Executive Summary

Graduate Program in Health Systems
Cyclical review year 2011-2012

Approved by the Graduate Program Evaluation Committee
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Meeting of June 17, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Program Reviewed</th>
<th>Health Systems</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degrees</td>
<td>Master of Science, Health Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fields</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Evaluation</td>
<td>Good quality</td>
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Significant Strengths of the Program

The Master of Science, Health Systems program was created in 2007 and launched in 2008 in response to an unmet need for trained researchers and academic leaders in the expanding field of health systems. This research-based program requires students to study health systems using the scientific problem solving methods of management science and systems science.

The program is interdisciplinary in nature and builds on the expertise of professors from the Telfer School of Management and researchers from the faculties of Health Sciences, Medicine, Social Sciences and Engineering who are actively participating in health systems research.

A distinguishing feature of the program is the research internship, which is explicitly incorporated into the learning objectives, thus providing students with an outstanding opportunity to experience the careers for which they are training and to understand the role of applied research in health systems. This internship, which is highly valued by students, is a unique feature that could be used to attract more applicants to the program.

The facilities are well-designed to support the mission of the program, including a popular area that is actively used for graduate student social gatherings. The current funding model appears to work well for students in the program.

The program's unique position within a business school is an advantage. Students in the MSc Health Systems program benefit from the strong reputation of the Telfer School of Management, and can take full advantage of the School's outstanding facilities and strong faculty.

Areas for Improvement and Enhancement

Along with these clear strengths, several possibilities for improving and enhancing the Master of Science Health Systems program were identified.

Health systems is a complex interdisciplinary field and the program would benefit from developing a clearer shared understanding of this field in order to present a common vision of "health systems"
across the program. This would allow students to understand more fully the value of viewing healthcare
issues from a systems perspective, and to be able to articulate this value more confidently.

While students feel that they are, overall, adequately prepared for conducting research, they did
express a desire to have more explicit guidance on the proposal phase, including how to develop,
structure, and defend a research proposal. The program should clarify the role of supervisors in this
regard and consider whether a proposal planning seminar or workshop could be useful for addressing
this need. Peer-to-peer learning – whether in-person or in a more virtual format – could be another
valuable method to help students better understand and prepare for the research component, and it
could also address the students’ desire to have more opportunities for contact between different
cohorts in the program.

As is normal when a program is initially developing, the MSc, Health Systems had an ad hoc and
opportunistic approach to developing international partnerships. Now that the program is more
established, it will be important to take a more systematic approach to internationalization and global
engagement that complements existing partnerships.

The question of whether the requirement for an entrance exam (e.g. GRE/GMAT, Tage Mage) affects
recruitment is worthy of closer study, particularly in the case of Francophone student recruitment.

Time-to-completion is very slightly longer than expected, and this should be monitored to ensure that it
does not become a problem. Similarly, the question of where to place the internship – whether earlier
or later in the program – should be weighed to determine where the internship could be of most benefit
to students, and whether the timing of the internship has an impact on time-to-completion.

Recommendations

The academic unit is encouraged to continue with their plans to address the opportunities and
challenges faced by the program. It is recommended that the program:

1. Develop and present a shared definition of “health systems” (e.g. on the program website), and
   use this as a basis to refine program objectives and learning outcomes in future.
2. Weigh the benefits and drawbacks of requiring entrance exams, particularly in the context of
   recruiting Francophones and Anglophones.
3. Formalize explicit guidance for students on the development of research proposals.
4. Continue monitoring time-to-completion rates, paying particular attention to the placement of
   the research internship within the program.
5. Develop a more systematic approach to internationalization and global engagement to
   complement existing partnerships.
6. Seek ways to facilitate increased engagement between cohorts.

Implementation Plan

Calendar and Deadlines
All noted recommendations should be addressed at the time of the next cyclical evaluation in 2019 –
2020.

Authorities
The authorities who are responsible for implementing and monitoring the recommendations include the
Director of the MSc Health Systems program, in collaboration with the Dean and Vice-Dean, Research of the Telfer School of Management.