

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review

MBA (Full-Time) and MBA with Co-op Programs

Date of Review: May 23 and 24 2019

In accordance with the University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the M.B.A. program. This report identifies the significant strengths of the program, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The report includes an Implementation Plan that identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the Final Assessment Report; who will be responsible for providing any resources entailed by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations and who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

Executive Summary of the Review

In accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the M.B.A. program submitted a self-study in March 2019 to the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies to initiate the cyclical program review of its programs. The approved self-study presented program descriptions, learning outcomes, and analyses of data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis. Appendices to the self-study contained all course outlines associated with the program and the CVs for each full-time member in the department.

Two arm's length external reviewers and one internal reviewer were endorsed by the Dean, Faculty of Business and selected by the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. The review team reviewed the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to McMaster University on May 23rd and 24th 2019. The visit included interviews with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and Research, Director of the program and meetings with groups of current students, full-time faculty and support staff.

The Director of the program and the Dean of the Faculty of Business submitted responses to the Reviewers' Report (July 2019). Specific recommendations were discussed, and clarifications and corrections were presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included.

- **Strengths**

- The Co-op MBA is a unique and highly successful flagship program for DeGroot and difficult to imitate.
- The Health Sciences specialization represents an area of strength and high reputation for McMaster University and DeGroot
- An exceptionally competent staff manages the recruitment, placement, and preparation processes for both Co-op and FT MBA programs, with impressive outcomes given the increasing number of international students who must be placed.
- There is a high level of community engagement by students, particularly in the Co-op MBA program.
- Overall, students expressed satisfaction with their experience in the MBA programs, particularly in the Co-op program and particularly related to the activities of the Student Experience office.
- The integrated first year curriculum was designed to address the relative inexperience of Co-op students (but it is not clear how successful the integrated courses have been).

- **Areas for Enhancement/Improvement**

- The governance of the MBA program should be changed to empower the MBA Program Director, in consultation with the Program Development Committee, to ensure success of the program. Changes should include giving the MBA Program Director a say in the hiring of MBA instructors and providing financial resources to entice the best instructors to teach in the MBA program.
- The number of full-time, tenure-track, research intensive faculty who teach in the MBA programs should be increased.
- The integrated courses (in the first semester) should be re-evaluated and more effort and resources should be placed into designing new program-specific integrated courses with clearly articulated learning goals, particularly for the Co-op MBA, as well as developing an integrative pedagogical culture among instructors.
- MBA and MBA with Co-op students should have different and separate core courses and MBA (FT) students might not require integrated courses.
- Both MBA and MBA with Co-op programs should be streamlined by reducing significantly the number of specializations and eliminating electives with small enrolments (freeing up academic resources to teach core courses). Suggested specializations are “General MBA”, “Finance”, and “Health Services Management”.
- To meet the program learning goal of providing students with a “global perspective”, courses should be offered in managing and understanding diversity and international business strategy.
- Recruitment staff should be better integrated into admission decisions.

Summary of the Reviewers' Recommendations with the Department's and Dean's Responses

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-Up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
Empower MBA Director and provide additional resources	Give MBA Director say in and veto over instructor assignments for MBA courses; Provide additional resources to incentivise teaching MBA courses and require certain FT instructors to teach some MBA courses	Associate Dean (Faculty Affairs & Accreditation) in consultation with Dean of the DeGroote School of Business	Fall, 2019
Increase the number of full-time, tenure-track, research intensive faculty teaching in the MBA program	Require certain FT, tenure-track faculty to teach some MBA courses and hire tenure-track faculty expressly for MBA teaching	Dean of the DeGroote School of Business	Over next five years
Re-evaluate/redesign the integrated courses in the first semester	a) Short-term: Bring together core instructors for planning meetings to facilitate better integration of core curriculum, in consultation with Area Chairs b) Long-term rethinking and redesign of integrated courses	a) MBA Program Director b) Associate Dean (Graduate Studies & Research) and MBA Program Director in consultation with the Dean of the DeGroote School of Business	a) Fall, 2019 – short term improvements in integration b) Fall, 2021 – long-term redesign
Separate core courses for MBA and MBA with Co-op students, possibly eliminating integrated courses for MBA program	Determine the feasibility of having separate core courses <u>or</u> separate cohorts, and of eliminating integrated courses for MBA (FT)	Associate Dean (Graduate Studies & Research) and MBA Program Director and Senior MBA Administrative Staff in consultation with the Dean of the DeGroote School of Business	Fall, 2021
Streamline MBA programs by reducing significantly the	Reduce the number of specializations based on student	Associate Dean (Faculty Affairs & Accreditation) and	Fall, 2020

number of specializations and eliminating electives with small enrolments	enrolment data and eliminate low-enrolment courses	MBA Program Director in consultation with the Dean of the DeGroote School of Business	
Offer courses in “Managing and Understanding Diversity” and in “International Business Strategy”	<p>a) We currently offer a required course, P700 (Business, Government and the Global Environment) which we will review to ensure a higher level of international content;</p> <p>b) We will explore the possibility of offering an elective course in “Managing and Understanding Diversity”;</p> <p>c) We are in the process of encouraging instructors to increase the number of global cases used and global content in other MBA courses.</p>	MBA Program Director with the MBA Program Development Committee and relevant Area Chairs in consultation with the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies & Research)	Fall, 2020
Better integrate recruitment staff into admission decisions	As of June, 2019, recruitment staff are included in admission committee meetings and have a voice in the admission decisions (although, previously, their written recommendations were reviewed and taken into consideration in making admission decisions)	MBA Program Director	Already in place

Faculty Response

The review team indicated several strengths for the MBA program reflecting the school’s commitment to this program with its different streams. The team also outlined several recommendations to further enhance the program. The program has addressed these recommendations in their response with a detailed action plan.

The Dean addressed three of the recommendations:

- The recommendation of considering designing separate core courses for co-op and full time students may result in allowing us to better cater to the needs of each of these groups and help reduce the negative perceptions of full-time students as being secondary in importance. However, given that the full-time program is mostly subscribed by international students, this separation will negatively impact the desire of international students to interact with domestic students. It would also reduce the exposure of our domestic students to global perspectives that international students are able to bring to the table. There are also obvious teaching capacity implications for such a move.

Careful consideration would have to be given, therefore, to the pros and cons of moving in this direction.

- The recommendation to significantly reduce the number of specializations to free academic resources based on student enrollment has been actively pursued at the school for some time now and has already resulted in cancelling several specializations. The Faculty will continue their efforts in that direction. However, the business analytics specialization has only become active recently and, as such, more time is needed to assess its viability.
- The recommendation that serious consideration be given to including courses on managing and understanding diversity and international business strategy is in line with the increasing globalization of business and the rapid growth in the international composition of our student body. It is not clear from the recommendation whether these courses should be required or elective courses. Adding required courses to the curriculum would necessitate the replacement of existing required courses or a reduction in the number of elective courses available to students. Such a change in curriculum requires further consideration and consultation with various stakeholders. It should be noted that efforts are underway to increase the global content of our required capstone policy course, P700 (Business, Government and the Global Environment), and the global content in other required as well as in elective courses. The Faculty will also explore interest in a new elective course in Managing and Understanding Diversity, in addition to the existing elective course International Financial Management.

Quality Assurance Committee Recommendation

McMaster's Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) reviewed the above documentation and the committee recommends that the program should follow the regular course of action with an 18-month progress report and a subsequent full external cyclical review to be conducted no later than 8 years after the start of the last review.