

# **FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT**

## **PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW (PPR)**

### **Bachelor of Applied Science**

### **Nutrition and Food**

### **Faculty of Community Services**

In accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the undergraduate Nutrition and Food Program. This report identifies the strengths of the program, together with opportunities for program improvements and enhancements, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

This report also 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, who will be responsible for leading those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

## **SUMMARY OF THE PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW OF NUTRITION AND FOOD**

The School of Nutrition offers a four-year Bachelor of Applied Science (BASc) in Nutrition and Food that focuses on nutrition, food and health from an integrative and multi-disciplinary perspective. The Nutrition and Food program is designed to ensure program graduates are well prepared to meet the nutrition-related needs of individuals, families and communities across health and community settings, food service and food industries, education, and private practice settings. The program is offered full-time with a September entry.

Students can select classroom-based courses as well as online courses offered via the Chang School of Continuing Education. In spring 2020, and continuing into the 2020/2021 academic year, the School of Nutrition pivoted to remote learning along with the rest of the University community in accordance with public health restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This document comprises the Faculty of Community Services' Dean's response to the Peer Review Team (PRT) Report and the School's response, in accordance with the directions of the 2019 and 2022 Periodic Program Review (PPR) Manuals and with Section 8.2 of Senate Policy 126, Periodic Program Review of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs. The site visit by the external PRT for the Periodic Program Review was carried out between October 9-10, 2024. The School of Nutrition and Food submitted a list of potential Peer Review Team (PRT) candidates to the Office of the Dean, who then selected

Dr. Brenda Hartman, Associate Professor, Brescia School of Food and Nutritional Sciences, University of Western Ontario

Dr. Susan Tosh, Associate Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa

Overall, the PRT felt the Nutrition and Food program is very good. The curriculum is well aligned with the learning objectives of the University and is designed to provide the students with learning experiences to achieve the program-level learning outcomes and degree level expectations. The curriculum is diverse and has a balance of science education and social studies that prepares students for professional dietetics or other careers. However, the current mapping and review of the curriculum is necessary to ensure that the course materials reflect the intended degree level expectations.

The teaching methods have diversity to engage students and provide them with a range of learning opportunities. The food labs are an excellent space for learning food preparation methods and dietary planning. A balance of in-person and virtual class time as well as asynchronous learning materials has developed since the pandemic and students and professors appreciate the flexibility of this approach. Ensuring that the balance is optimized should be part of the curriculum review process. Implementation of innovative teaching methods such as case studies and simulations is excellent. Assessment methods are effective but could be more diverse to support different learning styles.

The PRT Report offered five critical recommendations, and the School has responded thoughtfully to each to generate their Implementation Plan. The Dean's Office is in full support of the School's responses to the PRT recommendations.

The School of Nutrition and Food has submitted its response to the PRT report to the Dean of the Faculty of Community Services, to which the Dean responded on January 8, 2025.

The Academic Standards Committee completed its assessment of the School of Nutrition and Food on February 13, 2025. The Committee indicated that a thorough, analytical and self-critical program review was conducted. The program provided a detailed plan for future growth and support for development.

The Academic Standards Committee recommends that the program continue, as well as provide a one-year follow-up report, as follows:

The mandated One-Year Follow-up Report be submitted by June 30, 2026 to include:

1. An update on the Implementation Plan
2. A report on how EDI is being implemented into curriculum development plans
3. A progress report on the program's current periodic program review cycle
4. An update on hiring plan as presented in recommendation 4 of the Implementation Plan

Presented to Senate for Approval: March 25, 2025

Start date of next Periodic Program Review: 2027/29

## **SUMMARY OF THE REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS WITH THE PROGRAM'S AND DEAN'S RESPONSES**

### **RECOMMENDATION ONE:**

The School should continue its curriculum review and course mapping both through a committee and individual faculty. This is a high priority and should be done within the next 12 months. This will improve several small issues found throughout (library, assignments, faculty) and should include:

1. Scaffolding key courses throughout the program to build library research skills. Librarians have developed resources that could be more effectively utilized once skills are targeted
  - a. This can also include videos from Academic Integrity Office on use of AI
  - b. Information can be presented to CUPE part-time instructors as already developed resources to be included in courses ensuring consistency across curriculum.
2. Mapping to ensure that there is less overlap in content of courses as students (both current and alumni) have found that information and assignments have been repeated in several courses
3. Address the student perceived 'gap' in year 3 in nutritional science courses. Students (both current and alumni) reported that there is a lack of any nutrition focussed courses in year three. This may be addressed by perhaps moving FNN 301 or FND401 to third year rather than the first term of 4th year as possible solutions. This would also help address what students reported in terms of really 'heavy' courses all being in 4th year.
4. Curriculum mapping may also help with making teaching required knowledge more efficient and the available time could be used to increase content on anatomy and biochemistry. Current students reported a lack of knowledge and understanding in these foundational areas.

**PROGRAM'S RESPONSE:**

The School agrees with the recommendation. A similar recommendation was identified in our self study. We are presently undergoing a review of our undergraduate curriculum. The School is using a structured approach to this process, organized by the course series, with curriculum review being led and done by TFA in alignment with their subject matter expertise. TFA individually review their courses, share materials as appropriate, and come together to review the courses in the series in which they teach (FNF and FNP series, FNR series, FNN and PLN series, FND and FNS series) to ensure subsequent courses build on content of earlier courses, identify and resolve gaps, reduce repetition of material, and address any other relevant issues (eg currency, level of mastery). The School is undergoing accreditation of all 3 of its programs in 2025. The accreditation self study requires mapping of the new dietetic competencies (revised since the last accreditation cycle) to courses, and this work is being done within our curriculum review process.

**DEAN'S RESPONSE:**

I agree with the School's response on the need for these changes. The School has already moved forward with some activities in this regard, and the current plans for further revisions of the curriculum make sense and are responsive to the reviewers' recommendations as well.

**RECOMMENDATION TWO:**

A course should be included on nutritional assessment including the use of tools and instruments. This would allow students hands-on experience assessing human health metrics which are related to nutrition. It would prepare them for clinical placements as well as help them to better understand anatomy, physiology and metabolism. Students and alumni reported they wished they had more 'hands-on' learning of clinical skills. This would also help to address the perceived gap in year three of nutritional science courses. This should be considered during the mapping taking place within the next 12 months and a course developed over the next 2 years.

**PROGRAM'S RESPONSE:**

The School agrees with the recommendation of reviewing material across the FNN series. Reviewing coverage of nutritional assessment is a part of this course series review (nutrition assessment content is delivered at an introductory level in FNN 201, and in more depth in FNN301). Our self study course mapping also identified the need for a senior FNN course focused on nutritional science to complement

the required FNN 400 course that focuses on population health. In Fall 2024 the undergraduate School Council approved moving FNN403 from core elective to a required course, which would ensure that students who elect not to take the dietetics required courses FNN 301 and 401 (both core electives) have sufficient mastery (the highest level of competence) of nutritional science knowledge upon completion of the undergraduate curriculum.

**DEAN'S RESPONSE:**

I agree that this is a core element of dietetic education and needs to be updated as per the recommendations of the reviewers. In its response, the School is planning to focus on this aspect of the curriculum and I support these efforts.

**RECOMMENDATION THREE:**

The School needs to improve the communication to the students about other career path options using a nutrition degree other than dietetics. The availability of research concentration courses and research opportunities should be better advertised and explained to students along with possible career opportunities from the concentration or the other Certificates like Gerontology and Food Security offered in conjunction with the Chang school.

1. External action and Immediate: The Website needs to be updated as some of the information is dated and includes the Canadian Dietetic Knowledge Competencies Certificate on the main page (this is no longer available). Further, it took some digging on the part of the team to find the information on the other certificates offered by the program and the Chang school. These should be posted on the main page with links to further information about what careers are possible with the certificates. The Concentration on Health Research is not listed at all and should be found under the Curriculum button.
2. School action and within the next year: There is a good list of possible career choices shown on the website. The school has also indicated that a website has been developed to help students find information pertaining to school and volunteer opportunities. Students may find it helpful if the career choices listed on the school website were matched with key courses offered by the school so that students could see the link between the courses they choose and possible career paths.

**PROGRAM'S RESPONSE:**

The School agrees with recommendation 3-1 and appreciates the review team's feedback about our website. The School agrees with recommendation 3-2 about improving the accessibility of information on a wider range of career pathways, specifically non dietetics. These recommendations are in line with our self study recommendation to explore creating new structures within the program (e.g., concentrations or streams), which might reify alternative career paths and provide a structure within which we could more effectively serve student interests and highlight potential career pathways related to food, food studies, food security, sustainability, entrepreneurship, and others. The School will update our website. The School will continue to explore ways to better serve our students' varied career interests (e.g. making stronger connections with alumni, engaging alumni in the School through program advisory council, guest speaking, career information sharing, and others).

**DEAN'S RESPONSE:**

This is an exciting recommendation that corresponds to current conversations within the School. There are numerous avenues for expanding career-focused learning for the program that include food culture, food security, and food sciences. I strongly recommend moving toward a more differentiated spectrum of specializations within the curriculum to support additional career pathways.

**RECOMMENDATION FOUR:**

The School of Nutrition is currently facing challenges due to retirements, sabbaticals and leaves. This is Dr. Wong's first year as interim director, which is a lot of work. Further, the Associate Director is also new to her role. On top of these challenges the School also needs to prepare for an accreditation review by Accreditation Canada to maintain their professional status. Preparing the documentation required for this review will take a lot of time and effort. Since the last professional review, the process has been changed. New learning objectives, the "Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice", have changed and had to be implemented by 2023. This will require remapping dietetic competencies to course objectives as well as many other documents. Therefore, the School needs either the MAP Dietetic Lead Management person as per Recommendation 3 in Section 9 of the Self Study or at least a contract person to help prepare for reassessment of the program for accreditation. Someone with experience in the School, like an alumnus and part-time professor would be a good choice.

This is an External action and is needed within the next 12 months.

**PROGRAM'S RESPONSE:**

The School agrees with this recommendation. Accreditation of our 3 dietetics programs will take place in 2025, with expiry of our accreditation status March 31, 2026. The accreditation assessment work will require support, and the school agrees an individual who may be an alumni, and/or part time instructor, of the School would potentially be a good fit. The School is in process of seeking supports for this accreditation work to be done in the upcoming 12 months. The School is working towards facilitating increased TFA engagement and involvement in the accreditation process, and embedding a QA culture in the School as part of ensuring continuous adherence to high academic standards in our BASc program.

**DEAN'S RESPONSE:**

I support the response of the School to the recommendation of the PRT. Upcoming accreditation activities will indeed require special supports given changes to the accreditation body and program, and I support the School in hiring someone on contract to assist with these matters. At the same time, I do not support the creation of a new MAC position in the School. Instead, it will be of great importance for the faculty members in the School to re-engage with both accreditation processes and program review processes so that these processes reflect the collective wisdom and aspirations of the faculty team.

**RECOMMENDATION FIVE:**

The timing of assessments should be improved. The last assessment of this program was in 2014. The self-study documents were prepared in 2021, but the assessment is being completed in 2024. This means that the documents that were provided are out of date. We understand that the pandemic has caused a lot of difficulties, but in future the University should attempt to get caught up and conduct assessments each 7 years.

**PROGRAM'S RESPONSE:**

The School acknowledges timing issues and delays in this PPR cycle. The School acknowledges that the peer review team site visit and report is being submitted well after the data collection and analysis took place. Moving forward, as mentioned above in response to recommendation 4, the School plans to more intentionally embed a QA culture in the School and consider ways to do QA work more continuously. For example, the School will consider processes that might be implemented annually (e.g. student and alumni data gathering, annual surveys), and consider creating a QA committee of the School TFA.

#### DEAN'S RESPONSE:

Finally, I strongly agree with the PRT that the School must improve its timeliness with respect to quality assurance processes. To this end, I am confident that current efforts to ensure faculty members are engaged and take responsibility for these processes, along with changes to the university's IQAP processes that have improved the flow of work considerably, will produce the desired improvements.

### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: NUTRITION AND FOOD

#### Priority Recommendation #1

Implement curriculum mapping and updates (referencing PPR Self Study Recommendation 1, PRT 1, Decanal Response to PRT Recommendation 1)

#### Rationale:

Data from self study mapping activities identified the need to update curriculum to ensure that the links between early foundational learning and advanced practice-oriented learning are transparent; students have more opportunities to assess, plan, implement and evaluate nutrition/food problems in years 1 and 2; students have more opportunities to develop introductory communication skills in first year courses; and, first and second year courses provide more opportunities for students to engage in reflective practice and ethical decision making. The PRT also recommended curriculum updates to consider scaffolding key courses throughout the program to build upon skills and knowledge; and to ensure there is less overlap in content of courses.

#### Implementation Actions:

Conduct a review of the undergraduate curriculum structured around course series to facilitate looking within and across related courses.

- TFA to review courses aligned with their teaching and subject matter expertise; to be done individually and within course series (FNF and FNP series, FNR series, FNN and PLN series, FND and FNS series); to ensure subsequent courses build on content of earlier courses, identify and resolve gaps, reduce repetition of material, and address any other relevant issues (eg currency, level of mastery).

**Timeline:** within the next 12 months\*

\*The School of Nutrition is undergoing accreditation of all 3 of its dietetics programs in 2025. The accreditation self-study requires mapping of the new dietetic competencies (revised since the last accreditation cycle) to courses, and reviewing the curriculum will be aligned with the accreditation work.

#### Responsibility for:

- a) **leading initiative:** School Director (as lead), with all TFA involved in this initiative.
- b) **approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** School Director, School Management Team, all TFA, and School Council and Dean (as required)

#### Priority Recommendation #2

Including a senior nutrition course focusing on nutritional science as a required course (referencing Program Response to PRT Recommendation 2)

**Rationale:**

From course mapping activities and reviewing material across the FNN series in our self study, the need for a senior FNN course focused on nutritional science was identified, which would ensure students who elect not to take the required dietetics courses have sufficient mastery (at the highest level of competence) of nutritional science knowledge upon completion of the undergraduate curriculum. Including a senior FNN course would complement the required FNN 401 course that focuses on population health.

In Fall 2024, the undergraduate program School Council approved moving FNN403 from core elective to a required course, which would ensure that students who elect not to take the dietetics required courses FNN 301 and 401 (both core electives) take an advanced nutritional science course within their program.

**Implementation Actions:**

FNN403 will be redeveloped and offered, in keeping with the new curriculum changes.

**Timeline:**

Summer 2025 and Fall 2025: redevelopment of FNN403

Winter 2026: FNN 403 to be offered

**Responsibility for:**

**a) leading initiative:** a TFA with subject matter expertise and teaching interest in advanced nutritional sciences

**b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** School Director, FNN Course series team

**Priority Recommendation #3**

Improve supports and communications to students about non-dietetic career paths (referencing PPR Self Study Recommendation 4, PRT Recommendation 3, Decanal Response to PRT 3)

**Rationale:**

The PPR self study and the PRT highlighted the need to improve communications to students about career pathway options beyond dietetics. The PPR self study survey identified that students need clearer information and direction on potential non dietetics careers related to food, food studies, food security, sustainability, entrepreneurship, and other relevant paths.

**Implementation Actions:**

- Explore the creation of new structures within the program (e.g., concentrations or streams), which might reify alternative career paths and provide a structure within which we could more effectively serve student interests and highlight potential career pathways related to food, food studies, food security, sustainability, entrepreneurship, and others.
- Improve accessibility of information to students on a wider range of career pathways, specifically non dietetics; update School website to improve communications of careers (especially non dietetics).
- Explore further ways to better serve our students' varied career interests (e.g. making stronger connections with alumni, engaging alumni in the School through program advisory council, guest speaking, career information sharing, and other avenues).

**Timeline:** Within the next 12 to 18 months.

**Responsibility for:**

**a) leading initiative:** School Director, School Management Team

**b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** School Director, School Management Team, all TFA

**Priority Recommendation #4**

Improve quality assurance processes and supports in the School (referencing PPR Self Study Recommendation 3, PRT Recommendations 4 and 5, and Decanal Response to PRT Recommendation 4)

**Rationale:**

The PPR self study identified a need to secure additional support and resources to help with managing, integrating, and enhancing quality assurance and accreditation activities in the School. The PRT and Decanal response supported this need and also highlighted the need for improved timeliness of our quality assurance processes. Accreditation of the School's three dietetics programs is taking place in 2025, ahead of the expiry of our accreditation status on March 31, 2026, which will require self study assessments, surveys, reports, and site visits to be completed.

**Implementation Actions:**

1. Secure supports to assist with the work of the accreditation and PPR processes.
2. Facilitate increased TFA engagement and involvement in the accreditation and quality assurance processes; embed a quality assurance culture in the School as part of ensuring continuous adherence to high academic standards in our BASc program.

**Timeline:** within the next 12 months



**Responsibility for:**

**a) leading initiative:** School Director and School Management Team

**b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** School Director, School Management Team, all TFA, Dean