

General BA and BSc 2014 Annual Implementation Report

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Implementation Plan from 2011-2012 Final Assessment Report

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| Recommendation: Develop learning outcomes for General students in all programs. | |
| Responsibility: Associate Deans; Department Chairs; Registrar | Implementation Date: May 2013 |
| 2012-2013 Actions | |
| <p>Decanal Response on Recommendation: Defining Learning Outcomes for students in this program is made difficult given that most of these students end up in the program by default, with the result that there might be little coherence to the bundle of courses that they have taken. Still, there are changes – some done, some in process - that will ameliorate the situation.</p> <p>First, last year both the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Science promoted a policy, ultimately approved at Senate, requiring that at least 8 credits of a 15 credit BA/BSc degree be credits associated with the Faculty granting the degree.</p> <p>Within the Faculty of Arts, the Dean’s office is currently in the process of developing a clear statement outlining the learning outcomes (LO’s) associated, on the one hand, with a university education and on the other, with a BA specifically from the Faculty of Arts. The general headings associated with the former will include at least critical thinking, communication and teamwork and the general headings associated with the latter will include things like an awareness of cultural and social diversity; engagement with the critical problems of the 21st century, experiential learning, intercultural adaptability etc. In both cases, these general headings will be associated with rubrics that can be used – in particular classes - to assess whether (and to what degree) those LO’s have been achieved. As part of the process of developing these LO’s, we will be conducting a series of surveys designed to determine the degree to which individual courses are structured to achieve these LO’s. An initial survey, aimed at gathering some initial information regarding the pedagogical structure of all 300 and 400 level courses in the Faculty, has already been distributed. In other words, to the extent that the two sets of LO’s are explicitly embedded in all Arts courses, then the fact that students in the 15 credit General BA must take 8.0 credits in Arts will ensure that a little more than half their courses, at the very least, will be associated with clear LO’s.</p> <p>Within the Faculty of Science, all departments currently have clearly defined the learning outcomes associated with their specific programs and courses. Thus, the courses taken by each student in the 15-credit General program within the Faculty of Science already have learning outcomes associated with them. However, the program-level learning outcomes need to be addressed. It would be important for both the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Science to open discussion on how to manage program-level learning outcomes for both the BA and BSc General degrees.</p> <p>The Faculty of Arts is also planning a DAC retreat in early September that will be the kick off to a process that asks departments to develop a third category of disciplinary-specific LO’s (some departments have already done this. The goal is to have a link on every department’s home page for “Program objectives” that leads to a page given both the disciplinary-specific LO’s as well as the core competencies associated with a University/Arts education. At the moment, a good model is the “Program objectives” link/page on the Health Sciences home page in Science.</p> | |

If the proposal mentioned below (re "concentration" in a particular discipline) is passed, then the net effect should be that students in the 15-credit degree program will have access to at least at least some of these disciplinary-specific LO's.

PRS Comments: As this recommendation focuses on two separate issues: learning outcomes and access to upper year courses, the recommendations have been split for future reporting. On the issue of learning outcomes, the PRS supports the faculty and department-level efforts for all programs to have identified learning outcomes and looks forward to an update on progress made on this recommendation in next year's report.

2013-2014 Progress (check one):

Completed

Other (please explain):

Unit Actions: n/a

Decanal Comments: Almost all programs in the Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Science developed program level outcomes in 2013-14. The matter of Program Level Outcomes for a 3 year General Degree, however, as well as access to upper level courses in this program, must await the outcome of the discussion among Associate Deans from all Faculties (see below).

PRS Comments: The committee would appreciate an update on any progress made on this recommendation in next year's report.

Recommendation: Make every effort to open their second- and third-year courses to General students.

**Responsibility: Associate Deans;
Department Chairs; Registrar**

Implementation Date: May 2013

2012-2013 Actions

Decanal Response on Recommendation: To make it that much easier to allow students in the 15-credit program to accumulate courses in a particular discipline (again, assuming that the "concentration" proposal mentioned below passes), it would be useful if as many 2nd year courses as possible did not have prerequisites. In the Faculty of Arts, it is already the case that most 2nd year courses in some departments (e.g., English, History, Religion and Culture) do not have prerequisites; part the campaign that will start with the DAC retreat in September will be to convince other departments to likewise. In the Faculty of Science, all 2nd year courses have prerequisites due to the nature of the material being taught. Current limitations on space have meant that students in the 15-credit General program are restricted from many 2nd year courses until all majors have their required courses. With the creation of the Global Exchange Innovation Building and a potentially new Science II Building, the Faculty of Science will be able to open courses to students in the General program.

As an aside, eliminating prerequisites from as many 200 level courses as possible will also have the effect of facilitating transfers (i.e., from colleges, other universities, other faculties).

PRS Comments: Noted. Please provide any updates in next year's report.

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| 2013-2014 Progress (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain): |
| Unit Actions: n/a |
| Decanal Comments: Generally, in addition to the Faculty of Arts departments mentioned above, course prerequisites for second year courses are also not required in Philosophy or Political Science. Efforts to persuade Sociology to eliminate 200 level courses prerequisites (made during the course of their periodic review this past year) failed to persuade either the department or the reviewers. Elimination of prerequisites is not feasible in Communication Studies given that it is a high demand program and the goal is selectivity. It is also not feasible in language courses, or in physical geography courses, because progression requires technical expertise. In 2014-15, the Dean's Office will talk with Archaeology/Classical Studies and with Global Studies, and again with Sociology, to see if course prerequisites for their 200 level courses can be eliminated. |
| PRS Comments: The committee acknowledges the efforts made by both faculties in addressing this recommendation and encourages them to continue to monitor course availability for General students. For the purposes of reporting however, this recommendation is considered complete. |

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| Recommendation: Require all General students to have at least 4.0 credits in a particular concentration. | |
| Responsibility: Registrar; Associate Deans and Deans | Implementation Date: February 2013 |
| 2012-2013 Actions Decanal Response on Recommendation: A policy to require this will be set in motion in September. The Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Science will each discuss how to structure the 15-credit BA/BSc General program to include both breadth and depth courses, and create program-level learning outcomes. General BA in Arts: The Faculty of Arts Divisional Council passed a motion requiring students to have 4.0 credits in one concentration (same as Science below). General BA in Science: minimum 4.0 credits one concentration (Psychology, Biology etc) minimum 4.0 additional Science credits; minimum 3.0 credits outside Science (with at least 1.0 credit from Division A and at least 1.0 credit from Division B) General BSc in Science: 1.0 credits in MA; minimum 4.0 credits one concentration (Psychology, Biology etc) minimum 4.0 additional Science credits (with at least 2.0 from Division C); minimum 3.0 credits outside Science (with at least 1.0 credit from Division A and at least 1.0 credit from Division B) PRS Comments: Noted. Please follow up on this recommendation in next year's report. | |

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| 2013-2014 Progress (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Completed <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain): |
| Unit Actions: n/a |
| Decanal Comments: This motion (to require at least 4.0 credits in a single concentration) passed at Arts Divisional Council but was put on hold at Senate Academic Planning pending the outcome of discussions among Associate Deans from all Faculties (including the two Faculties at Brantford) on the development of a 15 credit BA that draws upon courses from several Faculties, and upon both online and intramural courses. The discussion will be organized and coordinated by the Associate Vice-President Teaching and Learning during 2014-15. |
| PRS Comments: The committee would like an update on progress made on this recommendation in next year's report. |

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| Recommendation: Develop a tracking mechanism to follow General students through their program | |
| Responsibility: Registrar; Faculty Advisors | Implementation Date: January 2013 |
| Recommendation completed. | |

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| Recommendation: Continue examining entrance requirements and university supports to ensure that those admitted have a real chance of succeeding in an honours-level education. | |
| Responsibility: Registrar; Deans; VP Taskforce | Implementation Date: Ongoing, to begin Winter 2013 |
| 2012-2013 Actions Program Response on Recommendation: The Faculty of Arts has raised the admission average once again; to 75% for Fall 2013. The Faculty of Science cut-offs remain in the mid-70s. Brantford has not set a floor on cut-offs but has not seen the same progression issues that Arts in Waterloo has seen thus far. The Faculty of Science has kept their admission averages relatively high (between 74% and 85%, depending upon the program). In addition, the floor for English and Math high school credits has been kept to 60% this year. It is clear that the grades seen in both English and Math at the high school level are indicative of performance at University. The Enrolment Management Committee and Admissions are well aware of the increased focus on quality over quantity when it comes to admission requirements, as evidenced by the increase in the Arts cut-off. The First Year Task Force has been constructed and is under way. In their deliberations, they will consider the supports needed to ensure students can progress in their Honours programs. PRS Comments: Noted. Please provide any updates in next year's report. | |

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| 2013-2014 Progress (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain): |
| Unit Actions: n/a |
| Decanal Comments: The entrance average in Arts was lowered (from 75% to 73%) in response to a dramatic reduction in applications. Similarly the entrance requirement for the BA in Psychology offered in the Faculty of Science was lowered from 74% to 73%. The reduced entry requirements were on the condition that the students involved take a reduced load (no more than 4 courses/term) and with the understanding that they would be provided with one on one mentoring by Learning Services and General Academic Advising. Learning services will also be tracking these students. |
| PRS Comments: The committee acknowledges the complexity of this recommendation and trusts that both faculties will continue to monitor this issue. There is no need to report on it further. |

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| Recommendation: Advise General students of their realistic prospects of graduating with an Honours degree. | |
| Responsibility: Faculty Advisors; Department Undergraduate Advisors; Central Advising | Implementation Date: January 2013 |
| 2012-2013 Actions | |
| <p>Program Response on Recommendation: Advisors in the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Science currently advise General students about the prospects of graduating with an Honours degree. Both Faculties have programs and workshops that are meant to inform students about the importance of their GPA in maintaining Honours status.</p> <p>A potential solution would be to place an academic hold on all students who have been placed in the General program due to failing to meet progression requirements.</p> <p>Decanal Response on Recommendation: See the recommendation, above, to freeze the registration of students likely to end up on a 15 credit degree at the end of their second year until they consult an academic advisor.</p> <p>PRS Comments: The PRS agrees with the decanal response. Please indicate in next year's report whether or not this solution has been implemented.</p> | |
| 2013-2014 Progress (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain): | |
| Unit Actions: n/a | |
| Decanal Comments: We discovered that much of the advising done by Dean's Office Advisors in the Faculty of Arts is already done in connection with students in a 15 credit BA who want to talk about this very issue (→ the value of the 15 credit BA). One of our advisors estimates that more than 50% of the students she sees want to talk about this | |

topic. One thing we've done this past year then is (1) increase the number of advising hours, and (2) moved one of our two advisors into the residences, to come into contact with students who might not come to the Dean's office. We did consider putting a hold on their LORIS account (until they had talked with an Advisor) but – in light of the number of students involved and the limited number of advisors we have - decided against this. This year, however, we plan to identify all the students who have been put into the 3 year General Degree because their GPA dropped below 5.0, and send each an email outlining some of the issues they should think about. This email will also invite them to a workshop run by the Associated Dean and by an Advisor at which these issues will be discussed and any questions answered.

PRS Comments: The committee considers this recommendation completed and there is no need to report on it further.

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| Recommendation: Remove "General" from any four-year degree. | |
| Responsibility: Arts, Science, & Brantford Associate Deans; Economics Chair; Registrar | Implementation Date: March 2013 |
| Recommendation completed. | |

Additional Recommendation from the Program Review Sub-Committee: At its November 11th, 2013 meeting, Senate Academic Planning approved the following motion: "that the Senate Academic Planning Committee, on the recommendation of the Program Review Sub-Committee, approve the inclusion of a university-wide recommendation on each Annual Implementation Report that, prior to the next cyclical review, the program develop a means for assessing program learning outcomes." A full explanation of the rationale behind the motion can be found here:

http://legacy.wlu.ca/documents/56385/PRS_Recommendation_for_Annual_Implementation_Reports_SAPC_Nov_11_2013.pdf

The committee recommends that the Department begin having conversations about program learning outcomes assessment and put together a strategy for collecting and presenting evidence of this assessment in its next cyclical review.

Additional Comments (PRS): The committee acknowledges the challenges associated with the follow-up from this cyclical review and appreciates the efforts made by both faculties in implementing the recommendations that came out of it. In recognition of this, the committee considers all but two of the recommendations completed for reporting purposes.