

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review

Global Health M.Sc.

Date of Review: September 27th, September 30th, October 4th, 2021

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 Global Health. 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 Global Health M.Sc. program submitted a self-study in October 2021 to the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies to initiate the cyclical program review of its graduate 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 and one internal reviewer were endorsed by the Deans, Faculty of Health Sciences, Business and Social Science and selected by the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. The review team reviewed the self-study documentation and then conducted a review on May 10th and 11th, 2021. The review included interviews with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, Associate Deans, Graduate Studies and Research, of the associated faculties, the program director and meetings with groups of current students, full-time faculty and support staff.

The program director and the Deans of the Faculty of Health Science, Business and Social Science submitted responses to the Reviewers' Report (November 2021 and May 2022 respectively). Specific recommendations were discussed, and clarifications and corrections were presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included.

- **Strengths**

The reviewers noted the program as “innovative, successful” in providing graduate students with “unique international, course-based (with thesis and non-thesis options), and work-integrated learning in a field that is growing and has **high demand**.” The consortium of international institutions was recognized by the reviewers as “**pathbreaking** for a master’s program, and it provides a good transdisciplinary model for how such inter-institutional collaborations can succeed.” Furthermore, the reviewers stated, “students are offered **rigorous training** in core theory and methods courses, and opportunities for community-based and international immersion for practicums or thesis work...[in] three areas of concentration in Globalization and Equity, Global Health Management, and Global Burden of Disease [offering] distinctive content education that are **well-suited to careers** in global health and medicine.”

According to the reviewers, the program “demonstrated specific excellence” in the following areas:

- 1. International collaborations**

- a. The program represents “model collaborations with multiple international institutions.”
- b. There is “high level of enthusiasm from global participants, [which] makes for a rich and meaningful global experience.”
- c. Collaborating on teaching, practicums, the learning symposium, and internationalization in all areas, the “international collaboration model provides an **extraordinary example** of problem-solving, interactive learning and pedagogy that is an ideal for global health itself.”

- 2. Transdisciplinarity**

- a. Notably, “the transdisciplinary nature of the program is **a true strength**.”
- b. The diverse pathways students can take in completing the program make it “unique and enable students to pursue scholarly interests that fit their diverse interests and needs.”

- 3. Hybrid learning models**

- a. The program is recognized as having developed hybrid strategies “essential for international collaboration” and in the transition within the pandemic.
- b. The models also support program growth and “enable students from different countries to participate in shared learning experiences.”

- 4. Quality of students and diversity**

- a. Amidst expanding enrollment, “care and rigor used to select students is noteworthy.”
- b. Students are “uniformly regarded as of very high quality.”

- 5. Faculty Leadership**

- a. Faculty are recognized as “remarkable” in credentials and for “their enthusiastic commitments to teaching and mentoring.”

- 6. Support within the University**

- a. The program is seen to be clearly valued and endorsed by the University as demonstrated by “high level of knowledge of its objectives, and in the commitments to its success with resources for faculty, students and space.”

- **Areas for Enhancement or Improvement**

While the reviewers found “no glaring problems that demand immediate concern,” the following chart addresses reviewers’ recommendations to maintain coherence in the program’s priorities, standards and goals.

	Recommendation	Proposed Follow-Up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
1	Alignment with University priorities: Given the program’s complexity and multiple partnerships, continue to regularly communicate internally about the program’s priorities, growth intentions, and identify complementarities with other programs and offerings at McMaster University.	We continue to invite faculty and program heads from internal partners to our program orientation and social events throughout the year to facilitate communication about program activities. This year (2021-2022) the program communicated with program administrators at the time of enrollment (July) to prepare for the coming academic year. This practice will continue. In terms of complementarities with other programs: - Focus within our programming is on international policies; providing students with international perspectives. - The Health Policy program (mentioned by reviewers) is a PhD program; we will explore possibilities for synergies.	Program Director – communicating with program heads. Academic Advisor – communicating with program administrators Program Director– synergies with PhD in Health Policy and other programs	Transdisciplinary program leads and professors are invited to student program orientation in January 2022; Communication about the upcoming year with program administrators is scheduled for June 2022, and ongoing as needed. Synergies will be reviewed beginning in the summer 2022.
2	Admissions Requirements: Greater transparency and timeliness in communication with other participating faculty to	Admission committee members coming from three different faculties & programs where GH students study, are provided with a summary review of the admissions cycle in the Spring (when applications are reviewed). The summary is sent to program	Academic Advisor & Curriculum Coordinator	Spring/Summer 2022 for the upcoming admissions cycle (2022-2023) and ongoing annually.

	inform course planning could be enhanced following admissions (e.g. number of students expected/year).	administrators in the summer; we will share the summaries directly with program heads as well.		
3	Admissions Requirements: A self-study of admissions practices to determine where they may inadvertently favor certain backgrounds (scholarly and cultural) would be of help if the desire is to increase students from diverse backgrounds, including increasing the number of students from the social sciences.	For the 2021-2022 academic cycle we shared Unconscious Bias training material provided by the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) with the Admissions Committee. The exercise included it as a point of conscious reflection on the ranking sheet. We will also begin a self-study with the explicit aim of exploring bias in terms of scholarly and cultural backgrounds (e.g., grades from social science vs other disciplines with different grading cultures).	Academic Advisor & Curriculum Coordinator	Jan-Feb 2022: discussions with Admissions Committee of bias risks in current process. May-Aug 2022: develop self-study questionnaire with assistance from SGS. Sept-Nov 2022: administer self-study. Dec 2022-Jan 2023: review findings, propose plan for review of 2023-2024 applications.
4	Curriculum: Recommend greater emphasis on quantitative methods in program	For all students, and particularly for thesis students, we will recommend a list of quantitative courses that can be taken as electives. (Draft list included as Appendix A). We will survey students in the Fall Term to gauge interest and needs to identify appropriate resources at McMaster. We will encourage	Program Faculty, particularly instructor of the Research Methods course	November 2021 and annually thereafter: compile and share list of possible quantitative methods electives. October 2022: survey students. Winter 2023: identify and make relevant resources

		students to take workshops offered by the MacPherson Institute such as data visualization, abstract writing. If necessary, we will work with the MacPherson Institute to provide workshops.		available, or provide workshops. Summer 2023: review uptake of offerings
5	Curriculum: Continue to strengthen curriculum on decolonization (global health and Indigenous health)	<p>We will explore potential to join working groups at the institutional level (e.g., Learning Lodge) and find ways to integrate global Indigenous health and decolonization perspectives and actions.</p> <p>A decolonization in global health speaker event is planned for February 2022 which a faculty and student and response panel. Maastricht University hosted a symposium on decolonization of global health in the Fall of 2021 that students and faculty at McMaster we invited to attend.</p> <p>A 3-credit course on Arctic health from a global health perspective, which will include aspects of decolonization and Indigeneity, is being proposed.</p>	Program Faculty	<p>By the time of the 18-month Progress Report, we will provide updates on curriculum supports that should have become available by that time.</p> <p>Fall 2021: Arctic health course being formally proposed for curriculum approval by the Graduate Program Curriculum Committee.</p>
6	Another curriculum gap noted, but not a specific recommendation: International law perspectives	<p>A course on Global Health Diplomacy is in the early development stage.</p> <p>At present these current offerings include international law perspectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GLOBLAST 777 / Global Governance (core offering) - GLOBHTH 709 / Refugee Health Policies (core offering) - BUSADMIN C750 / Legal and Ethics Issues in Healthcare (elective) 	Program Faculty	The course on Diplomacy and international law will be offered by January 2023.

7	Resources: As the program's leadership changes, ensure that the necessary infrastructure is put in place to nurture and maintain existing strong relationships with other participating faculty and to ensure program quality and continuity.	Stability in the leadership at the program level has established a standard of practice around nurturing and maintaining relationships internally and internationally.	Program Director	In terms of infrastructure to support this as leadership changes, we support institutional priorities that aim to maintain or grow internationalization of higher education.
8	Resources: Maintain the program's current access to physical space	Space is at a premium for meetings with delegates and visiting partner faculty. We will continue to require our current spaces and larger meeting areas post-pandemic.	Program Director	We will continue to work with central room bookings for our space needs.
9	Quality Indicators: the program could further improve communications about the thesis versus non-thesis options (including appropriate course options) earlier as this decision is only made after the students complete their first term; some students suggested the development of	<p>More supports are needed for thesis supervisors and access to information on program options can be improved. A Supervisor Handbook will be created for MSc Thesis Supervisors. A workshop is already being planned on Thesis Supervision.</p> <p>We will provide more information on flexibility in program pathways in online and early communication to incoming students, through Faculty Advising and in orientation sessions.</p> <p>As for a third stream, there are no barriers for students to take additional courses or to have a work-integrated</p>	<p>Academic Advisor – early communication with students; Faculty Advising orientation</p> <p>Thesis and Practicum Coordinator – develop MSc Thesis supervisor handbook and coordinate workshop</p>	<p>We will provide more clarity on flexibility in program pathways through a clear, graphic representation shared in online and in early communication to newly accepted students (June), through faculty advising (assigned in September of each year), and in orientation sessions (September & October).</p> <p>December 2021: workshop on thesis supervision already being planned.</p> <p>Winter 2022: develop MSc Thesis Supervisor</p>

	<p>a third stream – a hybrid of thesis and course-based options that would allow for an additional year in program.</p> <p>Some faculty could use more direction/program supports on how to advise thesis-based students.</p>	<p>learning experience in conjunction with completing a thesis. Thesis students are already advised they may take 24 months to complete the thesis, though the average is 14-18 months.</p>		<p>Handbook for distribution in September 2022.</p>
10	<p>Quality Indicators: further possibilities of “internationalization at home” should continue to be pursued and relationships with local organizations strengthened.</p> <p>While these program features are innovative, more needs to be done to ensure equitable access to them. As more hybrid forms of pedagogy are developed, this will perhaps</p>	<p>Local work-integrated learning opportunities with a global impact or lens continue to be identified and we are working with the Student Success Centre (SSC) on consolidating opportunities in a custom-created online platform.</p> <p>To expand accessibility, the core global health courses (GLOBH707, 708 and 709) offered in the Winter Term will include virtual participation options for 2022. The outbound mobility option with Maastricht University includes a virtual participation option for Winter 2022 that will also be assessed thereafter in consultation with our international partners.</p> <p>During the pandemic, the online global health symposium expanded to include participation from all</p>	<p>Thesis and Practicum Coordinator – international and local opportunities, funding options; relations with local organizations.</p> <p>Learning Symposium coordination</p> <p>Graduate Coordinator – virtual course offerings and outbound mobility</p>	<p>Next 6-8 months: SSC online platform consolidating global opportunities and international travel funding opportunities.</p> <p>Spring/Summer 2022: assess virtual participation in core courses, in ‘virtual mobility’ with Maastricht University, and in the in-person (if travel permitted) and virtual experiences of the Learning Symposium to determine feasibility of each for next year. Assessment to be done via student course feedback forms and focus group, and through discussion with course instructors.</p>

	<p>reduce frustration for those who cannot or do not want to travel (both are seen), but the singular importance of making travel available to those who cannot afford it is still high and should be addressed.</p>	<p>international partner institutions. We plan to continue offering an in-person and online experience once travel is normalized again.</p> <p>Students currently access funding via Graduate Student Association Travel Awards, the Global Experience Fund offered through the SSC. We promote and encourage applications to awards offered internally and national competitions. We continue to monitor Federal grants for travel (announcements delayed due to the pandemic) and we continue to work with the SSC to develop an online platform to consolidate global experience funding opportunities.</p>		
1 1	<p>Quality Indicators:</p> <p>Guidance available for students in the program could be improved. Specifically, some students and faculty felt that more could be done by the program to formalize expectations, help students find advisors for scholarly papers and identify projects for the practicum and for the thesis.</p>	<p>As we continue to provide information via our three main modes of communication (email, Facebook and Avenue to Learn) we will refine communications as modes change (e.g., dropped Twitter due to lack of student use). Each student will be assigned a specific faculty advisor dedicated to their plans, progress, and provide guidance on how to approach potential supervisors on their own initiative.</p> <p>Information is shared strategically throughout the year in line with curriculum priorities. Timeline: Program pathways (thesis/course-based) are included in admission information online and in the</p>	Thesis and Practicum Coordinator	By the time of the 18-month Progress Report, we aim to have updated communication modes (emergent platforms). We will also provide an update on improved communication in the form of infographics-based presentations of program pathways.

		<p>September Welcome Orientation. Winter Term mobility and concentration options are presented in October. Summer courses (scholarly paper and practicum) are introduced in the Fall Term, with workshops for these beginning in the Winter Term. Resources are available in the Fall term on Avenue to Learn on past Scholarly Papers, Practicums and Theses. Students can also ask to see previous Scholarly Papers.</p>		
1 2	<p>Quality Indicators:</p> <p>Guidance for success post-graduation and continued alumni engagement; more to help graduates with finding job placements post-graduation. A more robust alumni support system.</p>	<p>Pre-pandemic, the program hosted an annual alumni dinner in conjunction with a speaker-event or workshop. This will be reinstated once measures allow.</p> <p>In the most recent Alumni Survey sent in 2021, we included a link to the Alumni LinkedIn group to encourage greater participation. This resulted in an uptick in requests to join; currently the page has nearly 300 members. Alumni and the program use the page to promote employment opportunities and global health events. On the survey we also invite alumni to include their current email address to maintain our alumni database. The database is used to inform alumni of global health events and alumni dinners/event.</p> <p>Editors of the Global Health Annual Review alumni-run journal will be encouraged to expand calls for participation to alumni reaching back farther</p>	<p>Academic Advisor – career planning communication</p> <p>Communications officer – alumni communication</p>	<p>Winter 2022 and ongoing : presentation by ThriveHire and SSC about career supports.</p> <p>Winter 2022 and ongoing – pandemic measures permitting: invite alumni to social event (coincide with Chanchlani global health lecture or similar event). We will work with the University Alumni office in this planning.</p> <p>Spring: Poll students after Learning Symposium about ideal networking platform for global alumni.</p> <p>Summer 2022 and ongoing: introduce global and McMaster-specific alumni groups to students as they near graduation. Continue to include link on Alumni Survey.</p>

		<p>than past two years (include all alumni).</p> <p>Students have asked for a global alumni communication; we will initiate this after polling students on the preferred platform (e.g., LinkedIn, or similar).</p> <p>In terms of career support, students are encouraged and have in the past hosted career panels in the Spring with program support. ThriveHire.ca has been invited to present their global health career support company to students in the Winter Term (in line with Practicum planning); this will continue.</p> <p>McMaster's Student Success Centre (SSC) also provides career support to anyone with a degree from the university; this will be shared with students as they near graduation.</p>		
1 3	<p>System of governance: Transparency around program governance could be improved by bringing more of the excellent models for international collaboration into conversations with McMaster internal</p>	<p>Faculty executives receive monthly reports about our program activities; this is accessible to all department chairs and heads of schools in FHS.</p> <p>Pre-covid, we hosted annual meetings with Department Chairs associated with the program; this will be reinstated.</p> <p>Discussions are being held at the University level to develop a forum to share different ideas and foster collaboration on internationalization of higher</p>	Program Director	<p>As post-covid processes allow, we will reinstate meetings with program heads/chairs and regarding the development of a forum for programs across campus that support internationalization of higher education in their programming.</p>

	institutional collaborators.	education collaborations. This will be an excellent forum to share resources and potential joint programming.		
1 4	System of governance: The program pathways, targeted enrolment/per year, funding models and impacts on each participating university could be further clarified (e.g. impacts on courses taught by other faculty at McMaster). More communication is needed regarding the institutionalizing supports for the program in the partner faculty at McMaster, especially around anticipated size of cohorts and the curriculum.	On a bi-annual basis we meet with international partners, and on a per-term basis as needed. We will seek feedback from partner universities and internal McMaster partners about timeliness of information. We will continue to invite faculty deans, program heads and instructors from internal partners to our program orientation and social events throughout the year to facilitate communication about program activities. This year (2021-2022) the program communicated with program administrators at the time of enrollment (July) to prepare for the coming academic year. This practice will continue.	Program Director and Graduate Coordinator	Spring/Summer 2022 and ongoing: invite faculty deans, program heads and professors from internal partners to discuss past year and plans for the next. Annual Advisory Board meeting includes all partners. The two-day meeting is followed by an operational meeting where partners discuss models of higher education including funding, enrollment and trends that impact global health higher education. At that meeting, enrolment numbers are discussed and university strategies on transcontinental higher educational. Each university is involved in the quality review of partner programs.

Appendix A:

Quantitative Course Offerings at McMaster University relevant to Global Health:

Course
HTHRSM 751 – Observational and Analytical Research Methods

ECON 761 – Econometrics I
HRM 702 – Introduction to Biostatistics
MPH 701 – Population and Public Health Epidemiology
HTHRSM 723 – Regression Analysis
HTHRSM 727 – Theory and Practice of Measurement
HTHRSM 737 – Economic Analysis for the Evaluation of Health Services
POLSCI 784 – Quantitative Political and Policy Analysis
HTHRSM 753 – Regression Analysis
NURS 770 – Mixed Methods Research Design for Health Services and Policy Research

Faculty Response

The Deans thanked the reviewers, Drs. Vincanne Adams, Erica Di Ruggiero, and Ruth Chen for their thorough, thoughtful, and constructive review of the graduate programs in Global Health at McMaster University and appreciated that the reviewers identified strengths of the program including the strong network of international collaborators, transdisciplinarity, faculty leadership and support within the university.

They were thankful for several thoughtful suggestions about the curriculum, and we are confident that these will be carefully considered by the Global Health program leaders.

The review was timely and is greatly helpful for informing the search underway for new leadership of the graduate program and also the refinement of the internationalization strategy in the Faculty of Health Sciences and the wider University. The reviewers particularly highlight some key issues regarding governance, communication, and resourcing that will need tending to so that the program continues to thrive.

The reviewers note, throughout the report, how the complexity of program governance and international partnerships requires improved communication among the participating Faculties, program leaders, faculty, and international stakeholders, as well as increased transparency in program governance. These comments resonated strongly with the Deans. In this regard, they believe that it will be important to increase the frequency and depth of consultation among program leaders with the Associate Deans of the three participating Faculties. They also encourage a more active approach to the engagement of participating departments.

The reviewers highlight the “singular importance” of addressing inequities arising from financial barriers that limit some students’ travel to take up international practicum opportunities. Although the Deans agree that the Program’s strategies of online participation and “internationalization at home” are helpful in this regard, they agree with the reviewers’ assessment that the financial barriers to international travel remain an important problem in a

global health curriculum. The Deans will work with the program to evaluate mechanisms of support that may be available from program revenues and other external sources.

Along similar lines, the reviewers praise the program's use of hybrid learning strategies generally. The Deans agreed that this strategy makes sense given their global partnerships, with the added benefit that the program was well prepared to handle the disruptions of the pandemic. They cautioned, however, that McMaster is not primarily an online institution. Just as they acknowledge that online platforms likely do not replace the experience of a foreign practicum placement, they note that the program must preserve a balance of online and in-person learning experiences appropriate to the way the program was approved. In the Faculties of Health Sciences, Social Sciences and Business, they have established an approach whereby programs make explicit their overall hybridization strategy so that individual innovations in the post-pandemic environment are evaluated against a high level strategy consistent with the institution's priorities.

The Program does not respond to the recommendation to increase the enrollment of international students, which the reviewers characterize as a "repeated concern". The Deans note that students enrolled at international partner institutions do take McMaster global health coursework, so that the actual international engagement is likely underestimated. They will certainly work with the Program to review their international recruitment targets but are mindful of the financial constraints. International masters students pay higher fees and relocation costs and are eligible for fewer scholarships. It is often unattractive for such students to study in Canada for a 12 to 18 month MSc program, or in any case, this option is unavailable for students without the financial means. For these reasons they disagree with the reviewer's assessment that international admissions are an effective strategy for decolonization and equity, in the absence of an external funding initiative.

The Deans thanked the Program leaders and staff for their excellent self-study document and for mounting a successful site visit. They further thanked the staff in the School of Graduate Studies for their invaluable support during this process. Most of all, they again thanked the reviewers for their report and their insights to ensure the continued success of the Global Health graduate program.

Quality Assurance Committee Recommendation

McMaster's Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) reviewed the above documentation, and the Committee recommends that the Global Health M.Sc. program should follow the regular course of action with an 18-month progress report and a subsequent full external cyclical review to be conducted 7 years after the start of the last review.