

Department of Recreation & Leisure Studies

Year 4 Guide & Handbook 2012

Introduction & General Words of Wisdom:

The Department of Recreation & Leisure Studies at Brock University is privileged to offer one of the largest recreation degree compliments in Canada, including being the only university nationally to grant a professional 3 year degree in leisure studies.

The decision to apply to Year 4 should not be taken lightly. I would encourage every student to reflect on how meaningful and engaging the first 3 years of your degree at Brock (or the combination of college and university leading up to entering Year 4) have been. Year 4 can provide opportunities to immerse yourself into the discipline combining high academic levels of research, theory and practice. Ideally, students who elect to proceed onto the fourth year of the program are individuals committed to contributing to the professional disciplines associated with their degree (i.e., Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists, Outdoor Educators, Community Developers, etc.).

In the pages that follow there are a series of academic policies and procedures that outline the criteria that are followed to adjudicate decisions about acceptance into the fourth year of the program in Recreation & Leisure Studies. While all of this information is of significant importance it should not be read and/or interpreted as outlining what might be best for you individually. For example, students who qualify for any of the honours level degrees are <u>not</u> required to complete a placement course. This does not mean that the faculty within the Department of Recreation & Leisure Studies does not strongly recommend completing the placement course simply because you have met honours criteria. The placement experience provides an excellent opportunity to enhance your resume, network with professional practitioners, understand the employment dynamics of large and small organizations and much more. It would be fair to say that a placement experience will provide you with an educational experience that is of equivalent importance to your honours thesis/project. You should strongly consider completing a placement even if you are not required to complete the course for your degree.

The example of the placement course is only one single example of the type of thought and consideration you should take into account prior to applying. Year 4 will be your final academic challenge and it would be wise to approach your final year with a philosophy that embraces new knowledge. Read articles that are difficult to understand, work with smart and talented students in your cohort that you have never worked with before, apply for a high level placement that may require you to work more than the minimum number of required hours, embrace the required course that takes you out of your comfort zone, learn from the new faculty member who has never been an instructor for any of your classes before and take a class outside of recreation and leisure studies that is likely to benefit you in the future. Being open minded to new challenges is likely to only serve you well. You are the brink of launching a career (either occupational or academic) and none of the transitions will come as easily as you might like. Being proactive, rather than reactive, can ease the tension and burden of starting a life outside of academia. Consider Year 4 as a stepping -stone to polish your professional practices in addition to refining your critical thinking, research, analytical and writing skill sets.

Most importantly, if you determine that Year 4 of Recreation & Leisure Studies is "for you" take a few moments to absorb and embrace the plethora of options you will have to get involved as senior students in your department. Over the past 2 years our fourth year students have studied community development in Cuba, ran a March Break camp for underprivileged youth, supported the Canadian Congress on Leisure Research via an Experience Works grant, attended the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario conference in

Haliburton, completed internships from Halifax to Houston, experienced National Outdoor Leadership School excursions in Yukon, Alaska & Arizona all while embracing common beliefs in the value that leisure has on society on a daily basis.

Finally, I would remind you to implement 4 simple concepts for Year 4. These are the 4 concepts I have made a semi-tradition of attempting to instill in Year 1 students who are initiated to Brock during their first week on campus. They 4 simple concepts are:

- 1) Being Hopeful
- 2) Being Grateful
- 3) Being Useful
- 4) Being Present

I firmly believe that these general principles will help carry you through the various ups and downs of life as a student and beyond.

Best of luck to all of you in making your decision and please do not be afraid to consult with family, friends and faculty moving forward.

Respectfully,

Mike

4 YEAR HONOURS vs. 4 YEAR WITH MAJOR

There are, I would guess, two pressing questions on students' minds leading up to applying for Year 4. 1) What is an honours degree? and 2) Do you think that it is better to complete an honours degree than an alternative 3 year degree or 4 year with major degree?

The conversations that I have with students frequently turns to whether or not there is a decision to be made at all. The entire process should always begin by knowing exactly what options you have. The entrance requirements for Year 4 are as follows –

Bachelor of Recreation & Leisure Studies Honours Degree (in all 3 concentrations) -

70% or higher major average & 70% or higher non-major average (please note that this is measured differently than achieving a 70% or higher cumulative major/non-major average)

Students wishing to complete the honours thesis course (RECL 4F07) must have successfully completed either RECL 3Q17 or 3Q07 prior to the beginning of RECL 4F07. There are no exceptions for this prerequisite requirement.

Bachelor of Recreation & Leisure Studies With Major Degree (in all 3 concentrations) –

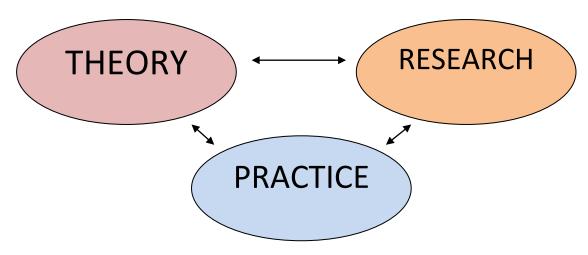
60% or higher major average & 60% or higher non-major average (please note that this is measured differently than achieving a 60% or higher cumulative major/non-major average)

You will not qualify to continue into Year 4 of the Recreation & Leisure Studies program with a major and/or non-major average of less than 60%.

It is important to understand that

Many students who are eligible for honours struggle to conceptualize how the research thesis process will work during the course. You are also likely to be concerned about what the expectations are for the honours level degree and how it might be beneficial in comparison to a four year with major degree. The illustration below might help to serve as a bridge to providing clarity regarding the honours thesis course:

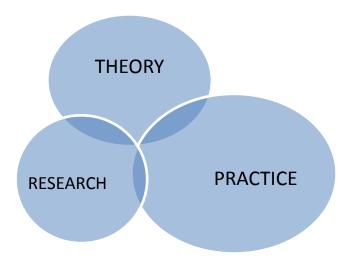
Through your first 3 years of the degree you have had opportunity to learn certain research approaches, leisure theory and practice somewhat independently of one another (i.e., independent spheres).



There may have been occassional opportunities to overlap some of the educational elements of your degree in a quasi-organized fashion. A well organized honours thesis should allow you the opportunity to blend, overlap and combine each of these individual spheres in a manner consistent with tried and true research practice. If you find yourself asking, for example, whether the leisure & well being model is an effective approach for care for CTRS's to utilize in a mental health setting or whether outcomes focussed management works on a mirco-organizational level of an institution (i.e., would it be appropriate for recreation services within Brock University) you have generated some general level research inquiries that you could build on more formally in an honours thesis.



The illustration above helps (I hope!) to provide a visual representation of the overlap that begins to occur with your knowledge during an honours thesis. The mid-section, where all there elements of the various forms of knowledge overlap and intersect could potentially be labelled as an honours thesis (or dissertation defense at higher levels of academia). There is a relatively equal distribution of knowledge between the three spheres (an important consideration with choosing between an honours and with major degree).



The four year with major degree, in contrast, is going to be more heavily weighted toward practice. There will be more situations where a combination of two (instead of three) knowledge areas overlap but your final project will be heavily reliant on your practical experience.

CHANGES FOR 2012-13

From time to time changes are made, or substitutions are required, for students to complete there degree. In 2012-13 there are a series of important changes that have been made that will impact course requirements for degree in Recreation & Leisure Studies across all three concentrations.

OLD COURSE(S)	NEW COURSE(S)
RECL 4P17 & 4P57/97 (all concentrations)	RECL 4F07 (all concentrations)
RECL 4P12 & 4P22 (ITR students only)	RECL 4F22 (ITR students only)
RECL 2P92 (all concentrations)	Any Year 3 RECL course (all concentrations)
RECL 4P10 (Community Recreation)	RECL 4P35 (CR students only)

REQUIRED COURSES

All students in Recreation & Leisure Studies Honours are required to take the following:

- 1) A minimum of 3.0 credits at the fourth year level (3(alpha)90 or above) in RECL
- 2) RECL 4P21 Cultural Politics of Leisure
- 3) RECL 4F07 Honours Thesis

All students in Recreation & Leisure Studies with Major are required to take the following:

- 1) A minimum of 3.0 credits at the fourth year level (3(alpha)90 or above) in RECL
- 2) RECL 4P21 Cultural Politics of Leisure
- 3) RECL 4F15 Program Placement & Evaluation (strongly recommended for Honours students)

All students in Community Recreation are also required to complete:

- 1) RECL 4P05 Community & Recreation Planning
- 2) RECL 4P35 Current Issues in Community Recreation

All students in Inclusive & Therapeutic Recreation are also required to complete:

- 1) RECL 4F02 Internship in Therapeutic Recreation
- 2) RECL 4F22 Advanced Practices in Therapeutic Recreation

All students in Outdoor Recreation are also required to complete:

- 1) RECL 4P16 Advanced Wilderness Program Planning
- 2) RECL 4P96 Issues in Outdoor Recreation

Teaching Assistant Experience

Working as a Teaching Assistant with introductory classes is an opportunity some fourth year students won't want to miss. Becoming a Teaching Assistant is an exceptional opportunity to gain valuable teaching experience, earn money, and further develop one's own understanding of recreation and leisure concepts. Teaching Assistant responsibilities are not part of the fourth year course load; the responsibilities should be considered as employment. The process is competitive, and preference will be given to students in keeping with the CUPE Collective Agreement, relevant work or volunteer experience, and knowledge of skills specific to a particular course. Students who are accepted as Teaching Assistants must attend training workshops as a requirement of employment.

The Teaching Assistant experience contributes to the learning environment during fourth year by providing students with an opportunity to develop leadership and evaluation skills. Please see the C.U.P.E. job postings listed on the Brock University Human Resources website during the 2011 spring/summer session.

Interested students should send the following to the Academic Coordinator:

C.U.P.E. Application form (available at http://www.brocku.ca/hr/labour/application_form.pdf)

One-page covering letter explaining your suitability for the job

A current résumé including a list of 3 or more applicable references

In accordance with the C.U.P.E. Collective Agreement Article 15.02 the preference in hiring will be given to qualified students, enrolled in the department or program in the following order:

Full time doctoral candidates enrolled at Brock University

Full time graduate students enrolled in a Master's program at Brock University

Full time undergraduate students enrolled in fourth year of a four year program at Brock University provided they have at least an eighty-percent average

Due to the number of seminars being dependent on the course enrolment, seminar appointments will not be finalized until the first day of classes. Since positions are limited and funds are often not finalized, students are advised to consider securing other sources of income.

How Does a Student Get Into Fourth Year?

Before students are permitted to take any fourth year major courses, Recreation and Leisure Studies students must:

- Meet the minimum requirements and pre-requisites
- Apply to fourth year studies regardless of whether they are interested in the honours or major (non-honours) program
- Be formally admitted to fourth year studies by the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies via a letter signed by the Department Chair.

How Does One Apply?

Students must submit two different application forms by **May 31st, 2012** if they intend to attend fourth year in September 2011.

Students must submit a departmental "Intent to Apply" form to Mike Fawkes, Academic Coordinator. This form is available is included in the fourth year application package.

Students must also apply to the University by submitting the "Application for Year Four Studies" form which is also included in the fourth year application package. Students are asked to notify the Department if their plans change.

How Will I Know I Have Been Accepted To Fourth Year?

Students who apply for fourth year and meet the minimum requirements are automatically accepted into the program. However, qualified students will also receive a letter of confirmation at their Brock University email by June 15th, 2012.

The letter will include a list of the courses that students must register for and a qualifier that students must satisfactorily complete all outstanding required courses in progress (e.g., Spring courses) and maintain their current academic level.

Best of luck to all of you.

Enjoy your summer.