

# Update on Student Mobility and Credit Transfer

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## *Purpose*

To provide information about current policy directions aimed at improving credit transfer in Ontario between and among colleges and universities.

## *Overview*

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, is seeking improvements in credit transfer in Ontario's postsecondary education institutions. COU is working with the Ministry, and with stakeholders, to develop analysis and options.

*International Context:  
The Bologna Accord, 1999*

Signed by Ministers of Education from 29 European countries, the Bologna Accord aims to create a European higher education area by making academic degree and quality assurance standards more comparable and compatible throughout Europe.

*National Context: Pan-Canadian Protocol on the Transferability of University Credits, 1995*

Signed by the Council of Ministers of Education with a view to achieving pan-Canadian recognition of university undergraduate credits.

## *Provincial context:*

### **The Ontario College-University Degree Completion Accord (Port Hope Accord), 1999**

Signed by representatives of Ontario's colleges and universities, the Port Hope Accord sets out a series of principles for developing degree-completion agreements.

### **Rae Report, 2005**

The Rae report calls for universities and colleges to recognize each other's related programming to create clear and efficient pathways for students.

## *Ontario Scene*

There are more than 300 existing transfer agreements of different types in Ontario.

There is also credit transfer activity happening *outside* of formal agreements between PSE institutions.

## *Articulation Agreements*

An official agreement between two or more institutions– at least one from each sector– that allows studies undertaken in specific programs at one institution to be credited toward, or provide advanced standing in, specific programs at another institution

Bilateral agreements:

- one college to one university

Multilateral agreements:

- many institutions to many institutions
- one institution to many institutions
- many institutions to one institution

## *Credit Transfer Mechanisms*

- Block Transfer / Degree Completion /Laddering (251 of 326 transfer programs in Ontario are this type)
- Bridging
- Case-by-case transfer
- Collaborative Program (concurrent degree-diploma program)
- Direct entry

## *Credit Transfer Outside of Formal Agreements*

### Examples:

- Case-by-case transfer (individual student transcript assessed for transfer credit)
- **Direct Entry** (a credit transfer opportunity to a specific degree program which has been formally approved by the receiving institution but is not a formal collaborative agreement between institutions)

## *MTCU's Approach*

MTCU is seeking more credit transfer pathways for PSE students; both college-to-university, and university-to-university pathways.

## *Principles of MTCU's Proposed Credit Transfer System:*

1. Builds on the foundation of student mobility and accessibility for all students and is one strategy for including underrepresented groups in the province for students applying for transfer between Ontario institutions and in the review of transfer credit.
2. Provides a high degree of consistency across the province for students applying for transfer between Ontario institutions and in the review of transfer credit.
3. Provides explicit and transparent information for students about transfer credit, credential recognition and mobility agreements for Ontario colleges and universities.
4. Recognizes the time and resources required by both colleges and universities to participate in the transfer process.

## MTCU Principles continued...

5. Realizes cost savings for students and their families, government and the public through the elimination of credit duplication.
6. Improves Ontario's ability to meet the demand for a skilled and flexible workforce by increasing the capacity and flexibility of the postsecondary education sector.
7. Builds on, but is not limited to, successful experiences, strengths and strategies already in place in Ontario.
8. Includes participation by all institutions, with the nature and extent of institutional participation to be determined by individual institutions.

## MTCU Principles continued...

9. Adopts a collegial approach among participating institutions that:
  - maintains the academic integrity of individual institutions and their programs and credentials; respects and acts within the boundaries of the required regulatory frameworks of the regulated professions.
  - requires institutions to optimize pathways for students and minimizes barriers to their mobility by basing agreements on maximum recognition of students' previous learning experiences, while taking into account the background and knowledge required for academic success post-transfer; recognizes student success is paramount

## MTCU Principles continued...

- awards qualifying students transferring between Ontario's publicly funded colleges and universities with credit for relevant learning already demonstrably completed at the appropriate level of mastery
  - maintains fairness and equity for all students by entitling any student who gains admission to an institution under a transfer agreement to the same rights and privileges as students who began their studies at the institution
10. Includes and/or facilitates processes to support consistency of application, continuous improvement, access to research, ongoing accountability, performance measurement and review and regular reporting to measure and enhance the performance of Ontario's credit transfer system.

## *MTCU's Key Performance Indicators and Accountability*

Key Performance Indicators for credit transfer will be part of a broader PSE accountability framework through the Multi-Year Accountability Agreements (MYAAs)

Indicators under discussion address:

- Improved transparency and access to information
- Improved student pathways
- Student success

## *COU's Approach*

- Environmental scan
- Gathering data (surveys) to develop recommendations about accountability and performance indicators
- Assessing best practices models from Ontario and other jurisdictions
- Discussions with stakeholders
- Developing options for improvement (for both college-to-university transfers and transfers between university programs)
- Public response to Colleges Ontario

## *Credit Transfer Groups*

- MTCU Steering Committee
- MTCU Working Group
- MTCU Information Management Strategy Working Group
- COU Standing Committee on Relationships with Other Postsecondary Institutions
- COU Credit Transfer Resource Group
- COU-OCAV Working Group on Credit Transfer

## *Colleges Ontario Approach*

- Advocating for “systemic” approaches to increased credit transfer between colleges and universities
- Advocating to expand the degree-granting powers of colleges
- PEQAB now allows colleges to grant degrees without using the term “applied,” for example, “Bachelor’s of Technology”

### *Questions for Discussion:*

- What models for college-to-university transfers in other jurisdictions should we be looking at closely?
- Are there approaches to college-to-university transfers that should be introduced, or expanded, in Ontario?
- Are there practical suggestions for improving transfers of credit among university programs?
- What performance indicators would be appropriate to improve accountability for credit transfer?

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