

**Agenda and Evaluation Report for  
Audit & Review Face-to-Face Meeting  
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater  
Environmental Safety & Health Masters, 2023-2024**

**Date:** 3/8/2024

**Invited:** Provost John Chenoweth; Dean Paul Ambrose (Business & Economics) and Dean Matt Vick (Graduate Studies); Department Chair/Program Coordinator Donna Vosburgh/Todd Loushine; faculty and staff in the program; Audit & Review Team Chair Christine Neddenriep (Katy Casey filling in at meeting); Audit & Review team members Amal Ibrahim; Assessment Representative Katy Casey

- 1) Introductions
- 2) Overview of review team evaluation, program comments
  - a) The meeting chair shared the review team's evaluation, focusing on program structure, accomplishments, and strengths. The program coordinator reiterated the value of the online MS in attracting "non-traditional" students (e.g., working professionals and career changers) to the high demand field.
- 3) Discussion of Review Team's evaluation:
  - a) Share the progress the program made on completing and distributing the alumni survey.
    - i) The alumni survey has been completed, but still needs to be reviewed and approved by the program. The plan is to use Qualtrics to administer the survey and find alumni through Linked In and other social media connections, survey data that graduating students complete, and the alumni office.
  - b) What is the program's optimal enrollment?
    - i) The program reported the ability to increase enrollment with current resources and support. The staff also noted the dips in enrollment due to students taking breaks to transition to a new job or promotion, and then returning to complete the program once the transition is completed.
  - c) Discuss the program's decision not to pursue accreditation. In the accreditation response, there was mention of the Certified Safety Professional (CSP) designation- does the program help students meet these criteria and achieve this status?
    - i) The CSP exam is not required to practice in most states. The program actively works to prepare students to take the exam but do not report any value in requiring it for program completion.
- 4) **Recommended Actions:** The evaluation report lists three recommended action (see page 13, point 4) related to assessment, alumni engagement, and student diversity.
- 5) **Recommended Result:** *Continuation with minor concerns*
  - Please make use of the detailed comments in the evaluation report (below).
  - Please select all applicable boxes and fill in the appropriate year:
    - ☒ Next FULL self-study will be due to the Dean on October 1, 2028 and to the Assessment Office on November 1, 2028.
    - ☐ Adjourn.

*Review team report is attached below, including Recommended Actions and instructions for Progress Reports (if required).*

**University of Wisconsin-Whitewater  
Review of Audit & Review Self-Study**

Date of Evaluation 11/29/2023 Short Self Study (SS\*)         

Program: Environmental Safety & Health MS      Masters ☒      Major ☐      Minor ☐

**Evaluations submitted by:** Christine Neddenriep; Tia Schultz; Matthew Vick; Katy Casey; Amal Ibrahim

**Review meeting attended by:** Christine Neddenriep; Tia Schultz; Matthew Vick; Katy Casey; Amal Ibrahim

**I. General Program Information**

**1. The program's mission statement reflects the nature and scope of the program.**

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

**2. The program's mission statement aligns with the School of Graduate Studies mission.**

Sufficient Evidence	3
Some/Partial Evidence	2
Not Applicable (explain why in comments below)	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

**3. Program described changes impacting the program since the last review.**

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

**4. The program has been responsive to actions recommended from the previous Audit and Review report; Progress Reports have been submitted, if relevant.**

Sufficient Evidence	2
Some/Partial Evidence	3
No/Limited Evidence	0

**5. The program has achieved or maintained program-level accreditation or has considered seeking it, where appropriate.**

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No Evidence	0

**General Comments related to section I.**

While there is alignment with some of the graduate school missions, it was not clear how the program prepares for careers in the industry- there was not any mention of professional preparation. In the accreditation response, there was mention of the Certified Safety Professional (CSP) designation- does the program help students meet these criteria and achieve this status?

Overall, the program's mission and the Graduate School's mission are well-aligned. The description of the program and how it is situated within the field of ESH is clear.

Accreditation is not a "value add". Attendance at Assessment Institute looks like the recommended action that was made (and met).

Accreditation available through Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) but not deemed "value added."

- The mission statement is strong and covers the essential elements of what the program aims to achieve. It could be further enhanced by addressing the global nature of ESH challenges, the integration of research and practice, community engagement, commitment to lifelong learning, and inclusion. - The evidence provided does indicate that the ESH program has undergone significant changes since the last review, which have likely impacted the program's structure, delivery, and operations. - The information provided does suggest that the MS in ESH program at UWW has distinct characteristics that set it apart from other programs both regionally and nationally. To further substantiate these claims, it would be beneficial to have comparative data on program outcomes, such as employment rates, salary advancements, and student satisfaction metrics, alongside similar programs. Additionally, external recognition or accreditation could serve as further evidence of the program's standing. - The evidence provided does suggest that the program has taken steps to respond to the actions recommended in the previous Audit and Review report. While these actions indicate a positive response to the previous review's recommendations, the evidence would be stronger if it included details on how the assessment plan has been implemented and the specific improvements that have resulted from these actions. Additionally, information on how the new faculty members have contributed to addressing the program's growth needs would provide a more comprehensive picture of the program's responsiveness. - The program's decision not to seek ABET accreditation seems to be based on a strategic assessment of the value it would add. It would be beneficial for the program to periodically revisit this decision, especially if industry standards or employer expectations change, or if there is a shift in the regulatory landscape that increases the value of accreditation.

**II. Alignment within the University**

**1. The program contributes to the fulfillment of UW-Whitewater's mission.**

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

## 2. The program contributes to the fulfillment of UW-Whitewater's Strategic Plan.

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

### General comments related to section II.

This master's degree is a great service to our region by providing a career-changing opportunity through a master's degree. Changes in Common Body of Knowledge requirements has made the program more accessible to a more diverse audience.

## III. Program Goals & Accomplishments

### 1. Goals and objectives were identified and undertaken to improve and advance the program.

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No Evidence	0

### 2. Goals currently in place will contribute to the program's advancement. Criteria for determining success were measurable and attainable.

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No Evidence	0

### 3. The program has a process for setting and assessing goals and making decisions about changes to the program goals.

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

### 4. Program faculty, staff, and/or students received special recognitions or awards during the review period.

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

### General comments related to section III.

III3. Two advisory boards and professional relationships with local, state, and national organizations provide input into the program. III4. Student awards?

The assessment plan appears to be discussing data with faculty at meetings and the advisory board. This meets the requirement, but an example of implementation might have been helpful.

The current program goals were described with little detail on the value of achieving the goals, or how the goals will be met- those involved, criteria for determining success.

- The evidence provided does indicate that specific goals and objectives were identified, and actions were taken to improve and advance the program. - Overall, the goals are aligned with the program's advancement and are largely measurable and attainable, although some may benefit from more specific success metrics. -The combination of internal faculty discussions and external input from advisory boards and professional organizations creates a comprehensive framework for setting and assessing goals. The evidence points to a participatory and informed process for program development and continuous improvement.

#### IV. Curriculum

##### 1. The program has a clearly articulated, efficient, and purposeful curriculum, complete with a capstone experience.

Sufficient Evidence	2
Some/Partial Evidence	3
No/Limited Evidence	0

##### 2. Dual-listed courses are described and explain differences between expectations for undergraduate and graduate students.

Sufficient Evidence	3
Some/Partial Evidence	2
No/Limited Evidence	0
Not Applicable (explain why in comments below)	0

##### 3. Changes to the curriculum were described, including the basis for the changes.

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

##### 4. Appropriate assessment data were used in making curricular revisions.

Sufficient Evidence	2
Some/Partial Evidence	3
No/Limited Evidence	0

## 5. The program provides opportunities for students to engage outside the classroom.

Sufficient Evidence	3
Some/Partial Evidence	2
No/Limited Evidence	0

### General comments related to section IV.

IV2. Syllabi not provided. How do these courses contribute at the undergrad level? IV5. Limited opportunities given the asynchronous nature of the program.

The program does a nice job connecting with students outside the classroom. This can be challenging in online programs.

1. The coursework option does not have a clear capstone experience laid out/explained. 4. Curricular changes were largely driven by the advisory board feedback (valuable). One example of the use of GOAS assessment data was given.

I did not see a course sequence, just a description of pre-requisites for admission to the program.

- The information provided does indicate that the MS in ESH program at UWW has a clearly articulated curriculum that is both efficient and purposeful, with distinct pathways to cater to different student needs and a capstone experience. -The evidence provided suggest that the program has taken steps to differentiate the learning outcomes and expectations for graduate students enrolled in dual-listed courses (e.g., reduction in dual-listed courses, advanced individual projects, class presentations and written reports, different grading scale). - The evidence provided indicate that there have been substantial and deliberate changes to the curriculum, with a clear rationale for each modification (e.g., course level changes, new elective courses, deactivation of courses, certificate program changes, feedback-driven decisions). The curriculum changes are well-documented, with clear explanations provided for each action taken. -The curriculum changes described are a result of a comprehensive review process that considers feedback from various stakeholders, including students, graduates, and advisory boards. -The program is actively working to provide high-impact educational practices that can enhance the learning experience and professional development of its students. However, the evidence would be further strengthened by data on student participation rates in these opportunities, feedback from students on the value of these experiences, and any outcomes related to job placements or career advancements as a result of these practices,

## V. Assessment of Student Learning

### 1. The program uploaded an assessment plan that includes student learning outcomes.

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

### 2. The program aligns their student learning outcomes to the Master's Essential Learning Outcomes.

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

**3. Student learning outcomes are "mapped" to the curriculum.**

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

**4. The program provided a timeline indicating when faculty and staff assess SLOs. The timeline is manageable and sustainable.**

Sufficient Evidence	2
Some/Partial Evidence	3
No/Limited Evidence	0

**5. The program described the measures/processes they use to assess SLOs, and the criterion for performance.**

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

**6. The program described the results of the assessment data collected.**

Sufficient Evidence	2
Some/Partial Evidence	3
No/Limited Evidence	0

**7. The program described specific actions individuals in the program took, or will take, to make changes to the program based on assessment results.**

Some/Partial Evidence	4
Sufficient Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

### General comments related to Section V.

Curriculum Map missing aligning with Master's Essential Learning Outcomes Assessment data limited to embedded assessments in courses

The assessment plan is very clearly laid out and has clear benchmarks for program level assessment. The plan for a portal for faculty to upload their data into also is well explained.

The program has an assessment plan that includes program SLOs, a curricular map, assessment methods and results. The program reported that SLO data is collected and discussed every semester. It is not clear who is then responsible for any follow-up or changes based on discussion of student performance.

Overall, the assessment plan seems to be well thought out with clear metrics and alignment with essential learning outcomes. However, there is always room for improvement, especially in terms of providing more detailed examples of signature assignments, ensuring the assessment measures are robust enough to capture the depth of student learning, and enhancing the systematic sharing and application of assessment data. -It would be beneficial to include more comprehensive examples of signature assignments that demonstrate how students meet the program's learning outcomes. These examples should showcase a range of skills from critical thinking to practical application. Additionally, the assessment measures could be expanded to include a variety of formats beyond traditional quizzes and written reports, like portfolios or reflective journals for a richer picture of student learning. - The application of assessment data should be an ongoing process with clear documentation of how feedback leads to specific changes in the curriculum or teaching methods. This could be done by maintaining an updated action plan that documents how assessment feedback informs curriculum changes, with clear responsibilities and timelines.

### VI. Student Recruitment, Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation: Trend Data

#### 1a. The program explains fluctuations in enrollment.

Sufficient Evidence	3
Some/Partial Evidence	2
No/Limited Evidence	0

#### 1b. Five-year enrollment and graduation trends reflect program vitality and sustainability.

Sufficient Evidence	3
Some/Partial Evidence	2
No/Limited Evidence	0

#### 1c. Program has strategies to recruit and retain students.

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

#### 1d. Students can enroll in appropriate courses and proceed without delaying graduation.

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0



**1e. The program described efforts to engage underrepresented communities.**

Sufficient Evidence	0
Some/Partial Evidence	4
No/Limited Evidence	1

**1f. The program described student composition and whether it was reflective of the diversity of the University.**

Sufficient Evidence	3
Some/Partial Evidence	2
No/Limited Evidence	0

**2. Claim that the program is oversubscribed, undersubscribed, or at optimal level is justified or supported by examples or data.**

NA

**General comments related to section VI.A****1a. Other explanations for significant fluctuations in enrollment?**

It would be helpful if the program made efforts to attract a more diverse population to the program than just the images shown on the website.

The program's responses to enrollment were not clear to me. I was not sure if they felt the program is sufficiently enrolled, or if there is room to grow or a need to grow (?) I am not sure including visuals in advertisements is an effective way to recruit students from diverse backgrounds.

- The provided information suggests that the program is actively responding to industry needs and student employment trends, which is a positive indicator of its vitality and sustainability. The program is proactively adapting to the evolving educational landscape and labor market, which are key aspects of a sustainable and vital graduate program. - The program mentioned using diverse visuals in marketing materials to engage underrepresented communities. However, to enhance this effort, it could consider outreach initiatives to schools in diverse areas, forming partnerships focused on diversity, and providing scholarships aimed at these communities. Additionally, establishing mentorship programs and incorporating an inclusive curriculum may further support the retention and success of underrepresented students. -The evidence suggests that the program's student composition, particularly in terms of gender and ethnicity, does not fully reflect the diversity of the University. While the program has recognized the need to promote the degree to women and non-white applicants, it may benefit from more proactive and targeted diversity initiatives. These could include outreach programs, partnerships with organizations that support underrepresented groups, and showcasing successful alumni from diverse backgrounds to attract a more varied student body.

## VI. Student Recruitment, Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation: Demand for Graduates

### 1. Placement information indicates that program graduates find employment to continue their education.

Sufficient Evidence	2
Some/Partial Evidence	3
No/Limited Evidence	0

### 2. Data suggests that employment opportunities for graduates of this program will remain strong.

Sufficient Evidence	2
Some/Partial Evidence	3
No/Limited Evidence	0

### 3. Described efforts to retain and track graduates.

Sufficient Evidence	0
Some/Partial Evidence	3
No/Limited Evidence	2

### 4. Described unique features of the program that set it apart from other system or regional colleges and universities.

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

### General comments related to section VI.B

Additional efforts to track graduates beyond the planned survey could be made. Use of LinkedIn?

1-2. The program wrote that they could not describe career projections, but attached a document that did describe career options and noted an increase in demand. 3. The program wrote their "need" to conduct an alumni survey in 23-24- it is not clear if plans are in place to send out the survey this year.

- The assertion that most MS in ESH graduate students is currently employed in the EHS field while studying is a positive sign of the program's alignment with industry needs. However, a more robust assessment of graduate outcomes would require additional data, such as alumni employment rates post-graduation, further education statistics, employer feedback, and job market analysis. -To support the claim of strong future employment opportunities, the program could benefit from gathering and presenting data such as national employment trends in the EHS field, feedback from industry partners, alumni employment statistics, and the geographic distribution of current students' employment. This broader scope of data would provide a more comprehensive view of the graduates' prospects. -The planned alumni survey for the 2023-2024 year shows a forward-thinking approach to improve graduate tracking and retention. However, for a more immediate and comprehensive understanding of retention and tracking efforts, the program could also consider some ongoing feedback methods and leveraging alumni networks and social media platforms to maintain engagement and gather informal feedback for real-time insights and engagement.

## VII. Resource Availability & Development: Faculty and Staff Resources

**1. Information on the numbers of full and part-time faculty and staff is provided. Expertise of teaching staff is aligned with the needs and future vision for the program.**

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

**2. Tenure and promotion standards, including post-tenure requirements, reflect faculty and staff ability to advance in rank.**

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

**3. Information is provided about changes in the faculty since the last Audit and Review.**

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0
Not Applicable (explain why in comments below)	0

**4. The program has identified staffing changes and anticipated areas of potential future need.**

Sufficient Evidence	5
Some/Partial Evidence	0
No/Limited Evidence	0

### General comments related to section VII.A

All departments have their own standards in addition to the college standards.

- These actions suggest that the program is actively managing its staffing to maintain the quality of instruction and meet student needs, despite the challenges posed by faculty turnover.

## VII. Resource Availability & Development: Student Resources

**1. The program has adequate personnel, student help, and service and supplies to serve its graduate student population.**

Sufficient Evidence	3
Some/Partial Evidence	2
No/Limited Evidence	0

**2. The program has adequate facilities, equipment, technological, and library resources to effectively serve its students.**

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

**General comments related to section VII.B**

The program appears to be well-resourced in utilizing University and COBE support services.

**VIII. Conclusions and Recommendations from the Department or Program**

**1. Areas of strength are provided.**

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

**2. Areas of improvement and continued progress are discussed.**

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

**3. Recommendations and resources are discussed.**

Sufficient Evidence	4
Some/Partial Evidence	1
No/Limited Evidence	0

**General comments related to section VIII**

3. Good insight into needs to demonstrate student/program assessment outcomes.

-The program's strengths lie in its student-centric design, active student advocacy, robust support from CoBE, and a commitment to continuous improvement and personalized student support. - The program identified some areas of improvement such as Alumni survey/ feedback, marketing and recruitment. -The program's discussion about standardizing data collection and analysis, including the use of worksheets for instructors, demonstrates a commitment to improving the assessment process and gathering valuable performance data.

## IX. Reviewer Conclusions

### 1. Strengths of the Program

Well resourced; program growth; market demand; innovation; and course offering/staffing.

The program is well designed for career-changing, working adults. It has eliminated barriers for students by reducing its Common Body of Knowledge requirements that do not count toward the MS. The assessment plan is robust and detailed.

Strong focus on serving working adults with a 100% online, asynchronous program. Expert faculty with diverse expertise. Access to a wide range of MBA courses to complement ESH coursework. Support and resources provided by the CoBE. Active efforts to grow and improve the program through data collection and analysis. An engaged advisory board and strong connections with professional bodies is a strength of your program.

A strength of the program is providing a program that fulfills a field need in a way that also supports the needs of working students.

### 2. Areas for Work or Improvement

Assessment plan that will yield data specific to master's level learning outcomes and impact on program changes/needs. Increase diversity of applicants including females.

Some of the responses in the report did not provide ample detail. It is not clear if these are areas that need improvement or areas that need more detail/clarity when written about in the report.

Growing the program, especially with women would be beneficial to the industry. Look for ways beyond images on the website to increase belonging and inclusion in the program.

Consider implementing a more comprehensive and systematic approach to assessing student learning outcomes, including the use of direct and indirect measures that provide a deeper understanding of student achievement. This could involve incorporating additional signature assignments, implementing regular programmatic assessments, and using external benchmarks or national standards for comparison. Additionally, establishing a more consistent and structured schedule for assessment meetings to discuss data and make informed decisions for program improvement could enhance the assessment process. Conducting an alumni survey to gather feedback and insights for program enhancement. Enhancing marketing and recruitment materials. Focusing on recruiting and retaining students from underrepresented communities.

### 3. Recommended Actions

1) Describe how the program uses the data collected from the assessment plan to drive program initiatives forward, and inform curricular decisions (e.g., course sequence, capstone performance). For example, share assessment results with external advisory board and discuss recommendations for informing curricular changes based on student performance.

2) Develop a method to communicate with alumni such as a LinkedIn page or follow up communication after the planned survey is completed.

3) Provide more detail, with specific strategies, on how the program will increase student diversity. Some examples include, outreach initiatives to schools in diverse areas, forming partnerships focused on diversity, and providing scholarships aimed at these communities. Additionally, establishing mentorship programs and incorporating an inclusive curriculum may further support the retention and success of underrepresented students.

### 4. Other Questions

NA

### 5. Other Comments

It would have been helpful to have more information and detail in many of the responses. There were items difficult to comment on because so little information was provided.

Thank you for your commitment to ensuring the program's excellence and continuous improvement. Your contributions are greatly valued!

**6. Recommended Result**

Continuation without qualification. Next self-study will be a shortened one focusing on the Recommended Actions from the current report.	0
Continuation with minor concerns. Progress report may be required, at the discretion of the Audit & Review Committee.	5
Continuation with major concerns in one or more of the four areas. Submit progress report(s) addressing the concerns as directed by the Audit & Review Committee. Progress reports must be submitted to the College Dean, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and the Audit & Review Committee.	0
Insufficient Information in the self-study to decide; revise self-study & resubmit.	0
Refer to Provost for action. This option is selected if the report is not completed by the date due.	0