

REQUEST FOR DECISION

Committee Name: Academic Programs Committee, University Council

Date: March 19, 2026

Presented by: Paul Jones, Chair, Academic Programs Committee

Subject: Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science

MOTION

It is recommended by the Academic Programs Committee that Council approve the Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science for inclusion in the 2026-27 University Catalogue Addendum, with the first student intake in September 2027.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies is proposing a Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science. This graduate certificate is aimed at healthcare professionals and staff and will prepare learners to lead improvement initiatives to effect change in their organization. The program emphasizes collaboration and will support learners to integrate their learnings into the local context with a goal to improve outcomes and an emphasis on people-centred care, population health, and equity. With a renewed focus in the province to develop a culture of continuous improvement, this program will meet the needs of the healthcare workforce as they learn about and embed continuous improvement practices in their organization and community.

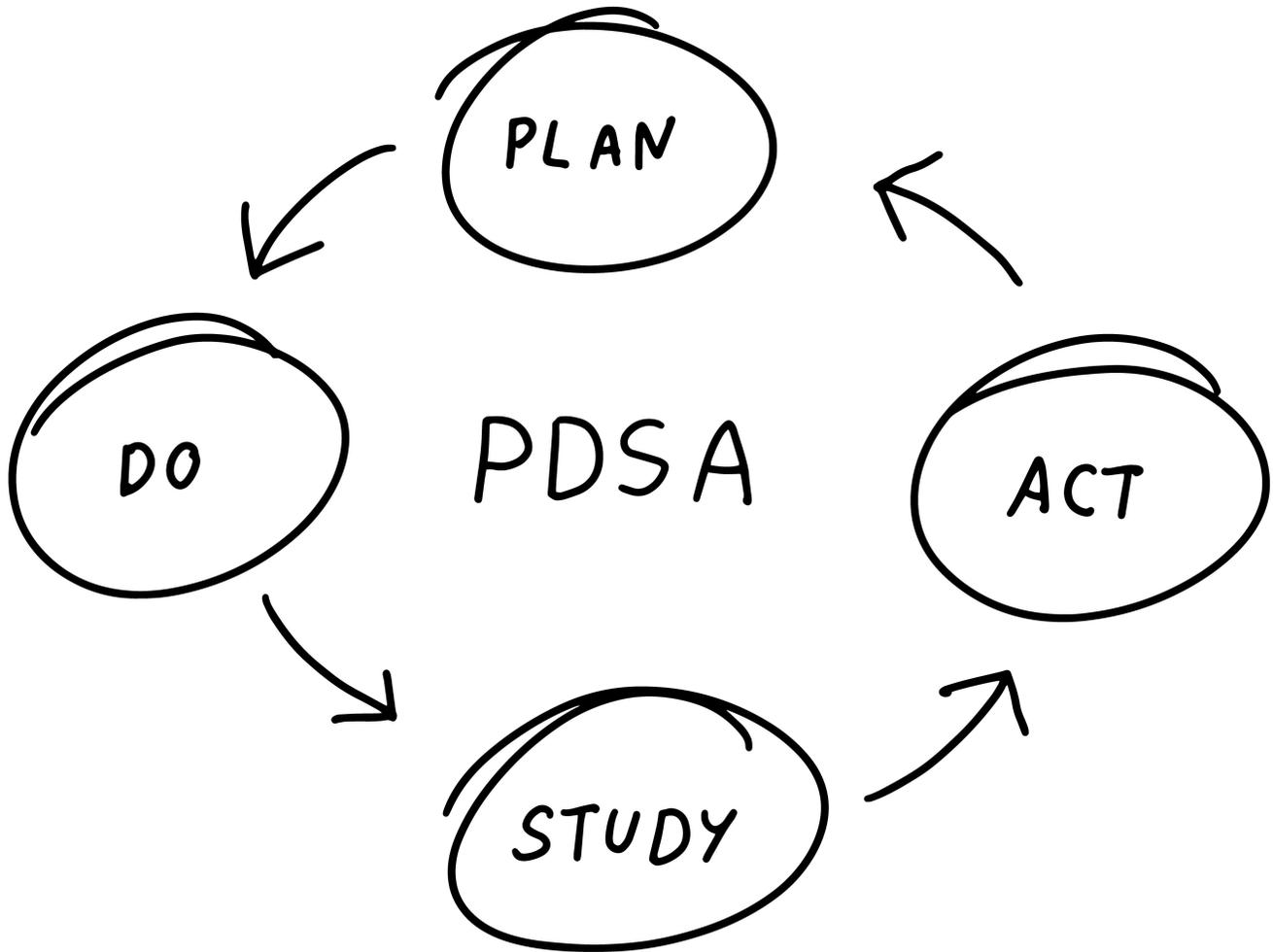
The proponents confirmed that they will be supporting faculty teaching in the program with a development approach that ensures that courses and assignments are developed in the context of the whole program and with an opportunity to deepen learning over time.

CONSULTATION

The College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies along with the proponents submitted a proposal to the Academic Programs Committee (APC) on February 4, 2026. APC had the opportunity to review the proposal and ask questions. APC voted in favour of this new certificate program.

ATTACHMENTS

1. **Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science**



Proposal: Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science

Submitted by: Dr. Gary Groot

Dec 9, 2025

Community Health & Epidemiology

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Acknowledgements

We wish to extend gratitude to all who participated in providing feedback and supporting program design, especially

- Core Design Team members:
Carla Flogan and Jessica Hamilton.
- Working Group members:
Dr. Emmett Harrison, Dr. Ben Leis, Dr. Michael Prystajacky, and Dr. Sachin Trivedi.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Memo - CGPS	03
Executive Summary	04
Proposal Overview	05
Rationale	06
Description of the Program	09
Curriculum Map	12
Program Consultation	13
College Statement	16
Department Statement	17
Bibliography	18
<u>Appendices</u>	
A: Graduate Admissions Consultation and Catalogue Entry	19
B: Consultation with Registrar	24
C: Provost & SFO Consultation	26
D: Letters of Support	27



CGPS Executive Summary

To: Academic Programs Committee of Council
From: Graduate Programs Committee, CGPS
Date: December 19, 2025
Re: New Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science

The College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies is recommending approval of a Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science. This practical graduate certificate is aimed at healthcare professionals and staff and will prepare learners to lead improvement initiatives to effect change in their organization. The program emphasizes collaboration and will support learners to integrate their learnings into the local context with a goal to improve outcomes and an emphasis on people-centred care, population health, and equity. With a renewed focus in the province to develop a culture of continuous improvement, this program will meet the needs of the healthcare workforce as they learn about and embed continuous improvement practices in their organization and community. The expected implementation of this program is the 2026-27 University Catalogue Addendum, with the first student intake in September 2027.

The Graduate Programs Committee reviewed the proposal and four new courses at their meeting on December 15th, 2025, and had minor suggestions for updates to the courses. The proponents confirmed that they will be supporting faculty teaching in the program with a development approach that ensures that courses and assignments are developed in the context of the whole program and with an opportunity to deepen learning over time. They also clarified the requirements around attendance and participation and confirmed there will be detailed rubrics for instructors and learners. The Graduate Programs Committee readily approved the proposal with the following motion:

MOTION: “To approve the new Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science” – **Ferrari/W.Martin** – CARRIED unanimously

Attached please find the proposal for the Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science.

If you have any questions, please contact the Academic Affairs Specialist at gradprograms.academicaffairs@usask.ca.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Certificate in Improvement Science is a new graduate-level program proposed by the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology. It builds on the success of the discontinued Clinical Quality Improvement Program (CQIP), aiming to fill a critical gap in health and social care education in Saskatchewan and beyond.

This 20-month, primarily online certificate is designed for working professionals—physicians, nurses, allied health professionals, administrators, and quality specialists—who are seeking advanced skills in leading, coaching, and evaluating quality improvement initiatives. The program combines academic rigour with real-world application through a structured practicum and two short in-person residencies.

Fostering the never-ending desire to improve requires social support that appreciates the creativity, the discipline, the courage, and the deep satisfaction that comes with understanding and being able to change one's own work.

– Dr. Paul Batalden –

Key features include:

- A focus on equity, reconciliation, and collaborative practice.
- Integration of complex adaptive systems thinking and learning health system principles.
- Strong alignment with professional competency standards.
- A flexible delivery model to support participation from rural, remote, and out-of-province learners.

This program directly supports USask's mission to advance interdisciplinary, applied knowledge and promote health equity. It aligns with the College of Medicine's goals of improving health outcomes and professional leadership, and it sets the foundation for a future Master of Science in Health Services Research.

The certificate has been developed through extensive consultation, including system leaders, faculty, and prospective learners. It is designed to integrate with existing improvement efforts across the health system and support career advancement.

With a proposed tuition of \$7,300, the program is competitively priced and is being developed to meet continuing education and accreditation standards across health disciplines.

By launching this certificate, the University of Saskatchewan has an opportunity to establish itself as a national leader in improvement science education and contribute meaningfully to the development of a culture of continuous improvement in healthcare.

Planned launch: Fall 2027

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

The development of a Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science is, in part, building on the success of the now discontinued Clinical Quality Improvement Program (CQIP). CQIP was led by the Health Quality Council (HQC) in partnership with the Saskatchewan Medical Association and the Ministry of Health from 2017-2022. The program engaged 91 clinicians, mostly physicians, over 5 cohorts in a 10-month period with a goal to support learners to be able to lead, coach, and teach improvement methods. Using a flipped classroom model requiring learners to engage in self-directed online learning and 4 in-person workshops, CQIP was very well received by program participants with evaluation recommendations focused on using a more interprofessional approach and deepening learning on data analysis and coaching skills.¹

Due to a change in priorities for the funders, CQIP was discontinued and has left a gap in terms of longitudinal clinical quality improvement learning opportunities in Saskatchewan. The proposed certificate offers an enhanced version of CQIP, with more contact time, the ability to deepen learning, and the achievement of a graduate level certificate upon successful completion. We also see it as a first step in the development of a Master of Science in Health Services Research (with a concentration in Improvement Science) for the university. Both the certificate and the eventual master’s would deepen the critical relationship between the university and the health and social care delivery system in terms of both professional formation and research.

One key feature of this certificate program will be the initiation and sustainment of a faculty development and support program that will seek to broaden and deepen existing teaching and research competencies in improvement science and online delivery. While the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology has had a unit, led by Dr. Gary Groot, dedicated to Healthcare Research and Quality Improvement, there is an opportunity to expand the faculty and graduate students associated with this unit through teaching and mentoring in the proposed program and advancing scholarship in the related fields of Health Services and Learning Health Systems research.

Title: Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science
Degree: Graduate Certificate
Intended Length of the Program: 20 months
Number of Credit Units: 12 cu
Academic Unit: Community Health & Epidemiology,
College of Medicine, College of Graduate and
Postdoctoral Studies
Proposed date for intake of students: Sept 2027

RATIONALE

- 1) *Describe the program and what the program will achieve. Outline connections to the mission and vision of USask and those of the academic unit offering the program.*

The Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science will offer graduate level learning opportunities for healthcare providers, including physicians, nurses, and rehabilitative and therapeutic professionals, administrators, and quality and safety specialists working in health and social care. The goal is to prepare learners to lead and evaluate collaborative improvement initiatives within their organization or work context. Establishing a graduate program of in this area can also strengthen and expand existing partnerships related to patient-oriented research (SCPOR), Learning Health Systems, and Implementation Science.

The University of Saskatchewan's mission is, in part, to advance "the aspirations of the people of the province and beyond through *interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches* to discovering, teaching, sharing, integrating, preserving, and applying knowledge".² The proposed program is an interprofessional one, which will emphasize collaborative practice with colleagues and communities in the context of applying improvement knowledge. Additionally, the university seeks to promote "*diversity and meaningful change*". Enrolled students will be learning how to lead change initiatives in their work context with a focus on making inequity visible and addressing it.

The College of Medicine's current vision is to be leaders in the improvement of health and well-being, while the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology emphasizes equity in the context of optimal health. The Graduate Certificate aims to provide the phronesis, or practical wisdom, needed for health and social care professionals to effect change and improvement with a focus on people-centered care, population health, and equity.

From a mission standpoint, Community Health and Epidemiology seeks to "create, synthesize and translate knowledge for evidence-informed policies and practices which support population health equity locally and globally".³ The proposed certificate will

- 1) expose learners to leading-edge and evidence-informed approaches to improvement science while
- 2) supporting them to reliably integrate leading-edge and evidence-informed practices into local processes and systems to with an aim of improved outcomes for a population.

- 2) *Describe the demand of the program - Market demand-analysis industry trends, survey potential students, consult with employers in relevant fields, etc.*

The University of Saskatchewan mission describes an aim to prepare students for an enriching career. An enriching career in health and social care needs to account for the growing issue of burnout.^{4,5}

The Stanford Model of Occupational Well-Being is explicit about the importance of being able to actively participate in improvement activities around workplace efficiency as a route to reducing burnout and increasing professional fulfillment.⁶ Originally designed with physicians in mind, the model has been expanded to be inclusive of healthcare professionals more broadly.⁷

Outside the context of well-being, it is important to note that health and social care professionals are increasingly expected to have competence in improvement science. Most, if not all, competency frameworks, include the ability to lead and/or participate in improvement work as a core competency linked to management, leadership, or professionalism, for graduates of programs from nursing to pharmacy to physical therapy to social work.⁸⁻¹² Medicine's CanMEDS framework, for example, includes improvement in the roles of Physician as Leader, Scholar, and Advocate for both the College of Family Physicians¹³ and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons.¹⁴ The Royal College, which determines educational standards for specialty education of physicians and surgeons in Canada, is currently updating the CanMEDS framework. Through the update, the focus on competency in improvement is likely to be strengthened as they have identified expertise in Complex Adaptive Systems (including systems science and quality improvement) as an emerging theme for consideration.¹⁵ The Royal College has also added an Area of Focused Competency (AFC) in Quality Improvement and Patient Safety for physicians in Canada.¹⁶ The AFC program is meant to recognize advanced training in specific disciplines that enhance physician scope of practice. The AFC in QI and Patient Safety does not currently have any accredited programs identified; the University of Saskatchewan could be the first.

The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) is continuing to adjust post-amalgamation and is seeking to re-energize the focus on developing a culture of continuous improvement. Most recently, there has been a restructuring of the strategic portfolios in the SHA to better align with a model of a Learning Health System; such a realignment will better support the operational and clinical teams to do improvement work, provided there are systems in place to support learning and training. The Health Quality Council recently convened all health system partners to think through how we can move forward as a whole system to support improvement. In that session, co-led by the SHA, there was discussion of the need to both engage the whole workforce in improvement and move to professionalize a subset of the workforce as expert in improvement. Establishing a graduate level program of learning can support the aim of professionalization and ensure that health system leaders and physicians are well positioned to ensure a culture of continuous improvement is embedded.

In a 2023 environmental scan conducted by the Vice-Dean of Faculty Engagement for the College of Medicine, 121 medical faculty¹ responded to a survey regarding quality improvement. In response to the question about interest in pursuing training, 55% stated they were interested in some kind of training, with 27% expressing interest in a Graduate Certificate and 11% in a Master's. The survey also reaffirmed the success of CQIP as a longitudinal experiential learning opportunity with 37% of respondents reporting that they had taken CQIP and many more in the comments expressing interest in a similar program being restarted to support learning in this area.

As part of our consultation, we surveyed a subset of faculty within the College of Medicine, including Rehabilitation Sciences. Response to the overall program design and outcomes was overall positive, with 31% of the 29 respondents identifying as potential learners. Respondents (n=12) to a second survey focused on course descriptions and outcomes reported being very interested in the courses as described and provided detailed feedback as to their perception of the strengths and gaps.

¹ The One Faculty model for the College of Medicine is unique in that a large majority of medical faculty are not employees or covered under USFA and therefore would be considered external to USask, see question 3.

- 3) *What is the target student demographic? (e.g., indigenous, mature, international, domestic, returning). Describe where the students are expected to come from [internal to USask (are they already in another program and are redistributing) or external (new enrolments)]?*

We aim to recruit new learners currently working in health and social care. While we will prioritize Saskatchewan-based applications, particularly those from learners based in rural Saskatchewan, we are open to applications from anywhere in Canada. Additionally, we will create Indigenous Equity Seats to support developing leadership in improvement in our Indigenous workforce.

- 4) *What are the most similar competing programs in Saskatchewan and Canada? How is this program different? Why should this program be offered at USask?*

Saskatchewan is not new to healthcare firsts and has often been the nexus of healthcare related innovation and improvement. From Medicare to establishing the first provincial Health Quality Council, we have often led the way. While there have been some ebbs and flows in our focus on quality improvement, it has been an “area of special and emerging strength” and we are well positioned to embed capacity building in improvement as a feature of our health and social care professional formation. Additionally, our university’s historical engagement in interprofessional education and current leadership in responding to the Calls to Action and TRC at a strategic level, support an approach to improvement that centers collaborative practice and equity.

Competing programs

Through their Executive Education Program, the Edwards School of Business offers an applied certificate in Operational Excellence. This certificate is focused on applications of the specific improvement methods of Lean and Six Sigma and delivered through four 2-day in-person workshops. In contrast, the proposed program is at a graduate level, with an eventual option to ladder into a master’s, and is offering a broader focus on improvement science with a specific application in health and social care.

Ontario offers the largest number of general improvement science learning opportunities via certificates and full graduate degrees. The University of Toronto hosts a graduate level certificate in Improvement, the Excellence in Quality Improvement Program (EQuIP). Non-graduate level certificates are available through Western (Quality Improvement in Healthcare Certificate at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry) and Queens (Foundations in Health Quality Improvement); both are self-directed and exclusively online with limited peer interaction and mentorship. Additionally, Queens and the University of Toronto offer a Master of Science in quality improvement.

The proposed program will feature several distinct throughlines that distinguish it from similar programs offered in Ontario. First, we aim to embed a focus on equity and the application of improvement to address the TRC Calls to Action. Second, we will include an emphasis on collaborative practice, amongst team members but also in pursuit of coproducing care and systems of care with patients, families, and communities. Third, we will specifically address complex adaptive systems (CAS) and how one can lead and coach from a CAS lens. Finally, we will offer the longest program in the country. The pacing of the program is more realistic for practicing health professionals and will enable significant application of learning through the practicum, ensuring thorough preparation and sufficient time to work on a project.

The University of Calgary is delivering a graduate certificate and master’s in Precision Medicine with a concentration in quality improvement. While their certificate program is quite similar in

terms of delivery methods and learner expectations, the precision medicine context is very specific and not as applicable to a broad range of health and social care professionals with an interest in improvement science.

In summary, there are no graduate programs in general improvement science West of Ontario. Establishing a certificate and an eventual Master of Science in this field could make us the Western provinces' choice for learning and development, especially as we are designing for primarily remote learning.

Table of Comparable Programs, Duration, and Cost

Location	Program	Level	Duration	Cost
USASK	<i>Certificate in Improvement Science</i>	<i>Graduate Certificate</i>	<i>156 contact hours, 4 courses over 20-months</i>	\$7,300
U of T	Excellence in Quality Improvement Program	Advanced Certificate	11-months	\$7,995
U of T	Quality Improvement & Patient Safety	Certificate	66.5 contact hours over 10 months	\$5,745 (MDs) \$3,745 (other)
U of Calgary	Precision Medicine (focus in Quality & Safety Leadership)	Graduate Certificate	1-year	\$14,095
USASK	Improving Teaching and Learning in Health Professions Education	Graduate Certificate	1-year	\$7,310
USASK	Quality Teaching in Health Professions Education	Graduate Certificate	1-year	\$7,310
USASK	Operational Excellence (Edwards)	Certificate	4 x 2-day courses over 8 months	\$7,980
USASK	Leadership (Edwards)	Graduate Certificate	3 courses over 9 months	\$6,300
USASK & U of R	Health Systems Management (Johnson Shoyama)	Graduate Certificate	3 courses over 12 months	\$8,340

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

1) What are the program learning outcomes or program competencies?

Graduates of the program will be able to:

- Critically reflect on the four domains of improvement knowledge and how they interact.
- Lead a collaborative approach to improvement in their local context.
- Critically evaluate the role of improvement in advancing quality, including safety, equity, and people-centered care.
- Advocate for quality and safety within their systems.
- Communicate effectively about quality & improvement, including use of data visualization and academic dissemination.

2) Where and how will experiential learning be incorporated into the program?

- There are 3 theory-based courses that will run sequentially over 3 semesters and will include application of concepts in case studies and development of practicum project plan components
- Following a summer break, the practicum runs for 8 months, offering learners the opportunity to apply theory and concepts through an applied improvement project, reflect on action in small groups, and adjust their approach moving forward.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
COURSES	Concepts & Methods in Improvement			Learning from Data for Improvement				Leading Change												
PRACTICUM													Residency (1.5 d)	Reflection Groups x 12 hours - meeting bimonthly					Residency (1.5 d)	

- 3) *Describe the planned modes and sites of delivery and explain the rationale for the modes selected.*
- The program is primarily virtual to enable participation from professionals working full-time around the province and to support out-of-province enrolment.
 - Limiting the requirement to attend on site is particularly important for rural and remote physicians who are challenged to participate in educational opportunities that require them to find time away from their practices.
- 4) *Is there a program residency requirement? Please describe.*
- There are two 1.5-day residencies planned.
 - The opening residency will allow us to support relationship building amongst the cohort and support peer review of project plans.
 - The closing residency will allow learners to present their projects in an academic environment and, potentially, to overlap with the subsequent year's cohort offering insights into their project successes and challenges.
- 5) *Complete the curriculum chart of the courses and learning experiences*
- See Page 10
- 6) *What elements of the program will support the diversity of USask learners?*
- Diversity of learners is supported through offering an interprofessional program with equity seats supporting Indigenous learners
 - Additionally, our distance learning approach will support participation from learners from diverse contexts, including rural and remote settings
 - While there will be synchronous offerings delivered virtually, our planned instructional approaches include asynchronous engagement, reflective practice groups, and self-assessment and reflection activities, supporting the Universal Design of Learning (UDL) principal of *Multiple Means of Engagement*.
 - We will support the UDL principal of *Multiple Means of Representation* through use of case studies, application into the practicum context, and invited speakers. We will also provide recordings of synchronous sessions and plan to both use and contribute to Open Education Resources, e.g. learners will be invited to submit their practice innovations and stories to the OER.
 - Finally, we plan to support the UDL principal of *Multiple Means of Action and Expression* by offering a diversity of assessment approaches including formative and summative exams, participation in discussion forums and structured debates, summarizing of learning in papers and presentations, and frequent use of peer review and feedback. A key part of faculty support for this certificate will include a discussion of un-grading and embedding learner choice in assessment.
- 7) *What qualitative and quantitative criteria will be used to evaluate whether the program is a success within a specified timeframe?*
- Enrolment and completion
 - Faculty, system partner, and learner experience
 - Program evaluation will be integrated into a research project focused on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in the context of Learning Health Systems.

8) *If applicable, is accreditation or certification by an outside body available, and if so, how will the program meet, and report on success against the required professional standard criteria?*

There are multiple and diverse opportunities for accreditation including:

- College of Family Physicians of Canada - Mainpro+® Credits
- Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons - Maintenance of Competencies credits and, potentially, as a program accredited to support the Additional Focused Competency (AFC) of Quality Improvement and Patient Safety. Note: USASK would be the first and only accredited program in Canada if successful. Will work with the College of Medicine CME and PGME office on this accreditation process.
- Canadian College of Health Leaders - Strategic Alliance that offers several credits towards the Canadian Health Executive (CHE) designation.
- Ensuring alignment with various health professions accreditation & continuing competence pathways, including pharmacy, nursing, and physical therapy.

9) *Describe the assessment of tuition:*

- Domestic tuition rate per full-time Graduate Certificate: \$7,300
- Domestic tuition rate per credit unit: \$608.33
- Students required to retake a course will be assessed tuition at the per credit unit rate

CURRICULUM MAP

Program Outcomes/ Competencies		Improvement Knowledge	Collaborative Leadership of Applied Improvement	Dimensions of Quality	Quality and Safety Advocacy	Effective Communication	USask Student Competency (ies) Achieved (EIS, NSR, LT, ADPS, CM, CW) *	Prerequisite(s) and/or Corequisite(s)	Primary Method of Instruction (e.g. lecture, clinical, active learning etc.)	New or Existing Course?	Is this course within your Academic Unit Authority? (Yes/No) Are the prerequisites within your Academic Unit Authority? (Yes/No)
Description of Outcome/ Competency		Critically reflect on the four domains of improvement knowledge and how they interact	Lead a collaborative approach to improvement in their local context	Critically evaluate the role of improvement in advancing quality, including safety, equity, and people-centered care	Advocate for quality and safety within their systems	Communicate effectively about quality & improvement, including use of data visualization and academic dissemination					
Course Number, Title and Credit Units	CHEP 871.3 Concepts & Methods in Improvement	X	X	X	X	X	EIS, LT, ADPS, CM, CW	NONE	Online	NEW	YES/NA
	CHEP 872.3 Learning from Data for Improvement	X	X	X	X	X	EIS, LT, ADPS, CM	871.3	Online	NEW	YES/YES
	CHEP 873.3 Leading Change	X	X		X	X	EIS, NSR, LT, ADPS, CM, CW	872.3	Online	NEW	YES/YES
	CHEP 880.3 Practicum in Applied Improvement	X	X	X	X	X	EIS, NSR, LT, ADPS, CM	871.3, 872.3, 873.3	Experiential Learning with reflection groups	NEW	YES/YES

***Student Competency Legend**

EIS= Engaging in Our Intercultural Society, NSR= Nurturing Successful Relationships, LT= Leveraging Technology, ADPS= Adaptive Design and Problem Solving, CM= Communicating Meaningfully, CW= Cultivating Well-Being

PROGRAM CONSULTATION

1) *Does the program relate to existing programs in the department, college or school, and with other colleges? Can students from other programs benefit from courses in this program? Can students enter this program from other programs (program transferability)?*

- The program relates to all health and social care professional learning programs offered at USask and, somewhat, to the Edwards School of Business graduate certificate in Leadership and Executive Operational Excellence certificate.
- As a graduate level course of study, students cannot transfer from other programs.

2) *Provide a summary of units and stakeholders (including students) that were consulted. If any concerns were raised, explain how these concerns were addressed.*

The proposal was developed using a longitudinal consultation process with a design team of content experts (n=3), a working group of practicing physicians with graduate level preparation in Improvement Science from other jurisdictions (n=4), and an advisory panel of invited healthcare and improvement specialists in Saskatchewan (n=29) who identified as potential learners, potential faculty, and/or expert advisors. Additionally, proposal developers met with:

- SHA Quality and Safety leadership,
- Health Quality Council,
- College of Medicine Department Heads,
- the Office of Research Ethics, and
- Edwards School of Business leadership responsible for both graduate programs and the Operational Excellence Certificate.

The overall response was very positive. Concerns raised through this process included:

- Ensuring sufficient time for the practicum including applications for ethics exemption.
 - Shifted from a parallel model for the practicum to a sequential model, extending the overall program from 12 to 20 months while maximizing both preparation and the opportunity to enact an improvement project.
 - Alerted the Office of Research Ethics to the timing and volume of ethics exemptions and will develop a template for ethics exemption requests specific to this program in collaboration with the Office.
- Ensuring operational alignment and preparation for practicum work with the delivery context.
 - Applications will include the need to identify a workplace sponsor who will sign off on project scope; learners will be required to situate their learning and application in the work context, e.g. when designing a workplace measurement

dashboard, learners will be encouraged to identify existing workplace frameworks and justify any deviation.

- Ensuring workplace recognition of time and effort, including tuition support and not requiring learners to take time without pay to engage in learning.
 - While we have no control over organizational choices in this matter, we have encouraged health system partners in the province to consider how this learning fits within their leadership development pathways and will offer organizations the opportunity to reserve seats for their identified and supported learners.
 - Our program design minimizes time away from work during working hours, i.e. residencies are on the weekend and virtual learning will be organized flexibly, and by encouraging learners to choose a practicum project in collaboration with their sponsoring organization, we hope that the application of improvement learning will enhance their working context and be seen as value-add.
- Ensuring demands on time aren't unrealistic – hesitation that original design of 12 cu over 12 months might be unrealistic for many to engage in meaningfully while working full-time.
 - Expanded to 20 months, including a 2-month summer break, to reduce the intensity of the program.
- Ensuring alignment with existing learning opportunities in the SHA related to improvement, i.e. Lean.
 - Academic content will be inclusive of a broad range of improvement methodologies, including Lean, and learners will examine strengths and limitations.
 - SHA will provide content expertise for Lean specific seminars.
- Ensuring alignment with overall provincial direction for capacity-building in quality and safety.
 - Participation in a newly established impact network with all health system partners.
 - Inclusion of key partners, i.e. HQC and SHA, in teaching and mentoring.

3) *Provide any other relevant consultations and evidence of support, if applicable (e.g., professional associations, accreditation bodies, potential employers, etc.).*

The following departments, units, colleges, and organizations were provided with an opportunity to review the proposal and provide feedback:

- College of Medicine: Indigenous Health, Research Office, Faculty Development, Continuing Medical Education, Rural Medicine, Northern Medical Services, SIPPA, Regina

Campus, Strategic Planning and Projects, School of Rehabilitation Sciences, Master of Physician Assistant Studies

- Other Health Science Programs: Public Health, Nursing, Pharmacy and Nutrition, Dentistry, Kinesiology
- Related USask Programs: Edwards School of Business
- Other: Saskatchewan Health Authority, Saskatchewan Health Quality Council, Saskatchewan Medical Association, Health Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada

Consultations are ongoing. Please see appended letters of support that have been received to date.

COLLEGE STATEMENT

The college of medicine supports this plan for a graduate certificate in improvement science, to be offered through the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology.

We view both the certificate and the longer-term vision of a master's program in health services research as strongly aligned with the college's future direction and strategic priorities—particularly our commitment to advancing research focused on health systems and population health. Both the certificate and the eventual master's program will serve as key bridging initiatives, aligning academic and delivery systems to collaboratively improve population health and deepen our understanding of learning health systems.



The practicum component of the certificate offers a valuable opportunity to strengthen partnerships between the college, the health and social care delivery systems, and the communities we serve. With its emphasis on complexity, equity, and collaborative practice, the curriculum is designed to equip graduates with the knowledge, skills, and mindsets necessary to meaningfully contribute to system improvement and advance reconciliation.

We look forward to the launch of this program and to its role in advancing our renewed strategic direction with a focus on change, collaboration, accountability, curiosity, and service.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Forgie'.

Sarah Forgie, MD, M.Ed., FAMMI, FRCPC. Pediatrics & Infectious Diseases
Dean and Professor
College of Medicine

DEPARTMENT STATEMENT



As department head, I am pleased to submit this proposal for a graduate certificate program in Improvement Science, to be housed in the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology. Improvement science is a core component of a health services program of research in our department that is advancing theory, methods, and praxis in this important area of enquiry for Learning Health Systems.

The proposed certificate is an interprofessional program for practicing health and social care professionals and leaders, with theoretical, methodological, and applied training in improvement science. Consistent with our department’s vision, mission, and values, the curriculum emphasizes equity and collaborative practice, with an aim to advance reconciliation and highlight relational strategies for systems improvement.

A key feature of the certificate program is our commitment to delivery that enables participation of interested professionals in all corners of the province. Developed for primarily online delivery, the implementation plan includes support for our teaching faculty to expand their skills and confidence in distance pedagogy.

We see this certificate as eventually also underpinning a master’s in health services research, to advance both the practice and scholarship of implementation science. Together, the certificate and the eventual master’s will be important “bridging” programs well positioned for academic and professional trainees to collaboratively advance Learning Health Systems responsive to the needs of patients and populations.

The certificate program marks an important step in our work to advance population health equity, supporting health and social system practitioners to lead improvement in practice as well as offering new teaching and research opportunities for our faculty in improvement science of relevance from patient to population and from acute to preventive care.

With thanks for your consideration of our program proposal for a certificate in Improvement Science.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sylvia Abonyi', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sylvia Abonyi, Ph.D.
Professor and Department Head/ Community Health and Epidemiology
Research Faculty/Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit

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APPENDIX A: GRADUATE ADMISSIONS CONSULTATION

1) *What are the admissions requirements of this program?*

Language proficiency:

- **Proof of English language proficiency** may be required for international applicants and for applicants whose first language is not English

Academic:

- A four-year degree, or equivalent, from a recognized college or university in an academic discipline relevant to the proposed field of study
- A cumulative weighted average of at least a 70% (U of S grade system equivalent) in the last two years of study (i.e. 60 credit units)

Applications will be reviewed holistically to assess an applicant's skills, personal attributes, background, and experiences. The standard academic admission requirements may be waived if the following are met:

- Recognized completion of at least one year (18 credit units) of higher education;
- A break of at least five years from formal higher education; and
- At least 10 years of work experience

Background & Experiences:

- A current resume that includes background and relevant employment history
- A letter of intent including reasons for applying and proposed project (template provided)
- Three letters of reference including one from a project sponsor

2) *What are the selection criteria?*

- Academic – weighted 50%
- Background & Experiences – weighted 50%
- Rubrics for assessment to be developed

3) *What are admission categories?*

- Saskatchewan Resident
- Rural (outside of Saskatoon and Regina)
- Indigenous
- General

4) *What is the rationale and process for supporting Indigenous applicants*

The University, the College of Medicine, and the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology are committed to decolonization, Indigenization, reconciliation and equity, diversity and inclusion, and are proud to support academic opportunities for Indigenous students.

We continue to grow our relationships and engaged partnerships among Indigenous community members, thought leaders, Knowledge Keepers and cultural service providers including those working within health care delivery systems. We recognize, value and affirm our responsibility and commitment to actively engaging Indigenous learners to co-create a culture of inclusivity, respect, and social accountability in all our teaching and learning spaces.

The Graduate certificate in Improvement Science **is designating up to 17% of our seats for Indigenous applicants.** This results in 3 of 16 seats in the first cohort. Applicants choosing to apply for these seats must indicate such in the online application and must also meet all usual entry requirements.

Verification of Indigenous Membership/Citizenship will be led and determined by the *deybwewin | taapwatwin | tapwewin*: Indigenous Truth Policy and Standing Committee in accordance with the processes developed to enact the policy. Verification of Indigenous Membership/Citizenship with documentation will be a condition of acceptance for seats that are designated for Indigenous applicants.

5) *What are the admission models?*

- Non-direct entry

6) *Intake - how many seats are required to be filled?*

- 16 in year 1, growing by 4 seats a year to a maximum of 32 in Year 5.
- 50% of seats will be prioritized for rural applicants
- 17% of seats will be prioritized for Indigenous applicants

7) *What are the application process and timelines?*

- We will intake students in September, with a two-stage admission process to prioritize Saskatchewan residents and rural and Indigenous applicants.
- Admissions will open in September in alignment with CGPS and close Feb 15 of the admission year.
 - Evaluation of submissions will be completed by April 30 by an admission committee specific to this graduate certificate program.
 - For Saskatchewan residents and rural and Indigenous applicants, offers for admission will be sent out in early May with a two-week expiry.
 - General admissions for out-of-province applicants will be considered in the situation where seats remain and will be confirmed by June 30.
- Note in year 1 of the program, we will need to compress these phases with notification of acceptance and confirmation still being complete by June 30.

- 3) Complete Catalogue entry- include admission requirements, complete program of study, and all courses in the entry

Improvement Science Graduate Certificate (G.Cert.)

Seats Designated for Indigenous Applicants

The University, the College of Medicine, and the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology are committed to decolonization, Indigenization, reconciliation and equity, diversity and inclusion, and are proud to support academic opportunities for Indigenous students.

We continue to grow our relationships and engaged partnerships among Indigenous community members, thought leaders, Knowledge Keepers and cultural service providers including those working within health care delivery systems. We recognize, value and affirm our responsibility and commitment to actively engaging Indigenous learners to co-create a culture of inclusivity, respect, and social accountability in all our teaching and learning spaces.

The Graduate certificate in Improvement Science is designating up to 17% of our seats for Indigenous applicants. Applicants choosing to apply for these seats must indicate such in the online application and must also meet all usual entry requirements.

Verification of Indigenous Membership/Citizenship will be led and determined by the deybwewin | taapwatwin | tapwewin: Indigenous Truth Policy and Standing Committee in accordance with the processes developed to enact the policy. Verification of Indigenous Membership/Citizenship with documentation will be a condition of acceptance for seats that are designated for Indigenous applicants.

Seat Allocation

1. 17% of seats designated for Indigenous applicants
2. Applicants from rural Saskatchewan will be prioritized to fill 50% of seats. Rural applicant seat allocation will involve a competitive process based on admission criteria evaluation.
3. All remaining applicants applying to the program will be placed into a competitive pool and seat allocation will involve a competitive process based on admission criteria evaluation.

Admission Requirements

- Language Proficiency Requirement: Proof of English proficiency may be required for applicants to graduate programs. Proof of English proficiency may be demonstrated through:
 - A minimum of three consecutive years of full-time study or completion of a graduate degree at a recognized post-secondary institution, where the exclusive language of instruction and examination of the program and/or institution is English; or
 - Provision of evidence of English language proficiency, using one of the approved tests listed in the [English Language Proficiency Policy](#).

- A four-year degree, or equivalent, from a recognized college or university in an academic discipline relevant to the proposed field of study
- A cumulative weighted average of at least 70% (USask grade system equivalent). The cumulative weighted average will be calculated based on the most recently completed graduate-level degree or 60 graded credit units (i.e., the last two years of full-time graded coursework) at the time of application.
- A current resume that includes background and relevant employment history
- A letter of intent including reasons for applying and proposed project
- Three letters of reference including one from a project sponsor

Applications will be reviewed holistically to assess an applicant's skills, personal attributes, background, and experiences. The standard academic admission requirements may be waived if the following are met:

- Recognized completion of at least one year (18 credit units) of higher education;
- A break of at least five years from formal higher education; and
- At least 10 years of work experience

Certificate Requirements

This certificate program is comprised of 12 credit units as follows:

- **CHEP 871.3** Concepts & Methods in Improvement
- **CHEP 872.3** Learning from Data for Improvement
- **CHEP 873.3** Leading Change
- **CHEP 880.3** Practicum in Applied Improvement

Course Descriptions

CHEP 871.3 Concepts & Methods in Improvement

Learners will review the historical roots of improvement science and develop skills for knowing when & how to use various improvement methods. Delivered through online learning, case studies, and small group work, participants will learn about frameworks and tools that can help them, evaluate the development and evolution of quality improvement approaches, assess the dimensions of quality with a focus on equity, and apply relational and technical strategies in various settings. Learners will explore Deming's System of Improvement Knowledge, explore the dimensions of quality (safety, timeliness, efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and people-centeredness) and frameworks and methods specific to individual dimensions (e.g. human factors, improved access, Lean, and more). Lastly, learners will critically examine synergies and tensions among the dimensions.

CHEP 872.3 Learning from Data for Improvement

This course explores the “what,” “why,” and “how” of measurement to support learning and improvement. Through a blend of synchronous and asynchronous online learning, case studies, and group discussions, learners will examine the critical role of measurement in improvement science, how it differs from measurement for research or accountability. Participants will be introduced to measurement frameworks, including foundational models such as Donabedian's Triad and contemporary approaches for developing dashboards and optimizing data visualization. Using the lens of complexity, learners will consider how to design internal quality monitoring strategies and apply measurement tools effectively within improvement efforts. The course emphasizes the importance of understanding variation, introducing statistical methods tailored to identifying, interpreting, and managing variation in the context of improvement. A strong focus will be placed on equity and people-centered measurement strategies that ensure data informs the needs of those closest to the work and the communities they serve.

CHEP 873.3 Leading Change

Learners will explore how to lead improvement and influence change. Delivered through online learning, case studies, and small group work, participants will learn about frameworks and tools that can help them, lead, coach, and mentor local improvement teams, support improvement across a journey of care or service, and influence large-scale change. Learners will strengthen their skills in reflective practice, conflict engagement, and communication while applying an equity and complexity lens to leadership. Finally, the course will include an introduction to key features of co-production and collaborative practice.

CHEP 880.3 Practicum in Applied Improvement

This practicum integrates learning from the other required courses for the Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science through application of concepts, theories, and tools to an improvement project in the learner's local context. The course spans eight months, with monthly sessions dedicated to planning, reflection on action, and peer feedback. Learners will share project progress at various stages for review and feedback. The final session culminates in a presentation summarizing their project. A core component of the course is guided reflection on the experience of leading and coaching improvement efforts, with an emphasis on lessons learned and personal growth. To support collaboration and community-building, the course includes two residencies, 1.5 days each in Saskatoon.

Consultation with the Registrar (CWR) – Proposal Highlights

Title of Proposal: New Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science

General Description: A 12 credit-unit graduate-level certificate using 4 new online CHEP courses. The 3-day practicum will be the only required in-person element.

Degree College: College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

College Approval: Graduate Programs Committee approval, December 15, 2025.

Effective Term: September 2027

Course implications

- This certificate is composed of 4 new CHEP courses.

Registration and classes

- Online courses follow standard term dates, with one course running across Fall Term 1 and Winter Term 2.
- Program requires mostly online learning, which reduces pressure on the Space Booking unit. Only one of the online classes includes a final examination. This final examination will be completed online.

Convocation

- No new hood is required.
- Students may graduate with the certificate as early as Spring Convocation 2028.

Financial and Budget

- The Deputy Provost and Strategic Finance Office have endorsed the proposal.
- Proposed non-standard tuition rate using a per credit unit method of assessment.
- Proposal indicates program tuition of \$7,300.00 for domestic students (\$608.33 per credit unit).
- Students required to re-take a course will be assessed tuition at the per credit unit rate.

Admission and Student Mobility

- Admission requirements align with standard graduate-level requirements.
- Target demographic for the program is domestic students; however, international applicants may apply and be admitted to the program.
- Admission includes the following admit types:
 - Saskatchewan Resident

- Rural (outside of Saskatoon and Regina) (prioritized to fill 50% of seats); competitive process based on admission criteria evaluation
- Indigenous (up to 17% of seats); applicants must indicate they are applying for one of these seats on their online application for admission and must meet all usual entry requirements.
- General.



PROVOST & SFO CONSULTATION

To: Academic Programs Committee of Council

From: Kyla Shea, Academic Programs and Planning Specialist

Date: January 7, 2026

Re: Certificate in Improvement Science

SUMMARY

The Provost and Strategic Finance Offices have reviewed and endorsed the proposal as proposed. The purpose of the review was twofold:

- 1) to understand the potential impact of the change on the program enrolment and alignment to the college/school strategic enrolment plan.
- 2) To understand the financial implications of the proposed change and the impact on the college / school financial situation.

Date: January 7, 2026	Reviewed By: Loleen Berdahl, Acting Deputy Provost	Communicated By: Kyla Shea
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APPENDIX C: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Letters of support received

- a. Assistant Dean Graduate Studies, College of Medicine
- b. Division of Continuing Medical Education, College of Medicine
- c. Office of the Vice Dean Indigenous Health, College of Medicine
- d. Master of Physician Assistant Studies, College of Medicine
- e. Rehabilitation Sciences
- f. Edwards School of Business
- g. Nursing
- h. College of Pharmacy & Nutrition
- i. College of Dentistry
- j. College of Kinesiology
- k. Saskatchewan Medical Association
- l. Health Quality Council
- m. Saskatchewan Centre for Patient-Oriented Research
- n. School of Public Health
- o. Saskatchewan Health Authority



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

College of Medicine

OFFICE OF THE VICE-DEAN RESEARCH
MEDICINE.USASK.CA/RESEARCH.PHP

Office of the Vice-Dean Research

Dean's Office Suite
Box 19, 107 Wiggins Road
4A20, Health Sciences Building
Saskatoon SK S7N 5E5 Canada
Telephone: 306-966-2621
Fax: 306-966-6164

August 06, 2025

To:

Dean of the College of Medicine
Faculty Council of the College of Medicine
College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS)
University of Saskatchewan

Re: Letter of Support – Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science

Dear Colleagues,

As the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies at the College of Medicine, I am pleased to offer my strong support for the proposed Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science, developed by the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology.

I had the pleasure of meeting with Dr. Gary Groot and Dr. Kath Stevenson to review and discuss the vision, structure, and expected impact of the program. Our conversation confirmed the academic merit and strategic importance of this proposal, which addresses a significant gap in graduate-level training in quality improvement science.

This timely and thoughtfully designed program will equip learners with the foundational concepts, methodological tools, and practical skills needed to lead and sustain improvement initiatives in various healthcare settings. The four-course structure—Concepts & Methods in Improvement, Learning from Data for Improvement, Leading Change, and a Practicum in Improvement—offers a cohesive and experiential curriculum rooted in contemporary improvement science and equity-focused practice.

I commend the development team for aligning the curriculum with institutional and health system priorities, including leadership development, data-informed decision-making, and the promotion of equity in care. The program's focus on reflective practice, collaborative learning, and real-world application through the practicum will ensure it has a meaningful and lasting impact on learners and their

organizations.

The certificate will complement our existing graduate programs in health sciences and public health, and I expect strong interest from professionals across various disciplines. I also see significant potential for future integration with laddered credentials, including professional master's programs, and for fostering interdisciplinary collaborations across colleges and sectors.

Please accept this letter as a formal endorsement of the proposal. I look forward to supporting the program as it progresses through the approval and implementation stages.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K Lukong", is positioned to the left of a vertical line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr. Kiven Eriq Lukong
Assistant Dean, Graduate Studies
Director, Health Sciences Graduate Program
College of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan
kiven.lukong@usask.ca | (306) 966-4586



September 29, 2025

College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, SK

Dear Dr.Groot,

As Associate Dean of Continuing Medical Education in the College of Medicine, I am pleased to provide my full support for the proposed Certificate in Improvement Science

At its heart, health care is directed towards improvement, improvements in care, in systems, and ultimately in the lives of the patients and families we serve. This certificate builds directly on that imperative by equipping learners with the knowledge and skills to lead meaningful, evidenced-informed change. Good intentions alone are not sufficient; improvement requires scientific grounding, methodological expertise, and thoughtful leadership.

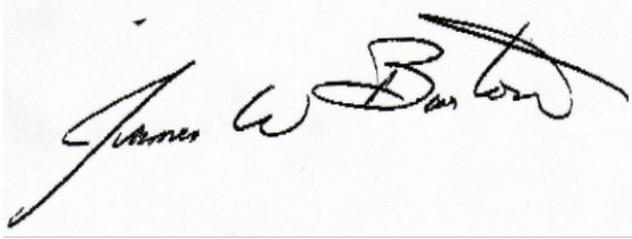
I am particularly encouraged that this program is designed as an interprofessional initiative, as future leaders in healthcare will not come solely from medicine but from across the entire spectrum in the Health Sciences, including nursing, rehabilitation sciences, pharmacy and nutrition, dentistry, and veterinary medicine. Bringing these disciplines together to study the science improvement will prepare graduates to lead collaboratively across professions and sectors, fostering the culture of continuous learning and equity our healthcare system urgently needs

From the perspective of continuing medical education, the alignment is especially clear. Our mandate is to provide ongoing education that enhances the quality of care and supports the professional growth of health providers. The certificate's emphasis on improvement methods, measurement, leadership of change, and application through practicum projects directly complements CME's role in advancing both quality and safety in Saskatchewan healthcare

I believe the Certificate in Improvement Science will become a cornerstone offering at the University of Saskatchewan, preparing health professionals to not only participate in, but also lead, system-level improvement.

I strongly endorse this proposal and look forward to our continued collaboration and supporting its success.



A handwritten signature in black ink on a white background. The signature reads "James W. Barton" in a cursive style. The first name "James" is written in a large, flowing script. The middle initial "W" is smaller and more compact. The last name "Barton" is written in a similar cursive style, with a prominent loop at the end of the word.

Dr. James W. Barton, MD, MHPE, FRCPC, CCPE
Clinical Professor of Medicine
Associate Dean, Continuing Medical Education
College of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan



As the Vice Dean Indigenous Health in the College of Medicine, I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the proposed Certificate in Improvement Science. Establishing this certificate program and the pursuit of a future graduate degree, positions the University of Saskatchewan, and the Province, as a leader in the field of Health Services Research and specifically in the work of Improvement Science.

The Office of Vice Dean Indigenous Health (OVDIH) has a social justice mission to humbly walk alongside all people of Saskatchewan towards equitable health, well-being, and belonging, seeking truth and justice now and for future generations. The OVDIH builds and challenges the capacity of the College of Medicine community to enhance the skills, attitudes, and education necessary to support the citizens of Saskatchewan so they can grow and thrive. The work that has led to the establishment of this certificate program, as well as the learning outcomes of the program, are aligned with the mandate and values of the OVDIH. Specifically, this certificate meets an identified need among health and social care providers and has the potential to contribute positively to system issues that impact patient safety, service quality, and health inequities.

The development of the Certificate in Improvement Science is responsive to a local demand for training, as well as the feedback of past learners. A commitment to consultation has led to a distinctive certificate program being proposed that emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach, allows for the broad application of improvement science in health and social sectors, and provides built-in peer mentorship opportunities. The Certificate in Improvement Science will provide current professionals who are employed in the health and social care sectors with an increased capacity and competence to address quality, safety, and equity issues within a localized context. Through student practicums that are developed in collaboration with a workplace, this certificate program has the potential of real-time responses to diverse health and social care needs in the province. Further, a collaborative approach that includes external partners and communities can advance the work of enacting culturally responsive care through local expertise and wisdom.

This certificate program is an exciting opportunity for the University of Saskatchewan to advance interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches within the province in the pursuit of meaningful change for those we serve.

Respectfully,



Janet Tootoosis BSc, MD, FCFP
Interim Vice Dean Indigenous Health
Clinical Associate Professor
College of Medicine
Ph: 306-966-4303



October 27, 2025

Academic Programs Committee
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, SK

Re: Letter of Support for the Certificate in Improvement Science

Dear Members of the Academic Programs Committee,

As the Academic Director of the Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) program at the University of Saskatchewan, I am pleased to offer my full support for the proposed Certificate in Improvement Science. This program represents a critical advancement in graduate education and will have far-reaching benefits for individuals, academic programs, and healthcare systems across Saskatchewan and beyond.

The MPAS program emphasizes research and quality improvement, culminating in a capstone project that challenges students to apply evidence-based approaches to real-world clinical and system-level challenges. The Certificate in Improvement Science offers a valuable opportunity for our students to collaborate with faculty and learners from diverse disciplines, deepening their understanding of improvement methodologies and enhancing their capacity to lead change in complex health environments. The program's focus on experiential learning, equity, and collaborative practice aligns closely with MPAS's educational goals and the broader mission of the College of Medicine.

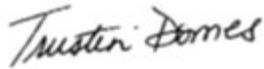
This program fills a significant gap in our College's offerings, particularly following the discontinuation of the Clinical Quality Improvement Program (CQIP). By building on the strengths of CQIP and expanding its scope, the certificate will support the development of a professional workforce equipped to lead and evaluate improvement initiatives. The proposed certificate not only addresses this need but also lays the groundwork for a future Master of Science in Health Services Research with a concentration in Improvement Science, which is an exciting development for our academic community and the province.

Importantly, the program's emphasis on equity, Indigenous leadership, and interprofessional collaboration aligns with the strategic priorities of our College and the University. Its flexible, primarily virtual delivery model ensures accessibility for rural and remote practitioners, while its experiential practicum ensures that learning is grounded in real-world application. In the future, I see Physician Assistants being very interested in this program to further their knowledge and skills in this important area.

By launching this certificate, the University of Saskatchewan continues to demonstrate leadership in the field of Improvement Science. If approved, this will be the only graduate-level program of its kind in Western Canada, which positions our institution as a national leader in health services research and quality improvement education.

I commend the collaborative work that has gone into developing this program and look forward to future partnerships between our programs. I strongly support its approval and implementation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Trustin Domes".

Trustin Domes MD, MEd, MBA, FRCSC
Associate Professor of Surgery
Academic Director, Master of Physician Assistant Studies
University of Saskatchewan



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

School of
Rehabilitation Science

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
MEDICINE.USASK.CA/SRS

104 Clinic Place
Saskatoon, SK S7N 2Z4 Canada
Telephone: 306-966-6579
Fax: 306-966-6575

September 16, 2025

College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS)
Academic Programs Committee
University of Saskatchewan

Re: Letter of Support – Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science

Dear Colleagues:

As Director of the School of Rehabilitation Science, I am pleased to offer my enthusiastic support for the proposed Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science, developed by the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology.

The certificate's emphasis on building practical skills in improvement science aligns closely with our School's mission and vision, particularly our commitment to knowledge translation that enhances quality of life and well-being. As such, this program would be a valuable opportunity for both new and established rehabilitation professionals to deepen their expertise in quality improvement.

I am especially encouraged by the program's interprofessional approach and its focus on academic dissemination within the context of real-world improvement initiatives. The primarily virtual delivery model is another strength, enabling health professional learners to engage in graduate education while continuing to work clinically, effectively transforming their professional environments into experiential learning spaces.

Please accept this letter as a formal endorsement of the proposal. I look forward to supporting the program and anticipate strong engagement from our graduates and faculty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brenna Bath".

Brenna Bath BScPT, MSc, PhD, FCAMPT
Director & Professor
School of Rehabilitation Science
College of Medicine
University of Saskatchewan
Phone: (306) 966-6573
Email: brenna.bath@usask.ca



August 20, 2025

Re: Letter of Support – Proposed Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science

Dear Dr. Groot,

On behalf of the Edwards School of Business, I am writing to express our support for the College of Medicine's proposal to establish a **Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science**.

We recognize the discontinuation of the Clinical Quality Improvement Program (CQIP) has left a significant gap in longitudinal learning opportunities for health and social care professionals in Saskatchewan. The proposed certificate not only responds to this gap but enhances it meaningfully offering more contact time, deeper applied learning, and a formal graduate-level credential. Moreover, we view this program as a promising and strategic step toward the development of a future Master of Science in Health Services Research, which aligns with the University of Saskatchewan's commitment to interdisciplinary scholarship and societal impact.

There is a natural alignment between the Certificate in Improvement Science and the priorities of the Edwards School of Business, particularly in the areas of systems thinking, organizational change, leadership development, and continuous improvement. These themes are core to both our MBA program and our research agenda.

Importantly, this initiative reflects a shared commitment to fostering a culture of continuous improvement, which is also a cornerstone of our AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) accreditation. The proposed certificate contributes meaningfully to that culture—not only within healthcare, but across the university and province.

We look forward to supporting the program's development and would welcome opportunities to collaborate through program entry pathways and research partnerships. Please consider this letter as a formal endorsement of the Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science. We commend the College of Medicine for its vision and leadership in advancing this timely and important initiative.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith A. Willoughby".

Keith A. Willoughby, Ph.D.
Dean
Professor, Department of Finance and Management Science
Edwards School of Business, University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5A7
E-mail: willoughby@edwards.usask.ca



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

College of Nursing

NURSING.USASK.CA

September 12, 2025

Dr. Gary Groot
Department of Community Health and Epidemiology
University of Saskatchewan

Dear Dr. Gary Groot

RE: Proposed Certificate in Improvement Science

The College of Nursing is pleased to offer support for the proposed certificate in improvement science. We have had the opportunity to review the proposal, including the syllabi of the four courses, and believe that this certificate would be a valuable asset to nurses in clinical leadership. Quality improvement as a concentration is a gap in the MN program, and nursing graduates may find that this additional certification could put them at an advantage for making system change.

The focus on equity is unique and an essential contribution to graduate education. There are very few opportunities to learn how to coach and lead from a systems lens, and the co-production of care systems is rare in an area where healthcare providers have traditionally been identified as experts and patients as passive recipients.

The course on concepts and methods in improvement would be a complement to the Master's of Nursing Professional Practice Leadership stream, and we would appreciate the opportunity for nursing students to select this course as an elective.

We can foresee opportunities for future collaboration with the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology as this certificate program matures and develops towards a degree program. There are opportunities for multidisciplinary education, and we will follow this certificate program with great interest.

Sincerely,

Wanda Martin, RN, Ph.D.

Associate Professor and Graduate Program Chair
College of Nursing



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

College of Pharmacy
and Nutrition

PHARMACY-NUTRITION.USASK.CA

 pharmacy-nutrition.usask.ca

August 14, 2025

College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS)
Academic Programs Committee
University of Saskatchewan

Re: Letter of Support – Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science

Dear Colleagues,

As Dean of the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition, I am pleased to offer our support for the proposed Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science, developed by the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology.

The certificate aligns with our clinical graduate program where focus on leadership and management is particularly relevant to our professional graduates. The proposed certificate course may serve as an important advanced learning opportunity for both new and experienced professionals in pharmacy and nutrition.

We appreciate the interprofessional nature of the certificate course and its focus on academic dissemination in the context of quality improvement. We also appreciate that the program design affords opportunity for learners to pursue graduate education from anywhere in the province while working full-time, leveraging the work context as a lab for experiential learning.

Please accept this letter as a formal endorsement of the proposal. I look forward to seeing active engagement from our graduates and faculty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jane Alcorn".

Jane Alcorn
Professor and Dean, College of Pharmacy and Nutrition



306-966-6327

pharmacy-nutrition@usask.ca



September 26, 2025

To:

College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS)
Academic Programs Committee
University of Saskatchewan

Re: Letter of Support – Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science

Dear Colleagues,

As Dean of the College of Dentistry, I am pleased to offer our support for the proposed Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science, developed by the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology.

The certificate's emphasis on developing practical improvement skills aligns with the mission and vision of our program, particularly our dedication to evidence-based practice and innovation. We recognize and value the program's strong focus on equity, a priority that we also uphold.

We are pleased to note the interprofessional nature of the program and its emphasis on academic dissemination. We also value the primarily virtual format, which makes it easier for learners to continue working full-time while pursuing graduate education and applying what they learn directly in their workplace.

Please consider this letter a formal endorsement of the proposal. I look forward to exploring how our graduates and faculty can engage with the program.

Sincerely

Walter Siqueira, DDS, MBA, PhD, FICD, FCAHS
Dean and Professor
IADR Distinguished Scientist

University of Saskatchewan
College of Dentistry
Health Sciences Building, Room GA10.14
Ph: 306-966-1920





October 22, 2025

College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS)
Academic Programs Committee
University of Saskatchewan

Re: Letter of Support – Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science

Dear Colleagues,

As Dean of the College of Kinesiology, I am pleased to offer our support for the proposed Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science, developed by the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology.

As the College of Kinesiology engages in curriculum renewal, we look forward to deepening our collaboration with other health science programs and strengthening the connection between public health and kinesiology. The proposed certificate offers a potential platform for this enhanced collaboration and would be a unique advanced learning opportunity for both new and experienced professionals working in the field of kinesiology.

We are pleased to see that the program embraces an interprofessional approach and emphasizes academic dissemination within the framework of quality improvement. We also value the primarily virtual format, which enables learners to pursue graduate studies from any location while maintaining full-time employment—effectively using their workplace as a setting for experiential learning.

Please consider this letter a formal endorsement of the proposal. I look forward to seeing meaningful participation from both our graduates and faculty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dani Brittain'.

Dani Brittain, PhD
Dean
College of Kinesiology





SASKATCHEWAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

201-2174 Airport Drive • Saskatoon, SK • S7L 6M6
p. 306 244 2196 • f. 306 653 1631 • w. www.sma.sk.ca

September 5, 2025

College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS)
Academic Programs Committee
University of Saskatchewan

Delivered via Email

Dear Colleagues:

Re: Letter of Support – Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science

As CEO of the Saskatchewan Medical Association (SMA), I am pleased to offer our support for the proposed Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science. This program represents a significant step forward in enhancing interdisciplinary collaboration, empowering physicians to effect change, and implementing improvements that will benefit patients across Saskatchewan.

The SMA has a long-standing commitment to fostering a culture of continuous improvement within the health care system, specifically by developing physician leaders in health system improvement. We have funded one-time and ongoing learning opportunities and partnered to support the now-discontinued Clinical Quality Improvement Program (CQIP). From a content perspective, it is evident that the certificate has been developed with the strengths of CQIP in mind, while also addressing opportunities for improvement.

This certificate program aligns strongly with the SMA's vision of physicians leading the provision of high-quality care and building healthy communities, and through its curriculum, it will provide physicians with the knowledge and skills necessary to drive meaningful change.

One of the key strengths of this program is its emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration. By bringing together physicians and other health care professionals, the certificate program will create a platform for sharing best practices, innovative ideas, and successful strategies. This interdisciplinary, collaborative approach will not only enhance the learning experience but also foster a sense of community and shared purpose among participants.

Moreover, the program's focus on practical application will enable physicians to implement improvements in their own practices and work environments. By learning how to identify areas for improvement, develop and test solutions, and measure the impact of their interventions, physicians will be better equipped to lead quality improvement initiatives. This will ultimately result in a more responsive and adaptive health care system that can meet the evolving needs of our patients.

Please accept this letter as a formal endorsement of the proposal. We look forward to its successful implementation.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Brossart, C.Dir.
CEO

October 2, 2025

To:

College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS)
Academic Programs Committee
University of Saskatchewan

Re: Letter of Support – Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science

Dear Colleagues,

As CEO of the Saskatchewan Health Quality Council, I am pleased to offer our support for the proposed Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science, developed by the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology.

We recently brought together all health system partners, including the University, to explore how we can collectively advance system-wide improvement in Saskatchewan. Participants highlighted the importance of involving the entire workforce in improvement efforts, while also developing a specialized group of professionals with advanced expertise in this area. Creating a graduate-level learning program can help achieve this goal of professionalization, equipping health system leaders and physicians to foster and sustain a culture of continuous improvement.

The proposed curriculum is built off a previous program, which we developed and delivered, the Clinical Quality Improvement Program (CQIP). From a content perspective, it is evident that the certificate has been developed with the strengths of CQIP in mind, while also addressing opportunities for improvement. We can also see opportunities to collaborate on program delivery and contribute as experts in improvement and safety science.

October 2, 2025

Page 2

Please accept this letter as a formal endorsement of the proposal. It is expected that the proposed program continues to align with provincially developed curricula as the strategy to advance system-wide improvement is implemented. We look forward to working in partnership with the department to support a high-quality program that meets the needs of the citizens of Saskatchewan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracey Sherin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tracey Sherin

CEO

Saskatchewan Health Quality Council (HQC)

November 5, 2025

College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS)
Academic Programs Committee
University of Saskatchewan

Re: Letter of Support – Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science

Dear Colleagues,

As Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Centre for Patient-Oriented Research (SCPOR), I am pleased to offer our support for the proposed Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science, developed by the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology.

SCPOR is a leader in patient-oriented research, and we are committed to supporting the optimization of a Learning Health System (LHS) in Saskatchewan. As a coalition of Patient Partners, provincial health policy makers, service providers, post-secondary institutions, and health improvement organizations, SCPOR has laid the foundation for a provincial Learning Health System that fosters meaningful engagement with patients, communities, clinicians, health system leaders and decision makers. Capacity and capability to engage in improvement work is a core component of a highly functioning LHS.

The curriculum proposed in the Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science will develop advanced skills in improvement methods, leading change, and use of measurement, balancing a strong theoretical foundation with applied skills in context. The certificate program will also help to strengthen provincial capacity to make further improvements in our health system and delivery of patient care. We are pleased to see a strong focus on equity, the TRC Calls to Action, and people-centered redesign within the program.

Please accept this letter as a formal endorsement of the proposal, we look forward to seeing how access to an advanced program such as this can help leaders, staff, and physicians engage more effectively as part of the LHS.

Sincerely,



Christina Weise
Executive Director, SCPOR



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

School of Public Health

SPH.USASK.CA

5D40 Health Sciences, 107 Wiggins Road
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5E5 Canada
Telephone: 306-966-2675
Facsimile: 306-966-2264

December 10, 2025

Dr. Gary Groot
HSC E-wing 3242,
107 Wiggins Road, Saskatoon, SK

Re: Certificate in Improvement Science Program

Dear Dr. Groot,

Thank you for providing the opportunity for the School of Public Health (SPH) to provide feedback on your Certificate in Improvement Science program.

The SPH agrees that the University of Saskatchewan is an appropriate platform for quality improvement training opportunities among students and professionals, alike, and your proposed graduate certificate program fills a vital gap in the field of quality improvement in Saskatchewan. The SPH sees potential for collaboration with respect to the proposed graduate certificate program.

The content of the four new courses constituting the certificate program: Concepts & Methods in Improvement, Learning from Data for Improvement, Leading Change, and Practicum in Applied Improvement, has relevance beyond your certificate program. I anticipate several students from SPH will be interested in these courses and the proposed certificate program.

Given the need for such a program and the timeliness of the proposal, the SPH fully supports the proposed Certificate in Improvement Science program.

Sincerely,

Michael Szafron
Acting Assistant Executive Director,
Professor and Graduate Chair



Master of Public Health 2021-2025



Angela Muzyka
Executive Director Quality & Safety
Saskatchewan Health Authority
429 4th Ave NE
Swift Current, SK S9H 2J9
P: 306-741-3669

January 27, 2026

College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS)
Academic Programs Committee
University of Saskatchewan

Re: Letter of Support – Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science

Dear Dr. Groot,

As Executive Director of Quality Improvement, I am pleased to offer our support for the proposed Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science, developed by the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology.

The Saskatchewan Health Authority is committed to delivering high-quality, safe, patient-centered care. Creating a graduate-level learning program will equip health system leaders and physicians to foster and sustain a culture of continuous improvement and safety.

I know the proposed curriculum was developed with input from our internal quality improvement learning and development team and with a vision of collaborative delivery. We look forward to supporting learners from the SHA to pursue this opportunity by ensuring operational alignment, facilitating data access, and lending our expertise in Lean methodology, safety, and patient-centered care.

Please accept this letter as a formal endorsement of the proposal. We are eager to partner with the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology to support a high-quality program that meets the needs of SHA physicians and staff and, ultimately, the citizens of Saskatchewan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Angela Muzyka".

Angela Muzyka
Executive Director Quality Improvement
Saskatchewan Health Authority

Healthy People, Healthy Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Health Authority works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Saskatchewan as the traditional territory of First Nations and Métis People.

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