Executive Summary of the 2011-12 Cyclical Review of the MSc/PhD in Microbiology and Immunology Programs
Submitted by the Graduate Program Evaluation Committee
June 26, 2013

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Program:</th>
<th>Microbiology and Immunology</th>
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<tr>
<td>Degrees:</td>
<td>Master of Science (MSc) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Microbiology and Immunology</td>
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<td>Fields:</td>
<td>There are two fields in the MSc and PhD programs: 1) Microbiology 2) Host Biology</td>
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<td>Date of external evaluators’ visit:</td>
<td>December 17-18, 2012</td>
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<td>Final evaluation:</td>
<td>Good quality</td>
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Research and graduate studies in the areas of infection and immunology are in the forefront of current health and biomedical research. The external evaluators noted that the graduate programs in microbiology and immunology provide a first-class environment for educating young scientists in these areas. These graduate programs are supported by strong faculty members, many with career awards, who can provide solid mentorship, and the programs attract excellent students. Research by the faculty members is first rate, and the program is well funded.

Notwithstanding the strengths of the programs, the evaluation identified areas for improvement. The evaluators noted that the current system of comprehensive examinations needs to be revised in order to correspond more generally with practices in this area and in the Faculty of Medicine. Students expressed concern with respect to the need for more career preparation activities at the program level, while the external consultants noted that the publication records of PhD students are uneven. The evaluators also questioned the sustainability of relying on adjunct professors for the majority of thesis supervisions. In its response, the program administration noted that it is already addressing these concerns, especially with respect to the comprehensive examinations, and that program governance is being updated.

**Recommendations**

1. The system for comprehensive examination should be revised so it is more closely aligned with practices in the biochemistry program and other programs at the Faculty of Medicine.
2. The Faculty of Medicine should ensure that the programs are appropriately governed and supported administratively to ensure continued development of the programs.
3. Ongoing efforts are needed to ensure that all thesis supervisors and students at the different sites are fully integrated into the program, that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities and that all students receive the support they need in a timely manner.
4. Greater emphasis should be placed on providing career development workshops to students at the program level. Steps should also be taken to make students more aware of such activities within the Faculty of Medicine and the FGPS.
5. Continued attention must be given to completion rates in both the MSc and the PhD programs and to PhD students’ time-to-completion rates.
Calendar and deadlines
The next cyclical evaluation must be completed by July 1, 2019. The five recommendations above are to be addressed in the next evaluation.

Authority
The director of graduate studies in microbiology and immunology, the chair of the Department of Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology as well as the vice-dean of graduate studies at the Faculty of Medicine are responsible for following up on these recommendations.