



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

Programs Reviewed:	Mental Health Studies, B.Sc. (Hons.): Specialist, Specialist Co-op, Major, Minor Neuroscience, B.Sc. (Hons.): Specialist, Specialist Co-op, Major Psychology, B.Sc. (Hons.): Specialist, Specialist Co-op, Major, Minor
Unit Reviewed:	Department of Psychology, University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC)
Commissioning Officer:	Vice-Principal Academic and Dean, UTSC
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professor Michael Dixon, Department of Psychology, University of Waterloo 2. Professor Albert Katz, Department of Psychology, Western University 3. Professor Frank Keil, Department of Psychology, Yale University
Date of review visit:	May 3 – 4, 2018
Date reported to AP&P:	November 1, 2018

Unless otherwise noted, all bulleted comments apply to all programs reviewed.

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

- Innovative curricular tools and initiatives, which are well suited to increasing student enrolment
- Excellent faculty possessing notable scholarly strength across all ranks
- Impressive progress made on recommendations from the previous review
- Good relationships with cognate units
- An overall collegial environment

3 Opportunities for Program Enhancement

The reviewers recommended that the following be considered:

- Addressing large student enrolment and class-size which limits student-faculty engagement, by considering ways to reduce these pressures, including the option of amending admission requirements
- Introducing writing and critical analysis into the curriculum earlier in programs, and increasing writing support for students
- Increasing upper level course offerings
- Finding ways to improve communications, coordination and the breadth of available placements in the co-op program
- Creating additional math and programming courses to support any potential plans to develop a new undergraduate program in imaging
- Ensuring that new faculty receive adequate space in a timely manner and that dedicated space for Psychology is made available in the vivarium
- Ensuring that faculty in the teaching stream are aware of the full scope of activity covered under pedagogical and professional development
- Developing social and research events to help orient new faculty and foster a sense of community
- Ensuring that senior faculty take on leadership roles and allowing early career faculty to establish their research careers
- Optimizing access to MRI equipment and supporting plans to increase the use of EEG technology
- Providing additional administrative support in the areas of technology and student advising



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO
SCARBOROUGH

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRINCIPAL ACADEMIC & DEAN

October 9, 2018

Professor Susan McCahan
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Office of the Vice-President and Provost
Simcoe Hall
University of Toronto

Dear Susan,

Administrative Response:
External Review of the Department of Psychology

Thank you for your letter of August 16, 2018 requesting my administrative response to the external review of the Department of Psychology. I appreciate the seriousness with which the reviewers approached the external review process, as well as the thoughtful consideration given to the Department and its undergraduate programs. I am particularly pleased to note the reviewers' acknowledgement of the Department's success in addressing the issues raised in their previous external review, the high morale in the Department, and the high quality of the faculty.

The external review report was sent to the Chair of the Department and has been shared widely among faculty, staff and students. The decanal group, including myself, the Vice-Dean Undergraduate, the Vice-Dean Graduate, and Academic Programs Officer met with the Department Chair and faculty on September 10, 2018 to discuss the external review, and the recommendations from the review report; I am pleased with the depth of the discussion that took place. We are considering the recommendations of the reviewers carefully and already have begun to act upon them.

Let me address the specific points raised in the letter:

Programs & Curriculum:

- The reviewers noted large student enrolment and class size limited student-faculty engagement and recommended considering ways to reduce enrolment pressures including the option of amending the admission requirements.

The reviewers agree with the Department that the quality of undergraduate programs suffer when enrolments are too high. As they note, large classes – when they are not supplemented by smaller tutorial sessions – can limit both the types of teaching and

testing that can be employed, and the skills students can achieve in writing, logical analysis, and experimental design. The reviewers are therefore supportive of the Department's plans to reduce class sizes through mechanisms such as increasing enrolment requirements so as to reduce student intake numbers, but they offer the caution that the Department remain mindful of the potential impacts of a reduced enrolment on research support and the size of the faculty complement.

The Department will be initiating a two-stage process to address large student enrolment and class size. First, it will gradually raise the GPA averages associated with enrolment requirements in Psychology (PSY) and Mental Health Studies (MHS) programs, but in a manner that recognizes potential impacts (e.g., on faculty complement and research) of reduced enrolments. In the 2018-19 academic year the Department increased the GPA entrance averages associated with introductory Psychology courses in PSY and MHS programs from 60% to 64% for the Major and from 70% to 72% for the Specialist. In the 2019-20 academic year the GPA entrance averages will be further increased to 66% for Major programs and 74% for Specialist programs. Second, by 2021-22, entrance requirements into the OUAC admissions category for Department of Psychology programs will be revised to include a high school math and biology course.

In addition, although it will not impact student enrolment, the Department will strengthen the research methods component of the program requirements, and locate it earlier in the program. A proposal for changes in the organization and sequencing of research methods courses in the PSY and MHS programs was approved at a Department faculty meeting in September 2018. The resulting curricular changes are being submitted in the current governance cycle, with an anticipated effective date of the 2019-20 academic year. Consideration of the research methods component for the Neuroscience program will be undertaken in the coming year.

- The reviewers noted challenges with integrating critical analysis and writing skills into the curriculum, and with providing writing support services to students. The reviewers recommended introducing writing and critical analysis into the curriculum earlier in programs, and suggested ways to increase writing support for students.

The reviewers believe there is more work to be done to ensure all students have exposure to writing opportunities both early in, and also throughout, their program. Towards this end, the committee recommends that the Department make greater use of written assignments – as opposed to multiple choice tests – as an assessment tool, and revise the curriculum to ensure students complete a minimum number of writing-intensive courses.

The Department currently is engaged in a curriculum mapping exercise that has a primary objective of identifying areas for strengthening skill development, including writing, public speaking, group work, constructive responding to feedback, etc., – from the B-level and upward. MHS will be mapped in the next six months, and PSY within the next year. Neuroscience will be mapped during the next academic year. In addition, the Department is currently reviewing a number of instructional tools that may provide richer writing opportunities to students, including continued development of peerScholar and other pedagogical tools.

- The reviewers observed student frustration with access to upper level courses and recommended increasing offerings.

The reviewers note that, in line with other Psychology departments, the UTSC Department of Psychology's strategy for dealing with their very large enrolments is to allow bigger classes in lower-level courses, while classes in upper-level courses are smaller. To support this effort, they recommend the Department provide more courses at the D-level.

The Department notes that, in the past 3-4 years, on average 3 new C- and D-level courses have been introduced each year, providing students with a much greater variety of courses in many areas of study from which to select; however, it recognizes there is more work to be done – particularly in areas like developmental studies. Therefore, it will continue to work to offer more C-level courses by core faculty members (these courses will be capped at 100 students), as well as to increase the number and diversity of D-level seminar courses.

- The reviewers noted a high attrition rate of students from the Co-op program option and recommended finding ways to improve communications, coordination and the breadth of available placements.

As the reviewers acknowledge, interest in Co-op is growing and students who are successfully placed in work terms are very pleased with their Co-op experience; however they express some concern about the attrition rate in the Co-op program, suggesting it may be due to difficulty finding suitable placements. They also note that scheduling issues associated with the timing of the work terms may be impeding some students in Co-op programs from accessing D-level courses. They believe better communication between the Department and the Arts & Science Co-op Office regarding placements, and better coordination of the undergraduate teaching schedule and the work term placement schedule will resolve these issues.

The Department will be striking a working committee to address the high attrition rates of students from the Co-op programs. The Department has already reached out to the Director of Arts & Science Co-op to arrange a meeting to discuss strategies for facilitating student retention and success in the Co-op programs. Based on a recent analysis, carried out by the Co-op office, of attrition rates across units and programs, low grades (i.e., not meeting the minimum GPA requirement of 2.5) have been identified as the primary reason that students leave Co-op after the first year. That said, first year exit rates in Psychological and Health Sciences is the lowest of all Co-op program areas (25% as compared to 32% in the other Life Sciences and 45% in the Social Sciences/Humanities). Thus, although attrition rates are of continued concern for the Department, these should be considered in the broader context of Arts & Science Co-op.

- The reviewers encouraged creating additional math and programming courses to support any potential plans to develop a new undergraduate program in imaging.

The Department is planning to introduce a new undergraduate program in Cognitive Neuroscience. As part of the program development process, the Department will begin reviewing its math and programming offerings and will develop new math and programming courses as needed.

Faculty & Research:

- The reviewers recommended working with the University to ensure that new faculty receive adequate space in a timely manner and that dedicated space for Psychology be available in the vivarium.

The reviewers highlight the importance of appropriate space in attracting excellent faculty, and they express some concern regarding the availability of existing space to accommodate growth. They encourage the Department and central administration to ensure adequate and appropriate space is provided for new faculty, and that dedicated space be provided in the vivarium for faculty and students engaged in research in behavioural neuroscience.

The Vice-Principal Academic and Dean notes that there is a new process at UTSC for identifying space and equipment needs for new faculty that involves the offices of the Dean, the Vice-Principal Research (VPR), and the CAO that enables the Campus to prepare in a pro-active way for new faculty needs. This new process also encourages departments to consider the research facility needs of new faculty at the time that they develop their faculty complement plans. The availability of suitable space will be taken into consideration at the time that the campus develops its next 5-year complement plan. In addition to this process, the Department Chair recognizes there is also a need to help manage faculty expectations.

With regard to the vivarium, the VPR has reviewed the use of the vivarium, and spaces were created with shared used based on the type of research needs. The Department will continue to advocate for some dedicated space for Psychology, given that a shared model is not always appropriate for the type of work undertaken by some of its faculty members.

- The reviewers encouraged ensuring that faculty in the teaching stream are aware of the full scope of activity covered under pedagogical and professional development including “discipline-based scholarship in relation to, or relevant to, the field in which the faculty member teaches”.

As the reviewers note, the Department of Psychology is notably “collegial, cooperative and friendly” (p. 7). They stress that teaching stream faculty are treated with respect, play an important role in the education and life of the Department, and have their input seriously considered: “Indeed,” they say, “we see the Psychology UTSC model as one that should be adopted elsewhere” (p.7). As a minor point, they suggest the Department

and central administration actively promote the message that teaching stream faculty are encouraged to conduct research in their fields of expertise.

The Department will work to improve messaging to faculty on UTSC's newly revised *Guidelines for the Assessment of Effectiveness of Teaching* which outlines the criteria required for promotion to associate and full-rank professor, in both the teaching and tenure streams. Part of the requirement for continuing status or promotion in the teaching stream is ongoing professional/pedagogical development, as is outlined in the guidelines. The Department Chair (who is new this year) attended a UTSC Chair's and Director's retreat, held in September 2018, in which the revised *Guidelines* were a key point of discussion. In addition, faculty will be directed to the workshops and information sessions that are regularly offered by the Office of the Vice-Provost Faculty and Academic Life in co-operation with the Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs and Equity. Finally, the Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs and Equity has, in the past year, introduced new mentorship opportunities and other supports for career development and progress towards promotion for teaching and tenure stream faculty across the campus, and faculty response has been very positive. This includes a Professional/Pedagogical Development Fund for the Teaching Stream, launched in April 2018 for which eligible expenses include (among other items): *Pedagogical research supporting contributions to the pedagogical literature, workshops or other pedagogical development opportunities; and Discipline - based scholarship in relation to, or relevant to, the field in which the faculty member teaches.* While this was widely disseminated, it will take some time for new guidelines and procedures to supplant old practice.

- The reviewers suggested developing social and research events to help orient new faculty and foster a sense of community.

The reviewers urge the Department to engage in more events designed to bring faculty and students together outside of class, so as to generate and support a greater sense of departmental life and cohesion. In particular they recommend social gatherings centred around holidays, and the development of local colloquium series. The latter could be spearheaded by junior faculty.

The Department agrees there is room for improvement in this regard. As a first step, Psychology hosted a "Welcome Back" lunch, as well as an orientation and mingle for incoming graduate students and postdocs in September 2018. In addition it has struck two new committees: a "Seminar and Events Committee" to develop a colloquium series and other academic and social events; and a "Graduate Affairs Committee" aimed at strengthening graduate student and postdoctoral presence and culture at UTSC, and building community between experimental and clinical students. The new committees have begun meeting this Fall term. The Department plans to launch the new colloquium series in the new year.

- The reviewers encouraged the Department to ensure that senior faculty take on leadership roles and allow early career faculty to establish their research careers.

The Department is making efforts to ensure an equitable distribution of service across faculty ranks, in ways that allow early and mid-career faculty more time to focus on establishing their research and teaching careers. The Department acknowledges that approximately 28% of its faculty hold the rank of Professor, however, their participation on the tenure and promotion committees of junior faculty are an important, and time-consuming component of their service.

For early and mid-career faculty, the Department is working to develop local processes to facilitate career development and progress through the ranks in a timely manner. In the coming academic year, the Department will hold “brown bag lunches” for assistant and associate professors, aimed at providing guidance and support to early and mid-career faculty; these activities are meant to complement recent mentorship initiatives by the Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs and Equity. In addition, faculty are encouraged to participate in the NCFDD Faculty Success Program, the costs of which are covered by the Provost, Dean and Chair’s Offices. Feedback from faculty who have completed this program have been highly positive and enthusiastic.

- The reviewers encouraged optimizing access to the MRI and supported plans to increase the use of EEG technology.

As the reviewers note, there is a reasonable argument to be made for UTSC to obtain its own fMRI; however, they recognize this may be a longer term goal. In the shorter term, they urge the Department to optimize use of the fMRI located on the St. George campus, and proceed with plans to bolster other types of imaging technology, such as EEG. Towards this end they recommend that the Department and central administration work together to: (1) establish a dedicated research space for UTSC faculty and students at the St. George fMRI facility; and (2) resolve the inadequacies associated with existing labs being used for EEG research, as well as provide additional EEG space and equipment.

The Department is looking at cost effective ways to gain better access to the fMRI on the St George Campus, and also to expand their EEG capacity. Towards that end, Department has scheduled a meeting, to take place in the Fall 2018 term, with the Vice-Principal Research and the CAO to discuss partnerships and strategy.

Administration:

- The reviewers recommended providing additional administrative support in the areas of technology and student advising.

The reviewers encourage the Department to engage a dedicated technician to support Peer-Scholar. They also suggest that, given current enrolment levels, an additional front-line staff member would be beneficial – particularly in providing support for the introductory Psychology courses.

In the Summer, the Department was grateful to receive funding to increase a staff position from 0.5 to 1.0 FTE and the Chair is in the process of hiring a new departmental

assistant into this position. This increase in FTE allows for a significant redistribution of duties in the administrative office, and in a manner that is expected to strengthen supports in areas of instructional technology and student advising. The Chair will continue to review the Department’s needs and make further adjustments in the distribution of duties amongst administrative staff in the coming year. If it is determined that a need exists, a request will be made to the Dean for an additional position.

Regards,



Professor William Gough
 Vice-Principal Academic and Dean

Action	Implementation Timeline	Lead
The Department will fill a new 1.0 FTE administrative staff position by November 2018.	Immediate (6 months)	Department Chair
The Department Chair will meet with the Vice-Principal Research to discuss equipment needs in Psychology.	Immediate (6 months)	Department Chair and Associate Chair, Research
The Department will advocate for dedicated space in the vivarium for faculty that need it for their research.	Immediate and ongoing (6 months and ongoing)	Department Chair.
The Department will continue to communicate with faculty about the revised <i>Teaching Guidelines</i> and provide additional resources and supports.	Immediate and ongoing (6 months and ongoing)	Department Chair
The Department’s new Seminar and Events Committee and Graduate Affairs Committee will begin meeting and developing ideas for social events and a colloquium series	Immediate and ongoing (6 months and ongoing)	Department Chair and Associate Chair Research
The Department will	Immediate to Medium (6	Department Associate Chair

increase the GPA entrance averages associated with introductory Psychology courses to 66 for the Major and 74 for the Specialist.	months to 1 year)	Undergraduate and Departmental Curriculum Committee
The Department will revise the sequencing of research methods courses in PSY and MHS programs.	Immediate to Medium (6 months to 1 year)	Department Associate Chair Undergraduate and Departmental Curriculum Committee
The Department will engage in curriculum mapping for all three areas of study with the primary objective of identifying areas where writing can be strengthened.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MHS: Immediate (6 months) • PSY: Medium (1 year to 2 years) • Neuroscience: Medium (1 year to 2 years) 	Department Associate Chair Undergraduate and Departmental Curriculum Committee
The Department will convene a working group to review attrition in the Co-op programs. In addition, the Department will meet with the Director of Arts and Science Co-op.	Immediate to Medium (6 months to 2 years)	Department Chair and Faculty Advisor to Co-op
As new faculty are brought on board, the Department will continue to develop and introduce new courses to meet program needs and student demand.	Immediate to Longer (6 months to five years)	Department Chair and Associate Chair Undergraduate
The Department will work with the Registrar's Office to add high school math and biology to the requirements for the OUAC admissions category for all Department of Psychology programs.	Medium (1 to 2 years)	Department Associate Chair Undergraduate and Departmental Curriculum Committee
The Department will convene a committee to review math and programming offerings.	Medium (1 to 2 years)	Department Associate Chair Undergraduate and faculty

5 Executive Summary

The reviewers identified the programs' strengths as the innovative curricular tools and initiatives, which are well suited to increasing student enrolment; excellent faculty possessing notable scholarly strength across all ranks; impressive progress made on the recommendations from the previous review; good relationships with cognate units; and an overall collegial environment. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: addressing large student enrolment and limited student-faculty engagement; introducing writing and critical analysis into the curriculum earlier; increasing upper level course offerings; finding ways to improve communications, coordination and the breadth of available placements in the co-op program; creating additional math and programming courses; ensuring that new faculty receive adequate space in a timely manner and that dedicated space for Psychology is made available in the vivarium; ensuring that faculty in the teaching stream are aware of the full scope of activity covered under pedagogical and professional development; developing social and research events to help orient new faculty; ensuring that senior faculty take on leadership roles and allowing early career faculty to establish their research careers; optimizing access to MRI equipment and supporting plans to increase the use of EEG technology; and providing additional administrative support in the areas of technology and student advising. The Dean's Administrative Response describes the Campus, unit and programs' responses to the reviewers' recommendations, including an implementation plan for any changes necessary as a result. The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations.