



## Executive Summary and Implementation Plan

### Quality Assurance – Cyclical Program Review

#### Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences - Master of Public Health

December 2014

In accordance with the Lakehead University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) the Department of Health Sciences submitted a self-study in November 2013. Volume 1 presented the program description and outcomes, an analytical assessment of the program and the program descriptors 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 and adjunct faculty member involved in the program.

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 site visit on 9-10 April 2014. The visit included interviews with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Dean of the Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences, Chair of the Department of Health Sciences, Graduate Coordinator for the program, Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Manager – Graduate Studies, Associate Dean (Research, Economic Development and Innovation), full-time and adjunct faculty, students in the program (2 of which joined by WebEx), the Head Librarian, and the Administrative Coordinator for the program. The Review Team visited the classrooms, laboratories, research assistant space, faculty and administrative offices as well as the University Library.

In their report (May 2014), the Review Team provided feedback that describes how the Masters in Public Health program meets the Quality Assurance Framework evaluation criteria and is consistent with the University's mission and academic priorities. The Review Team 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.

The Review Team noted the following program strengths:

- Largest graduate program on campus therefore makes an important contribution to maintaining student enrolment and supporting the academic plan.
- A flexible program together with the distance learning option has attracted applicants from across the country and from a variety of disciplines.

- Including professional experience as part of applicant review has resulted in a diversity of perspectives in each class.
- The design and delivery of the practicum ensures that students have a valuable experience that encourages development of job-ready skills. Hosting organizations also benefit.
- The “Flex-time” delivery model is a significant innovation resulting in high demand and top quality applicants.
- Course content and structure (e.g. streams in Gerontology and Epidemiology) are innovative.
- Use of technology for delivery and interaction by teaching staff is effective and evolving.
- Student retention rates are high and times to completion, including within the flex option, are on target.
- Faculty members have strong research profiles and productivity with diverse disciplinary backgrounds.

The Review Team provided feedback and recommendations for the Department identifying the following opportunities for improvement:

- Institute regular review of course syllabi to ensure consistency and currency especially with respect to Learner Outcomes.
- Consider more deliberate inclusion of Aboriginal and International health issues
- Consider opportunities for a version of the program designed to accommodate International students.
- Ensure training of teaching staff to take full advantage of available web-conferencing/teaching technology.
- Determine cost-effective strategy to retain WebEx (or another visual) meeting software.
- Increasing numbers of practicum placements may lead to operational challenges with their management; need to manage human resources to support this important task.
- Consider holding an in-person, on-campus orientation for all students.
- Foster development of relationships among incoming students to support future learning by enhancing opportunities for online and/or in-person discussions/meetings.

The Chair of the Department of Health Sciences, in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator of the Masters in Public Health program, departmental colleagues and the Dean of the Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences, submitted a response to the Reviewers’ Report (June 2014). Specific recommendations were discussed, and clarifications and corrections presented.

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 program, 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 Final Assessment Report; 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:

Master of Public Health

## Implementation Plan: Department of Health Sciences and Decanal Follow-up responsibilities

Suggestion/ Recommendation	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up*	Timeline
Develop a standard course outline for teaching staff	The departmental Curriculum Committee will address this as part of its ongoing review	DHS Curriculum Committee; Graduate coordinator MPH	August 2015
Establish opportunities for international students	Continue discussion regarding appropriate opportunities for expansion to include international students	DHS Curriculum Committee; Graduate coordinator MPH	August 2015
Review curriculum to identify additional opportunities to include global, Aboriginal, northern health issues	The departmental Curriculum Committee will address this as part of its ongoing review	DHS Curriculum Committee	August 2015
Ensure maintenance of WebEx (or comparable) software for program delivery	Meet with TSC to clarify options including funding	Director TSC, Dean FHBS, Chair DHS	August 2015
Enhance competence of all teaching staff in distance course delivery	Encourage teaching staff to utilize existing training opportunities; work with CEDL to develop specific training modules for best practices for the MPH program.	Director CEDL, Chair DHS	August 2015
Ensure that expansion of placement opportunities does not negatively impact quality of the experience for students or partners	Monitor impact of increased number of curriculum placements on existing staff resources; develop alternate management model if necessary	Administrative Coordinator MPH, Chair Department of Health Sciences	August 2015
Enhance opportunities for student/student and	Consider in-person, on-campus orientation for all students; use existing technology to	DHS Curriculum Committee; Graduate	August 2015

student/teaching staff communication	promote development of relationships for future learning	coordinator MPH, Chair Department of Health Sciences	
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\*The Dean of the Faculty, in consultation with the Department Chair 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).