

**FOR INFORMATION**

**PUBLIC**

**OPEN SESSION**

**TO:** Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

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**PRESENTER:** See Sponsor  
**CONTACT INFO:**

**DATE:** April 28, 2022 for May 5, 2022

**AGENDA ITEM:** 9

**ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

Annual Report on the Reviews of Graduate Collaborative Specializations: 2021-22

**JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) [Terms of Reference](#) (Sections 3 and 4.9) states that “The Committee...has general responsibility...for monitoring, the quality of education and the research activities of the University. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Committee works to ensure the excellent quality of academic programs by...monitoring reviews of existing programs...The Committee receives annual reports or such more frequent regular reports as it may determine, on matters within its purview, including reports on the ...[r]eviews of academic units and programs.”

**GOVERNANCE PATH:**

1. **Committee on Academic Policy and Programs [for information] (May 5, 2022)**

**PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

Governing Council approved the [Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units](#) in 2010. The *Policy* outlines University-wide principles for the approval of proposed new academic programs and review of existing programs and units. Its goal is to align the University’s quality assurance processes with the Province’s Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) through establishing the authority of the *University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP)*.

The scope of the UTQAP includes collaborative specializations. In line with the [QAF](#) definition, the University understands a collaborative specialization to be “an intra-university graduate field

of study that provides an additional multidisciplinary experience for students enrolled in and completing the degree requirements of one of a number of approved masters and/or PhD programs. Students meet the admission requirements of and register in the participating (or ‘home’) program but complete, in addition to the degree requirements of that program, the additional requirements specified by the Collaborative Specialization. The degree conferred is that of the home program. The completion of the Collaborative Specialization is indicated by a transcript notation indicating the additional specialization.” The learning outcomes of a collaborative specialization are in addition to those supported by the home program.

In the fall of 2015 the [Guidelines](#) governing these offerings were revised, establishing the lead Dean of the collaborative specialization as the review Commissioning Officer; previously the Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies commissioned collaborative program reviews. Because of the unique nature of collaborative specializations, their review process focuses on the quality of the “additional multidisciplinary experience” that collaborative specializations provide, over and above the experience associated with the home program. Reviews emphasize elements that are critical to determining ongoing quality of collaborative specializations at the University of Toronto, including:

1. Clarity and appropriateness of requirements
2. Evidence of successful attainment of learning outcomes
3. Evidence of ongoing need and demand
4. Continuing support of participating programs and supporting units (e.g. renewal of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA))

The Annual Report on the Reviews of Graduate Collaborative Specializations was previously submitted to AP&P on May 5, 2021.

## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

Two external reviews of collaborative specializations commissioned by their lead Dean were conducted in 2021-22. These were reviews of the Collaborative Specialization in Cardiovascular Sciences and the Collaborative Specialization in Neuroscience, both led by the Temerty Faculty of Medicine. The submission to AP&P consists of a table containing a summary of the review outcomes.

The reviews confirmed both collaborative specializations’ vitality, the appropriateness of their program requirements, and that the learning outcomes are in addition to those supported by the students’ home programs. As a result of the review of Cardiovascular Sciences, some programs with low student participation may pursue withdrawing from the program, though the Director has begun plans to grow participation in other units and explore collaborations with newer research organizations. For Neuroscience, the shift to digital platforms in response to COVID-19 has enabled a variety of new or enhanced collaborations; the collaborative specialization has also made improvements to program administration, and notes equity, diversity and inclusion as an area of increased focus. The MOAs for both collaborative specializations were recommended for renewal.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no financial implications.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

For information.

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**DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:**

- Annual Report on the Reviews of Graduate Collaborative Specializations: 2021-2022.

**University of Toronto**  
**Annual Report on Graduate Collaborative Specialization Reviews, Cycle 6, 2021-22**  
 Collaborative Specializations Reviews are Commissioned by the Dean of the Lead Faculty

**Collaborative Specialization (CS) Definition:** "an intra-university graduate field of study that provides an additional multidisciplinary experience for students enrolled in and completing the degree requirements of one of a number of approved masters and/or PhD programs. Students meet the admission requirements of and register in the participating (or 'home') program but complete, in addition to the degree requirements of that program, the additional requirements specified by the Collaborative Specialization. The degree conferred is that of the home program. The completion of the Collaborative Specialization is indicated by a transcript notation indicating the additional specialization." ([Quality Assurance Framework](#))

The learning outcomes of a collaborative specialization are in addition to those supported by the home program.

Collaborative Specialization & Lead Faculty	Participating Programs & Degrees	Appropriateness of Collaborative Specialization Requirements	Vitality of Collaborative Specialization	Other Strengths or Challenges Identified	Review Outcome
<b>Cardiovascular Science</b>  <b>Lead Faculty:</b> Temerty Medicine  <b>Date of Summary Assessment Report:</b> December 16, 2021	Biomedical Engineering – MSc, PhD Chemical Engineering and Applied Chemistry – MSc, PhD Clinical Engineering – MHSc Dentistry – MSc, PhD Kinesiology – MSc, PhD Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology – MSc, PhD Medical Biophysics – MSc, PhD Medical Science – MSc, PhD Pharmaceutical Sciences – MSc, PhD Pharmacology – MSc, PhD Physiology – MSc, PhD Rehabilitation Science – MSc, PhD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students at the MSc level are required to take a 0.5 FCE credit course from a selected cardiovascular curriculum list; PhD students take two of seven core courses for a total 1.0 FCE.</li> <li>All CSCS students must prepare a thesis in the field of cardiovascular sciences, under the supervision of a faculty member of the collaborative specialization.</li> <li>As the common learning activity, all students are required to attend and present once at the annual Student Research Day.</li> <li>Students are also encouraged to engage in optional student-organized activities, as well as the Cardiovascular Summer Initiative, Open Lab: Innovation in Cardiovascular Techniques, and the Circulation Seminars.</li> <li>All participating programs can accommodate the requirements of the CSCS.</li> <li>All enrolled students must complete the CSCS requirements in addition to those requirements for their degree program in their home graduate unit.</li> <li>Student progress is tracked by the CSCS Program Administrator; upon graduation, the student receives a transcript notation, and a certificate from the CSCS.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CSCS administers and runs seven 0.5 FCE graduate course modules; course enrolment numbers have remained consistent or are increasing, and the CSCS has added two new offerings since the previous review.</li> <li>The CSCS is active with 109 faculty members and an average enrolment of 81 students per year over the last 7 years.</li> <li>The need for CSCS graduates is evidenced by the fact that heart disease is the second leading cause of death in Canada.</li> <li>A new funding strategy shared by the CSCS partners has been implemented along with fundraising initiatives through Temerty Medicine. Supporting clinical units have agreed to provide financial support as needed to cover any shortfalls on a year-by-year basis.</li> <li>Approaching new partners while building commitments with existing partners will enable the CSCS to remain financially stable.</li> <li>By emphasizing interdisciplinary research across the theme of cardiovascular sciences, the CSCS builds upon the strength of individual units and helps to consolidate research across the University of Toronto's health-related Faculties.</li> <li>The CSCS offers ~\$150,000 worth of program scholarships and awards to students each year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alumni have gone on to successfully established research/education careers in diverse disciplines, in Canada and beyond.</li> <li>Exiting student evaluations indicate that the CSCS met their expectations, facilitated their research, and allowed them opportunities to meet a larger pool of cardiovascular researchers and receive feedback from peers.</li> <li>To address the challenges presented by COVID-19, the CSCS moved its courses, research day, and operations online as quickly as possible. Efforts were made to maintain academic and research excellence and continuity while also attending to the health and wellbeing of the CSCS community. The CSCS will continue to leverage the interest in online learning.</li> <li>The CSCS Director met with the Chairs/Deans of participating units that have not had any students during the review period. While some units are exploring withdrawal from the program, the Director has begun plans to grow participation in others.</li> <li>In addition to reaching out to new faculty in participating units, the CSCS will explore relationships with newer research organizations, such as the Ted Rogers Centre for Health Research and the Toronto city-wide Division of Cardiology.</li> <li>The CSCS is implementing several initiatives to increase student enrolment and further develop the student experience.</li> </ul>	MOA is recommended for renewal.

**University of Toronto**  
**Annual Report on Graduate Collaborative Specialization Reviews, Cycle 6, 2021-22**  
 Collaborative Specializations Reviews are Commissioned by the Dean of the Lead Faculty

Collaborative Specialization & Lead Faculty	Participating Programs & Degrees	Appropriateness of Collaborative Specialization Requirements	Vitality of Collaborative Specialization	Other Strengths or Challenges Identified	Review Outcome
<p><b>Neuroscience</b></p> <p><b>Lead Faculty:</b> Temerty Medicine</p> <p><b>Date of Summary Assessment Report:</b> March 3, 2022</p>	<p>Applied Psychology and Human Development – MA, PhD</p> <p>Biochemistry – MSc, PhD</p> <p>Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering – MAsc, MSc, PhD</p> <p>Cell and Systems Biology – MSc, PhD</p> <p>Computer Science – MSc, PhD</p> <p>Dentistry – MSc, PhD</p> <p>Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology – MSc, PhD</p> <p>Medical Biophysics – MSc, PhD</p> <p>Medical Science – MSc, PhD</p> <p>Music and Health – MA, PhD</p> <p>Pharmaceutical Sciences – MSc, PhD</p> <p>Pharmacology and Toxicology – MSc, PhD</p> <p>Physiology – MSc, PhD</p> <p>Psychology – MA, PhD</p> <p>Public Health – MPH, MScCh, MSc, MHSc, PhD</p> <p>Rehabilitation Science – MSc, PhD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All CSIN students must prepare a thesis in the field of neuroscience, under the supervision of a core CSIN faculty member.</li> <li>• Students at the Master’s level are required to take a 0.5 FCE credit course from a selected neuroscience curriculum list, while PhD students must complete courses totaling at least 1.0 FCE.</li> <li>• As a common learning activity, Master’s students must attend the Annual Collaborative Specialization in Neuroscience Research Day at least once; PhD students must attend twice.</li> <li>• Master’s students must attend at least 70% of lectures in the CSIN Distinguished Lectureship Series.</li> <li>• All participating programs are research thesis-based, and can accommodate the CS requirements.</li> <li>• Learning outcomes effectively broaden the scope of graduate training beyond those supported by the students’ home program.</li> <li>• In addition to providing fundamental cross-disciplinary knowledge, the CSIN offers opportunities for students to explore the most current and advanced developments in neuroscientific technology, techniques, and discoveries.</li> <li>• To better prepare incoming trainees and new faculty for the program requirements and expectations, CSIN has implemented an annual orientation event.</li> <li>• Student progress is tracked by CSIN’s Administrator and reviewed by CSIN’s Executive Committee; students who fulfill all CSIN requirements receive a transcript notation and an official document of program completion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CSIN’s committee meets annually to determine which courses qualify as neuroscience-related; there are presently 75 neurosciences courses on offer.</li> <li>• A Trainee Career Intentions survey enables outgoing graduate students to identify career goals; the comparatively high intention of CSIN graduates to pursue neuroscience/research-based careers exemplifies both the need and demand for the program.</li> <li>• CSIN is the largest collaborative graduate program in neuroscience in Canada.</li> <li>• Participation in the program is robust; as of August 2021 there were 409 faculty members, 394 graduate students, and 86 postdoctoral fellows. 16 academic departments across 7 faculties participate in the collaborative specialization.</li> <li>• Enrolment in the collaborative specialization has increased 26% and graduation by 71% since 2014.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSIN students complete a survey during the program to evaluate their learning experience, and feedback is overwhelmingly positive.</li> <li>• As there is no Graduate Department in Neuroscience at U of T, CSIN fills the important role of providing neuroscience students with a community and sense of identity.</li> <li>• To address challenges presented by COVID-19, CSIN transitioned to online program delivery. Remote learning has enhanced program participation, particularly of students and faculty from UTM and UTSC.</li> <li>• The shift to digital platforms is also encouraging collaborations with the Kite Research Institute, the Pan American Neuroendocrine Society, the Fields Institute, and others.</li> <li>• CSIN is exploring a hybrid model of event delivery post-COVID, to provide valuable in-person networking opportunities while continuing to offer the flexibility of remote learning.</li> <li>• To improve student experience and further develop research abilities, CSIN is considering adding additional workshops on the development of practical research skills.</li> <li>• Equity, diversity, and inclusion is noted as an area of increased focus.</li> <li>• To improve program administration, CSIN has developed new online forms and a database, moved to a digital newsletter, will be launching a new website this year, and is developing its social media presence.</li> <li>• CSIN will continue to work towards increasing its international reputation with an emphasis on building on its collaborations with the Max Plank-University of Toronto Centre in Neural Science and Technology; the shift to delivering lectures online has encouraged and enabled such partnerships.</li> </ul>	<p>MOA is recommended for renewal.</p>