



THOMPSON RIVERS
UNIVERSITY

OPEN LEARNING

Important Notice to Students

On April 1, 2005, the British Columbia Open University (BCOU) will become a part of the newly created Thompson Rivers University (TRU). From this date, BCOU will be known as Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning or TRU Open Learning (TRU-OL).

TRU Open Learning will maintain all of the programs and services currently offered by BCOU. For an interim period, TRU Open Learning will maintain its operations in Burnaby until the relocation to Kamloops, which is anticipated in 2006.

For BCOU students, the change will be seamless. All of the services currently available will continue. The following questions and answers may address some common concerns. If you have a specific question, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Transfer of BCOU to TRU Open Learning Student Questions and Answers March 21, 2005

Benefit of Transfer

Q. How does the transfer of BCOU to TRU benefit students?

A. TRU is the creation of two institutions – University College of the Cariboo (UCC) and the British Columbia Open University (BCOU). The combination of these two institutions will provide students with wider access and greater flexibility to developmental programs, trade certificates, technology diplomas, bachelor degrees, and post-graduate degrees, both on campus in Kamloops and by distance education.

Admission Requirements

Q. Will the open admission and flexible start times of BCOU courses change under TRU?

A. TRU intends to retain all of the flexibility associated with BCOU courses. However, all courses are subject to periodic review as they would be if BCOU remained independent of TRU. Students are advised to check all requirements, either in the calendar or on the website.

Q. Will program admission requirements change under TRU?

A. TRU Open Learning will have the same admission requirements as BCOU programs while it operates in Burnaby. However, all programs are subject to periodic review as they would be if BCOU remained independent of TRU. Students are advised to check all entrance requirements, either in the calendar or on the website.

Academic Requirements

Q. Will the academic requirements for BCOU programs change under TRU?

A. All programs are subject to review and change, but BCOU students currently completing BCOU programs will not be affected. BCOU students will be allowed to graduate based on the academic requirements in place at the time they were accepted into the program. Students may also choose to transfer to the new requirements if they wish. Students who leave a program for more than two years are subject to the rules in place when they are readmitted to the program.

Q. BCOU and UCC have similar programs but different requirements. Will BCOU students have to change their program requirements in order to receive a TRU credential?

A. No, students will graduate on the academic requirements in place at the time they were accepted into the program. If students leave a program for more than two years, they become subject to the rules in place when they are readmitted to the program.

Q. Since the residency requirements at BCOU are different than UCC, what are the residency requirements of TRU Open Learning?

A. TRU Open Learning programs will retain the flexible residency requirements that currently exist with BCOU.

Q. Can UCC credit be used to meet the residency requirements of a TRU credential?

A. All courses taken at BCOU and UCC can be used to meet the residency requirement of a TRU credential.

Q. Will TRU Open Learning courses satisfy the requirements of on-campus programs currently offered at UCC?

A. TRU Open Learning courses equivalent to UCC courses can be used to satisfy program requirements. However, some courses may not meet program requirements, especially at the diploma level. These will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Upper-level or third-year and fourth-year courses are currently being evaluated for equivalency and program requirements. Please contact your academic or program advisor for information about your individual situation.

Transfer Credit

Q. Will students completing programs at other colleges still be able to ladder into TRU Open Learning degree programs?

A. Yes, all degree requirements currently in place at BCOU will be transferred to TRU Open Learning. A student in any college program intending to ladder into a BCOU degree will be able to ladder into the same degree at TRU Open Learning.

Q. At present it is easy to transfer from a community college into BCOU. Will it be as easy to transfer into TRU?

A. As TRU is maintaining BCOU and its open access as TRU Open Learning, admission requirements will remain the same but students are advised to check for updates.

Q. Will students be able to register in TRU Open Learning courses for transfer credit to institutions other than TRU or TRU Open Learning?

A. Yes, students will still be able to register in TRU Open Learning college or university courses for transfer credit to other institutions. Most TRU Open Learning courses provide transfer credit, but students are advised to obtain permission from the receiving institution, prior to registering in courses. More transfer information is available in the BC Online Transfer Guide at www.bccat.bc.ca.

Transcripts

Q. What will transcripts show if students currently enrolled in BCOU programs transferred credits from UCC?

A. During the transition period from April 1, 2005, until the end of December 2006, students will have two transcripts: a TRU Open Learning transcript will represent BCOU credits, and a TRU transcript will represent previous UCC work. By 2007, these two separate transcripts will merge into a single TRU document, which will include all academic credits.

Q. How will the requirements of similar programs, such as the Social Service Worker program, be recognized?

A. If the requirements for two similar programs are different, TRU will distinguish between two credentials on the parchment and/or transcript. The distinction may be made by using the descriptor "Open Learning Division" or another similar identifier for students completing programs through TRU Open Learning.

Credentials and Parchments

Q. What type of credential will students currently completing BCOU programs receive?

A. Students completing their program requirements and who apply for graduation before March 31, 2005, will receive a BCOU credential. Students completing their program on April 1, 2005, or later, will receive a TRU Open Learning credential.

Q. What is the difference between a TRU Open Learning parchment and a TRU parchment?

A. There will be a distinction on the parchment showing the credential was received through "Open Learning." This distinction will be made because many of the programs have the same or similar names but have different requirements. There is no difference in the standards of the two credentials.

Q. Can students holding a BCOU parchment exchange them for a TRU Open Learning parchment?

A. When the University Council of TRU is elected, it will consider this question. Once a decision has been made, it will be posted on the TRU website.

Celebration of Learning

Q. Will there be a Celebration of Learning for BCOU students in 2005 and TRU Open Learning students in 2006?

A. There will be a Celebration of Learning for students who obtained a BCOU credential from April 1, 2004, through March 31, 2005. This ceremony is planned for June 16, 2005, in Burnaby. Notices will be sent to all students who have completed their program requirements. The event will also include TRU Open Learning students who complete a TRU credential between April 1 and April 30, 2005. Students completing their program after April 30 will be invited to participate in the 2006 event. We anticipate holding an annual Celebration of Learning at Mathissi Place until Burnaby operations relocate to Kamloops.

Fees

Q. Will the fees for my courses increase as a result of BCOU becoming part of TRU?

A. Fees are reviewed annually for all programs at all academic institutions and are determined by the Boards of Governors. Any planned changes to fees would come into effect August 2005. TRU should have a better idea of any fee changes by June 2005. Approved fee changes will be posted on the TRU website.

Q. Will TRU Open Learning students have to pay Student Society fees?

A. UCC already has students enrolled in distance programs, and these students are excused from a number of fees that campus-based students pay. Fees are reviewed annually for all programs at all academic institutions and are determined by the Boards of Governors. Any planned changes to fees would come into effect for August 2005. TRU should have a better idea of any fee changes by June 2005. Approved fee changes will be posted on the TRU website.

Financial Assistance

Q. What will happen to the financial awards program at BCOU?

A. Current federal and provincial programs will be maintained. BCOU funded programs and awards will remain the same. Any changes will be communicated through the TRU Open Learning section of the TRU website under Financial Awards.