Credit Transfer for Open/Online Graduate Programs: Concise Report

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Author's note

The following paper (of 17 pages) is the Concise Version of a much longer report on *Credit Transfer for Open/Online Graduate Programs*, completed in response to a request in 2016 from Thompson Rivers University, Canada, for a study on the topic of "Residency Requirements for Graduate Programs", taking a global perspective on the matter across a range of countries seen as relevant to the Canadian situation. The longer report was accompanied by a separate Annex consisting of reports on countries and institutions.

The Concise Version of the report was presented as the "PLAR Benchmark Report Executive Summary" to the March 2018 meeting of the **Planning Council for Open Learning** (item 4.a) along with the Full Report (not including the Annexes) and a Briefing Memorandum from a senior TRU staff member contextualising the report to the situation in the university, the province and Canada.

The document that follows this Author's Note is the Concise Version. It, the Full Report, the Briefing Memorandum, and the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Council can be found in the 83-page public document at https://www.tru.ca/__shared/assets/2018-03-12PCOLagenda29801.pdf

TRU senior staff confirmed to the author in November 2023 that these documents are public – but copyright to TRU.

A few very minor changes have been made, such as correcting some typos and layout issues.

It should be noted that the documents were written by a UK-based author in what he hopes is a good approximation to Canadian spelling and stylistic approaches – he apologises for any remaining infelicities. The issue of reconciling North American PLAR approaches and European/UK APL approaches is complex and out of scope for the report.

Nor does the report provide a detailed bibliography of Canadian-originated research on PLAR. For more on this topic readers are referred to the web site of the *Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment* (https://capla.ca) and a number of papers listing Christine Wihak as an author, such as the influential paper by her and Norm Friesen, "From OER to PLAR: Credentialing for Open Education" in *Open Praxis* (Volume 5, Number 1, January 2013).

Table of Contents

0.   Client Brief

This document is to be a benchmarking report for key aspects of open/online graduate programs including master's, graduate certificate and graduate diploma programs, with a focus on the following elements:

PLAR [Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition]

- Amount permitted for graduate credit
- Used/not used for "residency" and how much
- For theses, capstones, other graduation projects
- Practica where relevant

Entrance requirements

- Admissions tests
- PLAR use for resumes, letters of intent, letters of reference
- Degrees/ equivalents.

The report will be based on a sample of relevant and credible comparator open and/or distance higher education institutions internationally, both single mode and dual mode.

Comparator institutions are proposed to include the following ten:

Institution	Country	Institution	Country
TÉLUQ	Canada	FernUniversität	Germany
Athabasca University	Canada	Open Universiteit	The Netherlands
Penn State University	US	OU Catalonia	Spain
Central Florida State U	US	Massey University	New Zealand
UK Open University	UK	Charles Sturt University	Australia

The report is to include comparison tables as well as summaries and brief analyses to frame the information provided within the context of the needs of TRU, Open Learning. The report will be submitted in draft form with a review for feedback followed by a final copy. *(This was done in May-June 2017.)* The process may include various forms of discussion such as phone and Skype calls. *(It did.)* The contractor may be requested to participate in one PCOL meeting to clarify or amplify points discussed in the report. *(This was not needed.)*

The primary contact for this project is Dr. Irwin DeVries, Interim Associate Vice President, TRU Open Learning.

Modifications

In the event, a larger set of institutions were consulted. This was especially the case for the UK, which now has a well-developed route for PLAR-type entry especially to MBA from a range of vocational qualifications.

Note that this report is written in Canadian English (to the best of the author's abilities and those of the UK edition of Microsoft Word).

1.   Introduction and Summary

Structure of the report

Chapter 0 (before this chapter) is the client brief.

Chapter 1 (this one) is an introduction and Executive Summary

Chapter 2 is a brief description of the work undertaken.

Chapter 3 provides tabulations of the case studies. For the details and context the reader is referred to the full case studies in the Annex.

Chapter 4 provides a set of recommendations for TRU.

Notes on nomenclature and style

This report is written in Canadian English. The technical terms it uses are wherever appropriate the standard terms used in Canada, such as PLAR, residence and practicum. The local equivalents [in each country] to these are explained.

Executive Summary (for the Concise Report)

Conclusions on PLAR for graduate programs

First, the answers to the questions in the brief:

1. **Amount permitted for graduate credit:** The answer to this is complicated because master's programs vary in credit value, much more so than undergraduate programs – from 30 to 60 credit hours (1 to 2 equivalent full-time academic years). It can vary from less than 1/4 to around 2/3 – depending on the internal structure and length of the master's qualification.
2. **Residency:** There is always an irreducible minimum of credit hours that must be earned at the award-granting institution, typically no less than 1/3.
3. **Capstone, thesis, dissertation, project report:** no instance has been found where PLAR or transfer credit can be used for such a module.
4. **Practicum:** no such entities were discerned in the programs reviewed. In the likely event that a practicum would be a capstone-type module at the end of a program, it is unlikely that PLAR or transfer credit could apply.
5. **Admissions tests:** there was little sign of these in PLAR processes – however portfolios were often featured and would be scrutinised.
6. **PLAR use of resumes etc:** Many documents may be required for PLAR processes including resumes, letters of intent, research plans and portfolios. The narratives in section 3.2 give good practice examples.
7. **Degrees:** In countries (such as Australia) which offer both bachelor ordinary and bachelor with honors degrees, it is not uncommon for applicants with an ordinary bachelor degree to be unable to apply to join a master's program without going through some kind of bridging program. In other countries (such as Netherlands) with a two-tier system of institutions, students with bachelor degrees from the lower tier also had to undertake a bridging program. In a third type like US with tiers of accreditation (in the US, regional accreditation is higher than national accreditation), degrees were required (at least in theory) to have to come from regionally accredited institutions.

In terms of more general considerations:

8. As noted earlier, master's programs vary in credit value, much more so than undergraduate programs – from 30 to 60 credit hours (1 to 2 equivalent full-time academic years).
9. The internal structure of master's is not consistent across the world, with two or three subdivisions the most common, above the level of individual modules.
10. The sub-structure of certificates and diplomas (if one can be discerned) varies even more.
11. The credit value of a dissertation/project element varies from 5 to 15 credit hours and in some institutions/departments/routes this element does not exist.
12. Many institutions do not seem to accept entry to graduate programs other than via a recognised degree – but this is more flexible in some countries like UK.
13. There is much less standardisation of entry aspects at master's level – much more autonomy is left to departments.
14. There is much more focus at graduate level on **transfer of credits from other institutions** than recognition of informal/non-formal/vocational learning.
15. Only in rare exceptions (such as Royal Roads University) is there evidence of procedularisation of credit transfer and PLAR, such as standard progression routes.
16. Many institutions/departments have a "time-out" on credits – a point after which they are not valid – though there can be procedures to re-accredit such credits such as portfolios detailed recent relevant study/work.
17. Only in the UK and in New Zealand is there a clear route into graduate programs from higher vocational qualifications. Only in the UK is there evidence of proceduralisation of such routes between higher VET and Master's providers.

Methodological issues encountered

1. There is a lack of traction of the ISCED levels across the world. In particular there is significant inconsistency of the numbering of levels in the national/international schemes.
2. There is a lack of sufficient granularity in the ISCED scheme, with just one level (7) for Master's rather than two or three, and one level (6) for all varieties of "degrees" – honours, ordinary, research, vocational etc.
3. There is clear evidence that in some countries and institutions the relevant national or EU credit schemes are not always used in program descriptions on university web sites, or the information is tucked away in random-seeming locations. Even in distance learning programs, there is a nomenclature of "years" inappropriate in many cases.
4. There is a lack of standardisation of university master's programs' web sites even from the same university.
5. There is significant lack of visibility of detailed information on entry requirements – with a gap between the general university PLAR information, if any (usually focused on bachelor degrees) and the specific information for each Master's program. Non-standard (i.e. non-degree) entry routes are rarely featured explicitly.
6. In addition to the obvious language barriers to Anglophone researchers at non-English-speaking institutions, at many institutions in non-Anglophone countries offering Master's programs in English, even though the promotional material is in

English, much of the administrative material relevant to admissions may not be in English or even exist.

Recommendations

[These are slightly changed from the version in the Full Report.]

1. TRU should consider a focus at graduate level on specific percentages of credit transfer/ recognition.
2. TRU should consider building up a bank of pre-approved credit transfer pathways from specific institutions that it receives students from.
3. TRU should consider ensuring a more consistent approach to master's credit values and structure, recognising that there may be provincial and professional recognition issues requiring specific credit amounts.
4. TRU should consider the introduction of a clearer more systematic structure into graduate offerings – a certificate/diploma/master's trinity is suggested, as is often used in other Commonwealth countries.
5. For master's/program routes with a major dissertation element, TRU should consider offering direct entry to that level from students who have pre-approved graduate diplomas from other institutions – perhaps piloting this with the 18 credit ENVS 5990 Thesis element of the MSc Environmental Science.
6. TRU should consider a move towards the practice in some advanced Commonwealth countries of offering procedural PLAR routes to those with higher vocational qualifications, especially those accredited by respected professional associations. Some of the associations who offer such routes in other countries (such as the Chartered Institute of Management in UK) have reciprocity with associations in Canada (such as Canadian Institute of Management), as well as in Australia (Australian Institute of Management). Several of these institutes are increasingly active in online education.

2. Work done

The work was done predominantly by documentary review of web sites. Apart from reasons of efficiency and confidentiality, the web site is usually the main initial channel of information to students enquiring about a program. A number of unattributable conversations were had with experts, but no approach was made to institutions for non-public information.

The work was split into:

- ground-clearing
- literature search
- policy overview
- institutional studies.

In addition, in order to understand the current policy environment of TRU, a considerable amount of work was done in analysing the PLAR situation for master's programs at TRU. Interested readers are referred to Annex Section 2.4.

Ground-clearing

It was early on decided that the only feasible basis for making international comparisons was to adopt fully the International Standard Classification of Education from UNESCO, 2011 version.[1] This has nine levels, as follows:[2]

0	Early childhood education
1	Primary education
2	Lower secondary education
3	Upper secondary education
4	Post-secondary non-tertiary education
5	Short-cycle tertiary education
6	Bachelor's or equivalent level
7	**Master's or equivalent level**
8	Doctoral or equivalent level

The ISCED classification has a number of weaknesses – the most significant for our purposes being that the numerical levels are not followed by several of the nationally-specific classifications including in Australia and New Zealand. The second most significant is that several levels are insufficiently granular: level 6 does not differentiate between "bachelor" and "bachelor with honors" and level 7 takes no account of the fact the majority of master's programs have an internal structure with three or sometimes just two levels. For more see the country sections in Chapter X of the Full Report (summarised from the country Annexes).

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[1] http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-37c-fos-review-222729e.pdf page 3

[2] http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/International_Standard_Classification_of_Education_(ISCED)

The situation with credit hours is more complex. Most countries have nationally-specific systems except that EU member states (except the UK) use the ECTS system. In the tabulations in Chapter 3 all credits are converted to notional "North American" credit hours (as used in US and Canada) but readers are warned both that the conversion factors are disputed and that the amount of teaching to deliver one credit hour varies widely (and even wildly) between and within countries (and not only to reflect delivery mode).

The literature

The literature search revealed that despite the extensive literature on PLAR (and synonyms) there was very little of relevance to PLAR for *graduate* programs. Most useful were a number of papers which were essentially case studies of institutions at particular points in time, but with little coverage of online programs. The most important of these were:

- **OISE, Toronto**: Case Study of the Innovative M.Ed. in Higher Education Leadership Cohort initiative: "The most risky innovation was the admission of some very experienced professionals – "middle management" staff in colleges and universities – into the program for a Master's in Higher Education degree – even though they had not earned the normally required four-year or honours undergraduate degree. Students were admitted by one of three routes: standard admission, non-standard case consideration, or the certificate route, depending on their past academic achievements and professional experience."[3]
- **Middlesex University, UK**: This described "the extensive and innovative use of RPL by Middlesex University".[4]
- **University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**: The Graduate School of Business in 2007 "admitted seven students onto the MBA program on the basis of RPL".[5]
- **University, Queensland, Australia**: A case study "relating to e-portfolio-style RPL for entry into a Graduate Certificate in Policy and Governance at a metropolitan university in Queensland" (believed to be Queensland University of Technology). [6]

At the national level, only one paper was found of relevance, *Recognition of Prior Learning in higher education in Ireland*,[7] which is discussed in more detail in Annex Section 3.9.1.

Policy overview

Country-specific policies are covered in the country reports in the Annex. At supranational level, the **European Union** has not produced any material with focus on PLAR at graduate level. In any case in the area of education the European Commission can produce only *recommendations* – not directives or laws – and so many Member States in reality pay little attention. Furthermore, in many topic areas in education, such as credit transfer, the

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[3] https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/66925

[4] http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/JWAM-10-2015-001

[5] Singh, M. a. (2011). Let the Doors of Learning Be Open to All--A Case for Recognition of Prior Learning. South African Journal of Higher Education, 25(4), 803–818

[6] http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/conceptualising-recognition-of-prior-learning-processes-in-the-age-of-open-learning/135637

[7] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301623790_Recognition_of_Prior_Learning_in_higher_education_in_Ireland

European Commission is required to work with all the 48 European countries (including Russia) of the European Higher Education Area[8] – so progress tends to be slow.

UNESCO pays some attention to PLAR – see for example the UNEVOC page on Recognition of Prior Learning[9] – but again there seems to be nothing specific to graduate programs.

Case studies

Ten institutions studied in detail were the original set of ten institutions across eight countries – Canada, US, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, The Netherlands and Spain – proposed by TRU. These are listed in bold in the table below. However it was quickly found that the 10 institutions originally proposed did not give the coverage needed, especially since several had very few online graduate programs and/or very limited documentation in English on PLAR. Consequently on an incremental basis an additional 14 institutions were covered, listed in normal text in the table. (The abbreviations are used in Chapter 3.)

Institution	Country	Institution	Country
TÉLUQ	Canada	**FernUniversität (FernU)**	Germany
Athabasca University (AU)	Canada	Wismar University	Germany
Memorial University (MU)	Canada	**Open Universiteit (OUNL)**	The Netherlands
Royal Roads University (RRU)	Canada	Maastricht University	The Netherlands
Penn State University (PSU)	US	Fontys University	The Netherlands
Central Florida State U (CFSU)	US	**OU Catalonia (OUC)**	Spain
UMUC	US	UNIR	Spain
UK Open University (OU)	UK	**Massey University**	New Zealand
University of Derby	UK	Open Polytechnic (OPNZ)	New Zealand
Anglia Ruskin University (ARU)	UK	Otago Polytechnic	New Zealand
Higher vocational (HVET)	UK	Universal College (UCOL)	New Zealand
Charles Sturt University (CSU)	Australia	RMIT	Australia

However, it became clear from the literature and the author's earlier work, confirmed by conversations at various events, that additional countries were of great relevance, namely Ireland (literature and author's experience),[10] South Africa (literature and conversations) and Sweden (author's experience).[11] Thus Cork Institute of Technology (CIT), University of Limerick, Dublin City University (DCU), Institute of Technology Sligo, UNISA (the one in South Africa), Uppsala University and University of Gävle were also briefly studied. The country overviews for the eight countries, plus shorter overviews on Ireland and Sweden, have been brought together in the Appendix (Chapter X) of this report. For the original country reports see Annex Chapter 2 at the start of each section.

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[8] http://www.ehea.info/pid34250/members.html

[9] http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/go.php?q=Recognition+of+Prior+Learning&context=

[10] see for example http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Infrastructure-Review-Data-Collection-rubric-and-methodology-1.pdf

[11] see in particular https://www.academia.edu/13057630/International_benchmarking_the_first_dual-mode_distance_learning_benchmarking_club (TRU was involved in this)

3. Tabulations and exemplars

3.1 Tables

The first of the two sections in this chapter is a set of four tables whose rows are the requested information from TRU plus other criteria judged relevant, and whose columns are the 30 institutions checked.

The requested information is on **PLAR** and **entrance requirements**, as requested by TRU:

PLAR

- Amount permitted for graduate credit
- Used/not used for "residency" and how much
- For theses, capstones, other graduation projects
- Practica where relevant

Entrance requirements

- Admissions tests
- PLAR use for resumes, letters of intent, letters of reference
- Degrees/equivalents.

To provide context additional data is collected. This leads to a tabulation as follows:

Criterion	Description	Typical value
#onlineM	Number of online full Master's programs in English, but in some cases all Master's	from zero to over 100
credits-natl	Credit value of program in the national credit hours scheme – see country overviews for these	
credits-NA	Credit value of program "converted" to the North American credit hours scheme	30
PLAR-grad	Is there a PLAR process (including credit transfer) for graduate programs?	Yes, but usually much more restrictive and program-specific than at bachelor level
max transfer	The maximum amount of credits that can be transferred in	33%
Residency	The minimum amount of credits that must be offered by the Master's-granting institution	over 50%
Capstone	Whether PLAR of any sort can apply to a capstone course and in particular a thesis	PLAR never allowed
Practicum	Whether PLAR of any sort can apply to a "practicum" such as work placement	No such programs were revealed
Degrees	Whether applicants must have a bachelor degree and if it has to be honors	honors only in those jurisdictions that make a difference
Types	Whether there are institutions from which bachelor degrees are typically not accepted – in dual-system countries like Netherlands	typically institutions have "only" to be nationally accredited

Criterion	Description	Typical value
Recency	How recent do an applicant's qualifications have to be in order to be accepted	Within the last 7 years, but depends much on subject
ChallengeG	Whether there is any challenge/test subprocess with in the PLAR process for entry to graduate programs	Not usual for graduate programs

It should be noted that the tabulations give only fragmentary and summary information and the reader is then referred to the specific full entries in the Annex. At most universities there is not full standardisation of entry requirements to Master's programs.

Now follow four tables. The column headings give the country code of the country (e.g. CA for Canada) followed by the Annex section or subsection where a full description can be found.

In order to allow each table to fit on one page, footnotes have been kept to an absolute minimum.

Table 1: Canada and US – institutions

Section		CA 2.4	CA 3.1.1	CA 3.1.2	CA 3.1.3	CA 3.1.4	US 3.2.1	US 3.2.2	US 3.2.3
Criterion	Typical	TRU	AU	TÉLUQ	MU	RRU	PSU	CFSU	UMUC
#onlineM		5	18	3	5	20	46	25	43
credits-natl		28, 33	33, 48 (MBA)	45	30				
credits-NA		28, 33	33, 48	45	30		30-38	33-36-42	30-36
PLAR-grad		Yes	Credit transfer, no PLAR	Yes		credit transfer lists			no, but
max transfer		25% (on-campus)					33% but 20% for MBA		6 for some; 3 for GC; 0 for others
Residency	50%								
Capstone	PLAR not allowed								
Practicum	PLAR not allowed								
Degrees	honors only		degree (mostly)		degree (mostly)	degree			
Types	nationally accredited						regionally accredited institution		regionally accredited institution
Recency	5 years		5, 7 or 10 years						
ChallengeG			not available						not available

Table 2: UK, New Zealand and Australia – institutions

Section		UK 3.3.1	UK 3.3.2	UK 3.3.3	UK 3.3.4	NZ 3.4.1	NZ 3.4.2	NZ 3.4.3	NZ 3.4.4	AU 3.5.1	AU 3.5.2
Criterion	*Typical*	*UKOU*	*Derby*	*ARU*	*HVET*	*Massey*	*OPNZ*	*Otago*	*UCOL*	*CSU*	*RMIT*
#onlineM		34	20	20	some	107	Zero	7	1	80	5
credits-natl		180 CATS	180 CATS	180 CATS	180 CATS	120-240		120-240	180	96	96
credits-NA		45[12]	45	45	45	30-60		30-60	45	60	60
PLAR-grad		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
max transfer		30 (16%) to 60 (33%)	60 (33%)	120 (67%)	120 (67%) – e.g. MBA top-up	25%		30-60 (16-50%)	120 (67%)	50%	
Residency	50%	see above			no info	75%			33%		
Capstone	PLAR not allowed	no credit transfer	no credit transfer	no credit transfer	no credit transfer	no credit transfer		no credit transfer	no credit transfer		
Practicum	PLAR not allowed	no info									
Degrees	honors only	no info	degree at 2:2 level	degree at 2:2 level						bachelor is sufficient	bachelor is sufficient
Types	nationally accredited	accredited institution	accredited institution							Australian Bachelor	Australian Bachelor
Recency	5 years	7-16 years		5 years; more with portfolio		no credits for informal learning				10 years	10 years
ChallengeG			Yes							no info	no info

[12] The correlation to the US credit hours at the "official" 4:1 exchange rate – which works out at 45 credit hours for 180 CATS and 60 credit hours for 240 CATS – is implausibly high to many people who have worked or studied in both systems

Table 3: Netherlands, Germany, Spain and Sweden – institutions

Section		NL 3.6.1	NL 3.6.2	NL 3.6.3	DE 3.7.1	DE 3.7.2	ES 3.8.1	ES 3.8.2	SE 3.9.3a	SE 3.9.3b
Criterion	*Typical*	*OUNL*	*Maastricht*	*Fontys*	*FernU*	*Wismar*	*UOC*	*UNIR*	*Uppsala*	*Gävle*
#onlineM		14	55	9	12	a few	over 40	2	over 40	14
credits-natl		60-120		60-90	mostly 120		60	60	60-120	60
credits-NA		30-60		30-45	60		30	30	30-60	30
PLAR-grad		Partly	Unclear	Info only in Dutch	unclear	unclear	appears not	ECTS credit transfer	ECTS credit transfer	ECTS credit transfer
max transfer					none		n/a	limit unknown	high %	high %
Residency	50%				n/a		n/a		at least one course	at least one course
Capstone	PLAR not allowed				n/a		n/a			
Practicum	PLAR not allowed				n/a		n/a			
Degrees	honors only	university degree	*universiteiten* degree	relevant Bachelor	strict	any	recognised university	University Degree	bachelor degree	bachelor degree
Types	nationally accredited	hogeschole degree & bridging	*hogeschole* degree & bridging	any	see above	any	see above			
Recency	5 years									
ChallengeG					n/a	n/a	n/a			

Table 4: Ireland and South Africa – institutions

Section		IE 3.9.1a	IE 3.9.1b	IE 3.9.1c	IE 3.9.1d	ZA 3.9.2
Criterion	*Typical*	*CIT*	*Limerick*	*DCU*	*Sligo*	*UNISA*
#onlineM		1 studied	1 studied	7	10	147
credits-natl		60[13]	unclear	90	90	180
credits-NA		30		45	45	45
PLAR-grad		RPL Service	available	comprehensive	RPL process	RPL process
max transfer						
Residency	50%					
Capstone	PLAR not allowed					
Practicum	PLAR not allowed					
Degrees	honors only	graduates with experience	2:2 honors degree	honors degree	2:2 honors	honors degree
Types	nationally accredited					
Recency	5 years					
ChallengeG						

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[13] Ireland uses ECTS

4.   Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Conclusions on PLAR for graduate programs

First, the answers to the questions in the brief:

1. **Amount permitted for graduate credit:** The answer to this is complicated because master's programs vary in credit value, much more so than undergraduate programs – from 30 to 60 credit hours (1 to 2 equivalent full-time academic years). It can vary from less than 1/4 to around 2/3 – depending on the internal structure and length of the master's qualification.
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8. As noted earlier, master's programs vary in credit value, much more so than undergraduate programs – from 30 to 60 credit hours (1 to 2 equivalent full-time academic years).
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6. In addition to the obvious language barriers to Anglophone researchers at non-English-speaking institutions, at many institutions in non-Anglophone countries offering Master's programs in English, even though the promotional material is in English, much of the administrative material relevant to admissions may not be in English or even exist.

Recommendations

1. TRU should consider a focus at graduate level on specific percentages of credit transfer/ recognition.
2. TRU should consider building up a bank of pre-approved credit transfer pathways from specific institutions that it receives students from.
3. TRU should consider ensuring a more consistent approach to master's credit values and structure, recognising that there may be provincial and professional recognition issues requiring specific credit amounts.

4. TRU should consider the introduction of a clearer more systematic structure into graduate offerings – a certificate/diploma/master's trinity is suggested, as is often used in other Commonwealth countries

5. For master's/program routes with a major dissertation element, consider offering direct entry to that level from students who have pre-approved graduate diplomas from other institutions.

6. TRU should consider a move towards the practice in some advanced Commonwealth countries of offering procedural PLAR routes to those with higher vocational qualifications, especially those accredited by respected professional associations. Some of the associations who offer such routes in other countries (such as the Chartered Institute of Management in UK) have reciprocity with associations in Canada (such as Canadian Institute of Management), as well as in Australia (Australian Institute of Management). Several of these institutes are increasingly active in online education.