

# ONE YEAR FOLLOW UP REPORT

**PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW (PPR)**  
**Approved by Senate - June 2, 2020 for the**  
**Bachelor of Commerce In Retail Management**  
**Ted Rogers School of Management (TRSM)**

April 26, 2021

In June 2020, the Academic Standards Committee recommended that the program continue, as well as provide a one-year follow-up report by June 30, 2021. This report updates the status of the initiatives outlined in the Implementation Plan with a notable focus on the approval to transition the degree program to 40 credits.

The School of Retail Management has made significant progress and continues to work toward the implementation plan objectives as outlined below:

<p><b>Recommendation #1:</b> To include the "Honours" designation in the degree title.</p>
<p><b>Rationale:</b> As a four year B.Comm, the degree in Retail Management has been mapped to the OCAV table of UDLES for an Honours degree at the Bachelor's level.</p>
<p><b>Objective:</b> The Honours designation typically helps to differentiate Bachelor's degree programs that incorporate a higher level of achievement through the completion of a 4-year academic program rather than non-honours degrees that may only require 3 years of study. While the B.Comm degree in Retail Management has always been a 4-year program, it has not included this designation. The addition of the honours designation will help position graduates from the RM program on equal footing to their peers who have completed 4-year degrees at other post secondary institutions and as a point of differentiation from shorter college diploma programs.</p>
<p><b>Implementation Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upon approval of this Program Review, the School will propose this change be made to the Ryerson Undergraduate Program Calendar for the 2021/2022 academic year.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Timeline:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submission of proposal memo to Academic Standards Committee, May 2020</li> <li>• Submission of calendar changes to the Registrar office by October 2020.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Responsibility for leading initiative:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director</li> </ul>
<p><b>Responsibility for approving recommendation, providing resources and overall monitoring:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office of the Registrar</li> </ul>
<p><b>Status for 1-yr follow up report:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed/passed by Senate in June 2020</li> </ul>

**Recommendation #2:** To Discontinue the Part-time degree program offering.

**Rationale:**

- Part-time program admissions have averaged less than 8 students annually over 7 years.
- Retention rates for this group are only 25% after 4 years in the program.
- It is sometimes viewed as a “back door” entry point for prospective students who were deemed underqualified for the full-time RM program.
- Timing and nature of several core courses, including 4th year capstone classes prove challenging for part-time students to attend in the day yet limited interest/ability to offer evening, online or tied sections through continuing education for these senior level courses.
- As a result of the above, the use of course substitutions for core retail courses had become a norm to assist part-time students complete their requirements for graduation.
- Students completing the more established part-time degree in Business Management now have access to the Minor in Retail Management that wasn't available prior to the previous PPR and these Retail courses are available as online offerings.

**Objective:**

- Having already suspended new registrations in the part-time degree in Retail Management as of Fall 2017 and pending the outcome of this review, the formal discontinuation of this offering for new students is proposed to take effect in Fall 2021. Current students will continue to be supported on an individual basis toward the successful completion of their degree as they have been to date.

**Actions:**

- Approval of proposal to discontinue Part-Time degree offering in Summer 2020.
- Amendment to Ryerson Undergraduate Course Calendar to be submitted by October 2020 to become effective in Fall 2021.
- Update all online (Ryerson, TRSM, Chang School) references to the Part-Time degree with directions to the Part-time degree in business management and minor in retail.

**Timeline:**

- Approval of proposal in Summer 2020; commences Fall 2021

**Responsibility for leading initiative:**

- Program Director

**Responsibility for approving recommendation, providing resources and overall monitoring:**

- Faculty Dean

**Status for 1-yr follow up report:**

This proposal was approved by the Retail School Council (March 10) and Retail Program Advisory Council (March 23) and will be presented to the TRSM UCC (May 4) and Faculty Council (May 12) for final consideration by Academic Standards Committee in 2021

**Recommendation #3:** To focus RM program marketing messages on opportunities for internships, co-op, retail as a career (leveraging alumni, category management and sales professional certifications, advisory council, location, etc.) in relation to the RM curriculum.

**Rationale:**

- Student feedback suggests that internship/co-op opportunities and the unique nature of a degree specialized in retail are the most important factors for prospective applicants.
- While more active promotion of program scholarships was recommended in the previous program review, opportunities for financial aid appear to be a secondary concern for prospective students in attempting to identify the right program and may be more effectively highlighted later in the process of converting applicants to enrollments.

**Objective:**

- Overcoming misperceptions about retail careers have proven challenging for the industry as a whole and thus remains a priority for the RM degree program.
- The relevance of the degree and interest in specific retail careers once individuals are made aware of the opportunities (e.g., buying and merchandising, digital retailing, etc.) is illustrated in part through a high percentage of students who enroll in the RM program via direct entry (transfers from college programs) or working for a short period following high school.
- By developing consistent messaging that highlights the diversity of career possibilities and skills required for innovative retail initiatives, the school may better position the RM degree to improve conversion rates among new applicants and those considering a transfer from other university programs while also strengthening internal retention.

**Actions:**

- Develop a plan to highlight new retail alumni each year that match the interests stated by students and employer partners in annual surveys.
- Include focus on unique paths within the retail curriculum (i.e., buying, digital) and certifications (e.g., Professional Category Manager, Sales Professional).
- Explore the value of targeted marketing of a degree in retail beyond Ontario and opportunity to reach students considering a change in universities / programs.
- Increase focus on college diploma graduates for “direct entry” paths to the degree.
- Measure popularity of specific career roles/employer brands on social media/website.
- Survey students about top reasons for selecting the RM program and top forms of engagement they experienced prior to accepting their admission offer.

**Timeline:**

- Develop an initial plan in Summer 2020
- Content creation in July/August
- Begin activating content through online / print channels September through March
- Conduct new student and employer surveys in October
- Review annually in April the effectiveness of all content and plan for new examples to highlight in the following year.

**Responsibility for leading initiative:**

- Manager, Program Design in consultation with TRSM Marketing & Communications team.

**Responsibility for approving recommendation, providing resources and overall monitoring:**

- Program Director

**Status for 1-yr follow up report:**

This objective is underway and remains in progress.

- In coordination with faculty member Dr. Frances Gunn, the Manager of Program Design, student staff, and in consultation with the TRSM MarCom team, the program is undertaking several branding and outreach initiatives to further our exposure in the retail community.
- To date, students in second and third year of the program have shared TikTok style videos on the School's Instagram channel with their ideas on the themes of, "why a degree in retail just makes sense" and "why a career in retail just makes sense".
- Similarly, the School is launching a "Ryerson Retail Talks" video series to host on YouTube with four themes that will continue to outline the value of a degree and careers in retail. These themes include: "Talks with Students", "Talks with Faculty", "Talks with Alumni" and "Talks with Researchers". To date, 5 videos have been recorded with one featuring the winner of the Shopify Challenge in a 4<sup>th</sup> year Retail class who designed an ecommerce store for his family business.
- In the annual Retail Program Planning meeting this May, a deeper discussion about branding the school will continue from initial conversations in earlier faculty meetings during the year.

**Recommendation #4:** Propose curriculum change from 45 to 40 credits while presenting suggested paths of study that align with career fields, special topics, or future graduate studies.

**Rationale:**

- Updating the curriculum to 40 total credits will better align with requirements by other programs in TRSM, increasing flexibility and choice for RM students.
- Informal pathways that may be mapped to the curriculum (examples include Buying & Merchandising, Digital Retail, and Sales Leadership as identified by students and employers).
  - a) Many prospective students consider the RM program due to career aspirations in buying;
  - b) Digital innovation is an area that may be of interest yet often overlooked by prospective students as being part of a retail degree;
  - c) Sales leadership is a growing area within TRSM, and can be a great way to enhance interdisciplinary orientation within this field.
- Within an ever-changing industry, retail job functions, titles and terminology evolve and must be monitored to ensure currency and alignment with curriculum.
- Current students may benefit from clearer suggestions about how courses relate to each other and to prospective career paths or Masters programs.
- The potential to explore and identify one formal area of concentration (e.g., digital retail, sales leadership) that complements the school's reputation for buying and merchandising may better serve prospective, current and graduating students alike.

**Objective:**

- Propose a revised curriculum plan that reduces total credits from 45 to 40.
- Outline paths through the RM curriculum that relate to specific career interests. This may include special notation in the Undergraduate Course Calendar to show clusters of courses (e.g. RMG302, RMG400, RMG452, RMG806, RMG909, RMG916 for Buyers and Merchants)
- Explore the opportunity to develop pathways in a field of retail with growing student interest and employer demand.

**Actions:**

- Submit curriculum change proposal to TRSM Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.
- Review curriculum clusters and alignment to career paths during faculty meeting.
- Conduct iterative research with students, alumni, employers about these paths.
- Actively monitor course enrolments, student interests, and industry needs.
- In addition to the informal paths, identify the potential for one specific area of concentration within the retail degree.

**Timeline:**

- Review curriculum with Faculty in Spring 2020
- Present revised curriculum plan to UCC in Summer then TRSM Faculty Council in Fall 2020
- Prepare proposal for course calendar submission in October that includes informal paths.
- Further explore potential for one formal concentration in Winter 2021
- Present follow up report to ASC by June 30, 2021.

**Responsibility for leading initiative:**

- Program Director & Manager, Program Design & Academic Advisor

**Responsibility for approving recommendation, providing any resources made necessary by the recommendation, and overall monitoring of the implementation of the recommendation:**

- Faculty Dean

**Status for 1-yr follow up report:**

A motion was passed during a meeting of the Ryerson Senate on November 3, 2020 as follows:

- ***“That Senate approve the reduction from 45 to 40, in the total number of courses required for the Bachelor of Commerce in Retail Management degree program.”***
- *All 5 courses that were removed from the core requirements have been shifted to elective tables, allowing for potential future access to these topics on an optional basis.*

With this change becoming effective for students entering the degree program during the Fall 2021 academic term, and new branding initiatives related to item 3 above, the School will continue to present and develop potential paths of study through the curriculum in select classes (e.g. RMG100, RMG799) and online through the School website. (See Appendix – Curriculum Changes)

**Recommendation #5:** Explore opportunities for funding to support and sustain the ongoing integration of retail undergraduate students in faculty research projects on an annual basis.

**Rationale:**

- Faculty in the RM program have proven adept at guiding MScM students to successful completion of a research-based degree.
- The RM Academic Plan and NSSE survey suggests opportunities for integrating more undergraduate students in the research process.
- With select examples of grants being used to hire retail research assistants, this could be expanded if more consistent funding were available.

**Objective:**

- To identify internal funding within the RM program to support the ongoing integration of undergraduate students in research projects.
- Support Faculty in their pursuit for grants to open opportunities for Undergraduate-based research assistants.

**Actions:**

- Conduct needs assessment among faculty of the type of research support that is most needed.
- Align needs with potential for undergraduate students to provide relevant support.
- Explore potential for internal funding of student research positions.
- Develop process for faculty to apply / implement retail research projects.
- Identify or create space/process for student researchers and research assistants to work on an on-going basis.
- Invite select undergraduate students to the annual Retail Research Colloquium.

**Timeline:**

- Needs assessment in faculty meetings Fall 2020.
- Review internal accounts, potential sources of funding – Fall 2020.
- Develop pilot project & process for undergraduate research initiatives.

**Responsibility for leading initiative:**

- Program Director

**Responsibility for approving recommendation, providing resources and overall monitoring:**

- Faculty Dean

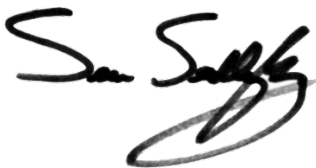
**Status for 1-yr follow up report:**

This objective remains in progress. While securing space and funding for undergraduate students to participate in research has been paused due to the impact of COVID-19 and virtual work environments, individual retail faculty have found success in mentoring undergraduate research.

Examples include:

- Dr. Mark Lee mentored a 4<sup>th</sup> year undergraduate student (Lara Hamdan) whose paper was published with her as the **primary author** in an “A-ranked journal” – the International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management in February 2021. He has also worked with another 4<sup>th</sup> year student who has also presented his work at an academic conference.
- Dr. Janice Rudkowski mentored a 3<sup>rd</sup> year student (Alex Duesing) in a Research Assistant Co-op position with funding through the Student Work Placement Program. She and Alex co-presented their work at the Triennial AMA/ACRA conference in March 2021. Dr. Rudkowski has also been successful in acquiring a MITACs Grant providing research opportunity for a student in Hong Kong.
- Dr. Mark Lee, in coordination with the UCC, has created a TRSM-wide Business Research Methods course that provides exposure and opportunity for undergraduate students. The course (to be BUS777 pending approval) will be offered to TRSM students in an intensive format (i.e., 2-weeks in Spring/Summer Semester). The intended benefit of the course is to recruit enthusiastic, high-performing students to get them interested in the graduate programs at TRSM/Ryerson.

Start date of next Periodic Program Review: 2024-25



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## Appendix – Curriculum Changes (Effective Fall 2021)

### Current Curriculum - 1<sup>st</sup> Year

Fall	Semester One	Winter	Semester Two
<b>RMG100</b>	Issues and Innovations in Retailing 1	<b>RMG200</b>	Intro to Retail and Services Management
<b>CMN279</b>	Introduction to Professional Communication	<b>ACC100</b>	Introductory Financial Accounting
<b>GMS200</b>	Introduction to Global Management	<b>ITM102</b>	Business Information Systems I
<b>QMS110</b>	Applied Mathematics for Business	<b>MKT100</b>	Principles of Marketing
<b>MHR405</b>	Organizational Behaviour	<b>QMS210</b>	Applied Statistics for Business
<b>ECN104</b>	Introductory Microeconomics		

### Approved New Curriculum - 1<sup>st</sup> Year

Fall	Semester One	Winter	Semester Two
<b>RMG100</b>	Issues and Innovations in Retailing 1	<b>RMG200</b>	Intro to Retail and Services Management
<b>CMN279</b>	Introduction to Professional Communication	<b>ACC100</b>	Introductory Financial Accounting
<b>GMS200</b>	Introduction to Global Management	<b>ITM102</b>	Business Information Systems I
<b>QMS110</b>	Applied Mathematics for Business	<b>MKT100</b>	Principles of Marketing
<b>MHR523</b>	Human Resources Management	<b>QMS210</b>	Applied Statistics for Business

#### Changes to get from 11 to 10 courses in first year include:

- moved ECN104 out of Semester 1 to Semester 4
- replaced MHR405 with MHR523

### Current Curriculum - 2<sup>nd</sup> Year

Fall	Semester Three	Winter	Semester Four
<b>RMG301</b>	Retail Operations Management	<b>RMG300</b>	Retail Information Management
<b>RMG400</b>	Merchandise Buying and Planning 1	<b>RMG303</b>	Managing the Retail Workplace
<b>ACC406</b>	Introductory Management Accounting	<b>RMG700</b>	Applied Retail Research
<b>ENT500</b>	New Venture Start-up	<b>ECN204</b>	Introductory Macroeconomics
<b>Liberal Studies</b>	One Table A Lower Liberal Studies	<b>LAW122</b>	Business Law
		<b>Liberal Studies</b>	One Table A Lower Liberal Studies

### Approved New Curriculum - 2<sup>nd</sup> Year

Fall	Semester Three	Winter	Semester Four
<b>RMG301</b>	Retail Operations Management	<b>RMG300</b>	Retail Information Management
<b>RMG400</b>	Merchandise Buying and Planning 1	<b>RMG303</b>	Managing the Retail Workplace
<b>ACC406</b>	Introductory Management Accounting	<b>RMG700</b>	Applied Retail Research
<b>LAW122</b>	Business Law	<b>ECN104</b>	Introductory Microeconomics
<b>Liberal Studies</b>	One Table A Lower Liberal Studies	<b>Liberal Studies</b>	One Table A Lower Liberal Studies

### Changes to get from 11 to 10 courses in second year include

- Removed ENT500 from Semester 3 and adding to the P.R. / Open Elective table II
- Moved LAW122 from Semester 4 to Semester 3
- Moved ECN104 from Semester 1 into Semester 4
- Moved ECN204 from Semester 4 to Semester 5

### Current Curriculum - 3<sup>rd</sup> Year

Fall	Semester Five	Winter	Semester Six
RMG434	Intro to Logistics & Supply Chain Management	RMG302	Retail Consumer Insights
RMG910	Omni-Channel Retailing	RMG452	Visual Merchandising and Space Planning
GEO419	Retailing GIS and Geo-demographics	FIN300	Managerial Finance I
Professional Elective	One course from Table I	Professional Elective	One course from Table I
Professionally Related / Open Elective	One course from Table II	RM799*	Internship Placement & Prep
Liberal Studies	One Table A Lower Liberal Studies	Liberal Studies	One Table B Upper Liberal Studies

### Approved New Curriculum - 3<sup>rd</sup> Year

Fall	Semester Five	Winter	Semester Six
RMG434	Intro to Logistics & Supply Chain Management	RMG302	Retail Consumer Insights
ECN204	Introductory Macroeconomics	RMG452	Visual Merchandising and Space Planning
FIN300	Managerial Finance I	Professionally Related / Open Elective	One course from Table II
Professional Elective	One course from Table I	Liberal Studies	One Table B Upper Liberal Studies
Liberal Studies	One Table A Lower Liberal Studies		
4 year Program with Internship:		RM799*	Internship Placement & Prep
5 year Program with Co-op:		Professional Elective	One course from Table I

#### Changes to get from 12 to 10 courses in third year include

- Removed RMG910 from Semester 5 and added to the Professional Elective table I.
- Removed GEO419 from Semester 5 and added to the P.R. / Open Elective table II.
- Moved ECN204 from Semester 4 (current) to Semester 5 (proposed)
- Moved FIN300 from Semester 6 to Semester 5
- Moved one P.R. / Open Elective Table II from Semester 5 to Semester 6
- Moved one Professional Elective Table I from Semester 6 to Semester 7 for students in the 4-year program
- Substituted RMG799 in Semester 6 with a Professional Elective only for students in the 5 year co-op program.

### Current Curriculum - 4<sup>th</sup> Year

Fall	Semester Seven	Winter	Semester Eight
<b>RMG500</b>	Retail Strategy	<b>RMG908</b>	Issues and Innovations in Retailing II
<b>RMG801</b>	<b>Retail Career Strategies</b>	<b>RMG925</b>	<b>Leading in Retail Service Organizations</b>
<b>Professional Elective</b>	<b>One</b> courses from Table I	<b>Professional Elective</b>	One course from Table I
<b>Professionally Related / Open Elective</b>	<b>TWO</b> courses from Table II	<b>Professionally Related / Open Elective</b>	<b>One</b> course from Table II
<b>Liberal Studies</b>	One Table B Upper Liberal Studies	<b>Liberal Studies</b>	One Table B Upper Liberal Studies

### Approved New Curriculum - 4<sup>th</sup> Year

Fall	Semester Seven	Winter	Semester Eight
<b>RMG500</b>	Retail Strategy	<b>RMG908</b>	Issues and Innovations in Retailing II
<b>Professional Elective</b>	<b>TWO</b> courses from Table I	<b>Professional Elective</b>	One course from Table I
<b>Professionally Related / Open Elective</b>	<b>One</b> course from Table II	<b>Professionally Related / Open Elective</b>	<b>TWO</b> course from Table II
<b>Liberal Studies</b>	One Table B Upper Liberal Studies	<b>Liberal Studies</b>	One Table B Upper Liberal Studies

### Changes to get from 11 to 10 courses in fourth year include

- Removed RMG801 from Semester 7 and add it to the Professional Elective Table I
- Removed RMG925 from Semester 8 and add it to Professional Elective Table I
- Moved one P.R. / Open Elective Table II from Semester 7 to Semester 8
- Moved one Professional Elective Table I into Semester 7 from Semester 6 in place of RMG801 for students in the 4 year program (or a 5<sup>th</sup> Professional Elective for those in co-op).

## Implementation Plan - Phased-In Summary of Curriculum Changes

### Year 1 – 2021-2022:

- ECN104 moved out of fall semester in 1st year
- MHR405 replaced with MHR523 in fall semester of 1st year

### Year 2 – 2022-2023:

- ECN104 moved into Winter semester of 2nd year
- ENT500 removed from Fall semester of 2<sup>nd</sup> year
- LAW122 moves from Winter to Fall semester of 2<sup>nd</sup> year
- ECN204 removed from Winter semester of 2<sup>nd</sup> year

### Year 3 – 2023-2024:

- RMG910 removed from Fall semester of 3<sup>rd</sup> year.
- GEO419 removed from Fall semester of 3<sup>rd</sup> year.
- FIN300 move from Winter to Fall semester of 3<sup>rd</sup> year.
- One P.R. / Open Elective Table II moved from Fall to Winter semester of 3<sup>rd</sup> year.
- For students in 4-year program only: one Professional Elective Table I removed from Winter

### Year 4 – 2024-2025:

- One P.R. / Open Elective Table II moved from Fall to Winter semester of 4<sup>th</sup> year.
- Move one Professional Elective Table I into Fall semester and remove RMG801 from 4<sup>th</sup> year.
- Move RMG801 from Fall Semester of 4<sup>th</sup> year to Professional Elective Table 1
- Move RMG925 from Winter Semester of 4<sup>th</sup> year to Professional Elective Table 1