

2023-2024



# Annual Report

**Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement (OAQE)**

*Supporting Academic Excellence and Innovation  
Through Continuous Program Enhancement*

Academic programs are dynamic – they are continuously shaped by changes in the discipline, by department, faculty and institutional priorities, and by changes in the workplace, in student demand and in relation to innovations in pedagogy and instructional technology. In addition to ongoing programmatic updates from year-to-year, the cyclical program review process, as well as the new program proposal process, there are opportunities to step back and carefully examine these dynamic factors. This important program review and development work helps to ensure intentionality and consistency across curriculum, student support, policy and unit operations.

The Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement (OAQE) and its partners are further building supports for this dynamic programmatic reality in several ways. 1- Introduced this past year, [Lightcast software](#) can produce [employment reports](#) that show employment opportunities and projections for upcoming and recent graduates. With parameters guided by the program learning outcomes, reports can be tailored to suit a program's specific needs. Interested undergraduate programs can contact [OAQE@uwo.ca](mailto:OAQE@uwo.ca), and graduate programs can contact [cloosley@uwo.ca](mailto:cloosley@uwo.ca). 2- Western Libraries is reshaping the library reports provided in support of program reviews to outline what is offered as well as a prospective plan that could further enhance library support in relation to each program's specific objectives. 3- As part of a pilot offering in winter 2024, the OAQE coordinated optional focus groups with program students led by trained student leaders. The resulting reports shared back with programs in support of their self-study preparations have proved insightful. Programs clearly heard from the student voice about strengths to leverage and areas that could be improved – a helpful blend of feedback to support celebration, reflection, visioning and planning.

As with the dynamic reality of Western, King's and Huron academic programs, the OAQE and its partners ensure that the equally dynamic nature of quality assurance and program development is reflected in its own processes and practices. A principal catalyst for the OAQE's own self-study, visioning and planning has been the provincially led quality assurance audit that wrapped up with the receipt of the final report in August 2024. This caps a two-year audit process that you can learn more about by visiting the [OAQE website here](#). In essence, we are pleased to share that the audit revealed several commendations in addition to some recommendations and suggestions. Overall, Western's thorough work and sustained commitment to quality assurance were highlighted through examples of committee work, increasingly robust and streamlined processes, and collaborative program supports. More on the outcomes of Western's quality assurance audit in a dedicated section later in this report.

Using the momentum and feedback received from the provincial audit as a springboard, the 2024-2025 academic year will see planning, revisiting the [OAQE Strategy Map](#) and the gradual implementation of suggestions received. As part of this next wave of concerted planning and change, the OAQE will be reaching out to its key partners to discuss shared objectives and areas where the OAQE can further build its supports and streamline its processes. I look forward to these conversations!

**Jovan Groen, Ph.D.**

Director of Academic Quality and Enhancement



## New Programs

### Undergraduate

- Minor in Entrepreneurship, Huron
- Major in China Studies, Huron
- Major and Minor in Animal Ethics and Sustainability Leadership, Huron
- Honours Specialization in Financial Economics, King's
- Certificate in Ecological Justice and Climate Ethics, King's
- Certificate in Climate Change and Society
- Certificate in Entrepreneurship
- Certificate in Purpose Driven Leadership

### Graduate

- Teaching and Learning, MTL
- Professional Practice, Clinical Leadership and Education, GDip
- Climate Risk Assessment and Opportunity, GDip
- Master of Climate Risk Assessment and Opportunity, MCR

### 14 Undergraduate Programs

(11 completed | 4 in progress)

2 @ 

7 @ 

2 @ 

## Cyclical Program Reviews



### 5 Graduate Programs

(3 completed | 2 in progress)

### 37 Across All Programs

49% (18) Changes to Program Requirements or Learning Outcomes

24% (9) Addition of a New Field, Minor Module or Certificate

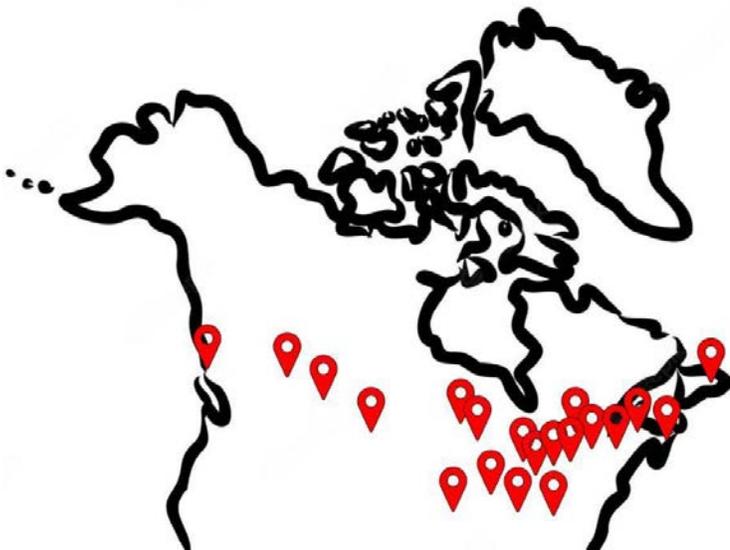
19% (7) Program, Field or Module Closure

2% (1) Integration of a Work-Integrated Learning Option

5% (2) Change in Degree Designation



## Major Modifications



## Institutional Origin of This Year's 50 External Reviewers

# Western's Academic Quality & Enhancement Team

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Visit the OAQE website @ <https://oage.uwo.ca/>

## Key Partners

- Office of the Vice-Provost Academic Programs
- School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
- Centre for Teaching and Learning
- University Secretariat
- Office of Institutional Planning and Budgeting
- Office of the Registrar
- Western Libraries
- Office of the Vice Provost, Academic Planning, Policy & Faculty
- Office of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
- Office of Indigenous Initiatives
- Western Alumni



***Western's OAQE works to ensure the quality of the University's undergraduate and graduate academic programs by leading quality assurance and enhancement processes in partnership with academic leaders and administrators across all departments, faculties, schools, and support units.***

## Audit of Western's Quality Assurance Processes and Practices

The outcome of this year's audit of Western's quality assurance (QA) processes is a testament to the commitment and ongoing work of Western's QA community – for which key members are the faculty and program leaders who shepherd the reflection, deliberation, visioning and planning processes. As noted in the audit report:

*“The Audit Team recognized that much has been done across the University since the last Cyclical Audit [in 2013-14] to strengthen the institution's work on quality assurance and its processes and practices. A strong commitment to QA and to continuous improvement across the campus was clearly evident through the documentation submitted for audit as well as through the discussions during the site visit.”*

*“The University has incorporated the notion of continuous improvement [...] in its academic programs and this understanding has been embraced by the campus community. Western is also proactive in introducing innovative practices (e.g. the [QA Academy](#)) to strengthen the awareness of the value of QA and its assessment.”*

Among the suggestions received, the audit team invited Western to consider expanding the pool and training of new internal reviewers for site visits; refining the process for appointing external reviewers; exploring additional ways to engage all program representatives in the mid-cycle progress reporting stage; more directly involving academic units in the preparation of implementation plans; and finding additional opportunities for engaging alumni in the cyclical program review process.

Springboarding from the new QA supports mentioned earlier in the report, from enhancements in association with the audit suggestions, and from ongoing improvements stemming from collaborations with OAQE partners, the years ahead will be animated with constructive change and innovation.

The full audit report is available on [the OAQE website](#). In the new year, a webpage will be added to outline a plan of action for the implementation of the audit suggestions and related enhancements to further bolster Western's quality culture.

## 2023-2024 Program Review Final Assessment Reports

Notable trends across program reviews completed over the past year include greater inclusion of the student voice in the self-study and a continued increase in the robustness of reflections and actions associated with the integration of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Decolonization and Indigenization into the teaching and learning experience.

Emerging themes in the feedback that students and alumni have provided to programs as part of the review process include the following.

- **Impactful Program Features:**
  - **Committed Instructors:** Engaged and passionate professors who care about both the subject matter and their students.
  - **Relevance and Diversity in Curriculum:** Integration of contemporary issues and diverse perspectives into the curriculum were noted as beneficial for student engagement and preparedness for the workplace.
  - **Hands-on Learning:** Practical, hands-on components such as labs, small group sessions, and real-world applications were highlighted as particularly impactful on student learning outcomes.
  - **Sense of Community:** Building and maintaining a supportive program culture through effective communication, inclusion of student leaders, and fostering a sense of belonging among students was emphasized.
  - **Support Services:** Availability and quality of support services such as academic counseling and mentoring initiatives were highlighted as critical for student success.
- **Areas in Need of Program Enhancement:**
  - **Clear communication:** Need for better communication with students about program requirements, deadlines and availability of support. Often websites housed outdated information and contact details.
  - **Regular Feedback Mechanisms:** To help with ongoing program enhancements, it was suggested to administer regular surveys or meetings with students throughout the year to gather more continuous feedback on program experiences.
  - **Connections with the Workplace:** Limited exposure to connections with the industry or the community. Might there be more partnership opportunities – to bring students into the community or bring persons from the workplace into the classroom?

Illustrating a concerted effort by programs to address historical inequities, enhance diversity representation, and create inclusive learning environments that respect and integrate diverse perspectives and knowledge systems, the following themes emerged across this year’s self-studies and program proposals.

- **Curriculum Development and Revision:** Many programs have developed or revised courses to incorporate themes of race, gender, Indigenous perspectives and decolonization.
- **Faculty Diversity and Training:** Efforts are being made to increase the diversity of faculty through targeted hiring practices. Faculty members are also undergoing bias training to ensure a more inclusive learning environment.
- **Community Engagement and Partnerships:** Several programs emphasize community engagement, particularly with Indigenous communities, aiming to create inclusive relationships and incorporate Indigenous perspectives into their activities and curriculum.
- **Student Support and Inclusivity:** Programs are implementing support structures for students from equity-deserving groups, including specialized support groups, revised admissions processes and holistic reviews of applicants to ensure diversity.

The following programs were reviewed during this academic year. The full versions of each of the Final Assessment Reports (FARs) can be found on [the OAQE website](#) by using the hyperlinks embedded in the program names below.

# Cyclical Program Reviews

## Don Wright Faculty of Music

- I. [Music, DMA, MA; Music Theory, MA; Musicology, MMus, PhD](#) (Approved in February 2024)

## Faculty of Arts & Humanities

- I. [Visual Arts, BA](#)
- II. [Visual Art, MA, MFA, PhD](#) (Approved in November 2023)
- III. [Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies, MA., PhD](#)

## Western Law

- I. Law LL.M., Ph.D., M.S.L (Pending final approval)

## Faculty of Science

- I. [Computer Science, BSc](#)
- II. [Integrated Science, BSc](#)
- III. [Astronomy & Physics](#), MSc, PhD (Approved in November 2023)
- IV. [Environment and Sustainability](#), MES (Approved in November 2023)

## Faculty of Social Science

- I. [Political Science, BA](#)
- II. Economics, BSc (Pending final approval)
- III. Economics, MA, PhD (Pending final approval)
- IV. [History, MA, PhD](#)

## Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry

- I. Undergraduate Medical Education (Pending final approval)

## Richard Ivey Business School

- I. Business, HBA (Pending final approval)

## Huron University College

- I. [Psychology, BA](#)

## King's University College

- I. [Bachelor of Social Work, BA](#)
- II. [English, BA](#)
- III. [Master of Social Work, MSW](#)

## Inter-Affiliate Programs

- I. [Jewish Studies, BA](#) (Huron-King's)