

TWO (2) YEAR POST CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEW FOLLOW-UP REPORT

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PROGRAM	IQAP REVIEW DATE	SENATE APPROVED
MES/MESc Environment -MA program in Environmental Studies -MSc program in Environmental Science	April 8, 2019	December 13, 2019

This report was approved by Senate on March 11, 2022

PROGRESS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION	% COMPLETE	RESPONSIBLE MEMBER/UNIT	STATUS IF NOT COMPLETED, PLEASE PROVIDE PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE
External Reviewers Recommendation #1: marketing & recruitment strategy	In progress	Marketing Recruitment Registrar's Office Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies	The university is in the process of developing its new strategic and academic plans. As noted in the PVPAR's response to the recommendation, the university is continuously working on improving its marketing and recruitment strategy. Due to the COVID pandemic, all recruitment was done virtually. During 2021-2022, recruitment continues to be done virtually through information sessions, promotional videos of respective programs, and liaising with prospective students. Furthermore, an international recruitment manager was hired to increase international enrolments. An annual update to the MES/MESc website and brochure was facilitated by Marketing in summers 2020 and 2021.
Recommendations #2: GS faculty membership; program structure; and	July 2020 – In progress	Dean of Arts and Science; Dean of Graduate	In consultation with the faculty and the Deans, a new GS coordinator was appointed-- Dr. April James, Professor of Geography (former CRC in Watershed Analysis and Modelling). Dr.

administrative oversight
(GS coordinator)

Studies and
Research

James has spearheaded many improvements to the MES/MESc program, including a review of the MES/MESc curriculum; streamlining of the Perspectives Course; and a review of GS faculty participation in the program. The course structure and delivery of GS programs continues to be addressed at the GS Committee level.

In September 2020, a new Terms of Reference document was approved by MES/MESc membership, creating a Steering Committee of 5 faculty to oversee administration of the program. This committee has successfully implemented addition of a new elective (e.g. ENST 5106 Multispecies Ethnography), developed a program student funding policy (approved Nov 2021), added the flextime option for the MRP route (Senate approved Nov 2021) and a January start for both Thesis and MRP routes (pending Senate approval).

Additional review of MES/MESc program structure, core courses and delivery, potential for communal graduate courses with other programs and development of program specific policies are ongoing.

External Reviewers Recommendation #3:
Being a program without a departmental home creates some challenges and opportunities that we identify throughout the report.

In progress

Dean of Arts and
Science
PVPAR

Currently, the MES/MESc program sits under the Graduate Studies programs overseen by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science and the Dean of Graduate Studies. The option of establishing a School of Environment has been discussed during the Arts and Science Retreats in the summer of 2020 and 2021. The consultation with faculty resulted in developing an undergraduate program in Environmental Science and Studies (in progress). Once the programs have gone through the curriculum processes and approved by the QAC and Ministry, the School or Department of Environment can be further considered. For the time being, the program is overseen by the Department of Geography and the Department of Biology and Chemistry and the MES/MESc Steering committee.

External Reviewers Recommendation #4:
The combination of two degrees (MES and MESc) and two tracks (1 year MRP option; 2 year thesis option) places strain on program resources and

In progress

Dean of
Graduate
Studies and
Research

The MES/MESc Steering committee is currently initiating a review of comparator programs to support consideration of sustainable program structure. Currently the program is primarily research-based with the 2-year thesis option well integrated into and supporting faculty membership research programs and training environments. Review

causes confusion/dissatisfaction among students. We identify specific concerns and offer suggestions on how to address these in SECTION C.

will aim to clarify options (e.g. more flexible program structure and continued focus on 2-yr thesis; professionalization of 1-yr MRP and/or course option) to determine the best fit for overall program sustainability specific to Nipissing University.

External Reviewers Recommendation #5:
Review of resources

April 2020

Dean of Arts and Science; Dean of GS and Research

The program has a new GS coordinator and Steering committee. The coordinator in consultation with the Faculty Dean annually adjust the budget aiming to reflect the program's needs (in alignment with broader institutional demands).

External Reviewers Recommendation #6:

Although most of our recommendations target specific issues within the program, the vision of/for the program could use some reflection and clarification.

In progress

Dean of Arts and Science;
Dean of GS and Research

The program is research-based, with professionalization opportunities for students at the seminar and speaker series level. As the strategic and academic plans are in the process of being developed, further discussion regarding a professional stream will unfold, supported in part by the program intercomparison review being initiated by the MES/MESc Steering committee.

With the development of the new BSc Environmental Science and BA Environmental Studies, the Faculty Dean in collaboration with the Departments of Geography and Biology and Chemistry is working on creating direct pathways from undergraduate A&S programs to the MES/MESc programs. Additional pathways of post bacheloriolate in Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies are also being considered.

External Reviewers Recommendation #7:
Current resource constraints (limited teaching capacity, limited student funding/relatively high tuition) seem to limit the prospects for future program growth.

November 2021; in progress.

Dean of Arts and Science;
Dean of GS and Research

Discussion of further streamlining of the program's structure is ongoing and will be informed by the program intercomparison review. Addition of flextime option for the MRP has been completed and a January start to existing programs will also facilitate access to the programs. In consultation with the new GS coordinator and Steering committee, faculty participation in the program and course offerings are increasing.

In 2019, a proposal for a new Tier II CRC in Climate and Environmental Change was submitted by the Department of Geography and was selected by the administration for approval. In fall 2020/winter 2021 the search committee interviewed and selected a candidate. The candidate submitted their proposal for the CRC in fall 2021 and we are awaiting approval (anticipated in April 2022).

This candidate will be cross-appointed between Depts of Geography and Biology/Chemistry. The candidate will bring expertise in mercury fate and transport, landscape biogeochemistry at interfaces of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. They will be an excellent addition to both undergraduate and graduate programming in Environmental Sciences.

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TO DATE

Most of the recommendations outlined above have been addressed or are in progress with consideration of impacts on faculty time due to COVID-19 disruptions. The program structure has been reviewed and is being further evaluated and/or adjusted. A new GS coordinator was put in place in July 2020 and the MES/MESc Steering committee approved in September 2020. The faculty membership has been reviewed and the GS coordinator/Steering committee continues to streamline teaching contributions to the program/s. At present, the MES/MESc program is overseen by the Department of Geography and the Department of Biology and Chemistry, with the GS Coordinator, and in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. The Dean of Arts and Science and the GS Coordinator review the budget and resources annually. Furthermore, following recruitment data and student interest in environmental issues, the Dean of Arts and Science struck a committee to develop a BA Environmental Studies and BSc Environmental Science programs to strengthen the intake the graduate studies level and to establish pathways to the MES/MESc programs. The program proposals are currently going through the institutional curriculum approval process and post bachelariate options are being considered.

The Dean of Graduate Studies and Research initiated a review of all GS programs at Nipissing University and is currently working on streamlining course requirements across the existing NU graduate programs. A flex-time for MRP option in MES/ MESc to align with the rest of Arts and Science graduate programs has been approved by on November 12, 2021 and a second motion for January start is pending, that will support more flexible program access.

A new CRC in Climate and Environmental Change is anticipated to join the program in Summer 2022 (pending approval from the federal government) and will contribute to supporting undergraduate programs in Environmental Sciences and the MES/MESc program.

LIST OF ACTION ITEMS LEADING UP TO NEXT REVIEW

- Establishing the School of Environment as an administrative body that will have oversight over environment-related programs.
- Considering of program structural revisions (e.g. more flexible program structure and continued focus on 2-yr thesis; professionalization of 1-yr MRP and/or course option) to differentiate the MES/MESc programs at Nipissing University

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS/NEXT STEPS – PLEASE ADD CONCLUDING SUMMARY REGARDING NEXT STEPS

The MES/MESc programs continue to strengthen its interdisciplinary mandate. While the program structure is being iteratively addressed, further discussion regarding administrative oversight will unfold once the strategic and academic planning processes have been concluded.