



Quality Assurance Cyclical Program Review

Faculty of Natural Resources Management - Master of Science in Forestry (MScF) and Doctor of Philosophy in Forest Sciences (PhD)

Executive Summary and Implementation Plan

April 2017

In accordance with the Lakehead University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) and the Ontario Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), the Faculty of Natural Resources Management (NRM) submitted a self-study (October 2012). Volume 1 presented the program descriptions and outcomes, an analytical assessment of their programs and program metrics including results from a student survey along with institutional information and statistical data. Volumes 2 and 3, respectively, provided a collection of the program course outlines and the CV's for each full-time member in the Faculty.

Two external reviewers and one internal reviewer, selected by the Senate Academic Quality Assurance Sub-committee (SAC-QA) from a set of proposed reviewers, examined the materials and completed a two-day site visit in March 2013. The visit included interviews with the Vice-President (Research, Economic Development and Innovation), Deputy Provost, Dean of the Faculty of Natural Resources Management, Manager of Graduate Studies, Coordinator and Acting Coordinator of the programs, core faculty, technical and support staff and the University Librarian. The Review Team also had an opportunity to visit University facilities (e.g. the Library, laboratories and other teaching spaces), tour the Centre for Northern Forest Ecosystem Research and meet with alumni and current students.

In their report, submitted April 2013, the Review Team provided feedback that describes how the MScF and PhD programs meet the IQAP and QAF evaluation criteria and are consistent with the University's mission and academic priorities. They reported that the admission standards, curriculum structure and delivery, and teaching and assessment methods are appropriate, reflect the current state of the discipline, and are effective in preparing graduates to meet defined outcomes and the University's Graduate Degree Level Expectations (DLE's). The Review Team highlighted that the MScF and PhD (Forest Sciences) programs are supported by a strong faculty research and scholarly record, an active, high-calibre laboratory environment, highly specialized, advanced topics and effective collaborations. The reviewers also commended the programs on graduation rates and time to completion and suggested that they continue to compile

and closely monitor graduate student exit surveys. The NRM Faculty are actively engaged in the regional communities, industry and government as well as with alumni. The Faculty has adequate support staff, technical support, academic services and physical resources for effective delivery of the program. The Review Team encouraged NRM Faculty to explore ways to improve coordination, build a sense of community and further enhance the programs. In addition, the Review Team provided recommendations with supporting rationale for future consideration.

The Review Team identified areas for improvement through recommendations regarding some programming changes, admission standards, and financial support of international students.

The Coordinators of the Programs, in consultation with the Dean of Natural Resources Management, submitted a response to the Reviewer's Report (June 2014). Clarifications and corrections were presented followed by a response to each of the recommendations made by the Review Team.

A Final Assessment Report (FAR) has been prepared to provide a synthesis of the external evaluation and internal response to the recommendations. This report identifies the significant strengths of the programs, the opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The Implementation Plan identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the FAR; who will be responsible for providing any resources made necessary by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations; who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

Programs covered by this cyclical review:

- Masters of Science in Forestry
- Doctor of Philosophy in Forest Sciences

Implementation Plan (Part A): Departmental Responsibilities

| Recommendation | Proposed Follow-up | Responsibility* | Timeline |
|--|--|--|---------------|
| Enhance coordination of program development and delivery | <p>Re-establish Graduate Studies Committee to address items including, but not limited to, the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarify LO's and assessment protocols for Special topics course 2. improve awareness around student, staff, faculty and administrator roles and responsibilities 3. identify and support social institutions that are essential for building a sense of community 4. consider merging administrative responsibilities of the two coordinators 5. improve effectiveness of communications with students from registration to graduation 6. consider a new course-based Masters program 7. rationalize existing and new fields in the PhD | Chair of the Graduate Program; Dean of NRM | December 2016 |
| Establish stronger working relationship with Faculty of Graduate Studies | <p>Address items such as, but not limited to, the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. student communications 2. student funding 3. administration of student records 4. support and management of international students | Chair of the Graduate Program; Dean of NRM | December 2016 |
| Maintain (formalize?) connection to alumni | <p>Track employment of graduates</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. quality assessment 2. marketing purposes 3. potential for participation in programming/research. | Chair of the Graduate Program; Dean of NRM; Alumni Association | June 2017 |

Implementation Plan (Part B): Decanal & Administration Responsibilities

| Recommendation | Proposed Follow-up | Responsibility* | Timeline |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|
| Secure faculty renewal | Part of annual budget planning cycle | Dean of NRM | Annual |

*The Dean of the Faculty, in consultation with the Program Chairs shall be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan. The details of progress made will be presented in the Deans' Annual Reports and filed in the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic).