

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review

Physician Assistant Education Program

Date of Review: February 16 - 17, 2017

*In accordance with the University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the **Physician Assistant Education Program**. This report identifies the significant strengths of the programs, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.*

The report includes an Implementation Plan that identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the Final Assessment Report; who will be responsible for providing any resources entailed by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations and who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

Executive Summary of the Cyclical Program Review of the Physician Assistant Education Program

In accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Physician Assistant Education Program submitted a self-study in January 2017 to the Associate Vice-President, Faculty to initiate the cyclical program review of its undergraduate programs. The approved self-study presented program descriptions, learning outcomes, and analyses of data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis. Appendices to the self-study contained all course outlines associated with the program and the CVs for each full-time member in the department.

Two arm's length external reviewers one from Ontario and one from Manitoba and one internal reviewer were endorsed by the Associate Vice President, Academic, Faculty of Health Sciences and selected by the Associate Vice-President, Faculty. The review team reviewed the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to McMaster University on February 16 – 17, 2017. The visit included interviews with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Associate Vice-President, Faculty, Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences, Associate Vice-President, Academic, Faculty of Health Sciences, Associate Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences and meetings with groups of current undergraduate students, full-time faculty and support staff.

The Assistant Dean of the program and the Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, submitted responses to the Reviewers' Report (May 2017). Specific recommendations were discussed and clarifications and corrections were presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included.

Strengths

In their report (March 2017), the Review team highlighted that the Canadian Medical Association Conjoint Accreditation Service visit in October 2016 awarded a full program accreditation, indicating that the program met all the criteria, requirements and measures involved in delivering the CanMEDS-PA National Competency Profile. The reviewers report also acknowledged a number of program strengths including the admissions process, high pass rate on the national certification exam, curriculum development, and program emphasis on interprofessional collaborative learning.

Areas of Improvement

The reviewers' report identified some potential areas for improvement, including support for students in second year clinical placements, increasing pharmacology teaching, and protection of confidential applicant information.

The Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, in consultation with the Assistant Dean of the program shall be responsible for monitoring the recommendations implementation plan. The details of the progress made will be presented in the progress report and filed in the Vice-Provost, Faculty's office.

Summary of the Reviewers' Recommendations with the Program's and Dean's Responses

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-Up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
<p>The PAEP should investigate if the Admission Application's Statement of Intent, review process is fair and ensures confidentiality where possible. Reviewing the subjective nature of application statement for candidate selection is recommended.</p>	<p>The PA program respectfully questions this recommendation as misinformation was passed along by the 1st year students. We have re-reviewed our process to ensure no breaches of confidentiality and have made the students aware during our most recent admissions process that confidentiality is protected (to reassure 1st year students). It should be reasserted that all confidential information (all identifiers) is removed from each applicant's supplemental application.</p>	<p>Assistant Dean, Kristen Burrows Program Manager, Nancy Weller Chair of Admissions, Dr. Michelle MacDonald</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Posting an Admission Bulletin indicating that 98% of successful applicants hold degrees on admission. This notice may reduce the application numbers to a more manageable level, as Faculty indicated 700 applications for the 24 positions.</p>	<p>The program hosts an annual information night (also available online). The previous GPA class averages for admissions is disclosed to potential candidates. Consideration will be given to publishing GPA averages on the admissions bulletin, or disclosing class statistics on the programs website.</p>	<p>Assistant Dean, Kristen Burrows Program Manager, Nancy Weller</p>	<p>To be completed and available online by February 2018.</p>
<p>Attention to the diversity of the program's student body and administrative tracking should be made to address the Ontario Equity and Inclusion Education Strategy. Including diversity demographics would be of value to the Ontario Government as the role Physician Assistants play in healthcare is studied.</p>	<p>Admissions information is collected by OUAC. Disclosure of diversity information is collected as part of the programs admissions process. One other Canadian PA program has done a diversity survey of its incoming graduates, which could be adapted to our program. The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care works closely with our program and only requests basic demographic information, such as age and gender.</p>	<p>Assistant Dean, Kristen Burrows Program Manager, Nancy Weller</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>The PAEP is a strong academic and clinical program using the recognized and respected Problem Based Learning approach. Several of those interviewed reported that the PBL cases were taken directly from the Undergraduate Medical Education Program. Students, PAEP graduates, and instructors suggested there is room to adapt some of those cases for the specific role PA play in Healthcare.</p>	<p>Medical Foundations cases are reviewed cyclically. Student and tutor feedback is reviewed annually regarding individual PBL cases. Tailoring cases to be more specific to the PA role will be integrated during the next review period for each medical foundations unit (MF1-MF3).</p>	<p>Assistant Dean, Kristen Burrows</p> <p>Academic Coordinator, Nancy Aza</p>	<p>MF1: August 2017 MF2: December 2017</p> <p>MF3: April 2018</p>
<p>Ongoing and timely attention to the preparation of the PBL tutors will benefit the program.</p>	<p>The program continues to support and encourage faculty development. Tutors are also expected to pursue lifelong learning, and are made aware of PBL orientations. Consideration will be given to making orientation mandatory. There are no new tutors for the upcoming academic year. Current faculty are familiar with the PBL curriculum and involved in updates and changes.</p>	<p>Assistant Dean, Kristen Burrows</p> <p>Academic Coordinator, Nancy Aza</p>	<p><i>*will be integrated when new tutors are recruited to the program.</i></p>
<p>Implement increased use of large group sessions to support the Pharmacology curriculum and knowledge.</p>	<p>This is a common issue identified in undergraduate medicine and PA education programs. This is a PBL curriculum, and pharmacology is integrated into each tutorial. The program has offered pharmacology large group sessions in this past, and the reviews are variable. We will continue to work with faculty trained in pharmacology to see if this process can be improved.</p>	<p>Assistant Dean, Kristen Burrows</p> <p>Academic Coordinator, Nancy Aza</p>	<p>Trial new large group sessions for the 2017-2018 academic year.</p>

PAEP Faculty members should perform Clinical Sites visits or connect with students more frequently during the Clerkship year.	<p>2nd year clerkship students have access to program faculty every 4 months when they are on campus for workshops. In addition, students can call or email at any time. Student-staff meetings are held after each campus visit (i.e. when students are on site for medical simulations).</p> <p>Clinical site visits do not occur frequently as our students are placed with McMaster faculty as a condition of their core rotation requirements. Site visits and consultations are done when an issue is identified by student, faculty or site staff.</p>	<p>Assistant Dean, Kristen Burrows</p> <p>Academic Coordinator, Nancy Aza</p>	Ongoing
Reinforce information related to accessing wellness and mental health services for PAEP students.	A website link will be created through the students medportal account to ensure students have 24hr access to mental health and wellness information when not on campus. A paper handout will also be provided to students during their clerkship orientation session.	Administrative Assistant, Danielle Laffan	To be in place for class of 2018 (will start clerkship in September 2017).
The Program Reviewers support the need for a Medical Director to be recruited in support of the Program Director and program curriculum. This position is unique to the nature of the PA-MD model and provides support for site development, ensuring current material, and provides quality assurance.	Consideration has been given to a Medical Director position. Due to the political nature of the PA profession in Ontario, this position must be strategically staffed. A job description has been created and will be submitted for approval when the role is required.	<p>Assistant Dean, Kristen Burrows</p> <p>Associate Dean of Education, Dr. Alan Neville</p>	Pending HR and program staffing requirements.

Dean's Response, Faculty of Health Science:

The Dean submitted a letter expressing his strongest support for the McMaster Assistant Education Program. The Dean's letter acknowledged that the Physician Assistant Education Program is among the Faculty of Health Sciences' most elite offerings and that the program trains an exceptionally talented group of students who upon graduation enter the workforce expertly equipped to support physicians in a range of health care settings and alongside physicians, nurses and other members of interprofessional health care teams.

Quality Assurance Committee Recommendation

McMaster's Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) reviewed the above documentation and the committee recommends that the program should follow the regular course of action with an 18-month progress report and a subsequent full external cyclical review to be conducted no later than 8 years after the start of the last review.