



**Honours Business Administration (HBA)  
Program**  
**Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan  
November 2024**

<b>Faculty / Affiliated University College</b>	Ivey Business School	
<b>Degrees Offered</b>	B.A.	
<b>Date of Last Review</b>	2015-2016	
<b>External Reviewers</b>	Dr. Kathryn Brohman, Smith School of Business Queen's University	Dr. Ari Pandes, Haskayne School of Business University of Calgary
<b>Internal Reviewer</b>	Dr. Ken Yeung, Associate Dean, Academic Faculty of Science	Sarah Tribe Student in Integrated Science with Chemistry
<b>Date of Site Visit</b>	April 9 & 10, 2024	
<b>Date Review Report Received</b>	May 17, 2024	
<b>Date Program/Faculty Response Received</b>	Program: June 18, 2024 Faculty: June 18, 2024	
<b>Evaluation</b>	Good Quality	
<b>Approval Dates</b>	SUPR-U: December 4, 2024 ACA: January 7, 2025 Senate (for information): January 17, 2025	
<b>Year of Next Review</b>	2031-2032	
<b>Progress Report</b>	June 2027	

### **Overview of Western’s Cyclical Review Assessment Reporting Process**

In accordance with Western’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a summary of the cyclical review, internal responses, and assessment and evaluation of the Honours Business Administration (HBA) Program delivered by the Ivey Business School.

This FAR considers the following documents:

- the program’s self-study brief;
- the external reviewers’ report;
- the response from the Program; and
- the response from the Dean, Ivey Business School.

This FAR identifies the strengths of the program and opportunities for program enhancement and improvement, and details the recommendations of the external reviewers – noting those recommendations to be prioritized for implementation.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the FAR that have been selected for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, specifies any action or follow-up that is required, and defines the timeline for completion.

The FAR (including Implementation Plan) is sent for approval through the Senate Undergraduate Program Review Committee (SUPR-U) and ACA, then for information to Senate and to the Ontario Universities’ Council on Quality Assurance. Subsequently, it is publicly accessible on Western’s IQAP website. The FAR is the only document from the undergraduate cyclical review process that is made public; all other documents are confidential to the Program, Ivey Business School, and SUPR-U.

## **Executive Summary**

The Honours Business Administration (HBA) Program is Ivey Business School's largest and longest running academic program, with 1,753 students enrolled in the 2023-2024 academic year. The HBA Program is a second entry program; operating a 2+2 model where students complete a minimum of 10.0 university credits in the first two years at university prior to entry to the HBA Program. The duration of the HBA candidacy is either two years for students pursuing a Bachelor of Arts (HBA); three years for students pursuing a combined degree in HBA and another program at Western or one of its affiliated university colleges; or four years for students pursuing a combined degree in HBA and Law.

The self-study included engagement with students via year-end surveys, a student townhall and listening sessions and targeted evaluations of newly implemented learning modules. Staff and Faculty member engagement took place via a dedicated team retreat in December 2022 and was equally facilitated by Ivey's own internal Curriculum and Program Review process.

The external reviewers shared a positive assessment of the Ivey HBA Program. They offer ten recommendations with considerations for further enhancement.

## **Strengths and Innovative Features Identified by the Program**

- Students engage with approximately 300 cases across their core and elective courses. Cases are particularly well suited to the presentation of complex problems and are illustrative of situations from the world beyond the classroom.
- Recent hire of a Director of Culture and Inclusion and the development of an EDI Learning Module, which is mandatory for all incoming students.
- A very robust applicant pipeline that supports future growth as space and other resources allow.
  - Continued program growth allows offering of new course options which enables students to design a program suited to their needs and interests.
- New onboarding week comprised of a Values Studio session, Academic and Program Onboarding, and an introduction to Career Management Essentials.
- Strong portfolio of co-curricular and experiential learning activities including business case competitions and experiential learning courses (study trips and client field projects) offered by Ivey and affinity group/clubs.
- Commitment to leadership development via events such as the Ivey HBA Leadership Day—a first-hand look at the development of good leadership from some of Canada's most respected practitioners; and the Leader Character & Candour Conference with leaders who deliver compelling messages about the importance character and candour.
- A Sustainability certificate that empowers Ivey HBA students to build and lead more sustainable organizations.

- *The Path: Your Journey through Indigenous Canada (The Path)* created by Indigenous Scholars, storytellers, and Elders as a means of introducing students to the importance of the relationship Indigenous peoples have with the land.

### **Areas of Improvement Identified and Discussed by the Program**

- Continue significant recruiting efforts to increase out of province applications, Indigenous applicants, and Black applicants.
- Build up of, and governance for, affinity groups to support marginalized students/ groups (Ivey Pride, BSIC, International Students).
  - Continue efforts to enhance equity and inclusion within the curriculum.
- Explore ways of incorporating Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI into the curriculum.
- Finding opportunities for shorter and more focused international opportunities.
  - Increase the support of, and access for, students pursuing exchanges to leverage our available capacity with partner schools.

### **Review Process**

As part of the external review, the review committee, comprising two external reviewers, an internal faculty reviewer, and an internal student reviewer were provided with Volume I and II of the self-study brief in advance of the scheduled review and then met in-person over two days with the:

- Vice-Provost (Academic Programs)
- Associate Vice-Provost (Academic Planning, Policy and Faculty Relations)
- Director of Academic Quality and Enhancement
- Dean, Ivey Business School
- Associate Dean (Faculty Development)
- Associate Dean (Programs)
- HBA Program Director
- Executive Director, Recruiting and Admissions
- Associate Director, HBA Recruitment
- Executive Director Program Operations
- Director, Admissions and Financial Aid
- London Program Operations Director
- Director, Student Experience
- Director of EDI
- Head Librarian, C.B. “Bud” Johnson Business Library
- Program Partners in the Faculties of Law, Engineering and Music
- Administrative and Program Staff
- Program Faculty
- Program Students

Following the site visit, the external reviewers submitted a comprehensive report of their findings which was sent to the Program and Dean for review and response. Formative documents, including Volumes I and II of the Self-Study, the External Report, and the Program and Decanal responses form the basis of this Final Assessment Report (FAR) of the Honours Business Administration Program. The FAR is collated and submitted to SUPR-U by the Internal Faculty Reviewer with the support of the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement.

### **Summative Assessment – External Reviewers’ Report**

External reviewers noted that *“Overall, the HBA program has a lot of strong attributes. It is evident that teaching is highly valued, and faculty and support staff are clearly engaged with the student classroom experience. Ivey has a long history of teaching excellence, and in particular case-based teaching and learning, and there continues to be great pride in this tradition and the School.”*

### **Strengths of the Program**

- Strong and creative attributes in HBA content and delivery including sustainability, international business, learning through action (LTA), and entrepreneurship with Ivey faculty being recognized as Canada’s top Business and Management scientists by Research.com.
- The Faculty building and gathering spaces – including the new Western Morrisette Institute for Entrepreneurship.
- Great network of partner schools for international student exchange programs.
- Recent hiring of research-intensive faculty resulted in significant growth in combined-degree opportunities, and ensures that the curriculum remains current, especially in relation to the case method.
- Sustainability is one of Ivey’s key critical research areas of interest, attracting international scholars to Ivey studying topics such as responsible leadership, regenerative agriculture, and carbon reduction.
  - Times Higher Education Impact Ranking recognizes Ivey’s research in the field of sustainability as one of the greatest contributors to sustainability research and teaching.
- Sustainability Certificate and an Entrepreneurship Certificate. These are relevant and forward-looking certificates given the importance of both these subject areas in the current business environment
- Ivey’s Learning Through Action (LTA) course integrates learning from different managerial perspectives and applies that learning to leadership essentials.

### **Prospective Improvements for the Program to Consider**

- More effectively demonstrate how the HBA program is delivering on Western's Degree Outcomes. (*Associated with Recommendation #1*)
- More structured approach to aligning program learning outcomes (PLOs) to specific courses would help to address potential redundancy and overlap in the curriculum across the different subject areas.
  - Clarify how PLOs are defined for combined degree offerings (*Associated with Recommendation #3*)
  - Clarify how elective HBA2 courses align to PLOs.
- Explore certification option with one of the three accrediting bodies to ensure that the program remains robust and meets learner and employer needs. (*Associated with Recommendation #2*)
  - Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB),
  - Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP)
  - International Accreditation for Business Education (IACBE).
- Adopt an integrated learning experience for combined programs and move away from the present two parallel streams of learning. (*Associated with Recommendation #3*)
- Heavy dependence on limited term positions that bring industry experience but lack the theoretical knowledge necessary for Ivey to stay current with changing management theories and practices. (*Associated with Recommendation #4*)
- Evaluate admission requirements and process in response to the significant changes in high school trends, business environment, and the lack of students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. (*Associated with Recommendation #7, 8 & 9*)
- Students raised concerns about 1) lack of diversity at Ivey and effectiveness of the LTA courses; 2) case method being more conducive to extroverted students; 3) career services focused on traditional job opportunities rather than future-oriented careers; 4) high risk aversion in choice of subject area in the first 2 years due to challenging entry requirement; 5) recruitment cycle coinciding with the beginning of the 3rd year is a stressor; and 6) need for greater administrative transparency in decision making processes. (*Associated with Recommendation #6, 9 & 10*)
- Concerns about how the HBA program is able to develop the deeper business tools and skills required by changing business practices that are more data-driven and quantitative.
- More international students would add valuable diversity, especially as business continues to become more globalized.

**Summary of the Reviewers’ Recommendations and Program/Faculty Responses**

The following are the reviewers’ recommendations in the order listed by the external reviewers.

Reviewers’ Recommendations	Program/Faculty Response
<p><b>Recommendation #1</b> Complete a comprehensive mapping of HBA Program Learning Outcomes to Western Degree Outcomes (WDOs). - map core (HBA1) and elective (HBA2) courses to HBA PLOs - provide more clarity on PLOs for combined degree offerings</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The HBA Program will embark on a comprehensive mapping of the Program’s Learning Outcomes to Western Degree Outcomes commencing July 2024. A taskforce that includes faculty and staff has been established to support this work. When the taskforce meets in July, it will establish an engagement plan with the HBA Association’s student elected representative for academic affairs. A Faculty Forum will be scheduled following the taskforce meetings to enable faculty engagement with this mapping exercise.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Dean’s Office supports the program’s mapping of the HBA Program Learning Outcomes to Western’s Degree Outcomes which will be undertaken through a taskforce led by the outgoing HBA Faculty Director. This mapping process will begin in July.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #2</b> Pursue accreditation from one of the three major business school accreditors: Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP), or International Accreditation for Business Education (IACBE).</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The Program is exploring AACSB accreditation and preparing required background documents and data in preparation for this process. It is a significant investment, and a decision will be made within the next academic year after Ivey’s new Dean is in place.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Dean’s Office will support the program through the submission process for AACSB accreditation. Ultimately, this decision will be that of the incoming Dean.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation #3</b> Enhance collaboration with non-Ivey faculties to design learning pathways for combined degree programs that adhere to the WDOs.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The Program will continue to work with main campus colleagues to further enrich combined degree opportunities to support enriched, diverse and pluralistic classrooms.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> Dean’s Office will equally continue to work with main campus colleagues to find avenues to further support dual degree opportunities that will further enrich and diversify the learning experience.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #4</b> Explore creative solutions to reduce dependency on limited term positions in a way that research-oriented faculty have more influence on Ivey’s content and curriculum.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The present teaching complement is 80% PhD holders. Of the limited duties (LT) faculty, 76% are PhD holders; these are faculty members who are capable of influencing curriculum content.</li> <li>• Innovation in curriculum is encouraged through the internal Curriculum and Planning Review Committee (CPRC). The Program is currently engaging in a new process whereby each Area Group (discipline area) is reporting out to the CPRC on how they intend to stay current and innovate curriculum within their area of expertise.</li> </ul> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Dean’s Office is confident that instructors have the requisite background and training to influence the curriculum content.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #5</b> Re-visit the 2+2 program structure.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The 2+2 continues to offer a unique approach to Business education. HBA program is not marketed as one that develops specialists but individuals capable of managing complex working environments. 90+% of graduates are hired approximately 3-months post-graduation. For students seeking more specialized skill sets, these are offered through either combined (dual) degrees or through specialized Masters programs. The Program recognizes the unwillingness of some potential applicants to “risk” not gaining admission and has decided to recruit students that will take risks and have the drive and resilience to meet the standards for admission. A limitation of a direct pathway to business school from high school is that it can adversely impact equitable representation of marginalized students, as supported by data in the higher education and inequality literature. An advantage of the 2+2 is that it presents the opportunity to engage with students from programs in the university that have historically higher representation of marginalized students; thus, allowing Ivey to have a more diverse pipeline of students who consider business school.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Dean’s Office will continue to reflect on the reviewer’s comments regarding the 2+2 approach. At this point in time, the belief is that the 2+2 still offers an important and unique approach to Business education. This approach develops well-rounded individuals that have several unique capabilities to offer to prospective employers; placement rates support this contention. Furthermore, the 2+2 attracts students that will take a risk on themselves and have the drive and resilience to meet the standards for admission while also allowing for the potential to attract a more diverse student population.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation #6</b> Director of Culture and Inclusion should engage with students to better understand EDID related challenges and further Embed principles of EDID in the broader HBA curriculum and through the practice of teaching.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The Director of Culture and Inclusion plays an active role in: 1) the recruitment and admissions process; the increase in representation seen at Ivey over the last 3 years is, in part, related to this intentionally collaborative work; 2) evaluating the Advanced Entry Opportunity admissions leadership scorecard, making recommendations that the program has adopted; and 3) exploring additional opportunities to further embed EDID in the program by enhancing the Learning Through Action modules (and their assessment) and week one’s Program Onboarding in the Fall term.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> Recruitment and Admissions has actively involved Ivey’s Director of Culture &amp; Inclusion in the HBA admissions process, establishment of admission criteria, and in the evaluation and modification of the HBA Advanced Entry Opportunity (AEO) admissions leadership scorecard. The Director continues to be engaged in assessing and contributing to modifications of the current curriculum based on feedback from the current and prior year cohorts.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #7</b> Explore opportunities for the Admissions and Alumni relations teams to enhance collaboration to better address current limitations with regard to AEO status, grade inflation, and financial accessibility.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The Program has started to see positive outcomes from efforts to expand AEOs - i.e., fewer GTA based students, more diversity across a number of demographic variables: ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability and Indigenous identity. The Program recognizes that continuing efforts are necessary to increase the financial accessibility of the program, such as, 1) informing applicants of the 4-year cost of a degree not just the two years at Ivey; 2) the continued work with Ivey Advancement to solicit donor funding for scholarships.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Dean’s Office believes that the 2+2 model effectively deals with the issue of grade inflation from high school given that students must maintain an 80% average over their first two years of university. Furthermore, any students that do not receive an AEO offer can still apply to Ivey after year 2. The Office also recognizes the need for continued growth in diversity in classrooms and have responded by actively recruiting to those areas. The need for more scholarships is acknowledged and the Dean’s Office, along with the program, is actively work with Ivey’s Advancement team.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #8</b> Conduct a critical evaluation of admission requirements as there have been significant changes in high school trends, business environment.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The program made four key improvements to the HBA Advanced Entry Opportunity admissions process for high school applicants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expanded the criteria for assessing leadership experiences to include part-time employment and home responsibilities, making the process more inclusive for those applicants without access to traditional volunteer and extracurricular activities.</li> <li>• application now allows candidates to explain any challenges they have faced that have affected their academic or leadership experiences.</li> <li>• webinars are offered to guide candidates in presenting a strong application, providing support to those who may lack assistance from family or high school staff.</li> <li>• introduced a video interview component to our application, adding a personalized touch and ensuring greater consistency and structure in evaluating leadership experiences.</li> </ul>

	<p>Additionally, the program collaborates with Western Undergraduate Admissions to collect data on university academic performance from specific high schools to develop an adjustment factor to normalize grades from institutions with grade inflation. Should there be any adjustments to the program-level learning outcomes (WDOs), the admissions process will be aligned accordingly.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> Several key improvements have been made to the HBA AEO Admissions process as noted in the Program’s response; equally, additional changes are noted in the response to Recommendation #6. The Dean’s Office, along with the program, is in the process of collecting and analyzing data on university academic performance relative to specific high school performance.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #9</b> Audit current recruitment efforts and strategies to reduce admission barriers.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> Over the past two years, the program included identity information in the application process to gather data on various demographics, including racial, gender, and sexual identity. Data has shown that there is increasing diversity in applicants – perhaps due to enhanced recruitment efforts. The Program is collaborating with the Advancement team on an upcoming campaign to emphasize scholarship funding to improve financial access to the HBA program.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Dean’s Office supports the program’s response and adds that recruiting efforts and strategies are continuously audited/assessed. Recruitment efforts to enhance the diversity of student body have positively impacted HBA AEO application pool. Continuous efforts will be made to increase diversity.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #10</b> Examine and address the disparity experienced by female students due to heavy reliance on class contribution, particularly in finance and operations courses.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The HBA Program has engaged the Wood Centre for Innovation in Teaching to deepen understanding of the barriers to contribution for students; not only women identifying students, but all students for whom contributing to class discussion is challenging. Also, “Dialogues for the 21st century classroom” is a new learning series for onboarding new faculty members, to enhance class participation.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The HBA Program, as explained in the response above, is making significant attempts to deepen understanding of the barriers to contribution for students and has engaged with the Associate Dean, Faculty Development and Director of Culture &amp; Inclusion on expanded needs for the onboarding of new instructors in the HBA Program.</p>

**Implementation Plan**

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. In each case, the Program Leader, and the Dean of the Faculty is responsible for enacting and monitoring the actions noted in Implementation Plan. Of note, recommendations specific to hiring are outside the scope of this review process – proposed actions below are in support of prioritizing and planning. A recommendation not included in the implementation table below is Recommendation #4 given that the Program and Faculty indicate no actions moving forward.

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
<p><b>Recommendation #1</b> Complete a comprehensive mapping of HBA Program Learning Outcomes to Western Degree Outcomes (WDOs). - map core (HBA1) and elective (HBA2) courses to HBA PLOs - provide more clarity on PLOs for combined degree offerings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commence a comprehensive mapping of the Program’s Learning Outcomes to Western Degree Outcomes, across HBA courses and for combined degree programs.</li> <li>• Establish an engagement plan with the HBA association’s student elected representative.</li> <li>• Host a Faculty Forum following the taskforce meetings to enable faculty engagement with this mapping exercise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HBA Faculty Director</li> </ul>	<p>By September 2025</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #2</b> Pursue accreditation from one of the three major business school accreditors: AACSB, ACBSP or IACBE.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the option of seeking AACSB accreditation first; prepare required background documents and data as part of the submission process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HBA Faculty Director</li> <li>• Dean</li> </ul>	<p>By May 2025</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #3</b> Enhance collaboration with non-Ivey faculties to design learning pathways for combined degree programs that adhere to the WDOs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in dedicated discussions with main campus colleagues to further enrich dual degree opportunities and support enriched, diverse learning experiences.</li> <li>• Confirm learning outcomes for combined degree offerings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HBA Faculty Director</li> </ul>	<p>By September 2025</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #5</b> Re-visit the 2+2 program structure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued reflection on the reviewer’s comments about program structure and the feedback emerging from the program review process. To be revisited as part of the upcoming progress report.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dean’s Office</li> </ul>	<p>Revisit as part of the progress report for June 2027</p>

<p><b>Recommendation #6</b> Engage with the students to better understand EDID related challenges and further embed principles of EDID in the broader HBA curriculum and through the practice of teaching.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue collaborative work on the recruitment and admissions processes to attract diverse applicants.</li> <li>• Evaluate Advanced Entry Opportunity admissions leadership scorecard.</li> <li>• Assess and modify the Learning Through Action modules based on feedback from the current and prior year cohorts.</li> <li>• Exploring additional opportunities to further embed EDID in the HBA curriculum (e.g., greater diversity in cases and examples, in guest speakers, through mentorship).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HBA Faculty Director</li> <li>• Director of Culture and Inclusion</li> </ul>	<p>By September 2025</p>
<p><b>Recommendations #7 &amp; #8</b> Explore opportunities for the Admissions and Alumni relations teams to enhance collaboration to better address current limitations with regard to AEO status, grade inflation, and financial accessibility.</p> <p>Conduct a critical evaluation of admission requirements as there have been significant changes in high school trends, business environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin informing applicants of the 4-year cost of a degree, not just the two years at Ivey.</li> <li>• Work with Ivey Advancement to solicit donor funding for scholarships.</li> <li>• Evaluate the improvements to the HBA Advanced Entry Opportunity admissions process.</li> <li>• Collect and analyze data on university academic performance relative to specific high school performance.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Determine if further adjustments to the admission process are needed.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HBA Faculty Director</li> <li>• Dean’s Office</li> </ul>	<p>By September 2025</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #9</b> Audit current recruitment efforts and strategies to reduce admission barriers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with Ivey Advancement on an upcoming campaign to emphasize scholarship funding to improve financial access to the HBA program.</li> <li>• Continue efforts to increase diversity in the AEO applicant pool.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HBA Faculty Director</li> <li>• Dean’s Office</li> </ul>	<p>Revisit as part of the progress report for June 2027</p>

<p><b>Recommendation #10</b> Examine and address the disparity experienced by female students due to heavy reliance on class contribution, particularly in finance and operations courses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage with the Wood Centre for Innovation in Teaching to deepen understanding of the barriers to contribution for students.</li><li>• Continue including “<i>Dialogues for the 21st century classroom</i>”, a new learning series, for onboarding new faculty members, to enhance class participation.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Evaluate the impact of the learning series as part of the onboarding process.</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HBA Faculty Director</li></ul>	<p>By September 2025</p>
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