

**UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR**  
**CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEW (CPR)**  
**FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: SCHOOL OF THE ENVIRONMENT**  
**UNDERGRADUATE GRADUATE PROGRAMS**  
January 2026

**Executive Summary of the Cyclical Program Review of the School of the Environment Programs**

In accordance with the University's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external review and the internal responses of the undergraduate and graduate programs in the Department of Philosophy.

In addition to identifying the strengths of the programs, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, the report prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation and sets out a plan (including the agent(s) responsible for addressing the recommendations and deadline dates) for follow-through. Timelines for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations are built into the process, with areas reporting mid-cycle on their progress to the Senate Program Development Committee, or earlier where there are significant concerns requiring urgent follow-up.

The School of the Environment 2020-2021 Self-Study submitted to the Office of Quality Assurance on October 23, 2024, included 1) a summary of recommendations and actions from the last review; 2) descriptions and an analysis of the programs, their learning outcomes, curriculum structure, and student experience; 3) information on enrolments as well as financial, physical, and human resources; and 4) the program data including the standard data package provided by the Office of Quality Assurance. Included in the appendices to the Self-Study were faculty member CVs, the Leddy Library report, course descriptions, syllabi, and the graduate student handbook.

The School of the Environment programs were reviewed by Dr. Bruce Erickson (Faculty of Environment, Earth, and Resources, University of Manitoba), Dr. Murray Richardson (Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Carleton University) and Dr. Phebe Lam (Department of Psychology, University of Windsor). In addition to assessing the Self-Study, the Review Team conducted a two-day on-site visit on June 2-3, 2025, which included meetings with faculty, students, administrative and technical staff, School Committees, the Director of School of the Environment, the Dean of Science, the Associate Vice-President, Academic, and the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Although the Review Team's report (July 7, 2025) noted the delay in completing the Self-Study and resulting concerns about the currency of some of the information in the document, they also noted that information gaps were, for the most part, addressed during the site visit. The Review Team confirmed that the undergraduate and graduate programs meet the IQAP evaluation criteria and are aligned with the University's mission, vision, and academic plans. Program learning outcomes align with university and COU-approved degree-level expectations. Curriculum mapping is used to track where learning outcomes are introduced, reinforced and mastered across the programs. Assessment methods reflect sound practice in assessing student achievement of program learning outcomes.

However, the Review Team also noted that the Bachelor of Environmental Studies (BES) is structured as a collection of courses drawn from departments across campus, which presents challenges in terms of cohesion and faculty ownership. Depending on course selection, students may not receive the required breadth and depth to achieve program-level learning outcomes and may graduate without meeting all learning outcomes. Further, the more science-focused Resource Management stream, and the lack of available social science-oriented environmental course offerings result in students enrolling in science-oriented environmental courses, thus blurring the distinction between the BES and the BSc in Environmental Science. The Review Team also noted with concern the overlap between the GLIER Environmental Science graduate programs and the School's graduate programs in Earth Sciences, and noted that merging these programs under the School's oversight would improve cohesion and administration.

Admission requirements for the BSc and graduate programs are appropriate, though some concerns were raised about the admission requirements for the BES in light of students taking a larger number of science-oriented courses due to lack of course offerings. An analysis of BES students' grades, conducted by the School in response to this suggestion, revealed no evidence of BES students struggling in the science-oriented courses. Upcoming program revisions also intend to address the number and availability of social science-oriented courses.

The Review Team noted that the programs are delivered by research-intensive faculty with expertise in earth sciences, environmental science, and GIS. While there is no specific expertise in environmental studies, the School is committed to both its undergraduate programs, with some faculty having shifted their teaching towards issues related to policy and human-environment interaction. Further focus in this area will be needed to ensure the sustainability of the BES program. The School is well-supported for faculty and student research spaces, though infrastructure is aging and needs to be monitored. Overall student feedback on their experience was positive.

The Head of the School of the Environment and the Dean of the Faculty of Science submitted their responses to the External Reviewers' Report (September 30, 2025 and October 6, 2025, respectively), addressing the recommendations, identifying follow-up actions, and providing clarification or corrections, as appropriate. The Senate Program Development Committee (PDC) Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan (January 2026) considered all the above documentation. The Executive Summary and Implementation Plan, along with any response from the area on the final recommendations, were submitted to Senate in February 2026.

### **Final Recommendations and Implementation Plan (in priority order)**

*Final recommendations were arrived at by the Program Development Committee, following a review and assessment of the External Reviewers report and the response from the Dean of the Faculty*

**Recommendation 1:** That the School continue strategic planning around the BES program strengths and identity to better prioritize its resources, including completing a full curriculum review and redesign. This should include:

- a) Establishing a strategic hiring plan, in collaboration with the Dean of Science, prioritizing hiring a new core faculty member to support the BES program in teaching and research, to ensure readiness as soon as budgets allow.
- b) Offering more core, integrative courses in Years 2 and 3 of the BES program, and emphasizing social science and policy throughout the curriculum, with less (or optional) natural science coursework.
- c) Creating new ESTU courses to the BES program requirements.
- d) Streamlining program requirements, course offerings, and options to better distinguish the BES from the BSc in Environmental Science and possibly create pathways for non-science majors. [ER Recommendation 1]

**Agents:** Head, School Council, Dean of Science

**Completion by:** Next Cyclical Program Review (2027-2028)

**Recommendation 2:** That the School continue to develop and formalize the integration of Indigenous knowledge, histories, and perspectives into the programs. [ER Recommendation 8]

**Agents:** Head, School Council

**Completion by:** Fall 2026 or by the next Cyclical Program Review (2027-2028)

**Recommendation 3:** That the School ensure that BES and BSc students are required to take an appropriate number of 4th-year courses in their program. [ER Recommendation 2]

**Agents:** Head, School Council

**Completion by:** Fall 2026 or by the next Cyclical Program Review (2027-2028)

**Recommendation 4:** That the School, in consultation and collaboration with the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Graduate Studies, expedite the merging of the Environmental Science and Earth Sciences graduate programs. [ER Recommendation 4]

**Agents:** Head, School Council, Dean of Science, Dean of Graduate Studies

**Completion by:** Next Cyclical Program Review (2027-2028)

**Recommendation 5:** That the School report on cohort-building efforts to strengthen undergraduate and graduate experiences in the programs, including continued support for the Jull group, integrating the field courses, and providing spaces for graduate students. [ER Recommendation 6]

**Agents:** Head, faculty members

**Completion by:** Fall 2026 or by the next Cyclical Program Review (2027-2028)

**Recommendation 6:** That the School report on efforts to work with the Office of the Registrar to identify and address discrepancies between program requirements listed in the calendar and those in UWinsite Student. [ER Recommendation 10]

**Agents:** Head

**Completion by:** Fall 2026 or by the next Cyclical Program Review (2027-2028)

**Recommendation 7:** That the School:

- a) develop annual undergraduate and graduate student satisfaction surveys; and
- b) report on efforts to work with Enrolment Management, Alumni Relations, and Institutional Analysis to collect more detailed information and statistics on alumni and student experience. [ER Recommendation 7]

**Agents:** Head, Enrolment Management, Alumni Relations, Institutional Analysis

**Completion by:** Next Cyclical Program Review (2027-2028)

**Recommendation 8:** That the School, working with the Dean of the Faculty and the Space Planning Committee, report on efforts to establish a long-term plan for the significant geological collection housed in the storage and lab rooms, with a view to reassigning and renovating some or all of the space to teaching and resource space. [ER Recommendation 9]

**Agents:** Head, Dean of Science, Space Planning Committee

**Completion by:** Next Cyclical Program Review (2027-2028)