

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review

Occupational Therapy, M.Sc.

Date of Review: May 1st and 2nd, 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 Occupational Therapy. 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 M.Sc. in Occupational Therapy program submitted a self-study in March 2023 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 May 1st and 2nd, 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 (July and December 2023 respectively). Specific recommendations were discussed and clarifications and corrections were presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included.

- **Strengths**

- **Program:** Mission and vision are aligned with priorities and goals of the university, faculty, and school. The Program Learning Objectives (PLOs) are linked to the Degree Level expectations and the method for assessing PLOs is clearly described.
- **Admissions:** The admissions requirements clearly link to the PLOs as well as the Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada (COTC, the OT professional requirements). There is a clearly described commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) which is forward thinking.
- **Curriculum:** Faculty research is incorporated into the curriculum; use of technology is embraced in teaching methods and curriculum mapping. EDI, including accessibility, is a priority and is being implemented with strong leadership (Prof. Dhillon).
- **Teaching and Assessment:** Problem based learning, teaching and assessment methods are effective and leading edge.
- **Resources to Meet Program Requirements:** The human resources and physical space are adequate for Program delivery. The budget structure provides some funding for creative ideas and initiatives within the Program.
- **Quality Indicators:** The OT faculty are recognized as international leaders in the field; the Program has high graduation (and low attrition) rates.
- **System of Governance:** Although complex, the governance systems meet the Program needs and accreditation requirements.
- **Academic Services:** Students commented on the opportunities for involvement within the Program, the opportunity to provide feedback which is addressed by faculty and staff; available resources are structured to compliment the curriculum.

- **Areas for Improvement**

The Review Committee did *not* identify any areas for Improvement.

The Review Committee did identify areas for Enhancement. These include (verbatim from report):

1. The excellence of the OT program is its people. Dedicated faculty, staff, and students work together with a strong commitment to Problem-Based Learning. Faculty and staff are working incredibly hard, and it will be important to monitor the sustainability of the human resources delivering the Program so as to avoid stress and burnout.
2. Dr. Bosch is an exceptional leader, and should she not seek a second term, it will be necessary to think about succession planning to ensure the continuity of this high-quality Program.
3. The new curriculum and the Program Learning Model are innovative, focus on outcomes, and address the competencies. It will be important to undertake program evaluation and ensure the outcomes are achieved.
4. The new admissions process and the use of Kira software is creative. While it has allowed for an increased number and diversity of people interviewed, it will be important to ensure an increased diversity in the OT evaluators in the process.
5. As technology continues to advance, it will be important to ensure classroom technology continues to meet the needs of faculty, staff and students.

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

Implementation Plan

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-Up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
1. Monitor the sustainability of the human resources delivering the Program as to avoid stress and burnout	Ongoing. Monitoring burnout has been a consistent area of review. The 2023 Climate Survey Results (not available at the time of the Reviewers' On-site visit), completed by faculty, staff and research staff, indicates that the faculty and staff are overall satisfied with the SRS (80.4%), and 15% had concerns about time to do role adequately. We will continue to review faculty workload at annual reviews. Staff will consult and communicate with their supervisor and/or the Director of Administration about ongoing workload.	Faculty: SRS Vice Dean OT Program Assistant Dean Staff: SRS Director of Administration	April 15, 2024 Summary of outcome of discussions and plans for next steps
2. Consider succession planning to ensure the continuity of this high-quality Program	Ongoing. Faculty at all levels are encouraged to consider further leadership and training opportunities (e.g., Acting Assistant Dean when incumbent is off-line for extended periods, chairing committees, FHS Leadership training). The SRS Vice Dean can explore interest in the Assistant Dean position during 2024 Annual Reviews	SRS Vice Dean OT Program Assistant Dean	March 2024 Annual Reviews
3. Important to undertake program evaluation and ensure the outcomes are being achieved with the new curriculum mapping and Program Learning Model	The OT Curriculum Committee underwent the first curriculum review using Appendix 4.1C SOP Curriculum Review. This SOP outlines the steps taken to ensure the outcomes are achieved and now requires review and revision to capture lessons learned from the first review, which includes a better description of the faculty's curriculum expectations, as suggested by the Reviewers.	Curriculum Chair Program Quality Improvement Chair Assistant Dean, OT Program	January 1, 2024
4a. Important to ensure an increased diversity in	Already underway: We agree with the reviewers' suggestions and have implemented a tracking system as part of the Admissions	Admissions Committee Chair	November 15, 2024 (review of diversity

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the OT evaluators in the process	Committee process to identify strengths and gaps in the diversity of our reviewers. Pending the outcome, efforts to recruit more diverse reviewers will be considered. This will be done in addition to continuing the Black Equity Stream admissions process.		numbers and plan to address if required)
4b. A part-time program should be considered	This issue will continue to be considered at an SRS Leadership Level. The scoping review in STEER/R is looking at strategies to increase retention of students with disabilities, and part-time options are one of the potential approaches. However, a first priority for the Program is the Northern Ontario School of Medicine University collaboration initiative (while not part-time, this initiative will address accessibility and workforce demand issues in Northern Ontario).	SRS Vice Dean OT Program Assistant Dean STEER/R Coordinator	June 1, 2024 (STEER/R update)

Faculty Response

The reviewers noted many strengths of the program, citing it as “excellent” and as a “recognized leader in Problem-Based Learning.” They praise the leadership of Dr. Bosch, the “cutting edge” curriculum, and the rich network of partners that sustains the program.

Effusive in their praise, the reviewers made few recommendations. We have reviewed the program’s thoughtful response to the report, and we are confident that they will address the recommendations appropriately. We observe that the OT program underwent accreditation in parallel with the IQAP and is guided by this process also. Nonetheless, we do appreciate when reviewers probe more deeply and challenge an excellent program.

With respect to resource management, the reviewers call for the School of Rehabilitation Science to monitor faculty workloads, be vigilant to associated stress, and monitor the sustainability of teaching and scholarship. The Assistant Dean and Vice Dean will continue to monitor this.

We agree with the reviewers that it will be worthwhile for the program to ensure the diversity of the evaluators who are involved in admissions process. The School of Rehabilitation Science has established itself as a leader in the Faculty 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 of Health Sciences and central university to support the recruitment of Black and Indigenous faculty. The School of Rehabilitation Science recently collaborated with Faculty’s Indigenous Health Learning Lodge (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.

Quality Assurance Committee Recommendation:

McMaster’s Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) reviewed the above documentation at the April 2024, meeting. The committee recommends that the **Occupational Therapy M.Sc.** 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.