

## Final Assessment Report

Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) Review  
Neuroscience Program (Graduate)

**Date of Review:** July 18-19, 2012

**Review Team Members:** Dr. Morris Moscovitch, University of Toronto  
Dr. Andrew Greenshaw, University of Alberta  
Dr. Steven Hanna, McMaster University

### Summary:

The Review Team's report recognized McMaster's strong commitment to interdisciplinary programs and research, including the Neuroscience Program. They noted is generally strong, has grown quickly, attracts excellent students, and has a group of well-funded and supportive research supervisors. The admissions requirements are appropriately aligned and the use of financial resources is very efficient. The report also highlights the effective teaching support received by students, particularly in research supervision and access to seminars and colloquia, and the significant valued-added component for scholarly exchange of ideas and resources with students from their supervisors' home departments.

The report identified some fundamental shortcomings within the program surrounding governance and consultation, which must be overcome in order for the program to sustain, grow and to reach its full potential. The reviewers also expressed concern about scope and depth of the core neuroscience course, and the range of courses available to students within the program. The Reviewers offered some suggestions which are listed below.

The Program, Faculty of Science, and the Faculty of Health Sciences appreciate the guidance the report offers and agree with the Reviewers for the need for a speedy solution to the more serious shortcomings in the governance and consultation of the program and strengthening the core neuroscience course. Their proposed implementation plan is summarized below.

The Quality Assurance Committee has completed a review of the report prepared for the Neuroscience Graduate Studies program as part of the IQAP process. While the Faculty has already taken a number of steps to address the concerns of the Reviewers, they are recommending a full external review of the Neuroscience program be held in 24 months to assess the progress being made.

Recommendation	Implementation Plan
Shorten the time-to completion for the PhD program to a target of 4.5 to 5 years	A decision will be made and reported back in the 18 month progress report.
Establish a Strategic Advisory Committee, a Curriculum Committee and an Admissions Committee	The committees will be created, will include student representation, and will meet regularly. The appropriate committee will develop a student

	handbook, ensure effective teaching assessment measurements are in place and will consider establishing additional graduate courses.
Establish regular meetings with the Lead Deans, the participating department chairs and program members (supervisors) to facilitate consultation	The Director will address the issues of communication and consultation and this will be measured in the next 18 month progress report.
Establish an Associate Director	The Associate Director was appointed in September. The Terms of Reference document for this position, and the Director position, describe the reporting, accountability and responsibilities of the Director and Associate Director
Ensure there is appropriate scope and depth in the core neuroscience course (Neuroscience 700)	The newly formed Curriculum Committee will be reviewing the course
Explore opportunities for future expansion in targeted areas such as clinical neuroscience research and bioclinical translational research activity	The Strategic Advisory and Curriculum committees will explore this recommendation.
The establishment of permanent administrative support and physical space	There are limitations on the ability to fulfill this recommendation however it will be explored.