

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mark Wallin, Chair, Policy Sub-Committee of APPC
FROM: Sandra Vermeulen, AVP, Academic (interim)
Mike Bluhm, AVP, Strategic Enrolment and University Registrar
Alana Hoare, Quality Assurance and Accreditation Liaison Officer
RE: Revisions to Policy ED 16-0
DATE: September 29, 2021

Executive Summary

On May 27, 2019 Senate approved revisions to policy ED 16-0 *Types of Undergraduate and Graduate Credentials* to include the general education requirements, including TRU's institutional learning outcomes, for all baccalaureate degrees:

Policy

V. Baccalaureate degrees are comprised of a minimum 120 credits and incorporate the TRU institutional learning outcomes into the program of study.

Regulations

II. BACCALAUREATE DEGREES

All TRU baccalaureate degrees will require the completion of at least 120 credits, and must include: I. general education credits;

TRU made an aspirational commitment to implement the policy changes for Fall 2021, thereby requiring all first-year students entering the first year of a baccalaureate degree program to meet the general education requirements as part of completion of their degree. This commitment does not appear in policy, but rather in communication materials to Deans, Chairs, faculty members, and other internal stakeholders. In addition, the commitment was reported to the NWCCU in TRU's Ad Hoc Report on Recommendation 2, which stated "All baccalaureate degrees must include the general education components for first year students in Fall 2021." (p. 12).

As of August 13, 2021, 27 out of 84 (32%) of programs are fully meeting the general education requirements. Of the 68% of programs that have not been modified to align with the general education requirements, 23 (40%) are Open Learning programs and 34 (59%) are on campus programs.

Challenges

TRU faced several challenges in meeting the implementation date of Fall 2021, due in large part to the global pandemic and the need for faculty to divert their attention to responding to the changing needs of learners and to pivot to remote learning.

In addition, the general education initiative highlighted gaps in our curriculum repository (curriQunet) to the extent that numerous course proposals lacked the necessary content—notably course learning outcomes—to be vetted against the general education criteria. Furthermore, many program proposals were missing program learning outcomes and curriculum maps. Therefore, for various departments, aligning programs and courses with the general education requirements was a significant undertaking.

The general education initiative also identified challenges that Faculties and Schools experience with developing and modifying Open Learning (OL) courses and programs. Many Faculties and Schools expressed concern and confusion regarding who has oversight of OL curriculum development. Furthermore, many Faculties and Schools experienced difficulties navigating the process for modifying OL curriculum.

Opportunities

Recognizing the heroic efforts of faculty members in rapidly pivoting to remote delivery and the operational and process challenges that have been exposed as part of the general education initiative, the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) has committed two full-time faculty members to supporting implementation of the general education requirements for a 16-month period (September 2021 - December 2022). Working collaboratively, one faculty member will be tasked with supporting OL program and course alignment and the second faculty member will support on campus program and course alignment. In addition, CELT will develop a handbook for program learning outcomes and curriculum mapping that will bring clarity and transparency to both on campus and OL curriculum development.

Given these challenges and additional faculty supports, we are seeking a modification to policy ED 16-0 to include an effective date of Fall 2023 for implementation of the general education requirements. The suggested changes are detailed below.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Amend policy ED 16-0 as follows:

Policy

V. Baccalaureate degrees are comprised of a minimum 120 credits and **will** incorporate the TRU institutional learning outcomes into the program of study **by Fall 2023**.

Regulations

II. BACCALAUREATE DEGREES

All TRU baccalaureate degrees will require the completion of at least 120 credits, and ~~must~~ **will** include: I. general education credits **by Fall 2023**.

NWCCU Accreditation Requirements

On July 3, 2019, TRU received a Record of Action taken by the NWCCU Board of Commissioners regarding Recommendation Out of Compliance. The Commission required that TRU “take appropriate action to ensure this Recommendation is addressed and resolved in the prescribed two-year period.” The Commission recommended that TRU: “Finalize the development of a General Education program including the approval of its proposed General Education Model, of courses for the Model, and of an assessment plan for the Model.”

During that two-year period, TRU completed the development of the general education model, which was approved by Senate in April 2019. Over 300 general education component courses were approved in July 2020. In addition, TRU is in the process of developing a general education assessment plan that is based on a community of practice approach, leveraging peer-to-peer learning and existing institutional processes, such as program review, course-embedded assignments, capstone courses, and institutional rubrics. It is anticipated that recommendations regarding a general education assessment plan will go forward to the Teaching and Learning Committee of Senate and Academic Planning and Priorities Committee in Winter 2022.

TRU was required to submit an Ad Hoc Report on Recommendation 2 detailing our progress in September 2020. The Report affirmed that “All baccalaureate degrees must include the general education components for first year students in Fall 2021” (p. 12). The Report was received by the NWCCU Board of Commissioners and accepted in February 2021. Significant progress has been made in addressing the Recommendation, and our continued planning and action demonstrates our commitment to ensuring all baccalaureate degree programs embed TRU’s institutional learning outcomes. Therefore, TRU will submit a formal letter to the NWCCU notifying them of an amended timeline for full implementation of the general education requirements, based on the revisions to policy ED 16-0.

Thank you,

Sandra Vermeulen
Associate Vice President Academic (interim)

Mike Bluhm
Associate Vice President Strategic Enrolment and University Registrar

Alana Hoare
Quality Assurance and Accreditation Liaison Officer

Attached
Redlined copy of policy ED 16-0

Types of Undergraduate and Graduate Credentials



805 TRU Way
Kamloops, BC V2C 0C8
tru.ca

REDLINED VERSION

POLICY NUMBER	ED 16-0
APPROVAL DATE	May 27, 2019
AUTHORITY	Senate / Planning Council for Open Learning
PRIMARY CONTACT	Registrar / Deans

POLICY

Thompson Rivers University (TRU) offers programs of study leading to undergraduate certificates, diplomas, and degrees; post-baccalaureate certificates and diplomas; and graduate certificates, diplomas, and degrees. This policy is intended to set minimum requirements for credentials. Individual programs may set higher requirements.

- I. **Undergraduate certificates** comprise less than 60 credits and generally involve in-depth study in a specific discipline. Students may, upon completion, continue their studies in order to pursue an undergraduate diploma and/or a baccalaureate degree.
- II. **Undergraduate diplomas** comprise 60 to 119 credits and generally involve in-depth study in a specific discipline. Students may, upon completion, continue their studies in upper-level work in order to pursue a baccalaureate degree.
- III. **Associate degrees** are undergraduate credentials comprising of 60 to 119 credits and generally involve a broad range of course offerings balanced with in-depth study in a specific discipline. Students may, upon completion, continue their studies in upper-level work in order to pursue a baccalaureate degree.
- IV. **Advanced certificates and diplomas** require students to have completed an undergraduate diploma or associate degree prior to entry to the advanced certificate or diploma program. Advanced certificates and diplomas are normally characterized by in-depth study in specific disciplines.
 - 1) Advanced certificates are awarded for the completion of a diploma (or equivalent) and up to 15 additional undergraduate credits,
 - 2) Advanced diplomas are awarded for the successful completion of a diploma (or equivalent) and 16 or more additional undergraduate credits.

- V. **Baccalaureate degrees** are comprised of a minimum 120 credits and will incorporate the TRU institutional learning outcomes into the program of study by Fall 2023. There are two types of Baccalaureate degrees:
- a. **First-year Entry** which generally takes one of three forms:
 - i. A combination of lower-level breadth requirements as a prerequisite for more specific discipline- and theme-based study at the upper level,
 - ii. A largely prescribed curriculum at both the lower and upper levels for specific discipline- or theme-based study,
 - iii. A general program featuring an interdisciplinary combination of courses at the lower and upper levels.
 - b. **Delayed Entry** which usually focuses on preparing students for entry into a profession or occupational field and require the following:
 - i. Cumulative credits are undergraduate credits required for admission plus credits required to complete the degree.
 - ii. A minimum of 30 prior university undergraduate credit for admission.
- VI. **Post-baccalaureate certificates** require students to already hold a baccalaureate degree and are composed of a maximum of 30 additional undergraduate credits in a specific area of study.
- VII. **Post-baccalaureate diplomas** require students to already hold a baccalaureate degree and are composed of a minimum of 31 additional undergraduate credits in a specific area of study.
- VIII. **Graduate certificates** comprise graduate coursework and will typically have 25% or fewer credits than a Master's degree offered in the same discipline. Students may, upon successful completion, continue their studies in order to pursue a graduate diploma and/or degree, where available.
- IX. **Graduate diplomas** comprise graduate coursework and will typically have between 25% and 50% the number of credits of a Master's degree in the same discipline. Students may, upon successful completion, continue their studies in order to pursue a graduate degree, where available.
- X. **Master's degrees** comprise graduate coursework and will typically require the equivalent of at least 4 semesters of full-time studies to complete. Masters degrees may be course based, course and project based, or course and thesis based.

REGULATIONS

I. ASSOCIATE DEGREES

For detailed information about Associate Degree requirements consult the BC Transfer Guide: <http://www.bctransferguide.ca/associate/requirements/>

II. BACCALAUREATE DEGREES

All TRU baccalaureate degrees will require the completion of at least 120 credits, and must include:

- I. general education credits as outlined in the Senate approved TRU General Education model [by Fall 2023](#); and,
- II. a minimum of 45 credits at the upper level (in this policy, “**upper level**” means 3000- or 4000-level courses).

Specific degrees may require more than 120 credits overall and/or more than 45 upper-level credits. Degrees may be general or may include the elements listed in 1), 2), and/or 3) below.

1) **MAJORS, MINORS, THEMATIC OPTIONS, CONCENTRATIONS, AND CO- OPERATIVE EDUCATION WITHIN DEGREES AND HONOURS DEGREES**

- a. **Major:** Consists of a minimum of 24 credits in a specific discipline or defined cross- disciplinary area with a minimum of 15 credits at the upper level. A major must be declared prior to the completion of 60 credits, unless otherwise stated by the program.
- b. **Minor:** Consists of a minimum of 9 upper-level credits in a specific discipline. A minor must be declared no later than the commencement of the final semester of study. Unless stated otherwise by program guidelines, students may complete any TRU Minor regardless of the degree they are pursuing provided they are approved by the Dean (or designate) of their academic unit.
- c. **Thematic Option:** Consists of a minimum of 24 credits in an approved interdisciplinary thematic area with 15 credits at the upper level. A thematic option should be declared prior to the completion of 60 credits, unless otherwise stated by the program
- d. **Concentration:** Consists of a minimum of 12 upper-level credits in a specific discipline or defined cross-disciplinary area. A concentration may accompany a declared major or be independent of a major. A concentration should be declared prior to the commencement of the final semester of study.
- e. **Co-operative Education** integrates a student’s academic studies with paid work

experience in approved employment opportunities. Students gain experience in a field related to their program according to the following criteria:

- i. Co-op work terms are developed and approved by TRU.
 - ii. The student is engaged in productive and meaningful work.
 - iii. The student's performance in the co-op work term is monitored by TRU.
 - iv. The student's performance in the co-op work term is supervised and evaluated by the employer and the co-op faculty.
- f. **Multiple Majors, Minors, Concentrations, Thematic Options, or Combinations of the Above** are allowed in some degrees. To qualify for a double major or a double concentration, both majors and concentrations must be offered by the same degree program; otherwise, it is a multiple program (see 3. below). A degree with a double major, double minor, double concentration, double thematic option, or any combination of majors, minors, concentrations, or thematic options requires the satisfactory completion of all requirements of each of the individual majors, minors, concentrations, or thematic options.

2) HONOURS DEGREE

- a) An honours degree requires the completion of a minimum of 120 credits. Of these, a minimum of 9 additional credits, beyond the number required in the non-honours option of the program, must be at the upper level.
- b) Students must have a 'B' average in relevant university courses (relevant as defined by the program) upon admittance to an honours program and must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 in their final 60 credits. Individual programs may have additional, or stricter, standards than those mentioned above.

3) MULTIPLE PROGRAMS occur when students undertake more than one certificate, diploma or degree with the University. When students undertake multiple specializations within a single degree, they are considered double majors, minors, or concentrations (see II. 2 f. above).

- i. Multiple programs require the satisfactory completion of all requirements of each of the individual programs.
- ii. Multiple programs may be completed either concurrently or sequentially.
- iii. Graduating multiple program students will receive one credential for each of the programs. The credentials awarded to multiple program graduates will not differ from those awarded to graduates of the corresponding single credential programs.
- iv. A minimum of 6 additional credits will be required for a dual certificate program.
- v. A minimum of 15 additional credits will be required for a dual diploma program.
- vi. A minimum of 30 additional credits will be required for a dual degree program.

III. RESIDENCY

All credentials must meet the University's residency requirements as per policy ED 8-0 Educational Standards in Credit Courses and Programs

IV. TRANSCRIPT NOTATION

Information pertaining to the type of credential (honours, major, minor, concentration, and thematic option) will be printed on the student's transcript upon completion of all requirements for the credential.

Types of Undergraduate and Graduate Credentials



805 TRU Way
Kamloops, BC V2C 0C8
tru.ca

CHANGES ACCEPTED

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