



**Huron Psychology**  
**Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan**  
**May 2024**

<b>Faculty / Affiliated University College</b>	Arts and Social Science, Huron University College	
<b>Degrees Offered</b>	B.A.	
<b>Date of Last Review</b>	2015-2016	
<b>Modules Reviewed</b>	Honours Specialization in Psychology Major in Psychology Minor in Psychology	
<b>External Reviewers</b>	Dr. Erin Austen, Department of Psychology St. Francis Xavier University	Dr. John Rempel, Department of Psychology St. Jerome's University
<b>Internal Reviewer</b>	Dr. Mark Yenson, Associate Academic Dean, King's University College	Morgan Helena Decampos Honours Specialization English Language & Literature
<b>Date of Site Visit</b>	February 28 & 29, 2024	
<b>Date Review Report Received</b>	March 26, 2024	
<b>Date Program/Faculty Response Received</b>	Program: April 19, 2024 Faculty: April 19, 2024	
<b>Evaluation</b>	Good Quality	
<b>Approval Dates</b>	SUPR-U: May 22, 2024 ACA: May 29, 2024 Senate (for information): June 7, 2024	
<b>Year of Next Review</b>	2031-2032	
<b>Progress Report</b>	June 2027	

### **Overview of Western’s Cyclical Review Assessment Reporting Process**

In accordance with Western’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a summary of the cyclical review, internal responses, and assessment and evaluation of the Huron Psychology Program delivered by the Faculty of Arts and Social Science, Huron University College.

This FAR considers the following documents:

- the program’s self-study brief;
- the external reviewers’ report;
- the response from the Program; and
- the response from the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, Huron.

This FAR identifies the strengths of the program and opportunities for program enhancement and improvement, and details the recommendations of the external reviewers – noting those recommendations to be prioritized for implementation.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the FAR that have been selected for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, specifies any action or follow-up that is required, and defines the timeline for completion.

The FAR (including Implementation Plan) is sent for approval through the Senate Undergraduate Program Review Committee (SUPR-U) and ACA, then for information to Senate and to the Ontario Universities’ Council on Quality Assurance. Subsequently, it is publicly accessible on Western’s IQAP website. The FAR is the only document from the undergraduate cyclical review process that is made public; all other documents are confidential to Huron’s Psychology Program, the Faculty of Arts and Social Science (Huron), and SUPR-U.

## **Executive Summary**

In place for over 40 years, the Huron Psychology program is designed to provide students of Psychology with the best possible grounding in foundational concepts and methods in the discipline. Over the four years of the program, the program strives to take students from a status of relative inexperience with the science of psychology and its different methodologies to a position of relative sophisticated independence in asking and answering significant questions within the discipline. The Huron Psychology program covers the basic fundamental experimental areas of Psychology (with an emphasis on behavioural approaches and research). An in-depth focus is on experimental methodology and research design with an emphasis on independent student research mentorship beginning in Year 1 which differentiates the program from other undergraduate Psychology programs. Total modular enrollments in 2022 were at 130, with total course enrollments in 2022-23 at 632. These figures represent an increase of approximately 40% since 2018.

To inform the self-study, the program hosted several dedicated departmental meetings/retreats to determine the approach for the review, to examine feedback collected for the review, and to complete a curriculum mapping exercise. Surveys were administered to current students and recent alumni and focus groups were held with the same groups.

The external reviewers shared a positive assessment of Huron's Psychology Program. They offer four recommendations with considerations for further enhancement.

## **Strengths and Innovative Features Identified by the Program**

- Curriculum is enriched by 1) significant experiential and community-based learning opportunities with a focus on “real-world” issues; 2) active research labs; 3) depth of focus on experimental psychology and research methods which prepares students for careers in experimental psychology, clinical psychology, counselling, social work, data analysis and graduate school.
  - One of the only programs to provide first-year students with substantive active engagement with methodology and statistics as a significant component of the course.
- A strong sense of community is fostered among students by ongoing engagement resulting from small class sizes, study groups, and social and academic events; faculty's participation in these events contributes to the active and vibrant community within this program.
  - Individualized attention to students fosters the development of critical thinking, curiosity, creativity, and leadership in the graduates and leads to measurably positive outcomes.
- Student feedback underscored the value of the personalized learning environment, the dedication of the faculty members, and the development of relevant research and writing skills.

- To further increase enrolment capacity and expand modular elective options, the department introduced two new half courses during this academic year and plans to introduce four new half courses next academic year.
- Since 2020, the program has held regular monthly “Decolonizing Psychology” discussions during the regular academic term with a focus on decolonizing or anti-colonial pedagogical and research approaches in Psychology.
- The tri-mentorship program featuring students in senior years, who serve as “learning facilitators” for a small group of first-year students.
- “Mini graduate experience” where students in certain modules must write a full thesis and defend that thesis before a departmental committee.
- High number of research publications that include students as contributing authors.

### **Concerns and Areas of Improvement Identified and Discussed by the Program**

- Increasing enrolment pressures in the last few years are creating workload demands for faculty that may unintentionally generate changes that affect the program environment.
- Students desire an increased breadth of course offerings in the program, in particular, more courses in clinical psychology, counselling psychology, health, and industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology.
- Students equally indicate a desire for increased opportunities to apply concepts and skills as well as better organization and communication of deadline dates and changes in assessment or structure to specific courses.
- Attract more students from equity-seeking groups; this would result in engagement with different perspectives and lived experiences in class discussions and more broadly in the program.
- Increased space allocation to the program would allow for the expansion of experiential learning activities and an increase in enrolment.
- Increasing opportunities for team or collaborative teaching for faculty in the program would facilitate flow of ideas between colleagues and promote the sense of continuity and connection between subareas of the discipline to students.

### **Review Process**

As part of the external review, the review committee, comprising two external reviewers, an internal reviewer and a student reviewer, were provided with Volume I and II of the self-study brief in advance of the scheduled review and then met in-person over two days with the:

- Vice-Provost (Academic Programs)
- Director of Academic Quality and Enhancement
- President, Huron University College
- Provost, and Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Science

- Registrar, Huron University College
- Director, Library and Learning Services
- Chair, Department of Psychology
- Administrative Staff
- Program Faculty
- Program Students

Following the virtual site visit, the external reviewers submitted a comprehensive report of their findings which was sent to the Program and Dean for review and response. Formative documents, including Volumes I and II of the Self-Study, the External Report, and the Program and Decanal responses form the basis of this Final Assessment Report (FAR) of Huron's Psychology Program. The FAR is collated and submitted to SUPR-U by the Internal Reviewer with the support of the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement.

### **Summative Assessment – External Reviewers' Report**

External reviewers shared that: *“Overall, the current program is exceptional in preparing undergraduate students for a career in research psychology. It is far stronger than most programs in teaching research methodology and statistics. We think the intentional scaffolding of research skills at each level of the program is commendable.”*

### **Strengths of the Program**

- Strong sense of community and a culture of engagement which is heightened by small classes.
- The faculty are committed to getting to know, and be available for, their students.
  - High levels of faculty collaboration required for co-teaching in the introductory psychology course promote further reflection on the program's quality.
- Meaningful partnerships within the university (e.g., Student Services) and community (e.g., daycares, Board of Education; City of London).
- Provision of strong research training (which is a high impact practice), and support for student research projects by helping them to access funding.
- Upper-level students who are trained to serve as mentors.
- High retention of students and evidence of increasing demand for the program.

### **Prospective Improvements for the Program to Consider**

- Increase in student enrolment could result in larger classes and heighten faculty workload; explore ways of managing workload by re-examining writing assignments, methodology aspects of the Introductory course, grading support, and course structure. (*Embedded in Recommendation #1*)

- Consider options for 1) increasing diversity in course offerings; and adding a core course in Psychopathology and one in clinical psychology. (*Embedded in Recommendation #2*)
  - Most Psychology undergraduate programs offer courses in Psychopathology and Clinical Psychology. This piece is missing from the Huron Psychology Department.
- Find ways to accommodate more thesis students. (*Embedded in Recommendation #3*).
- The program needs to have greater dedicated Lab and faculty office spaces. (*Embedded in Recommendation # 4*)
- Clearly communicate the math requirement for entry into the Honours Specialization.
- Students requested that information on 1) services offered by Academic Advising, Career Development unit be promoted more intentionally to students; 2) faculty's assistance in identifying transferable skills gained from the program.
- Where possible, faculty could find ways to integrate the student research that they supervise and support into their faculty research programs. Doing so could lead to publishable papers and contribute to helping move their research forward.

While the areas of improvement noted in the last three bullet points were not explicitly mentioned as part of the formal recommendations made by the external reviewers, they remain suggestions for consideration by the Program.

**Summary of the Reviewers’ Recommendations and Program/Faculty Responses**

The following are the reviewers’ recommendations in the order listed by the external reviewers.

<b>Reviewers’ Recommendation</b>	<b>Program/Faculty Response</b>
<p><b>Recommendation #1</b> Make some decisions about how to deal with enrolment pressures they are facing in a way that doesn’t compromise the quality of the program they currently offer.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The Program agrees that a faculty retreat facilitated by an external consultant with expertise in higher education and curriculum development would facilitate faculty’s discussion regarding developing a plan regarding this recommendation.</p> <p>The Department Chair will be responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organizing a full day Departmental Faculty Retreat with the goal to agree on a direction for the program to manage enrolment pressures over the next 3-5 years;</li> <li>• developing a plan to achieve the specified goals (discussed and decided at the Faculty Retreat); and</li> <li>• Monitoring of course enrolments and the effects of workload structure on faculty and student outcomes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Department has a solid plan to facilitate brainstorming on this important question and The Dean’s Office is providing funds to enable it.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #2</b> Decide how to deal with student requests for increased course diversity within the Program.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The Program agrees that more courses related to psychopathology/clinical psychology should be added to further course development.</p> <p>The planned Faculty Retreat in June would focus on suggestions regarding future course proposals and how faculty workload might accommodate the addition of a new slate of courses within the program.</p> <p>The Department Chair will 1) initiate discussion and organize ongoing meetings to discuss new course options; 2) work on submitting new set of course proposals to Senate for approval, aiming for enrolment commencing Fall 2027, should new courses be an agreed-upon approach; 3) facilitate annual discussions of new course proposals.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Department has a solid plan to facilitate brainstorming on this important question and the Dean’s Office is providing funds to enable it.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation #3</b> Identify ways to accommodate student demand for thesis projects.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The suggested options provided by the reviewers are helpful considerations regarding the supervision of thesis students and accommodating the workload required to successfully mentor thesis students to completion. Some faculty have adopted the suggested approach of assigning students to faculty research projects. Regarding the suggestion of <i>offering thesis credit through an upper-level lab course where students are supported to conduct original research projects as individuals or in small groups with the support of the course instructor(s)</i>. This is not seen as viable as it would require an entirely different course structure and potentially a revision of the course calendar description. The suggestion to co-supervise with other faculty at Huron has been adopted on a case-by-case basis this year (i.e., when student project ideas match the expertise of two different faculty). Although the workload issues related to this approach are not yet clear (this is the first year it was attempted), the Program has noted its potential to further build community and connectedness within the program.</p> <p>The Department Chair will: 1) organize discussions between June 2024 and June 2026 for Psychology faculty members responsible for thesis supervision to explore ways of making supervision more efficient; 2) continue to monitor and assess workload distributions for faculty who are supervising thesis projects and will revisit this annually.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Dean’s Office supports the Department’s response and indicated willingness to discuss adding teaching resources to the department as needed in the form of a full-time “program sessional” appointment or additional per course contract faculty.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #4</b> Ensure that individual Psychology Faculty Research Programs are supported.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> In acknowledgement of the space constraints at Huron, the program currently has no specific requests beyond maintaining the research and office space already available to the program. The program is committed to collegial, ongoing discussions regarding space needs with the Provost/Dean as program needs evolve.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The issue of space is a fraught one at Huron as there are many competing demands. The program’s current allocation of lab space is adequate to meet their needs. The Dean’s Office welcomes discussions in the event that new needs arise.</p>



**Implementation Plan**

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. In each case, the Program Chair, and the Dean of the Faculty are responsible for enacting and monitoring the actions noted in the Implementation Plan.

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
<p><b>Recommendation #1</b> Make some decisions about how to deal with enrolment pressures they are facing in a way that doesn't compromise the quality of the program they currently offer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize a full day Departmental Faculty Retreat in June 2024 dedicated to the management of enrolment pressures.</li> <li>• Develop a plan to achieve the specified goals resulting from the Faculty Retreat; which would be presented to the Psychology faculty members in Fall 2024, with prospective implementation scheduled for the 2025-26 academic year.</li> <li>• Monitor course enrolments and the effects of workload structure on faculty and student outcomes on an annual basis.</li> </ul>	<p>Department Chair</p>	<p>Plan by January 2025 Implementation in 2025-26</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #2</b> Decide how to deal with student requests for increased course diversity within the Program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate and manage discussion regarding new course options from a dedicated June meeting through to Fall 2026.</li> <li>• For agreed upon new courses, submit course proposals to Senate for approval, aiming for enrolment commencing Fall 2027.</li> <li>• Facilitate annual discussions regarding new course proposals.</li> </ul>	<p>Department Chair</p>	<p>By Sept 2026</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #3</b> Identify ways to accommodate student demand for thesis projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore ways of making supervision more effective with faculty members at upcoming departmental retreats.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Outline favorable approaches to prioritize.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Continue to monitor workload distributions for faculty who are supervising thesis projects.</li> <li>• Explore adding a full-time “program sessional” appointment or additional per course contract faculty, as needed.</li> </ul>	<p>Department Chair  Dean's Office</p>	<p>By Sept 2024 (revisit annually)</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #4</b> Ensure that individual Psychology Faculty Research Programs are supported.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the research and office space already available to the program.</li> <li>• Review space needs annually and bring forward any new needs to the Dean's Office.</li> </ul>	<p>Department Chair</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>