

**CARLETON UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON  
QUALITY ASSURANCE**

**Cyclical Review of the Master of Social Work  
Executive Summary and Final Assessment**

This Executive Summary and Final Assessment Report of the cyclical review of Carleton's Master of Social Work are provided pursuant to articles 4.2.5-4.2.6 of the provincial Quality Assurance Framework and article 5.1.9.23-24 and 5.1.9.26-27 of Carleton's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP).

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Master of Social Work is administered by Carleton University's School of Social Work, an academic unit of the Faculty of Public Affairs. As a consequence of the review, the MSW program was categorised by the Carleton University Committee on Quality Assurance (CUCQA) as being of **GOOD QUALITY WITH NATIONAL PRESENCE** (Carleton's IQAP 5.1.9.12).

The external reviewers' report, submitted on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015, offered a complimentary and constructive assessment of the MSW. For the reviewers, "it is clear ... that the program has a very positive reputation within the Faculty of Graduate Studies, the Faculty of Public Affairs, and the university in general." The report also adds that "the School is well integrated with several other units within the Faculty of Public Affairs." Furthermore, the School "is recognized provincially, nationally and internationally for its leadership role in 'structural social work,' and student competition for admission to the MSW program attests to its credibility among those applying for graduate studies in Social Work."

The reviewers praised the experiential component of the MSW. They discussed in particular the opportunity to conduct community-based research projects, which "provide an important link to community agencies and issues" and offer "an enriched research experience for students."

The report also stressed that "faculty members demonstrate a high quality of teaching expertise and a continuing record of research and scholarly work that is nationally, and in several cases, internationally recognized."

Within the context of this positive assessment, the report nonetheless made a few recommendations for the continuing enhancement of the graduate program. The recommendations were accepted by the School, the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs and the Dean of the Faculty of Public Affairs in a response to the report of the external reviewers that was received by CUCQA on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

On October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015, CUCQA received and approved an Action Plan describing how, when and by whom these recommendations will be addressed. The recommendations and the actions to be taken are detailed both in prose and in tabular form in the Action Plan.

Date: September 23, 2015

To: Dr. John Shepherd, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic)

From: Dr. Gerald de Montigny, Director, School of Social Work  
Dr. Matthias Neufang, Dean, FGPA  
Dr. André Plourde, Dean, FPA

Re: Action Plan to address the Cyclical Review for the Master of Social Work Program

Thank you and the reviewers for a very positive report on the quality of the School's program. I know that my colleagues have worked diligently over the years to ensure that the School provides our students with the best possible programs (BSW, MSW, PhD).

Over the past year the members of the School of Social Work have focused on addressing the ten issues identified by CUCQA. We continue to make significant progress in our work. In what follows I will outline both the steps taken and the steps to be taken to address each of the ten issues.

#1: Prioritize the review of learning outcomes in terms of how they are incorporated within the MSW curriculum and how they are assessed. This should be combined with a review of course outlines to identify redundancies and opportunities for new content;

In December (2014) the faculty spent a full-day refining the program level learning outcomes. Dr. Sarah Todd worked with the Director, and with faculty to develop the "Carleton School of Social Work Program Level Learning Objectives and Outcomes." This document was reviewed and passed in principle at the School of Social Work Faculty Retreat in June, 2015.

Subsequently Dr. Therese Jennissen, the BSW Supervisor, Dr. Hugh Shewell, the MSW Supervisor, and the Director further revised the document. The objective has been to create a template which combines the nine CASWE core learning objectives with the seventeen CUCQA learning outcomes developed for the MSW. This final document will be submitted to the next Departmental Board for approval by the end of 2015.

We have now aligned the CASWE Learning Objectives with the Quality Assurance Learning Outcomes.

The School has provided the document to Contract Instructors and to faculty to guide their development of course outlines, specifically to aid them in the

articulation of learning outcomes that reflect those identified in the Quality Assurance process.

In addition the Graduate Program Supervisor will continue to review all course outlines to ensure compliance with the School's Learning Objectives and Learning Outcomes.

We expect that all MSW course outlines will articulate Learning Objectives and Learning Outcomes by the Fall term 2016.

The MSW Committee will be tasked with performing an annual review of all MSW course outlines to ensure compliance with Learning Outcomes.

#2 Review electives to increase opportunities to address diversity issues, and apply direct and indirect practice skills consistent with learning outcomes;

As noted in our report the MSW committee has undertaken a review of all courses, including electives. The School is committed to ensuring that course content in core and elective courses addresses practice with diverse populations.

Additionally, through the Community Forum, and consultation with community stakeholders concerning emerging trends in social work and social services, we aim to identify gaps, and to identify elective course offerings for the 2016/17 academic year, and for subsequent years.

In addition to the routine review by the Graduate Program Supervisor, the MSW Committee, along with reviewing Learning Outcomes in course outlines (#1 above), will also review all courses with a view to enhancing the School's capacity to address diversity issues.

Through the new hires in 2015 the School is better able to address diversity issues. Dr. Patricia McGuire is a leader in issues of social work with Aboriginal communities, resilience, and work with Aboriginal women. Dr. Kenta Asakura brings expertise in practice with diverse racially marginalized and sexual minority youth.

As we proceed with the additional hire in 2016 we are committed to ensuring that the new faculty member will enable the School to continue to expand further our capacity to address diversity issues.

#3. Consider ways to meet the research and evaluation requirements of the program beyond SOWK 5405 (Research and Evaluation in Social Work), including in the practicum course;

The School is taking a multi-pronged approach to enhance research and evaluation. First, it must be noted that we are very proud of the innovative and community engaged research practice fostered through SOWK 5405. This course design brings real world research concerns into the classroom. Through the design of SOWK 5405 our students learn practical research skills, recognize that research is a pressing concern for daily practice, and that research is a life-long practice.

In 2016 MSW students who are completing a thesis or an Independent Research Project will be permitted to complete the newly introduced PhD Theory and Methods course and the Research Design Course instead of SOWK 5405.

The MSW Practicum manual was amended in 2015 to include two new learning outcomes: 1.) “applying findings of social work research”, 2.) “identifying opportunities for further inquiry stimulated by social work practice and conceptualize/develop research projects that contribute to the body of knowledge” (page 17, MSW practicum manual).

The School is also exploring through the MSW and Field Education Committees ways of strengthening and reinforcing research in the field. Dr. Shewell, the Supervisor of the Graduate Programs, has examined models for field education at other Canadian universities, which require completion by students of a research proposal as an integral component of their field experience. The School will examine this and other options during the next two years.

The School will continue to solicit and develop research based practicum opportunities. Indeed at the September 2015 agency fair, we were able to identify additional research based placements.

Dr. Adje van de Sande has agreed to take on the role of Academic Director for the Centre for Studies on Poverty and Social Citizenship. The Centre will provide an active nexus for those students wishing to do research in the areas of poverty and social citizenship. The hiring in 2016 will seek to recruit a candidate with expertise in the area of poverty and social welfare, further strengthening the research capacity of the Centre.

#4 Consider offering a more structured model for part-time completion of the MSW;

Although the School agrees that a parttime program would be desirable for many community members, especially those who are employed full time, the current provincial funding model which counts 3 part-time students as equivalent to 1 full time student, when combined with the University’s FTE enrolment expectations, renders a part-time program infeasible. Currently the School accepts 25 students in the Foundation year (those who have a BA or other non-social work degree) and 25 students into the advanced year (those who have a BSW). The effect of a program in which 50% of our existing FTE, i.e., 25 students would be part-time, would result in

admission of (3 x 25) 75 students, an increase of 50 individual students. The School's capacity to admit additional students and to find placements for those students is shaped by competition for placements in Ottawa and Eastern Ontario. In Ottawa, the School competes against the University of Ottawa School of Social Work for BSW and MSW placements, as well as Algonquin College and La Cité, which provide Social Service Worker programs. Additionally the University of Québec in Outaouais also offers a BSW program. Of course, placements for social workers increasingly face competition from co-op programs in criminology, human rights, philanthropy, etc. As the demand to enhance admissions increases, as funding for social services is cut, and as more programs develop co-op programs, the competition for limited placement resources threatens to reach a breaking point. To address the potential crisis the School's Field Practicum Coordinators are actively exploring options for the creation of innovative field experiences for our students.

It must be recognized that social work programs across Canada are facing a crisis of inadequate numbers of field placements for their students. CASWE requires that students must complete at least one placement for the MSW. In Ottawa the situation has been confounded by the fact that the University of Ottawa School of Social Work currently pays field placement agencies \$1,200.00 for every MSW student placement. Unfortunately, no similar support for field placements has been matched by Carleton University. The lack of financial incentives will need to be addressed in the next two years.

Until such time as the province changes the funding formula, the School will continue to offer a full time program, though we will commit to admit up to 3 part time students a year.

#5 Review admissions procedures to ensure applicants from equity-seeking groups are not disadvantaged;

In 2014 the MSW admissions process was significantly revised. We are currently reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the new process. A priority of this review is to assess the impact this process has had on equity-seeking groups, and to also set into place assessments to track student success once admitted.

The Supervisor of the Graduate Program will develop a full report on the School's performance concerning student admissions and the self-identification of membership in equity categories, which will be reviewed by the MSW Committee on an annual basis.

6. Develop strategies to ensure the ongoing availability of practicum placements;

We are pleased to report that with the recent hire of Brenda Morris as MSW Field Practicum Coordinator there are now two full-time instructors who are assigned to the field program. In addition, Kenta Asakura, an Assistant Professor hired effective

July 1, 2015, will focus on research that addresses social work education through the field practicum. Both these new positions affirm the priority position and recognition of field education in the School of Social Work. We are confident that the provision of new and dynamic personnel assigned to field coordination and research will allow the School to pursue the strategies developed in the field capacity report (December 2014).

7. Enhance the level of engagement with the community;

The School is closely engaged with the Ottawa-Carleton social work community. Our partnership with the social work community in Ottawa is a part of our daily work. Social workers from the community sit on key social work committees including Field Education, as well as all Hiring Committees.

In any given year, over 100 agencies and organizations across Ottawa-Carleton provide field placements for our students. Additionally the School organizes two Agency Fairs (Fall and Winter) each year. At the last Fair, almost 50 agencies attended from across Eastern Ontario. Fortunately agencies continue to recognize that Carleton MSW students provide excellent service to the community.

The School is fortunate to be able to hire leading social work practitioners in the community as Contract Instructors for courses and as Field Liaison Instructors.

Through the research course, SOWK 5405, we continue to meet community agency needs for hands-on research, and to link our students to real world research problems, partnering with an average of 12 agencies a year.

Every year, both as guests in our classes, and in special panels and events community members contribute to the School.

Finally, the School organized a Community Forum on September 11, 2015. It was a well attended event with over 40 community members participating. The Community Forum allowed members of the School to enter into dialogue about social work developments, skills, and expectations. The data will be collected, analyzed, and a course of action to guide the School in 2016-17 will be developed. Regular annual Community Fora will be scheduled moving forward.

Through the Centre for Studies in Poverty and Social Citizenship, the School co-sponsored the forum "More than Getting By: Putting daily life at the heart of our struggles" on March 20, 2015 and co-sponsored the CASWE workshop on Social Assistance with the CASWE Social Policy and Advocacy Committee on June 3, 2015.

Faculty are actively engaged in developing research partnerships linked to the community. In 2015 Sarah Todd accepted the position of the Eastern Ontario Hub Leader for YouthREX which works to support grassroots youth organizations in

conducting research and evaluation. In 2016-17 Dr. Shewell will be assuming coordination of the Carleton University Institute on the Ethics of Research with Indigenous Peoples (CUIERIP).

Several faculty in the School are active members in the Ontario Association of Social Workers (Eastern Branch) (OASW) as well as the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW). In addition other faculty are active participants on local boards and community initiatives. Other faculty provide clinical work in the community.

8. For the purpose of program evaluation, gather feedback from field instructors, community agencies and recent graduates to ensure continuing improvement;

The Field Education Committee (which consists of the two Field Practicum Coordinators, faculty, students, and community representatives from diverse practice settings) meets, and will continue to meet 5-6 times a year to evaluate and improve the field program. The Committee is in the process of developing new assessment and evaluation tools to gather feedback from field instructors and community agencies.

The School also benefits from having an active Alumni Association which aids and assists in the development of panels on professional practice, the future of social work, and new directions in social welfare.

9. Develop a hiring plan to bring the faculty complement to 17 FTEs, and a faculty recruitment strategy targeted at more senior levels;

The School has consistently affirmed that the faculty complement must be increased to at least 17.5, whether in annual budget submissions, applications for FPA faculty positions, or in regular discussions with the Dean of the Faculty of Public Affairs.

Fortunately, the School understands that senior administration at Carleton have decided to 'invest' in the School, by returning the full amount of Professor Moscovitch's salary to the School following his retirement on December 31, 2015, on the condition that the School increase undergraduate admissions by 10. The School welcomed this initiative, and agreed to increase admissions. Indeed, in 2015 the School increased BSW admissions by 23 students. Thus the School exceeded the target of 100 BSW students to admit 123 students.

At this time, one new Assistant Professor position has been allocated to the School effective July 1, 2016. This will bring the FTE to 16, and represents only a portion of the full-salary cost to be returned to the School. The School expects that the second position will be supplemented by operating funds, to provide the School with an additional position effective July 1, 2016, which would bring the FTE to 17, which

would still be less than the level recommended by the CASWE during the last accreditation.

Although the School has been fortunate to have received a bequest valued at approximately \$2.2 million, earning a projected annual income of \$85,000, the School's position is that additional hiring must be funded by University Operating Funds, not from the bequest. The School intends to use the proceeds from the bequest to strengthen our clinical capacity, to foster innovation, and to support research by faculty, MSW and PhD students, and to facilitate effective community engagement.

10. Monitor the effect on the MSW of workload issues related to the PhD program.

The revisions to the PhD program are on track to being included in 2016-17 Calendar. The revised program structure will allow students who are admitted in one year to take core courses with students who are admitted in the following year. The efficiencies created by the program revision will come into effect in 2017-18.

In 2016-17 the School will admit the first cohort of five to six students into the revised PhD program. Those students (Cohort A) will complete two core courses, SOWK 6101 (.5 credit) Theoretical Foundations in the Fall term and SOWK 6102 (.5 credit) Ethical Foundations in the Winter term (as well as the PhD seminar in Fall/Winter for .5 credit and 2.0 credits of electives). In 2017-18 a second cohort of five to six students will be admitted. Those students (cohort B) will join the students admitted the previous year, cohort A, in the courses, SOWK6201 Theory and Methods (.5 credit) in the Fall and SOWK6202 Research Design (.5 credit) in the Winter term. SOWK 6101 and 6102 will not be offered in 2017-18, but will be offered in 2018-19, as Cohort C joins Cohort B. The effect is that from 2017-18 all PhD core courses will have a registration of 10 to 12 students. Additionally, MSW students who have elected to complete the Thesis or Major Research Paper will be encouraged to register in SOWK6201 and SOWK6202 instead of the MSW core research course SOWK5405.

Finally, this redesign will allow PhD students to take MSW electives and vice versa.

## Conclusion

In summary the School is deeply committed to strengthening our ties to the professional social work community. We remain, as we have always been, primarily committed to ensuring the development of skilled and effective social work practitioners who are able to practice ethically and competently in the community. As a result of our professional commitment we have affirmed the need for relatively 'small' class sizes, optimally 12 to 14 students, especially for skills based courses. Although we are currently unable to reduce our class sizes to these optimum and

effective levels, we trust that with the ongoing recognition of our professional mission, and support from the University, we will be able to continue to ensure the provision of a high quality MSW at Carleton.

It is the School's position that, in the absence of additional FTE, it is very difficult for the School to meet our professional objectives and expectations. However, despite this situation the members of the School, both faculty and community contract instructors, have worked diligently to ensure that we are able to provide effective professional education for social work practice. Whatever recognition and success the School has achieved has been a reflection of the inordinate dedication, commitment, and hard work of faculty and staff in the School.

## School of Social Work

### Table of Actions to Address Cyclical Review, Timelines, and Actors

|   | <b>Recommendation</b>  | <b>Steps to take</b>   | <b>Individual/Committee Responsible</b>  | <b>Timeline</b>  |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| 1 | Prioritize the review of learning outcomes in terms of how they are incorporated within the MSW curriculum and how they are assessed. This should be combined with a review of course outlines to identify redundancies and opportunities for new content; | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Harmonize CASWE 'Learning Objectives' with QA 'Learning Outcomes'.</li> <li>2. Develop Carleton School of Social Work program Level Learning Objectives and Outcomes.</li> <li>3. Provide completed document to all Course Instructors</li> <li>4. Review CI course outlines for conformity with document</li> <li>5. Review all course outlines for conformity</li> </ol>                                   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Director &amp; Graduate Supervisor</li> <li>2. Director, Graduate &amp; Undergraduate Supervisors</li> <li>3. Grad &amp; Undergrad Supervisors</li> <li>4. Grad &amp; Undergrad Supervisors</li> <li>5. Grad &amp; Undergrad Supervisors</li> </ol>                | <p>Summer 2015<br/>Summer 2015<br/>Winter 2016<br/>Fall 2016<br/>Fall 2016</p>   |
| 2 | Review electives to increase opportunities to address diversity issues, and apply direct and indirect practice skills consistent with learning outcomes;   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hire new faculty to address diversity issues –hired Asakura &amp; McGuire</li> <li>2. Hire 1 new faculty</li> <li>3. Curriculum Review</li> </ol>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hiring Committee &amp; Director</li> <li>2. Hiring Committee and director</li> <li>3. Graduate program supervisor</li> </ol>   | <p>July 1, 2015<br/>July 1, 2016<br/>Ongoing,<br/>September 2016</p>   |
| 3 | Consider ways to meet the research and evaluation requirements of the program beyond SOWK 5405 (Research and Evaluation in Social Work), including in the practicum course;  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to offer SOWK5405 as a Community Based Research course</li> <li>2. Allow MSW students who do the thesis to register in the PhD Research Methods courses</li> <li>3. Develop research based practicums</li> <li>4. Review development of research practicums</li> <li>5. Develop capacity of Centre for Studies on Poverty and Social Justice to provide research placements for students</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Faculty instructors for the course.</li> <li>2. Faculty instructors for the course</li> <li>3. MSW and BSW Field Practice Coordinators</li> <li>4. MSW Supervisor</li> <li>5. Academic Director of the Centre for Studies on Poverty and Social Justice</li> </ol> | <p>Present &amp; ongoing<br/>Fall 2016</p> <p>Present &amp; ongoing</p> <p>Fall 2016 and annually thereafter<br/>Fall 2017</p> |
| 4 | Consider offering a more structured model for part-time completion of the MSW;   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to review funding formula for part-time/full time students</li> </ol>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Director &amp; Graduate Supervisor</li> </ol>  | <p>Ongoing</p>   |
| 5 | Review admissions procedures to ensure applicants from equity-seeking groups are not disadvantaged;  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Production of annual report addressing demographics of admission, focus on equity seeking groups &amp; submission of report to Faculty &amp; Departmental Board</li> </ol>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Graduate Supervisor and Director</li> </ol>  | <p>Annually<br/>Beginning 2016</p>   |
| 6 | Develop strategies to ensure the ongoing availability of practicum placements;   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthen field development capacity through hiring of a second Practicum Coordinator and a faculty member with</li> </ol>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hiring Committee recommended hire of Practicum Coordinator Brenda and Dr. Kenta</li> </ol>   | <p>Done</p>  |

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|----|--|--|---|---|
|    |  | research interest in field education<br>2. Development of Instructor with Job Description positions.   | Asakura effective July 1, 2015<br>2. Director   | Fall 2015   |
| 7  | Enhance the level of engagement with the community;  | 1. Continue to organize bi-annual Agency Fair in Fall and Winter<br>2. Organize Community Forum  | 1. BSW & MSW Practicum Coordinators<br>2. Graduate Supervisor & Faculty   | Fall<br>Winter<br>Sept 11, 2015 & annually thereafter |
| 8  | For the purpose of program evaluation, gather feedback from field supervisors, community agencies and recent graduates to ensure continuing improvement; | 1. Develop and Conduct annual survey of field supervisors<br>2. Develop survey of recent graduates and alumni  | 1. Instructor for SOWK 5405 & MSW/BSW Practicum Coordinators<br>2. Instructor for SOWK 5405, Graduate Supervisor & Director | May 2016<br><br>May 2017                              |
| 9  | Develop a hiring plan to bring the faculty complement to 17 FTEs, and a faculty recruitment strategy targeted at more senior levels;                     | 1. Continue to work with the Dean of FPA to secure necessary resources for the School.<br>2. Ensure that there is recognition by senior administration of expansion of School program enrolment. | 1. Director<br><br>2. Director  | Ongoing   |
| 10 | Monitor the effect on the MSW of workload issues related to the PhD program.   | 1. Implement revised PhD program beginning September 2016.   | 1. Graduate Supervisor & Director   | May 2017  |