

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- whether the action item(s) are in progress, complete or no longer applicable (with a brief explanation);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.


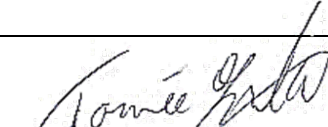
The following report template has been created for the program to report on progress made regarding recommendations presented in the Implementation Plan, and any other relevant program developments and enhancements.

- 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

Research for Policy and Evaluation, MA / Faculty of Social Science

Program	Research for Policy and Evaluation, MA	Faculty / Affiliated University College	Faculty of Social Science
Approval Dates of the Review	SUPR-G: March 25, 2020 SCAPA: April 1, 2020 Senate: April 17, 2020	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/social_sciences_grad/2020%20Research%20for%20Policy%20and%20Evaluation%20Program%20Review.pdf		
If applicable, submission of follow-up report(s)	<i>Not applicable</i>		

	Name	Signature	Date
Program Chair/Director	Victoria Esses		June 6, 2023
Dean (or delegate)	Jamie Baxter		6 June 2023

Progress Update on the Implementation Plan

Recommendation #3	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Adopt policy statement that aims to build inclusive backgrounds and perspectives within student body, including a blend of recent graduates and those drawn from the work force.	Include the statement in all materials and outreach for the program and include in program specification going forward to for final approval.	Associate Dean Graduate Program Director	Before start of program in Sept 2020
<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><i>What specific actions have been taken?</i></p> <p>This statement has been included in all program materials since our launch: e.g., https://nest.uwo.ca/graduate/index.html https://grad.uwo.ca/admissions/programs/program.cfm?p=285</p> <p>“Through courses and a four-month internship, the program focuses on collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and communicating research for practical applications. The emphasis is on developing quantitative and qualitative research skills for practical applications</p>			

outside of academia. We aim to build an inclusive student body in terms of background and perspective, including a blend of recent graduates and those drawn from the workforce.”

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up? N/A

Additional Comments If applicable

Recommendation #4	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Internship Coordinator should be full-year appointment with intensive involvement in the full year Internship course.	Ensure job description of internship coordinator addresses the need for full-year support and appoint the internship coordinator.	Dean Associate Dean, Graduate Program Director	Fill the position by Summer 2020

Recommendation Implemented

Yes No Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? Yes No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

A full-time internship coordinator was hired in July 2020 and has been in this position since that time, participating in the Internship Course each fall and winter term, setting up internships for our students, and managing the internships over the course of the summer (e.g., learning outcomes, monthly reflections, meetings with internship supervisors, capstone presentations).

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

Additional Comments *If applicable*

Recommendation #5	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Hold retreat before classes begin in September.	explore this possibility and determine whether it is feasible, depending on arrival dates for incoming students.	Program Director Internship Coordinator	Begin process in summer 2020

Recommendation Implemented

Yes No Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? Yes No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

A full retreat before classes begin in September was not deemed feasible because many of our students each year are from outside of London who do not arrive here until right before classes begin. Instead, each fall, in the week that classes begin we hold an orientation session of 1.5-2 hours for the new students in the program. The goal is to provide a warm welcome to the program, have the students get to know each other and the instructors and staff, and present the many opportunities available to them through the Network for Economic and Social Trends over the course of the year.

Next Steps (if applicable)

The orientation session will be adjusted as needed from one year to the next based on informal feedback from students

Additional Comments

This is listed as “partially” in the sense that the full expectation of a “retreat” was deemed infeasible. The orientation session has already been implemented in fall 2022 and 2023

Recommendation #6	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Launch Brown Bag series.	Utilize the existing colloquia organized by the Network for Economic and Social Trends (NEST) and its six Centres.	Program Director	Prior to September 2020

All items corresponding with the row above to be populated by the OAQE

Recommendation Implemented

Yes No Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? Yes No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

Each fall the students in the program are told about the opportunity to attend colloquia and distinguished lectures given in the Network for Economic and Social Trends and its 8 participating centres. In addition, the students receive the emails that announce each of these lectures and accompanying activities (e.g., opportunities to meet with speakers).

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

Additional Comments

If applicable

Recommendation #7	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
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Set up contact person from supporting faculty for the student's internships.	Program Director to consult with Dean (regarding potential workload implications) and faculty members.	Dean Department Chair Program Director Program Faculty Members	Prior to Summer Term 2021
<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><i>What specific actions have been taken?</i></p> <p>The Director of the program and the Internship Coordinator are the main contacts for the students during their internships. If questions arise for which advice would be useful from other faculty members in the program, these other faculty members are also willing to confer with the students and offer advice.</p>			
<p>Next Steps (if applicable)</p> <p><i>What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?</i></p>			
<p>Additional Comments</p> <p><i>If applicable</i></p>			

Recommendation #8	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Revisit course titles.	Explore the possibility of revamping the course titles and descriptions as recommended.	Program Director Program Faculty Members	Begin process in summer 2020.
<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><i>What specific actions have been taken?</i></p> <p>Two course titles have been changed. <i>Qualitative Research Methods</i> is now <i>Qualitative Research Methods and Data Collection</i>; <i>Collating and Communicating Research</i> is now <i>Knowledge Mobilization</i>. Course descriptions of all courses have been revamped since the start of the program to best meet the needs of the students.</p>			
<p>Next Steps (if applicable)</p> <p><i>What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?</i></p>			
<p>Additional Comments</p> <p><i>If applicable</i></p>			

Recommendation #9	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Adjust NEST mandate to include the goal to “train the next generation of applied public policy researchers.”	Will be revised to include the goal of training the next generation of applied researchers.	NEST Director NEST Administrative Assistant	Prior to September 2020.
<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><i>What specific actions have been taken?</i></p> <p>The NEST mandate was revised in the summer of 2020 to include the goal of training the next generation of policy researchers: see https://nest.uwo.ca/</p> <p>“Train the next generation of leaders for the academic world, for local, national and international government, and for the private and non-profit sectors;”</p>			
<p>Next Steps (if applicable)</p> <p><i>What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?</i></p>			

Additional Comments *If applicable*

Note: The total number of expandable text boxes will be dependent on the number of prioritized recommendations appearing in the program's most recent Final Assessment Report (FAR).

Continuous Program Enhancement

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

Because our students are not eligible for OSAP or traditional scholarships, a new set of bursaries has been set up for our students. They are currently eligible for 6 MRPE program bursaries at a value of \$6,000 each. There are 4 bursaries available for domestic students and 2 available for international students. We are hoping to have the bursary applications open in the spring to help increase student acceptance rates. With a recent increase in tuition for the program, the Faculty will explore the possibility of growing the number of bursaries as program enrolments grow.

We have been working on recruitment strategies and will be marketing the program through CanadaLand.com starting in the fall. We have also used Google Ads and hope to run that campaign again. These efforts have contributed to success in meeting enrolment targets as described below.

Finally, the program was set up based on our background research as to the needs of potential employers of our students, and the type of research skills they are looking for. We are continuing to monitor the needs and expectations of potential employers to tailor course content so that the Program is aligned with the job market.

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For New Programs Only:

Update on Initial Administration of the Program Report on the following items:	
<i>Appropriateness of Program Leadership</i>	<p>The MRPE has benefited from expert leadership from the Director (Vicki Esses). She has responded to all the external reviewer concerns and serves our students very well in terms of meeting the learning objectives, securing instructors each year, and making minor adjustments to adapt to the changing landscape (e.g., COVID). The Alumni – Where are they now? webpage is one example of how the Director and Program are making excellent strides to attract new students to MRPE.</p>
<i>Adequacy of Administrative Support</i>	<p>We are fortunate to have Leha Huffman serving as the Program Administrator and Michele Manocchi as the Internship Coordinator. Along with the Director, these two more than adequately serve the needs of the MRPE students.</p>
<i>Adequacy of Resource Allocation (e.g., staffing, financial)</i>	<p>MRPE is currently well-resourced with the Director and two staff. In terms of space, the student room and (NEST) kitchen/lounge are used as work space and cohort-building social space and there are currently adequate quiet spaces and group meeting spaces for students to meet their learning objectives. These resources were designed to serve a cohort of about 30 students.</p> <p>The biggest resourcing challenge the Program faces concerns elective courses provided from the existing roster of graduate courses in each of the Departments. Some</p>

	<p>departments have been inflexible in terms of graduate course offerings and enrolment caps such that students get turned away at the 11th hour from courses offered to be available. While those offers may be conditional/tentative, the Dean’s office is aware of the problem and will be taking steps to foster a Faculty-wide culture of teamwork concerning electives including through Graduate Council and Chair’s meetings.</p>
<i>Achievement of Program Objectives</i>	<p>The program is achieving its objectives to, “develop quantitative and qualitative research skills for practical applications outside of academia” and, “build an inclusive student body in terms of background and perspective, including a blend of recent graduates and those drawn from the workforce.” While MRPE has attracted students who are already in the workforce, that number is relatively small compared to those who come straight out of an undergraduate degree. The internship objectives have been met through relationships with over 20 employers, with a few of those offering more than one internship (e.g., Department of Justice). While the program informally tracks alumni through LinkedIn connections with the Director and Internship Coordinator, the program is looking to formalize this alumni network with an MRPE LinkedIn account.</p>
<i>Achievement of Enrolment Targets</i>	<p><i>The enrollment targets are being met. The programs started during the pandemic with 5 students in 2020/21, then 8 in 2021/22, 14 in 2022/23, and is on track to receive 23 in 2023/24. We are on track to reach or exceed our goal of 30 students as early as the 2024/25 admission cycle.</i></p>
<i>Other</i>	<p>We are very proud of the MRPE as an interdisciplinary pan-faculty program with tight links to the Network for Economic and Social Trends (NEST).</p>