



University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP) Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan

Program(s):	Psychology, B.Sc., Hons.: Specialist, Major; Minor Psychology Research, B.Sc., Hons.: Specialist Environment and Behaviour: Minor <i>Note: review of undergraduate programs only</i>
Division/Unit:	Department of Psychology
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Dr. Michael Ross, Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Waterloo2. Dr. John Lydon, Professor, Department of Psychology, McGill University3. Dr. Howard Nusbaum, Professor and former Chair, Department of Psychology, The University of Chicago
Date of review visit:	April 2-3, 2012
Date reported to AP&P:	April 16, 2013

1 Outcome

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that there were no issues to be drawn to the attention of the Agenda Committee but requested a follow up report in two years concerning how the Department has managed enrollment pressures, including steps to decrease the number of students while increasing the complement.

2 Significant Program Strengths

- Excellent quality of applicants and students
- The high quality faculty, with strengths in the areas of cognition and neuroscience
- World-class nature of the Psychology Research Specialist program

3 Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement

The reviewers recommended that the following be considered:

- Addressing the very high undergraduate enrolment relative to the number of available teaching staff, which limit students' access to courses, opportunities for active learning, and engagement with peers and faculty in and out of class
- Adding an honours thesis to the Specialist program in Psychology, since this is often required for admission to top-tier graduate programs
- Focusing on development and personality/abnormal psychology areas, which are commonly part of the undergraduate curriculum; the Department's current focus on cognition and neuroscience means that these areas risk being neglected
- Providing additional advising to help students navigate undergraduate program options and requirements and when applying to graduate programs

4 Implementation Plan

The Dean undertook in consultation with the Department to support the following changes:

- Immediate Term (6 months)
 - Managing undergraduate enrolment
 - The Dean's Office and Department will focus on admission streams, admission intakes and enrollment controls on programs, increasing faculty and rectifying a technical glitch with ROSI that led to over-subscription
 - The two new hires have started to teach in the undergraduate program as of the 2012-13 academic year
 - Changing curricular focus
 - The Department is maintaining its strengths in cognition and abnormal psychology by adding new teaching staff and through its access to the teaching staff at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
 - Providing academic advising
 - The Department is changing the role of a current staff member so that undergraduate advising is emphasized
- Medium Term (1-2 years)
 - Managing undergraduate enrolment
 - The Department has submitted three appointment requests to the Faculty Appointments Committee for search consideration in the 2013-14 academic year: one tenure-stream position and two teaching-stream (one of the latter, jointly with the Cognitive Science program)
 - The Department will encourage growth in minor programs while restricting growth in major and specialist programs
 - Changing curricular focus
 - The Department is increasing supervisory capacity for theses and other research projects
 - Providing academic advising

- The Department will evaluate the success of the advising-focused staff position and add more advising if necessary and if resources permit
- Longer Term (3-5 years)
 - Managing undergraduate enrolment
 - The Department will consider offering more discussion-based seminar and lab courses, depending on the faculty complement, which will provide students with greater opportunities for active learning, as well as online courses
 - Changing curricular focus
 - The Department will move away from compartmentalizing Psychology into sub-fields
 - Providing academic advising
 - In the longer term, the Department will evaluate the feasibility of providing more formal career advising at both the undergraduate and graduate level

The Dean's Office will follow up annually with the unit to assess progress.

5 Executive Summary

The reviewers identified the programs' strengths as the excellent quality of the applicants, students, the Psychology Research Specialist Program, and the faculty complement, who are particularly strong in cognition and neuroscience. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: the very high undergraduate enrolment relative to the number of available teaching staff; the absence of an honours thesis for the Psychology Specialist Program; the shift away from personality and abnormal psychology; and the need for additional advising for students. The Dean's Office and the Department will take measures to address student over-subscription and faculty/student ratios. The Department is in the process of adding additional teaching staff as well as adding increased staff capacity in advising, both in the short and long term. The Department will increase supervisory capacity for theses and other research projects. Given the availability of the faculty complement, the Department will consider how it can offer more discussion-based seminar and lab courses. The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that there were no issues to be drawn to the attention of the Agenda Committee but requested a follow up report in two years concerning how the Department has managed enrollment pressures, including steps to decrease the number of students while increasing the complement.