



Ontario Heads of Business



oncat
Ontario Council on
Articulation and Transfer

Research on Current Level Transfer Agreements – Awareness, Usage and Maintenance/Sustainability

Ontario Colleges Heads of Business
ONCAT Project # 2017-36

Executive Summary

May 2018

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Executive Summary

Previous Project

In November of 2014, the Heads of Business (HOB) for the Ontario Colleges, with the financial support of the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT), undertook a pilot project to implement system-wide pathways for four agreements in the disciplines of Business, Accounting, Human Resources and Marketing.

PROGRAMS	MAESD #	MAESD#
Business/Business Administration	50200	60200
Business Accounting/ Business Admin. - Accounting	50100	60100
Business- Human Resources/Business Admin. Human Resources	50223	60223
Business- Marketing/Business Admin. Marketing	52900	62900

Current Project

In March of 2017 with funding again through ONCAT, the Heads of Business launched a research project to evaluate the status of the HOB transfer agreements three years after implementation. This project had four primary goals:

1. Provide insight into institutional processes required to support student mobility.
Research Question: What is the awareness level of students and college staff of the system level agreements?
2. Contribute to our understanding of the student experience of transfer.
Research Question: What are the student's attitudes towards their experiences after they have transitioned and what barriers/supports do they report related to their transfer?
3. Generate and analyze new quantitative information on student mobility in Ontario.
Research question: How many students have benefited (intentionally/unintentionally) from the system-wide transfer agreements?
4. Analyze promising practices in facilitating transfer and supporting transfer student success
Research Question: How effective has the promising practice of Curriculum, Pathway Guides (CPGs) been as a process to keep transfer agreements current?

To answer these four questions, the research methodology included seven unique components including system wide and college specific data analyses, student and stakeholder surveys, reviews of existing Curriculum Pathway Guides, website analyses and college stakeholder interviews and focus groups.

Conclusions and Implications

In response to the four research questions listed above:

1. The awareness of the four HOB transfer agreements is high among the longer tenured college staff, but awareness is lower with newer, less experienced staff. Specialists, such as the Credit Transfer Office staff, are generally more aware of the agreements than academic areas, while the awareness level of the agreements among students is reported by staff to be very low.
2. The number of respondents to the survey of business students that had transferred between institutions was not sufficient to provide a perspective on the student experience. Our research identified a significant variance in the process and experience between colleges for transfer

students. Students are surprised that they can obtain transfer credits and, in some cases, misinterpret transfer requirements.

3. It is not possible to determine the exact number of students transferring under the HOB agreements because this information is not tracked at the provincial (OCAS/ONCAT) or college level. However, the data supplied by OCAS indicates that on average since the time the agreements were implemented, 90 students have transferred each year. Conflicting data supplied directly from six colleges showed approximately 63 students per year have transferred over the past four years.
4. The Curriculum Pathway Guides (CPGs) are not widely used to facilitate the transfer of students or to keep the transfer agreements current. When they are used, college staff found the CPGs to be a key part of administering a HOB student transfer and maintaining the course requirements specified in the HOB transfer agreements.

Additionally, it is evident that since the implementation of the Heads of Business agreements, a palpable, cultural shift has occurred within the colleges as it relates to the reciprocity of credits within programs included in the four agreements. Despite the culture shift the number of students benefiting from the ability to transfer is significantly less than .01% of all Provincial Business Student Registrations.

Notwithstanding the overarching difficulty in acquiring the necessary data to make informed decisions, this research did bring to light several opportunities for the Heads of Business and the Colleges to benefit from one another's expertise in communication and processes.

Several conclusions and implications have been identified for the Heads of Business and the HOB - Transfer Agreement Steering Committee to explore in the coming months as it pertains to the ongoing success of the current agreements.