

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review

School of Nursing (B.ScN, MN, PhD)

Date of Review: April 2 – 3, 2014

In accordance with McMaster's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the **School of Nursing (B.ScN, PhD) Programs**. 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 School of Nursing (B.ScN, MN, PhD) Cyclical Program Review

The McMaster **School of Nursing (B.ScN, MN, PhD) Program** is recognized by other Canadian Schools/Faculties of Nursing for leadership in undergraduate and graduate nursing education and the high caliber and output of nursing research. In accordance with the IQAP, the program submitted two individual reports: an undergraduate and a graduate self-study. The self-studies presented the program descriptions and learning outcomes, an analytical assessment of the program, including data collected from students 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 Program.

Two arm's-length reviewers, one from Ontario and one from Newfoundland, and one internal reviewer participated in a two-day site visit organized by the School of Graduate Studies in which they reviewed the undergraduate and graduate nursing programs jointly. The reviewers reported that the goals and priorities of the Nursing Programs at McMaster University are consistent with the University's mission and academic plan. Specifically the University's mission to "foster discovery, communication and preservation of knowledge through teaching, research and scholarship" is evident in the nursing program's reputation for problem-based learning and evidenced-based practices. Administrators, faculty, and staff members within McMaster University School of Nursing voiced their commitment to the school, their students, and their work. Overall, undergraduate students, at all three collaborative sites (McMaster University, Mohawk College, and Conestoga College), were positive about the program and their instructors, as were graduate students at McMaster University. However, it was noted that there is minimal inter-professional education within the program and given that McMaster University's School of Nursing is within a Faculty of Health Sciences, there are opportunities to strengthen this. The faculty and nursing administrators from all three sites said they had an effective committee structure for working together to develop, manage, and implement the undergraduate curriculum.

The following program strengths and weakness were also noted:

Strengths

- The school has unique programs, including highly successful collaborations between McMaster, Mohawk and Conestoga, that are highly recognized by the reviewers and other Canadian schools alike
- The programs have strong foundations based on problem-based and evidence-based learning
- The innovative “Kaleidoscope” curriculum has met with success through the first cycle
- Research is of high quality and is well recognized by the nursing community

Weaknesses

- The budget was identified as a key issue in the original report. This has largely been addressed in the follow-up, but funding will likely remain a key issue in on-going operations
- Faculty complement is at some degree of risk; this needs to be monitored closely
- The lack of extensive interprofessional education is identified as a key issue. Buy-in by the entire faculty will be needed in order for efforts in this direction to be truly successful
- The issue of common admission for Mohawk or Conestoga students is identified throughout the documents. Efforts to address this issue are on-going, and will need the collaborative input of several units, including the registrar’s office

Summary of the Reviewers’ Recommendations with the Department’s and Dean’s Responses & Follow Up Process

Recommendation #1: Develop a staffing plan for tenure stream positions that includes the percentage of theory courses in the undergraduate and graduate programs that are taught by tenure stream faculty members, as well as graduate student (thesis and PhD) supervision.

Response: During faculty career review meetings this spring the director of the School of Nursing determined an appropriate teaching load for all tenured faculty. This resulted in a minimal increase in teaching in the undergraduate nursing program. This will be an ongoing initiative for the School.

Responsibility for following up: Associate Dean

Timeline: Update at 18-month report

Recommendation #2: Evaluate work processes and workload of staff members to rationalize all positions.

Response: A proposed plan has been developed to enhance support provided to faculty with a reduced staff complement. This has yet to be implemented.

Responsibility for following up: Associate Dean

Timeline: Update at 18-month report

Recommendation #3: Clarify role of Assistant Dean of Research at McMaster University’s School of Nursing and how this role can best be used to meet research needs of beginning and midcareer faculty members.

Response: The terms of reference and function of this role will be evaluated and reassessed by the new Director of the School of Nursing.

Responsibility for following up: Associate Dean

Timeline: Update at 18-month report

Recommendation #4: Senior faculty members have just retired or are about to retire, reducing the expertise within the faculty to mentor new faculty members and supervise graduate students.

Response: The program agrees but has taken steps to try and address this concern. The program highlights the fact that there are mid-career researchers who are able to supervise students. SON has recommended three junior faculty for appointment in the graduate program to try and increase the numbers available to thesis committees. A large group of qualified and experienced 'clinical' faculty (adjunct) also serve as guest lecturers, on thesis committees, and as external examiners for masters and PhD students' oral defense sessions, scholarly paper reviews, or comprehensive examinations. While not included in the full- and part-time faculty numbers, the program states that these professionals enhance the high level of academic resources for our students.

Responsibility for following up: Associate Dean

Timeline: Update at 18-month report

Recommendation #5: Ensure stipends for PhD students especially if faculty members may not have a grant/have a grant under review.

Response: Under the new budget model, the Nursing Graduate Program has the opportunity to access Scholarship Funding which will increase the direct support for students through entrance or departmental scholarships, and reduce the funding needed from faculty grant support. These measures will enhance the future recruitment of PhD students.

Responsibility for following up: Associate Dean

Timeline: Update at 18-month report

Recommendation #6: Different streams are outlined in the calendar, however, courses related to these streams may not be offered because of low enrollment.

Response: The six fields described relate to the research expertise within the graduate faculty. A review of the fields has been discussed with the Nursing Graduate Faculty and a retreat is planned for September 2014 to review and consider revising them to areas of research excellence. Program has also developed cross listings with HRM and RS.

Responsibility for following up: Associate Dean

Timeline: Update at 18-month report

Recommendation #7: Increase simulation lab opportunities including time when the labs are available for students to practice outside of their allocated lab time at the McMaster University site.

Response: There are plans to extend the stimulation lab for undergraduate students. Senior students have also been hired as peer students to provide support to students in CSBL. The use of standardized patients is being reviewed. The AVP, Academic agrees and states that faculty leadership will encourage the nursing undergraduate program to develop its curriculum for simulation learning to ensure that opportunities and experiences and use of simulation facilities are optimized.

Responsibility for following up: Associate Dean

Timeline: Update at 18-month report

Recommendation #8: Students participate in clinical volunteer work in the community that is not supervised by clinical instructors during the first two years of the program.

Response: The program clarifies that in the first two years, this is not a volunteer experience but rather a service learning opportunity. Although a tutor is not present with the students, the program clarifies that the placements are carefully selected to meet course objectives and placement contacts are aware of the students' learning expectations.

Responsibility for following up: Associate Dean

Timeline: Update at 18-month report

Recommendation #9: Need to have a common admissions process for undergraduate students at all three collaborative sites.

Response: Program notes that Mohawk College has made a formal request to have their applicants use the University application system. Conestoga College has indicated that they do not wish to use this system and wish to stay with OCAS. Mohawk and McMaster are currently working with the McMaster registrar's office to move this forward process.

Responsibility for following up: Associate Dean

Timeline: Update at 18-month report

Recommendation #10: Monitor CNRE (or NCLEX starting in 2015) pass rates to determine impact of strengthened pre-health courses and common admission process.

Response: Program concurs that careful review of the impact of changes will be important.

Responsibility for following up: Associate Dean

Timeline: Update at 18-month report

Recommendation #11: Consider ways to improve cross institution transfer of information.

Response: SON is awaiting the full roll-out of MOSAIC prior to developing sustainable information transfer processes.

Responsibility for following up: Associate Dean

Timeline: Update at 18-month report

Recommendation #12: Interprofessional education (IPE) is minimal in the undergraduate program and can be enhanced at all three sites.

Response: The program concurs that this is an area that requires further development. Some steps that have already been taken to promote interprofessional education include:

- Nursing faculty member is on the planning group for Program for Interprofessional Practice, Education and Research.
- McMaster Interprofessional Student Collaborative (MISC) is a student-initiated group created as part of PIPER. They host a facebook page and Blog and plan IP events throughout the year.
- Curriculum mapping for IPE competencies was conducted in 2012, looking for opportunities to implement shared IPE experiences between all our health-related programs.
 - i.e. "Crisis on the Ward" SIMulation event that involves all Level 4 students from Practical Nursing and BScN, Respiratory Therapy and Paramedic programs.

The AVP, Academic agrees with this recommendation also and states that the Health Sciences Faculty leadership will work with the School and undergraduate nursing program to ensure there is a strong faculty lead for PIPER from the school to work on enhancing the IPE.

Responsibility for following up: Associate Dean

Timeline: Update at 18-month report

Recommendation #13: Feedback from undergraduate students at the three sites.

Response: Curriculum Quality Sustainability and Innovation Committee (CQSIC) reviews year end reports, which include student feedback and makes modifications to the expectations of individual courses as necessary. Faculty development offered throughout the year addresses issues of inconsistency among tutors.

Responsibility for following up: Associate Dean

Timeline: Update at 18-month report

Recommendation #14: Consider supporting access to the McMaster library resources for students at Conestoga College and Mohawk College.

Response: College site libraries were provided with funding to upgrade resources to University level when collaboration began. All college site students are registered as McMaster University students and have online access to McMaster University library resources. It is true however that they cannot access the librarians for support. Should all students enter through the University admissions process, this may change.

Responsibility for following up: Associate Dean

Timeline: Update at 18-month report

Recommendation #15: Consider bursaries for students who cannot afford to do an outpost or low income clinical experience in the 4th year of the course.

Response: The program suggests they might work with the advancement office to establish an ongoing bursary/scholarship program to support the students for this experience.

The AVP, Academic supports the program's plan to work with advancement so students may pursue an outpost or international clinical experience.

Responsibility for following up: Associate Dean

Timeline: Update at 18-month report

Quality Assurance Committee Recommendations

The School of Nursing has high quality programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels which are admired by other Schools in Canada. It is clear that considerable effort has already been placed on addressing the issues arising from the review. The committee therefore recommends that the next IQAP review occur on the regular cycle, subject to a satisfactory follow-up report after 18 months.