

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review

Bachelor of Health Science (Honours) Program

Date of Review: April 21 – 22, 2015

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 Bachelor of Health Science (Honours) undergraduate program. 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.

This Final Assessment Report includes an Implementation Plan that identifies who will be responsible leading the follow up for the proposed recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

Executive Summary of the Bachelor of Health Science (Honours) Program Cyclical Program Review

The **Bachelor of Health Science (Honours) program** submitted a self-study to the Associate Vice-President (Faculty) on **April 2, 2015**. The self-study presented the program description and learning outcomes, an analytical assessment of the program, and program data including the data collected from a student survey along with the standard data package prepared by the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis. Appended were the course outlines for all courses in the program and the CVs for each full-time faculty member in the Department.

Two arm's length external reviewers, both from Ontario and one internal reviewer were endorsed by the Dean of the 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 April 21 – 22, 2015. The visit included interviews with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Associate Vice-President, Faculty, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Chair of the department and meetings with groups of current undergraduate students, full-time faculty and support staff.

The Assistant Dean of the department and the Associate Vice-President of the Faculty of Health Sciences submitted responses to the Reviewers' Report (March 2016). Specific recommendations were discussed and clarifications and corrections were presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included.

The Final Assessment Report was prepared by the QAC to be submitted to Undergraduate Council and Senate (January 2017).

BRIEF SUMMARY OF REVIEWERS’ COMMENTS.

The following program strengths and areas for improvement were also noted:

Strengths

The Review Team noted key strengths of the program that were summarized overall as:

“ This is an impressive program, not only for its attention to principles of PBL and aligned curricula, but also for its attention to the developmental arc of its learners. It assumes that students can achieve excellence in a motivated and intentional fashion and it puts in place the structures to support this outcome. The scaffolding and mentoring are further supplemented by a governance structure that embeds consultation and ongoing curriculum development into its equally sustainable structures of pedagogy and course development. It would be easy to think it is ‘easy to do this’ because of the apparent ease and fluidity of the processes; however, the complexities and intricacies ought not to be underestimated. The program team is well integrated and believes in its mission. Their commitment to their own ongoing development as academic professionals and scholars is further testimony to the strength and depth of this program.”

Areas for Improvement

The Review Team’s report noted that there is the potential for transition overload going from group work dynamics to a more specialized focus. In addition, the report notes that the apparent level of student stress, especially as experienced in early years seems to be on the program’s radar and does require monitoring.

The Dean of the 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 Associate Vice-President, Faculty’s office.

Summary of the Reviewers’ Recommendations with the Department’s and Associate Vice-President Academic’s Responses

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-Up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
Grades (in the context of electives, stress and external view of the program)	As far as we aware, there are no significant issues with grades and performance for BHSc students. There are two things that we would be concerned about; enrolment in professional programs	No proposed follow-up	

	and graduate programs after their undergraduate studies and secondly, in course performance relative to other McMaster students and students who transfer to McMaster from other institutions. In the context of post-graduation performance, we hear that BSc students are exemplary and are well accepted to other universities, programs and by employers. We have not heard anything else.		
Opportunities for more efficient use of existing resources (issues related to program practices, collaboration with engineering and term 3 programming)	Continue to consult with students on all issues related to term 3 programming but early feedback acknowledges that there are already several subcultures with the program specializations and therefore, there may be ways to maintain the existing culture if term 3 programming is realized.	Assistant Dean	Ongoing
More reflection on mental health programming in level one	Continue to formally review the current programming every year with level one students and faculty A new course on mental health will be added	Assistant Dean	Ongoing
Increase communication strategies to help address career aspirations	The program will continue to develop new communication strategies to help address career aspirations for the wild-	Assistant Dean	Ongoing

	<p>type (genetic term) stream and other issues. More exploration with social media is being used to increase the penetration of messaging</p>		
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Faculty Response:

The AVP Academic, Faculty of Health Sciences noted in her report that she was “extremely gratified to see the recognition on the part of the reviewers of the myriad strengths of the program. These include: the deep commitment and camaraderie of faculty and staff in the program; the very positive and challenging environment experienced by the students who are encouraged to become aware and critical thinkers capable of grappling with increasing independence; the introduction of creative support structures to enable students to cope with the pressures of collaborative self-directed learning; and the continuous efforts to introduce and evaluate innovative pedagogical approaches.”

The AVP Academic further notes that the response from the assistant dean of the program “includes both an instructive discussion about the issue of grade inflation and students’ relationship to grades, as well as a systematic response to the key comments and recommendations made by the reviewers. These latter relate to the efficient use of resources and the need to protect the current program culture in the event of a three term program; quality enhancement suggestions related to stress and mental health, career options, and communication; issues of staff workload; and opportunities to increase interaction with the university generally, both at a student and at an instructional level.

The AVP Academic highlights that “the reviewers were intrigued by the potential for engagement with other parts of the university and adopting the “champion model for program leadership within the wider McMaster context”. There has long been discussion of how to scale up the innovative approaches adopted by the BHSc (and other signature programs e.g. Arts & Science and iSci) within the broader university. In the context of the ever-increasing attention to student experience and outcomes evident across all Faculties at McMaster, the opportunities for cross-fertilization abound. The BHSc program, through its current partnering with both Engineering and Business, is actively collaborating in these conversations. As the reviewers so aptly noted, such cross-fertilization requires “active engagement with core principles rather than potentially more superficial replication of structural elements – the distinction between what they term “core values/substance” and “surface-level features”.

Finally, the AVP Academic notes that the issue of leadership succession has been satisfactorily addressed with the selection of a new assistant dean as of July 1, 2015

Quality Assurance Committee Recommendation

That the Quality Assurance Committee recommends that the undergraduate Bachelor of Health Sciences (Honours) program should follow the regular course of action with an 18-month progress report that should provide additional commentary about what is further being done to help support issues of student mental health and wellness within the program. A subsequent full external cyclical review will be conducted no later than 8 years after the start of the last review.