulted with the Human Rights and Equity office in finalizing our Strategic Plan for the next five years (2024-2029) to ensure continued alignment with the University’s vision, mission, values, as well as the University Strategic Plan, all of which include a commitment to equity, diversity, inclusivity, accessibility, anti-racism, reconciliation, and decolonization.

*Action 3:* To date, two out of three 2-hour training sessions have been completed by ESRC faculty and staff in collaboration with the Human Rights and Equite Office. A third training session will occur in Year 2.

**Recommendation #6**

**Promote support of and rewards for affiliate faculty by their “home” units to participate fully in the program.**

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation not to be accepted, as it is outside of the jurisdiction of the Committee but is nonetheless worthy of consideration. It is expected that the Program will proceed through normal channels of advocacy to link with faculty members participating in transdisciplinary (and other cross-disciplinary) programs such as theirs.

**Implementation Plan**

Recommendation not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee’s jurisdiction.

**Recommendation #7**

**Consider expanding the sustainability minor to a major.**

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers this recommendation not to be accepted, as it is outside of the jurisdiction of the Committee, and as the Centre noted, beyond the purview of the SSAS Program Committee.

**Implementation Plan**

Recommendation not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee’s jurisdiction.