

Ad Hoc Report

April 20, 2020

Table of Contents

Introduction.		5			
Background	to the Recommendation	5			
Recommend	ation	6			
Approval of General Education Model					
Approval of Courses					
Approval c	of an Assessment Plan	16			
Conclusion					
Appendices.		22			
Appendix A	Report of the General Education Taskforce	23			
Appendix B	General Education Taskforce Terms of Reference	24			
Appendix C	General Education Model Criteria	25			
Appendix D	Baccalaureate Degree Program Resource Guide	26			
Appendix E	Learning Outcomes and Assessment Task Force Proposal	27			

Introduction

On July 3, 2019, Thompson Rivers University (TRU) received formal notification and official record of action taken by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) that TRU was granted accreditation at the associate, baccalaureate, and master's degree levels effective September 1, 2018. The letter indicated the status of previous recommendations including: "Recommendation 2: Fall 2017 Interim Candidacy Review - continued as non-compliant as revised Recommendation 2 of the Spring 2019 Interim Candidacy Evaluation. The timeline to come into compliance is extended for good cause until Spring 2021". As such, TRU is required to submit an Ad Hoc Report without a visit Fall 2020 for Recommendation 2: Spring 2019 Interim Candidacy Review.

Background to the Recommendation

During TRU's candidacy period it was noted by NWCCU that TRU was not compliant with the NWCCU Standards 2.C.9 and 2.C.10. Although, TRU did not use the term general education within its' baccalaureate degrees, TRU noted elements of general education were contained within the degrees. In 2016 TRU undertook an audit of the graduation requirements for each of its baccalaureate programs. While the audit demonstrated that elements of general education exist in all TRU baccalaureate degrees, the process presented an opportunity to identify potential gaps and areas for improvement. It also provided the opportunity to better articulate why TRU requires students to take three (3) to six (6) credits of communication, three (3) credits of mathematics or statistics, and electives outside the discipline within a degree.

In November 2016 the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee (APPC) of Senate establish a general education taskforce (GET) with the purpose "to advise APPC on the establishment, revision, or discontinuance of policies and procedures in relation to general education curriculum". GET is chaired by a faculty member and includes 24 members: 13 faculty members; three (3) student representatives; and eight (8) administration and staff.

GET began its work in February 2017 and follows a process which is intentionally iterative, faculty led, collaborative, and consultative. Over a two-year period GET engaged in comprehensive research, consultation, and deliberation, and in April 2019 recommended to APPC that TRU adopt a scaffolded, thematic model of general education, based upon eight institutional learning outcomes (ILO), for all baccalaureate degrees. The general education model and revisions to policy <u>ED 16-0 Types of Undergraduate and Graduate Credentials</u> was unanimously approved by Senate in Spring 2019 following the NWCCU Interim Candidacy site visit. The approved general education model is consistent with the TRU mission statement, values, and strategic priorities; it supports student choice within their area of study and allows for exploration beyond the degree major. For more details on the development of TRU's general education model see Appendix A: Report of the General Education Taskforce.

Recommendation

The Commission recommends 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 (Standards 2.C.9 and 2.C.10).

This report details the progress TRU is making towards addressing Recommendation 2.

Approval of General Education Model

TRU's general education model (see **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**) was unanimously approved by Senate on April 29, 2019. A Notice of Motion was served at the same Senate meeting regarding revisions to policy <u>ED 16-0 Types of Undergraduate and Graduate Credentials</u>, which incorporates the general education model and eight (8) institutional learning outcomes (ILO). This policy was unanimously approved at the May 27, 2019 meeting of Senate.

TRU's general education model is built around eight (8) ILOs that are categorized into four (4) themes (Connection, Engagement, Exploration, and Local to Global). The model was intentionally designed to be scaffolded throughout all years of a baccalaureate degree and requires a total of 27 credits which consist of:

One 3-credit course for each ILO 3 credits x 8 courses = 24 credits
One 3-credit capstone course 3 credits x 1 course = 3 credits

Within the 27 credits:

- 1 course must be a High Impact Practice course (HIP), recommended to be taken in Year 1 or 2;
- 1 course from each theme must be outside of the major discipline for a minimum of 4 courses; and,
- Capstone course is taken in the final year of study.

Figure 1: General Education Model

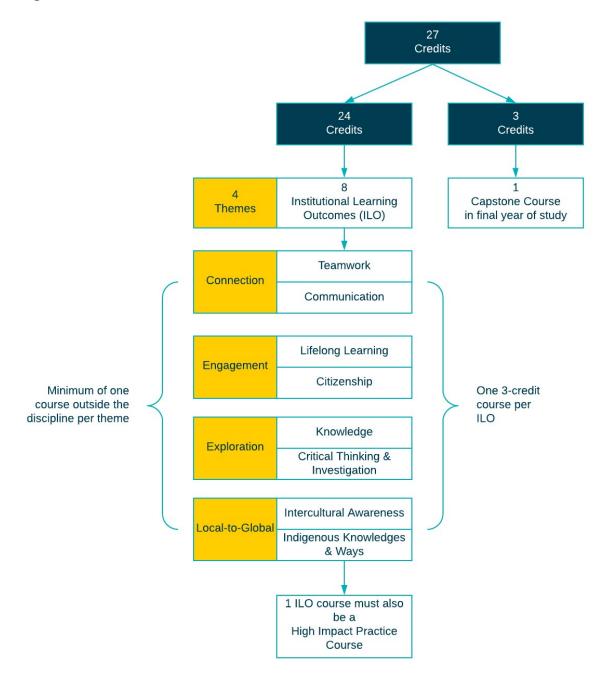


Figure 2: Institutional Learning Outcomes

		A TRU graduate should be able to		
Connection	Teamwork	demonstrate the necessary skills of effective leadership and teamwork. TRU graduates act with integrity, they seek opportunities to work cooperatively in meaningful ways across all areas of their personal and professional lives. Through collaboration, graduates support thoughtful dialogue and connections with others. They nurture safe environments where people can take risks and challenge assumptions.		
	Communication	demonstrate effective communication skills appropriate to a range of audiences and contexts. TRU graduates use the art of wordsmithing to succinctly communicate ideas. They aptly use an arsenal of communication methods including oral, written, graphic, visual, digital, artistic, and numerical. They rely on evidence and scholarly research to support a claim. By paying careful attention to their audience, they tailor their communications in a meaningful manner. Graduates listen, seek clarification, and work to understand and respect other viewpoints and contrasting opinions.		
Engagement	Lifelong Learning	reflect on and set goals for learning beyond their university experience. TRU graduates understand the limits of their knowledge and value opportunities to learn more. With active intent, they engage with their communities personally, and professionally. They work independently and productively, identifying opportunities to further their careers, and establishing action plans to meet their goals. Not easily discouraged by setbacks, they reflect and apply learned strategies, to adapt to changes in society.		
	Citizenship	critically evaluate and apply socially responsible, sustainable and ethical behaviours. TRU graduates' strive to live within the means of the planet. They apply ethical principles to decision-making by considering the social, economic, and ecological side effects of everyday actions. Their entrepreneurial spirit motivates them to tackle modern issues for the benefit of future generations. Graduates practice compassion and value human rights, reinforcing fairness, equity, and equality in their daily lives.		
Exploration	Knowledge	acquire, connect and apply a depth and breadth of knowledge. TRU graduates seek out new avenues and possibilities to ponder, research, and create. Within interdisciplinary and discipline-specific frameworks, they use evidence to make informed decisions. Graduates apply skills gained beyond their university experience to innovate solutions. They use their depth and breadth of knowledge to bridge domains and, in sharing their discoveries with others, they inspire positive change.		
	Critical Thinking & Investigation	construct meaning from information by applying creative and critical thinking through research. Through design, imagination, and creativity, graduates discover knowledge and produce new knowledge. They use sound research methodologies to navigate obstacles and solve problems. Using reliable assessment methods and analyzing relevant data, they reach meaningful conclusions. They have the tools to evaluate arguments and charged rhetoric, and to envision scenarios that divert from the familiar.		
Local to Global	Indigenous Knowledges & Ways	recognize and respect the value of Indigenous knowledges and ways. They affirm the value of Indigenous teaching, learning, research, and creative practices. They offer a positive contribution to a modern, globalized society.		
	Intercultural Awareness	recognize and respect the value of diverse worldviews. TRU graduates exhibit attributes of citizenship and democracy. They embrace diverse perspectives and appreciate those who bring varied viewpoints, skills, knowledge and tools to problem solving.		

Approval of Courses

On September 12, 2019, the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee (APPC) of Senate approved revisions to the General Education Taskforce's (GET) terms of reference (see Appendix B) to include:

Following broad consultation with Faculties and Schools at TRU, advise APPC on the establishment, revision, or discontinuance of policies and procedures in relation to general education curriculum, including:

- advise APPC on general education course designation criteria;
- develop an interim process for identifying general education courses:
- recommend an ongoing process for general education course approvals and baccalaureate degree program approvals; and,
- advise APPC on an assessment plan for general education.

General education course designation criteria

To provide clarity for determining course eligibility, GET developed *criteria* and associated *foci* for each component, (each ILO, HIP, and capstone), of TRU's general education model.

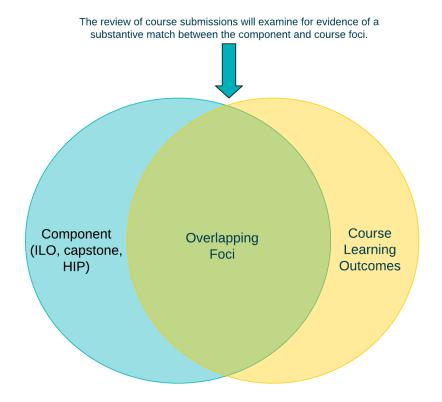
Criteria refers to the standard used to assess a course's eligibility for meeting a component of the general education model. The *foci* or *focus* refers to the central topic or intent of a component. See Appendix C: *General Education Component Criteria*.

The criteria were drafted over a five (5) month period (September 2019 – January 2020) during which time members of GET established working groups and met on a weekly basis. Guided by the Senate-approved ILOs and component descriptions, GET conducted an environmental scan to determine appropriate criteria for each component, including:

- review of Canadian and global institutions of higher education;
- meetings with TRU faculty and staff with expertise relevant to the components;
- review of learning outcomes of existing TRU courses; and,
- review of relevant literature in the field.

In addition, GET developed a *tool* to help assess course eligibility. The *tool* refers to the matrix used to measure the alignment of the component with the *foci* of a course's learning outcomes. For a course to qualify there must be a substantive match between the foci of the component and the course learning outcomes as shown in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3: Foci Alignment



The video tutorial <u>General Education Model Criteria & Tool</u> details the method for determining course eligibility for a general education component. The criteria, foci, tool, and video were shared with stakeholders during a three (3) month consultation period (February – April 2020) that included a survey; presentations to Faculty Councils, Student Caucus, and relevant standing committees of Senate; focus groups; and an open forum. Following the consultation period, GET considered the feedback, and then finalized and recommended the criteria to APPC for approval, as per GET's terms of reference.

The criteria and tool for each component of the general education model were approved by APPC on May 14, 2020. To view the criteria for each component of the general education model see Appendix C.

Interim process for identifying general education courses

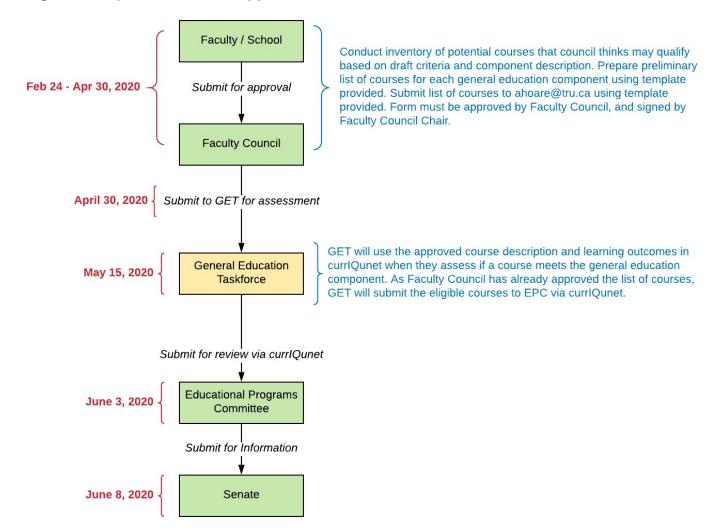
Designating a course as a TRU general education component is a Category I change as defined by Senate. These consist of minor changes where, if no substantive curriculum-related concerns are raised during the peer-review process, Faculty Council has final approval, and thus go forward to the Educational Program Committee (EPC) of Senate for information only (see <u>Definition of Categories</u> and <u>Operating Procedures of the Educational Programs Committee (EPC) of Senate for the Review and Approval of Submissions</u>, section 6. EPC Procedures, Category I Changes).

To facilitate the expedited approval process of courses, on February 24, 2020, the Provost and Vice President Academic and Research sent an email to all Deans and Faculty Council Chairs outlining a process to initially identify courses that will meet the general education components with the promise that GET will conduct the initial assessment of the courses using the approved criteria and foci. Each Faculty Council was requested to identify courses (campus and open learning) they thought would meet the general education model components using the Senate-approved definition and description. They were provided with a template to record these courses. The populated template required Faculty Council approval and Faculty Council Chair signature before it was sent to GET. The deadline for submission was April 30, 2020.

An expedited interim approval process (see **Figure 4**) was approved by APPC on March 12, 2020.

Following APPC approval of the criteria and tool for the general education components, GET met on May 15, 2020 for a full day retreat to assess the list of courses submitted by Faculty Council chairs. GET used the EPC approved course description and learning outcomes to assess if a course met the general education component. When GET determined there was a substantive match between the component foci and course learning outcomes, the course was submitted to EPC via the curriculum management software currlQūnet. This expediated process did not bypass TRU's academic approval processes; however, it provided Faculties and Schools vetting support through GET and administrative support through the Office of Quality Assurance during the initial phase of general education course approvals.

Figure 4: Expedited Interim Approval Process



All baccalaureate degrees must include the general education components for first year students in Fall 2021. Once the ILO, HIP, and capstone courses are identified and approved, Faculties and Schools will assess the alignment between their baccalaureate degree requirements and the requirements of TRU's general education model to ensure they are in compliance with policy <u>ED 16-0 Types of Undergraduate and Graduate</u> <u>Credentials</u>. Figure 5 provides a graphic representation of how Faculties and Schools can determine whether changes need to be made to their programs to meet the TRU general education requirements. Faculties and Schools will have approximately seven (7) months to assess program alignment and make changes as necessary. All required program modifications are expected to be submitted to EPC for approval by December 2, 2020. **Table 1** outlines the implementation timeline.

We anticipate that the majority of the program modifications will be Category I and II where, if no substantive curriculum-related concerns are raised during the peer review

process, changes approved by Faculty Council stand and no further review by EPC is required.

Figure 5: Curriculum Development Decision-Tree

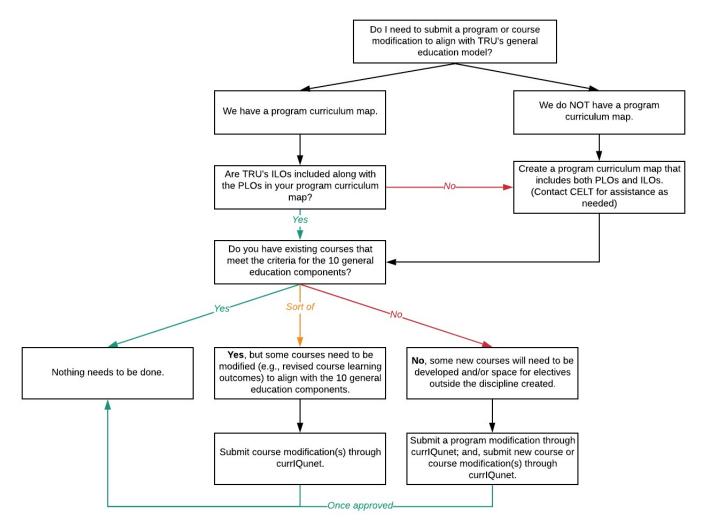


Table 1: General Education Model Implementation Timeline

Date	Oversight	Task
Feb. 24 - Apr. 30, 2020	Faculty Council	Identify courses from your Faculty/School you think may meet the general education model components. Use the spreadsheet provided (see attached) to record these courses. The completed spreadsheet must be approved by your Faculty Council and signed by the Faculty Council Chair before it is sent to GET.
Mar. 12, 2020	APPC	Approval of expedited interim approval process for ILO, HIP, and capstone courses
Apr. 9, 2020	APPC	Approval of ongoing approval process for ILO, HIP, and capstone courses
Apr. 30, 2020	Faculty Council Chair	Submit list of courses to ahoare@tru.ca using template provided. Form must be approved by Faculty Council, and signed by Faculty Council Chair
May 14, 2020	APPC	APPC approval of criteria
May 15, 2020	GET	Retreat to assess eligibility of courses using criteria and tool
May 15-18, 2020	Office of Quality Assurance	Manual submission of courses in curricUNET
May 19 - 27, 2020	Academic Approval Process via curriQunet	5-day Peer Review
Jun. 3, 2020	EPC	EPC review of courses
Jun. 4 - Nov.1, 2020	Faculties and Schools	Curriculum mapping and submit program and course changes, as needed
Dec. 2, 2020	EPC	EPC review of Category I and II changes (i.e., program modifications).
Feb. 28, 2021	Academic Calendar	Final date for course and program modifications for Fall 2021 intake
Sept. 1, 2021	Faculties and Schools	All baccalaureate programs must include general eduation components for all students starting the program

Support, including education and training for curriculum mapping and academic approval processes, are provided by GET, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), and the Office of Quality Assurance, as needed. The following are some examples of supports offered:

Baccalaureate Degree Program Resource Guide with a section related to
policies, procedures, and pedagogical resources to support incorporating the
general education components and associated foci into programs and courses
(see Appendix D under development);

- series of instructional videos;
- dedicated webpage housed on the Academic Approvals intranet website;
- Teaching Fellows curriculum mapping workshops; and
- CELT course redesign workshop.

Ongoing process for identifying general education courses

The ongoing process for determining general education component courses is embedded within TRU's academic approval process. Prompts have been added to the course proposal form in currlQūnet asking if the proposed course is an ILO, HIP, or capstone course. If the originator clicks 'yes' then a drop-down list will appear and they will be asked to identify all that apply (e.g., Teamwork and Knowledge). If a component is selected the relevant tool will appear and the originator will be required to identify the alignment between the component foci and the course learning outcomes by checking the appropriate boxes in the tool. The completed tool will then accompany the course proposal form through the approvals for new courses and course modifications, as per policy ED 8-2 Undergraduate Course and Program Approvals. The procedures for which are detailed in the Operating Procedures of the Educational Programs Committee (EPC) of Senate for the Review and Approval of Submissions

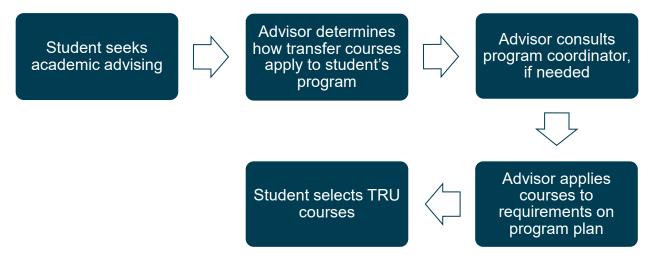
The ongoing approval process was approved by APPC on April 9, 2020.

Transfer credit

Students seeking to apply transfer credit towards a TRU baccalaureate degree program will go through TRU's transfer credit process as per policy <u>ED 2-4 Transferability of University Credits</u>. This involves consulting with subject matter experts to determine whether the course is equivalent to a specific TRU course. If a transfer course is deemed equivalent to a TRU course that has an ILO, HIP, or capstone designation then it will also receive that designation. Once the course has been assessed by faculty, this transfer credit decision is built into TRU's transfer credit database in Banner. Going forward, the course will populate the record for any student transferring this course, regardless of program.

Determining the applicability of a transfer course towards a student's baccalaureate degree program occurs after the course has been assessed for transfer to TRU. When the course is in the database and on the student's TRU record, program-level decisions are made about how the transfer course applies, or does not apply, to the student's program requirements. This happens during program advising or in consultation with the program coordinator or chair, as shown in **Figure 5**.

Figure 5: Applicability of Transfer Courses



Approval of an Assessment Plan

CELT and the Teaching and Learning Committee of Senate have been tasked with identifying an assessment plan for all program learning outcomes at TRU, including the ILOs. TRU is engaging in a variety of activities that enhance the capability of its' faculty and staff to successfully develop and implement an ILO assessment plan. The activities include a complement of learning and development from external and internal expertise.

Building institutional capacity to develop and implement an assessment plan CELT collaborates with Faculties and Schools across the university to support the development of engaging pedagogies through innovative professional development, personalized consulting, and supportive educational leadership. CELT programs are designed to facilitate a teaching culture that improves student learning, successful transitions and learner retention. Below are examples of such programs; however, more can be found on the CELT website:

- Teaching Fellows
 One-on-one consultations and/or presentations to faculty councils and department meetings to discuss program learning outcomes and facilitate curriculum mapping.
- Teaching Fellows Workshops
 A three (3) part series exploring the benefits of TRU's general education model, aligning ILOs and program learning outcomes, and curriculum mapping.
- Assessment and Evaluation Course
 An eight (8) week course, totalling 24 hours, where faculty members examine the ethical, practical, and research foundations for the assessment and evaluation of student tasks for learning in courses and educational programs. The purpose of assessment and evaluation in the learning process is explored along with the ethics of how and when to evaluate learning. The course enables participants to create assessment tools and evaluation systems that are aligned with instruction and educational outcomes to reflect and communicate student learning.

Course Renovation Institute
 A five (5) day workshop for faculty members to map course concepts, compose learning outcomes, plan instruction, and select activities and assessment strategies for their students using the process outlined in the 2004 book Rethinking Teaching in Higher Education by Saroyan and Amundsen.

In November 2019, TRU invited Dr. Jillian Kinzie, Associate Director, Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, National Survey of Student Engagement Institute, and Research Associate at the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, to meet with GET to discuss the implementation of HIPs and capstone courses, as part of the TRU's general education model, including recommendations for course criteria and learning outcomes. In addition, Dr. Kinzie offered a workshop on assessment of ILOs, which was open to all members of GET, the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Taskforce (LOATF), and the teaching fellows. The workshop addressed fundamentals about curricular alignment, mapping, and broad-level assessment of ILOs. Dr. Kinzie also met with TRU's teaching fellows to offer advice on the process they are using to support faculty with generating program learning outcomes, and curriculum and assessment mapping.

On February 19 – 21, 2020, the Associate Vice President Academic, Director of Centre for Excellence in Learning & Teaching (CELT), the Coordinator Teaching and Learning, and the Quality Assurance & Accreditation Liaison Officer attended the AAC&U General Education, Pedagogy, and Assessment Conference to learn more about assessment strategies for general education. A focus was placed on attending sessions that emphasized responding to assessment resistance, engaging faculty in curricular change, meaningful and intentional assessment, and capstones and HIPs.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Taskforce (LOATF)

On June 7, 2019 the Teaching and Learning Committee of Senate approved the establishment of a Learning Outcomes and Assessment Taskforce (LOATF) for a term of 24 months with the purpose of creating a principles document along with associated resources that will establish an approach to the development, monitoring, and regular review of program and course learning outcomes and assessment.

As outlined in the *Learning Outcomes and Assessment Task Force Proposal* (see Appendix E), the taskforce will:

- Review and summarize related and relevant documents that were created by the previous committee, as well as policies and procedures related to program review, NWCCU accreditation, general education, and provincial-level quality assurance;
- 2. Identify the stage at which each baccalaureate program is at in the development of their program-level outcomes;
- 3. Identify the stage at which each baccalaureate program is at with the development of learning outcomes assessment;

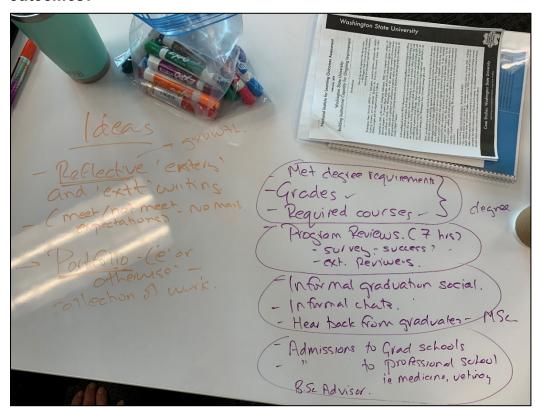
- 4. Draft principles to guide the establishment and use of learning outcomes for curricular assessment at TRU. (Note: this will not include evaluations of individual instructors); and,
- 5. Recommend a model of continuous learning outcomes assessment and curriculum review which would fit within structures and processes that are already established.

Several members of the General Education Taskforce (GET) are also members of LOATF, including the chair of GET. LOATF will thus advise GET on a general education assessment plan, which GET will then bring forward to APPC for approval in spring 2021. This will eliminate duplicative efforts across the committees; however, faculty representatives on GET were encouraged to join LOATF, given their wealth of knowledge related to TRU's general education model.

LOATF met for the first time in November 2019, and since that time has been meeting on a monthly basis. Early activities included, for example:

- reviewing existing program-level assessments, and assessing the strengths and drawbacks for each approach (see Figure 6);
- reading relevant literature and discussing findings in the context of TRU; and,
- identifying key milestones and a timeline to achieve LOATF mandate by spring 2021 (see Table 2).

Figure 6: LOATF Activity: How do we know if students have achieved program outcomes?



How do we know if Students have acheived program outcomes? Nursing - acheinement of CLO / Pass

Nursing - Acheinement of CLO / Pass

Rubric (TRU) SOBE/ACT - Program rewar + process gravites Desired - Passing consen/clo actual - LU -6 competences AITS - Major Structure (depth + breachth) - - CLO achaement - Capstone - Common marking system > Discussion +
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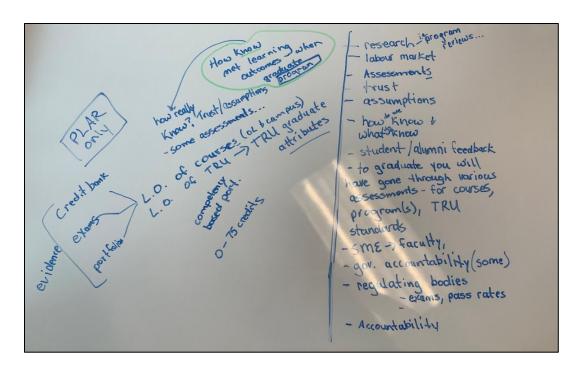


Table 2: Timeline for approval of general education assessment plan

Date	Oversight	Task
April 8, 2021	Academic Planning & Priorities Committee (APPC) of Senate	GET recommend to APPC approval of principles and procedures, and general education assessment plan.
March 1, 2021	General Education Taskforce (GET)	LOATF recommend to GET the general education assessment plan.
March 1, 2021	Teaching & Learning Committee (TLC) of Senate	LOATF recommend to TLC principles and procedures document.
December 1, 2020 - February 1, 2021	LOATF	Consultation with TRU community (e.g., Faculty Council presentations) regarding principles and procedures, and general education assessment plan.
September, 2020	APPC	LOATF recommend revisions to policy ED 8-4 <i>Program</i> Review to APPC to recommend to the Policy Subcommittee of APPC for review (if necessary).
August - November, 2020	LOATF	Review alignment between principles and procedures and general education assessment plan; and, finalize both documents.
July - August, 2020	LOATF	Review policy ED 8-4 <i>Program Review</i> and assess need for revision; If so, draft revisions to ED 8-4.
June - July, 2020	LOATF	Draft general education assessment plan
April - May, 2020	LOATF	Draft principles and procedures document for learning outcomes and assessment

Conclusion

TRU was intentional in drafting a general education model that avoided new or complicated structures that create barriers to degree-completion. A comprehensive audit of all TRU degree programs demonstrated that many of the programs already incorporate the ILOs, in particular the professional programs (e.g. Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Social Work); however, we anticipate the requirement of a capstone course will be the most notable change and may require additional resources and support for development.

Existing courses that meet the general education criteria will be flagged in Degree Works to assist students and academic advisors in tracking degree-completion requirements. As new courses are developed, the departments will be required to complete the tool and demonstrate a substantive match to the approved criteria and foci, if they wish the course to be considered and approved for general education credit.

CELT Teaching Fellows will work with programs to map existing program requirements to the program learning outcomes, ILOs, and other requirements of the general education model. If gaps exist (such as a need for capstone or HIPs) within the program, programs will be required to make changes and submit a program modification. Such program and course modifications will be processed through TRU's normal Senate academic approval processes.

We expect the majority of the degree programs to be ready to implement revised programs that incorporate the general education model in Fall 2021. Ongoing consultation will occur with academic advisors, faculty councils, students, and other key stakeholders to discuss challenges and opportunities during and following implementation of the general education model.

LOATF is in the process of developing a principles and procedures document for the development, implementation, assessment, and review of learning outcomes in programs and courses. It is anticipated that the principles and procedures document will be submitted to APPC for approval in spring 2021.

We wish to acknowledge the continued commitment of faculty, GET, CELT, and LOATF and their work towards implementing TRU's general education model amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Appendices

Appendix A Report of the General Education Taskforce

Appendix B General Education Taskforce Terms of Reference

Appendix C General Education Model Criteria

Pending APPC approval on May 14, 2020

Appendix D Baccalaureate Degree Program Resource Guide

Under development

Appendix E Learning Outcomes and Assessment Task Force Proposal