Ontario College of Teachers

Membership Services Review

→ Executive Summary

November 18, 2021

optimus sbr

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 2

Project Background and Context 2
Project Overview.. 2
Project Mission... 2
Project Success 2
Project Scope 3
Project Approach... 4
Project Methodology 4
Current State Findings... 5
Membership Services Department... 6
Client Services Unit 6
Membership Records Unit 7
Evaluation Services Unit 8
Recommendations 9
Recommendation Overview.. 9
Implementation Planning and Prioritization 14
Prioritization Criteria 14
Prioritization of recommendations and implementation planning can be based on a preliminary scoring incorporating criteria of Expected Benefit and Expected Effort. The methodology also facilitates the determination of recommendations considered Quick Wins versus Longer-Term/ Strategic recommendations. The following criteria was used to prioritize the recommendations: 14
Prioritization and Timelines 15
Implementation Planning 17

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Project Background and Context

The Membership Services Department of the College had engaged Optimus SBR to assess the services provided by the Client Services, Evaluations Services, and the Membership Records to its clients, applicants, and members. The overall intent for the assessment was to improve the service timelines and levels for each of the three units within the Department.

It is important to note that the assessment is conducted during a time when the Department's service levels and timelines are impacted by changing government regulations within a short period, evolving work landscape due to a global pandemic, an increasing number of applications, and the implementation of a new CRM system. These factors have not only impacted the College's service levels but have also impacted the staff workload and morale. As a result, the project identified focus areas and objectives which were beyond the initial focus of just service levels. In addition, the department is often faced with competing priorities, including priorities and activities that are outside the control of the department/College. These competing demands and external factors have led to difficulty in the task prioritization, further contributing to high workloads for staff and leadership. Therefore, it becomes more important for the Membership Services Department to take a quick action in addressing the identified challenges. The focus should be on improving the service levels while addressing associated issues that may not have a direct impact on service level.

1.2 Project Overview

1.2.1 Project Mission

To conduct a review of the Membership Services Department, which includes the Client Services, Evaluation Services, and the Membership Records Units. The review will assess the overall Department/Unit Structure as well as policies, practices, procedures, and staffing used by each unit. The review will also consider alignment to contact center and CRM systems.

1.2.2 Project Success

- An understanding of the effectiveness and efficiency of the structure for the Department to support the completion of work currently carried out.
- A clear understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the Department.
- Clarity on opportunities to improve the policies, practices, and procedures used by the units
- A clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of staff within the Membership Services Department and the three in-scope units, and opportunities for improvements
- Enhanced understanding of continual improvement opportunities including those related to Contact Centre and CRM systems.
- Confidence and buy-in among the College on the recommendations and path forward.

1.2.3 Project Scope

Based on Optimus SBR's proposal and the discussion with the College's project team, the following scope was defined for this engagement:

- Development of core planning documents, specifically including a Project Plan (to identify key milestone dates) and a Stakeholder Engagement Plan
- Conducting up to five (5) Discovery Interviews with key College stakeholders
- A one (1) hour virtual discovery update to discuss discovery findings and themes
- Stakeholder engagement, including up to eight (8) virtual interviews with staff, and the development of a staff survey
- Development of a Mid-Term Progress Report (Current State Report)
- A (1) hour virtual mid-point briefing to discuss the Mid-Term Progress Report and preliminary recommendations with the College's Director, Membership Services, and Deputy Registrar
- Development of the Draft & Final Consultation Reports, including key project findings, recommendations, high-level implementation planning support, and next steps.
- A (1) hour virtual final presentation to the College's Director, Membership Services, and Deputy Registrar

Additional interviews and discussions were scheduled as needed throughout the engagement.

The items that were not included as part of the scope for this engagement are:

- Detailed process mapping for unit procedures
- Implementation of recommendations
- Development and conduct change management recommendations
- Jurisdictional scan
- Deep dive for assessing the implementation of the CRM system

1.2.4 Project Approach

Optimus SBR followed the 5-step approach to conducting the assessment for the Membership Services Department.

Figure 1 Project Approach

1. Project Launch & Discovery	2. Data Gathering & Review	3. Current State Analysis & Mid-Term Progress Report	4. Future State Recommendations Development	5. Consultant Report Development
o Setup and Planning o Project Kickoff Meeting o Discovery Activities and Update o Stakeholder Engagement Plan	o Data and Document Review o Survey Design and Development o Stakeholder Engagement	o Department Assessment o Mid-Term Progress Report Development o Review and Validation	o Recommendations Development	o Consultant Report Development o Review and Validation o Final Presentation o Knowledge Transfer o Project Closeout
Deliverables				
o Project Plan o Stakeholder Engagement Plan	o Survey o Stakeholder Interviews	o Draft and Final Mid-Term Progress Report	o Draft Recommendations	o Final Consultation Report o Final Presentation

1.2.5 Project Methodology and Criteria

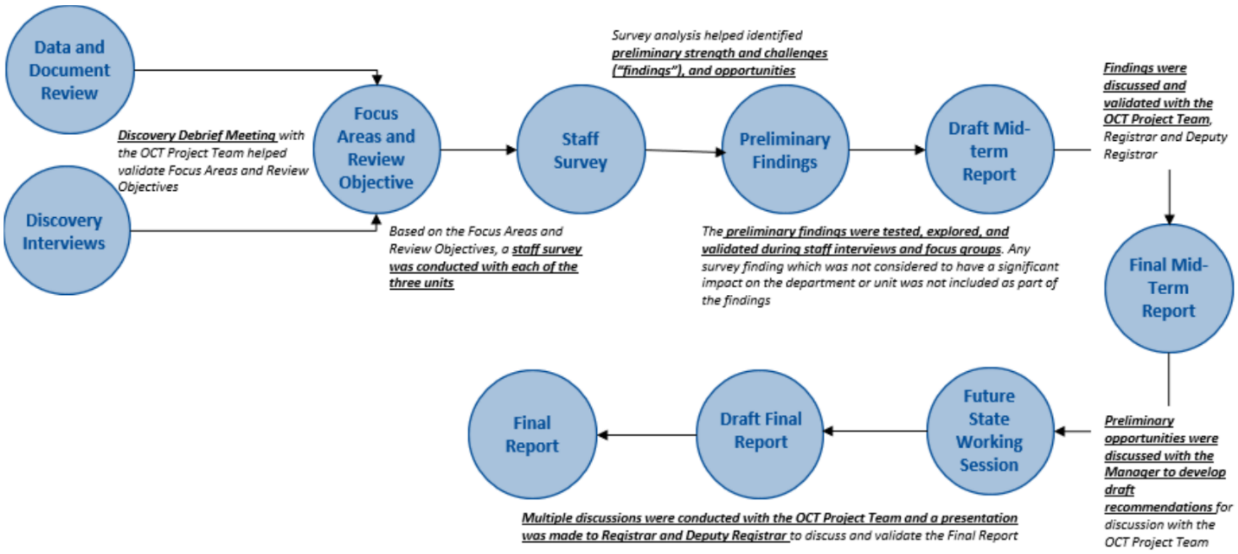
Optimus SBR reviewed the data and documents, engaged multiple stakeholders through interviews and focus groups, and conducted a survey to develop the Current State Report. The findings and the preliminary opportunities identified in the Current State Report were discussed and validated with the College's project team.

Based on the preliminary opportunities, Optimus SBR developed preliminary recommendations which were discussed with the OCT project team in a working session.

The following figure is a detailed representation of the methodology and criteria used by Optimus SBR to develop the findings and the recommendations. The following findings were filtered based on the following approach:

- Low impact or out of scope:
    - Was not aligned to effectiveness or efficiency of the Department's processes, policies, or procedures
    - Was not related to the structure of the department
    - Was not related to the roles/responsibilities of the Department
- Low occurrence of the finding:
    - Was not consistently identified by stakeholder
    - Was considered to be the result/outcome of a 'one-off' situation or event

Figure 2 Project Methodology and Criteria



1.3 Current State Findings

Based on the focus areas and objectives, the current state analysis identified that the type of work and services provided by the department to its clients, members and applicants are in alignment with the regulations and policies. In addition, there was no evidence of bias identified through the processes used by the Department. The assessment noted that though the department was delivering the right work and services, it needed to improve the way (e.g., collaboration with other units, process efficiency) in which those services are currently being delivered and administered.

The findings identified below are categorized as department-level and unit-level findings. The department-level findings are the ones that impact all three units, whereas the unit-level findings only pertain to that specific unit within the department.

1.3.1 Membership Services Department

The table below provides an overview of the current state findings for the Membership Services Department:

Table 1 Current State Findings - Membership Services Department

Current State Findings	Focus Area
1. Staff members across units have a **limited understanding of the impact of their work on other units** and the associated processes • **Limited collaboration of Client Services Unit with both the Membership Records Unit and Evaluation Services Unit** is impacting the service quality • **Limited collaboration between MRU and ESU** on application processing is leading to confusion and delays • **Limited collaboration exists** among the MSD staff is raised as an issue potentially resulting in limited knowledge sharing opportunities and the development of processes designed to achieve a common goal and meet legislated timelines	Cross collaboration Process
2. The higher workload is impacting **team morale and culture** within each unit. However, some units and certain staff roles may be impacted more than others	Culture Project/Initiative Prioritization
3. **Limited self-service opportunities** for the client leads to a higher volume of phone calls and emails and manual processes	Process
4. Staff are often engaged in special projects or cross-department initiatives but **do not have a prioritization approach** to manage their workload	Project/Initiative Prioritization
5. Staff mostly follow the **first-in-first serve model, but some files may jump the queue** to manage unit workload and service levels	Policy/Procedure
6. The identified focus areas across the 3 units are **not adversely impacted by any specific policy or procedure**	Policy/Procedure

1.3.2 Client Services Unit

The table below provides an overview of the current state findings for the Client Services Unit:

Table 2 Current State Findings - Client Services Unit

Key Finding	Focus Area
1. Client Services staff are **committed to their work and feel supported by the leadership team** of their Unit	Resourcing/Staffing Level
2. The **unit's service levels are dropping, leading to both client and staff frustration**	Service Level Process Resourcing/Staffing Level

Key Finding	Focus Area
3. The **current rate of email processing is lower than the daily email inbound rate** which will result in the continuous growth of the **email backlog**	Process Resourcing/Staffing Level
4. Unit workload and complexity has increased but **the permanent staff component has been reduced**	Service Level Resourcing/Staffing Level
5. **Staff morale and team culture** is adversely impacted by the current challenges of the Client Services Unit	Resourcing/Staffing Level
6. **Lack of clarity around prioritization of social media requests** and usage of social media channels	Service Level Process
7. Staff are generally clear about the roles and responsibilities, but get asked to **support additional cross-unit tasks** which may deviate them from their core roles and responsibilities	Resourcing/Staffing Level

1.3.3 Membership Records Unit

The table below provides an overview of the current state findings for the Membership Records Unit:

Table 3 Current State Findings - Membership Records Unit

Key Finding	Focus Area
1. **Technological challenges** are impacting client experience, staff frustrations, and delays in service timelines	Process Service Level
2. **Alternative Documentation Process (ADP) requires considerable time and resources** to support	Process
3. **Questionable Documentation Process (QDP) requires considerable time and resources** to support	Process
4. **Support for the IAR team has reduced, and workload has increased**; leading to staff fatigue, frustration, and negatively impacting service timelines	Service Levels Resourcing/Staffing Level
5. **Staff distracted in supporting initiatives outside the Unit**, detracting from their core responsibilities	Resourcing/ Staff Level
6. Organizational structure and **staff's roles and responsibilities are effective**	Resourcing/ Staff Level Roles and Responsibilities

1.3.4 Evaluation Services Unit

The table below provides an overview of the current state findings for the Evaluation Services Department:

Table 4 Current State Findings - Evaluation Services Unit

Key Finding	Focus Area
1. **<u>Implementation of the enhanced teacher education program in 2015 has contributed to the complexity</u>** of evaluation tasks and has increased timelines. The legislated timelines of "within 120 days" seem a reasonable timeframe (see Table 15 Evaluation Services Benchmarking). Staff generally agrees that the timelines are realistic but that more flexible language in legislation, for instance "up to x days" or "120 *business* days" would be helpful and would allow for additional research on complex files or files from new jurisdictions 2. **<u>Evaluation worksheets have been amplified in recent years</u>** due to the need to justify the granting/not granting of teaching qualifications. Even though it now takes a great deal of time to complete the worksheets, all agree this is necessary to support a variety of functions and processes such as communicating decisions to applicants and members, reassessments, and appeals, etc. 3. Current evaluation standards appear sufficiently clear to help guide evaluators through applicant file evaluation and decision making. ESU job descriptions are clear and give specific idea of what the role involves and what background and skills are required. **<u>No evidence of evaluator bias toward specific applicant files was discovered</u>**. However, evaluators raised the issue of potential perceived bias from an applicant's perspective	Service Level Process
4. **<u>Limited quality control processes for MRU file</u>** completion impact ESU timelines. The lack of/limited QC processes on MRU files before sent to ESU was highlighted as potential cause.	Service Level Roles & Responsibilities Level Process
5. **<u>QC process that relies heavily and solely on Senior Evaluators and Manager,</u>** takes away from their other tasks and responsibilities 6. **<u>Limited training for dealing with new countries/programs</u>** raised as an issue when evaluators are assigned to evaluate files from new jurisdictions/new programs 7. **<u>Lack of standardization</u>** when completing worksheets or gathering resources **8.** **<u>Lack of optimal information/knowledge-sharing</u>** platform between evaluators	Staff/resource Level Roles & Responsibilities Level Process

9. **<u>Preparation for appeals, including completing indexes and submissions</u>**, **<u>is extremely time consuming</u>** and takes time away from file evaluation. In addition, evaluators have many other responsibilities such as degree verifications, reassessments, equivalency requests, adding information to CRM and additional projects. Elimination of the evaluation and administrative assistant positions in the past few years has impacted the ESU and resulted in additional duties assigned to unit staff. 10. **<u>Working in silos</u>** leads to inconsistent practices among MSD units	Process Level Roles & Responsibilities Level Process
11. Resources and knowledge to **<u>enable staff to work efficiently and effectively from a home work environment</u>** could be improved	Roles & Responsibilities Level Staff/resource Level

The College deserves to be commended for many positive aspects of its approach to the evaluation of the applications, including the following non-exhaustive examples:

- Having leadership and management support for enhancing evaluation services
- Maintaining a high level of consciousness on the part of its ESU staff
- Diligently conducting evaluations based on comprehensive standards
- Being especially sensitive to the needs of the applicants
- Arranging for an external review

1.4 Recommendations

1.4.1 Recommendation Overview

Through discussions with the Department's leadership team, and the development of review areas of focus/objectives, the need to address service levels was identified as the critical project requirement. Recommendations have focused on opportunities to improve service levels. However, through the review, a number of other opportunities have been identified. While these opportunities may have indirect positive impacts on service levels, they are not directly related to initiatives to improve service levels. To align with this, recommendations have been identified as "Primary Recommendations" and "Secondary Recommendations".

It is important to note that the 'Secondary recommendations' **should not be viewed as less important**, however since the focus on this project is to help improve the Department service level, a higher emphasis is given to the recommendations that have a direct impact on the service level.

The recommendations below are categorized as follows:

- **Primary recommendations:** These recommendations will have a direct impact on the Department and Unit service levels and should remain the key focus during implementation.
- **Secondary recommendations:** The key focus areas and objectives defined during the current state assessment helped identify gaps and challenges that are important to address but the recommendation may not have a direct impact on the service level (e.g., improving team culture and staff morale).

Table 5 Recommendations Overview

Department/ Unit	Recommendation	Sub-Recommendation
Membership Services Department	**<u>Primary Recommendations</u>** 1. Develop a decision-making framework to prioritize tasks both at department-level and unit-level	1A. Assess alignment with Department mandate and objectives
		1B. Implement a risk-based decision-making framework to support day-to-day activities
		1C. Continue to flow all unit requests through department's senior management
	2. Improve collaboration across the three units	2A. Develop a cross-unit process map to enhance staff understanding of interdependences and improve collaboration
	<u>Secondary Recommendation</u> 3. Implement initiatives to improve the department culture in terms of employee engagement and motivation	3A. Conduct annual/bi-annual department Check-In Surveys and share findings with the staff
		3B. Consider cross-unit "Buddy" or "Coffee chats" to facilitate conversations across units
		3C. Develop a staff-led culture and engagement team
Client Services Unit	**<u>Primary Recommendations</u>** 4. Enhance self-service capabilities to manage workload and improve service levels	4A. Continue the implementation of the call back option
		4B. Continue to update the IVR to share status update information without involving the agent or direct all to the online application portal
		4C. Improve the use of social media channels to enhance client satisfaction and potentially reduce the call/email volume for the unit
		4D. Introduce chatbots to provide round the clock support
		4E. Enhance the adoption of current and new self-serve tools implemented by the unit
	5. Improve staffing to manage the increasing call and email volumes	5A. Add at least 3 full-time contract staff to manage the unit's email workload
		5B. Add up to 18 FTEs to manage the daily phone volume
	6. Build a social media strategy and guidelines in collaboration with the Communications Department	6A. Transfer the responsibility of managing social media inquiries from the Communications Department to the Client Services Unit

Department/ Unit	Recommendation	Sub-Recommendation
	Secondary Recommendation 7. Cross-train staff across both phone and email responses	*N/A*
Membership Records Unit	8. Improve the technological and automation capabilities	8A. Continue to expand the self-serving dashboard capabilities to provide services to members and provide a real-time status update
		8B. Continue to automate the process of document validation
	9. Identify the staffing component based on service level and processing times	9A. Improve data collection to access processing times for different types of documents
		9B. Set service target for the unit
		9C. Assess staffing requirements based on processing time and service targets
	Secondary Recommendations 10. Improve staff training to provide support to the IAR team and build staff's critical thinking and leadership skills:	10A. Cross train unit staff to provide support across any of the three teams
		10B. Clarify accountability and responsibility between Manager-Officers, and the MRU staff and build an ongoing feedback and training mechanism
	11. Continue with the first-in-first-serve model until the unit has more data to support the specialization and categorization of files	*N/A*
	12. Develop tools and automate the QDP process to improve process effectiveness	12A. Review and refine the checklist/criteria to support the identification of questionable documents
		12B. Continue to expand the database of academic institutions and associated contact details to support the automation of the QDP process
	13. Enhance the effectiveness of the ADP process	13A. Specify the additional and alternative documents accepted by the College
		13B. Enhance the skill set of the team to support the ADP process
		13C. Formally tracking ADP volume to inform resourcing needs
Evaluation Services Unit	14. Enhance the use and value of the current self-assessment	14A. Employ evaluators' knowledge, experiences, and data to inform and enhance the current self-assessment tool

Department/ Unit	Recommendation	Sub-Recommendation
	form/tool "Applicant Eligibility Assessment" in the evaluation process	14B. The form should include the evaluation criteria, specific academic requirements
		14C. Investigate potential to implement completion of self-assessment tool as a compulsory first step in the application process
	15. Improve ESU staffing to manage administrative functions	15A. Add one FT Administrative/Evaluation Assistant
	16. Enhance inter/cross-unit communication, collaboration, standards, and procedures at all stages of the application	16A. Work closely with MRU to develop strategies to decrease the number of incomplete files sent to ESU
		16B. Develop checklists that can be used by MRU/ESU at different steps of the documentation and evaluation processes
		16C. MRU training/workshops by ESU to avoid reoccurring incomplete information
		16D. Pair/group ESU with MRU staff to close gaps in communication and increase focus on specific files from beginning to end
		16E. Introduce a new position "Evaluation Agent" to promote cross-boundary work by acting either as a conduit or as glue
	17. Evaluate and revise current QC processes and protocols to suit ESU context specific needs	17A. Launch data gathering strategy targeting QC process outcomes to determine workload versus risk ratio
		17B. Take the heavy onus of QC off Senior Evaluators and the Manager by increasing accountability among evaluators
		17C. Conduct ESU review phase of standards and procedures to identify areas of potential discrepancies between evaluators to ensure that QC is efficient, and outcomes are the same regardless of QCer
		17D. Implement a peer review file process that engages more experienced evaluators before the file is sent for QC
		17E. As the last option, and only if none of the above recommendations are implemented, hire an additional bilingual Senior Evaluator to assist with QC if the same processes are maintained
	18. In collaboration with Policy and Research, evaluate workload	18A. Identify risk factors that have the potential to cause problems, conduct risk analysis. For instance, determine which activities and

Department/ Unit	Recommendation	Sub-Recommendation
	versus need, and implement a risk assessment tool to identify levels of risk surrounding not preparing comprehensive index material	processes can be streamlined and/or eliminated
		18B. Initiate policy reviews to incorporate changes
		18C. Decrease evaluator time spent on unnecessary "administrative" tasks
		18D. If the process cannot be streamlined, determine the potential to assign the preparation of comprehensive Index of Materials or part thereof to an administrative/evaluation assistant (new FTE)
	19. Invest in resources to increase work efficiencies	19A. Establish processes, procedures, and platforms to capture, store and access information
		19B. Provide adequate resources/knowledge surrounding creating a comfortable/efficient home work environment, for instance surrounding occupational health best practices
	<u>Secondary Recommendation</u> 20. As a long-term recommendation, investigate the potential to revise and supplement the current evaluation process with a competency-based equivalency exam	20A. Shift evaluation focus on matching internationally educated teacher education to matching essential profession specific competencies using a competency-based equivalency exam.

1.5 Implementation Planning and Prioritization

1.5.1 Prioritization Criteria

Prioritization of recommendations and implementation planning can be based on a preliminary scoring incorporating criteria of Expected Benefit and Expected Effort. The methodology also facilitates the determination of recommendations considered Quick Wins versus Longer-Term/ Strategic recommendations. The following criteria was used to prioritize the recommendations:

Expected Benefits

The benefit has been assessed holistically based on the intended outcome of the recommendation. Criteria include:

1. Impact on service level
2. Mitigation of current or potential risk
3. The expected impact si on unit, department, or College
4. Operational efficiency
5. Likelihood of Success / Adoption

Expected Effort

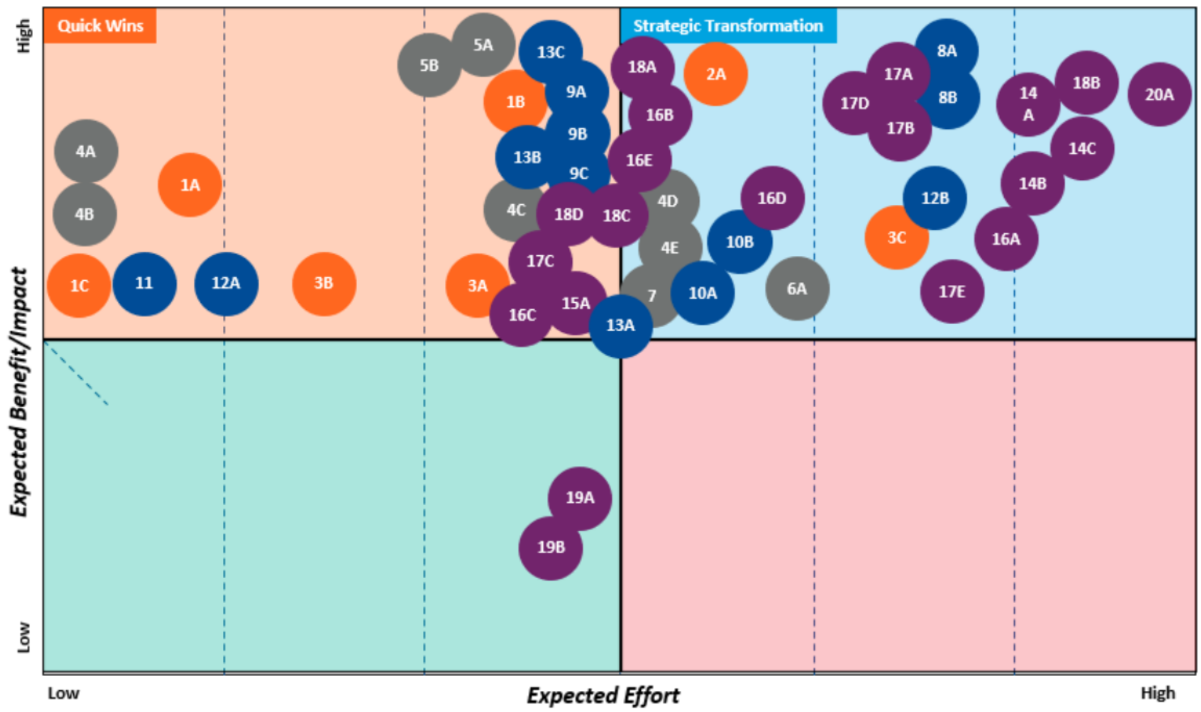
The effort is an assessment of the resources, time, and complexity associated with implementation. Criteria include:

1. Complexity
2. Directional Cost
3. Work Effort (Implementation)

1.5.2 Prioritization and Timelines

The figure below maps the recommendations based on the effort and impact associated with each recommendation. Mapping the recommendations on the map below helps identify recommendations that can be quick wins and the more strategic ones. However, a strategic recommendation may need to be prioritized to support the immediate needs of the department.

Figure 3 Effort and Impact Analysis



The current prioritization and timing of recommendations are based on Optimus SBR's assessment and discussion with the College's project team. Given the objective of the engagement, any recommendation that has a direct impact on the service level is considered a high impact recommendation. However, the effort required to implement the recommendation may vary. The impact and effort generally define the prioritization for the recommendations. Any recommendation which has a high-impact, and a low-effort requirement falls under the top left quadrant of the chart above and is considered as a *Quick Win.* However, it is possible that the recommendation may have a med or high effort and high impact (e.g., recommendations 5A and 5B have medium effort but give the department needs and requirements, it should have a higher priority during implementation) but can be prioritized over a low effort and high impact recommendation. The following criteria were considered during the prioritization of recommendations:

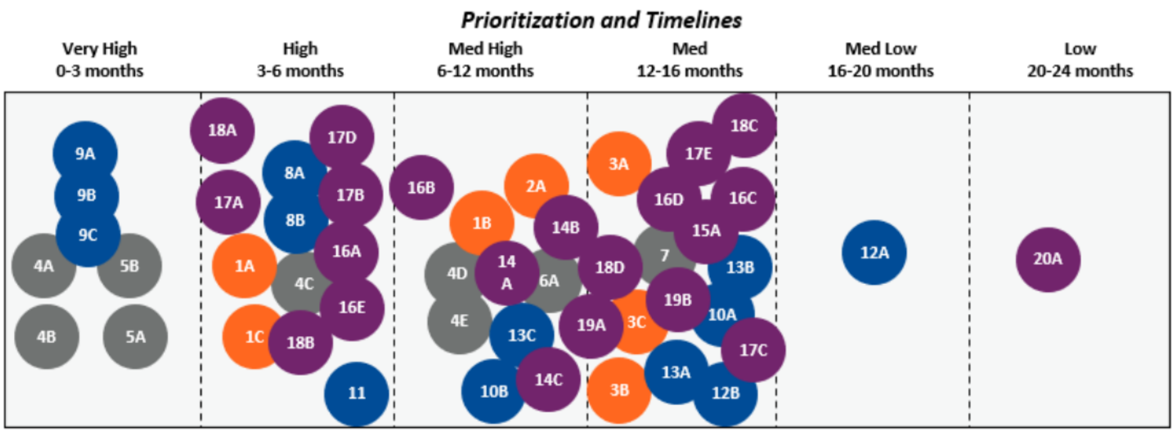
- **Effort-Impact**: Recommendations that usually lie in the top left quadrant of the chart above have higher priority. However, this is not always the case
- **Improvement in service level:** Recommendation that positively impacts the service level are considered a higher priority
- **Department-wide or unit-wide impact:** Recommendations that have a broader impact on the department are considered a higher priority

The prioritization and timeline scales are as follows:

- **Very high:** 0-3 months
- **High:** 3-6 months
- **Med high:** 6-12 months
- **Med:** 12 -16 months
- **Med low:** 16-20 months
- **Low:** 20-24 months

These timelines indicate when the recommendation implementation should be started and not the completion of implementation.

Figure 4 Recommendation Prioritization and Timelines



1.5.3 Implementation Planning

The implementation activities build on the recommendations put forward and outline some of the respective actions for consideration as well as include estimated costing implications where applicable. The activities (and costing estimates) are directional and non-exhaustive; developed to provide initial direction on how to move forward with each recommendation. It is understood that based on these directions, the College will need to develop more detailed work plans to support successful implementation as well as contemplate resourcing requirements. In many cases, these recommendations represent complete projects for the Department to initiate, and should be structured, managed, and reported on accordingly (including the use of business cases, project charters, workplans, etc. where appropriate). They should not be implemented 'off the side of a desk' or in addition to day-to-day requirements for staff. It is acknowledged that while staff capacity is limited, a series of recommendations have been outlined to help alleviate some of these constraints. To that end, not all activities are required (or recommended) to be completed at once and the suggested prioritization/sequence (e.g., enhanced self-service tools, addition of least 21 FTE, in the next 3 months) has been provided to support resource balancing across time.

Table 6 Implementation Planning

Recommendation	Implementation Activities (Includes estimated costing implications where applicable)
Membership Services Department	
1A. Assess alignment with Department mandate and objectives	• Establish Department-specific working groups with a cross-section of staff to review non-Departmental activities and ensure all activities are brought forward • Identify activities that fall outside of Department mandate and objectives • Leverage decision-making framework (see recommendation 1B. determine which activities should remain in Department and which should be re-distributed to another area • Communicate necessary changes across Departments to respective senior management

1B. Implement a risk-based decision-making framework to support day-to-day activities	• Design risk-based decision-making framework, leveraging leading practices; building upon the example provided i.e.:
	  o Issue identification (identify the issue and put it into context);
	  o Risk assessment (assess risk and benefits); and
	  o Risk management (identify and analyze options, select a strategy, implement the strategy, and monitor and evaluate the results).
	• Refine and align decision-making framework with senior management
	• Communicate finalized framework with staff to inform them on the decision-making process

1C. Continue to flow all unit requests through department's senior management	• Develop and send updated communication to Department Staff to provide clear direction and support for all new requests to flow through

	• Senior management to assess the request, through the lens of the decision-making framework • Assign the task(s) to required staff members
2A. Develop a cross-unit process map to enhance staff understanding of interdependences and improve collaboration	• Bring together a cross-department working group to ensure comprehensive perspectives on activities performed in each department • Conduct working sessions to identify process steps (e.g., inputs, outputs, resources involved, work effort required, etc.) for each unit. This activity may be best performed by a third-party vendor with process mapping expertise. Ideally, the College would be in a position to document all material processes, however, given constraints, the working group may need to prioritize the most time-intensive tasks and/or those with the largest opportunity for efficiencies to be gained • Summarize and sequence process steps based on current state operations • Share finalized process maps with all staff for feedback • Gathering input from staff on areas for improvement, (e.g., bottlenecks and areas of inefficiency). *Note, this "crowd-sourcing" of feedback also helps create a common understanding of the workflows within each Department* • Plan for improvements in the process (based on staff input) • Implement and monitor improvements in process steps

3A. Conduct annual/bi-annual department Check-In Surveys and share findings with the staff	• Design the annual/bi-annual department Check-In Surveys focused on:
	    ○ Workload management and key recommendations the MSD is planning to implement (with timelines)
	    ○ Communications and support related to continued COVID-19 response
	    ○ Flexible work environment and the ability to work effectively from home
	    ○ Workload distribution
	• Deploy the survey in an annual/bi-annual cadence to all staff. Consider ~2-week window for responses
	• Once the survey is closed – aggregate and theme responses to identify areas of opportunity. Develop specific and tactical activities to respond to identified areas for improvement.
	• Leverage insights gathered through the survey to make improvements most salient to staff. Follow up with staff who participated to show where changes are being made in response to their feedback

3B. Consider cross-unit "Buddy" or "Coffee chats" to facilitate conversations across units	• Randomly pair staff across units • Connect pairs via email to let them know of who they have been paired with • Request the pairing schedule a 15-minute informal meeting – virtual or in-person (based on their mutual preference)

	• Allow the pair to connect organically to build new friendships, find a mentor or mentee, build a larger professional network, or get a better understanding of what's going on across the organization
3C. Develop a staff-led culture and engagement team	• Make a call to all staff for volunteers to participate in a small working group tasked with supporting various culture and engagement activities. Ideally, the group will be comprised of 6-8 cross-unit staff. • Empower the group to identify opportunities within the College to enhance culture and staff engagement (e.g., staff socials, recognition awards)
Client Services Unit	
4A. Continue the implementation of the call back option	*N/A – Continue working toward the implementation that MSD has embarked on.*
4B. Continue to update the IVR to share status update information without involving the agent or direct all to the online application portal	• Leverage CRM to source real-time status updates on applications • Share this information via automated message through the phone line (IVR)
4C. Improve the use of social media channels to enhance client satisfaction and potentially reduce the call/email volume for the unit	*See Recommendation 6*
4D. Introduce chatbots to provide round the clock support	*It is recommended that the College work with a third-party vendor to implement chatbot functionality. The vendor will be able to provide additional direction on implementation however high-level steps have been outlined below.* • Define requirements needed of the chatbot in terms of functionality (e.g., response types, number of platforms supported, languages, etc.) • Configure the chatbot with relevant content/responses • Train/Test the chatbot based on common use cases, iterating on functionality as desired • Launch chatbot Estimated costs include: ○ Initial Setup Fee: $1,000-$10,000 ○ Monthly Cost: $1,000-$5,000
4E. Enhance the adoption of current and new self-serve tools implemented by the unit	• Document a customer journey map that reports how members interact with the college throughout their tenure. These interactions should be documented across channels where necessary • Based on the journey map identify points where self-service options exist to streamline the process • Promote the self-serve tools through all possible channels

5A. Add at 3 least full-time contract staff to manage the unit's email workload	*N/A – Recommend following College's existing hiring process* Estimated costs include: ○ Number of FTE: 3 ○ Estimated Total Compensation (Salary + Benefits at 20% of Salary): $72,000 Total Cost: $216,000
5B. Add up to 18 FTEs to manage the daily phone volume at peak	*N/A – Recommend following College's existing hiring process.* Estimated costs include: ○ Number of FTE: 18 ○ Estimated Total Compensation (Salary + Benefits at 20% of Salary): $72,000 Total Cost: $1,296,000
6A. Transfer the responsibility of managing social media inquiries from the Communications Department to the Client Services Unit	• It is recommended that the broader communication is managed by the Communications Department while the client inquiries are handled by the CSU • In collaboration, both should work to develop set guidelines for managing the social media responses • CSU to take on the following responsibilities: ○ Follow guidelines and service levels ○ Monitor and respond to general inquiries ○ Transfer client-specific inquiries to the appropriate unit ○ Develop and use a template for responses ○ Identify key general inquiries to be included in the FAQ • Manage customer expectations
7. Cross-train staff across both phone and email responses	• Identify individuals in a position to support both phone and email responses and have not yet received training • Conduct training across both phone and email responses • Recognize and reward employees that have gained new skills and/or responsibilities through this process • Incorporate the cross-training process into the overall career development plan for staff
Membership Records Unit	
The unit will need additional contract staff (i.e., 1-2 contract staff) to support the current backlog and workload of the unit. Once the contract staff has helped the unit manage the backlog, the unit can assess the need for continuing to have additional staff to support the implementation of the following recommendations.	
8A. Continue to expand the self-serving dashboard capabilities to provide services to members and provide a real-time status update	• Leverage CRM tool, and ability to provide real-time status updates on files, to drive member self-service capabilities in areas such as issuance of temporary certificates to the members, membership extension requests, etc.
8B. Continue to automate the process of document validation	*MRU is in discussions with MyCred that will partly automate the document validation process. Once the solution is implemented the MRU staff will receive the credentials to sign in and download validated documents from the MyCred platform and upload them to the internal CRM system. Recommend continuing to implement this solution and longer-term identify areas for full automation of document validation and upload.*

9A. Improve data collection to access processing times for different types of documents	• Establish categories of data collection that captures relevant fields for later analysis e.g., categories based on document or process type • Ensure staff have access to this shared database/repository (e.g., CRM) where they can input data into the respective categories • Monitor information being encoded in the shared database/repository on a regular (weekly) basis to identify areas of improvement related to processing times
9B. Set service target for the unit	*Recommend this be started once the unit has collected sufficient data to accurately discern processing times.* • Review current state processing times to establish a baseline Leadership to identify service targets that reflect the desired objectives of the College/unit. Consider conducting an environmental scan to identify the service level targets of other comparable entities
9C. Assess staffing requirements based on processing time and service targets	• Based on the work identified above, the unit should identify the required resources to fulfill the target service levels • Identify the gap between required resources and current staff complement • Validate gap with leadership and take action to right-size resource needs with targets
10A. Cross train unit staff to provide support across any of the three teams	• Identify individuals in a position to provide support to the IAR team and have not yet received training. Ultimately it is recommended that staff across the Primary Document Assessment (PDA) team, Ontario Data Management (ODM) team, and International Assessment and Research (IAR) team are cross-trained to provide support across any of the three teams, however, it was identified that the IAR team requires the most immediate support • Conduct training across both areas where knowledge gaps exist • Recognize and reward employees that have gained new skills and/or responsibilities through this process • Incorporate the cross-training process into the overall career development plan for staff
10B. Clarify accountability and responsibility between Manager-Officers, and the MRU staff and build an ongoing feedback and training mechanism	• MRU leadership team to meet with Managers and Officers to clarify accountability and responsibility between the respective roles • MRU leadership team to establish a recurring feedback mechanism to support staff's continuous improvement and improve work quality/delivery
11. Continue with the first-in-first-serve model until the unit has more data to support the specialization and categorization of files	*In absence of processing time and document categorization, the unit should continue to follow the first-in-first-serve model for document processing. However, as there is more data available on processing times and service targets are defined, the unit should consider specialization where the unit has the capacity of triaging the documents and processing them based on complexity, processing time, and resource availability.*
12A. Review and refine the checklist/criteria to support the identification of questionable documents	• Review existing QDP checklist against the backdrop of both internal and external shifts that have occurred since its initial development, to ensure the list of criteria accurately reflects the current reality of QDP processes

	• Update existing QDP checklist based on areas of refinement identified above
12B. Continue to expand the database of academic institutions and associated contact details to support the automation of the QDP process	• Document list of academic institutions (globally) that the unit has communicated with and update correspondence details in their database • Setup automated emails for sending documents to academic institutions for validation. Leverage existing email templates used for this purpose. • Consider partnering with World Education Services (WES) for the exchange of information with academic institutions globally
12C. Continue to improve implementation of the current CRM system to manage process bottlenecks	*A deeper technical review of the CRM system will be required to provide more specific recommendations related to implementation support.*
13A. Specify the additional document requirement and alternative evaluations and assessments accepted by the College	• Compile from staff involved in ADP, the known countries where the College requires additional documentation and/or alternative evaluations and assessment options. • For applicants submitting from these respective countries, include these additional document requirements (e.g., personal affidavit), alternative evaluations, and assessments as part of their submission process to proactively allow applicants to submit those documents
13B. Enhance the skill set of the team to support the ADP process	*See Recommendation 10A, a similar process to follow for ADP.*
13C. Formally tracking ADP volume to inform resourcing needs	*See Recommendations 9A/B/C, similar process to follow for ADP.*
Evaluation Services Unit	

14A. Employ evaluators' knowledge, experiences, and data to inform and enhance the current self-assessment tool	• Involve MSD staff and other users in the design, user testing and implementation of new self-assessment tool, and include them in decisions about changes to the tools.
	  ○ MSD staff, particularly the evaluators, to provide feedback in terms of tool alignment with the actual evaluation process
	  ○ MSD staff, particularly the evaluators, to review and attempt self-assessment tool to understand its current design
	  ○ Implement feedback, if necessary, into the tool
	• In collaboration with Research & Policy team, develop policies for change management to optimize acceptability, feasibility, and overall uptake.
	• Assess how the changes will be integrated into existing system, including how it might change workflows and the delivery of services. For instance, how will the daily routines of MSD staff need to change to include self-serve processes? What are the activities that will no longer be required?

	• Deliver training to all users before new programs are rolled out, specifically with applicants and ensure that training and support is available via different channels (e.g., focused sessions, online, via peers) • Continuously monitor how the changes are affecting staff roles and daily activities. For instance, is it reducing or increasing workloads?
14B. The form should include the evaluation criteria, specific academic requirements	• As above, any gaps in tool specifics to evaluation criteria rectified via staff input if necessary
14C. Investigate potential to implement completion of self-assessment tool as a compulsory first step in the application process	• Committee formed to discuss and strategize the potential and plan to implement and bring forth proposal/strategies/benefits/consequences to necessary decision stakeholders • Platforms for application process revised to accommodate this step
15A. Add one FT Administrative/Evaluation Assistant	• Plan with evaluators and investigate potential tasks that could be moved on this person • Evaluate the value of this task list in terms of lifting this onus from evaluators • Engage necessary decision makers to determine potential
16A. Work closely with MRU to develop strategies to decrease the number of incomplete files sent to ESU	• Across-units task force to be constructed and dedicated to closing gaps between units and implementing best solutions for this issue, identify and summarize exact issues that lead to incomplete files • Strategize solutions targeted at solving this specific issues-involve discussion and engagement at evaluator and record member level • Implement strategies, evaluate, revise if needed
16B. Develop checklists that can be used by MRU/ESU at different steps of the documentation and evaluation processes	• Determine contents of checklist and phase at which this can be brought into max. effect • Implement as a necessary process step, evaluate effect over time, re-evaluate and revise if needed • Ensure evaluator and recorder input on the checklist to the max. applicability
16C. MRU training/workshops by ESU to avoid reoccurring incomplete information	• MRU/ESU across-unit task force to investigate areas to target training to solve the issue of incomplete information • Implement overtime period, evaluate and revise as needed
16D. Pair/group ESU with MRU staff to close gaps in communication and increase focus on specific files from beginning to end	• ESU/MRU small groups to specific file batch to be identified • Processes that can be eliminated to get incomplete files solved to be identified and removed to allow small groups to work closer and shorten the timeframe between issue identification and solution
16E. Introduce a new position "Evaluation Agent" to promote cross-boundary work by acting either as a conduit or as glue	• Identify a person that has expertise in three units (CSU, MRU, ESU) to serve in this role • List out the exact role, responsibility, and tasks and value • Person to also contribute to CSU/MRU/ESU across-unit task force
17A. Launch data gathering strategy targeting QC process outcomes to	• Design survey to be used by Senior Evaluators over a specific timeframe to capture data on most identified issues • Tie data to specific file types

determine workload versus risk ratio	• Evaluate the need to adjust the file QC process specific to this data
17B. Take the heavy onus of QC off Senior Evaluators and the Manager by increasing accountability among evaluators	• Design recording mechanism and process for Senior Eval. To record reoccurring evaluator issues after QC of file • Provide Senior Evaluator mechanism and formal process to remediate reoccurring evaluator specific issues • Emphasize remediation above punitive process • Investigate current tools to determine potential to increase decision-making skills
17C. Conduct ESU review phase of standards and procedures to identify areas of potential discrepancies between evaluators to ensure that QC is efficient, and outcomes are the same regardless of QCer	• Investigate current understanding and steps taken by Senior Evaluator to conduct QC, identify discrepancies in processes and understanding • Develop tools to realign process and understanding to ensure streamlined and standardized
17D. Implement a peer review file process that engages more experienced evaluators before the file is sent for QC	• Introduce a peer evaluator QC process for files less risky as identified in the above recommendation • Remove these files from Snr Eval need for QC •
17E. As the last option, and only if none of the above recommendations are implemented, hire an additional bilingual Senior Evaluator to assist with QC if the same processes are maintained	• Establish period to implement above strategies, evaluate impact to determine if any were effective • Investigate the value of an additional Senior Evaluator as the next option
18A. Identify risk factors that have the potential to cause problems, conduct risk analysis. For instance, determine which activities and processes can be streamlined and/or eliminated	• Investigate data to determine the potential for streamlined processes
18B. Initiate policy reviews to incorporate changes	• Use the data from above to initiate policy reviews
18C. Decrease evaluator time spent on unnecessary "administrative" tasks	• Dedicate time to investigate what admin. steps can be removed from the evaluator, either eliminated or adapted, or placed onto a potential assistant
18D. If the process cannot be streamlined, determine the potential to assign the	• Determine the job description taking into consideration other recommended administrative tasks recognized in this report

preparation of comprehensive Index of Materials or part thereof to an administrative/evaluation assistant (new FTE)	• Present the need for an additional staff member to relevant decision makers
19A. Establish processes, procedures, and platforms to capture, store and access information	• Dedicate time to gather evaluator needs and input in terms of better knowledge/information sharing to create a standardized database and processes • Introduce knowledge capturing as part of evaluator file evaluation process for long term benefit for all • Establish plans or processes to replace manual systems (for instance using the existing and the digital library) to reduce the burden of operating a dual system
19B. Provide adequate resources/knowledge surrounding creating a comfortable/efficient home work environment, for instance surrounding occupational health best practices	• It is understood that the equipment provided to all staff members of the College is managed by a different department • Implementing this recommendation would require a feasibility analysis to determine the needs of the specific unit/staff within unit and if funding could be secured • Outsourcing occupational health related education • Providing additional screens • Creating video tutorials and providing access to helplines to assist with home work environment setup and to professionally address any physical discomfort issues
20A. Shift evaluation focus on matching internationally educated teacher education to matching essential profession specific competencies using a competency-based equivalency exam.	• Will require a shift in the profession to competency-based model to define knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours of the profession, shift from credential assessment to competencies required • Long-term effort may require third party input to develop