



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

Program(s):	Mental Health Studies, B.Sc., Hons: Specialist and Specialist Co-op, Major Neuroscience, B.Sc., Hons: Specialist and Specialist Co-op, Major Psychology, B.Sc., Hons: Specialist and Specialist Co-op, Major, Minor
Division/Unit:	Department of Psychology, UTSC
Commissioning Officer:	Vice Principal and Dean, UTSC
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	1. Dr. Richard Beninger, Head Professor, Department of Psychology, Queen's University 2. Dr. Ellen Bialystok, Professor, Department of Psychology, York University 3. Dr. Jennifer Crocker, Professor, Department of Psychology, Ohio State University
Date of review visit:	December 6 and 7, 2011
Date reported to AP&P:	April 3, 2012

1 Outcome

- The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations

2 Significant Program Strengths

- Excellent and innovative co-op program
- Alignment of the curriculum with the current state of knowledge in the fields of psychology and mental health
- Opportunities for students to learn about cutting edge research
- Impressive laboratory facilities for teaching

- New and innovative courses and course delivery models
- Unique and attractive mental health studies program
- High quality of many faculty members; outstanding quality of new hires
- Exceptionally high staff, faculty and student morale

3 Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement

The reviewers recommended that the following be considered:

- Reviewing admission criteria to the major and specialist to shape the number, quality and preparation of enrolled students
- Adding additional topics in cognition to fill gaps in the curriculum
- Increasing opportunities for students to develop written and oral communication skills, engage with peers and faculty, and develop a sense of belonging within the program and university
- Increasing the percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty
- Ensuring that the scope of the program covers all core areas of psychological science

4 Implementation Plan

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

- Immediate Term (6 months)
 - Adding additional topics in cognition; ensuring that the scope of the program covers all core areas
 - The Department has hired two new faculty to teach in the area of cognition and is reviewing its course offerings in cognition to determine how best to deploy these new teaching resources
- Medium Term (1-2 years)
 - Reviewing admission criteria
 - The Department has studied a range of appropriate admission criteria, including the introduction of a high school mathematics requirement and a minimum GPA in the introductory psychology courses, and will adopt criteria that align with departmental and campus-wide priorities
 - Increasing opportunities for students to develop communication skills and for student engagement
 - The Department's planned introduction of new admissions criteria will reduce overall enrolment, supporting increased emphasis on communication skills and student engagement
 - Increasing the percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty
 - The Department's reliance on part-time teaching staff has declined since 2009-10, and will decline further as enrolments decrease, with the introduction of new admissions criteria, and faculty complement increases
- Longer Term (3-5 years)
 - Increasing opportunities for students to develop communication skills and for student engagement

- The Dean will work with the Department to find resources to support an increase in faculty complement that will allow for the creation of new courses and sections of courses supporting an increased emphasis on communications skills and student engagement
- Ensuring that the scope of the program covers all core areas
 - The Department's hiring strategy will continue to be shaped by leading edge trends in the science of psychology, focusing on contemporary scholarship in behaviour and cognitive neuroscience

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

5 Executive Summary

The reviewers identified the programs' strengths as excellent and innovative co-op option; up-to-date curriculum and teaching facilities; opportunities for students to learn about research; innovative courses and course delivery models; unique and attractive mental health studies programs; high quality faculty and high department morale. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: admissions requirements; breadth of curriculum; opportunities for students to develop communication skills and for student engagement; and full-time faculty resources. The Department has studied a range of appropriate admissions criteria and will adopt additional requirements that align with departmental and campus priorities. The Department has hired two new faculty in cognition to address gaps in the curriculum, and is reviewing its course offerings in that area to ensure its teaching resources are deployed effectively. The Department is committed to hiring in areas that reflect leading edge trends in the science of psychology. By restricting program enrolment (through additional admissions requirements) and increasing faculty complement, the Department will support increased opportunities for students to develop communication skills through coursework. Reduced enrolment and increased faculty complement will also allow students more opportunities to engage with faculty and each other in and out of the classroom. The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the reviewers' recommendations.