



Professor Nicholas Rule, Vice-Provost, Academic Programs  
University of Toronto  
65 St. George Street, Room 106  
Toronto, Ontario M5S 2E5

June 5, 2025

Re: Request for an Interim Monitoring Report for the 2019-2020 review of the Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education and its programs.

Dear Professor Rule,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Interim Monitoring Report for the 2019-2020 review of the Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education (LHAE) and its programs and the administrative response to the review.

At OISE, ongoing quality improvement initiatives, and engagement of our departments and programs in an extensive process of self-appraisal for the purpose of cyclical reviews, serve as important tools to assess our performance relative to international peer institutions and monitor progress towards realization of our academic priorities. Our academic leaders and colleagues welcomed the opportunity to reflect on the previous review while considering future directions. I want to take this opportunity to thank Professor Marcelo Vieta, LHAE Chair, and his colleagues for their engagement and contributions that have informed the development of this report.

Given the timing of the last UTQAP review, it is important to highlight that the site visit for the review, which was scheduled to take place March 26-27, 2020, had to be deferred due to the pandemic-related travel restrictions and measures put in place in Canada, as well as in the external reviewers' countries. The visit was deferred for the fall term and took place virtually on November 4-6 & 9-10, 2020. It is also essential to note that the progress on some recommendations has been somewhat disrupted due to the pandemic and shift to remote academic operations including classes.

During that time, our departments shifted their focus to managing the transition to online learning, ensuring that programs ran effectively remotely while maintaining academic integrity and student engagement. The department of LHAE has demonstrated great resilience and innovation during the pandemic, leveraging its online and distance education expertise to ensure academic continuity. Faculty-led advancements in online pedagogy have strengthened the department's adaptability and commitment to supporting students during this period and have later informed innovative program delivery mode changes including the introduction of online and hybrid modes to some programs/fields in addition to the in-person delivery.

Please find enclosed the Interim Monitoring Report on the progress of the implementation of recommendations from the 2019-2020 UTQAP review of the Department LHAE and its programs. Please contact me if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,



Erica N. Walker  
Professor and Dean  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education  
University of Toronto

Cc: Professor Joseph Flessa, Associate Dean, Programs, OISE  
Professor Marcelo Vieta, Chair, Department of LHAE, OISE  
Biljana Cuckovic, Director, Governance, Policy & Planning, OISE  
Lachmi Singh, Director, Academic Programs, Planning and Quality Assurance, VPAP Office  
David Lock, Academic Reviews and Planning Specialist, VPAP Office  
Emma del Junco, Academic Reviews and Planning Specialist, VPAP Office

## Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education

UTQAP Cyclical Review, November 4-6, 9-10, 2020

Review Reported to Governance, October 26, 2021.

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Implementation Plan Update	Supported by VPAP Program Innovation Fund (PIF) Y/N
<p><i>Students</i></p> <p>The reviewers observed that the cost of the funding commitment that supports MA and PhD students, including international students, has effectively led to decreased enrolments in these programs and increased enrolment in self-funded, practice-oriented MEd and EdD programs, and limits international student recruitment. This has consequences for student diversity and potentially on the international reach and reputation of LHAE programs.</p>	<p><b><i>The funding commitment for MA and PhD students</i></b> and its implications for international student enrolment in the funded cohort remains beyond the department's immediate control. While the University does not offer financial aid programs to international students, in addition to funding from their home countries, they may be eligible for some scholarships and awards (e.g. Connaught International Scholarship for Doctoral Students). However, starting in September 2025, funding for students in the funded research-stream programs at U of T will increase to \$40,000 annually, which will improve access for students from diverse financial backgrounds and ensure that they can focus on their research and academic success without undue financial hardship. Additionally, a new Office of Student Financial Support was created under the leadership of Vice-Dean, Academic Operations. A new Director of Student Financial Support and Operations was hired to lead a team of staff and coordinate the administration of all OISE student financial support programs in collaboration with the departments. This includes student funding, internal awards, as well as need and merit based financial aid. Previously, student funding and financial support portfolios existed cross-functionally across the Registrar's Office, Associate Dean, Programs Office, as well as within the departments. The new office consolidates student financial support functions and creates a 'one stop shop' for student funding within the Dean's Office, which will increase efficiency of OISE's student funding operations. The department's international student enrolment in professional programs (MEd and EdD) remains robust, which contributes to the diversity of student population. Additionally, since the review, the department enhanced the research-oriented learning opportunities for MEd students making it more accessible for interested MEd graduates to consider applying to a PhD or an EdD. They have also enhanced course offerings for research-stream students by increasing the number of research methods courses across all programs including adding several OISE-wide JOI courses. The department's two Collaborative Specializations (i.e., the Comparative, International and Development</p>	<p>N</p>

<p>The reviewers note comments from students that high faculty advising loads can lead to a feeling that they do not have full or effective access to their advisors; some students also expressed concern/confusion over the processes of advisor assignment and thesis supervisor pairing.</p> <p>The reviewers noted difficulties faced by BIPOC students in the areas of research, teaching, outreach, institutional organization, hiring/admissions, and labor relations, and recommended establishing a working group to deepen understanding of these difficulties and create an action plan for addressing them.</p>	<p>Education; and the Workplace Learning and Social Change) also remain popular and continue to attract students.</p> <p>Regarding <i>faculty advising loads</i>, LHAE faculty still have high supervisory loads due to several faculty retirements and departures to other institutions, the increased demands from EdD programs, and administrative secondments of some of the department's tenured faculty. However, since 2020, the department has hired ten new faculty members with continuing appointments, which will help alleviate these issues as the newly appointed faculty reach tenure and are able to take on more supervisees. In addition to working with the Dean's Office on principled and fiscally responsible faculty renewal planning, the department uses other strategies to address this issue including: (i) the practice of co-supervisions when possible; (ii) fostering a collegial culture and transparency in advisor assignments and supervisor pairings where faculty contribute to all stages of the process (from admissions to the thesis defense); (iii) the involvement of the departmental staff in managing this process; and (iv) keeping an up-to-date database on supervisor-supervisee pairings. The department has also initiated a new doctoral tracking process to ensure students are supported to complete the program requirements in a timely manner.</p> <p>To improve access for <i>students from underrepresented groups</i>, progress has been made including diversifying the faculty complement. The majority of faculty members hired since 2020 bring diversity to the department, which now better reflects the LHAE student population. LHAE faculty include BIPOC faculty who are researchers and experts on a range of leadership, higher education, adult education and community development issues including those related to EDI. We draw from this well of expertise to improve and enhance the experience of the department's racialized students. In particular, since 2020, the department has hired ten new faculty members of whom eight are members of racialized communities. All new faculty bring a range of expertise in EDI themes to all three programs. Additionally, in collaboration with the LHAE student association, the department is creating inclusive and equity-supporting spaces for students including initiatives focused on food security and community-building, and a compilation of resources on mental health and wellbeing for the departmental community. In addition to the monthly "Continuing Conversations" space for faculty and staff to safely discuss emerging issues, in 2024-2025, under the leadership of Associate Chair, Prof. Francine Menashy, the department started a mentorship group for early career faculty. This is an ongoing priority as the department continues its work on reimagining itself as a space that fosters a culture of inclusion and respect in collaboration with other OISE departments and the Dean's Office. In the coming months, they plan on establishing a working group or a committee on EDI in order to continue conversations and expand the work on creating spaces and resources for mutual aid and support regarding these issues.</p>	
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<p><i>Faculty/Resources</i></p> <p>The reviewers identify growing enrolments coupled with resource shortfalls as LHAE's "greatest long-range planning challenge," observing that enrolments have increased significantly since 2012 while staff and faculty complements have not. They noted rapid increases in the number of sessional instructors with corresponding concerns about instructional equity and quality and recommended that faculty and staff complement plans be developed to support any further growth in LHAE programs.</p>	<p>Regarding <i>faculty/resources</i>, since the review, the department has hired ten new faculty members and continues to work with the Dean's Office on the principled and fiscally responsible faculty renewal planning. They are planning to seek approval for additional faculty positions for the 2025-2026 recruitment cycle and have recently renewed contracts for their three Contractually Limited Term Appointment (CLTA) faculty to support the program needs. While they continue to rely on hiring sessional instructors, they are reviewing this strategy and are in the process of developing a new workload plan for the 2025-2026 academic year. This entails: (a) working with the three programs to offer courses more strategically across the year including offering a suite of in-person, synchronous, and asynchronous courses taught primarily by continuing faculty and CLTAs; (b) requiring that core courses are taught by continuing faculty; (c) training staff to close undersubscribed courses, if possible, by moving students to other courses with available spaces; (d) increasing the course-breakeven point bar at 15 students per course (from the current 12); and (e) revising course schedules in advance of the beginning of each term to ensure as close to maximum capacity as possible per course. In terms of administrative staff resources, since the review, the department has changed its staffing structure and increased staff complement from five (originally an executive assistant, a business officer, two student success officers, and a communications officer), to nine staff now including a departmental manager, an executive assistant, an academic programs coordinator, three student success officers (one master's specialist, one PhD specialist, and an admissions/recruitment officer), the business officer, the finance and operations assistant, and the communications officer. The current staff complement is cohesive, collegial and effectively supports the growth of the department's programs.</p>	N
<p><i>Programs</i></p> <p>The reviewers commented on the wide range of pathways through several programs and suggested considering the effectiveness of each for supporting its target groups of students, and consolidating where possible, in light of the additional scheduling and administrative overhead in offering them.</p>	<p>The department has three <i>programs</i> with multiple degrees two of which have multiple fields or specializations. These diverse offerings are the department's strength helping them cater to the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. However, since the review, faculty have been reviewing programs and developing major and minor program modifications to ensure that programs are current and continue to meet the needs of students. For example, in 2020-2021, the Higher Education (MEd) program converted its leadership cohort option into a formal field that now recognizes this specialization on the students' transcripts. Similarly, in 2023-2024, the Educational Leadership and Policy (MEd) program introduced a new field entitled School Leadership in Diverse Contexts, which replaced the former Coursework Only [Online/Hybrid Delivery, Part-Time] option within the general MEd program. Also in 2023-2024, the Higher Education (MEd) modified the requirements and delivery mode for its Education in the Professions field to meet the needs of a broad range of professionals who participate in the program. Since the review, all programs made a number of minor modifications to update admission and/or program requirements to ensure the programs are current and that expectations are clear to students. Websites have also been improved communicating degree programs, fields</p>	N

	and specializations requirements more clearly to students in an accessible way. The department has also increased wayfinding regarding student success and wellbeing resources; made faculty profiles more compelling; and consolidated course listings by deactivating courses that have not been offered for five years. They have also created new courses in several sought-after areas including Indigenous education, work-integration and workplace learning, immigrant settlement issues and services, critical perspectives in education, organizational change, leadership and policy, as well as several popular professional courses including a new course on coaching.	
<p><i>Departmental Integration and Coordination</i></p> <p>The reviewers noted the recommendations from the 2012 review regarding departmental integration and coordination of curricula across degree programs and observed that the department has made “real and impactful progress” towards addressing them. However, they commented that “goals, learning objectives and plans for change or growth were rooted in the subdisciplines of the programs, not an overarching departmental vision.” While their conversations with stakeholders suggested that “a comfortable balance had been found between program and department structures,” some of the above issues around complement planning, student support, and staffing might be considered in relation to department integration and coordination.</p>	<p>As can be seen from already described initiatives to address the 2019-2020 review recommendations, notable progress has been made regarding the <b><i>departmental integration and coordination</i></b>. Since the review, the department hosts regular meetings for faculty and staff oriented less to programming and more to dialogue to collaboratively envision and co-create the department’s goals and priorities. Over the years, they have increased the offering conferences, symposia, and seminars led by faculty and students across all three programs, or one of the three department affiliated research centres. These include international conferences led by the Centre for Leadership and Diversity (CLD), the Centre for Learning, Social Economy &amp; Work (CLSEW), and the Comparative International and Development Education Centre (CIDE). The annual student-led Nina Bascia Education Policy Symposium represents an opportunity for students to showcase their research in an inclusive environment with the added benefit of peer-feedback.</p> <p>It is important to note that, since the review, the department has gone through significant leadership transition including several Chairs. Prof. Nina Bascia who led the department through the review, completed her five-year term on June 30, 2020. Her term was extended until June 30, 2022. She was succeeded by Prof. Creso Sá who served as Chair from July 1, 2022 until his appointment as OISE’s first Vice-Dean effective January 1, 2024. Prof. Ruth Childs then stepped in as Interim Chair from January 1 to June 30, 2024. While serving as Vice-Dean, Prof. Sá stepped in again as Interim Chair from June 30, 2024 until the appointment of Prof. Marcelo Vieta as Interim Chair effective September 1, 2024 until June 30, 2025. Prof. Vieta now commences his term as LHAE Chair from July 1, 2025 until June 30, 2027.</p> <p>The appointment of Prof. Vieta as Chair, effective July 1, 2025, presents an opportunity to revisit the departmental vision to ensure its alignment with the department’s evolving strategic priorities. This leadership transition is expected to bring a fresh perspective to addressing challenges identified in the review and driving meaningful change. Aligned with OISE’s new Academic Plan 2025-2030, and involving consultation with LHAE faculty, students, and staff, the department will undertake its own implementation planning and identify its unique contributions to realizing the shared goals and objectives contained in the OISE plan.</p>	N