

Engaging the Community and Moving Forward

Section 1: Setting the Context

The overall goal of the ARUCC PCCAT National Transcript Standards and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Project is to contribute to enhanced student mobility by creating standards and tools that facilitate the efforts of registrarial and pathway practitioners and policy developers at Canadian postsecondary institutions and allied organizations.

A core component of Phase 2 is to further engage the national community in a discussion about what the future transcript standards and transfer credit nomenclature *should* look like. To quote the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide, the main transcript issues remain “‘what information to record’ on the transcript and ‘how to record’ the needed information, so that the transcript accurately and equitably reflects educational achievements, and the information it conveys is clear and unambiguous for present and future users” (ARUCC, 2003, p. 10).¹ For transfer credit nomenclature, the primary goal is to seek agreement on what terms and definitions to adopt in a database that are reflective of common and promising practice.²

This phase is also focused on creating a national, online database scheduled for launch by the end of September 2015. Phase 1 findings, additional research, the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide, and transfer credit glossaries in use within and across pathway organizations in Canada are being assessed as a means to inform database development.

Phase 1, completed in June 2014, resulted in a comprehensive, national understanding of current transcript and transfer credit nomenclature standards, practices, and thinking. The full report is available online at: <http://www.arucc.ca/en/resources/arucc-pccat-project.html>.

¹ <http://www.arucc.ca/uploads/PDF/transe.pdf>

² In Phase 1, respondents across Canada stressed consideration of electronic data exchange standards. For the latter, the researchers are seeking advice from the Canadian Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) User Working Group which is leading a separate related project; therefore, this topic is not covered in the Consultation Document. The 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide directly references the XML data standards work in the US and noted the promise these would hold for the future (pp. 43-44). Given the infancy of the field at that time, further details could not be provided.

These findings will support the updating of the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide to a certain degree; however, there are differences of opinion, gaps, and variable practices. Further, there is evidence that the previous Guide was not widely used which is somewhat unfortunate as, while there is room for updating the document, it offers a number of enduring principles, standards, and recommendations that still resonate in the present day. The findings also indicate there is a variable appreciation of the alternative practices in other international jurisdictions, some of which might assist with supporting standards development particularly in the areas of competency-based education and program learning outcomes.

Project Operating Principles

Core principles continue to guide this work: supporting student mobility; facilitating community engagement; and encouraging transparency, coherency and knowledge enhancement. The project is also guided by a commitment to recognize and respect institutional autonomy and provincial authority.³ In this context, the overarching intentions include pointing “to good practices, even best practices” (ARUCC, 2003, p. 10), highlighting enduring common practice which should be preserved, and pointing the way to future possibilities.

Objectives

Three objectives inform the consultation and communications process: confirming and validating Phase 1 findings; clarifying remaining relevant considerations where questions remain surrounding previously collected data; and resolving any discrepancies or evident gaps. Realization of these objectives will inform the content created for the transcript and the transfer credit nomenclature standards database (the “Guide”).⁴

Consultation Format

To elicit forward thinking and broad, and deep consultation with the community, this Consultation Document is structured to allow for reflective consideration of questions that are grounded in Phase 1 evidence and additional research. ***It does not repeat questions asked in Phase 1; however, focuses on probing the issues to a deeper level.***⁵

Input can be provided primarily in two ways:

1. Through an online survey that accompanies this Consultation Document at the following URL: http://fluidsurveys.com/s/ARUCCPCCATPhase2FeedbackSurvey_SondageRetroactionPhase2ARUCCPCAT/; OR,
2. By separate written submission to the primary investigator for the project, Joanne Duklas (jduklas@cogeco.ca).

The approach is deliberately flexible at this stage to ensure deep reflections on those transcript standards and transfer credit nomenclature topics that are particularly concerning to pathway developers and registrarial practitioners.

³ Duklas et al. (2014). ARUCC PCCAT National Transcript Standards and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Study, ARUCC PCCAT, p. 23.

⁴ For the purposes of this Consultation Document, “Guide” from this point forward will explicitly mean to reference the future transcript and transfer credit nomenclature standards database.

⁵ The stakeholder groups to be consulted are provided in Appendix A.

For your convenience, a summary of the consultation questions is available in Appendix B.

The research group is also conducting select regional workshops and stakeholder interviews to capture further qualitative input. These additional venues are intended to probe topics in a manner that elicits additional context beyond the survey. The online survey and the discussions in these venues will not replicate the consultation questions from Phase 1.

Participants are also encouraged to revisit the Phase 1 Report: <http://www.arucc.ca/en/resources/arucc-pccat-project.html>

Consultation Timing

The time period for the primary consultation phase begins Wednesday, April 29th and concludes Friday, June 5th with the formal closure of the supporting online survey, the link for which accompanies this Consultation Document. It will be supported by a number of stakeholder consultation opportunities. During the month of June, the consulting team will be creating the content for the searchable databases and seeking any final confirming reflections from leadership within the ARUCC and PCCAT stakeholder groups. The database will be developed with a goal to launch by September 2015.

Consultation Deadline

The deadline to provide feedback through the survey is Friday, June 5th, 2015. Workshop timing is pending consultation with regional associations across Canada.

Highlighting Exemplars

While the project scope does not include analyzing each and every institutional transcript or transfer credit policy or practice or conducting individual institutional interviews, participants in this consultation process are encouraged to continue identifying exemplars. These will be examined at a high level to inform identification of promising practice.

There are two primary methods to submit feedback: (i) through the online survey accompanying this Consultation Document; or, (ii) in writing to the primary investigator, Joanne Duklas, about the topics of relevance to your situation (jduklas@cogeco.ca). The research group is also conducting select regional workshops and stakeholder interviews to capture further qualitative input.
