

Ongoing Improvement Progress Report

Instructions and Report Template

As part of the protocols outlined in Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), to facilitate the continuous improvement of academic programs between review cycles, in connection with the Final Assessment Report (FAR) and Implementation Plan, a monitoring process will include an Ongoing Improvement Progress Report. The outcomes of this report will be considered as part of the program's next cyclical review.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the operationalization of the implementation plan following a Cyclical Program Review (or the review of a New Program). This should include a brief summary of actions taken by the Program and the Dean's Office since the completion of the review (usually about three years), as well as an update on the stage of implementation for all applicable items. These include:

- whether the action item(s) are in progress, complete or no longer applicable (with a brief explanation);
- the timelines of each item and how they are progressing or expected to progress, particularly if they are diverting from original timelines in the FAR and Implementation Plan, and;
- a short description of any other program developments and improvements that have taken place following the review.
- For new programs only, an evaluation of the initial administration and resourcing of the program.

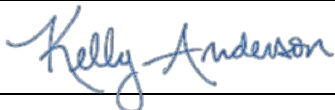

The following report template has been created for the program to report on progress made regarding recommendations presented in the Implementation Plan, and any other relevant program developments and enhancements.

- The program will complete the template and submit it to the faculty Dean's Office for sign-off.
- The program will then submit the completed Ongoing Improvement and Progress Report to the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement (OAQE). Reports are due by June 30.
 - The OAQE will present all Ongoing Improvement and Progress Reports to SUPR-U/G for approval. Approvals, or any follow-up questions/concerns, will be communicated to the program and Dean's Office by the OAQE.
 - It should be noted that as per the requirements of the province's Quality Council, progress reports will be posted on the [reports page](#) of the OAQE website.

Ongoing Improvement Progress Report

Epidemiology & Biostatistics, MSc, PhD / Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry

Program	Epidemiology & Biostatistics, MSc, PhD	Faculty / Affiliated University College	Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry
Approval Dates of the Review	SUPR-G: Feb 22, 2021 SCAPA: March 3, 2021 Senate: March 12, 2021	Year of the Next Review	2027-2028
Link to the Programs Final Assessment Report (FAR)	https://www.uwo.ca/pvp/vpacademic/iqap/academic_programs/iqap_reports/schulichgrad/2020%20Epidemiology%20and%20Biostatistics%20Program%20Review.pdf		
If applicable, submission of follow-up report(s)	<i>Not applicable</i>		

	Name	Signature	Date
Program Chair/Director	Kelly Anderson		June 19, 2023
Dean (or delegate)	Thomas Drysdale		June 19, 2023

Progress Update on the Implementation Plan

Recommendation #1	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
<p>While the learning outcomes are well articulated, and follow the Ontario GDLEs, it may also be useful to examine to what extent the program’s objectives and learning outcomes map themselves on to the competencies that the Epidemiology and Biostatistics graduates ought to demonstrate by the end of their studies as they enter the job market. Whereas the program excels at developing all required cognitive competencies related to the field, consideration might also be given to diversify the “professional capacity/autonomy” training by more formally targeting emotional intelligence, leadership, relationships and communication skills.</p>	<p>Department to restart and continue the process of developing LOs for master’s students by the end of the program specifically focusing on professional capacity and autonomy.</p>	<p>Department Chair Graduate Chair Graduate Affairs Committee</p>	<p>Spring 2022</p>
<p>Recommendation Implemented</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially</p> <p>If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>			
<p>Progress</p> <p>As requested by the external reviewers, we have expanded and more clearly articulated the learning outcomes related to professional capacity/autonomy. Please see the updated learning outcomes in Appendix A.</p>			
<p>Next Steps (if applicable): <i>Not applicable</i></p>			
<p>Additional Comments: <i>Not applicable</i></p>			

Continuous Program Enhancement

What additional initiatives or changes has the program been working on in relation to continuous program improvement?

- **Part-Time PhD:** We have introduced a part-time option for our PhD programs, aimed at making PhD studies accessible for the non-typical PhD applicant. This will provide an opportunity for practicing clinicians and other professionals who want to gain new skills and expand their current research focus.
- **Collaborative Specialization Program in Machine Learning in Health and Biomedical Sciences:** Our department signed a memorandum of understanding to enable our graduate students to participate in this new collaborative specialization program, and we have already had uptake by several students. The need for training in this area was highlighted by the external reviewers in last IQAP review.
- **MD+ Program:** Our graduate program joined the MD+ program, which provides undergraduate medical trainees with opportunities to pursue graduate training to complement their MD degree.
- **PhD Comprehensive Exam Redesign:** We undertook an extensive review and redesign of our PhD comprehensive exam process to move away from a two-day written exam towards an exam format that is tailored to the research area of each student. The new exam process involves a critical methodological review of the prior literature relevant to the student's dissertation topic, and sets the foundation for developing the PhD proposal.
- **Clinical Epidemiology and Research Management Advanced Health Care Practice Master's Program:** In collaboration with the Faculty of Health Sciences, we now offer a course-based master's program in clinical epidemiology targeted to health professionals. The need for a program of this kind was highlighted by the external reviewers in our last IQAP review.
- **MSc Stipend Review:** We engaged in a departmental review of our MSc stipend policies, following the decision to remove the minimum funding levels for MSc students (implemented the 2018-2019 academic year). A MSc stipend working group was developed with an aim to: (i) increase transparency around allocation of MSc student funding; (ii) develop department policies and procedures to increase consistency across students; and (iii) explore creative uses of existing resources to increase equity in the distribution of funding. The working group developed a series of recommendations, which resulted in changes to our admissions processes, department policies and practices around stipend "claw back", and OGS allocations.
- **EpiBio Student Research Day:** The department student society organized an inaugural EpiBio Student Research Day, with the support of the department, with participation by 65 graduate and undergraduate students in the department. We anticipate that this will become an annual event.

APPENDIX A – Modifications to program-level learning outcomes in the domain of professional capacity/autonomy.

Master’s Level

Ontario Graduate Degree Level Expectations	Program-level Learning Outcomes	How does the program support achievement of each GDLE?	How does the program evaluate the achievement of each GDLE?
		Describe teaching methods and support activities	Describe Assessments
Professional Capacity/Autonomy	Practice professionalism through ethics, including maintaining high standards of data quality and reporting, adhering to research ethics principles, and respecting contributions to scholarship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program/faculty orientation and workshops throughout the term (e.g. academic integrity, TCPS2) • Course work (e.g. coverage of reporting guidelines, case-based discussions) • Supervisor support and mentorship (e.g. REB process, thesis supervision) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of required training, including submission of a TCPS2 certificate • Course work assessment • Thesis writing (e.g. attention to ethical requirements, appropriate attribution of scholarly work)
	Identify special considerations for working with vulnerable or marginalized populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and discussion of articles and case studies chosen to reflect vulnerable populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course work assessment • Thesis
	Develop skills in critical thinking, problem solving, and independent learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor support for expanding beyond course content in independent projects and for problem solving • Supervisor support and mentorship for thesis development and troubleshooting • Support from <i>Learning Development & Success</i> centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course work assessment (e.g. critical appraisal) • Thesis • Feedback from supervisors and advisory committee members

PhD Level

Ontario Graduate Degree Level Expectations	Program-level Learning Outcomes	How does the program support achievement of each GDLE?	How does the program evaluate the achievement of each GDLE?
		Describe teaching methods and support activities	Describe Assessments
Professional Capacity/Autonomy	Practice professionalism through ethics, including maintaining high standards of data quality and reporting, adhering to research ethics principles, and respecting contributions to scholarship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program/faculty orientation and workshops throughout the term (e.g. academic integrity, TCPS2) • Course work (e.g. coverage of reporting guidelines, case-based discussions) • Supervisor support and mentorship (e.g. REB process, thesis supervision) • <i>Own Your Future</i> workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of required training, including submission of a TCPS2 certificate • Course work assessment • Thesis writing (e.g. attention to ethical requirements, appropriate attribution of scholarly work)
	Incorporate special considerations for working with vulnerable or marginalized populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and discussion of articles and case studies chosen to reflect vulnerable populations • Instruction on the study design considerations and novel methods to conduct analyses on special populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course work assessment • Thesis proposal • Dissertation
	Work autonomously and collaboratively as part of a multidisciplinary team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group project work in some core courses • Preparation for comprehensive exam (combination of group and independent study) • Interaction with supervisor and advisory committee members • <i>Own Your Future</i> workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course work assessment (e.g. participation, group evaluations) • Mentorship and feedback from supervisors and advisory committee members

	<p>Apply skills in critical thinking, problem solving, and independent learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instructor support for expanding beyond course content in independent projects and for problem solving ● Supervisor support and mentorship for thesis development and troubleshooting ● Support from <i>Learning Development & Success</i> centre ● <i>Own Your Future</i> workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Course work assessment (e.g. critical appraisal) ● Comprehensive exam ● Thesis ● Feedback from supervisors and advisory committee members
	<p>Engage in professional development opportunities to acquire and articulate the skills and competencies necessary for a career in academia or beyond, including: career engagement, communication and relationship building, leadership, thriving, teaching and learning, and intercultural and social fluency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Own Your Future</i> workshops (<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mentorship and feedback from supervisors and advisory committee members