



## **Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan**

Joint PhD in Educational Studies

Faculties of Education

Brock University, Lakehead University and the University of Windsor

March 2021

**Cyclical Program Review for  
Joint PhD in Educational Studies**

Faculties of Education

Brock University, Lakehead University and the University of Windsor

**Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan**

**Programs Reviewed**

Joint PhD in Educational Studies

**Review Team**

Dr. Ann Vibert

School of Education

Faculty of Professional Studies

Acadia University

Wolfville, Nova Scotia

Dr. Steve Alsop

Faculty of Education

York University

Toronto, Ontario

Dr. Rupert Klein

Department of Psychology

Lakehead University

Thunder Bay, Ontario

## Background

In accordance with the Lakehead University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (as the host institution for this review), a Final Assessment Report has been prepared to provide a synthesis of the external evaluation and internal response and assessments of the Joint PhD program in Educational Studies offered collaboratively through the Faculties of Education at Brock University, Lakehead University and University of Windsor. This report identifies the significant strengths of the program, the opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The report includes an Implementation Plan that identifies:

- a. who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the Final Assessment Report;
- b. who will be responsible for providing any resources made necessary by those recommendations;
- c. who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations;
- d. any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations; and
- e. timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

## Review Summary

The joint Faculties of Education submitted a Self-Study in October 2019. Volume I presented the program descriptions and outcomes, an analytical assessment of the program, and program information along with institutional information and statistical data. Volume II provided course syllabi. Volume III provided the CVs for core faculty affiliated with the programs.

The Review Team for this cyclical program review included two external reviewers and one internal reviewer selected by the Senate Academic Quality Assurance Sub-Committee (SAC-QA) at Lakehead University from a set of proposed reviewers. The Program Committee and Secretariat provided the set of proposed reviewers.

The reviewers examined materials and completed a two-day site visit on January 30-31, 2020. The site visit was conducted from Lakehead University and included in-person and virtual meetings with the following members from all three institutions: the PhD Program Committee, the Provosts and Vice-Presidents (Academic), the Academic Deans of Education, the Deans of Graduate Studies, Educational Librarians, Program and other Administrative Staff, Faculty members involved in teaching and supervision,

current PhD students and alumni. In addition, the team met with Dr. R. Koster, Deputy Provost and Vice-Provost (Teaching Commons), Lakehead University, at the outset and conclusion of the visit to clarify process and follow-up to the review.

The Team toured the Faculty of Education and central campus on Lakehead's Thunder Bay location; virtual tours of the complementary facilities at Brock University and the University of Windsor were conducted.

Due to the joint structure of this program and the material contained in this report, it is helpful to describe the following unique structural and functional elements. A Secretariat and Program Committee manage the program. The Secretariat rotates from one university to the next on a five-year cycle. The Secretariat consists of one senior faculty member, the Director, who receives a teaching release for administrative duties and one administrative assistant (the Program Administrator). The Program Committee consists of three senior faculty members, one from each university; although each has a different title (i.e. Chair, Associate Dean, Director), they are similarly responsible for the administration of the program within their institution. The Program Committee meets monthly during the Fall and Winter terms. Program changes requiring institutional approval do not come into effect until all three institutions have completed their respective processes.

In their report (March 2020), the Review Team provided feedback that describes how the joint program delivered by the Faculties of Education at Brock, Lakehead and Windsor meets the Quality Assurance Framework evaluation criteria and aligns with the mission, strategic and academic plans of the three institutions. The Review Team noted that the common aspirations for high-quality scholarship, innovative research, capacity building in research and teaching, and connection to community locally and globally are reflected in the detailed learning and program outcomes of the Joint PhD. They identified that the program structure offers students the advantages of flexible learning environments including a combination of program delivery approaches designed to make distance study accessible and approachable; further, through the collaboration, the institutions are able to offer greater breadth and depth of scholarly and pedagogical expertise than could be offered by the institutions individually.

At the graduate level, students must meet standard University admission policies appropriate for the Program Learning Outcomes. Curriculum structure and delivery, and teaching and assessment methods are appropriate, are aligned with comparable programs across Canada, reflect the current state of the discipline, and are effective in preparing graduates to meet defined program outcomes, appropriately aligned with the Graduate Degree Level Expectations.

With respect to quality indicators not also included in Strengths (below), the Review Team noted the following:

- The program capitalizes on the advantages of “jointness”, which is highlighted as a unique strength. An innovative doctoral program by design, it offers students flexibility while building on the individual strengths and expertise of faculty at each university.
- Distance technologies are used to full advantage to support academic advising and teaching, making full use of innovative blended delivery modes. Well-resourced with audio and visual hardware and excellent technical support personnel, the room and building capabilities are clearly central to enabling a program distributed across three universities.
- Although originally designed to meet the needs of mid-career educational professionals, for whom relocating families and meeting full-time residency requirements over several years was not possible, the program now attracts students from a wider range of backgrounds (e.g. early-career and non-traditional educational experiences). Distance delivery techniques and program flexibilities are built into the program structure in order to serve students over wide geographic areas and, especially in the case of Lakehead University, to offer access to doctoral study to students in rural and remote communities.
- The day-to-day running of the program is managed by the Joint PhD Program Committee and the Joint PhD Secretariat. There is much evidence that this structure is highly successful in overseeing this complex inter-institutional program.
- Documentation shows admirable completion rates (most within 5-7 years of enrollment) and employment outcomes.
- Support provided by librarians and teaching commons personnel at each university is extensive, effective and appropriate.
- There is ample evidence of an on-going “ever-greening” approach to program review taken by the Program Committee, faculty and administration; ongoing program monitoring coupled with a regular rotation of instructors ensures updated course content. The Program Committee recently developed a series of clear, thoughtful and comprehensive Learning Objectives that further strengthen the program leading to a wide range of outcomes commensurate with a high quality program.
- The program handbook is clear and comprehensive.
- The application process works well even for those from “outside traditional formal education contexts” thus supporting the diversity of students.
- Deliberate collaboration seeks to establish and strengthen faculty-faculty, faculty-student and student-student networks; students praised the instructors’

considerable abilities to create a strong and supportive academically rigorous program and [...] community of learning.

- Assessment approaches are grounded in a critical-constructivist educational philosophy through which faculty and students are viewed as knowledge co-constructors in a learning community. A range of self-assessment, peer-assessment and instructor-assessment practices are interwoven across program elements.
- As faculty in the field of education, instructors in the program are, by training and scholarship, experts in pedagogical theory and innovative teaching practise. The review team stated “they bring this knowledge to bear effectively on their teaching in this program”.

### Strengths Summarized

The reviewers described the following key strengths:

- This is clearly a high-quality PhD program. The distinctive collaboration between the three universities, the strong administrative support and the combined scholarly expertise of the faculty involved are all strengths. The program is designed to be flexible and accommodate different professional backgrounds. The scheduling is adaptable to the demands of working professionals and those with other commitments (e.g., family). The concentrated summer teaching seminars (DS1 and DS2) and the possibilities of independent study and leaves-of-absence that could be taken with little disruption to the progression through the program *[are helpful]*.
- The quality and diversity of the curriculum and the flexibility of the mode of delivery are key program strengths. The Review Team’s meetings with graduate students highlighted how the DS1/DS2 summer courses were hallmark moments in the program. They mentioned it was an “intense experience” but there was resounding praise for those teaching these courses and their abilities to create and sustain a strong cohort amongst students in the similar year and to receive mentorship from DS2 students. Students noted that the cohort model was worth the expense and time and that the effects continued as cohorts stayed in contact, which aided in retention, motivation and academic/professional development.
- The students were extremely positive about the staff, administrators and faculty.
- For Lakehead especially, but likewise across Ontario, it was noted that the flexibility of this program provides access to students and offers the professional weight of over 80 faculty members. *[This provides]* Access to the best scholars and cross-collaborations that no individual university could provide alone.

## Opportunities

The Review Team identified four opportunities for improvement as part of their summary; two of these were elaborated as Recommendations and are addressed as such. Opportunities, unlike Recommendations, are not commented on as part of the Final Assessment Report.

The reviewers suggest:

- Given student comments, it would be helpful to highlight the importance of reading prior to attending the first Doctoral Seminar in particular as students found that deliverables were quite demanding within the time constraints. Furthermore, it may be worth considering the addition of a final capstone experience within each cohort, though it was recognized that variable times to completion may not make this option feasible.
- Both the purpose and form of the Doctorate Comprehensive Portfolio was raised as a source of some confusion and differing interpretation by students and also by some faculty. The Review Team noted that clarity concerning the comprehensive portfolio was an issue raised in the 2011/12 IQAP review, and that in response the Program Committee quite reasonably rewrote the section of the Program Handbook dedicated to the portfolio. Nevertheless, it appears that interpretations around this program feature continue to vary widely, calling for further discussion of the role and extent of the portfolio within the program.  
*Dealt with in Recommendation 3c.*
- There are matters that arise as a consequence of varying policies and procedures across the three universities co-offering the program. These include differences in collective agreements, differences in credit for course and thesis supervisions, differences in Graduate Student Office policies and procedures. While such differences are to some extent inevitable in a joint program involving three separate universities, they do imply the importance of opportunities for faculty, Program Coordinators, and Faculty Deans to recognize and address, to the extent possible, these differences.  
*Dealt with in Recommendations 1a, 2a and 2b.*
- Finally, the question of further coursework in order to support theory development and methodological knowledge was raised. The self-study indicates that this has been an on-going consideration in program review; some students favour increased coursework, and others disagree. One potential avenue for considering this matter might include, as suggested in the 2011/12 review, reducing the credit of the Doctorate Comprehensive Portfolio in order to increase opportunities for coursework.  
*Dealt with in Recommendation 3c and 3d.*

## Recommendations

As per the IQAP, responses from the Joint PhD Program Committee<sup>1</sup>, Deans of the Faculties of Education and Deans of Graduate Studies to each of the Review Team Recommendations are included below. The Deans of Education provided a joint response while the Deans of Graduate Studies provided individual responses.

The recommendations were organized by the Review Team into three areas: (1) Program Governance and Administration; (2) Admission and Residency Requirements; and (3) Program Structure and Curriculum.

### **(1) Program Governance and Administration**

#### **Recommendation 1a:**

That the Secretariat, Program Committee, Deans of Education and Deans of Graduate Studies review the existing balance of Secretariat and home university policies, procedures and practices.

#### **Program Committee Response:**

*This recommendation was broken down into 3 specific areas to be examined: i) the application process ii) Leaves of Absence and iii) Progress and probation*

*i) Admissions - the academic unit disagrees with the recommendation of a review of the admission process. Although admissions are granted by each home university, the application process is greatly streamlined by having Secretariat personnel responsible for taking in the applications, checking them for completeness, and communicating with prospective students. This allows for cohesive responses to all inquiring students. It also allows for a complete overview of applicants to the entire program. If this process was moved to the home universities, it would be harder to maintain this consistency and big picture view. Additionally, as the application process is time-consuming, it would require hiring extra personnel to deal with the application load at each University. It would also eliminate the opportunity for students to list a second and third choice home university – one of the advantages of a joint program.*

*ii) Leaves of Absence - we agree that the role of the Secretariat should be reviewed.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Normally this would be the responsibility of the individual Academic Unit; in the case of the joint PhD, the Program Committee fulfills this role.

*Organizational Changes - Changes in organization required for adjusting the role of the Secretariat in Leaves of Absence would be minimal. In fact, since the IQAP Self Study was prepared, the PC has conducted this revision and ultimately decided that PC approval should not be required for Leaves of Absence. This change has been entered into the 2020 Joint PhD handbook.*

*Resources - The resources required for implementation of this recommendation are minimal.*

*Proposed Timeline - The proposed review for this point has already been completed.*

*iii) Progress and probation - we agree that mechanisms and requirements for progress and probation should be reviewed.*

*Organizational Changes - The mechanisms of progress and probation are more complicated and require a more thorough review and discussion amongst the PC and other stakeholders. Any changes to the program organization would be administrative and reflected in the Joint PhD handbook.*

*Resources - The resources required for implementation of this recommendation are minimal.*

*Proposed Timeline - This review should be completed within the next year.*

#### **Deans of Education Response:**

*Please see the response from the Program Committee.*

#### **Deans of Graduate Studies Response:**

*Lakehead University - Faculty of Graduate Studies will work with all relevant parties as required.*

*Brock University - The Academic Unit's response is appropriate and FGS supports the rejection of i) and will work with the unit as required for ii) and iii).*

*University of Windsor – FGS believes it is time to move admissions to each home University and is in discussions with the Faculty of Education.*

#### **Recommendation 1b:**

That the Secretariat, Program Committee and Deans of Graduate Studies consider implementing an administrative transition period during the year before the Secretariat rotation.

#### **Program Committee Response**

*The Program Committee agrees in principal with this recommendation.*

Organizational changes - *This recommendation would require few changes in organization. The transition would proceed as usual, but ideally, be smoother based on having someone already in the administrative position at the new Secretariat.*

Resources - *This would require that the new Secretariat hire an administrative officer before the Secretariat officially moves. That would increase the budget for administrative support for the transition year. It would also depend on the regulations and timelines around hiring for the new Secretariat university. Consideration will have to include an evaluation of all these elements.*

Proposed Timeline - *The Secretariat is scheduled to move next in July 2023. This consideration will therefore be addressed in 2022.*

#### **Deans of Education Response:**

*Given that there is sufficient notice of this proposal, the budget can be adjusted accordingly. The benefits of a smoother transition would, in our view, outweigh the costs.*

#### **Deans of Graduate Studies Response:**

*Brock University - FGS is in support of the Academic Unit's and the Academic Dean's response. However, funding considerations fall outside of FGS' purview.*

#### **Recommendation 1c:**

That the Secretariat (with support from the Deans) continue to provide funds and actively promote opportunities for faculty to meet and discuss teaching and research collaborations.

#### **Program Committee Response:**

*The PC agrees with this recommendation as it pertains to the teaching and research agendas associated with the PhD program. In terms of faculty or student research, the PhD program committee does not want to be seen as pushing faculty towards particular collaboration with faculty members from within the Joint PhD program, or otherwise interfering with their research programs.*

Organizational Changes - *This would not require any changes in organization.*

Resources - *Some form of faculty gathering can be conducted fairly efficiently. For example, a virtual meeting can be set up between instructors in terms where multiple courses are running. Similarly, a virtual speaker series may allow faculty members and students to share their research programs with one another so faculty can learn more about the research of their colleagues at other universities. In*

*person retreats and meetings would require resources provided by the home universities.*

*Proposed Timeline - We propose to continue with virtual meetings beginning in the Fall term. For in-person meetings, a timeline is hard to identify currently, but we'll continue to review both the travel situation and the financial situation at the home universities.*

**Deans of Education Response:**

*All three Deans, and their wider Faculties, are committed to increasing collaboration between faculty as appropriate.*

**Deans of Graduate Studies Response:**

*Brock University - FGS is in support of the Academic Unit's and the Academic Deans' response. However, funding and faculty members' collaborations fall outside of FGS' purview.*

**Recommendation 1d:**

That the Secretariat considers ways that program administrators might physically meet alongside the annual Program Committee meeting.

**Program Committee Response:**

*We agree that an in-person meeting of the program administrators would be helpful. It may not be feasible to do it alongside the annual PC meeting, as the Secretariat administrator is required at that meeting.*

*One option that may be more feasible, given resources, is having an in-person administrative meeting at the point of Secretariat rotation at the new Secretariat university. For example, in 2023 the administrators at Lakehead and Brock could travel to Windsor and have a meeting on Windsor Campus with the Windsor administration and new Secretariat administration. This would allow for more cohesion amongst the administrators, while also helping the new Secretariat administrator to understand the procedures at each home university. As there is generally less turnover in the administrator positions than the PC positions, an in-person meeting every few years may be sufficient to build that camaraderie.*

*Organizational Changes - No organizational changes would be required.*

*Resources - For a full yearly meeting, resources required by the Joint PhD would be the full cost of an outside meeting and travel costs for the Secretariat administration. Resources required from the home universities would be travel costs for the three home university administrators.*

*For a meeting at the point of Secretariat rotation, the PhD would provide resources for the day of the meeting, and two of the home Universities would have to provide travel for their administrators.*

*Proposed Timeline - A meeting at the point of secretariat rotation could be implemented at the next rotation, summer 2023.*

**Deans of Education Response:**

*The Deans are supportive of this proposal. The experience of Lakehead is that opening opportunities for administrative staff to meet with their colleagues at the other campus is beneficial in building administrative capacity.*

**Deans of Graduate Studies Response:**

*Brock University: FGS is in support of the Academic Unit's and the Academic Dean's response.*

**Recommendation 1e:**

That the Secretariat disaggregate time-for-completion data (presented in the Self-study) to include distinctions between part-time and full-time status, international and domestic status, and monitor completion rates with respect to equity, diversity and inclusion.

**Program Committee Response:**

*We agree that this would help us understand our students more.*

*Organizational Changes - No organizational changes required.*

*Resources - No additional resources would be required.*

*Proposed Timeline- This should be completed by Sept 2020.*

**Deans of Education Response:**

*Please see the response from the Program Committee.*

**Deans of Graduate Studies Response:**

*Brock University - FGS is in support of the Academic Unit's and the Academic Dean's response. Disaggregating this data will be extremely helpful in identifying completion rates and demographic information.*

**(2) Admission and Residency Requirements**

**Recommendation 2a:**

That the Program Committee and Secretariat further clarify the requirements of part-time and full-time registration status.

**Program Committee Response:**

*Each University does differ somewhat in the requirements of full-time and part-time status. We agree that clarification would be helpful. Their individual responses are below.*

*Lakehead University - Does not have a part-time program, so this suggestion does not apply.*

*Brock University - Is currently undergoing changes to the full-time/part-time registration requirements, and part of this change will clarify part-time residency. Depending on the outcome of recommendation 2b, the changes may involve removing the residency requirement for part-time students altogether.*

*University of Windsor - The University of Windsor does currently require students to register full-time during their residency. However, it is not necessary for students to quit their jobs.*

*Changes in Organization - These points of clarification would not require changes in organization, but would likely result in clarifications within the Joint PhD Handbook. It should be noted that recommendation 2b would require changes in organization that would make this recommendation obsolete.*

*Resources - Clarifying these points would likely require co-operation from the Faculty of Grad Studies at each home university, but no additional financial resources.*

*Proposed Timeline - As Brock University is currently in the process of adjusting these requirements, clarification would likely take the next year to complete. This timeline may be adjusted depending on the results from recommendation 2b.*

#### **Deans of Education Response:**

*Please see the response from the Program Committee.*

#### **Deans of Graduate Studies Response:**

*Brock University - FGS will cooperate with the Academic Unit to help clarify these points.*

*University of Windsor – FGS believes that clarification of this issue is important and will continue discussions with the Faculty of Education.*

#### **Recommendation 2b:**

That the Secretariat, Program Committee, Deans of Education and Deans of Graduate Studies review the full-time residency requirements.

#### **Program Committee Response:**

*The Program Committee agrees that the program may have evolved beyond full-time residency requirements for part-time students, and these requirements should be reviewed.*

*Changes in Organization - While the review may not ultimately lead to changes in organization, if a change is made, this would be a large change in organization requiring calendar changes and possibly a major modification of the program to remove this requirement.*

*Resources - The resources required for this review would be minimal, as would implementing this change. However, it should be noted that with part-time students no longer registering full-time for residency, there will be a decrease in incoming resources.*

*Proposed Timeline - We expect to implement this review over the next year. If change does occur, we expect that full implementation will take another year.*

**Deans of Education Response:**

*Please see the response from the Program Committee.*

**Deans of Graduate Studies Response:**

*Lakehead University - in conjunction with all parties, FGS is happy to review residency requirements.*

*Brock University - FGS is in support of the Academic Unit's response and will work with them to review residency requirements.*

**(3) Program Structure and Curriculum**

**Recommendation 3a:**

That the Program Committee holds a retreat for Faculty and Students to discuss the roles and purposes of the three academic fields.

**Program Committee Response:**

*The program committee partially agrees with this recommendation. The particular fields of study have been examined multiple times since the last review, with no indication of strong inclination on a meaningful or functional change. We recognize that some faculty and students are still dissatisfied, but we are not hopeful that another retreat will change anything in that regard. However, the reviewers do raise a good point that while we've made changes to prevent faculty feeling pigeon-holed to one field of study, we haven't made such adjustments for students. Therefore, it might be wise to conduct a review and consultation, if not a full retreat, to examine*

*ways that we can help students relate to the fields of study. This may involve allowing students to declare a secondary field of study (and may require them to take multiple field-of-study courses).*

*Changes in Organization - Depending on the outcome of the proposed review, this may require an adjustment to how students declare a field of study, or require additional course work or other requirements for students who would like to identify across multiple fields of study.*

*Resources - If this review takes the form of a retreat, then it would require the set-up and hosting of a retreat by the Joint PhD as well as travel costs for the home universities. If we instead hold virtual meetings specifically on the topic of how to allow students to identify across multiple fields, the resources required would be minimal. The resources required to implement any changes would, of course, depend on the outcome of review, but at the extreme end, if many students start taking multiple field of study courses, it may require additional instructors for the most popular courses.*

*Proposed Timeline - Given the multiple reviews that we expect to initiate as a result of the IQAP process, we would propose initiating this review in the 2021-2022 academic year. The review should not take longer than 6-10 months. Any changes that result from that would then be implemented in either the 2022-2023 academic year, or the 2023-2024 academic year, depending on how in-depth those changes are.*

**Deans of Education Response:**

*Please see the response from the Program Committee.*

**Deans of Graduate Studies Response:**

*Brock University - FGS supports the Academic Unit's response. However, curriculum considerations such as these fall outside of FGS' purview.*

**Recommendation 3b:**

That the Program Committee and Deans of Education reflect on possible ways in which the joint PhD program can build on the strengths of the masters' programs at each university.

**Program Committee Response:**

*The Program committee agrees in principal that reflecting on the connection between our masters' programs and the Joint PhD is a worthwhile endeavour. Although, as clarified above, PhD students are welcome to take masters' courses at*

*each home university. Similarly, each home university has events, like Graduate Student Research Conferences, at which masters and PhD students can share in one another's work.*

*Changes in Organization - We do not anticipate any changes in organization to follow from this reflection; however, it may be necessary to better communicate the connections between the masters and PhD programs at each home university.*

*Resources - We do not anticipate any resources required for this reflection, nor for increasing student awareness around the connection between the masters and PhD programs.*

*Proposed Timeline - Given the current pressures on the Deans of Education, it may be prudent to wait on this reflection for a few months. We do not expect it would take more than a few meetings. We would loosely schedule this for 2022.*

**Deans of Education Response:**

*The key to this recommendation is to develop better communication strategies between existing and potential MEd students and the PhD Program. The Deans would support any such strategies.*

**Deans of Graduate Studies Response:**

Lakehead University – FGS sees this as an opportunity to engage with our students and potentially expand our Direct Offer Program to promote the PhD Program to our MEd students.

Brock University - FGS supports the Academic Unit's response, and agrees that better communication is key.

**Recommendation 3c:**

That the Program Committee reconsider the current range of practices and further clarify the purposes and associated learning outcomes of the Doctorate Comprehensive Portfolio.

**Program Committee Response:**

*We agree that there continues to be confusion among both faculty and students as to the purpose and requirements of the comprehensive portfolio. However, we disagree that a review of the portfolio itself would be most beneficial for ameliorating this confusion. The practices and outcomes of the portfolio are necessarily broad based, due to the variety of methods and topics covered by the three faculties of education. For example, one student doing arts-based research on mental health in*

*elementary schools, and one doing quantitative research on learning stats in higher ed are going to have very different processes and outputs – yet both portfolios should demonstrate depth and breadth of knowledge in their topic area as well as their chosen methodology as they relate to their field of study (the current evaluation measures outlined in the Joint PhD handbook).*

*Rather, it seems that faculty and students continue to hold misconceptions about the requirements of the portfolio, and are not consistently aware of the changes that have been made to the portfolio criteria since the last review. We think the solution to this problem may be that we need stronger messaging around the purpose and outcomes of the portfolio. For example, although it is stated in the Joint PhD Handbook, many faculty and students don't recognize that the Portfolio is the examination that moves a student to Doctoral Candidacy status. Many faculty and students similarly don't recognize that the portfolio defence and the dissertation proposal meeting must be two separate events (this information is also in the Joint PhD Handbook). We do agree that a review of our messaging and identifying ways of clarifying many of these points for faculty and students would be beneficial.*

*Changes in Organization - We do not anticipate any changes in organization based on this review, although we expect changes to the program handbook to help clarify points. This will likely include moving the statement about the Portfolio being the milestone examination that moves a student to candidacy status to the opening of the Comprehensive Portfolio section, and repeating it throughout.*

*Resources - Improving this messaging may require resources. Perhaps a Q & A for students – either virtually or in-person. Perhaps better faculty engagement. A review would have to be completed to know the resources required for implementation.*

*Proposed Timeline - The Program Committee intends to begin the process of reviewing and generating ideas for improved messaging immediately. We expect to have ideas to implement within the next year.*

#### **Deans of Education Response:**

*Please see the response from the Program Committee.*

#### **Deans of Graduate Studies Response:**

*Brock University - FGS supports the Academic Unit's response. The Comprehensive Portfolio is a requirement for Candidacy and so it is critical that messaging about its purpose and outcome be clearly articulated.*

*University of Windsor – FGS looks forward to the discussions to ensure clarity and consistency in the product.*

**Recommendation 3d:**

That the Program Committee considers ways of differentiating the curriculum by building in flexibility for students to take intensive and specialised courses, including research methods courses.

**Program Committee Response:**

*As mentioned in the clarification section above, students can take intensive and specialty courses, including research methods courses. They can take these courses as their specialized elective, audit them with the approval of their supervisor and the Chair/Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in Education, or request PC approval to enrol in another course. We agree that messaging around this option can be improved.*

*Changes in Organization - Although this option exists, only the specialized elective option is clearly outlined in the Joint PhD program handbook. We would propose modifying the handbook to make it clear that other options are possible with approval.*

*Resources - No resources required.*

*Proposed Timeline - We expect to be able to add these clarifications to the 2021 Joint PhD Handbook.*

**Deans of Education Response:**

*Please see the response from the Program Committee.*

**Deans of Graduate Studies Response:**

*Brock University - FGS supports the Academic Unit's response.*

**Recommendation 3e:**

That the Program Committee and Deans explore the range of supervisory practices including the distribution of supervisory load and the current practice of allocating supervisors.

**Program Committee Response:**

*This recommendation has two elements. First, the issue of supervisory load and compensation for programmatic elements like a directed study. As the reviewers note, this is an issue governed by the collective agreements at the home university, and individual budgets of each home university Faculty.*

*The second point is that the program explore the idea of having a temporary supervisor, thereby making the switch between supervisors easier when students*

*refine their interests as they gain more experience. We agree that these ideas merit exploration, while acknowledging that these ideas may also run up against collective agreement issues and are difficult to enact at smaller universities, where there may be only one faculty member with expertise in a student's area of focus. We should also note that amicable changes of supervision do take place and it is rare that the supervisory relationship deteriorates and becomes problematic. Asking prospective students to identify a willing supervisor before applying to the program typically works very well.*

*Changes in Organization - If a plan around making supervisory changes easier were implemented, it would have considerable changes to the organization, as most of the program is built on an apprenticeship model. Considerable reflection and consideration of multiple angles will be required before anything can be implemented.*

*Resources - Any change in this regard would likely require minimal resources.*

*Proposed Timeline - This idea requires considerable review and exploration. We would expect to have some ideas as to whether either of the proposed changes is even plausible, given the collective agreements at the 3 universities within the next year. Further consultation with faculty and students would then be required. If there is impetus to make these changes, we'd expect to begin implementing around 2023.*

#### **Deans of Education Response:**

*This recommendation raises many issues around collective agreements, and the individual practices of Faculties in recognizing supervision. Any changes would need to be carefully considered, based on extensive consultation, and, as far as practicable, reflect the individual nature of the three institutions.*

#### **Deans of Graduate Studies Response:**

*Brock University - Supervisory load and assignment is governed by collective agreements and falls outside of FGS' purview.*

#### **Recommendation 3f:**

That the Program Committee and Secretariat explore ways of more firmly connecting students with academic support facilities in their home universities.

#### **Program Committee Response:**

*The Program committee agrees with this recommendation.*

*Changes in Organization - This would require only minimal changes to the organization. During the summer sessions, an orientation to the host university*

*facilities still makes sense, but in fall term making the option for home university orientation to facilities and supports can be added easily.*

*Resources - University libraries and other facilities would have to provide such an orientation, but these events are common in fall and should not require much in the way of additional resources.*

*Proposed Timeline - Given the current situation, the summer sessions this year are being held online. As an offshoot of that decision, the home university libraries have already begun to make asynchronous, online, orientation materials available. We expect other home university facilities to make similar materials available for fall term. Thus, we expect this to be implemented by the coming fall term.*

#### **Deans of Education Response:**

*We agree with the Academic Unit Response, and would also point out that the PC is in the process of developing a joint policy on accommodations that will clarify the provision of accommodations, especially during the summer sessions.*

#### **Deans of Graduate Studies Response:**

*Lakehead University - FGS is happy to work with the relevant parties to further promote academic supports within the University.*

*Brock University - FGS is happy to work with the Academic Unit to promote the supports available to graduate students at the University.*

### **Clarifications**

The Program Committee identified the following points for clarification:

- 1) On Page 11, the reviewers indicate that “suitable adjunct faculty may sit on committees but not supervise”.
- 2) It’s suggested by the reviewers that students must leave other work in order to complete residency.
- 3) Recommendation 3d: That the Program Committee considers ways of differentiating the curriculum by building in flexibility for students to take intensive and specialized courses, including research methods courses.

#### **Program Committee response:**

*1) At Lakehead, tenure or tenure-track faculty who have supervisory status with the Faculty of Graduate Studies, but are adjunct faculty within the Faculty of Education,*

*may supervise. At the University of Windsor, individuals with Faculty of Education adjunct status may co-supervise PhD students. At Brock University, only designated faculty may supervise students. Adjunct professors may serve as 4<sup>th</sup> member of the supervisory committee.*

*2) Although full-time enrolment means students receive funding and therefore must not work full-time at Brock University, the University of Windsor does not make such a stipulation. Students may enrol full-time and maintain their other employment (although they may not be eligible for funding if they have full-time employment).*

*3) Students are able to take additional courses under the current model. In their first year, during winter term students are required to take a specialization elective. This could be a directed study with their supervisor, or could be a methods or content course offered by the University at the Masters' level. Additionally, students may audit any course offered by their home university, with the permission of their supervisor and Chair/Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in Education. Students may also request to enrol in an additional course, which requires Program Committee approval.*

**Deans of Education response:**

*Please see the response from the Program Committee.*

## Implementation Plan (Part A): Program Responsibilities

Implementation of the Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility*	Timeline
Review existing academic policies, procedures and practices wrt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● LOAs</li> <li>● Progress and Probation</li> <li>● Full- and part-time status</li> <li>● Residency</li> </ul>	Identify areas of overlap or confusion; develop clarification or modifications where necessary and appropriate; seek institutional approval (if necessary); publish revisions in Handbook and elsewhere as appropriate	Program Committee and Secretariat	May 2022
Review curriculum wrt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fields of education</li> <li>● Role and weight of Portfolio</li> <li>● Intensive and specialized courses</li> </ul>	Consider changes to curriculum based on consultation with faculty, students and administrative staff; develop clarification or modifications where necessary and appropriate; seek institutional approval (if necessary); publish revisions in Handbook and elsewhere as appropriate	Program Committee and Secretariat	May 2022
Enhance administrative function and decision-making: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Timing of transition</li> <li>● Time-to-completion data</li> </ul>	Complete cost:benefit analysis for any structural/functional administrative changes; seek access to additional data to better understand student demographics	Program Committee and Secretariat	Sept 2021

<p>Enhance opportunities for communication and collaboration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Faculty to faculty</li> <li>● Program administrators</li> <li>● Faculty and students</li> <li>● Elaborate and clarify connections between Masters and PhD programs</li> <li>● Better connect students to academic support facilities</li> </ul>	<p>Identify cost effective opportunities for appropriate communication and collaboration between different parties (faculty, students, librarians, teaching commons personnel, etc.); ensure appropriate notice/publication of any changes</p>	<p>Program Committee and Secretariat</p>	<p>Sept 2021</p>
<p><b>Note – as all Academic Units will be developing their response to the Academic Plan (2019-2024), some of these items may be addressed as part of this process.</b></p>			

## Implementation Plan (Part B): Decanal & Administration Responsibilities

Implementation of the Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility*	Timeline
Meet regularly with Secretariat and Program Committee to monitor progress on the Implementation Plan**	Inform supervisor as per institutional procedures.	Deans of Education*	Annually
Explore the range of supervisory practices	Identify opportunities for increased consistency given existing institutional practices and governance	Deans of Education	May 2022
If adopted, implement the transition from one University to the next one year earlier	Pilot in 2022 (Lakehead to Windsor)	Deans (Education and Graduate Studies)	Dec 2021

\*indicates individual or office with responsibility

\*\*Note - The Dean of the Faculty, in consultation with the academic unit shall be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan. The details of progress made will be presented in the Deans' Annual Reports and filed in the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic).