

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Under Nipissing University's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) and the Ontario Universities Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), all programs are subject to a comprehensive review at least/at minimum every eight years to ensure that they continue to meet provincial quality assurance requirements and to support their ongoing rigour and coherence. This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on June 29, 2023 and ratified by the Quality Council on May 5, 2023

In academic years 2018-2019 a program review was scheduled for the MES/MESc programs. This was the 1st program review for this program. The timeline of the review was as follows.

PROGRAM UNDER REVIEW

PROGRAM	SENATE APPROVAL DATE	PREPARED BY
MASTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES MASTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE	DECEMBER 13, 2019	PROVOST & VICE PRESIDENT

A. REVIEW TIMELINE

SELF-STUDY REVIEW TIMELINE	DATE
1. Self-Study Presented to AQAPC	March 21, 2019
2. Site Visit Conducted	April 8-9, 2019
3. Reviewer's Report Received	May 28, 2019
4. Department's Response Received	July 31, 2019
5. Dean's Response Received	August 18, 2019

A. REVIEW SUMMARY

Two external reviewers conducted the review. During the in-person site visit, the reviewers met with the following groups and individuals:

- Provost & Vice President, Academic & Research
- Dean of Arts & Science
- Registrar
- MES/MESc Students
- Dean of Graduate Studies & Research
- Harris Learning Library Executive Director & Librarian

- Internal Review Committee
- MES/MESc faculty members

The academic programs offered by the Department which were examined as part of the review included:

- Master of Environmental Studies (MES)
- Master of Environmental Science (MESc)

The follow program strengths were noted:

The Graduate Program in Environmental Studies and Science is a strong fit with Nipissing University's mission and strategic priorities. It supports student growth while benefiting local, national, and global communities, and it actively enhances opportunities for Indigenous and first-generation learners. The program also aligns with key institutional strengths, particularly in environmental sciences and community collaboration, including partnerships with Nipissing First Nation and local municipalities on environmental issues.

In addition, the program is a central component of the university's Strategic Research Plan, contributing to major research themes such as environment and natural resources, Indigenous and decolonial research, the human condition, and inequality. Its interdisciplinary nature and broad impact are widely recognized, with strong support and enthusiasm from senior administrators who view it as reflective of the university's core values and priorities.

Summary of review team recommendations:

The recommendations highlight the need to strengthen and clarify the graduate program within the broader context of Nipissing University's growing focus on graduate education. Improved marketing, strategic planning, and support from new leadership structures are essential. While the program benefits from dedicated faculty and a functional core curriculum, its lack of a departmental home and complex structure, i.e. the program's multiple degrees and tracks, create confusion and strain resources.

A key recommendation is to develop a clearer, shared vision for the program, as differing views about its purpose contribute to ongoing challenges. Finally, limited resources, including teaching capacity and student funding, are major constraints on stability and growth. Addressing the funding model and overall resource allocation for graduate studies should be a top priority in future institutional planning.

Status:

Due date for 2 Year Follow-up Report: 2021

Date of next Cyclical Review: 2026

B. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Below are the recommendations that require specific action as a result of the Review, along with the identification of the position or unit responsible for the action in question. Notwithstanding the position or unit identified as being responsible for specific recommendations, the Dean of the Faculty has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the recommended actions are undertaken

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE MEMBER/UNIT	PROJECTED COMPLETION
#1 - Develop a recruitment strategy	Registrar's Office, Dean of Grad Studies	April 2020
#2,3,4 - Review resources, incl. Programme structure and membership	Faculty, Dean of Grad Studies	April 2020
#2, 5 - Review curricula and pedagogy	Faculty, Dean of A&S	April 2020
#6 - Review degree pathways and options	Deans & Provost, Faculty, Registrar	April 2020