

# Credit Transfer for Open/Online Graduate Programs: Annex 4 New Zealand

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## 3.4 New Zealand

The population of New Zealand is 4.5 million, so in Canadian terms it is about the same as that of British Columbia, with some geographic and climate similarities also especially in respect of South Island.

### University sector

There are eight universities in New Zealand. These, represented by their Vice-Chancellors, make up the membership of *Universities New Zealand – Te Pōkai Tara*.<sup>1</sup> With the exception of Lincoln they are all of reasonable size (over 10,000).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.universitiesnz.ac.nz>

University	Students (EFTS)	Staff (FTE)
Auckland	32,657	5,019
Auckland University of Technology	19,117	2,106
Waikato	10,371	1,513
Massey	19,704	2,972
Victoria	16,787	1,824
Canterbury	13,171	1,787
Lincoln	3,717	618
Otago	19,197	3,755
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>134,721</b>	<b>19,594</b>

Of these, Massey University is the one best known for distance learning, but most universities have at least a few online courses.

The New Zealand universities receive approximately 40% of their annual income from government grants – NZ\$1.3 billion of the combined total income of NZ\$3.1 billion recorded in 2010. The remaining income is split evenly between student fees and other sources – principally research contracts and trading income. Nearly 60% of the sector’s expenditure of NZ\$3.0 billion went on staff salaries and related costs.<sup>2</sup>

However, there are around 20 other higher education providers. The largest group are the 16 Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs).<sup>3</sup> Of these the most notable in terms of online learning are the Open Polytechnic (an equivalent in some ways to the UK Open University) and Otago Polytechnic (which is the host of the OER university).<sup>4</sup>

In addition, there are three Wānanga (Maori community HE institutions).<sup>5</sup>

### The New Zealand Qualifications Framework

The New Zealand Qualifications Framework has a non-ISCED-compatible set of 10 levels: of which for higher education the most important ones are:

3	University entrance/school-leaving exams
4&5	Tertiary certificates and diplomas
6	Graduate diplomas and certificates and Bachelor ordinary degrees
7	Bachelor degree with honours
8	Postgraduate diplomas and certificates
9	Master’s
10	Doctoral

<sup>2</sup> A New Zealand dollar is worth around 90% of a Canadian one

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/about-education-organisations/itps-in-new-zealand/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://oeru.org>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.tec.govt.nz/Learners-Organisations/Learners/performance-in-tertiary-education/performance-by-type-of-tertiary-provider/about-wananga/>

Typically an honours degree takes four years, as in Canada; but New Zealand (as does Scotland) still has the general bachelor's degree (called "ordinary degree" in the UK).

### Credits

It seems that one year of full-time university study is equal to 120 credits.<sup>6</sup> Thus an honours degree is 480 credits and a bachelor degree 360 credits, just as in Scotland.

### Master's

The NZQA site has a clear description of the Master's Degree in New Zealand.<sup>7</sup> It is considerably more prescriptive than in many comparator countries such as UK or US.

Master's Degrees usually build on a Bachelor's Degree [ordinary], Graduate Diploma, Bachelor Honours Degree or a Postgraduate Diploma. *They may also build on extensive professional experience of an appropriate kind.* Their outcomes are demonstrably in advance of undergraduate study, and require individuals to engage in research and/or advanced scholarship.

Master's Degrees are constituted in one discipline or coherent programme of study. They may be undertaken by taught courses or research, or by a combination of both.

The Master's Degree is at least 240 credits<sup>8</sup> except where:

- it builds on a Bachelor's Degree with Honours or an equivalent qualification, or significant relevant professional experience, in which cases it can be fewer than 240 but no fewer than 120 credits
- it builds on a three-year Bachelor's Degree or an equivalent qualification, in which cases it can be fewer than 240 but no fewer than 180 credits.

The Master's Degree must comprise a minimum of 40 credits at level 9 (master's)<sup>9</sup> with the remainder at level 8 (postgraduate diploma/certificate).

### Structure of a Master's

Master's Degrees are structured in three principal ways:

**By thesis or primarily by thesis:** Entry to a Master's Degree by thesis is normally based on a Bachelor *Honours Degree* or a Postgraduate Diploma in the same field of study. The degree includes 120 credits, of which at least **90 credits** (at level 9) consist of a research project presented in the form of a thesis, dissertation, substantial research paper or scholarly creative work.

**By coursework and thesis:** Entry to a Master's Degree by coursework and thesis is normally based on an undergraduate [ordinary] degree in the same field of study. The degree includes 240 credits, of which at least 90 credits at level 9 are in the form

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<sup>6</sup> Worked out from 15 credits = 0.125 EFTS (effective full-time student) – <http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/future-students/apply-and-enrol/transfer-credit-from-a-nz-tertiary-institution/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand/understand-nz-quals/masters-degree/>

<sup>8</sup> As compared with typically 180 for a practical masters in UK, but read on

<sup>9</sup> One could regard that as the "dissertation" level

of a thesis, dissertation, substantial research paper or scholarly creative work, and of which up to 150 credits are from coursework.

**By coursework:** Entry to a Master's Degree by coursework is normally based on an undergraduate degree achieved at a specified level of attainment. The degree is at least 120 to 240 credits and is achieved through coursework consisting of courses, project work and research in varying combinations. It may build on undergraduate study in the same academic field, or it may build on the more generic graduate attributes of an undergraduate degree in other fields, or in some cases on relevant professional experience.

Thus the third option looks considerably less prestigious than the first two.<sup>10</sup>

### **3.4.1 Massey University**

The University has a comprehensive set of pages on distance learning,<sup>11</sup> covering all aspects including fees and courses available. There are 107 online Master's programmes.

Massey also has a process for Recognition for prior learning.<sup>12</sup>

#### **Master of Agricommerce**

This<sup>13</sup> is a 180-credit (i.e. shorter) Master's with either a Professional Practice Pathway with a 60-credit<sup>14</sup> individual study relevant to a student's own career/industry or a Research Pathway with an in-depth 90-credit thesis,<sup>15</sup> more appropriate for those students targeting a research or academic career.

Entry requirements do not suggest any specific alternative pathway, merely stating:<sup>16</sup>

a Bachelor of AgriCommerce having achieved a B grade average or higher over the qualifying 300-level courses, or equivalent.

There is also a 120-credit faster route available for students who already have a Postgraduate Diploma in AgriCommerce (with B+ grade or higher) or a Bachelor of AgriCommerce with Honours having achieved Second Class Honours, Division I or higher.

It has to be said that this range of options and the options within each programme would seem to lead to complex sequencing issues<sup>17</sup> and difficult choices of study modules.

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<sup>10</sup> "Master's Degrees that build on generic attributes and/or experience (often called 'conversion Master's') are usually in professional fields and are recognised as appropriate professional preparation by the profession or industry concerned."

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/distance-learning/distance-learning\\_home.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/distance-learning/distance-learning_home.cfm)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/distance-learning/course/cross-credit.cfm>

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/programme-course/programme.cfm?prog\\_id=93423](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/programme-course/programme.cfm?prog_id=93423)

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/programme-course/programme.cfm?prog\\_id=93423&tab=plan](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/programme-course/programme.cfm?prog_id=93423&tab=plan)

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/programme-course/programme.cfm?prog\\_id=93423&tab=plan](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/programme-course/programme.cfm?prog_id=93423&tab=plan)

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/programme-course/programme.cfm?prog\\_id=93423&tab=plan](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/programme-course/programme.cfm?prog_id=93423&tab=plan)

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/programme-course/programme.cfm?prog\\_id=93423&tab=plan](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/programme-course/programme.cfm?prog_id=93423&tab=plan)

## Masters of Veterinary Medicine

The Master of Veterinary Medicine programme offers practicing veterinarians a flexible, modular system of study via distance. Students may choose from a wide range of small animal, large animal, equine, epidemiology and veterinary business courses.<sup>18</sup> It is a 120-credit master's qualification.

There are several options for "capstone" modules to complete the programme but it is necessary to do one of them in order to gain a Master's.<sup>19</sup> There are also PgD and PgC routes of 120 and 60 credits respectively.

### Entry requirements

These are fairly uncompromising.<sup>20</sup>

Admission to the Master of Veterinary Medicine requires you to have a completed a veterinary degree. If you have completed a Massey University Bachelor of Veterinary Science (BVSc), or have a veterinary qualification that can be registered by the New Zealand Veterinary Council or is considered by the Academic Board to be equivalent to the Massey University BVSc, you can enrol into the Master of Veterinary Medicine.

Courses in the Master of Veterinary Medicine programme are not designed as retraining tools for veterinarians wanting to return to practice. They assume a base level of knowledge of that achieved in the veterinary degree, and they aim to extend veterinarians to a higher level of knowledge and skill. All courses have some assessments that require reporting of clinical material that a student has managed.

## General regulations on PLAR

Massey University has an informative page on *Recognition of Formal and Informal Prior Learning*,<sup>21</sup> – some highlights are below:

2. A student shall be required to complete at least the following through Massey University to be awarded a Massey University qualification:...

(c) For a postgraduate or graduate qualification, **three-quarters of the credits required.**

**18. No credit from informal learning towards a graduate or post-graduate qualification is permitted.**

19. Credit for Massey University quality assured professional development courses may be awarded towards a qualification....

20. Students may be awarded credit to the following maximum values...:

(d) a Postgraduate Certificate or Post-Graduate Diploma, one-quarter of the credits

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<sup>18</sup> [http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/programme-course/programme.cfm?prog\\_id=93367](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/programme-course/programme.cfm?prog_id=93367)

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/fms/Colleges/College%20of%20Sciences/MVM/paper-overviews/Introduction%20to%20the%20MVM%20capstone%20courses%202016.pdf?A7963BEC3F3DF7030F0E024FD2812F45>

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/programme-course/programme.cfm?prog\\_id=93367&tab=plan](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/programme-course/programme.cfm?prog_id=93367&tab=plan)

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/calendar/qualification-regulations/recognition-of-formal-and-informal-priorlearning.cfm>

required for the qualification, up to a maximum of 30 credits;  
(e) a Master's Degree, one-quarter of the credits required for the qualification, up to a maximum of 60 credits.

The upshot appears to be that for a 120-credit master, at least 90 credits (75%) must be studied through Massey University – for a 180-credit Master, at least 135 credits (also 75%).

### 3.4.2 Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

The Open Polytechnic (OPNZ) offers “a range of qualifications and courses to study by distance and online learning – from certificates and diplomas, to degrees (including honours degrees)<sup>22</sup> and graduate diplomas”.<sup>23</sup> However, “graduate diploma” is used in the sense of a NZQA level 6 qualification, lower than an honours degree. Thus OPNZ is not relevant for our study.

### 3.4.3 Otago Polytechnic

Otago Polytechnic<sup>24</sup> is not only the headquarters of the OER university but offers over 1000 programmes including a scaffolded range of graduate qualifications offered online as follows (master's in bold):<sup>25</sup>

- Postgraduate Certificate in Midwifery Practice, Postgraduate Diploma in Midwifery and **Master of Midwifery**
- Postgraduate Certificate in Occupational Therapy Practice, Postgraduate Diploma in Occupational Therapy Practice and **Master of Occupational Therapy**
- Postgraduate Certificate in Visual Arts, Postgraduate Diploma in Visual Arts and **Master of Visual Arts**; also **Master of Fine Arts** and **Master of Design Enterprise**
- **Master of Professional Practice** or Graduate Diploma in Professional Practice
- Postgraduate Certificate in Design, Postgraduate Diploma in Design and **Master of Design**
- Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Management and Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Management, but as yet no Masters.

#### **Postgraduate Certificate in Midwifery Practice, Postgraduate Diploma in Midwifery and Master of Midwifery**

The PgC is a 60-credit course at NZQA level 8 (the lower of the two graduate levels), comprising four courses.

Entrants should be midwives and hold a bachelor's [ordinary] degree OR *have relevant equivalent skills and knowledge acquired through appropriate work or professional experience.*

The PgD stage is another 60 credits (four more courses), taking students to the half-way point in the Master's programme.

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<sup>22</sup> See for example <https://www.openpolytechnic.ac.nz/qualifications-and-courses/op7090-bachelor-of-information-technology/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.openpolytechnic.ac.nz/qualifications-and-courses/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.op.ac.nz>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.op.ac.nz/study?Keyword=&Interest=0&Postgraduate=1>

The Master's phase has two options:<sup>26</sup> You can complete a 120 credit midwifery thesis or in some instances a 60 credit midwifery dissertation. The thesis option enables you to complete a piece of original research based on higher order skills of analysis and critical evaluation. Both pathways also require the completion of two compulsory pre-requisite courses: Knowledge and Theory in Midwifery, and Research Methods in Midwifery.

#### *Entry, credit transfer and PLAR*

There appears to be no programme-specific material referring to PLAR (Recognition of Prior Learning) but there is a comprehensive document at the university level on this matter.<sup>27</sup> Highlights of this 10-page document are:

Advanced standing applies where an RPL applicant has been assessed for courses, qualifications and/or an APEL process in which the outcomes equate to at least 60 credits towards an Otago Polytechnic qualification. An exception is the Masters of Professional Practice [180 credits] where Advanced Standing can be awarded for outcomes that equate to at least 30 credits. (page 2)

**Responsibilities of Heads of School.** Determining which courses RPL will not apply to and ensuring this is included in the approved programme documents. The rationale for not allowing RPL in a programme must be clearly articulated in the programme document, for example where external agency requirements place limits on RPL such as those the Nursing Council of New Zealand have in place. (page 5)

RPL education is to be included in the ongoing Professional Development Programme of Otago Polytechnic. (page 6)

### **3.4.4 Universal College of Learning**

The Universal College of Learning (UCOL)<sup>28</sup> is a private ITP which supports a variety of online learning courses (among other learning options). UCOL was founded in 1906 as the Palmerston North Technical School. In 1971 it became the Palmerston North Technical Institute, and in 1983, the Manawatu Polytechnic. Per the UCOL web site, the school has retained a focus on core vocational programmes, although it also delivers Foundation and Certificate programmes, Diplomas, Degrees and some Post-Graduate options (as well as community-based programmes).<sup>29</sup> There are a small number of Master's degrees.

#### **Master of Design**

The Master of Design<sup>30</sup> is a Level 9 programme which comprises 180 credits, of which 120 credits are at Level 8 and 60 at Level 9.

Students must undertake and complete a written thesis based on their research initiatives *and* prepare a body of work for final exhibition. As part of their studies students will

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.op.ac.nz/study/health-and-community/midwifery/master-of-midwifery/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.op.ac.nz/assets/policies/AP0501.09-Recognition-of-Prior-Learning.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.ucol.ac.nz>

<sup>29</sup> There does not now seem to be a portal to distance learning courses but there are examples, e.g. <http://www.ucol.ac.nz/Documents/Downloadable%20Documents/Fact%20sheet%20for%20distance%202013.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.ucol.ac.nz/programmes/arts-design/master-of-design#course-information>

undertake industry-oriented design or art projects that address the needs of the project client.

Compulsory modules are:

- Advanced Research Methods for Design
- Concept Development Studio
- Major Project
- Thesis Dissertation and Implementation.

Elective courses include Advanced Digital Photography; Advanced Illustration; Advanced Glass Studio; Advanced Textile and Fibre; Advanced Computer Aided Drafting; Advanced Object; Advanced Printmaking; and Advanced Moving Image.

*Entry, credit transfer and PLAR*

Applicants *may* be asked to provide a portfolio of original, developmental and finished work. Each successful candidate *will be required* to submit a professional portfolio and a research proposal.

Up to **two-thirds** of the qualification (120 credits) may be credited via Recognition of Prior Learning. *In exceptional circumstances, this amount may be increased by the Faculty Board of Educational Improvement.*

Applications for Recognition of Prior Learning, including Cross Credit, Credit Transfer and Assessment of Prior Learning may be made on the Recognition of Prior Learning Form<sup>31</sup> where a student believes they can demonstrate specified competencies.

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<sup>31</sup> This is usefully available – see

<http://www.ucol.ac.nz/Documents/Recognition%20of%20Prior%20Learning%20Application%20Form.pdf>