Program: Epidemiology

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<th>Degrees:</th>
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<td>Master of Science in Epidemiology</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy in Epidemiology</td>
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| Fields:                                       | Good Quality with Report for the Master of Science in Epidemiology |
|                                               | Good Quality with Report for Doctor of Philosophy in Epidemiology |

**M.Sc. & Ph.D. in Epidemiology**

**Strengths of the Program**
The Department of Epidemiology and Community Medicine offers an established M.Sc. program, as well as a new Ph.D. program that is still developing. Both programs are delivered by highly qualified and well-funded faculty to outstanding students. Both programs provide a solid foundation in the field, with a comprehensive range of offered courses. The quality of instruction within the program is highly rated. The program benefits from the unique position of the department in the Faculty of Medicine, with consequent affiliations to many clinical research environments, hospitals, research institutes, and government agencies. There are also associations with both the Residency Program in Public Health and Preventive Medicine and the graduate program in Population Health. These associations offer the opportunity for the integration of research findings, practice, and policy. The Ph.D. program is unique in that an Independent Study Plan is developed for each student leading to personalized training within the broader structured program.

**Areas for Improvement**
Despite the clear academic strengths of both the M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs, there are a number of structural issues that need to be addressed. The admission requirements need to be re-evaluated and clarified, particularly for mature applicants who have extensive experience in the workforce. Revised admission criteria should lead to cohorts of students who are better prepared for graduate studies in this area. A major concern was raised with regards to the time to completion for the M.Sc. degree. The department has created two new streams, the “M.Sc. with thesis” option, which corresponds to the current format, and a “M.Sc. with Research Paper” option, which is designed to streamline the process. The external evaluators felt that the completion time problem could be resolved by addressing structural issues within the current M.Sc. program, and that the introduction of a new stream was not necessarily warranted. Structural changes to the program should be based on sound pedagogical principles and must not negatively impact on students achieving the desired learning outcomes. The external evaluators of the program also identified other structural issues, including the need for better financial support for students (particularly in the first year of the M.Sc.), additional Ph.D. level courses, enhanced professional training, improved scheduling of Ph.D. comprehensive exams, and an improved coordinated involvement of both cross and adjunct professors in long term planning of course availability and the functioning of thesis advisory committees. Although the quality of
publications by current students in the graduate programs is high, enhanced opportunities for students to publish their thesis work are required.

**Recommendations**

1. The admission criteria need to be re-evaluated and clarified, particularly for mature students with extensive work experience.
2. The structural framework for the M.Sc. degree needs to be re-evaluated to ensure that students in both streams have the ability to complete their rigorous training in a timely manner. The introduction of new streams requires careful implementation.
3. The structural frameworks of both the M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs need to be streamlined to enhance the student experience and to increase student opportunities for funding. Changes to the program structure should enhance opportunities for students to publish their thesis research.
4. Continued attention must be devoted to the development of appropriate professional training for students in both the M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs.

**Calendar and Deadlines**

All four recommendations should be addressed in a report to be submitted in 36 months. The next cyclical evaluation will be completed no later than the year 2021.

**Authorities**

The Director of the graduate program in Epidemiology, the Chair of the Department of Epidemiology and Community Medicine, the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine.