POST-SECONDARY BC

HOW AN UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY DEGREE IS STRUCTURED

There is a logical mathematical sequence to how the typical undergraduate degree, like a Bachelor of Arts or Science or Business, is structured. If students were to take a 'full load' of 5 courses every semester, they could complete their degree in four 'university' years.

[See the TERMINOLOGY Document for explanation of 'Full Load' and other terms used in this document]

BUT … Most students do not take a 'full load' every semester. As a result, it's important to understand how a degree is structured in order to determine how long it might take to actually complete it.

The basic 'math' behind building an undergraduate degree is based on these formulas:

- 1 semester = four months
- 2 semesters [normally Fall & Winter] = 1 university year
- 1 course = 3 credits
- 5 courses / semester = 15 credits
- 10 courses over 2 semesters = 30 credits, which = 1 university degree year
- 4 university years = 120 credits, which = A typical undergraduate bachelor's degree

Here's how a student entering post-secondary study in Fall 2019 could plan their 4-year degree path:

Semester		Courses	Credits	Semester		Courses	Credits	= Total Credits
Fall	2019	5	15	Winter	2020	5	15	30
Fall	2020	5	15	Winter	2021	5	15	60

NOTE: *By taking specific courses students can earn an Associate Degree with their first 60 credits.*

Fall	2021	5	15	Winter	2022	5	15	90
Fall	2022	5	15	Winter	2023	5	15	120

TOTALS: 40 courses = 120 credits = Typical Bachelor of Arts, Science or Business degree

THE 5-6 YEAR DEGREE IS MORE COMMON: If students take 4 courses per semester they would need at least two more semesters [1 more year] to complete their degree. Students who work part-time while attending post-secondary might only be able to take 3 courses in some semesters, which means it could take 12 – 15 semesters to complete 120 credits. Taking courses in the summer can be an option as well.

NOTE: This is a 'generalization' of typical Arts, Science and Business degrees. Students must look at the specific degree at their institution of interest to determine the exact structure and course requirements.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS COST? See '*The Post-Secondary Cost Puzzle Explained*' document