


CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE (CPRC)

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

PSYCHOLOGY

DEGREE PROGRAMS BEING REVIEWED	Psychology BA/BSc (Peterborough & Durham) Psychology MA/MSc
EXTERNAL REVIEWERS	Dr. Guy Lacroix, Carleton University Dr. Cathy Mondloch, Brock University Dr. Ian Neath, Memorial University of Newfoundland
INTERNAL REPRESENTATIVE	Dr. Igor Svishchev, Chemistry, Trent University
YEAR OF REVIEW	2016-2017
DATE OF SITE VISIT	January 31 & February 1, 2017
DUE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION REPORT BY PSYC	October 1, 2018
DATE OF NEXT CYCLICAL REVIEW	2024-2025
DATE PREPARED BY CPRC	November 1, 2017
DATE APPROVED BY PROVOST & VP ACADEMIC	November 12, 2017
SIGNATURE OF PROVOST & VP ACADEMIC	

Both the undergraduate and graduate psychology programs are the scientific study of behaviour and the mind. Developing from the interdisciplinary of the scientific field, the programs have a multitude of practical applications. The BA/BSc and the MA/MSc in Psychology collaborate to create excellence and innovation in teaching, learning, research and student development. The reviewers noted that ‘there is clearly a culture which engages all members of the Trent community, favours dialogue and collegiality, and nurtures a sense of belonging’.

In the undergraduate program students may receive either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, depending on the courses selected. The Honours, 4-year degree can be course or thesis-based. The programs are among the largest programs at Trent, attracting approximately 1000 single- or joint-majors students per year. The reviewers mentioned that a number of undergraduate students indicated, ‘the extraordinary efforts by the programs to challenge them academically, but at the same time enable them to succeed’. The primary goal of the program is to provide students with a broad exposure to diverse areas of the discipline (both natural- and social-science oriented) and an in-depth study of the issues, methodologies, research findings and contributions within the discipline.

The Psychology MSc/MA program began in September 2010. This is the program's first formal review and the reviewers commented that, 'the department should be commended for launching such a successful program'. The program has seen steady enrolment growth since inception demonstrating continued demand for this program by students. The MA/MSc program is designed to use traditional course-based instruction to provide students with exposure to a variety of methodological, statistical, and or laboratory technique. The program is two years in length and consists of focused specializations with three distinct fields: Health Psychology, Developmental Psychology, and Cognition/Perception/Neuroscience Psychology.

SUMMARY OF PROCESS

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the BA/BSc Psychology and MA/MSc Psychology underwent a review. Two arm's-length external reviewers (Dr. Guy Lacroix, Carleton University, Dr. Cathy Mondloch, Brock University and Dr. Ian Neath, Memorial University of Newfoundland) were invited to review the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to the university on January 31st and February 1st, 2017. An internal member (Dr. Igor Svishchev, Chemistry, Trent University) joined the Review Committee with the role of participating and facilitating during the site visit.

This Final Assessment Report (FAR), in accordance with Trent University's Institutional Quality Assurance Policy (IQAP), provides a synthesis of the cyclical review of the undergraduate degree program. The report considers four evaluation documents: the Programs' Self-Studies, the External Reviewers' Report, the Programs' Responses, and the Deans' Responses.

A summary of the review process is as follows: the academic units each completed a self-study which addressed all components of the evaluation criteria as outlined in Trent's IQAP. Appendices included: Curriculum Vitae; Course Syllabi; Learning Outcomes; Enrolment, Retention and Student Data; Calendar Copy; University Degree Requirements; TUFA Collective Agreement; and Student Surveys. Qualified external reviewers were invited to conduct a review of the two degree programs which involved a review of all relevant documentation (self-studies, appendices, IQAP) in advance of the site visit. A two-day site visit took place where reviewers met with senior administration, faculty, and students.

Once the external reviewers' report was received both the Programs and Deans provided responses to the report. The Cyclical Program Review Committee (CPRC) reviewed and assessed the quality of the degree programs based on the review documents and reports on significant program strengths, opportunities for improvement and enhancement, and the proposed implementation of recommendations provided by the Deans.

The Implementation Plan identifies those recommendations selected for implementation and specifies: proposed follow-up, who is responsible for leading the follow-up, and the specific timeline for addressing the recommendation, if applicable. Academic units, in consultation with their respective Dean, will submit an Implementation Report in response to the recommendations identified for follow-up. The Report is due October 1, 2018.

SIGNIFICANT PROGRAM STRENGTHS

- The reviewers commented that ‘the commitment to teaching is remarkable. The programs are rigorous and challenging and appreciated by the great majority of students’.
- The Reviewers noted faculty dedication in exposing students to a number of different research experiences, effectively preparing them for graduate studies.
- The Psychology undergraduate programs offer many opportunities for small group or one-on-one learning. The majority of courses provide opportunities for close interaction between students and instructors through seminars, labs, workshops and in-class demonstrations.
 - Small-group seminars complement the larger first-year introductory courses.
 - 2nd and 3rd courses in statistics and research method all have laboratory components.
 - 4th year provides a variety of experiential learning opportunities available to qualified students, including research practicum and thesis options
- The research practicum courses in the curriculum allow third- and fourth-year students to obtain hands-on research experience. These courses provide an additional means for students to develop knowledge and skills in research.
- Reviewers commented that, ‘The graduate program [MA and MSc] is relatively new, and has progressed very well in the short-time it has been in existence.’
- MA and MSc students complete the program in a timely fashion, and participate in at least one conference presentation.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

- The BA and BSc Psychology programs can be identical in content if a student is strategic in their course selections. The programs should evaluate the specific goals that it wants to achieve within each program and identify program-specific criteria.
- The current undergraduate curriculum may benefit from modifications providing alternate pathways leading to equally strong degrees, but with a different focus (e.g. less research oriented).
- The pool for potential applicants for CUPE positions is small and concerns arise over quality of future teachers.
- The graduate programs would be enhanced if the curriculum were further developed and regularized, with fewer reading courses.

COMPLETE LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1 (Undergraduate)

That both the department and the University think carefully before proposing any changes.

Our overall impression is that the department is delivering an excellent undergraduate program that is both challenging and highly valued by its majors. In particular, we are wary of some discussions where changes that would weaken or reduce the rigour of the program were suggested because it was thought it would lead to increased majors and increased number of students completing a psychology or honors degree.

Undergraduate Program Response

The program is in agreement with the reviewers. Any discussion about changes to our programs will need to be made from the perspective of enhancing the quality and rigour of curriculum rather than increasing our number of majors.

Decanal Response

The current route to a BA/BSc major is modelled around learning outcomes that would enable students to enter graduate School. However, not all students aspire to graduate school and the current curriculum may benefit from modifications providing alternate pathways leading to equally strong BA/BSc degrees.

RECOMMENDATION 2 (Undergraduate/Graduate)

That positions vacated by retirement be replaced immediately with tenure-track faculty members, that at least one additional tenure-track position be hired to allow the MSc Program to be delivered more effectively, and that a tenure-track faculty member be hired in Durham.

Program Responses

Undergraduate: The program agrees with the reviewers; increasing tenure-track complement would allow more effective delivery of the undergraduate program.

Graduate: Agreed, an increase to tenure-track complement would allow more effectively deliver of the graduate program.

Decanal Responses

Undergraduate: The current mix of faculty appears to be appropriate for the program, and provides sufficient flexibility to address needs. If the budget allows, it would always be desirable to increase the complement of permanent faculty.

Graduate: Staffing decisions are ultimately the responsibility of the Dean of Science. The program should continue to make tenure track requests keeping in mind the needs of the graduate program.

RECOMMENDATION 3 (Undergraduate)

That the use of overflow space should be eliminated in introductory psychology and additional sections of this course should be added.

Undergraduate Program Response

This issue has already been addressed, the program will no longer be using an overflow room.

Undergraduate Decanal Response

Issue has been resolved. As of 2017-2018 we will no longer use overflow space for large courses.

RECOMMENDATION 4 (Undergraduate/Graduate)

That TA support be more predictable and consistent from year to year.

(e.g. Directly tied to course size so that faculty can plan courses with confidence about support with regards to office house, marking, lab/seminar leadership).

Program Responses

Undergraduate: The program agrees with the reviewers about the benefits of consistency in assigning TA support to courses. The department will examine its current policy and create a new, revised policy to address the issues raised here.

Graduate: There are no TAs for graduate courses, however several factors are considered when allocating graduate student teaching assistantships.

Decanal Responses

Undergraduate: Core courses already have support through permanent staff. Allocation of TA resources to non-core courses is always a balance between needs (stability) and expertise of available TAs. I agree with the departmental responses. The department appears to use a reasonable approach to allocate GTAs.

Graduate: In agreement with the Dean of Science Response. The number of TAs is dependent on the number of graduate students that the graduate program attracts as well as their expertise. There will always be some variability from year-to-year.

RECOMMENDATION 5 (Undergraduate/Graduate)

That assignments of TAs, deadlines for submitting course syllabi, and awarding of marking support be coordinated so that instructors can plan their courses better.

Undergraduate Program Response

Deadlines for submitting course syllabi and the consideration of marking support requests are all set by the Dean's Office.

Decanal Responses

Undergraduate: Some deadlines are set by contractual agreements and allow very little flexibility. The institution continually works with departments and students to improve these processes.

Graduate: In agreement with the Dean of Science. The allocation of GTAs is specified in the CUPE II collective agreement which sets out the process and timeline for GTA allocations.

RECOMMENDATION 6 (Undergraduate/Graduate)

That professional TAs (OPSEU) be retained as they greatly enhance the program.

Undergraduate Program Response

We agree with the reviewers about the contribution and impact of our professional TAs. Without them, we simply would not be able to incorporate smaller-group style teaching in our core courses.

Decanal Responses

Undergraduate and Graduate: Agreed

RECOMMENDATION 7 (Graduate)

That the training of TAs be reviewed, with the consideration of including OPSEU TAs in the process.

Graduate Program Response

We have a limited number of OPSEU TAs and their workload is currently at capacity. Many of the teaching skills required are dependent on the course being taught, and on the instructor.

Graduate Decanal Response

Graduate Studies offers a GTA training certificate through the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Students take a variety of workshops as part of the certificate. In the latest CUPE II collective agreement, there was an increase in professional development funds for GTAs.

RECOMMENDATION 8 (Undergraduate)

That the program monitors the impact of using 'R' in its undergraduate statistics courses to determine if it is beneficial to students taking 2nd and 3rd year statistics.

Undergraduate Program Response

R is an open course (free), available on all platforms, and is becoming a popular tool in many research settings. To date, students were able to complete their lab assignments using R without major issues. We will continue to monitor the impact of using R.

Undergraduate Decanal Response

From an institutional view, the Dean welcomes the initiative to explore open source options. As long as the integrity of course offerings does not suffer, R is acceptable, especially considering that it is becoming popular and software of choice in research settings.

RECOMMENDATION 9 (Undergraduate)

That the program considers adding a capstone course or other capstone experience for Honours students who do not meet the requirements to register for a thesis.

Undergraduate Program Response

The department is not opposed to developing a capstone course for course-based honours students. To offer an alternate course-based capstone experience would require servicing up to 200 fourth-year students. We are open to discussion about developing such a capstone course provided resources are available.

Undergraduate Decanal Response

The program already offers a variety of experiential learning opportunities for upper year courses, including research practicum and thesis course. Introducing a new capstone course should therefore be optional, if instructional resources allow new course offerings.

RECOMMENDATION 10 (Undergraduate)

That the program considers distinguishing the BA and BSc programs in psychology and implementing specific criteria for both.

Undergraduate Program Response

The Program's Curriculum Committee will consider this request, investigate different options for proceeding, and report back to the department.

Undergraduate Decanal Response

The Program should consider options to distinguish the two degrees more clearly.

RECOMMENDATION 11 (Graduate)

That scheduled content courses be offered at the MA level, one per each of the three focus areas, such that the faculty who teach these courses receive teaching credit (courses would count as 'load').

Graduate Program Response

Indeed, there needs to be graduate-level content courses that are systematically offered for each of the three streams. This teaching should also be recognized as part of faculty teaching load.

Graduate Decanal Response

All graduate courses should be done on load. This seems like a reasonable recommendation and the program should investigate whether this is feasible.

RECOMMENDATION 12 (Undergraduate/Graduate)

That the program develops a formal model whereby all teaching activities (supervision of honours theses, reading courses) are considered when viewing teaching contribution.

Program Responses

Undergraduate: The program agrees with the reviewers recommendation.

Graduate: TUFA and the administration are currently working on a graduate compensation model as a result of the new Collective Agreement.

Decanal Responses

Undergraduate: A new model of teaching contributions needs to consider all aspects and must not be limited to thesis and practicum courses alone.

Graduate: As part of the latest TUFA collective agreement there is a commitment by the institution to recognize graduate supervision. The program is also working on a workload compensation model. These discussions are ongoing and the program is encouraged to report back on the results of these conversations.

RECOMMENDATION 13 (Graduate)

That the graduate program increases administrative support from 0.25 to 0.5.

Graduate Program Response

The program is in agreement.

Graduate Decanal Response

The administrative support for Psychology MSc/MA was recently increased to 0.35 to reflect increasing enrolments. The School of Graduate Studies uses a formula to ensure that there is balance between the number of students in a graduate program and admin support.

RECOMMENDATION 14 (Undergraduate)

That the program continues its ongoing discussion of the most appropriate third year statistics course.

The panel had a number of interesting alternatives, and is reluctant to recommend one approach over the others. However, the panel does recommend retaining a rigorous course, whatever the particular topic might be.

Undergraduate Program Response

The Program discussed the possibility of revising the third-year statistics course at one of its recent meetings. We want to proceed with caution and ensure that any proposed curricular revisions enhance the quality of our curriculum, and do not compromise the rigour of our courses.

Undergraduate Decanal Response

The Dean agrees with this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 15 (Graduate)

That the department and the University engage in a dialogue to see if a PhD program in experimental psychology is feasible.

Graduate Program Response

The program will examine the feasibility of developing a PhD program in experimental psychology as an extension of our current Master's program.

Graduate Decanal Response

The Dean supports this recommendation. The graduate program/undergraduate program should discuss with the Dean of Graduate Studies if there is interest and if the PhD program is a viable option.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The applicable Dean, in consultation with the Department Chair/Director of the relevant Academic Unit shall be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan. The Reporting Date for submitting a follow-up Implementation Report is indicated below and is the responsibility of the Academic Unit in consultation with the Dean.

DUE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION REPORT: OCTOBER 1, 2018

The Implementation Report should be submitted to the applicable Dean(s) who will then forward the Report to the Office of the Provost.

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-Up <i>If no follow-up is recommended, please clearly indicate 'No follow up report is required' and provide rationale.</i> <i>Indicate specific timeline for completion or addressing recommendation if different than Due Date for Implementation Report</i>	Position Responsible for Leading Follow-up
Recommendation #1 (Undergraduate) That both the department and the University think carefully before proposing any changes.	No follow up required.	
Recommendation #2 (Undergrad/Grad) That positions vacated by retirement be replaced immediately with tenure-track faculty members, that at least one additional tenure-track position be hired to allow the MSc Program to be delivered more effectively, and that a tenure-track faculty member be hired in Durham.	No follow up required. This is a faculty resource issue and is part of annual staffing plan discussions; under the purview of the Dean and Head of Trent Durham.	
Recommendation #3 (Undergraduate) That the use of overflow space should be eliminated in introductory psychology and additional sections of this course should be added.	No follow up required. Issue has been resolved; the program no longer uses overflow rooms.	
TEACHING ASSISTANTS (Undergrad/Grad) Recommendation #4 That TA support be more predictable and consistent from year to year. Recommendation #5 That assignments of TAs, deadlines for submitting course syllabi, and awarding of marking support be coordinated so that instructors can plan their courses better.	No follow up required. The program uses a reasonable approach to allocate GTAs. No follow up required. This is beyond the scope of this review; timelines are mandated through collective agreements.	

<p><u>Recommendation #6</u> That professional TAs (OPSEU) be retained as they greatly enhance the program.</p> <p><u>Recommendation #7</u> That the training of TAs be reviewed, with the consideration of including OPSEU TAs in the process.</p>	<p>No follow up required. Currently no issues with respect to OPSEU TA positions.</p> <p>No follow up required. GTAs have access to Professional Development funds and all TAs have access to training through the Centre for Teaching and Learning.</p>	
<p><u>CURRICULUM</u> (Undergraduate)</p> <p><u>Recommendation #8</u> That the program monitors the impact of using 'R' in its undergraduate statistics courses to determine if it is beneficial to students taking 2nd and 3rd year statistics.</p> <p><u>Recommendation #9</u> That the program considers adding a capstone course or other capstone experience for Honours students who do not meet the requirements to register for a thesis.</p> <p><u>Recommendation #10</u> That the program considers distinguishing the BA and BSc programs in psychology and implementing specific criteria for both.</p> <p><u>Recommendation #14</u> That the program continues its ongoing discussion of the most appropriate third year statistics course.</p>	<p>Program to provide update.</p>	<p>Chair</p>
<p><u>WORKLOAD</u></p> <p><u>Recommendation #11</u> (Graduate) That scheduled content courses be offered at the MA level, one per each of the three focus areas, such that the faculty who teach these courses receive teaching credit (courses would count as 'load').</p> <p><u>Recommendation #12</u> (Undergrad/Grad) That the program develops a formal model whereby all teaching activities (supervision of honours theses, reading courses) are considered when viewing teaching contribution.</p>	<p>Further review is necessary. Program to report back.</p> <p>The programs indicated a draft compensation model had been developed. Provide update on implementation and/or status of this workload model.</p>	<p>Chair/Director in consultation with Deans</p>

<p><u>Recommendation #13</u> (Graduate) That the graduate program increases administrative support from 0.25 to 0.5.</p>	<p>No follow up required. Administrative support has been increased to reflect increasing enrolments.</p>	
<p><u>Recommendation #15</u> (Graduate) That the department and the University engage in a dialogue to see if a PhD program in experimental psychology is feasible.</p>	<p>No follow up required. Although this falls outside the purview of this review, the program is encouraged to explore the feasibility of developing a PhD program.</p>	