



Marketing External Review Report

November 25 & 26, 2024

External Review Team Members

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OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE SELF-STUDY REPORT

Criteria: The Self-Study Report provides a data-supported analysis of the program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges.

Standards for Assessing the Report:

- Strengths and areas of improvement identified in the report are supported by data and external review findings;
- Recommendations are supported by data, a clear rationale, and external review findings.

The External Reviewers:

- ☒ Validate the Self-Study Report's findings and recommendations
☐ Do not validate the Self-Study Report's findings and recommendations

Rationale for this Determination:

1. Quantitative Skills Improvement

The program self-study report showed that only 29% of students felt confident in applying marketing mathematics principals to justify marketing investment spend. The current curriculum does not systematically reinforce the education of marketing math throughout the program, which can/will lead to knowledge gaps in the workforce and potentially create a more difficult time for students finding their first role in industry.

2. Student Satisfaction & Employment Outcomes

A strength of KPU can be seen through the 94% of graduates from both the BBA in Marketing Management and diploma programs being satisfied, alongside the 95% of diploma graduates being employed, with 75% of BBA graduates in industry.

3. Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

Another notable strength of the BBAMM is the WIL program. Not only will it provide significant value to students upon graduation, it will also provide BBAMM faculty with a real-time pulse on the evolving required skills sets of graduates. Although it is not mentioned, creating a formalized process, such as an Exit Interview for students and employers, will aid in the collection of this valuable data.

4. Contingency Plan to Reflect AI

Overall, the strategies reported in this MMPRSSR report are supported by data and a clear rationale. However, the data used to determine "work ready" skills is highly problematic. It does not reflect the vast changes that have and are occurring in the marketing profession now. It is recommended that MSBMMP develop a contingency plan to address the rapid adoption of AI in the marketing profession.

REVIEWERS' VALIDATION OF THE SELF-STUDY REPORT CHAPTERS

CHAPTER 2: Curriculum Review

Criteria: This chapter provides a clear profile of the program graduates, relevant program learning outcomes, and a curriculum mapping assessment that adequately identifies any gaps in the program's curriculum. The assessment is supported by appropriate evidence and conclusions.

Standards for Assessing this Chapter:

- Strengths and areas of improvement identified in this chapter are supported by data and external review findings;
- Recommendations in this chapter are supported by data, a clear rationale, and external review findings.

The External Reviewers:

- ☐ Validate the Self-Study Report's findings and recommendations
- ☒ Do not validate the Self-Study Report's findings and recommendations

Rationale for this Determination:**2.1 Pathways For Graduation**

Work BC 2024 and LinkedIn data are highly credible evidence. Career paths projected in this report rely heavily on LinkedIn 2023 data. At the time this report was being compiled, this reliance was appropriate. However, today the LinkedIn data is significantly outdated; it does not reflect the role AI is expected to play in the execution of daily marketing activities. A common belief of AI's impact on marketing job displacement is that many entry level digital marketing activities such as social posts, content management, copywriting, display ad design, media buying, will be delegated to AI; eliminating, or reducing greatly, the demand for entry level digital marketers.

2.2 Skill Development

2.2.a Since KPU has stated the goal of MSB is to ensure BBAMM graduates are ready to work (MMPRSSR, page 8) with curriculum closely aligned to industry standards (MMPRSSR, page 12), the use of KPU Policy AC9 as the primary source for skills development does not seem to adequately reflect the industry standards. Furthermore, this section should also include a discussion on how AI is going to be addressed in skills development.

Since the digital marketing landscape is evolving at an unprecedented pace with AI taking the forefront, the participants of the graduate discussion panel encountered challenges in adapting to their first career roles. The alumni pointed out two variables that created these challenges: lack of marketing/business software tooling training and understanding of the use of metrics about presenting to managers & c-suite. With 72% of businesses increasing their investments in digital marketing technologies (Gartner, 2024), the institution must be proactive to remain aligned and relevant to industry/business needs. With many universities now trying to lead this AI race, KPU has an opportunity to have a marketing program that stays actively invested in teaching AI driven decision making and creates best practices surrounding the use of it.

2.2.b Branding was identified by 69% of the discipline sector survey to be essential or very important (MMPRSSR, page 32). The student survey found students want more exposure in branding (MMPRSSR, page 31). Furthermore, in Appendix C1: the advertising career path includes brand strategy and management. KPU does not offer a course in Brand Management.

2.3 Curriculum Assessment: There is no clear distinction between minor and major curriculum changes in processes, which creates a lag between the fast-paced changes in the marketing field being experienced. Approximately, 15-20% of all AI software is focused, which I think emphasizes the use case that education needs to adapt to this boom. The marketing department should be required to review course outlines more frequently due to the updates in technology advancement (i.e. Digital marketing changes, AI related courses.). With this being stated, all marketing AI/tooling courses should be bespoke to the program to reflect the specific use in the profession.

Recommendations, if any, identified by the External Review Team— include a rationale for each recommendation:

2.1 It is recommended that more current evidence on marketing job displacement be collected and reflected in the career pathways for graduation.

2.2.a It is recommended that the evidence for Skill Development be expanded from KPU Policy AC9 to include the Canadian Marketing Association recommendations at minimum and recommendations from several subsectors marketing associations such as digital marketing, ecommerce, retail, etc. Furthermore, this section needs to include a discussion on how AI will be addressed in the curriculum going forward.

As how students receive and the demand for education changes – it is recommended to provide more flexible learning options with online modules, boot camps, and micro-credentials that relate to industry software being used (i.e. Salesforce, Marketo, HubSpot, Google Ads, etc.). This will allow students to gain industry-relevant knowledge outside the classroom. The review team understands the issue with privacy as mentioned in discussions, but staying true to the spirit of the polytechnic, KPU should be strategizing how to develop an education plan around tools & software being used daily in industry.

2.2b It is recommended that KPU develop a brand management course or remove it from the Career Path Map.

2.3 It is recommended to expedite the course review process and define the difference between major & minor changes with a focus on higher-level courses first due to their importance. By implementing a structured internal review cycle yearly or every two years, KPU's marketing program can remain competitive and better prepare students for the evolving job market.

With the planning of the new curriculum, it's recommended the marketing program create an AI literacy framework to provide ethical and relevant teachings to students.

CHAPTER 3: Program Relevance and Student Demand

Criteria: This chapter adequately assesses program's relevance, faculty qualifications and currency, connections to the discipline/sector, and student demand. The assessment is supported by appropriate evidence and conclusions.

Standards for Assessing this Chapter:

- Strengths and areas of improvement identified in this chapter are supported by data and external review findings;
- Recommendations in this chapter are supported by data, a clear rationale, and external review findings.

The External Reviewers:

- ☒ Validate the Self-Study Report's findings and recommendations
☐ Do not validate the Self-Study Report's findings and recommendations

Rationale for this Determination:

3.1 Relevance

3.1a Since the goal is to develop a highly valued, work ready skills toolbox, the most relevant feedback for relevance of the program would be from the alumni and industry representatives. Reliance on undergraduate student opinion is not ideal because this group is not well informed on the subject and the reliance on faculty opinion only is also not ideal. However, because most of the BBAMM faculty are (or have been) industry practitioners, the data is acceptable, but it would be better to have it collaborated with discipline experts.

Studies from Harvard Business Review indicated that 92% of hiring managers prefer candidates with real-world project experience. By strengthening relevance through practice, KPU will be setting up future alumni with a curriculum that reflects real-world demands. An example, students found Marketing 4200 IMC Practicum as an experiential learning experience and will benefit from more opportunities like these live exercises throughout the program.

3.1b In Appendix C1 Research is identified as a career pathway for BBAMM graduates yet KPU does not offer a market research course in marketing.

3.1 c Indigenization of post-secondary curriculum has been mandated by the federal and provincial governments. However, given the diversity of KPU student body, a focus solely on Indigenization is not enough. Marketing best practices dictate that marketing communication to be bespoke to its target market. This suggests that best practices in curriculum would require KPU curriculum to be internationalized.

3.2 Faculty Qualifications and Currency

It is agreed that the Marketing Management department has a robust roster of faculty. Current faculty qualifications include a master's level credential, two doctorate degrees, two doctorate degrees underway, and other industry relevant credentials (CM, Digital Marketing Certifications and PIDP. While there is mention of professional experiences, there does not seem to be a formalized process whereby faculty candidates have a minimum number of years industry experience relevant to the courses they teach. Given this program's heavy focus on "ready for work", it seems appropriate that teaching focused faculty have relevant industry experience in addition to their master's level degree. Research focused faculty can be exempted from this requirement.

3.3 Student Demand

The demand for marketing professionals with expertise in digital strategy, analytics and integrated marketing communications skills is at an all-time high due to the AI boom. Demand for marketing professionals is projected to grow by 10% over the next decade according to the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2024. From the discussions, alumni and students agreed on increased support with real-world learning opportunities and industry led workshops as part of education.

Recommendations, if any, identified by the External Review Team— include a rationale for each recommendation:

3.1. It is recommended that the program relevancy be assessed by PAC members and / or a discipline sector survey to collaborate faculty feedback.

3.1.b It is recommended that the Market Research Pathway be removed from Appendix C1 or KPU develop a consumer research course wherein student design and execute a consumer research plan whereby students use qualitative and quantitative consumer research techniques, design questionnaires (on/offline), tabulate the results and write a research report.

3.1.c KPU should provide campus-wide curriculum indigenization resources to the MSB faculty. Furthermore, BBAMM faculty should focus on internationalizing its curriculum to meet the standards of excellence in marketing communication practices.

3.2 Faculty Qualifications and Currency

It is recommended that a formal process be developed to ensure that teaching focused faculty possess a master's relevant credential and a minimum number of years work experience in the subject area of the courses they are hired to teach.

3.3 Student Demand

It is recommended to incorporate more live consulting projects where students solve business challenges for real companies that might be experiencing the lack of software/AI marketing expertise for students to experiment with lower stakes.

CHAPTER 4: Effectiveness of Instructional Delivery

Criteria: This chapter adequately examines the effectiveness of the instructional design and delivery of the program and student success. The assessment is supported by appropriate evidence and conclusions.

Standards for Assessing this Chapter:

- Strengths and areas of improvement identified in this chapter are supported by data and external review findings;
- Recommendations in this chapter are supported by data, a clear rationale, and external review findings.

The External Reviewers:

- ☒ Validate the Self-Study Report's findings and recommendations
☐ Do not validate the Self-Study Report's findings and recommendations

Rationale for this Determination:

4.1. It is widely believed in the post secondary sector that the lack of math skills amongst freshmen is a herculean problem. Incoming students are ill-prepared to complete any of the four math course options they are given to select from. Often, students delay the enrolment in math courses until the very end of their studies. This leads to avoidance of math-based marketing courses (or any business course for that matter). Yet marketing management today is sharply focused on performance and analytics, both are math centric.

4.1.b WIL Both domestic and international students fear leaving a permanent job placement for the temporary opportunity offered in a WIL placement.

Recommendations, if any, identified by the External Review Team—include a rationale for each recommendation:

4.1. It is recommended that students be required to complete their first-year math course before they can take a second-year course. Industry heavily relies on data-driven decision-making, which involves understanding a certain minimum standard of quantitative & analytical skills. In a recent study, 97% of marketing leaders consider data analysis a crucial skill for students entering the workforce (Forbes 2023). With our discussions, we learned that many students lack the confidence in making decisions based on marketing math and have difficulties leading and applying the knowledge in budget creation, or proving marketing spend.

Furthermore, it is recommended a dedicated marketing framework be implemented throughout the whole curriculum. This will better the student comprehension and retention after graduation, where they will need it most. The continuous reinforcement will better prepare them for growth/performance marketing, analytics, managerial responsibilities and so much more – this is where typically higher compensation is earned. It is recommended to integrate math across existing courses, rather than stand-alone ones.

4.1.b WIL It is recommended that the Wil program explore having employers of existing students become WIL eligible. This would allow students to achieve the benefits of WIL without giving up their permanent position.

CHAPTER 5: Resources, Services and Facilities

Criteria: This chapter adequately assesses the program's resources, services, and facilities from both the student and faculty perspective. The assessment is supported by appropriate evidence and conclusions.

Standards for Assessing this Chapter:

- Strengths and areas of improvement identified in this chapter are supported by data and external review findings;
- Recommendations in this chapter are supported by data, a clear rationale, and external review findings.

The External Reviewers:

- ☒ Validate the Self-Study Report's findings and recommendations
☐ Do not validate the Self-Study Report's findings and recommendations

Rationale for this Determination:

5.1a Adequate Facilities

As reported in Appendix F, over 60% of students and faculty are satisfied with e-Classrooms. For computer labs, over 60% of students are satisfied while only 37% of faculty are satisfied. Furthermore, there is concern about room layout and setup. This situation seems to be a common problem at many universities. In my own classrooms I have tables designed to seat two students, yet the classroom chairs provided are too big to fit two per table. Furthermore, marketing classes are expected to be experiential learning and technology rich, just like the industry. Poorly maintained IT equipment and lack of technical support after 5 pm, is hugely problematic since many of the marketing courses make use of tech tools, not just SPSS.

5.1.b Support Services- Curriculum Technology Tools

To develop work ready digital marketing skills students, need access to the technology tools used in the marketplace. Many marketing courses need to give students hands-on experience with industry standard tools such as Shopify. Furthermore, faculty need to be well trained in how to use them.

5.1c Support Services-Faculty Skills Building

Given the dynamic changes within the marketing domain today, staying current in this industry requires time and financial support. For many universities across Canada, significant budget challenges are currently being faced due to the challenges in the recruitment of international students. This situation is further exacerbated by the noticeable rise in cost of professional membership dues and conferences fees (including travel). There is some relief in that many conferences now offer virtual attendance options.

Recommendations, if any, identified by the External Review Team—including a rationale for each recommendation:

5.1a Adequate Facilities

It is recommended that KPU create a dedicated computer lab for MSB. This would allow all business classes to access technology tools. Furthermore, it is recommended that KPU create a classroom planning committee that is comprised of 50% faculty members so that classroom layout and furnishing choices enhance student and instructor learning environments.

5.1.b Support Services- Curriculum Technology Tools

It is recommended that KPU provide adequate budget to MSB to facilitate the purchase of licenses for key marketing tech tools to be used in the delivery of course curriculum to ensure students are work ready.

5.1c Support Services-Faculty Skills Building

Ideally, more funds should be made available to support faculty PD. However, current circumstances make that challenging. To stretch existing PD funds, faculty could be encouraged to attend virtual conferences when possible. Many professional bodies are now offering free seminars and presentations. Faculty could be encouraged to take advantage of these too. Faculty could also be encouraged to share their findings from conferences/ seminars/ meetings with other faculty members.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

There is significant effort and reflection demonstrated in this report. The Review Team Members have assembled a data rich synopsis of MSB and the challenges it faces in delivering relevant marketing education to undergraduates today. Much effort has been taken to adequately capture industry, student and faculty feedback on a broad range of important topics. However, too much reliance on the student and PAC feedback in this report is risky given the very small number of participants. There should also be concern about the focus on entry level marketing skills (including digital) when these are thought to be the most likely to be replaced by AI. At the time this report was being compiled and written, AI and it's use in marketing was just beginning to be talked about. However, in the short time between the date of this report and now, AI's lightning speed adoption in marketing has rendered several parts of this report, outdated. As a result, it would be prudent to add an addendum to deal with AI, it is here and cannot wait until the next program review.

APPENDIX 1:
EXTERNAL REVIEW SITE VISIT AGENDA

Kwantlen Polytechnic University

**Marketing External Review
Remote Site Visit Agenda**

November 25 & 26, 2024
Via Microsoft Teams
Thanks to External Reviewers:
Cindy Stewart
Tate Tham
Katherine Carpenter

Day 1: Monday, November 25, 2024

9:00 - 9:50:	Introductions and Interview with Program Chair
9:50 - 10:00:	Break
10:00 - 11:00:	Meet with Program Faculty
11:00 - 11:10:	Break
11:10 - 12:00:	Meet with Library Liaison & Faculty Advising
12:00 - 12:10:	Break
12:10 – 13:10:	Meet with Alumni/Program Advisory Committee

Day 2: Tuesday, November 26, 2024

9:00 – 10:00:	Meet with Students
10:00 - 10:10:	Break
10:10 - 10:50:	Meet with Dean/Associate Dean
10:50 - 11:00:	Break
11:00 - 11:40:	Final Meeting with Program Chair
11:40 - 11:50:	Break
11:50-12:20:	External Review Team meets to discuss findings and coordinate their review.

*All times are in Pacific Standard Time.