

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
Evaluation of Graduate Programs
School of Rehabilitation Sciences
Cycle: 2018-2019
Date: May 20, 2020

I. Programs

- Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Sciences

II. Evaluation Process (Outline of the visit)

- The Final Assessment Report for the evaluation of the aforementioned program(s) was based on the following documents: (a) the self-study brief produced by the academic unit, (b) the report produced by the external evaluators following their site visit, and (c) the comments from the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Lucie Thibault, the Director of the Program, Mary Egan, and the former Director of the program, Carol Leonard, on the aforementioned documents.
- During the site visit, the external evaluators met with the Vice-Provost, Academic Affairs, Aline Germain-Rutherford, the Vice-Provost, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, Claire Turenne-Sjolander, the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Lucie Thibault, the Director of the Program, Mary Egan, the PhD supervisors, members of the support staff, regular professors and graduate students.

Comments from the Internal Delegate (Graduate Studies)

- The internal delegate reported on his impressions of the discussions that took place with the various participants and shared his view of potential program improvements. His feedback covered four major points, which had also been raised by the Graduate Programs Evaluation Committee in their response to the initial self-study brief: (1) the need to review the 'core competencies' of students prior to admission, (2) the question of 'succession planning' for faculty members, (3) centralization of programs with the Faculty, (4) the potential to further expand on current relationships between researchers and the various institutes in the Ottawa region.

III. Summary of Reports on the Quality of Programs¹

This section aims to inform the unit on the strengths and weaknesses observed during the evaluation process in order to improve its programs.

1. EMPHASIZING THE STRENGTHS AND IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES

Strengths

- High quality of research supervision

¹Based on every document prepared during the assessment process.

- Highly supportive learning environment
- Focus on collaborative and interprofessional research
- Student funding
- Broad understanding of the spectrum of approaches in rehabilitation research
- Multidisciplinary perspective in the program supported by three core courses
- Competitive student funding system
- Clear and thorough program learning outcomes

Challenges

- Need for discipline-specific courses
- Need for a research method course
- Redundancies in core courses (7101, 7102, 7103)
- Lack of professional skills development or career building
- Geographical division and lack of a sense of community
- Clarification of administrative structure
- Recruitment of International and Francophone students
- Need for a hiring strategy in light of potential retirements

Sections 2-6 provide the context and rationale for the subsequent recommendations

2. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- As recognized by all parties, clarifications are needed at student and School levels on the capacity of the program to offer courses in both French and English. The Dean, the School and program chairs have agreed to review the Faculty policy regarding the minimum enrolment requirements for offering a course, as well as to revisit promotional material (including website) to increase clarity on the bilingual components of the program. New recruitment initiatives, targeting francophone students in particular, at local, national and international levels, would also help preserve the bilingual character of the program. Enhancing the website and program visibility, will help promote research activity and student achievements. As suggested by the Dean and the external evaluators, supporting students' research endeavours, especially in conference participation could only be profitable to the visibility and the excellence of the program. (Recommendation 1)

3. CURRICULUM AND STRUCTURE

- The self-study and discussion with students during the external evaluators' visit have highlighted the need to develop a new program component geared towards a better understanding of professional issues and expectations or activities that develop professional skills and support career-building. These should include relevant skills for the job market, as well as support to enhance science communication (publication output, conference presentations). (Recommendation 2)
- A recurrent element of all reports and discussions, the lack of discipline specific courses (including qualitative research design, statistic course) is a concern for students and constitutes the weak angle of a program structure that otherwise offers a broad and distinctive understanding of the discipline. For some students, the broadness of the program involves some redundancies "in relation to cohort needs and background they

bring (clinical students in particular)” (External Evaluators Report, p. 5). In order to understand better the situation and the options to enhance both the structure and the content of the program, a curriculum analysis should be conducted with the assistance of TLSS. (Recommendation 3)

4. TEACHING, LEARNING AND EVALUATION METHODS

- A better understanding of all challenges related to the geographical spread would help define new initiatives for enhancing teaching and learning experience, while exploring the potential of Web or video-conferencing, as suggested by the external evaluators. The expected results of this undertaking would be twofold, improving both the teaching and the learning experience, bringing together more students and professors, and drawing on the strong collaborative and interprofessional research of the program community. (Recommendation 4)

5. STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND GOVERNANCE

- The external evaluators have noted a shared feeling that the program does not foster a sense of community among students. Several factors were mentioned in relation to the absence of a sense of belonging to a learning community (geographical spread, the decline of student-led academic activities, etc.), but the lack of a student representative in the governance structure might be limiting the potential of the program to address the needs and expectations of a very diverse student population in terms of professional skills. The implementation of new mechanisms that improve communication and administrative transparency would ensure involvement of Ph.D. students in the academic committees and give a structure to their engagement in the program. (Recommendation 5)
- Students have expressed their strong interest for an improved offer in regards to professional development and core competencies. A Ph.D. student-led seminars series, as suggested by the external evaluators, would give visibility to local research conferences and other academic activities, as well as foster a sense of community within the program. (Recommendation 6)

6. PHYSICAL SPACES AND RESOURCES

- The external evaluators have highlighted the diversity and dynamism of faculty members in regards to teaching, thesis supervision, and research. They have also identified some areas of research that are not as well represented (technology, cognition and kt). In order to maintain the distinctive broadness of fields covered by the program in light of faculty attrition, a recruitment strategy need to be developed with the criteria of program coherence, distinction, and conformity to the accreditation norms (relevant for professional programs). Because new hires are attributed centrally and are not aligned with faculty attrition, the external evaluates suggest exploiting research ties with research institutes as a mean to access additional faculty members to support immediate program’s objectives. (Recommendation 7)
- The question of an autonomous operational budget to support academic activities has been discussed with the Dean and the external evaluators. As explained by the Dean in her response, some clarification is needed regarding the administration of the operational budget. The Dean understands the targeted result behind the external evaluators’ recommendation, which aims at enriching students’ learning experience. It is suggested that a discretionary fund could be attributed to the School in order to facilitate the organisation of academic and social activities within the School. (Recommendation 8)

IV. Program Improvement²

The programs under evaluation are in conformity with the standards of the discipline. The following recommendations aim at maintaining or increasing the level of quality already achieved by the programs.

Program Objectives, Learning Outcomes, Mandate and University Plan

Recommendation 1: The GPEC recommends that efforts be undertaken to preserve the bilingual character of the program, specifically by enhancing recruitment of francophone students to ensure that French-language courses are offered.

Curriculum and Structure

Recommendation 2: The GPEC recommends that the program structure include activities that develop professional skills and support career building.

Recommendation 3: The GPEC recommends that courses be revised to reduce potential overlap and to expand discipline-specific offerings (including a potential research methods and / or statistics course) for students. Broad consultation with past and present students is recommended.

Teaching, Learning and Evaluation Methods

Recommendation 4: The GPEC recommends that new initiatives be undertaken to minimize the negative impact of geographical spread on teaching and learning experience.

Student Experience and Governance

Recommendation 5: The GPEC recommends that student representatives be included on relevant committees at the level of the program and faculty, and that new mechanisms be implemented to improve communication and administrative transparency.

Recommendation 6: The GPEC recommends that student-led seminars, local research conferences and other academic activities be developed and promoted to foster a sense of community within the program.

Physical Spaces and Resources

Recommendation 7: The GPEC recommends that a recruitment strategy be developed to ensure the viability of the program in the face of faculty attrition.

Recommendation 8: The GPEC recommends that the School and the Faculty facilitate the access to special initiative funds that support academic activities enriching students' learning experience.

V. List of courses not offered for more than three years and the reasons

All of the courses have been offered at least once in the last three years.

VI. Conclusion

As noted by the external evaluators, "the program has a particular strength in its unique approach using the ICF, its multi-disciplinarily and interprofessional approach. In general, the program is encouraged to continue with this approach while considering the recommendations provided above in order to address concerns of the student body and faculty members, and in general to ensure

²Partially based on the External Evaluators Report.

long-term sustainability". The reviewers emphasized the high level of engagement and interest from administrators, faculty and students regarding the continuous improvement of their program, a demonstration of enthusiasm that is perceived as an indicator of high quality standards in the discipline and among the community of teachers and learners.

The School is demonstrating strong leadership in its response to the challenges identified in the self-study and the external evaluators' report. A plan of action is already being designed to maintain the program's strengths, its broad approach and supportive learning environment, while addressing the need to verify the coherence of the curriculum in regards to all stakeholders' comments and suggestions, and reinforce the sense of belonging to the program.

In light of this positive assessment, the committee members would like to thank all participants for the evaluation of programmes. They congratulate the unit on the rigour of the work accomplished and on the quality of the self-study report, as well as that of the report produced by the external evaluators.

Schedule and Timelines

A meeting will be organized with the program chairs, the Faculty Dean and Vice-Dean following the reception of the Final Assessment Report so that a plan of action can be put in place along with deadlines particular to each recommendation. A progress report that outlines the completed actions and subsequent results will be submitted to the two evaluation committees (SCEUP and GPEC) on a date agreed upon at the time of the meeting regarding the action plan.

The next cyclical review will take place in no more than eight years, in 2026-2027. The self-study brief must be submitted no later than June 2026.

ACTION PLAN

Faculty: Health Sciences

Department: School of Rehabilitation Sciences (SRS)

Program(s) evaluated: Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Sciences

Cyclical review period: 2018-2019

Date: September 30, 2020

FOCUS AREA #1: OBJECTIVES						
Recommendation 1: The GPEC recommends that efforts be undertaken to preserve the bilingual character of the program, specifically by enhancing recruitment of francophone students to ensure that French-language courses are offered.						
Define the actions to undertake	Priority Level*	Assigned Person or Persons	Deadline to attain the objective	Expected results	Implementation Indicators	Progress on the actions taken: accomplished, to be sustained, to be continued, to be developed
<p>-Work with marketing and promotion team at Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) to promote PhD program to francophone student populations in masters in rehabilitation sciences and areas such as epidemiology, psychology, education with emphasis on bilingual and international character of the program.</p> <p>-Work with FHS to improve and communicate availability of faculty-level courses in French to PhD students (e.g., research methods, statistics).</p> <p>-Inform students of opportunities to develop or improve French skills through French courses at uOttawa (e.g., <i>Institut des langues officielles et du bilinguisme</i> (ILOB)).</p> <p>-Inform students of scholarship/grant opportunities available through <i>Consortium national de formation en santé</i> (CNFS) for students whose works aims to improve health in francophone minority situations.</p>	2	<p>-PhD Director -School of Rehabilitation Sciences (SRS) Director</p> <p>In collaboration with -Student Association -SRS Program Directors</p> <p>(working in collaboration with FHS Academic Office)</p>	<p>-Initial promotion in winter 2021.</p> <p>-Ongoing promotion integrated into the program 2021-2024.</p>	<p>-Increase in number of francophones and bilingual students (French-English) applying to program.</p> <p>-Improved understanding of bilingual opportunities in program (e.g., submit coursework in French, thesis proposals in French).</p> <p>-Availability of additional courses in French in faculty.</p>	<p>-Update of website including clearer information regarding bilingual character of program.</p> <p>-Proportion of francophones and/or bilingual students applying to program.</p> <p>-Bilingual and multilingual students representing student body on committees.</p>	<p><i>To be completed by the Evaluation Committee when reviewing the progress report</i></p>

* PRIORITY LEVEL: 1. URGENT-IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED 2. IMPORTANT-ACTION REQUIRED WITHIN 18 MONTHS (MAXIMUM) 3. ADVISED: DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGY-ACTION TO BE DISCUSSED AND MUST BE IN PLACE BY MID-CYCLE (WITHIN 4 YEARS)

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Define the actions to undertake	Priority Level*	Assigned Person or Persons	Deadline to attain the objective	Expected results	Implementation Indicators	Progress on the actions taken: accomplished, to be sustained, to be continued, to be developed
-Ask student association to promote bilingual/multicultural student involvement in student association and activities.						

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FOCUS AREA #2: CURRICULUM AND STRUCTURE

Recommendation 2: The GPEC recommends that the program structure include activities that develop professional skills and support career building.

Define the actions to undertake	Priority Level*	Assigned Person or Persons	Deadline to attain the objective	Expected results	Implementation Indicators	Progress on the actions taken: accomplished, to be sustained, to be continued, to be developed
<p>-Promote uOttawa Altitude program by updating student handbook and website to include resource information about career development (focus on career development workshops).</p> <p>-Promote¹ and continue to develop targeted career development workshops (3-4 annually) for students based on students' identification of needs (e.g. writing workshop, careers in government).</p> <p><i>¹ currently offered through student association led events.</i></p> <p>-Promote TLSS opportunities for training in teaching for doctoral students intending to pursue an academic or teaching career, such as the Certificate in University Teaching for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Fellows.</p>	2	<p>-PhD Director -Student Association</p> <p>-Collaboration with the Career Development Centre</p>	Winter 2022	<p>-Enhanced career development opportunities tailored to students' needs.</p> <p>-≥ 80% student satisfaction with career development opportunities.</p>	<p>-Updated student handbook and website with resource information about career development.</p> <p>-Diversity and number of workshops/events offered.</p> <p>-Number of students attending sessions.</p> <p>-Student perception of career development (via survey through student association).</p>	<p><i>To be completed by the Evaluation Committee when reviewing the progress report</i></p>

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FOCUS AREA #2: CURRICULUM AND STRUCTURE						
Recommendation 3: The GPEC recommends that courses be revised to reduce potential overlap and to expand discipline-specific offerings (including a potential research methods and / or statistics course) for students. Broad consultation with past and present students is recommended.						
Define the actions to undertake	Priority Level*	Assigned Person or Persons	Deadline to attain the objective	Expected results	Implementation Indicators	Progress on the actions taken: accomplished, to be sustained, to be continued, to be developed
<p>-Conduct a curriculum content analysis with guidance from Teaching and Learning Support Service (TLSS).</p> <p>-Change sequence of courses to permit students more time to choose elective course (current choice is usually in 1st term of program before thesis is decided).</p> <p>-Compile list of courses students in PhD Rehabilitation have taken as elective(s) to examine whether there are common threads/need.</p> <p>- Compile list of appropriate courses offered in other uOttawa PhD programs (e.g., population health, epidemiology, nursing, human kinetics, biomedical engineering).</p>	<p>*2 and 3</p> <p>*Initiated within 18 months but not all modifications completed</p>	<p>-PhD Director With PhD committee -Professors currently teaching in PhD, and -Student representatives from English, French, International segments</p> <p>Vice-Dean Academic (Programs)</p>	<p>Spring 2021 and ongoing</p>	<p>- Enhance course sequence.</p> <p>-Greater choice in courses.</p> <p>-Easier access to courses focused on core competencies in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research approaches and in statistics.</p> <p>-Easier access and support for courses from other schools/faculties.</p>	<p>-Updated course sequence on FHS website.</p> <p>-Student satisfaction with curriculum format (via survey or focus groups).</p> <p>-Compilation of list of courses taken by PhD students.</p> <p>-Availability of research methods course(s).</p>	<p><i>To be completed by the Evaluation Committee when reviewing the progress report</i></p>

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<p>-Work with FHS to improve and communicate availability of faculty-level courses for PhD students and ensure representation of courses/content to support quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research methods.</p>						

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FOCUS AREA #3: TEACHING AND EVALUATION

Recommendation 4: The GPEC recommends that new initiatives be undertaken to minimize the negative impact of geographical spread on teaching and learning experience.

Define the actions to undertake	Priority Level*	Assigned Person or Persons	Deadline to attain the objective	Expected results	Implementation Indicators	Progress on the actions taken: accomplished, to be sustained, to be continued, to be developed
<p>-Advocate for space as part of Top Shelf project (Lees Campus) to include space for PhD students for individual work and to facilitate a sense of student research community.</p> <p>-Enhance virtual course offering when advantageous (e.g., blended course options).</p> <p>-Enhance virtual meeting options (e.g. for student-led workshops and program communications with students).</p>	3	<p>-PhD Director</p> <p>-SRS Director</p> <p>-Professors teaching courses and supervising research</p>	Spring 2022 and ongoing	<p>-Adequate space for students at Lees Campus.</p> <p>-Increased sense of student research community and diminished silo effect.</p> <p>-Greater student participation in workshops.</p> <p>-≥ 50% of events accessible to off-campus students.</p>	<p>-Number of students using the shared space at Lees on a consistent basis.</p> <p>-Number of events (including courses) with virtual access.</p> <p>-Mention of consideration of PhD interests in Lees Project in School meeting minutes.</p> <p>-Indication of virtual course offerings in syllabus.</p>	<p><i>To be completed by the Evaluation Committee when reviewing the progress report</i></p>

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FOCUS AREA #4: STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND GOVERNANCE

Recommendation 5: The GPEC recommends that student representatives be included on relevant committees at the level of the program and faculty, and that new mechanisms be implemented to improve communication and administrative transparency.

Define the actions to undertake	Priority Level*	Assigned Person or Persons	Deadline to attain the objective	Expected results	Implementation Indicators	Progress on the actions taken: accomplished, to be sustained, to be continued, to be developed
<p>-PhD director monthly check-in with student association president to facilitate ongoing communication.</p> <p>-Initiate a café check-in with Director and full-time PhD student group 2-3 times/year (or as needed).</p> <p>-Hold PhD committee meetings 3-4 times per year with student association representative attending meetings.</p> <p>-Ensure student representation <u>continues</u> for all committees (e.g., School Council, Faculty Council) (NB: representation is already in place).</p> <p>-The Faculty has revised the process related to distributing bursary related assistantships (Faculty counterpart of admission scholarships). The School and the Faculty will collaborate to ensure clear communication of the revised</p>	<p>2 Important</p>	<p>-PhD Director in collaboration with student association</p> <p>-SRS Director</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>-≥ 70% of students consider communication between program and students is good to excellent.</p> <p>-≥ 70% of students consider they are adequately represented on relevant committees.</p>	<p>-Student satisfaction (through survey).</p> <p>-Student representation <u>continues</u> on all relevant committees (documented in meeting minutes).</p>	<p><i>To be completed by the Evaluation Committee when reviewing the progress report</i></p>

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process, including posting of positions, student applications as well as criteria for selection of teaching assistants and markers.						

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FOCUS AREA #4: STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND GOVERNANCE						
Recommendation 6: The GPEC recommends that student-led seminars, local research conferences and other academic activities be developed and promoted to foster a sense of community within the program.						
Define the actions to undertake	Priority Level*	Assigned Person or Persons	Deadline to attain the objective	Expected results	Implementation Indicators	Progress on the actions taken: accomplished, to be sustained, to be continued, to be developed
<p>-Continue to promote student-led seminar series (currently 6-7 times/year).</p> <p>-Offer more seminars virtually to facilitate participation.</p> <p>-Work with School administration support staff to improve efficiency of communication between student association and students.</p> <p>-Work with Programs in Audiology-Speech-Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy, and Physiotherapy to enhance interaction between PhD and master's students (e.g., Masters student poster days).</p> <p>-Encourage international student representation in Student Association to</p>	2 - 3	<p>-Student Association with PhD Director</p> <p>-SRS Director</p> <p>-SRS Program directors</p>	June 30-2021	<p>-≥ 70% of students perceive that communication mechanisms are efficient.</p> <p>-Improved sense of community for local and international students.</p>	<p>-Student satisfaction with communication mechanisms.</p> <p>-Increase in number of student-led events.</p> <p>-Increase in participation of students.</p> <p>-Student satisfaction with seminar program and sense of community.</p>	<p><i>To be completed by the Evaluation Committee when reviewing the progress report</i></p>

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FOCUS AREA #4: STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND GOVERNANCE

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Define the actions to undertake	Priority Level*	Assigned Person or Persons	Deadline to attain the objective	Expected results	Implementation Indicators	Progress on the actions taken: accomplished, to be sustained, to be continued, to be developed
facilitate communication of international student needs. -Conduct focus group with international students (experienced and new) regarding needs, gaps, and recommendations.			June 30-2022			

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FOCUS AREA #5: RESOURCES

Recommendation 7: The GPEC recommends that a recruitment strategy be developed to ensure the viability of the program in the face of faculty attrition.

Define the actions to undertake	Priority Level*	Assigned Person or Persons	Deadline to attain the objective	Expected results	Implementation Indicators	Progress on the actions taken: accomplished, to be sustained, to be continued, to be developed
<p>-Provide input into hiring of new faculty.</p> <p>-Increase shared teaching of courses within the School – to foster greater sense of belonging to PhD program for professors.</p> <p>-Ensure communication with new professors (4 have joined the program in 2020).</p>	1	<p>-SRS Director -PhD Director</p>		<p>-Enhanced involvement of input from PhD program in hiring process.</p> <p>-Enhanced involvement of faculty members in the teaching and research supervision of the program</p>	<p>-Number of new faculty members involved in supervision of students.</p> <p>- Number of new students enrolled in PhD.</p>	<p><i>To be completed by the Evaluation Committee when reviewing the progress report</i></p>

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FOCUS AREA #5: RESOURCES

Recommendation 8: The GPEC recommends that the School and the Faculty facilitate the access to special initiative funds that support academic activities enriching students' learning experience.

Define the actions to undertake	Priority Level*	Assigned Person or Persons	Deadline to attain the objective	Expected results	Implementation Indicators	Progress on the actions taken: accomplished, to be sustained, to be continued, to be developed
-Discussion with SRS Director and/or Dean or designate to recommend dedicated fund for PhD program.	2	-PhD Director -SRS Director	June 30-2021	-Specific fund or clarity regarding budget for PhD student activities.	-Dedicated budget for PhD activities. -Increased number and/or improved activities designed to enrich the student learning experience.	<i>To be completed by the Evaluation Committee when reviewing the progress report</i>

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Faculty: Health Sciences
Program(s) evaluated: Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Sciences
Cyclical review period: 2018-2019

Program Director:



September 30, 2020

Signature

Date

Department Chair:



October 2, 2020

Signature

Date

Faculty Dean:



October 5, 2020

Signature

Date