

UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR
UNIVERSITY PROGRAM REVIEW (UPR)
REPORT ON: Economics
GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS
 April 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Review Preparation

In preparing this document, the Program Development Committee reviewed the following: Economics' Self-Study (SS) (2014/2015), the report of the external reviewers (ER) (November 2018), the response from the Head (HR) (February 2019), and the response from the Dean (DR) (March 2019) to the above material. The external reviewers were: Dr. Aggey Semenov, Department of Economics, University of Ottawa; Dr. Miquel Faig, Department of Economics, University of Toronto Mississauga; and Dr. Nancy Ursel, Odette School of Business, University of Windsor.

Undergraduate and Graduate Programs

At the undergraduate level, the Department offers a Bachelor of Arts (General) in Economics, a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Economics, a Bachelor of Arts (Combined Honours) in Economics, a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Economics, and a Bachelor of Science (Combined Honours) in Economics. The Department also collaborates with the Odette School of Business to offer a Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) in Business Administration and Economics.

The Department offers a Minor in Economics, as well as Major and Minor Concentrations in Economics for the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Arts and Science.

At the graduate level, the Department offers a Master of Arts in Economics and a Master of Applied Economics and Policy.*

Note: The Master of Applied Economics and Policy did not form part of this review, since it was not in place at the time of the Self-Study.

Enrolments

Undergraduate

	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018
Full-Time	69.5	77.5	80.5	83	74.5
Part-Time	13	12	19.5	26.5	14

Graduate

	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018
Full-Time	61	86	111	121	116
Part-Time	3	1	0	0	1

Human Resources*

Faculty/Instructors

Tenure/tenure-track faculty	11 (including the Head and 2 vacancies)
Limited-Term Appointments	4 (including 1 vacancy)
Faculty members involved in graduate program delivery	8 (+1 LTA with affiliate graduate faculty status)

Full/Part-time Staff

Head Secretary	1
Secretary	1

*as of Winter 2019

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT (with Implementation Plan)

Significant Strengths of the Programs

The Department offers quality undergraduate and graduate programs offered by dedicated and highly qualified faculty. (ER, p. 6, 8, 9) The close relationship between faculty and students, due to smaller class sizes, and the Leddy Library's Academic Data Centre were noted as "distinctive features" and "excellent" resources for students, particularly in a discipline that normally has very low retention rates (with higher attrition from first to second year). (ER, p. 4, 5, 7, 9) The external reviewers also commended and encouraged the Department to continue its practice of "targeting superb teachers to introductory courses" for greater student engagement and retention. (ER, p. 8)

One other notable initiative includes the Department's mentoring program, whereby the performance of honours students is monitored. (SS, p. 87)

During its last curriculum review, the Department made revisions to its undergraduate curriculum which included adding applied courses, bringing it inline with the shift in the discipline. (SS, p. 87; ER, p. 3)

Opportunities for Program Improvement/Enhancements

The external reviewers commended the Department on its coverage of the core economics subjects, noting that as economics "has become a more applied and empirical discipline than it used to be", the Department has not followed the current trend whereby "most programs have increased the number of applied courses and sacrificed the coverage of theory to reflect the evolution of the discipline". (ER, p. 3). However, the external reviewers noted its undergraduate and MA programs are "more concentrated on the core courses of the discipline [...] than it is typically the case" and that the inclusion of more applied content or courses (while maintaining appropriate coverage of the core theory courses), particularly in its MA in Economics, is the primary area for program improvement for the Department and best opportunity for increasing enrolments. (ER, p. 3, 8)

The introduction of the Master of Applied Economics and Policy (MAEP) has proven successful and resulted in enrolment growth in the Department, counteracting the stagnant enrolments in the undergraduate programs and the decline in MA enrolments. (ER, p. 6) However, this increase in enrolments in the MAEP needs to be managed carefully to ensure there are no negative impacts on the other programming in the Department. (ER, p. 5)

Growing its mentorship program to include upper-level peer mentors to first and second year students, the introduction of internships at the undergraduate and graduate levels, increasing research collaboration and external research funding, and increasing recruitment, retention and alumni outreach were all identified by the Department as areas for improvements. (SS, p. 87-88)

These and other opportunities for program improvements are captured in the recommendations listed below.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Recommendations (in priority order)

(Final recommendations arrived at by the Program Development Committee, following a review and assessment of the External Reviewers report, the Head's response, and the Dean's response.)

Recommendation 1: That the Department expand the focus of the MA in Economics from preparing students for a PhD program to preparing students for work in non-academic sectors, while ensuring that students interested in a PhD program can still pursue that option.

Agents: Head, faculty members

Completion by: Fall 2022

Recommendation 2: That the Department allow the students in the MA in Economics program to increase their exposure to applied economics, which can be achieved, for example, 1) by replacing some second semester core courses with applied courses, 2) by allowing MA students to take MAEP courses, or 3) by introducing an MA thesis worth 2 courses and a directed reading course.

Agents: Head, faculty members

Completion by: Fall 2022

Recommendation 3: That the Department increase writing and practical assignments in all undergraduate and graduate courses where this is feasible, and build on the practical emphasis that some of the Econometrics courses in the Department already have.

Agents: Head, faculty members, Centre for Teaching and Learning

Completion by: Fall 2022

Recommendation 4:

- a) That the Department submit course-level learning outcomes for its undergraduate and graduate courses; and its combined honours programs.
- b) That the Department engage in curricular planning and mapping for each of its programs, including submitting assessment methods for each of its courses that clearly correspond to the course-level and program-level learning outcomes.

[The Department has submitted learning outcomes to Senate for each of its standalone graduate and undergraduate programs.]

Agents: Department Council, Head, CTL

Completion by: Fall 2022

Recommendation 5: That the Department maintain admission requirements in all the programs and focus on growing enrolments through greater and more sustained undergraduate and graduate recruitment efforts.

Agents: Head, faculty members

Completion by: Fall 2022

Recommendation 6: That the Department:

- 1) make a case to the Dean of the Faculty for additional tenure-track appointments to reflect the increased number of students enrolled in their programs (including those enrolled in MAEP) and to reduce the reliance on LTA faculty.
- 2) report on how it might support further increases in enrolment by modifying the curriculum.

Agents: Head, faculty members

Completion by: Fall 2022

Recommendation 7: That the Department increase the data gathered on alumni, their placements and career outcomes, and report on how it is using the data to maintain contact with alumni, increase student recruitment, and improve curriculum. [The Department's plan to hire an RA to collect these data and to establish/grow a platform (e.g., the Department's active LinkedIn account) to register and maintain contact with alumni is a good one.]

Agents: Head

Completion by: Fall 2020