

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review

Physiotherapy, M.Sc.

Date of Review: February 27 and 28, 2023

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 M.Sc. in Physiotherapy. This report identifies the significant strengths of the program, 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 Review

In accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Physiotherapy M.Sc. program submitted a self-study in December 2022 to the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies to initiate the cyclical program review of its program. 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 the CVs for each full-time member in the department.

Two arm's length external reviewers and one internal reviewer were endorsed by the Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, and selected by the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. The review team reviewed the self-study documentation and then conducted a virtual review on February 27th and 28th, 2023. The review included interviews with the Deputy Provost; Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, Associate Dean, Grad Studies and Research, Assistant Dean of the program and meetings with groups of current students, full-time faculty and support staff.

The Assistant Dean of the program and the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences submitted responses to the Reviewers' Report (May and December 2023 respectively). Specific recommendations were discussed and clarifications and corrections were presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included.

- **Strengths**

The MSc(PT) Program was identified to have several strengths. These strengths included a robust admissions process, excellent retention of students who graduate, and strong programming with the new SPIREL curriculum. Additionally, Reviewers acknowledged the diverse academic faculty that have strong and impactful research; advancements and continued plans to address justice, equity, inclusion and diversity; and leadership that is strong and recognized. The Reviewers also acknowledged the potential growth opportunities with the Northern Studies Stream (NSS) and the PT/ PhD stream.

- **Areas for Improvement**

The final Reviewers' Report identified five themes that the MSc(PT) Program could consider for enhancement during the next IQAP cycle. These themes were: enhancing evaluation processes and response rates; build on existing work to further develop the social justice, equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility in all aspects of the Program (i.e. admissions, vision / mission/ values); enhance student support through collaborations with the central university and developing a clear pathway for who to go to for what; resource management which include reflecting on the number of sessional lecturer appointments and sustained administrative support; and curriculum renewal including monitoring student success in both academic and clinical elements and contextualizing program outcomes within the MSc(PT) Program.

Implementation Plan

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

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-Up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
<p>Establish processes to help facilitate improved response rates and optimize receiving constructive feedback from employers, graduates, clinical preceptors, and students.</p>	<p>Continue to build on work with Alumni Office from last year (2022) to engage graduates from MSc(PT) Program (graduates);</p> <p>Continue to monitor and review length of surveys for alumni, employers, and preceptors to help reduce the burden of completion;</p> <p>Maintain in-person site visits with clinical partners;</p> <p>Offer focus groups for clinical preceptors to provide a separate venue for feedback;</p> <p>Meet with students to better understand concerns and identify</p>	<p>Chair, Evaluation Committee (Lisa Carlesso)</p> <p>Director, Clinical Education (Physiotherapy) (Jasdeep Dhir)</p> <p>Director, Clinical Education (Physiotherapy) (Jasdeep Dhir)</p> <p>Assistant Dean (Physiotherapy) (Sarah Wojkowski)</p>	<p>1 year (2023-2024)</p>

	opportunities for improvement;		
Consider ways to provide more time in program to complete surveys, offer incentives, or consider other methods such as focus groups with alumni, employers, or site visits to garner feedback.	<p>Offer focus groups for clinical preceptors and alumni to provide a separate venue for feedback;</p> <p>Meet with students to better understand concerns and identify opportunities for improvement;</p>	<p>Director, Clinical Education (Physiotherapy) (Jasdeep Dhir)</p> <p>Assistant Dean (Physiotherapy) (Sarah Wojkowski)</p>	1 year (2023-2024)
Show evidence of how feedback is considered in curriculum design/school initiatives to demonstrate actions to address recommendations.	<p>Enhance transparency of Program Evaluation Processes to demonstrate how feedback is being considered and integrated;</p> <p>Create annual reporting structures for Program Evaluation that provide evidence of how feedback is considered for Program evaluation.</p>	<p>Chair, MSc(PT) Program Evaluation Committee (Lisa Carlesso)</p> <p>Director, Clinical Education (Physiotherapy) (Jasdeep Dhir)</p> <p>Assistant Dean (Physiotherapy) (Sarah Wojkowski)</p>	2 years (2023 – 2025)
Continue to monitor outcomes and challenges for dual program students.	<p>Consult with Assistant Dean (Rehabilitation Sciences), and dual degree graduates/learners of the program to understand challenges and develop collaborative plans / opportunities to address challenges more clearly;</p> <p>Establish a plan for and begin to monitor</p>	<p>Assistant Dean (Physiotherapy) (Sarah Wojkowski)</p> <p>Assistant Dean (Rehabilitation Sciences) (Ada Tang)</p>	2 years (2023 – 2025)

	outcomes for dual degree students as first cohort graduates (2024).		
Consider elements of equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility in the program vision, mission, and values.	<p>MSc(PT) Program faculty and staff will review current vision, mission, and values statements at the May 2023 Faculty Retreat and will make recommendations for revisions;</p> <p>Circulate draft revised to stakeholders (i.e. clinical preceptors, students) for further input / review</p>	Assistant Dean (Physiotherapy) (Sarah Wojkowski)	1 year (2023 – 2024)
Address the low uptake of students applying to and accepting seats through the Facilitated Indigenous Application Process (FIAP) and support uptake of the newly established Black Equity Stream (BES). Focus on ways to share positive experiences, supports available, incentives to attend and build awareness of physiotherapy within targeted communities.	<p>Review admissions data from 2018 – present to understand trends in admissions related to FIAP;</p> <p>Meet with representation from the Faculty of Health Sciences Indigenous Health Learning Lodge (IHLL) to discuss trends and possible strategies to enhance update of FIAP;</p> <p>Establish and implement a process for monitoring data associated with BES;</p> <p>Work with students, alumni, and professional partners to share information about physiotherapy</p>	<p>Chair, Admissions Committee (Greg Spadoni)</p> <p>Assistant Dean (Physiotherapy) (Sarah Wojkowski)</p>	2 years (2023 – 2025)

	within targeted communities.		
Consider including material for orientation that addresses emergency procedures, awareness of security services, locations, and training of AED devices, first aid (physical and mental health).	<p>Review MSc(PT) Program Handbook and Orientation Week Presentations to ensure safety information / processes are present and clear;</p> <p>Adapt presentations during Orientation Week to review content related to safety processes explicitly with incoming students;</p> <p>Review current training requirements for students related to first aid and consider opportunities for enhancement.</p>	<p>Program Manager / Program Coordinator (Amanda Benson)</p> <p>Assistant Dean (Physiotherapy) (Sarah Wojkowski)</p>	6 months (2023)
Work with central services to explore access for improved services to support MSc(PT) students for mental health, and access to services such as physical therapy and medical care, particularly during summer and when out on clinical placements.	Meet with leadership from Student Wellness to understand limitations / opportunities for enhanced summer services.	<p>Program Manager (Acting, Amanda Benson)</p> <p>Assistant Dean (Physiotherapy) (Sarah Wojkowski)</p>	6 months (2023)
Develop a feedback/communication framework so students can be efficient at getting the help they need to succeed, and the program is getting the right feedback to make meaningful change	<p>Meet with students to better understand concerns and identify opportunities for improvement.</p> <p>Based on feedback provided from student meetings, develop a</p>	Assistant Dean (Physiotherapy) (Sarah Wojkowski)	6 months (2023)

through the appropriate committee structures.	Feedback / communication framework that allows opportunities for timely feedback.		
Consider advantages of balancing the number of sessional lecturers, volunteers with permanent teaching positions either in the form of teaching focused faculty or clinical specialists hired to teach and provide administrative support.	One year pilot of a 0.5 FTE Instructional Assistant role that will begin on July 1, 2023. This role will be associated with teaching and administration for the Clinical Lab (CL) Courses.	Vice Dean, School of Rehabilitation Sciences (Dina Brooks) Assistant Dean (Physiotherapy) (Sarah Wojkowski)	1 year (2023 – 2024)
Consider how program outcomes and terminology pertaining to expertise and advanced training are contextualized within the entry-to-practice MSc(PT)	Review Program and student outcome statements and course terminology to ensure context within entry-to-practice.	Assistant Dean (Physiotherapy) (Sarah Wojkowski)	2 years (2023 – 2025)
Explore optimal student methods for evaluations in the continued evolution of the renewed curriculum. Consider descriptors or a grade that could be shared for feedback to students in pass-fail evaluations.	Review current evaluation methods across the MSc(PT) Program to ensure alignment with course and curriculum objectives; Review of courses with Pass / Fail evaluations (i.e. clinical education / problem-based tutorial courses) to ensure descriptors are clear for what constitutes a PASS in the associated evaluations.	Assistant Dean (Physiotherapy) (Sarah Wojkowski) Director, Clinical Education (Physiotherapy) (Jasdeep Dhir)	2 years (2023 – 2025)

Dean's Response, Faculty of Health Sciences

The reviewers note many strengths of the program, including the strength of the applicants at admission and their success at graduation, and the high quality of the new SPIREL curriculum. They note that the program is well supported by faculty with strong research programs and excellent leadership. The reviewers make recommendations for improvement in five main areas.

We have reviewed the program's thoughtful response to the report and we are confident that their plan will address the recommendations appropriately.

We agree that the Facilitated Indigenous Application Process (FIAP) and Black Equity admissions processes can be important mechanisms for advancing equity and inclusion goals. The School of Rehabilitation Science has established itself as a leader in the Faculty of Health Sciences in working toward the diversity and inclusiveness of its learning and research environment. This effort is supported in concrete ways through initiatives in the Faculty and central university to support the recruitment of Black and Indigenous faculty. These include a significant investment for the funding of Black and Indigenous faculty cohort hires and the establishment of a Department of Indigenous Studies. The Faculty of Health Sciences has recruited an Associate Dean of Indigenous Health and established the Indigenous Health Learning Lodge (IHLL). The School recently collaborated with IHLL to recruit its first full-time Indigenous faculty member. Within the School, initiatives such as the Anti-Racism, Anti-Bias and Anti-Oppression (ARABO) committee offer a forum to share support and experiences among learners across rehabilitation disciplines, as called for in the reviewers' recommendations.

The reviewers make several recommendations regarding resource management. The Physiotherapy program has the advantage that it operates within the budget envelope of the entire School of Rehabilitation Science and is supported by the diversified revenues of the School.

The reviewers note how the School's leaders have been "innovative and creative" in securing resources. At the same time, the reviewers suggest expanding staff positions and consider the "balancing" of sessional and full-time teaching positions. The reviewers note that the use of sessional instructors ensures that students are being taught clinical skills by active clinicians and they also praise the research output of the fulltime faculty in physiotherapy. We agree that the balance of sessional and full-time teaching positions needs to be monitored closely.

Quality Assurance Committee Recommendation

McMaster's Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) reviewed the above documentation at the March 20, 2024, meeting. The committee recommends that the Physiotherapy MSc. program should follow the regular course of action with an 18-month progress report and subsequent full external cyclical review to be conducted no later than eight years after the start of the last review.