

An abstract graphic consisting of several white lines of varying lengths and orientations, creating a sense of movement and depth against the dark blue background. The lines are primarily oriented diagonally, with some horizontal and vertical segments interspersed.

ARUCC PCCAT TRANSCRIPT AND TRANSFER CREDIT NOMENCLATURE STUDY

An Examination of Current Practices at Canadian
Postsecondary Organizations

ARUCC PCCAT TRANSCRIPT AND TRANSFER CREDIT NOMENCLATURE STUDY

AN EXAMINATION OF CURRENT PRACTICES AT CANADIAN POSTSECONDARY ORGANIZATIONS

Prepared for:

Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC)

Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT)

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The Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer



PCCAT/CPCAT

The Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer
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Project Leadership and Sponsoring Organizations

Project leadership

The Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC) and the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT) jointly led the national Transcript and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Study.

ARUCC

ARUCC is a professional body for higher education administrators and managers in Canada. The Association advances best practices and professional development in the area of academic administration including, but not limited to, admissions, registration, examinations, scheduling, transcripts, systems, records, calendars, scholarships and awards, secondary school liaison, and other activities or undertakings that may be deemed appropriate to the Association. ARUCC is an Associate Member of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada and of the Canadian Council for the Advancement of Education (CCAIE).

PCCAT

PCCAT is a professional body for higher education admission and transfer credit professionals in Canada. The purpose of PCCAT is to facilitate research about, and implementation of, policies and practices that support student mobility and granting of transfer credit both within and among provinces and territories in order to improve access to postsecondary education in Canada.

ARUCC PCCAT Project Steering Group

The research project benefited from the leadership provided by an ARUCC PCCAT Steering Group comprising the following representatives most of whom are executive members from the leading organizations:

Dr. Robert Adamoski, Associate Director, Research, BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT)

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ARUCC PCCAT Project Advisory Group

A thirty-member advisory group, representative of postsecondary institutions and organizations across Canada, provided integral guidance and advice. Their input is gratefully appreciated. A list of the membership is available in Appendix A.

Special Mention

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- Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC)
- British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT)
- Campus Manitoba
- Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO)
- New Brunswick Council on Articulations and Transfer (NBCAT)
- Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT)
- Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT)

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Executive Summary

The Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC) and the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT) have collaborated to lead an extensive study to understand current transcript and transfer credit nomenclature practices in Canada. These findings will ultimately inform a comprehensive update and expansion of the 2003 ARUCC National Transcript Guide and potentially result in a searchable database of transcript practices and Canadian transfer credit nomenclature. The ultimate goal is to enhance the clarity, consistency and transparency of the academic transcript and transfer credit resources that support student mobility. The specific deliverable for this phase was to identify and summarize Canadian transcript and transfer credit nomenclature practices, review four international jurisdictions as a means to highlight promising practices related to these two areas and, finally, to provide both an overview of systems and an initial examination of emergent perspectives and themes. The report purposefully avoids suggesting prescriptive solutions or outcomes; however, the findings from this study will provide a solid foundation from which to move forward the standards and terminology discourse in Canada. This report collates the findings from the supporting research conducted from January through to April 2014.

The report begins with an overview of background, context, scope, objectives and guiding principles for the project.

The research was focused on the following objectives:

- Articulating the enhancement requirements for the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide and testing its core principles and definitions;
- Identifying at a specific, operational level the current transcript and transfer credit terminology practices in use across Canada within postsecondary institutions and by associated organizations;
- Highlighting gaps and opportunities in current transcript and transfer credit nomenclature practices;
- Providing a beginning understanding of the emergent thinking surrounding transcript and transfer credit terminology standards;
- Conducting an initial jurisdictional review to identify promising practices in various jurisdictions (with a particular focus on Europe, the United Kingdom, United States and Australia);
- Informing a next phase of consultation, which will be tasked with deliberating and determining a transcript and transfer credit terminology standards guide(s).

The following core principles underpinned the research process and guided efforts executed by the Project Team, under the leadership of the ARUCC PCCAT Steering Committee:

- Supporting student mobility through enhanced clarity, transparency and consistency of transcript and transfer credit information as the primary underlying focus of the project;
- Broad and deep consultation and engagement of individual, institutional and organizational stakeholders;

- A focus on research, including being informed by previous research, collecting evidence of current practices, validating existing principles and illuminating emerging issues and trends;
- Respecting institutional autonomy and culture;
- Improving transparency and coherence;
- Enhancing knowledge through exchange of information and promising practices during the research process.

In keeping with the Guiding Principles, the research employed a variety of methods, which are described beginning on page 25 with additional details provided in Appendices D1 through D11. These methods included an online poll completed by 25 participants on the project's national advisory committee, regional workshops with 103 participants across the country, and 25 individual stakeholder interviews.

This input was used to guide development of a national survey targeted primarily to members of ARUCC and PCCAT. The survey was completed by 119 individuals, representing 105 institutions, for an organizational response rate of 57%. The project also received 145 samples of transcripts and transfer credit material from 44 postsecondary institutions and the XML data standards for electronic transcripts from the Canadian Post-Secondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) User Group.

In addition, jurisdictional reviews were conducted to explore the current transcript and transfer credit nomenclature practices, at both national and provincial/regional levels in Canada. The four international jurisdictions, Australia, Europe, UK and the US, grounded this research in a global context.

Research findings are presented beginning on page 27, with a focus on Canada. Provincial and regional jurisdictional overviews (Western Canada, Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic Canada) that informed the development of the Canadian report are included in Appendix E. The Canadian jurisdictional overview highlights the combined strength and capacity of provincial responsibility for postsecondary education. Particular attention to the work of provincial councils on articulations/admissions and transfer and related bodies¹ is examined together with national strategy leadership and coordination achieved through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), and sector-specific bodies such as the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), Colleges and Institutes Canada (formerly the Association of Canadian Community Colleges) and the Conference Board of Canada, in addition to ARUCC and PCCAT.

Consistent themes related to transcript and transfer credit nomenclature standards that emerged from the Canadian jurisdictional research include the following:

- There is solid evidence of collaboration within jurisdictions to ensure quality of process, qualifications alignment, efficiencies and coordination and a growing research culture.
- The variability in regional, programmatic and linguistic nomenclature is evident across the country.

¹ BCCAT, ACAT, Campus Manitoba, ONCAT, NBCAT, the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission and, for Quebec, the Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche et de la Science (MESRS) and the Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire (BCI)

- There is emerging interest and work in the area of national electronic transcript exchange standards and practices, particularly as noted through the work of the member organizations of the Canadian Post-Secondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) User Group. It is important to note that while the scope of the research did not include data exchange protocols, this area was of significant interest among research participants. The project benefited from the cooperation of the Canadian PESC User Group, whose work is also profiled in the Canadian jurisdictional overview.
- The increasing implementation of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) structures (e.g., in Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Ontario) bring attention to the need for clear, transparent and appropriate transcription and transfer credit standards for credits achieved through PLAR.
- The growing adoption of online learning and blended learning models, and the emergence of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) present questions with respect to assessment and transcription of alternate delivery format courses.
- There is a growing focus on learning outcomes as a mechanism to improve and enhance pathway development and credentialing. Implications for transcripts and credit transfer must be considered.

The international jurisdictional findings begin on page 46. Each jurisdiction offers their own interesting credentialing approaches, and policies and practices related to transfer and mobility. Simply transposing an international approach on Canadian jurisdictions is neither suggested nor appropriate given the histories, cultures, and system norms with respect to institutional autonomy and local postsecondary frameworks. The research, however, provides an overview of common practices, new possibilities and collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries that may be helpful to national discussions. Highlights of key themes and promising practices derived from the international research include the following:

- Advantages to students and internationalization more generally when collaboration among and support for coordinating levers and organizations that enhance mobility are encouraged. This is evident whether it occurs within or across jurisdictional borders. Policy development and coherence in the areas of credentialing and transfer credit nomenclature are enhanced as a result. As one example, in some of the international jurisdictions studied and with the help of coordinating agencies, qualifications frameworks situate the level of student learning achieved and facilitate interpretation and comparison of equivalencies for credential types across regions.
- Providing an explanatory document with standard content to accompany the transcript and degree parchment or creating cross-jurisdictional standards to enhance clarity about the credential and its provider appears to be another typical outcome of collaboration. Examples include the Diploma Supplement (EU), the Higher Education Graduation Statement (Australia), the Higher Education Achievement Record (UK) and the Transcript Guide published by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO). Each example is representative of best practice both nationally and internationally.

- Competency-based learning outcomes in these jurisdictions are increasingly being used to measure, assess, and compare student learning and are subsequently resulting in implications for transcription and transfer credit nomenclature.
- There is growing support for identifying and adopting standards for electronic data exchange and participating in international initiatives that support student mobility and data portability (e.g., the “Groningen Declaration”).

Findings from the Canadian primary research are presented beginning on page 62 with the advisory poll, workshops, stakeholder interviews, and website and document sample review and on page 73 for the national survey results. Further details of primary research findings are provided in the appendices.

Findings from the transcript research are extensive, with the following summary of highlights:

- Respondents confirmed the currency of most of the transcript principles and definitions included in the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide. Awareness and usage of the Guide appears to be inconsistent. Numerous examples were provided of needs for enhancements to the Guide.
- There is continued evidence of ambiguity surrounding understandings of what constitutes an 'official' transcript and questions about related privacy and security considerations.
- There is substantial variability in definition and understanding of terms, as well as in practices of what should be included on the transcript. There is also considerable support for enhancing consistency and clarity of practice. Variability in definitions of credit and credit weight stands out as presenting an opportunity for developing common usage and/or understanding.

The transfer credit nomenclature and related policy research also revealed significant variability in approaches with respect to transfer credit guides and use of terminology at the strategic and operational levels for both pathway agreements and individual transcript assessment for transfer credit. Guides and glossaries produced by provincial councils on admissions/articulation and transfer (e.g., BCCAT, ACAT and ONCAT) were highlighted as promising resources. Respondents noted in particular the need to contemplate and potentially define standards for: transcripts and transfer credit assessment with specific reference to terminology for types of pathway agreements (e.g., articulation, degree completion, block transfer, and joint programs); alternative learning delivery such as online learning and experiential learning; competency-based education (e.g., learning outcomes); and equivalent learning (e.g., Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition - PLAR, challenge exams, etc.).

Additionally, respondents acknowledged the impact of regional, programmatic and linguistic nomenclature differences, which are often embedded in institutional policies and/or regulations. At the same time, actual data comparisons have revealed a number of common themes and practices, which are noted throughout the report.

Recommendations resulting from the research are presented beginning on Page 111 within *Implications and Concluding Remarks*. The findings achieved through this research demonstrate a high level of convergence among the themes derived from the advisory group, stakeholder interviews, jurisdictional research, and survey findings. Such results validate and confirm the reliability of the research. At a high level, important findings include the following:

- There is a tremendous will and engagement among ARUCC and PCCAT colleagues, as well as allied organizations to work towards refinements that will improve clarity, transparency, and mobility for students.
- While there is strong support for moving forward with transcript and transfer credit nomenclature standards, there is an equal assertion that institutional autonomy be respected and that any such standards become recommended, not required practice.
- Student mobility and the processes and structures that support it are subjects of increasing focus worldwide. There is significant opportunity to benchmark and learn from promising practices in regional, national, and international jurisdictions.

Six recommendations are offered to guide the next phase of the ARUCC PCCAT project:

1. Enhance the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide - The next phase of the ARUCC PCCAT project should further assess these findings, confirm that which is still current and relevant in the ARUCC Transcript Guide, and propose a series of potential content enhancements, changes and additions that should then be presented for consultation, review, refinement and endorsement by the community.
2. Determine where to house the new Guide - An analysis should be conducted in the next phase to explore how best to present the information and ensure its currency and final location.
3. Develop a national Transfer Credit Glossary - The feasibility of creating a single national glossary for transfer credit nomenclature should be explored, the specifics of which would be endorsed and supported by PCCAT, ARUCC, and the councils on admissions/articulation and transfer. The glossaries and terminology guides presented in this report, together with the frequently used terms identified through the survey will provide a helpful starting point for this work. Assuming the support and resources are available, it may be possible to implement the new glossary in the next phase.
4. Develop a sustainable and complementary communications plan – The guides and glossaries ultimately must be supported by a complementary communications plan to ensure regular awareness and usage of the tools.
5. Establish a national awards program to recognize and validate promising practices – The two associations should consider developing a national awards program, ideally adjudicated by both ARUCC and PCCAT that acknowledges potential promising practice in Canada and begins to bring external validation and visibility to models of interest throughout the country.
6. Support the development and adoption of electronic transcript exchange standards – the next phase of the ARUCC PCCAT project should continue to ensure that the Canadian PESC User Group member organizations are consulted and engaged in this process. Further, the ongoing project should be mindful of the opportunities presented by international opportunities such as the Groningen Declaration.

The report includes an extensive reference list. A comprehensive series of appendices provide further insights into the themes and recommendations derived for this report.

Introduction

Student mobility and progression are hallmarks of twenty-first century student success. Students move between and among colleges, institutes, universities and the workplace. Ensuring their qualifications and achievements are well understood and recognized is essential, whether students remain in their home provinces, transfer across Canada or venture outside our boundaries for international experience and education. Institutional official transcripts should be the passports to mobility.

The official institutional transcript should provide clarity and transparency for prospective students to enable fair recognition of their qualifications and achievements. The last decades have witnessed a proliferation of educational opportunities. Individual institutions have developed varying policies, guidelines, and procedures to present credentials and other relevant information on the transcript. The evolution of large-scale vendor administrative systems has had an impact on student record management and nomenclature that is reflected on student transcripts. The recognition of transfer credit, prior learning and credentials on transcripts varies across institutional and geographic boundaries, often creating impediments and barriers to student mobility and progression.

The Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC) and the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT) collaborated to lead an extensive research project designed to ultimately inform a thorough update to the 2003 ARUCC National Transcript Guide. Additionally, this collaborative undertaking seeks to support the development of a searchable database of transcript practices and Canadian transfer credit nomenclature. The final report from this research project follows.

The report provides background and context for the project and a project overview including a summary of the research approach. The research findings begin with a Canada-wide review (with supporting information in Appendix E on the following regions - Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario and Western Canada) and also include international research focusing on Australia, Europe, the United Kingdom and the United States. The international research provides a system overview, description of qualifications frameworks and quality assurance, transcript standards, and policies and practices related to transfer and mobility for each country. The National Survey findings are provided within the body of the report and are supported by an appendix containing more detailed findings. Given the range of associations and acronyms mentioned throughout this report, a Glossary is provided in Appendix B.

The scope of this report is to present findings that will inform the next phase of analysis and consultation, with the eventual goal of creating a guide that provides recommendations for Canadian transcript content and presentation, and a compendium of transfer credit nomenclature. The report purposefully avoids suggesting prescriptive solutions or outcomes.

The research process adhered to specific principles such as respecting institutional autonomy and provincial authority. These principles are outlined on page 23. Interestingly and as the findings will demonstrate, the high degree of common practices across the country suggest that the previous 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide and the work of provincial and national associations such as the two leading

this project and the sponsoring organizations have led to alignment of best practices across the country, which is promising for the next stage of the project.

Background and Context

Over the past three decades, there has been a growing interest in student mobility both within provinces and across the country. As an illustration of this, ARUCC, PCCAT and the regional associations have a long history of commitment to developing standards for both transcripts and transfer credit mobility.

In 1986, ARUCC created Canada's first report on student records, *A Report of the Task Force on Student Records* (1986).

In 1998, the BC Council on Admission and Transfer and the BC Registrars' Association created one of Canada's first transcript guides (British Columbia Registrars' Association (BCRA), 1998). This guide exists in the present day and provides a specific itemization of the components that should be present on the transcript. Further to this and over the past twenty years, the BCRA, BCCAT and the British Columbia government ministry responsible for higher education have produced a number of guides to facilitate student mobility and transfer in the province, many of which are published on the BCCAT website (www.bccat.ca).

In 2003, Canada's first nation-wide transcript guide was published by ARUCC (2003) resulting from approximately a year of consultation and research with all levels and sectors across Canada's postsecondary landscape. Funded by the then Human Resources Development Canada, the research was supported by a national committee and regional registrarial associations from across the country. As with the previous two transcript guides, the reason for examining the area of national transcript standards remains consistent – changes in postsecondary context and pedagogy, growing inter-institutional partnership arrangements both nationally and internationally, available technology, and demographic changes require a reconsideration of what should constitute the components and role of today's transcript. While the transcript still functions in some ways as an artifact of an institution's program offerings and a student's educational path, the changing postsecondary landscape necessitates review and reconsideration. Like the current ARUCC PCCAT Study, the original 2003 guide focused on providing "good...even best practices" (p. 10) without being "normative... [or]...prescriptive" (p. 10). The 2003 ARUCC guide is used in the present day; however, ARUCC members have indicated that it no longer meets all postsecondary transcription needs in light of today's realities and pressures.

In 2002, the Council on Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), endorsed a credit transfer improvement strategy, which was adopted by all members and is encapsulated in the *2009 Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada* (2009). This document emphasized a number of commitments including facilitating student knowledge about credit transfer through "clearly stated policies and procedures" (p. 1). At the time of the 2009 CMEC statement, a national working group compiled a cross-Canada lens on the provincially-led action plans towards enhancing mobility in keeping with CMEC's intention of building "a pan-Canadian system of credit transfer...over time, through an initial focus on developing

and enhancing strong provincial/territorial transfer systems” (CMEC Working Group on Credit Transfer, 2009, p. 1). The ARUCC PCCAT national project currently underway represents a continued effort to advance a national focus within postsecondary institutions by identifying the different transfer practices in place.

With a specific focus on transfer credit nomenclature, there are numerous examples in different parts of the country wherein guides, policies, and subsequent glossaries have emerged in the past two decades. Technology and the Internet have aided the development of advanced transfer guides and/or transfer websites in the different provinces. Some examples include the following:

1. BC Transfer Guide at bctransferguide.ca (BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT), 2004-2014);
2. Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) at <http://www.acat.gov.ab.ca/> (2009);
3. Atlantic Provinces Community Colleges Consortium at <http://www.apccc.ca/agreements/agreements.html> (2014);
4. The annual *2012-2013 Transfer Guide for Newfoundland & Labrador* at <http://www.aes.gov.nl.ca/postsecondary/transferguide/index.html> (Newfoundland & Labrador Department of Advanced Education and Skills, 2014);
5. The Ontario ONTransfer.ca, which features both a Program Transfer Guide and a Course Transfer Guide (Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT), n.d.);
6. The New Brunswick Portal.nbcacat.ca (New Brunswick Council on Articulations and Transfer, 2010).

Growing interest in student mobility and achieving principles inherent to the CMEC statement are evident. The long standing interest and engagement in student mobility from organizations such as Colleges and Institutes Canada (2011), the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) (2008; 2009), and the Conference Board of Canada (2013) are further evidence of the commitment to enhancing Canada’s transfer milieu.

In 2012, PCCAT conducted one of Canada’s first national mobility studies with the objective of understanding the nature and movement of students from one jurisdiction to another within Canada (Heath, 2012, p. 7). The study concluded that mobility appeared to be increasing but also amplified the challenges introduced by inconsistent data definitions and inaccessible data sources (p. 7). The research concluded that further pan-Canadian studies would benefit from focusing on improving these areas; hence, the value of a project such as the ARUCC PCCAT Transcript and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Study.

It is generally understood that student mobility through credit recognition, transfer and admission to successive education levels is a cost-effective and efficient way to promote access to postsecondary education. When well supported, it also mitigates geographical barriers and carries with it the potential to facilitate a national network for education and workforce preparation and mobility. Unfortunately, differences in transcript practices and credit transfer terminology often cause confusion and misunderstanding for individuals moving across and within provincial boundaries. These differences also

affect the institutions that receive them, limiting recognition of previous studies whether between schools or progression through to graduate studies.

While the PCCAT study on mobility concluded that the commitment espoused in the CMEC principles is being actualized (p. 72), the challenges impeding sustainable change and study require additional attention. Over time, education and training institutions have developed varying policies, guidelines, and procedures to recognize credentials from other Canadian jurisdictions and different approaches to featuring relevant information on transcripts and in student information systems. Typically, these standards are institutionally driven and either impacted by institutional policy and culture and/or information system platforms. Issues arise on a number of fronts including but not limited to a lack of common terminology. Terms and approaches may vary by region and institution, leading to difficulties in interpretation, mobility, and data sharing and analysis.

The *BCCAT Credentialing Practices for Joint Programs* study served as an initial beta for the ARUCC PCCAT Project (Duklas, 2013). The focus of the BCCAT research was exclusively on transcript protocols for postsecondary institutions involved in joint program development. The findings, however, served to test the core research principles and methods, which are similar in nature to the national project. More importantly, it provided beginning evidence of the variety of transcript and transfer credit nomenclature practices in use in one Canadian region. This research served to confirm the appropriateness of and need for the ARUCC PCCAT Transcript and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Study. Another recently released ONCAT report noted similar challenges with transfer and highlighted nomenclature as one area of needed focus (Arnold, 2014).

As a relevant contextual point, the ARUCC PCCAT Transcript and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Study also inventories various qualifications frameworks to provide background information given their value in informing and facilitating transfer and mobility. However, practitioners do not always understand the link of frameworks to transcription protocols. As the transcript is an artifact of an institution's quality, program offerings, and student learning experience, it is a passport for mobility. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly important to consider credential outcomes, best practices and qualifications frameworks in relation to transcription and transfer nomenclature.

Qualifications frameworks come in many forms but often provide a map or legend of the credentials offered by a particular jurisdiction. Further, some jurisdictions are engaging in exercises and forms of credentialing that intentionally provide evidence of how transcription and credentialing align with the local framework, thereby providing a means by which comparisons of outcomes across regions and sectors can occur. Put another way, a transcript, transfer pathway, or potentially the terminology in use can lack meaning if an evaluator, assessor, or pathway developer does not understand the structure of the system from which these artifacts emerge. Conversely, disconnects can emerge between practice and policy, which can adversely impede an institution's partnership and student mobility goals. The value of alignment is certainly true internationally and growing in importance nationally. While it is recognized that not all frameworks explicitly mention transcription or transfer nomenclature, there is an emerging trend to consider credentialing and transcription in these contexts. For these reasons, the

findings in this report and its appendices include information regarding qualifications frameworks in use or development elsewhere.

Project Overview

Scope

The scope of the research project involved identifying the current practices across Canada in two areas: transcript protocols and transfer credit terminology. The research also sought to provide evidence of common or promising practices. The project is part of a larger multi-year initiative to create a new transcript standards guide and a glossary of transfer credit terminology. The target audience for the research focused primarily on the ARUCC and PCCAT membership, which includes registrars (or designates) from public and private postsecondary institutions from across Canada and other individuals with direct involvement in transfer credit assessment and/or policy development either at a school, in government or through another organization that maintains an interest in student mobility.

It was not the intention of the research project to identify standards that should feature in a future transcript or transfer credit glossary of terms. That phase is intended to occur at a later stage. However, the findings from this research project will provide a solid foundation from which to move forward the standards and terminology discourse in Canada.

As an important aside, the scope of the research does not include electronic data exchange protocols as this is the focus of another project led by the Canadian PESC User Group. It also does not include a review of privacy legislation in each province in relation to transcripts and transfer credit.

Research Objectives

The research was focused on the following objectives:

- Testing the core principles of the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide and articulating how it may be enhanced;
- Identifying the current transcript and transfer credit terminology practices in postsecondary institutions and by associated organizations across Canada;
- Identifying differences in the various practices;
- Providing an understanding of the emergent thinking surrounding transcript and transfer credit terminology standards;
- Conducting a review to identify promising practices in various jurisdictions (with a particular focus on Europe, the United Kingdom, United States and Australia);
- Providing evidence to inform the development of a transcript and transfer credit terminology standards guide(s).

Principles governing research

The following principles guided the Project Team, working under the leadership of a Steering Committee comprised of members from both ARUCC and PCCAT:

Supporting Student Mobility

The commitment to enhancing student mobility by capturing current practices and challenges nationally and internationally remained a core principle of the project. Communication between and among institutions about academic achievements is facilitated when transcripts are appropriately reflective of the programs and progress students have achieved and the reporting is readily and easily understood. The advantages to students are many, including smoothing assessment and reducing confusion by receiving institutions, evaluators and employers.

Engagement

Primary consideration was given to ensuring broad support from the postsecondary sector and interested stakeholders across the country. From the initial poll, through the establishment of a multi-regional advisory working group, workshops and interviews with practitioners in every province, to the comprehensive survey distributed widely to ensure both breadth and depth of input, the project was met with enthusiasm and deep engagement from all participants.

Research

Throughout the project, the focus was to conduct and compile comprehensive data about current practices and emerging issues and trends, while in no way attempting to influence practices, guide philosophies or prejudge outcomes.

Institutional Autonomy and Recognition of Provincial Authority

The objective of this phase was to ensure that varying institutional cultures and practices as well as regional influences and authority were respected. The final report seeks to present the findings and high-level qualitative themes without judgment or bias.

Improving Transparency and Coherence

The report attempts to enhance the transparency of current practices and to inform national discussion on the development of strategies and protocols. The intent is to provide background that identifies common and successful practices as well as challenges that might impede student mobility and progression, and ultimately to provide a basis for developing recommendations and guidelines to assist practitioners, students, and other interested parties.

Enhancing Knowledge

Facilitating communication among institutional practitioners and enhancing understanding of current (and particularly common or promising) practices across Canada and beyond informs and helps individuals in their own practice. Developing common understanding about the current state and future

prospects for postsecondary transcripts is universally helpful and was a key principle guiding the work on this project.

Associations and organizations involved in the research process

ARUCC is supported by its institutional membership base and provincially-based regional registrarial associations. PCCAT is comprised of individual membership and supported by the various councils on admission/articulation and transfer across the country.

The regional registrarial associations include the following:

- Atlantic Association of Registrars and Admissions Officers (AARAO);
- Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire (BCI) sous comité des registraires - formerly la Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec (CREPUQ);
- Ontario colleges' Committee of Registrars, Admissions and Liaison Officers (CRALO);
- Ontario University Registrars' Association (OURA);
- Western Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (WARUCC).

The Association des registraires des collèges du Québec (ARCQ), the College/CEGEP registrars' association in Quebec, is not currently an affiliated member of ARUCC; however, this group was also included in the consultation process.

The councils on admissions/articulation or similar provincial organizations include the following:

- Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT);
- British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT);
- Campus Manitoba;
- New Brunswick Council on Articulations and Transfer (NBCAT);
- Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT).

In addition to the above, there were a number of educational organizations/associations that provided input into the research consultation process. Primarily, participation was captured through stakeholder interviews supplemented by internet research, a process that is described further within the methodology section of this report. The interviewees represented the following organizations:

- BC Campus;
- Brandon University;
- Campus Manitoba;
- Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC), Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC);
- Colleges and Institutes Canada;
- Conference Board of Canada;
- Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO);
- Manitoba Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE);
- Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche et de la Science (MESRS);

- Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning;
- University of Saskatchewan;
- University of Manitoba;
- World Education Services (WES).

Appendix C provides a listing of the stakeholders involved in the interview process.

Methodology

Overview

The research process for the ARUCC PCCAT Project employed a variety of strategies to achieve its objectives. To ensure all participants had a baseline understanding of the project, a communications plan was developed and select definitions were identified. A national Advisory Group comprising representatives primarily from postsecondary institutions across Canada supported the project. This group responded to a preliminary poll distributed in the early research stages to help inform subsequent research and consultations. This ensured breadth and depth of consultation in the initial stage.

The research included in-person and virtual workshops held in various regions across the country, stakeholder interviews, institutional sample transcript and policy reviews, website analysis, and Internet research. Throughout the project, a permission and notice of use message was represented in various settings to enhance the comfort level of respondents. The methods used are described in greater detail in Appendix D1. To support the next phase of the ARUCC PCCAT project, samples of the definitions and various tools used are available in Appendices D2 to D11.

A comprehensive, online survey was developed and refined by the Project Team as a result of feedback captured from the research consultation process. The Project Team, members of the Advisory Group and members of the ARUCC PCCAT Project Steering Group tested the online survey. The instrument was structured into four parts. The first section requested organizational demographic information to facilitate future data analysis. The second part focused on identifying institutional (or, in the case of Quebec CEGEPs, governmental) transcript protocols and the third section focused on highlighting transfer credit practices. The latter had a particular additional focus on identifying transfer credit terminology. The last section of the survey focused on identifying promising practices, emerging trends, and articulating perspectives on future directions through questions probing principles and definitional terms. The survey was launched on March 5th and formally closed on March 28th, 2014. In addition, the survey remained open five extra days to facilitate late responses.

The target audience for the research project primarily comprised registrars and those in organizations and institutions with direct involvement in transfer credit policy development and management. The particular focus was on ARUCC and PCCAT members.

Methodological Considerations and Limitations

For the most part, the project experienced very few challenges during the research process other than a very tight timeline. There was extensive engagement from the Canadian registrarial community, which

facilitated the success of the study. Having noted this, there were some considerations that arose primarily with the national survey.

First, the survey's online nature, while efficient and allowing for immediate feedback, prevented the interaction normally inherent to a focus group or interview setting; hence, the value of the workshops and the interviews. The nature of online surveys is such that it is difficult to adjust questions to facilitate response in a manner that allows for nuanced feedback. As a result, sometimes the respondents had difficulty understanding the intent of particular questions. The instrument was structured in such a manner as to provide an array of quantitative and open-ended qualitative responses to mitigate this situation.

Distribution of the national survey was reliant on association email lists. To obviate the impact and potential lack of currency of any given list, the national survey was cascaded to local regional association email lists.

Topic complexity was an initial concern. Tying transcript and transfer credit nomenclature is a relatively obvious pairing in that one informs (or impedes) the other; however, both are individually robust and complex topics. As a result, it became somewhat of an early challenge to ensure the national survey addressed both topics. This was mitigated by involving the national advisory group in the testing process.

Again, as a result of the topic complexities, the length of the survey was noted by some respondents as a challenge. Beta testing revealed that the estimated time of completion was 30 to 45 minutes; ultimately, the average time to completion ranged from 30 minutes to one hour. Despite the time involved for respondents to complete the survey, the institutional response rate was 57%.

Nomenclature differences caused some initial concern with respect to the survey. While definitions were provided for select items, the entire instrument was designed to illicit information, in part, on terminology usage. Therefore, it became necessary to avoid overly defining terms. The findings did reveal a significant range of terminology usage particularly on the transfer credit side. Exploring the full nuances of this will become an important component of the next phase of the ARUCC PCCAT project.

Introduction to the Research Findings

The variety of research strategies pursued by the Project Team resulted in an array of findings, some of which were intentionally sought early as a means to identify the questions that should be featured either in the workshops or in the national survey (e.g., the advance poll distributed to the ARUCC PCCAT Advisory Group, the website review and the sample collection exercise). The Canada-wide, region-specific and international research occurred in parallel to much of the primary research. For the purposes of the report and in the interest of first establishing the larger context in which institutional transcription and transfer credit nomenclature is situated, the findings are presented in the following order:

1. Canada-wide overview, incorporating regional overviews in Appendix E;²
2. International overview;
3. Current Canadian perspectives on transcript and transfer credit nomenclature practices;
 - ARUCC PCCAT Advisory Group findings;
 - Website and sample review;
 - Workshop findings;
 - National survey findings.

At the end of each of these sections, the evident themes and recommendations are provided as a means to assist with informing the future phase(s) of this ARUCC PCCAT multi-year project.

Canada-Wide Research Findings

The Canadian jurisdictional research focused both nationally and regionally. It revealed consistent themes as follows:

- Solid evidence of collaboration within jurisdictions to assure quality of process, align qualifications, promote efficiencies and coordination, and advance a culture of research;
- Regional, programmatic and linguistic nomenclature differences;
- Growing interest in online learning;
- Emerging interest and work in the area of national electronic transcript exchange standards and practices;
- Increasing need for transcription and transfer credit standards in the area of prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR);
- Growing focus on learning outcomes as a mechanism to enhance pathway development and credentialing;
- Lack of standardized transcript and transfer credit practices in many jurisdictions;
- Continued interest in building on collaboration and trust.

To facilitate establishing a larger contextual framework and to align this work with the international findings, the Canada-wide section in Appendix E provides a system overview and information on the

² Canadian regional reports are contained in Appendix E.

national qualifications framework and quality assurance. Below provides a regional snapshot, the current environment for transcript and transfer credit standards, and the status of the national data environment related to the project's focus. The Canadian PESC User Group is profiled below as well. All of this has been informed by regional research conducted throughout Canada, the full details of which are available in Appendix E. The regional findings in this Appendix are presented in accordance with the structure of ARUCC's association: Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario³ and the western provinces. The core relevance of that data is to provide specific examples of how each jurisdiction is contributing individually and collaboratively to ensure quality of process, alignment, efficiency, and coordination, particularly in the area of transfer. While more needs to be accomplished, the evidence shows there is a maturing and growing infrastructure within the different regions to support collaboration, evolution, and convergence of discussion and opportunity.

The section on Canada ends with a summary of the above findings along with details to situate each within the contextual implications for transcript and transfer nomenclature standards development.

Canadian System Overview

Canada has among the highest postsecondary education attainment rates in the OECD. In 2011, 51% of Canada's adult population held a tertiary education qualification, the highest rate among OECD countries, which had an average rate of 32% (OECD, 2013). Postsecondary education in Canada is the responsibility of each of the 10 provinces and three territories; unlike many countries, there is not a federal ministry or department of education.

Postsecondary education in Canada "encompasses all types of formal instructional programs beyond secondary school, including academic, vocational, technical, and continuing professional education offered primarily by universities, colleges, and institutes" (Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials [CICIC], 2009). While provinces have their own structures for postsecondary education, there is substantial similarity among the systems, with a mix of public and private institutions, and credential-granting authority being approved by the provincial and territorial governments. The traditional model of degrees being granted primarily by universities, and diplomas and certificates primarily by colleges and institutes is evolving and university colleges and some colleges now grant degrees in many jurisdictions. There are close to 250 (mostly) public and private institutions in Canada with degree granting authority and over 150 recognized colleges and institutes that are focused primarily on diploma and certificate programs. In addition, there are approximately 1300 private career colleges in Canada that are registered or licensed by a provincial or territorial government (CICIC, 2009). Appendix F provides a graphical representation of similarities and differences in the structure of provincial and territorial education systems in Canada (CICIC, 2010).

Despite having decentralized responsibility for education, coordinated pan-Canadian strategy and action is achieved in part through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), an intergovernmental body with representation of all 13 provinces and territories (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada

³ The Ontario colleges' Committee of Registrars, Admissions and Liaison Officers (CRALO) and the Ontario University Registrars' Association (OURA) each hold separate seats on the ARUCC executive; however, for the purposes of this study, all consultation and the resultant findings were pursued collaboratively. As an example, the two groups participated in a shared workshop.

[CMEC], n.d.a.). In *Learn Canada 2020* (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada [CMEC], 2008), the provincial and territorial ministers of education articulated their vision for quality lifelong learning opportunities for all Canadians, recognizing “the direct link between a well-educated population and (1) a vibrant knowledge-based economy in the 21st Century, (2) a socially progressive, sustainable society, and (3) enhanced personal growth opportunities for all Canadians” (p. 1). One of the eight key activity areas specified in the plan is to “Enhance and stabilize the long-term capacity of postsecondary systems to meet the training and learning needs of all Canadians seeking higher education learning opportunities” (p. 2). To this end, credit transfer is one of six themes of focus to achieve that goal. CMEC has introduced a *Working Group on Credit Transfer* that reports annually and ministers of education have endorsed the ministerial statement on credit transfer in Canada (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada [CMEC], 2009). CMEC has asserted that a “pan-Canadian system of credit transfer should be encouraged” (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada [CMEC], n.d.b.).

A key unit of CMEC is the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC), formed in 1990 “after Canada signed the UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region...[which] promotes international mobility by advocating wider recognition of higher education and professional qualifications” (Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials [CICIC], 2014). Through their website, www.cicic.ca, CICIC provides comprehensive information on the postsecondary system and credentials in Canada, serving individuals and institutions both within and outside of the country. CICIC also represents Canada in a number of global associations and working groups focused on student mobility, such as the European National Information Centres (CICIC, 2014).

Beyond CMEC, further national postsecondary system collaboration is achieved through sector-specific associations such as the Association for Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and Colleges and Institutes Canada. AUCC provided ongoing monitoring and analysis for Canada’s university system during the development of the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area, and submitted updates to the system through the *Statement on Canadian Universities and the Bologna Process* (2008) and *The Bologna Process and Implications for Canada’s Universities* (2009). In the conclusions of the 2009 report, AUCC notes,

[T]he increasing focus in Europe, as part of the Bologna Process, on learning outcomes and student-centred education presents a challenge to Canadian higher education institutions and systems to closely examine policies and procedures on admissions, curriculum and program design, as well as the measurement of student accomplishments (p. 14).

It adds, “The Bologna Process poses a challenge to other higher education systems such as Canada’s “to put their own houses in order”, and simultaneously offers an opportunity to develop international partnerships and collaboration and research” (p. 14).

Colleges and Institutes Canada’s *Transfer, Articulation and Pathways* (TAP) committee has been working on ways to enhance transfer for some time, and is looking to advance transferability principles to guide

members' efforts. Examples of questions related specifically to transfer nomenclature that have arisen through TAP's work and that of the *Recognition of Learning Network*, include the following:

- What is a transfer student?
- What is PLAR and how is it impacting transferability?
- What is assigned versus unassigned credit? (Michèle Clarke, personal communication, January 17 and 24, 2014).

In 2013, the *Joint Presidents' Working Group of Colleges and Institutes Canada and AUCC* was formed and serves as an excellent example of strategic level engagement across the college and university sectors on the topic of student mobility (Michèle Clarke, personal communication, January 17 and 24, 2014). The joint committee may explore issues related to the need for better transfer data to track the state of mobility in Canada, the potential and impacts of PLAR, and curriculum design potential for joint programs.

Further, the Conference Board of Canada (2013) introduced the *Centre for Skills in Post-Secondary Education* (CSPSE) in 2013, with 35 investor members, including colleges, universities, councils on articulation and transfer, and sector associations, and a five year mandate to examine advanced skills and postsecondary education challenges facing Canada today. Among the examples of potential initiatives identified in the Centre's research plan are the following:

1. Create a national system that maximizes the opportunities for domestic and international student mobility across provinces and among institutional categories.
2. Create a national credit transfer and recognition facility similar to what currently exists in Western Canada.
3. Create a national credential recognition facility for newcomers to Canada (*p. 17*).

Diana MacKay, Director of Education confirms that there is strong alignment between the Centre's objectives and the ARUCC PCCAT National Transcript and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Study (personal communication, January 31, 2014). At a meeting of the Conference Board's *Quality Network for Universities* in February 2014, university vice-presidents, academic and leaders from PCCAT participated in a working session on the CSPSE and formed a 'coalition of the willing' to move this agenda forward (Diana MacKay, personal communication, February 17, 2014).

Regional 'Readiness'

As illustrated by the findings of the regional/provincial jurisdictional overviews in Appendix E, well-established structures are in place in some regions across Canada and others are under development, creating synergies that will help to drive progress toward achieving CMEC's credit transfer and student mobility goals. Below are some illustrative examples.

Best practice

The councils on admissions/articulations and transfer are receiving accolades for the work in the area of transfer. To illustrate, BCCAT was routinely mentioned in all the primary research venues. The *ACAT Transfer Best Practices* (Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer, 2013) and *Transfer Alberta*, its online portal, were cited in the western workshops and in stakeholder interviews as examples of best practice. In Ontario, ONCAT has also launched a new Course-to-Course Transfer Guide (Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer [ONCAT], 2014), significantly enhancing transparency and access to information for students, which is receiving strong support from stakeholders. In Manitoba, Campus Manitoba is soon to launch its new site for students (Dave Neale, personal communications, March 2014). The New Brunswick Council on Articulations and Transfer (NBCAT) has launched a transfer site as well and augments it with instructional tutorials to facilitate information access (nbcats.ca). These organizations are engaging in and also exploring new methods to encourage knowledge mobilization through conferences, research, communications and inter-provincial memoranda of understanding. As one example, ACAT's new 'Spotlight' publication (2014) provides updates on the work of ACAT and profiles trends, best practices, research, innovative admissions and transfer initiatives.

CMEC Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance

Regions across Canada have endorsed the *CMEC Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Education in Canada*, which includes the Canadian Qualifications Framework (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 2007). Further, there is a government ministry in each province/territory with responsibility for postsecondary education; typically quality assurance is locally governed by some form of Degree Authorization Act and/or institutional charter.

Cross-jurisdictional Collaboration

In 2009 the *Atlantic Provinces Community College Consortium* and the *Association of Atlantic Universities* signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) outlining guiding principles, operating principles and implementation guidelines to enhance transfer and mobility opportunities for students in the Atlantic provinces. The MOU (2009) recognizes institutional autonomy, yet outlines common approaches to transfer agreements (by block transfer, course-by-course transfer, or entry to a specified year), basis of admission, and coordination and dissemination of information pertaining to transfer pathways.

As another significant example of the interest in inter-provincial exchange focused on facilitating dialogue and collaboration, the various jurisdictions in the west have come together beginning in 2010 to form the Western Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (WestCAT) (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), 2011, p. 13; Western Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (WestCAT), 2009). Its mandate is "to encourage and facilitate inter-provincial access, mobility, and transfer of credits for students moving among British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba" (Western Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer [WestCAT], n.d.).

Transfer Portals, Guides and Nomenclature

Many of the regions have developed transfer portals,⁴ which include glossaries and guides⁵ to facilitate transfer and transfer literacy for students and other constituents. The challenge, revealed by this project's research, is not all terms and definitions always align.

Transfer credit nomenclature development has occurred in some jurisdictions across Canada, which serves as a foundation for national work in this area. Examples include the glossaries available on select websites of councils on admission/articulation and transfer⁶ and, to a lesser extent with limited scope, inter-institutional definitions in frameworks (Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance, 2010, pp. 4, 6). The Quebec BCI has produced guidelines for inter-Quebec partnerships that provides some nomenclature guidance (Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec, 2013).

The relevance of the work of the various regions to the ARUCC PCCAT research project is best illustrated through the following comment: "The more commonalities we can build in our terminology and understanding, the more effective we can become" (Philip Bélanger, personal communication, January 21, 2014).

Government Support

Provincial governments are providing extensive funding and support, enabling significant research and advancements in the area of transfer. As one example, the Ontario Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU) has provided significant funding to advance transfer in the province and has tabled a policy statement for credit transfer, which was adopted by all postsecondary institutions in the province (Government of Ontario, 2011). It reads as follows:

Ontario will have a comprehensive, transparent and consistently applied credit transfer system that will improve student pathways and mobility, support student success and make Ontario a postsecondary education destination of choice. The credit transfer system will assist qualified students to move between postsecondary institutions or programs without repeating prior, relevant learning (p. 1).

Campus Manitoba provides another example. It is part of the Manitoba government's support framework for transfer with a specific mission to serve "as a conduit to provide access to college and

⁴ Examples include NBCAT's Credit Transfer Portal (www.portal.nbc.ca), BCCAT's Portal (bctransfer.ca), and ONCAT's website (ontransfer.ca), which features a Program Transfer Guide and a Course Transfer Guide. Campus Manitoba is soon to launch a similar portal (Dave Neale, personal communication, January 21, 2014).

⁵ ACAT: <http://alis.alberta.ca/ps/ep/aas/ta/sta/search.html>; ONCAT: http://www.ontransfer.ca/index_en.php?page=the_ontario_postsecondary_transfer_guide; BCCAT: <http://www.bctransferguide.ca/>; Nfld & Lab: http://www.aes.gov.nl.ca/postsecondary/transferguide/TGDecember6_2012withoutMAP.PDF

⁶ BCCAT: <http://www.bctransferguide.ca/resources/glossary/>; ONCAT: http://ontransfer.ca/index_en.php?page=glossary; ACAT: <http://alis.alberta.ca/ps/ep/aas/ta/faq/glossary.html>

university courses and programs for Manitobans through distributed learning mechanisms including the Internet. Campus Manitoba supports students by providing services that remove barriers and enable the achievement of educational goals” (Campus Manitoba, n.d.). It has recently been re-envisioned⁷ (Government of Manitoba, 2013) and now will focus on two new spheres of activity: (i) establishing a new platform that helps Manitoba deal with technology and online learning, and (ii) addressing and advancing Manitoba’s lack of progress on the provincial transfer credit platform (Dave Neale, personal communication, January 21, 2014; Jeffrey Kehler, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Government Regulations

There are examples of sectors that adhere to transcript and transfer frameworks that specify detailed practices and terminology due to government regulations. For example, the Quebec college system uses a transcript template, available in both French and English depending on the college’s language of instruction that is enshrined in Le Règlement sur le régime des études collégiales, RREC/College Education Regulations, CQLR, Article 31 (Vincent Petitclerc, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

As another example, the private schools in BC are governed by a Transcript Maintenance Agreement administered by the Degree Qualifications Assessment Board (DQAB), the provincial body responsible for quality assurance assessment of degree-level programming (BC Ministry of Advanced Education, n.d.). The Agreement defines explicitly what should be present on a transcript. In Table 1, the differences to the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide are highlighted to illustrate the points of divergence in transcript standards for one regional sector.

Although somewhat different than the above two examples, the Ontario government is implementing a transfer accountability framework with a supporting glossary, funding model and a set of performance indicators (Fougère, M., Golets, S., & Smith, G., 2012).

Research

A number of organizations across the country with funding support from their government have developed or are developing a research agenda to enhance understandings and develop empirical evidence of student mobility patterns, challenges, and student success, and to consider new system models. BCCAT provides the longest standing example of research contributions⁸ and most recently initiated and sponsored the beta study for the ARUCC PCCAT national project, BCCAT *Credentialing Practices for Joint Programs* (Duklas, 2013). The province-wide research project amplified the nomenclature challenges in the area of joint program terminology and provided insights regarding joint program identification on transcripts and parchments (2013, pp. 12-17).

⁷ Campus Manitoba’s original mandate was to provide regional online support through 14 learning centres, which were subsequently closed in June 2013.

⁸ <http://bccat.ca/system/history/>

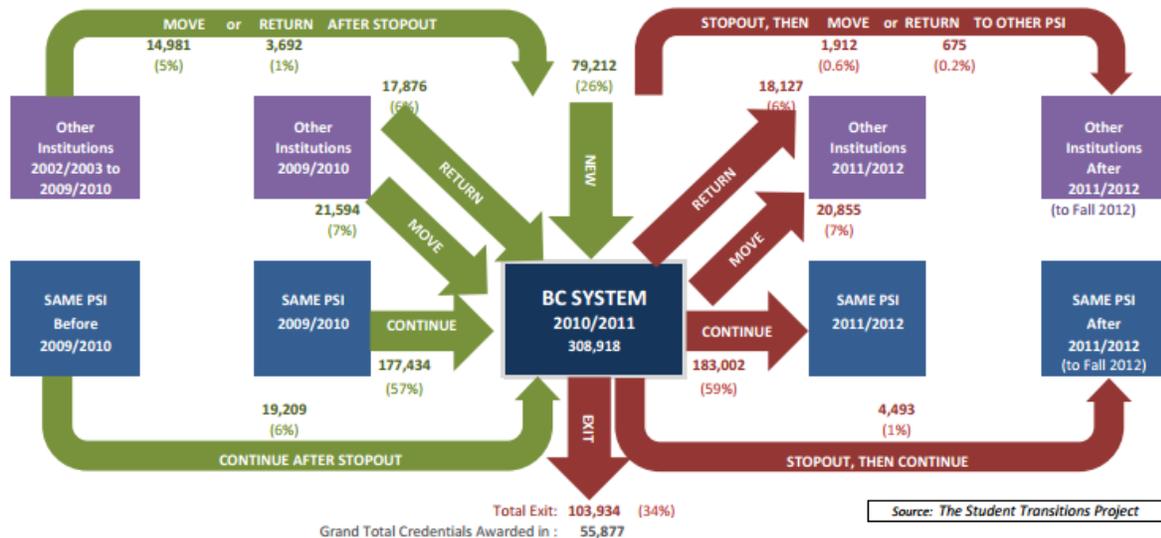
Table 1: Comparison of BC DQAB Transcript Maintenance Agreement Requirements and ARUCC Transcript Guide

Transcript Component	BC DQAB Transcript Maintenance Agreement Requirements	ARUCC Transcript Guide
Student information	The student's name, contact information, and student ID number.	Essential (Student contact information discretionary for privacy reasons)
Basis of Admission	The qualifications that form the basis for the student's admission to the institution.	Not Recommended (Essential for student database)
	Information about any credits transferred, entrance examinations and prior learning assessment used for admission or advanced placement.	Recommended for transfer credits, courses/credits accepted (Discretionary for grades accepted, cumulative transfer of credits, block transfer, LOP, student exchange, PLAR; Entrance exams essential for student database)
	The name(s) of any other postsecondary institution(s) attended by the student, and the dates of attendance.	Not Addressed
	The name and completion date of any degree, diploma or certificate earned by the student before registering at the institution.	Not Addressed
Academic History	The dates of the student's admission and completion or withdrawal from his/her program(s) of study.	Essential (Period of attendance, withdrawal date from institution essential; withdrawal from program/course discretionary)
	The date(s) of each academic semester or term during which the student studied at the institution.	Essential (Period of attendance)
	A list of all courses completed, in progress or withdrawn from at the institution.	Essential
	A list of credits and grades earned by the student.	Essential
	The student's grade point average per academic term and overall.	Recommended
	A notation of academic suspension, dismissal or probation if any of these actions has been taken against the student.	Recommended (Essential for suspension or dismissal)
	Academic awards or honours given to the student.	Internal Recommended; External Not Recommended
	The name of any degree earned by the student and the date the degree was granted by institution.	Essential
Institutional Information	The institution's name, location, and address.	Essential
	The institution's grading key.	This addresses trust and validation principle
	The name and authorized signature of the registrar or similar official.	This addresses trust and validation principle
	The institution's seal.	This addresses trust and validation principle
	The date on which new information was last added, and the date the transcript was issued to the student or other body.	Essential

Source for DQAB transcript information: Ministry of Advanced Education. (n.d.). Private and Out-of-province Public Institutions – Ministry's Requirements. Retrieved from <http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/degree-authorization/private/ministers-requirements.htm#maintenance>, March 28, 2014.

Figure 1 provides an overview of student mobility numbers from British Columbia’s Student Transitions Project (BC Ministry of Advanced Education, n.d.). While comparable data is not available from other Canadian provinces, it demonstrates that students are combining attendance at a number of schools all the way through their educational journey; suggesting that a shift is occurring with regard to long-held understandings regarding the concepts surrounding transfer, transcript standards and transfer credit nomenclature more generally (Rob Fleming; Robert Adamoski, personal communication, January 23, 2014).

Figure 1: Student Pathways to BC Public PSE Institutions 2010/2011 and Future Student Pathways, up to Fall 2012



Source: BC Ministry of Advanced Education. (n.d.). *The Student Transitions Project*. Retrieved from BC Ministry of Advanced Education http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/, May 1, 2014.

A study recently released by ONCAT (Arnold, 2014) highlights the challenges to “transfer literacy” from “asymmetries” that are introduced by nomenclature that is not universally aligned or understood. In Ontario, there has been a recent proliferation of research studies – both published and in progress through HEQCO and ONCAT – on system policy and design, including design for transfer (Hicks, Weingarten, Jonker, & Liu, 2013; Higher Education Strategy Associates, 2012; Trick, 2013; Weingarten, Hicks, Jonker, & Liu, 2013); students’ experiences of transfer (Decock, McCloy, Liu, & Hu, 2011; ONCAT, 2013; Wilson, McCaughan, & Han, 2011); and academic performance of transfer students (Drewes, Maki, Lew, Willson, & Stringham, 2012; Gerhardt, Arai, Carroll, & Ackerman, 2012; ONCAT, 2013; Stewart & Martinello, 2012).

The value of projects such as the ARUCC PCCAT study is such that a detailed examination and creation of standards and glossaries would be beneficial to advancing mobility.

National Transcript Standards

The Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC) is the professional association for registrars, admission directors, student records managers, student services managers, and other student services areas in universities and community colleges in Canada. To facilitate networking, collaboration and professional development on a regional basis ARUCC has a regional structure, comprising the following five sub-associations: Western Association of Registrars of Universities and Colleges (WARUCC), Ontario Universities Registrars' Association (OURA), Ontario colleges' Committee of Registrars, Admissions and Liaison Officers (CRALO), Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire (BCI) sous comité de registraires, and the Atlantic Association of Registrars and Admissions Officers (AARAO). The more detailed jurisdictional reports in Appendix E highlight transcript and transfer credit practices in regions and provinces in Canada.

ARUCC's *National Transcript Guide for use in Canadian Postsecondary Institutions* (2003), which is a focus of this study, was developed to assist institutions in determining "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" (p. 10). Chapter III of the Guide, *Transcript Data Elements*, is an effort to "list, classify and, where warranted, to define in an as exhaustive and as unambiguous a manner as possible, all data elements discussed in relation to the postsecondary transcript in Canada, whether they are recommended for inclusion or not" (p. 10). The Guide also includes, in Chapter IV, discussion of current issues of the day with respect to the postsecondary transcript, including topics related to security and privacy of the student record; electronic transcripts; the co-curricular record; the need to keep abreast in global developments related to transcripts and mobility, including impacts of the Lisbon Convention and the introduction of the Diploma Supplement in the European Higher Education Area; external learning; and the national student identifier (pp. 37-47). Appendix B of the Guide (pp. 55-65) includes a glossary of Canadian postsecondary transcript terminology.

The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC) also includes a comprehensive guide of postsecondary education terminology on its website. Originally created in 2003 and updated in 2012, the glossary functions in a wiki-style, in which professionals can make comments and suggest revisions to entries as appropriate. The guide is widely used and is intentionally developed for a broad audience. Given its diverse constituency and international focus, CICIC recognizes that specific sectors within postsecondary education may need to develop their own glossaries with more specific definitions (Natasha Sawh, personal communication, February 3, 2014).

The 2003 ARUCC National Transcript Guide is the only national transcript guide specifically created for Canadian postsecondary institutions.

Structures for Transfer and Mobility

Given the provincial responsibility for postsecondary education in Canada, it follows that structures responsible for transfer and mobility are also provincially focused. Six provinces have a distinct council or organization responsible for leadership of infrastructure, programs, and research to enhance transfer and mobility in their jurisdictions, as follows:

- British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT);
- Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT);
- Campus Manitoba;
- Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT);
- Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire (BCI);
- New Brunswick Council on Articulations and Transfer (NBCAT).

An overview of each of these organizations and their activities is provided within the respective regional reports in Appendix E.

On a national level, the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT), formally incorporated in 2013 (Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer [PCCAT], n.d.), is the national organization focused on the facilitation of “policies and practices that support student mobility within and among provinces and territories and granting of transfer credit in order to improve access to post-secondary education in Canada” (PCCAT, n.d.). The member organizations and institutions supporting PCCAT and ARUCC often publish transfer credit glossaries to assist in developing a common understanding of nomenclature in their respective province or institution each of which are developed and managed independently. Appendix H contains an inventory of institutions that, as part of this research, identified their transfer credit policies. This will be an important resource to inform the next phase of the Study.

National Data Collection and Reporting

Overview

Given provincial jurisdiction for postsecondary education in Canada, the majority of data reporting occurs at the provincial level, through institutions’ accountability requirements for government funding. At the national level, Statistics Canada operates the Postsecondary Information System (PSIS) (Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, 2013), a national survey through which universities, colleges, and vocational and trade training centres report annual program and student-level data. Reports from PSIS data focus primarily on planning, policy, and labour-force supply analysis, aimed at enhancing Canada’s economic position both nationally and globally. PSIS data do not track student mobility currently.

The PCCAT study, *Student Mobility in Canada Across Canadian Jurisdictions*, (Heath, 2012) reported findings from 41 postsecondary institutional respondents to its national survey on student mobility. While there is considerable agreement among data elements that ought to be collected, the study

concluded that attention needs to be paid to developing comparable business and reporting practices that will enable better data collection and research about postsecondary mobility patterns in Canada.

In addition, as noted above, a number of public and private policy, research and advocacy organizations also conduct research and produce reports related to a wide range of postsecondary issues, including student mobility. Notable among these, with a national scope, are the Conference Board of Canada, AUCC, Colleges and Institutes Canada, Higher Education Strategy Associates, and Statistics Canada, among others.

Canadian Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) User Group

In April 2013, ARUCC signed a *Memorandum of Understanding* with the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council, which is an American professional association based in Washington D.C. with an international mission to enable “cost-effective connectivity between data systems to accelerate performance and service, to simplify data access and research, and to improve data quality along the education lifecycle” (P20W Education Standards Council (PESC), 2013, p. 1). In 2011, the Canadian PESC User Group was established with a mandate to ensure PESC's mission and all its deliverables, including the development and release of PESC-approved standards that support and incorporate Canadian-based stakeholder interests.

Since October 2011, the Canadian PESC User Group has been educating the sector on PESC standards and garnering interest and participation from various parties, including individual postsecondary institutions, vendors, and bodies such as ARUCC, Statistics Canada, CMEC, and PCCAT (Canadian PESC User Group, 2014). The ARUCC PCCAT project complements the efforts and projects of the Canadian User Group. Additionally and as previously mentioned, Canadian PESC User Group members are represented on the ARUCC PCCAT Advisory Working Group.

Canadian PESC User Group Activities

The members of the Canadian PESC User Group are currently working to develop a Canadian transcript exchange network (Canadian PESC User Group, 2014). The goal of this initiative is to create a national student-centric network that is based on PESC XML standards (PESC, n.d.) with a priority on the electronic exchange of Canadian high school transcripts. The network will exist within and between Canadian provinces and territories, and be scalable to postsecondary transcripts, as well as to other stakeholders who need access to Canadian institutional official transcripts.

The most active provinces of the group at present are Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario, primarily because each already has centralized application services. However, representatives from other provinces are also involved on a regular basis, notably Saskatchewan and New Brunswick.

Below are examples of initiatives undertaken and successes achieved by User Group member organizations within the last 12 months (Canadian PESC User Group, 2014):

- Douglas College is now sending transcripts in PESC XML to BCcampus⁹ for the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) to retrieve via the web and subsequently forward to Ontario universities (BCcampus, 2014).
- In British Columbia, the PESC standard is now used for the transcript exchange service for six postsecondary institutions, using BCcampus as the exchange hub.
- ApplyAlberta (APAS) and Ontario Colleges Application Services (OCAS) are working on a *Canadian PESC High School Transcript Implementation Guide* to complement the existing PESC guide and make recommendations for the Canadian sector. It is slated to be finalized at the May 2014 Spring PESC Data Summit.
- OCAS and OUAC have partnered to allow OUAC to receive completed secondary school transcripts in PESC XML for non-direct entry applicants by leveraging OCAS's Electronic Transcript Management System (eTMS) service.¹⁰
- In Ontario, two colleges are now sending their transcripts to the OCAS hub in PESC XML and one university is in the testing phase towards doing the same with the OUAC hub.
- New Brunswick has approval for a province-wide project to collect secondary school grades via PESC XML and anticipates that the infrastructure could be ready for interprovincial transcript data exchange by 2016.
- Nova Scotia has begun a project to establish a provincial transcript service for high school and postsecondary institutions, which may become a joint venture between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

The members of the Canadian PESC User Group are facilitating collaboration within each jurisdiction, nationally and internationally by developing advisory groups and memorandums of understanding, and pursuing board membership, conference roundtable exchanges and more. As an example of local collaborative efforts, a TranscriptsBC Standards Reference Group was established in British Columbia in September 2013 with a mandate to create a reference group for PESC XML data standards (BCcampus, 2014). This group is facilitated by BCcampus and there are currently six member institutions: Douglas College, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Langara College, Simon Fraser University, University of British Columbia, and University of the Fraser Valley. The member institutions exchange e-transcripts using the PESC XML transcript standards via the BCcampus TranscriptsBC hub. Its intentions include working collaboratively to develop solutions relating to transcript data exchange, ensuring alignment with print versus electronic transcripts, applying consistent PESC XML data elements for transcript information for use across institutions on an ongoing basis, developing common testing scenarios to facilitate robust and efficient implementation, and facilitating PESC adoption and data exchange at all levels operating within the sector (e.g., graduate, undergraduate etc.).

As an international example of collaboration, Canadian PESC User Group and ARUCC members are also participating in the Groningen Declaration initiative, which is an international data exchange group

⁹ BCcampus "is a publicly funded organization that uses information technology to connect the expertise, programs, and resources of all B.C. post-secondary institutions under a collaborative service delivery framework" (BCcampus, n.d.).

¹⁰ At the May 2013 Spring PESC Data Summit, OCAS was awarded the 2012 PESC Best Practices Award for its eTMS service.

focused on student mobility (see page 61) (Groningen Declaration on Digital Student Data Repositories Worldwide, 2012).

Canadian Emerging Themes – Implications for Transcripts and Transfer Credit

Nomenclature

There are eight themes that emerged from the Canadian jurisdictional research. These include collaboration, infrastructure readiness, nomenclature differences, online learning, electronic transcript data exchange, and equivalent learning (e.g., PLAR). Each are addressed below.

1. Collaborative effort to ensure quality of transcript and transfer credit assessment processes, understanding and recognition of credentials across jurisdictions, and supporting infrastructures

The regional overviews in Appendix E provide compelling evidence of readiness, action and capacity for the evolving provincial and national discourse on transcription and transfer credit nomenclature standards. The provincial government ministries and their councils on articulation/admissions and transfer, the regional associations of ARUCC, and provincial research bodies like HEQCO appear to be individually and collectively committed to continue improving the research, policy, evidence, levers, and infrastructures to support enhancements.

Building trust among institutions and across jurisdictions is seen as a key enabler to moving forward in the area of transcript and transfer credit nomenclature development. Developing a coherent shared language of learner pathways and mobility is also a priority in many regions. Transfer is certainly part of mobility, but there is much more, including pathways, PLAR, and movement between education and the labour force.

The promise of this project for helping to build a common and shared nomenclature for transcripts and transfer credits, as well as a shared understanding of how each institution transcripts transfer credits is appealing (Ann Marie Lyseng and Eric Dohej, personal communication, February 4, 2014).

2. Regional, programmatic, and linguistic nomenclature differences

The research revealed the importance of being mindful of the differences between the francophone and anglophone population within Canada. Differences in terminology can become a barrier, not just in the translation between French and English, but also between different French speaking regions, such as between Quebec and Acadia (Philip Bélanger, personal communication, January 21, 2014). The same was true across the different English speaking regions within Canada. As one example relevant to the transfer nomenclature world, Atlantic registrarial practitioners reported that the word “residency” is not universally understood across the region and tends to be avoided in favour of a more narrative descriptor approach. As another example, some institutions and/or programs use the term “units” versus “credits” or “unités” versus “crédits”.

The DQAB Transcript Maintenance Plan, which governs private and out-of-province institutions in British Columbia, is another illustration. The comparison to the ARUCC guide provided in Table 1 introduces interesting points of discussion when examining practices and standards. As the BCCAT Credentialing Practices for Joint Programs study found (Duklas, 2013), sometimes identifying common terminology can facilitate moving forward opportunities for change.

The next phase of the ARUCC PCCAT project should include further analysis and identification of the array of terminology in use across Canada as a means to acknowledge the nuances introduced by programmatic, regional and linguistic differences.

3. Transcript and transfer credit practices

Specific recommendations for improvements that emerged from the workshops and stakeholder interviews include: building a common understanding of what to include on the transcript; ensuring that the transcript reflects the totality of the student's academic learning; moving towards a commonly understood grading and credit counting system; and automating transcript and transfer credit processes wherever possible.

Feedback received from World Education Services (WES) (Margarita Sianou, personal communication, February 25 and 27, 2014) detailed typical challenges in assessing Canadian transcripts, including the following: differentiating the length of different types of degrees; a lack of recording of previous study for transfer students, including previous institutions and credits transferred; and evaluating degree granting authority of faith-based schools. WES (2012) has furthered its work in this area by collaborating with stakeholders to develop and promulgate the adoption of best practices such as through publication of its *Best Practices: Strategies and Processes to Obtain Authentic International Educational Credentials*. Its research and consultations confirm the value of developing common terminology, documentation practices and selective harmonization (p. 4). While the focus of some of this work is on credential evaluation and recognition, the principle value to enhanced mobility is clearly emphasized. The research being undertaken by ARUCC and PCCAT complements efforts such as these.

The next phase of the ARUCC PCCAT national project should have as a final deliverable the creation of a practice standards guide for transcripts and a transfer credit glossary, both of which leverage today's web-based technology.

4. Electronic transcript exchange standards and practices

Developing electronic transcript exchange standards and practices routinely emerged in the consultation process for the ARUCC PCCAT national project. The interest, when expressed, was at times nested in a contextual frame as contributors to the study acknowledged the importance of data exchange protocols but also emphasized that the data delivery model should not drive the creation of overall transcript and transfer credit standards and principles. The distinction was aptly expressed by Mike Sekulic, University Registrar at Grant MacEwan University:

It is important to avoid confusing the information delivery method [i.e. electronic or paper] with the academic and philosophically derived principles about what a transcript is and what should be featured on a transcript. The culture, history and values of an institution can affect what goes on a transcript and is a conceptual perspective that can't be fully captured in data exchange protocols but that should be captured in a transcript guide (personal communication, February 4, 2014).

The findings indicate an appetite for developing better data exchange and reporting protocols with a caution to preserve the distinctiveness of the role differential between delivery mechanisms, systems, institutional autonomy, privacy regulations, and academic policy. The partnerships developed between organizations like ARUCC, PCCAT, and the Canadian PESC User Group are helpful in this context as the collaboration ensures ongoing dialogue and alignment in the creation of standards.

The next phase of the ARUCC PCCAT project should continue to encourage collaboration with the Canadian PESC User Group to facilitate the development of electronic transcript exchange informed by sector input.

5. Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR)

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is receiving significant attention across the country, as evident in stakeholder interviews nationally and in New Brunswick, Ontario, and Alberta (Philip Bélanger, personal communication, January 21, 2014; Glenn Craney, personal communication, January 23, 2014; Ann Marie Lyseng and Eric Dohei, personal communication, February 4, 2014; Michèle Clarke, personal communication, January 17 and 24, 2014), as well as in the workshops conducted in support of this research. Examples are found across Canada.

In Manitoba, PLAR is in place at all universities and colleges and is well established (Jeffrey Kehler, personal communications, February 13, 2014). The Saskatchewan government is emphasizing a PLAR mandate. The New Brunswick Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Action Group (NBPLAR) was formed in 2010 and has realized significant progress in developing a provincially coordinated approach for the assessment and recognition of prior learning (both formal and informal) in the academic, employment and regulatory sectors aimed at resulting in savings of time and money for individual clients, organizations and practitioners (Philip Bélanger, personal communication, January 21, 2014).

Participants in the AARAO workshop also emphasized the importance of PLAR, particularly among the college sector.

In Ontario, the use of PLAR seems to be thoroughly implemented and integrated across the college system; however, its support and adoption is inconsistent among Ontario universities. The provincial student associations are advocating for greater use of PLAR. Initiatives underway at Ryerson University and the University of Guelph have potential to inform the rest of the provincial university system. Enhancing the systematic use of PLAR is seen to be an important tool to ensure that the student transcript is a true reflection of all learning that has taken place and been assessed, whether formal or informal (Glenn Craney, personal communication, January 23, 2014).

In Alberta, ACAT recognizes the need for more pervasive attention to and adoption of PLAR in order to fully support transfer initiatives. Meeting the needs of Aboriginal communities and integrating Aboriginal institutions into the transfer system is also an area of growing focus in Alberta. PLAR is seen as a potentially helpful tool to assist in the recognition of traditional knowledge (Ann Marie Lyseng and Eric Dohei, personal communication, February 4, 2014).

Key issues of concern that pertain to this project include whether credits awarded based on PLAR should be distinguished on the transcript, transferability of PLAR credits, and whether method of learning should be recorded.

The next phase of the ARUCC PCCAT project should explore the range of practices and suggest recommendations on transcription and transfer credit protocols for review and consideration by the sector.

6. Expanded focus on learning outcomes

Expanded use of learning outcomes is seen to be an important tool and enabler of credit transfer. Learning outcomes can serve as a tool for quality; a mechanism to align learning with what knowledge and skills students need to have on completion of a program; a means to talk with employers outside of the academy about what graduates bring to the workplace; and as part of ensuring a common language is developed when placing Ontario in the global academic environment (Martin Hicks, personal communication, February 20, 2014). As examples of recent work in this area, HEQCO has invested heavily in learning outcomes as a core research area (Martin Hicks, personal communication, February 20, 2014), and ONCAT requires the use of learning outcomes as a framework for new pathway development projects (Glenn Craney, personal communication, January 23, 2014). Alberta is also examining learning outcomes more closely (Ann Marie Lyseng and Eric Dohei, personal communication, February 4, 2014), and BCCAT (FitzGibbon, 2014) has just published a research report, *Learning Outcomes and Credit Transfer: Examples, Issues and Possibilities*.

In Canada, the tendency has been towards developing bilateral, and sometimes multilateral, articulation agreements, based on very close review and mapping of curriculum and/or course outcomes from one credential to another. This approach is very useful in facilitating student flexibility in transferring credits

prior to program or credential completion as needs and circumstances arise. However, this approach can be time and resource intensive for jurisdictions lacking the appropriate history, culture, and infrastructure. It also is difficult to have broad impact at the pan-Canadian system level using this approach alone (Diana MacKay, personal communication, January 31, 2014). Research and pathway development initiatives underway in Ontario and British Columbia, with a particular focus on credential-based pathways as complements to course and block credit equivalencies, have potential to inform the system and supplement other successful transfer models. As a relevant point, the focus in some international jurisdictions is to understand credentials and movement between credentials in terms of, “What rights - in terms of access to further study or access to a profession - does this credential give the holder?” (Natasha Sawh, personal communication, February 4, 2014).

Canadian higher education practitioners need to monitor global developments with respect to learning outcomes, transfer models and related nomenclature, and regionally specific transcription standards development.

7. Online learning

Online learning is another phenomenon receiving considerable attention across Canada, with specific implications for this transcript and transfer credit nomenclature study. There is currently debate across the postsecondary education system as to whether the transcription of online and experiential learning courses is or should be different from standard face-to-face courses. This question will gain increasing importance as blended teaching and course delivery models gain prominence. Given that online courses are typically free of geographical constraints, they have also become an important accessibility option for campus-based students to augment courses taken on their home campus in summer; for part-time and mature students to juggle work, family and school; and to expand access to topics and professors not available at a given institution. The challenge remains for institutions is to ensure program eligibility and appropriate transcription and recognition of such courses. Similarly, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) present challenges in how to assess, and if appropriate, how to evaluate for transfer credit and how to transcript. These matters have direct relevance to transcription and nomenclature.

The next phase of the ARUCC PCCAT project will want to examine course mode of delivery and its potential impact on transcription and transfer credit standards development.

8. Additional emerging considerations

An additional emerging consideration from the regional research impacting transcripts and transfer credit includes the potential of CIP codes¹¹ as a tool for assessing program alignment in pathway development (Glenn Craney, personal communication, January 23, 2014). Dual credits represent another priority receiving attention particularly in Alberta (Ann Marie Lyseng and Eric Dohei, personal communication, February 4, 2014).

There is strong support for enhancing transcript and transfer credit nomenclature standards in the various regions across Canada, and for the current approach to the National Transcript and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Study, with its broadly consultative approach, working from a practitioner base within the profession.

¹¹ CIP codes refers to “Classification of Instruction Programs” (Statistics Canada, 2010).

International Research Findings

In parallel to the national survey, the research included a review of credential and transfer credit practices in select international jurisdictions: Australia, Europe, the UK, and the US. The intent was to provide benchmarking opportunities and to identify promising practices. The research also served to establish a global context for the importance of transcript and transfer credit nomenclature standards for students and policy makers.

In Appendix G and for each region, a system overview is provided along with a summary of its structure relevant to transcription and transfer credit nomenclature. Credential and transfer supports, and related research infrastructures are identified below along with potential promising practices.

This section concludes with a summary of themes evident internationally that will help to inform future consultation focused on developing transcript standards and transfer credit nomenclature. These are noted below and are, from a holistic perspective, examples of suggested system tools or levers to enhance transparency and mobility. Each of these is described in further detail at the end of this section.

- Collaboration and supporting coordinating levers and organizations that enhance mobility within and across jurisdictions;
- Tools such as qualifications frameworks to situate learning and facilitate interpretation and comparisons of credential equivalencies;
- Credentialing approaches such as an explanatory document to accompany the transcript and parchment and/or the existence of nation-wide credentialing standards;
- A competency-based learning outcomes approach;
- Standards for electronic data exchange;
- Participation in international initiatives that support student mobility and data portability (e.g., the “Groningen Declaration”).

The international regions selected for this study demonstrate overall similarities in postsecondary education systems to Canada. For example, with the US, the American Collegiate Association of Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) has published a comprehensive transcript guide, the *AACRAO 2011 Academic Record and Transcript Guide (2011)*, which is similar to the ARUCC Transcript Guide. The same organization maintains a long-standing commitment to transfer pathway development and publishes resources such as its comprehensive, online *Transfer Credit Practices of Designated Institutions (2012)*. This tool provides details on transfer practices at institutions across the US and presents the information within a standardized framework using consistent nomenclature.

According to a 2011 survey and study published by the Institute for International Education, *Joint and Double Degree Programs in the Global Context: Report on an International Survey* (Obst, Kuder, & Banks, 2011), these areas have very active institutions that are developing joint partnerships with higher education institutions from around the world (p. 10). Most tend to be developing relationships with schools from India, China, Europe, UK, and the US (p. 13). Australia tends to have a similar level of activity with Indonesia and Singapore. Therefore, their collective expertise in the area of student mobility is very robust.

Each profiled jurisdiction also present interesting examples of credentialing and transfer credit initiatives that are relevant to this study. The European Higher Education Area, through the Bologna Process, has innovated the Diploma Supplement, which is a multi-country example of supplementing transcripts with a document that introduces an academic artifact that confirms consistency, clarity, and quality of the credential. Australia and the UK offer similar examples in the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement and the Higher Education Achievement Record respectively.

These regions are differently structured and governed in comparison to Canada; however, provide some interesting insights.

Electronic data exchange and the portability of student data emerged as themes regardless of region. Both are viewed as mechanisms to facilitate mobility and efficiencies beyond regional borders. There are emerging opportunities for data coordination, sharing and collaboration on an international scale that have significant implications for transcription and transfer credit nomenclature.

Australia

System Overview

The Commonwealth Department of Education is responsible for higher education and research in Australia. Each State and Territory government also has a Department of Education, though the specific departmental names may vary. The tertiary education system in Australia comprises higher education and vocational education and training. The university system includes 37 public and three small private Australian universities. Internationalization is a prominent feature of Australian higher education, with international students making up 25.7% of the student population in 2012 (Department of Industry Innovation Science Research and Tertiary Education, 2013). There are approximately 140 other higher education providers in Australia, but they are mostly small, and account for 7% of all higher education students.

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) is an independent agency established by the Australian Government, with responsibility for regulatory and quality oversight of the system (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013a). In addition, TEQSA maintains and publishes a National Register of higher education providers, which serves as the authoritative information source of registered higher education providers in Australia (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, Commonwealth of Australia, 2013). Further details on the Australian educational system along with information on the qualifications framework are contained in Appendix G. Components of direct relevance to transcription and transfer credit nomenclature are described below.

Transcript Standards and the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement

The research has not revealed documentation of country-wide transcript standards for Australia. However, in 2013, the Government of Australia, through the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, introduced *Guidelines for the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS)* (Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, Commonwealth of Australia, 2013), which is modelled after the European Union's Diploma

Supplement. The Guidelines define required and optional elements to be included in each of the five sections of the Graduation Statement, which are listed in Table 2 below.

The AHEGS is distinct from academic transcripts issued by institutions in that it is only issued at course completion and a separate Graduation Statement is issued for each credential that is achieved (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Commonwealth of Australia, p. 10). Guidelines for the AHEGS also define requirements for representing jointly-badged qualifications, nested degrees and double/combined degrees on the Graduation Statement.

As an illustrative example of how the system works, an institution such as the University of Queensland distributes the institutional transcript *and* the AHEGS upon graduation (University of Queensland, 2013). At the University of Queensland, students can contact the institution directly to obtain a new AHEGS, an institutional transcript, a testamur and a *Certificate of Award* (each come with additional fees). The latter is a letter from the University providing information on the degrees awarded along with their conferral date (2013). The institution's transcript contains a listing of all courses taken along with respective results.

Transfer Credit Nomenclature

There does not appear to be a national directory of transfer agreements with supporting nomenclature, which could be a result of the size and complexity of institutions or the broad expectations for pathways from one credential to another that are included in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). There are numerous pathway opportunities and resources at the regional and institutional level such as those offered by TAFE SA of the government of Southern Australia, which offers courses and pathway opportunities for students in vocational education and training programs (Government of Southern Australia, n.d.a.). TAFE SA offers an online searchable database of university credit pathways and course equivalencies (Government of Southern Australia, n.d.b.).

Examples of specific institutional efforts are readily available. As an illustration, Charles Darwin University (n.d.) provides policy-based pathway descriptions on its website, based on requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework. Griffith University has a particularly comprehensive website that outlines the variety of pathway opportunities to the institution.¹² The University of Canberra (2013) hosts a detailed course-to-course transfer database on its institutional website. There are also examples of institutional glossaries typically at the institutional level, some of which include transfer-specific terminology (University of South Australia, n.d.; Open Universities Australia, n.d.).

¹² <http://www.griffith.edu.au/pathways>

Table 2: Contents of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement

	Compulsory Items	Optional Items
Front Page	AHEGS logo Statement on the AHEGS Certification Institutional logo	
Section 1 – The Graduate	Family name Given name Student number	Date of birth
Section 2 – The Award	Name of the award (& specialization) Detail, including admission requirements, duration of study, language of instruction and AQF level	Features of course (e.g., placements, overseas study) Pathways to further study Course accreditation
Section 3 – The Awarding Institution	Awarding institution	
Section 4 – The Graduate’s Academic Achievements	Course details Key to grading	Additional course details Special achievements, recognition and prizes
Section 5 – Description of the Australian Higher Education System	Introduction Australian Qualifications Framework Admission Quality	

Source: *Guidelines for the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement*. (Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, 2013).

Europe

System Overview

The Bologna Process is at the core of the EU's efforts to enhance compatibility and coherence of participating nations' academic qualifications. The Bologna Process has been able to bring about system-wide change through the "implementation of trust-building tools aimed at increasing transparency across national jurisdictions and at bringing about convergency of systems" (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency [EACEA], 2012, p. 9). Key Bologna structures, resources and tools that have been developed to achieve a high level of comparability, compatibility and exchange among higher education systems in Europe include: the three-cycle system and the overarching European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework (EHEAQF), which aligns with the existing European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF); the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS); the Diploma Supplement; and quality assurance structures (2012, p. 9). Given their direct relevance to transcription and transfer credit nomenclature, the ECTS and the Diploma Supplement are described below. Further details on the broader European education system are contained in Appendix G.

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

The ECTS is a "tool that helps to design, describe, and deliver study programmes and award higher education qualifications" (European Union, 2014d). Typically used in conjunction with outcomes-based qualification frameworks, the ECTS supports transparency and recognition in the assessment of qualifications. "The ECTS allows students to accumulate the credits they earn...in a transparent and comparable way.... [and] it facilitates the transfer of learning experiences between different institutions" (European Union, 2014b, p. 3). Three key features of the ECTS are the provision for credits to be awarded based on learning achieved in non-higher education contexts; that ECTS should support credit accumulation, not just credit transfer; and that the system include transfer credit ranges for qualifications at the bachelor and master's level (EACEA, 2012, p. 30).

The ECTS functions as a web-based tool, using course catalogues, detailed program descriptions, and course descriptions that include learning outcomes (expressed as what students are expected to know, understand and be able to do) and the workload (expressed as the time students typically need to achieve these outcomes). "Each learning outcome is expressed in terms of credits, with a student workload ranging from 1 500 to 1 800 hours for an academic year, and one credit generally corresponds to 25-30 hours of work" (European Union, 2014d).

Diploma Supplement

The Diploma Supplement is typically used in parallel with the ECTS. It provides a "standardised description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies completed by the holder of a higher education diploma" (European Union, 2014b, p. 3). The Diploma Supplement is produced by higher education institutions and is awarded free of charge in a major European language, on completion of a credential, according to standards agreed to by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO (European Union, 2014e). Every higher education institution taking part in the new *Erasmus+* education, training, and youth program has agreed to issue the Diploma Supplement in conjunction with its higher education diploma (European Union, 2014b). The Diploma Supplement has

eight required sections, as illustrated in Table 3. The outline is accompanied by extensive explanatory notes about the information to be included, as well as sections on principles, guidelines and a comprehensive glossary of terms used in the Diploma Supplement (European Commission, 2002-2014). The Europass website provides examples of the Diploma Supplement for a range of EHEA member countries (European Union, 2014f).

Table 3: Outline Structure for the Diploma Supplement

Supplement Category	Supplement Component
Student information	Family name Given name Date of birth (day/month/year) Student identification number (if available)
Qualification type	Name of qualification Title conferred (if applicable and in original language) Main field of study for qualification Name and status of awarding institution (in original language) Name of institution administering qualification if different from awarding institution (in original language) Language of instruction/examination
Qualification level	Level of qualification Official length of program Access requirements
Contents and results gained	Mode of study Program requirements Program details (e.g., modules or units studied) Individual grades/marks/credits obtained from transcript Grading scheme and, if available, grade distribution Overall classification of qualification (in original language)
Qualification function	Access to further study Professional status (if applicable)
Additional information	Additional information (if relevant) Further information sources
Certification of supplement	Date Signature Capacity Official stamp or seal
National higher education system information	
Note	Where information isn't provided, a rationale is needed.

Source: http://www.ehu.lt/files/Diploma%20Supplement_EN.pdf, retrieved March 1, 2014.

To encourage and monitor adoption of and compliance with these tools, the European Commission has a certification-type process that awards 'labels' to higher education institutions that demonstrate they are implementing the ECTS and/or the Diploma Supplement correctly. Through the labelling process, important issues related to differences in the development and implementation of national qualifications frameworks, use of learning outcomes, and in the measurement of student workload have emerged. An expert working group has been assembled to address these issues and the outcomes of

their work will be presented in the new ECTS User Guide, anticipated in 2015 (European Union, 2014b). Institutions value the labelling process because it “certifies a level of transparency and state of progress that strongly support[s] the internationalization of curricula” (p. 9).

United Kingdom

System Overview

Responsibility for Higher Education in the United Kingdom is delegated to England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Higher education institutions are independent, self-governing bodies established by Royal Charter or legislation, and most are partially funded by government. There are 133 members of Universities UK, which includes the executive heads of all of the universities in the United Kingdom and some colleges of higher education (Universities UK, 2013a). In addition, there are over 550 institutions that offer courses leading to a degree, but who do not have the authority to award degrees; a university or higher education college that has degree granting authority validates their courses (Government of Alberta, 2007). Further details on the overall UK system are provided in Appendix G.

Transcript Standards and the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)

In the UK, the Academic Registrars Council (Academic Registrars Council (ARC), n.d.) is the professional organization for “senior managers responsible for academic administration of student matters in publicly funded universities and colleges of higher education in the United Kingdom” (p. 1). While the organization, like ARUCC, appears to provide services, such as professional development opportunities and practitioner groups focused on admissions, assessment, and student records, there does not appear to be a publicly accessible transcript guide similar to the ARUCC Guide.

In 2003, higher education institutions in the UK agreed to issue a diploma supplement-like document to all graduates, in accordance with the Berlin Communique of the Bologna Process and conforming to the strict guidelines set out by the UK National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) and the Europe Unit of Universities UK (UK Higher Education Europe Unit, 2006). Following subsequent years of consultation and trials for an appropriate solution for the United Kingdom (Universities UK, 2007; Universities UK, 2012), the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) was introduced in 2012, as a “[C]oncise, electronic document produced by a higher education institution which provides a record of a student’s achievement during their time in higher education. A maximum of six pages long...it must adhere to a standard template...and be verified by the academic registrar or equivalent officer in each institution to confirm credibility” (Universities UK, 2012, p. 5).

The HEAR conforms to the data fields required for the Diploma Supplement, yet is distinct in that it is “[A]n electronic rather than paper document; ... is an ongoing record that is updated throughout the student’s career with the institution....; and it contains information about the student’s non-academic achievements that can be verified and validated by the institution” (ECCTIS, 2013). Universities UK (2014) has produced a HEAR Reference Pack for institutions, which includes an overview of the contents of the HEAR/Diploma Supplement, detailed commentary defining what is to be included in each section, a checklist for implementation, and standardized information on the national education system. The HEAR comprises eight main sections, following the format of the European Diploma Supplement, as

seen in Table 4 below. *Bringing It All Together – Introducing the HEAR* (Universities UK, 2012) also includes a comprehensive glossary of acronyms and terms (pp. 26-27) and an exemplar HEAR document (pp. 46-57).

Table 4: Summary of Contents of the Higher Education Achievement Report

Item	Components
1. Information identifying the holder of the qualification	1.1 Family name(s) 1.2 Given name(s) 1.3 Date of birth (day/month/year) 1.4 Student identification number or code (if available)
2. Information identifying the qualification	2.1 Name of qualification and (if applicable) title conferred 2.2 Main field(s) of study for the qualification 2.3 Name and status of awarding institution 2.4 Name and status of institution (if different from 2.3) administering studies (in original language) 2.5 Language(s) of instruction/examination
3. Information on the level of the qualification	3.1 Level of qualification 3.2 Official length of programme 3.3 Access requirement(s)
4. Information on the contents and results gained	4.1 Mode of study 4.2 Programme requirements 4.3 Programme details (e.g., modules or units studied), and the individual grades / marks / credits obtained (if this information is available on an official transcript this should be used here) 4.4 Grading scheme and, if available, grade distribution guidance 4.5 Overall classification of the qualification (in original language)
5. Information on the function of the qualification	5.1 Access to further study 5.2 Professional status (if applicable)
6. Additional information	6.1 Additional awards (Accredited performance in non-academic contexts) 6.2 Additional recognized activities undertaken by students which demonstrate achievement 6.3 University, Professional and Departmental prizes 6.4 Further information
7. Certification of the HEAR	7.1 Date 7.2 Signature 7.3 Capacity 7.4 Official stamp
9. Information on the national higher education system	

Source: Higher Education Achievement Report – A reference pack for institutions. Universities UK, 2014, pp.2-4.

The *International Education Guide for the Assessment of Education from the United Kingdoms of Great Britain and Northern Ireland* (Government of Alberta, 2007) provides a comprehensive overview of history and development of the secondary and postsecondary education system in the UK. Considerable detail is provided with respect to program opportunities, admission requirements, grading, and

progression. The document also includes numerous examples of certificate and degree parchments and transcripts from a variety of higher education institutions in the United Kingdom (pp. 63-80).

United States

System Overview

Higher education in the United States is a decentralized, complex system with approximately 4,500 colleges, universities and junior colleges, including but not limited to public and private universities and colleges, liberal arts colleges, community colleges, and technical colleges. Adding to the complexity is a combination of national, state, and institutional responsibility for postsecondary education. The national government, through the US Department of Education (USDE), establishes policies related to federal funding, predominately research and financial aid, administers the distribution of those funds, collects data and oversees research, identifies and focuses national attention on major issues in education, and enforces federal laws prohibiting discrimination in programs that receive federal funds (United States Department of Education, 2013). States are engaged in transcript and transfer practices applicable to their two- and four-year public institutions. Examples include common course numbering (e.g., Florida) and block transfer mandates (e.g. Oregon). Beyond the scope of federal and state engagement, institutions continue to exert a significant degree of autonomy, especially among private institutions. Further details on the US system are contained in Appendix G. Components directly related to the ARUCC PCCAT project scope are described below.

Transcript Standards

The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (AACRAO) represents 2,600 institutions in 40 countries, and is a recognized authority on student admissions, academic records and enrolment services, particularly in North America. It produces an authoritative *Academic Record and Transcript Guide* (2011), which provides a summary of best academic transcript practices of relevance in the US context and categorizes information for inclusion on the credential as:

- Essential;
- Recommended;
- Optional;
- Not Recommended.

The Guide acknowledges the substantial variability among student information databases and transcript practices across institutions and is not exhaustive. It contains a number of sections including a very helpful section that explores the area of electronic data exchange of transcript information.

With respect to transcript electronic data exchange and reporting, the NCES Institute of Education Sciences issues data standards and guidelines, including the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) project, which is a national collaborative effort to develop voluntary, common data standards for a set of education data elements (US Department of Education, Common Education Data Standards, n.d.). The purpose is to streamline data exchange and analysis, but there are no elements explicitly applicable to transcript reporting. Transcripts are used in many NCES studies and require standardized coding,

which is done by the researchers after-the-fact using a taxonomy system called the College Course Map (CCM) as there is no standardization for transcript recording (Institute of Education Sciences, n.d.).

The AACRAO Guide addresses electronic data exchange of transcript information and demonstrates a helpful example of how one region has integrated that topic with transcript standards.

Transfer Credit Standards

AACRAO (2012) has also published *Transfer Credit Practices of Designated Educational Institutions*, a voluntary exchange of information on practices for the acceptance of transfer credit. Further, it offers a section on national transfer credit practices on its website that is only accessible to AACRAO members (2012). This particular resource provides, by institution, information on accreditation, higher level credit transfer protocols, types of degrees and programs offered, contact information, whether or not PLAR is accepted, and if an appeals process for transfer credit is in place. It uses a standardized nomenclature in that the categories and types of transfer credit available are subject to specific definitions. The website also includes a *Joint Statement on the Transfer and Award of Credit* signed by the following national associations: AACRAO, the American Council on Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), 2001).

Although there are no nationwide standardized rules for transfer and requirements vary by institution, most states have developed transfer systems and policies to support within state student mobility. The use of learning outcomes as a basis for transfer is well-established in the US, with notable examples in Pennsylvania and Oregon (FitzGibbon, 2014). An example of a multi-state initiative is *the Interstate Passport Initiative*, a transfer framework of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (2013) to facilitate students in five Western states (California, Hawaii, North Dakota, Oregon, and Utah), in transferring from community colleges to four-year institutions by focusing on learning outcomes. Participation at the institution, system or state level is voluntary.

A specific state example of a system that offers streamlined and readily understood transcripts and transfer credit is the North Dakota University System (NDUS) that has instituted a statewide initiative to make it possible for students to easily transfer from one campus to another within the system (North Dakota University System (NDUS), n.d.a.). To do so requires an articulation agreement. NDUS stipulates minimum content for each agreement (including department and program name of both the sending and receiving institutions, specific admission requirements to the program, an outline of the program specifying the courses and credits to be earned, completion requirements, timeline for completion, and signatures and dates authorizing the agreement). NDUS also has a *General Education Requirement Transfer Agreement* (GERTA) that outlines an approved set of general education courses that are transferable among University System campuses and North Dakota's five tribal colleges. The transfer of coursework among University System campuses, the tribal colleges and North Dakota private colleges is made easier by the use of a common course numbering system (North Dakota University System (NDUS), n.d.b.).

The American Council on Education (ACE) (2014) has a College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT) whose purpose is to “connect workplace learning with colleges and universities by helping people get academic credit for formal courses and examinations taken outside of traditional degree programs.” ACE provides course equivalency information to make appropriate recommendations for college credit, but institutions make local decisions about awarding credit. Despite this, there is evidence of nomenclature differences. For example, credit for prior learning goes by different names including ‘PLA’, experiential learning and ‘alternative’ or ‘equivalent’ credit.

Transfer is an important element in the US higher education system. Peter and Cataldi (2005), in their study *The Road Less Traveled? Students Who Enrol in Multiple Institutions*, found that “attending more than one institution during the course of undergraduate enrolment is a common practice” (p. viii). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (US Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, n.d.) has conducted or sponsored many studies on student transfer behaviour, compiling data and statistics on the number and percentage of students who, for example, transfer from two-year institutions to four-year institutions, four-year institutions to other four-year institutions, two-year to two-year, and so on, and the characteristics of the students and the programs they transfer among.

The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, amongst its many activities, monitors student mobility on a national scale across close to 4,000 participating colleges and universities (National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, Spring 2014). In *Transfer & Mobility: A National View of Pre-degree Student Movement in Postsecondary Institutions*, the Clearinghouse conducted a five-year longitudinal study of 2.8 million students who began postsecondary studies in 2006 (Hossler, D., Shapiro, D., Dundar, A., Ziskin, M., Chen, J., Zerquera, D., Torres, V., 2012, February) and found that “one-third of all students change institutions at some point before earning a degree, a rate consistent across all types of institutions outside of the for-profit sector” (p. 5). Of those, 25% transfer more than once. The report concludes by noting the potential for changing the paradigm (p. 48) when examining supports for institutions and transfer students:

The growing emphasis on holding institutions accountable for student success has, to some extent, reinforced the traditional reporting paradigm in which the institution is the unit of analysis and students are viewed as simply entering, progressing linearly, and completing a degree — or not. Indeed, to date much of what we know about student success focuses on the efforts of individual institutions, through programs and policies, to improve student persistence and graduation at the institution of original enrollment. We know far less about the factors associated with student success for mobile students. The analyses in this report suggest that a new view may prove useful, in which students are the unit of analysis and institutions are viewed as stepping stones along a diverse set of educational paths (p. 8).

The National Center for Education Statistics has also examined enrolment in institutions in the US and notes that more than 45% of postsecondary students are enrolled in two-year, public colleges (Institute of Education Sciences: National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2012, December, p. 4). The work of organizations such as the NCES, the National Clearinghouse and AACRAO help to illustrate the value of taking a national lens in the area of transfer in addition to a local view.

International Emerging Themes and Opportunities for Canada

Through our review of transcript and transfer credit nomenclature standards and practices in four international jurisdictions, and both broad and deep investigation of practices in Canada at the national and regional/provincial levels, we have observed a number of themes. By sharing these, the authors are not suggesting any or all are what Canadian jurisdictions should implement going forward; rather, the intention is to present opportunities for benchmarking and to encourage additional dialogue appropriate for subsequent phases of the project.

In general, systems designed to support transfer and mobility seem to have in common a number of core components that serve as tools or levers to enhance clarity, coherence, confidence, and transparency in the postsecondary education system, for students, institutions, and employers. These core components include strong evidence of collaboration (e.g. through a central coordinating agency or group of agencies); alignment of credentials (e.g., through standards development and/or a qualifications framework, typically built on learning outcomes); advancement of common practices and/or a standardized document that accompanies the academic transcript and degree parchment to provide clarity and further detail about the credential awarded.

Not exclusive to any particular region and yet highly relevant was the theme of electronic data exchange and the portability of student data. These areas are being viewed as mechanisms to facilitate mobility and efficiencies beyond regional borders.

Each of these is described further below.

System Coordination

In the European Union, each country has responsibility for its higher education system, yet the development of the Bologna Process and the subsequent formation of the European Higher Education Area provide an overarching framework for coherence and compatibility of postsecondary education credentials across Europe. In the United Kingdom, the Quality Assurance Agency plays such an overarching role, even though Scotland, England, Wales, and Northern Ireland each have authority over local postsecondary systems. In Australia, the Australian Qualifications Framework Council, an agency of the Government of Australia, informs the work of each sector. Coordination occurs at the local level with each sector developing qualifications that adhere to the AQF. In Canada and the United States, where responsibility for postsecondary education is decentralized to the provinces/states (although in the US there is also federal involvement), responsibility for structures to support transcription standards and student mobility also falls within provincial/state and institutional authority. That said, there is strong national coordination on major issues in postsecondary education at the government level through the United States Department of Education and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, respectively, as well as through sector-based professional organizations such as PCCAT and ARUCC. Most relevant to this project are the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) and the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC), who have each produced guides for recommended standard practices for academic transcripts.

The international research suggests that the engagement of national organizations working together is critical to achieving synergistic improvements in the areas of transcript standards and transfer credit.

Alignment of Credentials

Collaboration within and across jurisdictions tends to be supported by coordinating levers and tools that enhance mobility. As an example, a qualifications framework serves as the primary context for understanding the continuum and relationship of qualifications offered in some of the jurisdictions studied. Typically providing an overview of the credentials, admissions requirements, normative duration of each qualification, and a series of statements describing learning expectations (expressed as learning outcomes), a qualifications framework assists in the comparison of credentials and nomenclature across geographic and systemic jurisdictions which, in turn, is argued facilitates mobility (Ulicna, D.; Coles, M.; Makulec, A.; Duda, A.; Schaepkens, L.; Charalambous, S.; Mernagh, E., 2011). Qualifications frameworks are typically used in conjunction with a diploma supplement or similar standardized document explaining the credentials. The focus of qualifications frameworks is clearly on learning outcomes that can be demonstrated and assessed rather than on course inputs. While a number of qualifications frameworks also include a measure of hours or credits typically required for each credential, they emphasize that such measures are intended as an indicator of effort required. In sum, a qualifications framework is one of the components of a sample 'toolkit' that assists in aligning understandings of systems and nomenclature. Of the international jurisdictions studied as part of this research, the United States is the only jurisdiction that does not have a national qualifications framework.

As noted earlier in this report, the comprehensive Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) provides a national standard against which all postsecondary institutions' credentials can be compared. One feature of the AQF that appears to stand-out for its potential to enhance transparency, clarity, and as a result, student mobility, is the AQF Pathways Policy, which documents the expected level of advanced standing credit to be awarded toward a higher qualification in the same or a related content area. While not part of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), Australia has always had three-year undergraduate degrees, which meant it could comfortably align its qualifications with the Bologna three-cycle system. Australia has aligned its qualifications framework with those of several countries in the Asia Pacific and has been an active participant in discussions of a potential Asia Pacific Qualifications Framework (APEC Secretariat, 2009).

In sum, aligning qualifications frameworks has been achieved for the UK (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2013), Europe, and Australia (Ulicna, D.; Coles, M.; Makulec, A.; Duda, A.; Schaepkens, L.; Charalambous, S.; Mernagh, E., 2011). In Canada, AUCC has played an important role in monitoring developments in the EHEA and in briefing Canadian universities. It is a strength for Canada that it has a qualifications framework that is endorsed and adopted by the jurisdictions across the country. Future phases of the ARUCC PCCAT project may wish to further explore and integrate the work that AUCC has done regarding alignment of the Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework with the Bologna three-

cycle framework. As such a suggestion, while inter-related to nomenclature and transcription, requires further study and is beyond the scope of this ARUCC PCCAT research, it is noted in the context of the advantages various elements contribute to transcription and transfer nomenclature and for enhanced mobility, clarity and transparency more generally. Further, as the Government of Canada has established a goal to “work with the provinces and territories, Canadian educational institutions, and other stakeholders to double the size of our international student base from 239,131 in 2011 to more than 450,000 by 2022” (Government of Canada, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, 2014, p. 11), it will also be critical that standards and guidelines are developed to efficiently and effectively assess international transcripts.

Adoption of Common or Best Practices or an Explanatory Document that Accompanies the Transcript and Degree/Diploma Parchment

Among the jurisdictions that appear to be most systemically organized around a coherent transfer and mobility structure (Europe, United Kingdom, and Australia), a document has been introduced that is, at a minimum, issued in addition to the academic transcript and parchment upon graduation, and that provides a detailed description of the program and courses completed and the system and authority that has issued the credential, according to a pre-determined and jurisdictionally approved standard.

In the European Higher Education Area, this document is the Diploma Supplement; in the United Kingdom, it is the Higher Education Achievement Record; and in Australia, it is the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement. In each of these jurisdictions, there are regulatory or certification processes in place to ensure compliance with the *system-wide* standards.

The development of the Diploma Supplement through the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area is very significant for Canada. In addition to providing information on a student’s learning outcomes, the Diploma Supplement helps to understand and situate a credential within a country’s postsecondary qualifications. The current practice is that an international assessor has to take a transcript from an institution in Canada and map it to a postsecondary education system or qualifications framework. The Diploma Supplement puts those two pieces together (Natasha Sawh, personal communication, February 4, 2014). Similar documents, such as the Higher Education Achievement Record in the UK and the Higher Education Graduation Statement in Australia, serve the same purpose.

In the United States and Canada and in the absence of such documents, the academic transcript with its accompanying key, and the degree parchment are the official declarative documents. Assessors often use these documents and, for international assessment, do so in conjunction with a qualifications framework (where available), to fully understand the credentials; hence the inclusion of questions in the national survey for this project to confirm whether admission assessors actually use qualifications frameworks. Within North America, transcript guidelines produced by AACRAO and ARUCC respectively are intended to be descriptive of recommended practice, rather than prescriptive of required practice, recognizing that institutional autonomy governs actual practice. Therefore, testing the usage and awareness of these guides were equally important questions to probe in the national survey.

The European Diploma Supplement, the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (HEGS), the UK Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR), the American AACRAO Transcript Guide, and the AACRAO Transfer Credit Practices Database are all promising practices that can inform credential and transfer credit nomenclature standards development in Canada.

Competency-based Learning Outcomes and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

The focus on competency-based learning outcomes is another key initiative that is emerging across the European Higher Education Area, as well as in Australia, the United States and, as the earlier research shows, in Canada. The focus changes from “these are the courses I took” to “this is what I learned and what I can do” (Natasha Sawh, personal communication, February 3, 2014). This shift in focus helps employers to understand and compare credentials. Related to a focus on learning outcomes is prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR), or other methods used to recognize learning achieved in informal contexts with academic credit. While PLAR and its implications for transcripts and transferability of credits was a strong theme across the Canadian research, it was also evident in our international jurisdictional research, referenced as student-centred education, and recognition of experiential education.

Learning outcomes are increasingly being used as a tool in a wide variety of contexts, including for quality assurance, accountability, in curriculum mapping, joint program development, and to compare student learning for transfer decisions. This area bears close monitoring by those involved in transcription and transfer credit nomenclature development.

Electronic Data Exchange

Electronic data exchange was a continual theme that emerged in the research. Technology creates opportunities to enhance both the content and distribution/transmission of higher education transcripts to broaden e-transcripts to become e-portfolios for students, containing more information about their college and university education and experiences.

In *eTranscripts: Reflecting Student Learning and Showcasing Unique University Experiences*, Nguyen and Kallman (2012) propose that the transcript be re-envisioned to provide more robust information providing evidence of learning, growth and outcomes. They argue that the transcript should evolve with the evolution of technology and uses the example of Stanford University envisioning a secure, linkable e-transcript integrated with a student’s electronic portfolio.

Further, Pittinsky (February 10, 2014), in *Extending the Transcript*, suggest that the traditional transcript, which has gravitated to a basic document structure and contains courses, grades, and credits in some chronological sequence, should be extended to include co-curricular and competency-based

information. He proposes the development of a Postsecondary Achievement Report (PAR) as “a concise, electronic document that provides a standardized, machine-readable report of the full range of higher education experience.” He suggests that Britain’s Higher Education Achievement Report and Australian’s Higher Education Graduation Statement could serve as models.

Groningen Declaration

There is international interest in the portability of student data as a means to enhance mobility. This desire has resulted in the creation of the *Groningen Declaration*, which is both a movement and document that was signed on April 16 2012 in the Netherlands (Groningen Declaration on Digital Student Data Repositories Worldwide, 2012). The goal of the declaration is student mobility:

[D]igital student data portability and digital student data repositories are becoming increasingly concrete and relevant realities, and in the years to come, they will contribute decisively to the free movement of students and skilled workers on a global scale (2012, p. 1).

The Declaration is a commitment to create “convergence rather than uniformity,” and the consideration of data security, privacy, identification, compatibility, comparability, and more (2012, p. 1). It includes a vision for phasing out paper exchange. As of April 2013, Canada is not a signatory. Organizations in the following countries have signed the Declaration: Australia, Belgium, the People’s Republic of China, France, Italy, Mexico, Romania, the US, India, Netherlands, Norway, Russian Federation, South Africa, and the UK. The full declaration is available online¹³ and members of ARUCC and the Canadian PESC User Group participated in the global 2014 Groningen Declaration conference in Washington D.C.

The timeliness of the work of ARUCC, PCCAT and the Canadian PESC User Group is striking in light of the Groningen Declaration.

Future phases of the ARUCC PCCAT project will want to contemplate the implications and opportunities introduced by the work of the Canadian PESC User Group and the Groningen Declaration.

¹³ <http://groningendeclaration.net/>

Current Canadian Perspective on Transcript and Transfer Credit Practices

The early advance poll, the jurisdictional workshops held for practitioners across Canada, and the national survey represented three examples of primary research and consultation for this study with those involved in both transcript and transfer credit work. The website and sample review also contributed to this section.

In total, the primary research, in addition to the 23 stakeholder interviews included the following:

- Advance poll by advisory group - 25 participants;
- Website review - approximately 70;
- Sample analysis - 44 institutions submitted 145 samples of transcripts, legends, transfer credit policies, transfer credit supplementary information, and related documents;
- Workshops - 103 postsecondary participants from public and private colleges, institutes, universities (both undergraduate and graduate);
- National survey - 119 participants - primarily postsecondary (public and private) from registrarial operations (57% institutional response rate; most schools and organizations had one person respond).

The findings from each are described in turn below. Given the size of the national survey, it is covered separately beginning on page 73.

ARUCC PCCAT Advisory Group

Information on the Advisory Group's demographics and contributions are in Appendix I. To assist with the research, an advance poll was sent of which twenty-five (25) responses were received, for a response rate of 93%. The information provided informed the development of the national survey and the workshops.

The insights provided by the respondents through the advance poll served to identify emergent themes and potential questions that required validation by a national survey. These early indicators helped to inform the appropriateness of and need for this type of research and the value of standards guides and glossaries.

Canadian Postsecondary Institutional Websites and Sample Review

As part of the jurisdictional research, approximately 70 university and college websites from across Canada were reviewed with a goal to inform development of the national survey questions. In addition, 44 universities and colleges submitted 145 sample transcripts, policy and procedure documents, and forms for review and comparison. A full catalogue of samples received is included in Appendix J of this report.

Website Review

A select number of Canadian university websites were accessed in search of transcript policies and practices, and transfer credit nomenclature practices as they relate to transcripts. The review revealed that universities do not commonly post detailed information specifically related to official transcripts and that there is little consistency about what information is available. The information that is available is normally published on the Registrar's webpage and/or in the University Academic Calendar.

All universities examined post information about how to order transcripts and the associated charges and caveats (e.g., that normally a transcript will not be produced and/or released for students with outstanding debts) but very limited information, if any, was posted about the content or substance of the transcript. Most universities indicate that the transcript is a confidential document and will only be released upon request of the student, normally directly to a third party as requested or stamped "Issued to Student" if provided directly to the student. Many universities indicate a definition of a transcript, with the majority indicating that the transcript is an official copy of the student's complete academic record and separate copies for different degree programs will not be issued.

Most universities provide information about transfer credit in greater or lesser detail and many publish course equivalency tables, but there is little or no reference to how these will be presented on transcripts. A review of selected colleges¹⁴ revealed that, as with universities, colleges provide information to students or former students about how to order a transcript and many colleges post relatively detailed summaries of academic policies and procedures but it is unclear from the websites how these translate into transcript presentation or notation.

There is a great deal of evidence online regarding institutional grading scales for both colleges and universities. Appendix K provides a summary of institutional websites demonstrating practices of providing more detail about what is included in institutional grading scales, how to interpret the information and, to a lesser extent, how to read a transcript.

The University of Saskatchewan (2011) also posts a comprehensive nomenclature report to support consistent language incorporating all policies, rules and procedures or academic and administrative nomenclature, but does not articulate what specific nomenclature, codes or symbols are used on the official transcript. This comprehensive nomenclature policy appeared to be a relatively unique institutional practice in Canada.

¹⁴ CEGEP Transcript policy is legislated by the Quebec government and is outlined in the Quebec section of this report.

As previously mentioned, Appendix H provides an inventory of the transfer credit and nomenclature policies available at a sampling of Canadian institutions, which were provided as a result of the national survey. Those with published transfer credit nomenclature are noted.

Transcript and Transfer Credit Samples

Universities and colleges were asked to provide samples of institutional transcripts and associated legends/keys, as well as policies, procedures and guidelines related to transfer credit and nomenclature. As noted, 44 institutions provided a total of 145 samples for review. The variety received presented a wide range of practices. In addition, the World Education Services (WES) staff in New York City provided a summary of transcript elements they would consider 'best practice' to facilitate evaluation and assessment, and supplied samples from four Canadian universities to illustrate the practices they would like to see.

Transcripts

An overview of the various university and college transcripts reveals wide variation in practices with very few particular patterns consistent among colleges, universities or regions. Trends that were evident are noted below.

Most, but not all, institutions use some form of security paper and seal for official transcripts and display the name and location of the institution, the date of issue of the transcript, and the Registrar's electronic signature. Some universities include accreditation-related information, e.g., member of Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, Association of the Commonwealth, International Association of Universities. Most institutions indicate that the transcript is only official if issued directly to a receiving institution and/or the transcript is clearly marked "Issued to Student" if not forwarded directly to an institution.

Student identifiers include name and identification number, and sometimes the birthdate, normally only the month and day. In some cases, previous names are also included on the transcript. Most transcripts include a legend or key with the grading scale(s) and explanation of other codes, symbols and notations.

All transcripts provide a chronological summary of registered courses, usually in ascending order (i.e., most recent last) although the chronology may be within academic careers (e.g., undergraduate followed by graduate). Based on the samples submitted for the ARUCC PCCAT project, Table 5 provides an overview of what is regularly included and what is sometimes included.

The World Education Services (WES) is a non-profit organization that conducts research and annually conducts more than 100,000 credential assessments internationally (2014). WES, when reviewing transcripts, also looks for and routinely requests the following information as, according to WES, it would appear this type of information is not always readily available (Margarita Sianou, personal communication, February 25 and 27, 2014):

- Degree length (e.g., three-year general, four-year degree);
- Whether Lab components are included in a course (e.g. Physics, with Lab);

- The Major (Minor) if the degree is not completed (normally included for completed degrees);
- List of credits needed for diploma/degree completion;
- Course code definitions on the transcript legend (i.e., include clear criteria of unit value and definitions);
- Transfer credits (i.e., include academic institution and source e.g., course, exam-based, IB, AP, etc.).

Table 5: Overview of Sample Transcript Components Found in Samples Submitted

Transcript Component	Normally Included	Sometimes Included
Credentials granted – e.g., degrees, diplomas, certificates – and date of conferral	✓	
Program registration information (e.g., degree/diploma program, academic plan or concentration [e.g., major/minor])	✓	
Term and date (year)	✓	
Course information – including course number, course title, grade, units of course weight, grade points, remarks or notations if applicable; No grade or grade points listed if course(s) in progress	✓	
Total units of course weight (credits earned) and grade points to calculate GPA (by term; cumulative)	✓	
Calculated GPA (term and cumulative)	✓	
Academic standing	✓	
Other term honours e.g., Dean’s Honour List	✓	
Issued to Student (where applicable)	✓	
Academic Probation		✓
Suspension or expulsion for academic discipline (not clear if time limited)		✓
Suspension or expulsion for non-academic discipline (not clear if time limited)		✓
Total credits required for credential (Quebec universities - considered best practice by WES)		✓
Total credits earned, differentiating transfer credits and institution credits		✓

Transfer Credits

Most universities include credits granted from other institutions or programs. Most, but not all, include the name of the institution the credits are transferred from. Some list the specific course or course equivalent (considered a best practice by WES) (Margarita Sianou, personal communication, February 25 and 27, 2014) but some only list the number of credits granted. Many indicate if the credit was earned

on academic exchange, letter of permission, a previous institution or from IB or AP credits. Some institutions cite if the credit was granted as PLAR. Normally transfer credits are listed at the beginning of the transcript.

Numerous examples of transfer credit policies were submitted as part of the research study, some of which include references to nomenclature. Appendix H provides the inventory and identifies those wherein transfer nomenclature is embedded.

Most universities and colleges have clearly articulated policies and procedures for assessing and awarding transfer credit. Samples of institutional policies, procedures, and/or forms were submitted from 24 institutions, some of which were also noted in the survey responses. Many colleges submitted policies and procedures related to PLAR, but no universities. One university submitted a sample transcript for a Nursing program showing credit recognized from prior learning, a practice that was not uncommon for Ontario universities admitting Registered Nurses to complete a degree.

From the samples submitted it appears that, in general, colleges (and former colleges) provide greater clarity and breadth of information about transfer credits. Transfer credits are listed at the beginning of the transcript showing the transferring institution and date, the course number and title (or noted as unspecified), and the credit hours awarded. The end of the transcript shows the overall credits earned, differentiating those transferred and those earned at the college. Grades are not transferred with credits and therefore are not included in the GPA calculation.

Samples submitted from universities predominately state the transferring institution or source (e.g., IB, AP) and the total credits transferred; in some cases the course numbers of credits transferred are listed in a string with the credit weights but no further detail is supplied nor is it clear how the credits factor into the total credits required or earned for the degree.

Electronic Transcripts

The *PESC XML College Transcript Implementation Guide* was also submitted. The Guide provides a brief description of data elements (“tags”) and indicates whether the element is required or optional. The ‘Recommended Use’ column reflects recommendations from the PESC approved College Transcript Schema, standards of good practice as defined by the AACRAO Transcript Guide, and “generally recommended practices for exchanging electronic transcripts”.

Conclusion

There appears to be a wide variation in practice among universities and colleges in Canada about what is included on an official transcript, how it is displayed, and what information is available on institutional websites describing policies and practices with respect to transcripts. Transfer credit policies and practices also appear unique to institutions, with a general trend to being more transparent to prospective students about what they might expect when transferring institutions. Many, however, continue to reserve decisions on transfer credit until after admission, if pre-arranged agreements and articulation paths are not in place. Institutions and users of transcripts (postsecondary institutions, employers, governments, and non-governmental agencies) would clearly benefit from greater

consistency and transparency in transcript production. The development of a national transcript guide could be extremely useful in assisting institutions in defining policies and practices, but its value will be realized only if it is widely communicated and used across the Canadian postsecondary sector.

Regional Workshop Thematic Findings

The background details regarding the regional workshops are contained in Appendix L. All regional associations which are allied with ARUCC actively supported these workshops. Six occurred either in person, through teleconference, or both and involved ARUCC and PCCAT representatives from across Canada. In total, 103 individuals primarily from postsecondary institutions, participated in the workshops. The exchanges within the workshops provided a rich opportunity to explore a number of topics of relevance to the ARUCC PCCAT research. The thematic findings are shared below.

Themes

1. Affirming the value of the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide

Across the country, a proportion of workshop participants were aware of and used the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide. In general, they found it a useful, practical, and relevant resource in the following broad areas:

- As an articulation of standards and principles;
- To clarify common terminology and provide definitions;
- To underscore the role of the transcript;
- As a practical framework, especially in the ranking of transcript elements as *essential, recommended, optional, or not recommended*;
- As a means to describe and to promote a vision for best practice in transcript annotations and relevant practices/processes;
- As representative of a Canadian postsecondary culture that values best practice research and awareness.

The Guide was considered useful in influencing and framing institutional transcript standards and policy, and as a foundation for the development of or enhancements to student information systems.

2. Lack of Awareness of the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide

While some workshop participants used and valued the Guide, some participants indicated a lack of awareness of its existence and were only made aware of it by virtue of the announcement of the ARUCC/PCCAT national study. Had they known about it sooner, these participants indicated they would have found the Guide a useful resource. Even fewer were aware of the AACRAO Transcript Guide. Additionally, some registrarial participants did not know where to access these Guides.

There is a lack of awareness that resources such as the ARUCC and AACRAO Transcript Guides exist.

3. 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide Enhancement Needs

Gaps identified in the current guide relate to a shifting landscape, resulting in a need to test whether principles and recommendations articulated in the Guide are still relevant and valid in the present and emergent context. Examples include the following:

- New and emerging technological advancements that need to be considered and anticipated overall:
 - changes to how courses are delivered;
 - advancements that affect inter-institutional exchange of transcripts;
- Growing number of institutional partnerships with divergent customs and standards;
- Increasing student mobility;
- New legislation such as privacy;
- A need to explore the legal contours of a transcript (i.e., what represents a current and common definition of what a “trusted transcript document” means?).

Workshop participants pointed to terminology used in the Guide that was rapidly becoming obsolete such as “correspondence courses” or “Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)” and which needed to be updated. In addition, they identified a need for the Guide to address how changes in traditional classroom delivery of courses: distance education, online or blended delivery, as well as the proliferation of MOOCs should or should not be reflected on a transcript.

Institutions are challenged by how to navigate and create joint transcripts and to reconcile different transcript expectations and practices of institutional partners, especially in the international realm.

It was noted by workshop participants and survey respondents that there is sometimes misalignment between the 2003 ARUCC Guide and other expectations, which can then lead to variable approaches. Examples include the protocols for electronic data exchange in some jurisdictions, the requirements of vendor developed student information systems, and the different requirements embedded in government-mandated policies such as the BC Government’s Transcript Maintenance Agreement (DQAB).

4. 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide Enhancement Recommendations

The following represents an overview of the main suggestions to strengthen future editions of the Guide:

- Include more detail on transcript practices with less emphasis on history and context;
- Build on current technology to enhance its usability;
- Represent more equitably all postsecondary options in Canada;
- Reassess and reconsider the transcript element ranking recommendations in the Guide (*essential, recommended, optional, not recommended*) for currency and relevance, and balance with broader institutional or collective jurisdictional goals;

- Provide a rationale for practices recommended in the Guide such as that all credentials should be displayed on a single transcript;
- Include a rationale for ranking of elements (*essential, recommended, etc.*) and place transcript element ranking recommendations within the context of applicable laws or protocols;
- Provide greater detail on best practices such as transfer credit, partnerships, grading, progression, academic history, co-curricular records, legends, etc.;
- Include samples of best practice transcripts in the Guide as a visual aid to institutions;
- Simplify the language used in the Guide.

Some non-university participants found the current Guide to be too university focused and would appreciate it be expanded to enhance the presence of colleges.

It was suggested that the current guide's ranking of elements ("*essential*", etc.) is too narrow. These recommended rankings should be reassessed in light of broader institutional goals to ensure the transcript standards are aligned with and not a barrier to important jurisdictional or institutional initiatives such as the automation of transfer credit between and amongst institutions.

A rationale for these rankings and for other practices identified in the Guide would be helpful. Rather than the Guide simply indicating that it is "*not recommended*," it would be indispensable to know what has underpinned the recommendation such as Human Rights legislation or other applicable laws, best practice protocols, etc.

Structural changes to the Guide would improve readability and usability: suggestions included providing an index and using current technology (e.g., pop-up windows to supply definitions without cluttering the document).

5. Electronic transmission of transcripts

Many workshop participants identified this aspect of transcript delivery as needing extra attention in the Guide. As electronic exchanges of transcripts are becoming more common, this is forcing the re-examination of the definitions of "official" versus "unofficial" transcripts.

Depending on the jurisdiction, transcripts exchanged electronically through collective initiatives may not include the same level of detail available through a paper transcript such as "program of study" and "credential", or grading schemes and scales, leading to challenges in interpretation.

Participants identified the opportunity to align this project with work being done by the member organizations of the Canadian PESC User Group.

6. Institutional autonomy

Participants across the country stressed the importance of institutional autonomy; it was cited as the key component that takes precedence over best practices related to transcript and transfer credit pathway development. The point was made that institutionally-specific academic governance committees have ultimate authority and their decisions supersede best practice standards.

Some jurisdictions/postsecondary institutions do not have explicit overarching transcript annotation and nomenclature policies outside of policies on grading and/or academic honesty.

Other institution types within some jurisdictions must conform to government-set standards and protocols on transcripts such as Quebec colleges and CEGEPS as well as some university programs that are closely allied with government-regulated programs such as Education, apprenticeship, etc.

Within their own institutions, participants found it invaluable to point to and use best practice resources such as the ARUCC and similar guides to help shape and inform policy and practice, and to promote consistency internally.

7. Influence of student information systems on transcript standards

Across the country, workshop participants emphasized the influence vendor products are having on standards development. Also apparent was evidence that lack of resources for systems development (whether for internally built or to customize vendor products) impedes institutional ability to implement best practice in terms of both transcript and transfer credit terminology standards. In the first instance, examples were cited wherein new systems purchased from vendors lacked the capacity to incorporate established Canadian standards or institutional standards. Alternatively, once bought systems were implemented, evolving to those standards represented additional costs to institutions making changes unattainable. With regard to systems built within an institution, the same challenges were evident in the workshop conversations. In a few instances, the changes brought on by new systems purchased from vendors were viewed positively as it compelled the institutions to re-examine critically the relevance and viability of past practice.

8. Variable jurisdictional/institutional approaches to transcript annotations

Institutions across the country identified a variety of practices used in annotating academic history including by chronology, program, level, or method of admission. A great number of differing practices were noted in terms of what appears on an institutional transcript including but not limited to the inclusion of non-credit courses, non-academic notations, milestones, grades for courses transferred from other institutions, credit weights and values, calculation of averages, progression toward credential, credential conferred, dates of program/credential, courses taken elsewhere while still at home institution, academic honesty issues, grading practices, graduate milestones, cotutelle arrangements, etc.

9. Variable jurisdictional/institutional approaches to transfer credit nomenclature

Some provincial/regional or association guidelines on transfer credit nomenclature were cited by participants as having variable definitions posted.

Amongst and within institutions, inconsistencies were noted regarding how transfer credit earned through partnerships are identified on the transcript and in the terminology used.

It was noted that terminology that may be considered typical in some jurisdictions is not well understood or used in the same way by other institutions. To illustrate, “residency”, which is a term used by many institutions to describe the minimum number of credits that must be taken at an institution in order to qualify for a credential, is avoided by some as it is ambiguous and confusing to students. “Residency” could apply to medical students, provincial legislation governing who is considered a resident of a Canadian province, etc.

By way of another example, “Letter of Permission” is a term not used in Quebec universities for transfer activities among Quebec universities; instead, this process is called “The Inter-university Transfer Agreement” (Clara Spadafora, personal communications, March 4, 2014). The term “exemption” can sometimes mean a student has been given an equivalence in Ontario colleges, whereas in Quebec colleges and CEGEPS, “exemption” has not been used in decades, although it still appears on the transcript legend. The term has been replaced by “dispensation”, which means that the student has been excused from taking a core course for the diploma, usually for compelling medical reasons.

The interchangeable and differing use of “advanced standing” as well as “transfer credit” and “equivalency” were also highlighted.

Some institutions have already started to move away from partnership terminology that they feel is too explicit and potentially misleading (e.g., “2 + 2” or “joint partnerships”) and are opting for more generic language such as “transfer agreements”.

The workshop findings highlighted the degree of difference in transfer nomenclature across regions and nationally.

10. Identification of and reflection on best practices

When asked for examples of best or promising practices in the realm of transcript standards and transfer credit nomenclature, workshop participants tended to identify the various councils on admission and transfer, especially the pioneering “CATs” such as BCCAT and ACAT, which represent a collective or jurisdictional approach. The AACRAO Transcript Guide was also identified by a few institutions as providing a useful resource; however, it was not generally well known or used amongst the participants.

Participants expressed a desire for greater best practice identification and research in the following areas:

- How or whether to reflect institutional partnerships on transcripts;
- Whether to include grades earned at other institutions either through partnerships or on a letter of permission/inter-university transfer on transcripts;
- How or whether PLAR or challenge exams should be annotated on a transcript;
- The role of the co-curricular record in an academic transcript;
- Validating translations of a home institution’s transcript;

- The organization of academic history on a transcript and the role of milestones, both non-academic and academic;
- Identification of fraud or academic honesty issues on a transcript;
- Legends and customization or standardization of institutional transcripts.

11. Focus on principles and rationale

Although much detail was provided during workshop discussions that pointed to differing methods, standards and reasons for same across institutions, workshop participants stressed the need for a robust framework to guide the development and enhancement of transcript and transfer credit nomenclature standards. The clear articulation of principles and a sound rationale to underpin recommendations were viewed as providing invaluable guidance to institutions and jurisdictions.

12. Valuing the consultations

One immediate positive outcome of conducting the consultations through workshops was that they provided an opportunity and a forum for colleagues from a variety of institutions and jurisdictions to share their own policies, practices, and approaches, and to reflect on a desired future state. The opportunity to discuss issues relevant to transcripts and transfer credit in a collective setting allowed representatives to hear first-hand from other colleagues, and to interact immediately with the information provided. This helped spark new ideas or approaches to take back to their respective institutions. The workshops also served to enhance engagement in the ARUCC PCCAT project and to encourage participation in the national survey.

Workshop participants sent a clear signal of support for transcript and transfer credit nomenclature standards development.

National Survey Findings

The findings from the national ARUCC PCCAT survey are detailed and extensive. Appendix M contains more detailed data; a separate CSV file was also provided to ARUCC and PCCAT leadership under separate cover. Identified below are the higher level findings to inform the next phase of the project. As a codicil, what follows are preliminary findings. A future phase of the ARUCC PCCAT project will want to conduct a more detailed analysis of the data to confirm the potential next steps i.e., suggested emergent standards.

Survey Participant Demographics

The survey was distributed primarily through the ARUCC and PCCAT listservs. A total of 119 individuals accessed the survey of which 10 provided only partial responses.¹⁵ As depicted in Table 6, there were 108 respondents representing 96 unique postsecondary institutions and 11 respondents representing 9 unique non-postsecondary organizations. As a result, there were 105 unique organizations involved in the survey.

Table 6: Respondent Type and Number of Unique Organizations Represented

Respondent Type	Number of Total Responses	Additional Responses per Organization	Total Number of Unique Organizations
Postsecondary	108	12	96
Non-Postsecondary	11	2	9
Total Responses	119	14	105

Determining response rate is somewhat complex for this project primarily because membership to PCCAT is at the individual level whereas for ARUCC, it is at the organizational level. Table 7 provides an overview. A total of 183 organizations within ARUCC and PCCAT received the invitation (postsecondary institutions and non-postsecondary organizations).¹⁶ Therefore, the organizational response rate to the survey was 57% considering the organizations evident in the membership within both ARUCC and PCCAT.

¹⁵ As these ten completed questions beyond institutional demographic information, their responses were included in the final results.

¹⁶ The survey invitation was subsequently cascaded to a variety of listservs such as WARUCC, OURA, OURA Graduate, CRALO, AARAO, BCI, BCCAT, ONCAT, etc., which, in many instances, duplicated the membership of ARUCC and PCCAT. In cases such as the BCCAT listserv, a number of additional non-PSE organizations were represented; however, the core invitees and subsequent respondents represented ARUCC and PCCAT members. For ARUCC, associate and regular members were counted, not corporate or honorary members as the latter two groups are not represented on the ARUCC listserv.

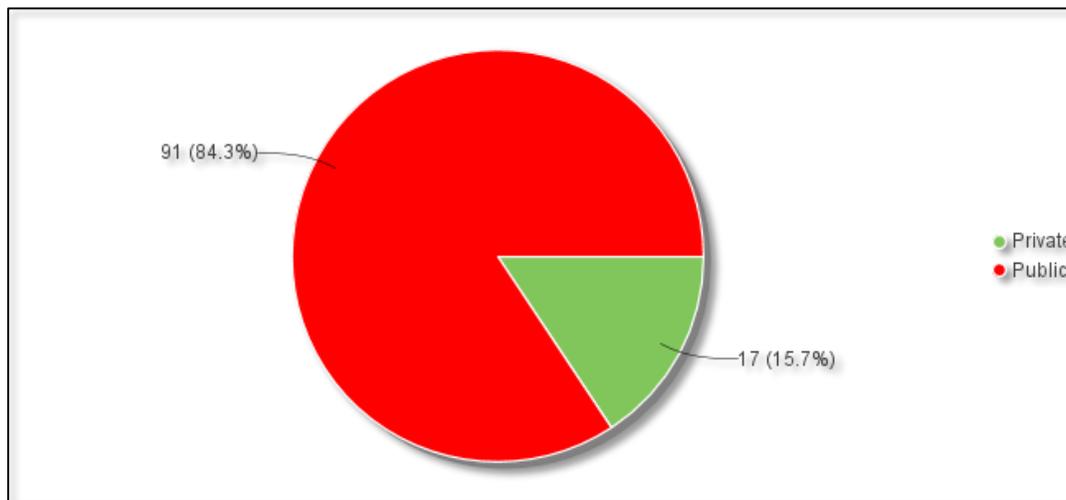
Table 7: Membership and Response Rate Analysis

Assoc.	Total Members *	Total Organizations	Total non-PSE institutions	Total PSE institutions represented	PSE Organization Duplicate Members between ARUCC and PCCAT	Non-PSE Institutional Duplicate Members between ARUCC and PCCAT	Total Unique Organizations that received Invitation	Total Unique Organizations that Responded to Survey	Organizational Response Rate
PCCAT	137	79	32	47	40	0	183	105	57%
ARUCC	183	183	7	176					

* Institutional for ARUCC; individual for PCCAT

Of those that responded on behalf of postsecondary institutions, 17 (16%) represented private sector institutions (see Figure 2).¹⁷ This is not surprising as most of the members in ARUCC and PCCAT are from either public postsecondary institutions or, to a lesser extent, non-profit or government organizations.

Figure 2: Public versus Private Respondents

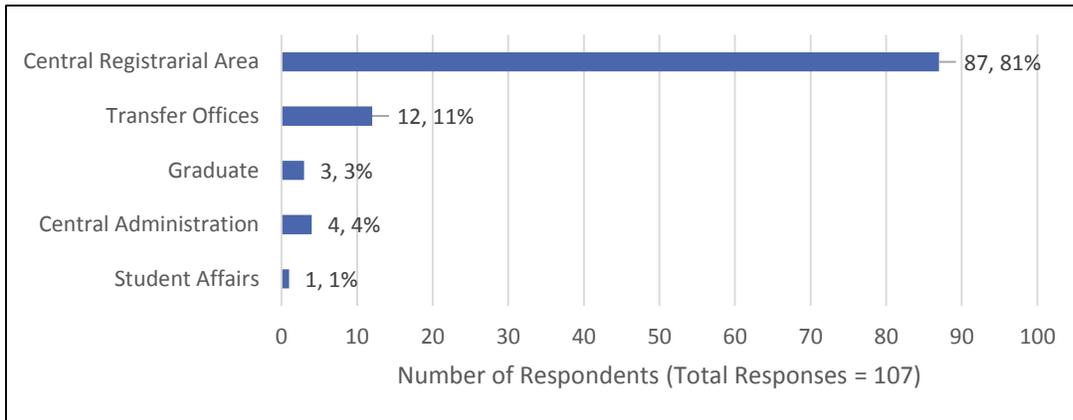


Respondent Profile

The respondents to the survey from postsecondary institutions were primarily represented by those working within the central registrarial, admissions and/or enrolment services area (see Figure 3). Seventy-four (74, 85%) of the respondents from the central registrarial area were from the public sector and 13 (15%) were from the private sector.

¹⁷ The additional responses per institution are included in the balance of the report.

Figure 3: Functional Area Represented by PSE institutional Respondents



Regional Demographics

Ontario (32, 30%), British Columbia (31, 29%) and Alberta (15, 14%) had the largest participation in the survey. Figure 4 provides the overall findings. Figure 5 depicts the postsecondary institutional data by province.

As an important note, the Quebec CEGEPS are legislated with respect to transcript and transfer credit nomenclature. Therefore, one government official participated in the survey on behalf of all the Quebec CEGEPs and colleges; the Quebec results throughout this report need to be considered within that context. It is also for this reason, that the Quebec CEGEP/college results are not included in Figure 5. To balance these findings, the Quebec section of the jurisdictional research provided additional details on the practices for CEGEPS and colleges (see Appendix E).

Figure 4: Respondents by Province

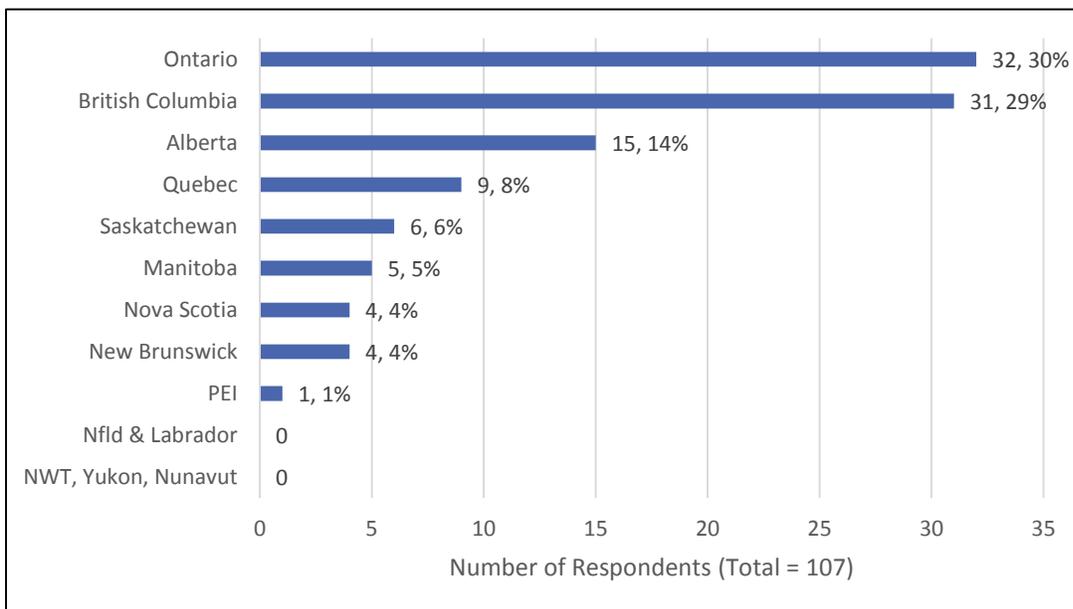
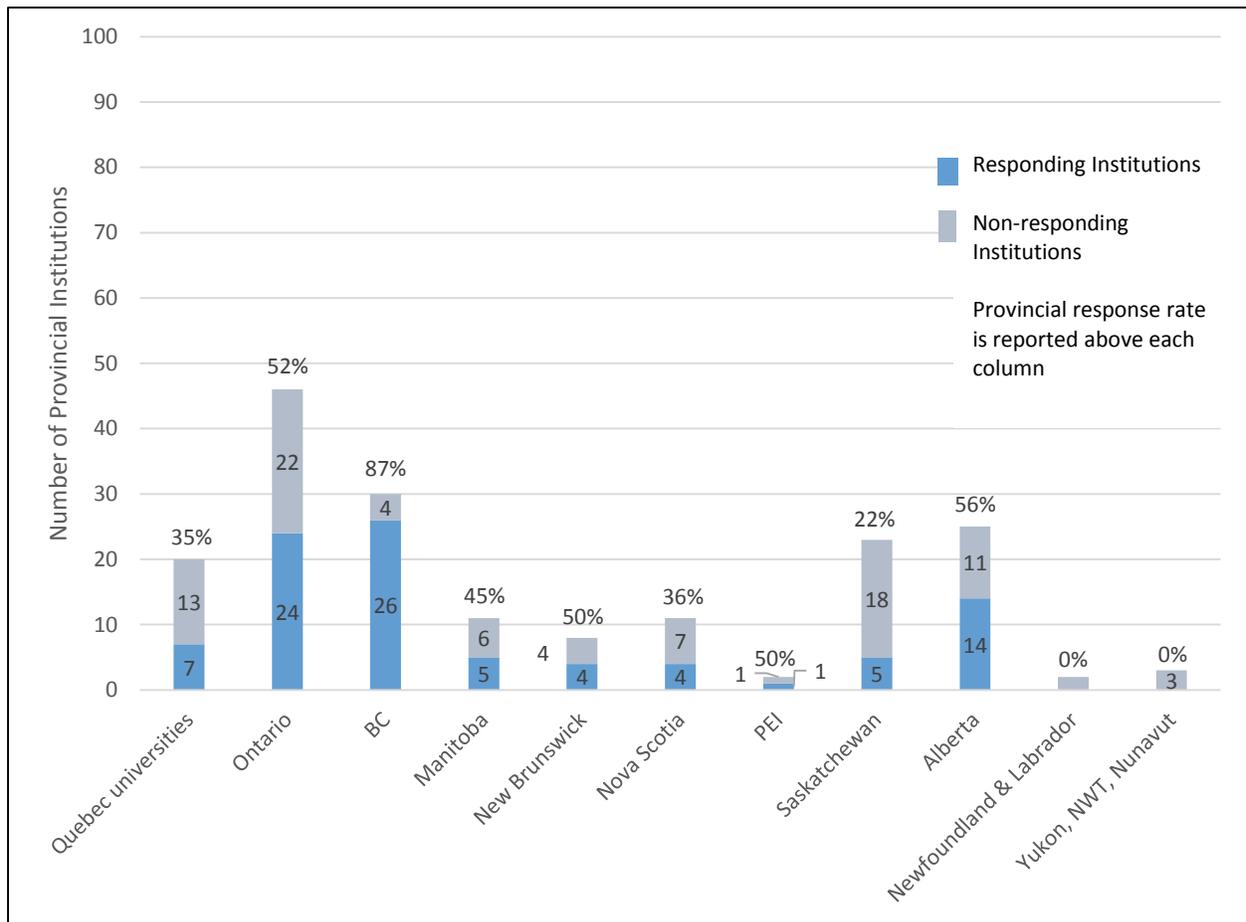


Figure 5: Number of Responding and Non-Responding PSE Institutions by Province (with Percentage Response Rates)



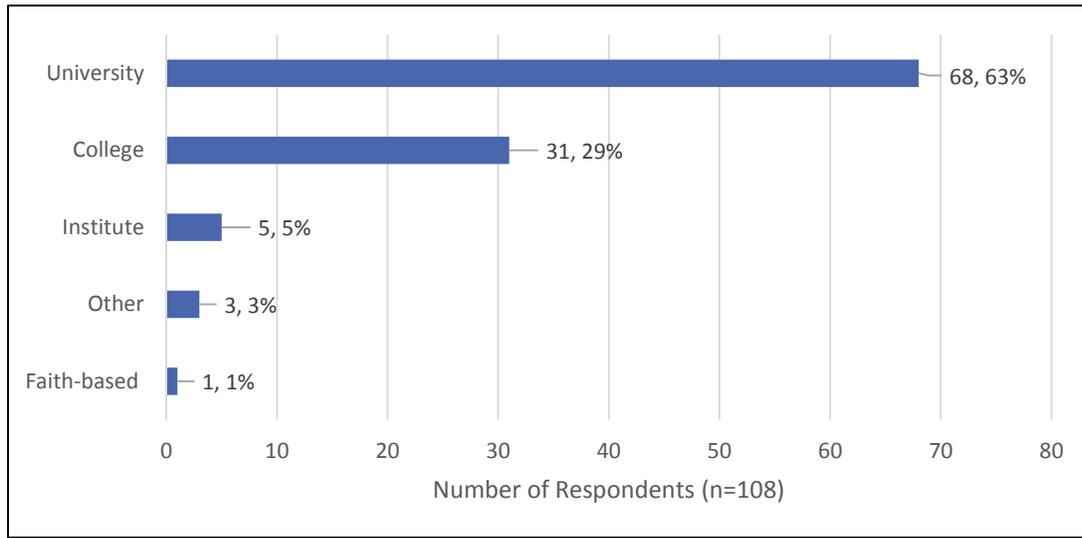
Sources: The number of institutions per province were taken from provincial ministry websites and/or were provided by local sources within each province.¹⁸

Institutional Type

Figure 6 provides a summary of institutional type as reported by the respondents. Sixty-eight (68, 63%) of the respondents were from universities; 31 (29%) were from colleges (one of which was the government CEGEP representative); 5 (5%) were from an institute; 1 (1%) was from a theological institution; and 3 (3%) reported “other.”

¹⁸ AB = Mike Sekulic, personal communications, May 14, 2014; BC = includes public and private schools that are members of BCCAT; MB = includes private and faith-based schools - Jeffrey Kehler, personal communications, May 14, 2014; NB, NS, PEI, Nfld & Lab = Phil Bélanger, personal communications, May 14, 2014; ON = includes Redeemer (member of OURA per Aaron House, President, OURA); Sask = Alison Pickrell and Russ Isinger, personal communications, May 14, 2014

Figure 6: Institutional Type



Transcript Practices

The Role of the Transcript

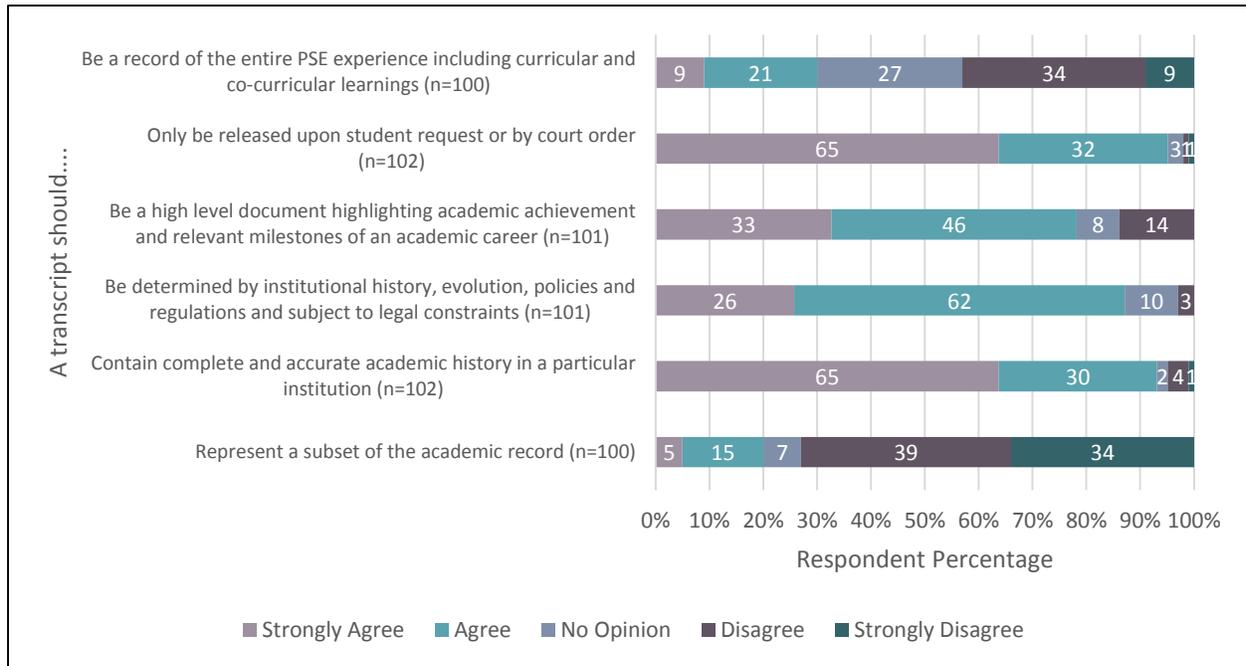
All participants were offered the opportunity to comment on the principles and protocols entrenched in documents such as the ARUCC Transcript Guide. Figure 7 contains the findings on what respondents feel a transcript should and should not represent.

A significant number agreed or strongly agreed that transcripts should:

- Only be released upon student request or court order (97, 95%);
- Be a high level document highlighting academic achievement and relevant academic milestones (79, 78%);
- Be determined by institutional history, evolution, policies, and regulations and be subject to legal constraints (88, 87%);
- Contain a student's complete academic history at a particular institution (95, 93%);
- Not represent a subset of a student's academic record (73, 73%).

Respondents were invited to provide further clarification or commentary regarding the role of a transcript. Examples provided included emphasizing the importance of separating the academic transcript from the co-curricular summary (perhaps through creation of a secondary supplement), ensuring the transcript contained sufficient information to support an accurate interpretation of a student's educational history (with examples provided), and to consider exploring the creation of some form of diploma supplement similar to what is available in Europe and other regions.

Figure 7: What should a Transcript be?

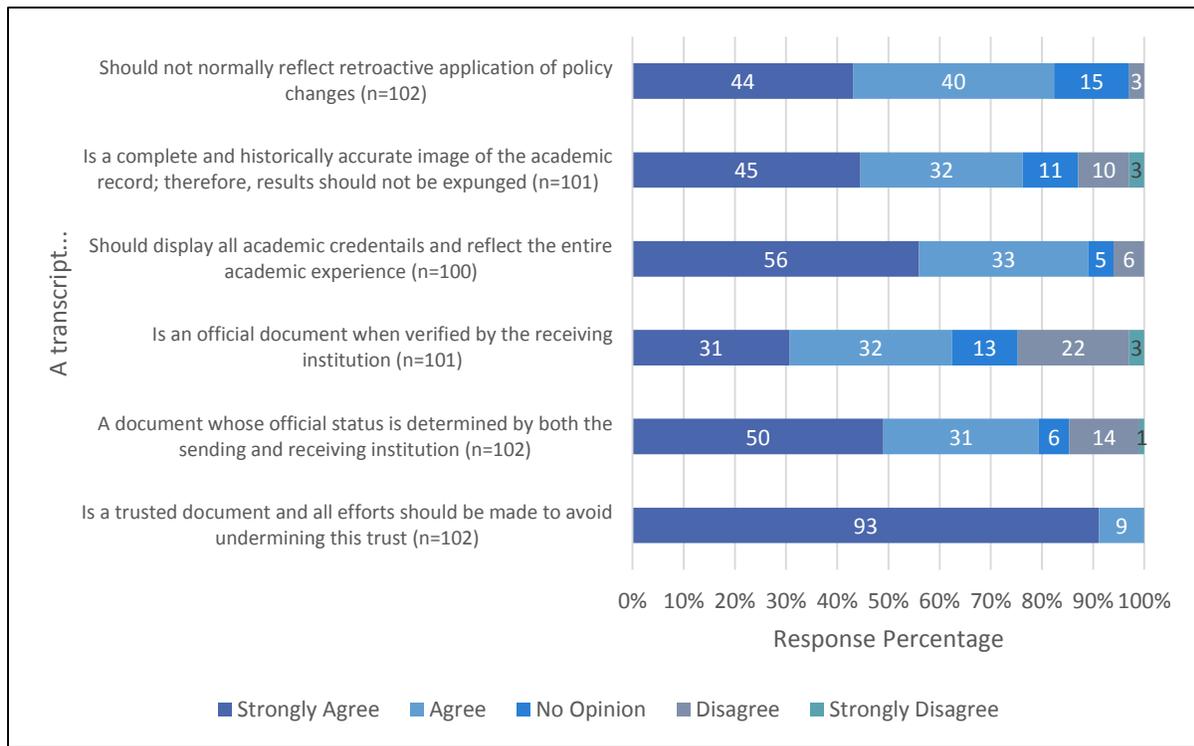


The respondents were also asked to identify their level of agreement with the transcript principles entrenched in the ARUCC Guide. Figure 8 provides the findings.

Most of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide principles although there appeared to be some ambiguity around the concept of a receiving institution being the verifier of what constitutes an official transcript.

The community of registrarial and transfer pathway experts confirmed the enduring validity of many of the core transcript definitions and principles entrenched in the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide.

Figure 8: Level of Agreement with ARUCC Guide Transcript Principles



What constitutes “official”?

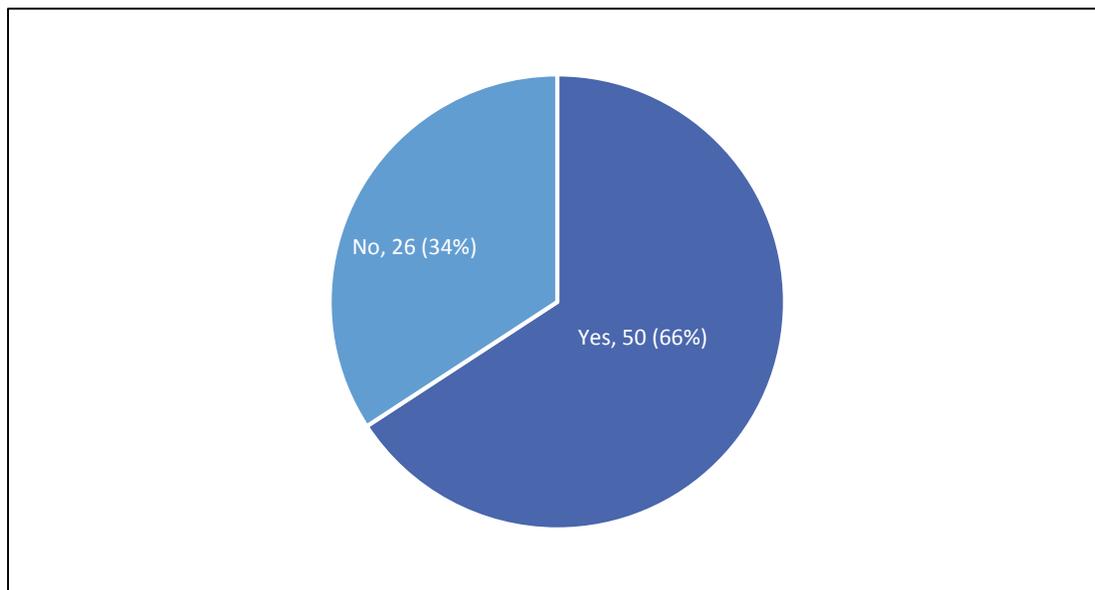
The qualitative findings suggest there are divergent viewpoints regarding what constitutes “official” and some degree of trust in accepting a transcript from a student in a sealed envelope as official. Unfortunately, there have been reported occurrences wherein such sealed envelopes have been easily replicated (Brazao, 2008); therefore, this view is subject to challenge. Defining and securing endorsement of what constitutes an “official transcript” is also an area of potential exploration and resolution given the advancements in the area of document fraud. It is noted that the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide spoke directly to this same issue and provided specific guidance. As an important additional point, electronic data exchange holds the promise of virtually eliminating document fraud.

Partial transcripts and expunging student records

Figure 7 indicates that 73% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that a transcript should represent a subset of the student record. However, select institutional respondents reported a plan to create program specific transcript supplements in response to student requests. This approach stands in contrast to the strongly held view that transcripts should be representative of the entire academic history (95% strongly agreed or agreed; see Figure 7). In another part of the survey respondents were asked to identify if their institution distributed partial transcripts. Ten (10, 13%) out of 77 respondents indicated they engaged in this practice; 67 (87%) did not.

As with the previous question and related to the topic of partial transcripts, the respondents were invited to identify additional principles that should guide transcripts. According to three respondents, expunging student record information from a transcript was noted as necessary in the case of administrative error, under extraordinary circumstances beyond a student’s control, or for legal reasons (e.g., witness protection). Transparency, coherency, and qualitative explanations were recommended when altering a record. The respondents, in another section of the survey, provided evidence indicating that in practice more than half (i.e., 50, 66%, of 76 respondents) removed courses and/or grades as a result of an appeal (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Can records be expunged upon successful appeal?



Most of the registrarial respondents and transfer pathway experts reported a lack of support for altering student transcript history or distributing partial transcripts.

Co-curricular Record

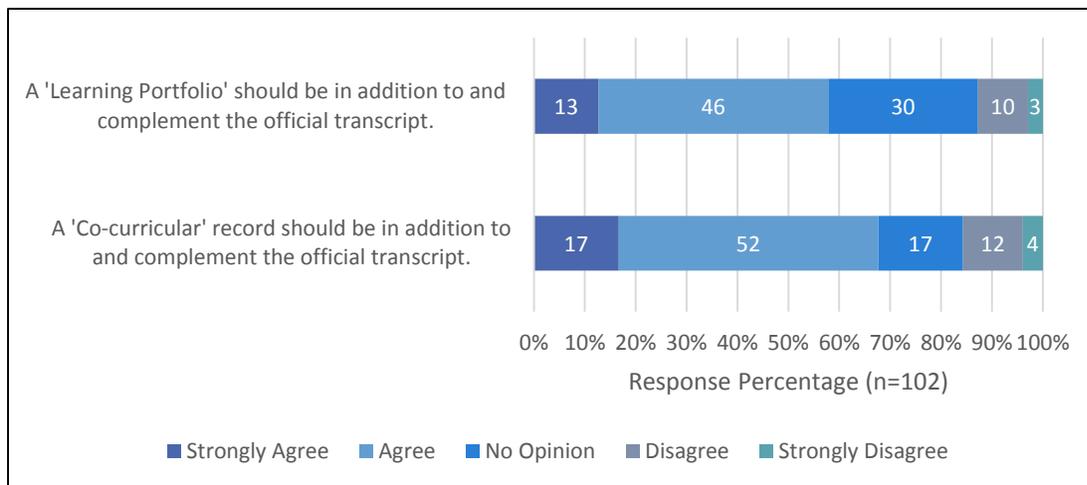
In Figure 7 above, there is evidence of diversity of opinion regarding co-curricular information being part of the transcript. While a larger proportion (43, 43%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with including this information on transcripts, 27 (27%) indicated ‘no opinion’ and approximately 30 (30%) agreed with including this information.

In another section of the survey, respondents were asked to identify their level of agreement with the complementarity to transcripts of co-curricular records and Learning Portfolios (see Appendix D2 for the definitions provided to assist respondents with this question). Figure 10 provides the findings. A larger proportion of the community agreed or strongly agreed that both are complements to the institutional transcript. Qualitative commentary further suggested there is value in keeping them as separate

entities. Respondents were also asked if they included extra-curricular, non-academic activities on a transcript. Thirteen (13, 17%) out of 77 indicated 'yes', 57 (74%) indicated 'no', and 7 (9%) indicated 'not applicable'.

For those that responded in the affirmative, types of co-curricular information captured varied. Examples included participation in formal group discussions on topical issues, service experience such as internship for non-credit, continuing studies, and leadership and non-academic components that are part of the program requirements. Additional commentary from respondents suggested that verification, standards, access to opportunities, and assessment protocols for co-curricular components are such that institutional effort needs to occur to normalize the type and quality of information that is represented. Further, respondents emphasized that non-academic co-curricular information was not appropriate to reflect on a transcript. The term 'co-curricular record' was also raised as a point of confusion as 'record' is sometimes replaced with 'portfolio' or 'transcript'. It was also noted by respondents that these kinds of initiatives serve different purposes and roles that, while complementary, are not the same as that of the transcript; it was further stressed that converging the information on one document can result in tensions between the purpose and role of each.

Figure 10: Level of Agreement with the Complementarity of Co-curricular Records and Learning Portfolios



Further consultation in a next project phase regarding co-curricular records with respect to the transcript seems to be a reasonable suggestion given the findings surrounding this topic.

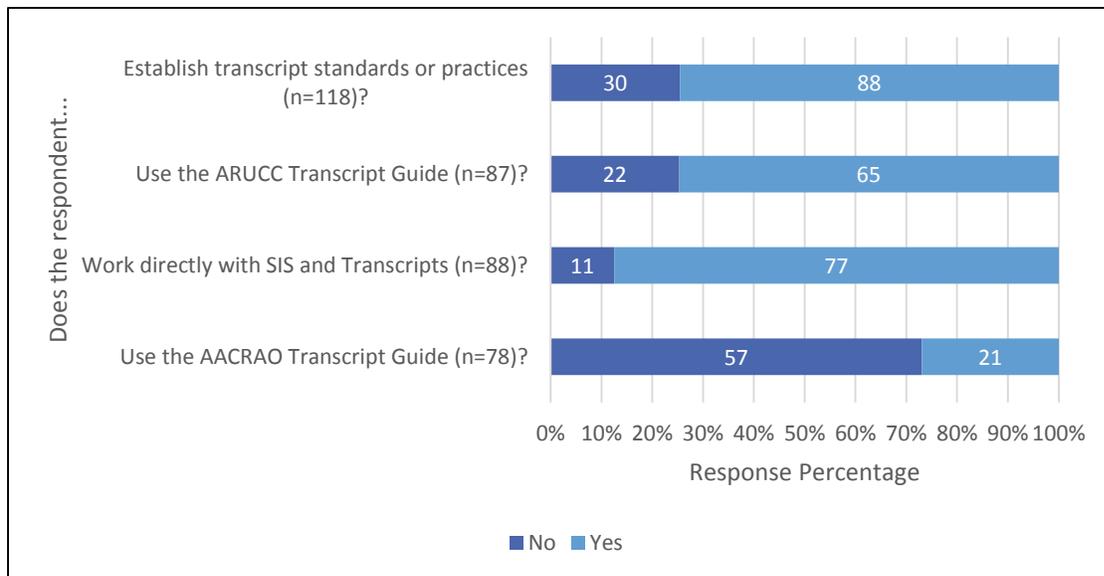
The registrarial community and transfer pathway experts demonstrated awareness of and support for co-curricular records and Learning Portfolios as potential complements to the official transcript.

Transcript Responsibilities and Usage of Transcript Guides

Of the total 108 respondents, 88 from both postsecondary and non-postsecondary organizations indicated involvement in establishing transcript standards and practices. Their expertise informed the responses to current transcript practices in the survey.

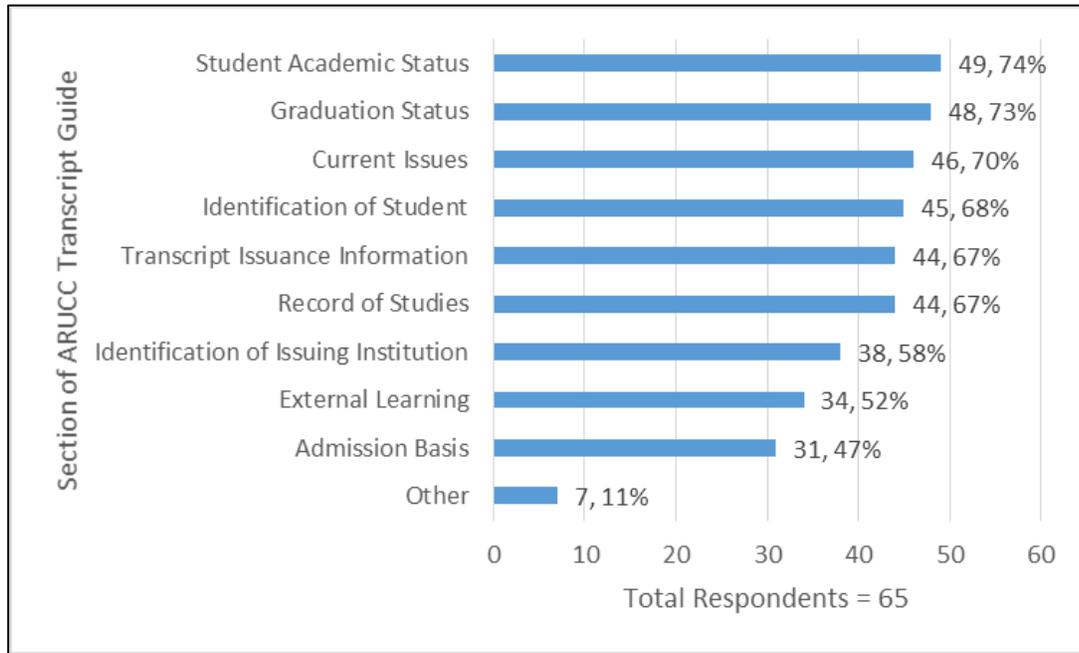
Figure 11 provides a more distilled view of those 88 that indicated responsibility for setting transcript standards or practices: 77 (88%) out of 88 reported working directly with Student Information Systems (SIS) and transcripts; 65 (75%) out of 87 reported they used the ARUCC Transcript Guide; and 21 (31%) out of 68 reported they used the AACRAO Transcript Guide (57, 84% did not). These findings are not too surprising as it was not unusual to hear in workshops that people hadn't heard of and/or did not use the two guides, particularly the AACRAO Transcript Guide.

Figure 11: Engagement with Transcript Standards, Guides, Practices and Credentials



Of the 65 (75%) that used the ARUCC Transcript Guide, Figure 12 illustrates respondents' perspectives on the most useful sections of the Guide from highest to lowest. Those that responded 'other' stressed the necessity of more guidance regarding the annotation of cumulative grade point averages, external awards, and transfer credit. They also indicated support for the categorization approach currently in the Guide (i.e., 'not recommended', 'optional', 'recommended', 'essential'). This information is helpful to know when contemplating the components that would be useful in a future iteration of the Guide.

Figure 12: Usage of Sections within the ARUCC Transcript Guide



* Respondents could identify more than one item when responding to this question.

When asked the question “What insights might the AACRAO Transcript Guide lend to Canadian transcript standard development?” there were 17 qualitative responses provided. Examples included protocols for handling fraudulent transcripts, transcription of non-traditional learning, continuing education, and recording academic and disciplinary actions. There was stronger qualitative support for developing universal best practice standards including for those related to electronic transcripts (9, 53%, out of 17 respondents). How the AACRAO Guide displays specific transcript components was cited as helpful by two respondents. Since a similar model exists in the ARUCC Transcript Guide, that was also noted as a format to continue and expand.

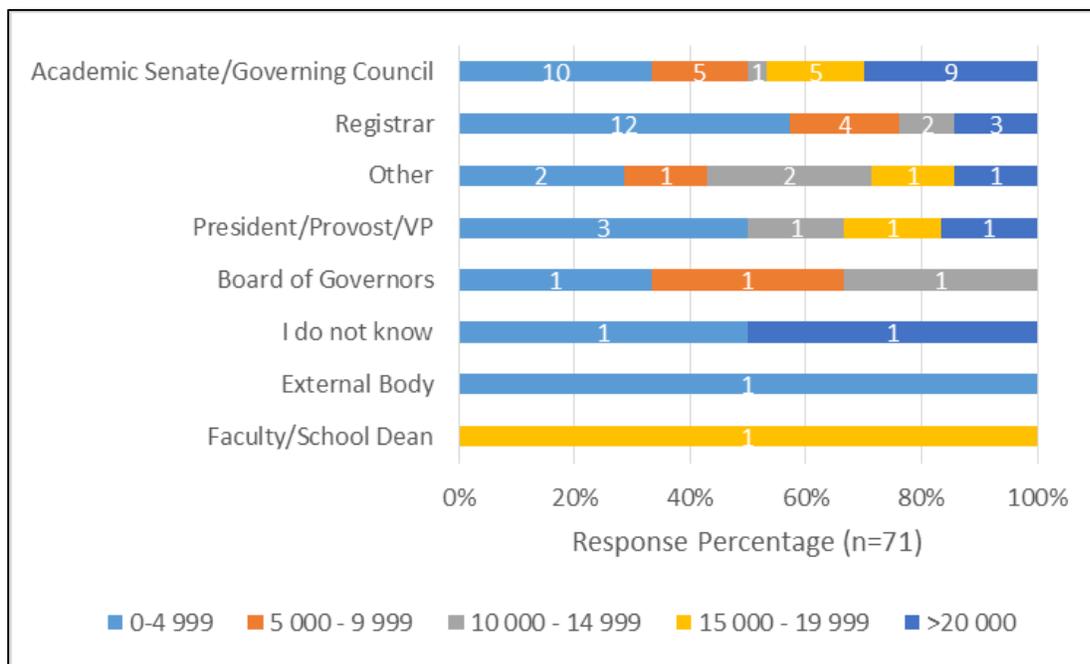
The findings suggest that ARUCC will want to identify and implement mechanisms to ensure the practitioners are routinely advised of the existence of a Canada-wide transcript guide.

Transcript Decision Authority

When examining the findings regarding the highest authority at an institution with the power to approve transcript policy, the two most common mentioned were the academic Senate/Governing Council (30, 42%) or the Registrar (21, 30%).

Figure 13 compares the findings against institutional size; it would seem that for smaller institutions, the authority is relatively similar between academic senates/governing councils and the Registrar with the authority of the academic senates/governing councils increasing as the institution’s size grows. When comparing the findings against institutional type, the universities and colleges align with these findings (see Appendix M, Figure M6).

Figure 13: Approval Authority (Transcript Policy) versus Institutional Size



Transcript and Grading Publication Practices

Figure 14 provides an overview of the predominant grading scales used at any given institution in Canada.¹⁹ Approximately 30% employ a letter grade with an associated grade point scale. The rest are spread over five other approaches.

¹⁹ Respondents were asked to identify the “predominant” grading scale; not if any particular grading scale was the only one in use at their institution.

Figure 14: Predominant Grading Scales Used at Canadian Institutions

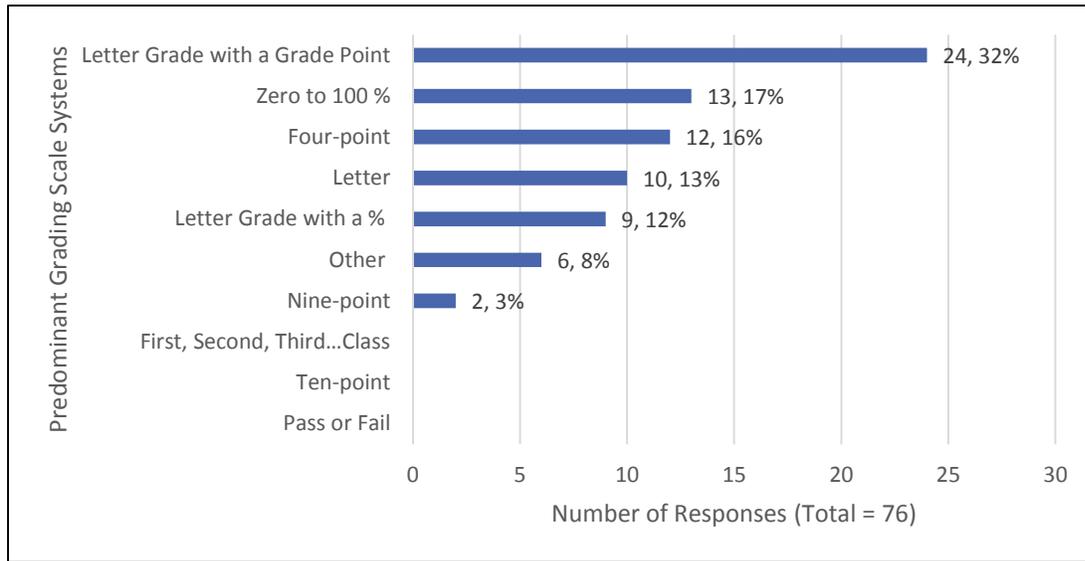
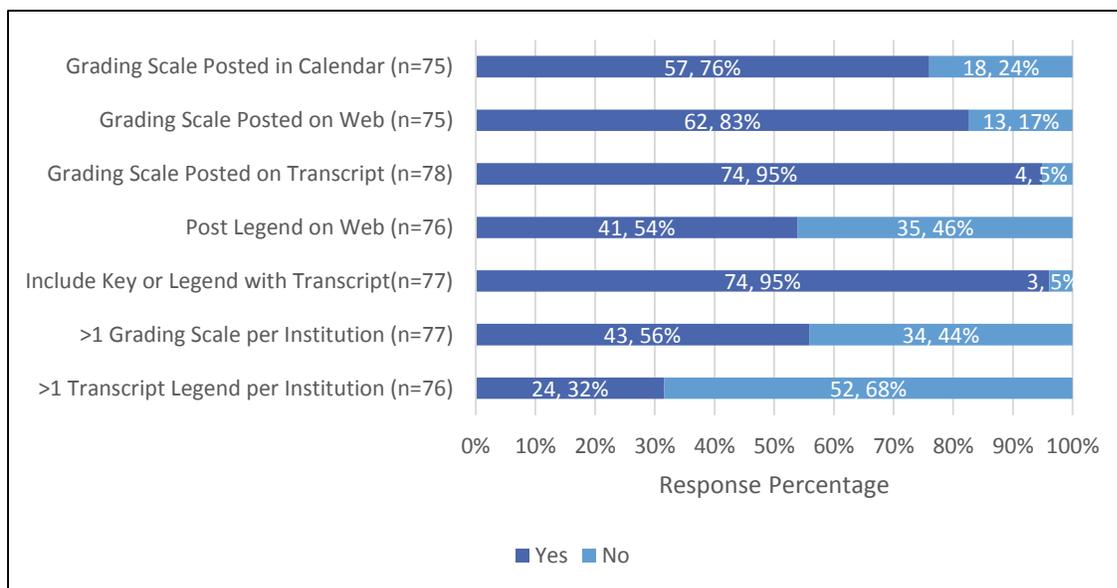


Figure 15 provides an overview of some of the more common transcript legend and grading scale/systems publication practices. These are relevant as they can potentially impact transparency, coherence, and ultimate assessment accuracy. For example, if it is not easy to find a grading scale in order to interpret results for admission entry or transfer credit assessment, mobility is potentially impeded. Similarly, if an institution has more than one grading scale and does not include the relevant grading scale with the transcript, it could cause potential evaluation errors. At minimum, the task of the assessor becomes more difficult when they have to seek out additional information that perhaps is not readily available.

Figure 15: Transcript Legend and Grading Scale Practices



The findings indicate many institutions publish their grading scales/systems in a variety of locations including with the transcript. These practices are particularly helpful given the evidence indicating more than one grading scale (43, 56%) or transcript legend (24, 32%) per institution in Figure 15.

The diversity of grading systems and the evidence of common practices for publishing grading scales and transcript legends suggest an opportunity exists to use this data to inform future standards development and recommended practices.

Common Transcript Components

One of the objectives of the research was to identify the most common components featured on institutional transcripts. The comparison of practices to the ARUCC Transcript Guide assists in identifying divergent approaches and potential opportunities for further consultation. Components that exist but are not addressed in the current Guide provide some insights into areas requiring confirmation and/or enhancement. For example, personal information such as student email and date of birth need to be carefully considered given the privacy implications. Further, the category assignments emphasized in the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide might need to be reconsidered in light of current realities. These findings represented a complement to the samples submitted as part of this project (see Appendix J).

Table 8 provides an overview of the percentage of institutions that feature particular components relating to student and institutional demographics. Each is compared to the ARUCC Transcript Guide as a means to providing a beginning insight into the potential gaps.²⁰

²⁰ Specific findings related to the tables in this section are available in Appendix M.

Table 8: Common and Uncommon Transcript Components on Institutional Transcripts

Transcript Component		Percentage of Institutional Respondents							ARUCC Transcript Guide	
		100%	90-99%	80-89%	70-79%	60-69%	50-59%	20-49%		Less than 20%
Institutional Information	Transcript Issue Date	✓								Essential
	Institutional Name	✓								Essential
	Institutional Location		✓							Essential
	Student ID at Institution		✓							Essential
	Branch Campus Location								✓	Not specified
Student Identification	Student Name	✓								Essential (Official Name)
	Provincial Education #							✓		No bearing on transcript
	Student Date of Birth				✓					Discretionary (day, month)
	Student Mailing Address							✓		Discretionary
	Student Email								✓	Not specified
Admission	Admission Test Scores								✓	Not specified; institutional qualifying exam essential when program requirement
	Admission Basis							✓		Not recommended
Prior Studies	Prior Secondary or Postsecondary Attended								✓	PSE name essential for joint and collaborative partnerships
	Date Prior Credential Received								✓	Not specified
	Prior Credential Earned								✓	Not specified
	Postsecondary Credits Earned at High School							✓		Not specified
	Prior Postsecondary School Name								✓	Essential for joint and collaborative partnerships
	Prior Postsecondary Period of Attendance								✓	Not specified
	Prior Postsecondary Credential Received								✓	Program essential
	Prior Postsecondary Date Credential Received								✓	Discretionary

As demonstrated in Table 9, institutional respondents reported that it is very uncommon to publish cumulative grade point average information on a transcript. It will be interesting in a next phase to examine if this kind information would be considered relevant and necessary.

Table 9: Presence of Grade Point Average Components on Institutional Transcripts

Transcript Component	Percentage of Institutional Respondents								ARUCC Transcript Guide
	100%	90-99%	80-89%	70-79%	60-69%	50-59%	20-49%	Less than 20%	
Class Averages								✓	Discretionary
Overall Cumulative Average by Academic Career at Institution						✓			Cumulative GPA recommended
Overall Cumulative Average by Program							✓		Not specified by program
Session Average							✓		Not specified by session
Term Average						✓			Recommended
Demonstrated Competencies								✓	Recommended
Narrative Evaluation								✓	Essential when no other type of grading used

Program and course component practices at Canadian institutions vary and are mostly aligned or closely aligned to the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide for those items identified as “essential”. This speaks to the degree of enduring support for the guidelines proposed in the original Guide, which is a helpful indicator of the value of the current ARUCC PCCAT project. Approaches to identifying credit related items are not necessarily aligned with the Guide. Table 10 provides the details. There are areas that are growing in focus such as transfer credit and course mode of delivery. As the latter is not a component that is addressed currently in the Guide, it might be a relevant addition given an increasing focus on student mobility.

Table 10: Program and Course Components

Transcript Component		Percentage of Institutional Respondents							ARUCC Transcript Guide	
		100%	90-99%	80-89%	70-79%	60-69%	50-59%	20-49%		Less than 20%
Program Details	Program name		✓							Essential (program of study identification)
	Program type			✓						Varies with institutional practice
	Major					✓				Varies with institutional practice
	Minor						✓			Varies with institutional practice
	Specialization					✓				Varies with institutional practice
Course Details	Course identifier		✓							Essential (discipline identifier also essential)
	Course name	✓								Essential
	Course grade		✓							Essential
	Course location								✓	Not specified
	Course in progress			✓						Not specified
	Course mode of delivery								✓	Not specified
Credit Details	Credits per course/units per course		✓							Essential
	Credit summary					✓				Recommended (cumulative credit value earned)
	Credits earned			✓						Essential (also cumulative credit value earned)
	Credits taken				✓					Recommended (term credit value attempted)

Progression and milestone practices, when contrasted against the ARUCC Transcript Guide, provide some interesting examples of divergence, as presented in Table 11. As an illustrative point, the date the program is completed is relevant to those students that finish their program well in advance of a convocation date. Having this component on a transcript might very well assist registrarial operations by

reducing the need for customized letters and help students with securing employment. It, however, is currently not a specified element in the 2003 Guide.

Table 11: Progression and Milestone Practices versus the ARUCC Transcript Guide

Transcript Component		Percentage of Institutional Respondents							ARUCC Transcript Guide	
		100%	90-99%	80-89%	70-79%	60-69%	50-59%	20-49%		Less than 20%
Graduate Studies Activities	Advancement or admission to candidacy (or graduate internal promotion)								✓	Essential
	Graduate thesis / dissertation title identified							✓		Essential
	Graduate comprehensive exams complete								✓	Not specified
	Graduate thesis/dissertation completed/defended							✓		Not specified
	Graduation requirements met							✓		Not specified
Professional Activities	Professional certification received								✓	Discretionary (if part of program requirements)
	Practicum / apprenticeship requirements complete						✓			Discretionary (if part of program requirements)
	Accreditation met								✓	Not specified
Graduation Activities	Credential awarded			✓						Essential
	Date credential conferred			✓						Essential
	Graduation date			✓						Not specified
	Satisfactory completion of institutional qualifying exams								✓	Essential (if program requirement)
Program Progression Activities	Date program completed							✓		Recommended
	First year/"freshman" year complete								✓	Not specified

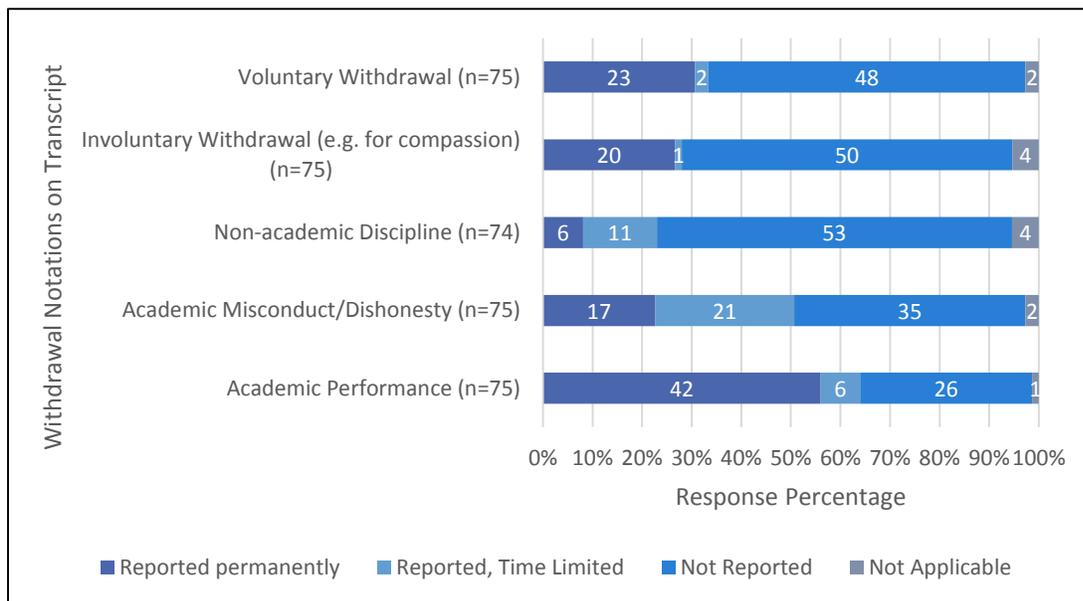
Additional areas identified by respondents that are not currently covered by the Guide touch on a range of topics, including program transfer notations, conditional approval of progress, successful completion of internships, graduate school milestones or other requirements (e.g., completed, unsatisfactory, in progress, ethics requirements, thesis ranking for oral and written components, promotion to PhD, graduate workshops, exhibitions for Fine Arts students), undergraduate standing each term, and non-course related milestones relevant to program success or requirements (e.g., academic integrity, Workplace Health and Safety Training, English language proficiency and satisfying related requirements).

Whether any of these are relevant additions to the inventory of transcript protocols requires further discussion and debate.

Probation and Withdrawal Notations

Withdrawal practices at Canadian institutions are somewhat varied. Figure 16 contains the findings. As a set of more common themes, voluntary and involuntary withdrawal and non-academic discipline tend not to be reported, which is in keeping with the ARUCC Guide. Of interest, 35 of 75 institutions (47%) indicated they do not report academic misconduct/dishonesty on a transcript. The ARUCC Guide recommends reporting this information. Forty-eight (48, 64%) noted withdrawal due to academic performance is reported (6 indicated for a specified time period), which is noted as an essential notation in the ARUCC Guide if it is for withdrawal from the institution; the Guide indicates it is a discretionary measure whether or not to note withdrawal from a course or a program.

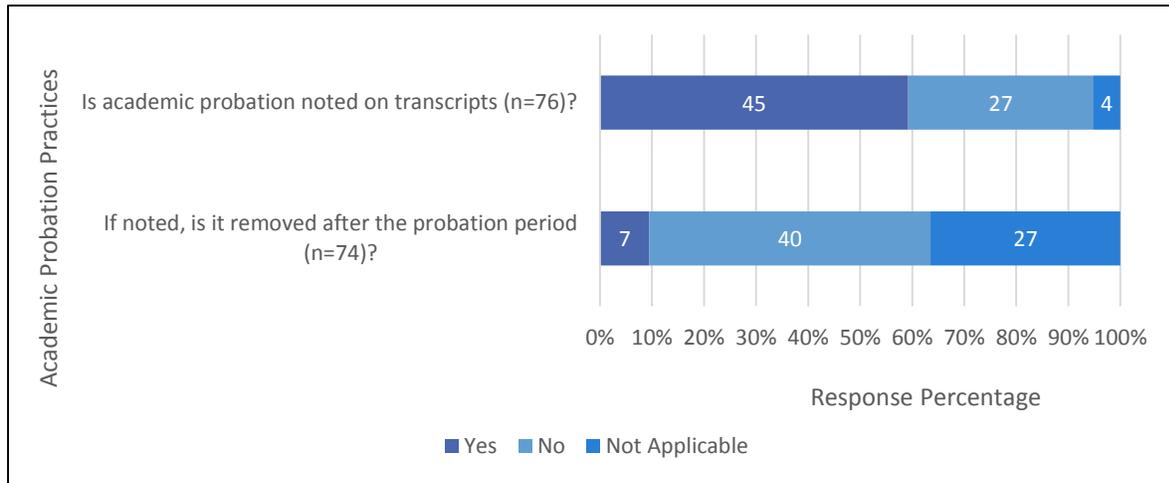
Figure 16: Withdrawal Practices



Expunging student records was already highlighted previously. In any of the above, when respondents reported the item as noted on transcript, it is typically removable with appeal or application. Several indicated that a 'W' or 'Withdrawn Extenuating Circumstances' is noted on the transcript, or converted to a retroactive drop or withdrawal.

Figure 17 provides the findings regarding academic probation. Forty-five (45, 59%) reported noting academic probation on the transcript. The ARUCC Guide indicates it is essential to notate academic performance when it results in removal from an institution; it suggests a discretionary approach for all others. Of those that do note it, most do not remove it.

Figure 17: Academic Probation Practices



Awards

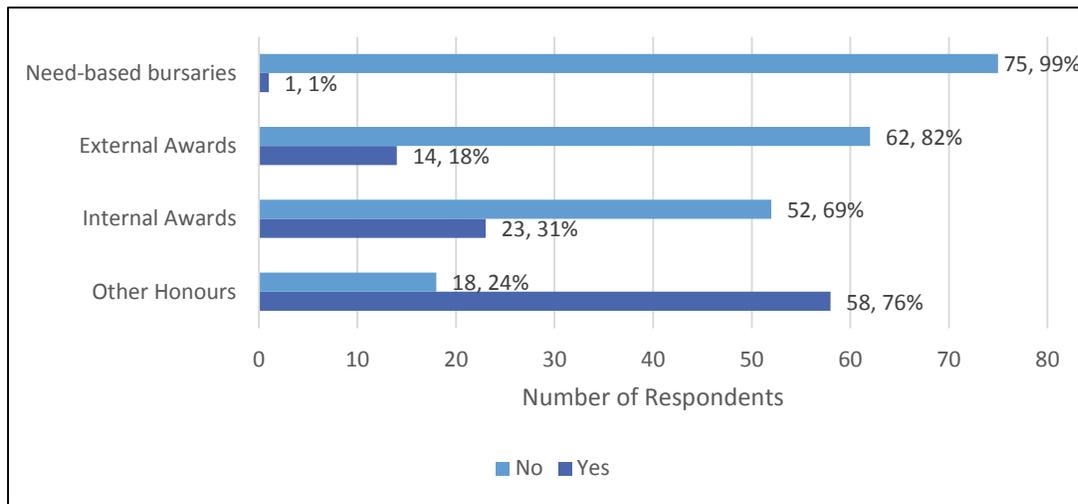
Figure 18 outlines the transcript publication practices for awards and bursaries at the respondent institutions.

A number of qualitative comments across all categories were shared: the largest concerns with sharing awards information on transcripts indicated that doing so would disclose personal financial information and therefore be a breach of confidentiality and privacy; that bursaries were not related to academics and therefore not appropriate for the transcript; or that doing so was not their institution's practice. For the latter, some respondents referred to current institutional policy precluding the reporting although most reported they did not know the reason. Select respondents suggested that awards were not considered relevant to the academic record; hence, the lack of reporting.

The approach regarding needs-based bursaries is not surprising given the privacy considerations. The one institution that did report these indicated student permission was sought first.

External awards were confirmed by respondents as difficult to identify and verify; therefore, these findings are not surprising.

Figure 18: Transcript Publication Awards Practices



The findings regarding internal awards was interesting in that most indicated ‘no’ and yet the ARUCC Guide recommends their inclusion. With respect to honours, 47 institutional respondents provided qualitative commentary regarding the types of honours that are reflected on transcripts. ‘Dean’s Honour List’ (cited 22 times) and ‘Graduated with Distinction’ (18) were the most popular. Other examples cited included ‘Honours’, ‘High Honours’, ‘With Honours’, ‘President’s Honour List’, and ‘Graduation Honours’. A couple of institutions reported the ‘Governor General’s Academic Gold Medal’, the ‘Governor General’s Collegiate Bronze Medal’ and the ‘Lieutenant Governor’s Silver Medal’.

Although there is an ARUCC transcript standard for citing both internal and external awards, it would appear that practices are varied across the country.

Given the findings across the range of transcript components, a future phase of the ARUCC and PCCAT project will want to examine the opportunity of reconfirming, refining, or adding transcript standards in a number of areas.

Credit Systems

In response to an open-ended question regarding their institution's definition of 'credit', 76 respondents offered a range of comments, with the following themes most prevalent:

- A credit as having a direct relationship to lecture or instructional contact hours, with the majority indicating that 3.0 credits equaled a one term course and 6.0 a two term or a full year course;
- As an indicator of value and as a required component of a credential (certificate, diploma, degree);
- As a measure of effort or workload required by a student to meet learning goals.

Six (6, 9%) did not use a credit system.

In the application of credit hours and weighting, the following is a snapshot only of common institutional responses:

- Responses by term ranged from a minimum weighting of .5 through to 4 credits translating into instructional hours per course from 33 to 69;
- Responses by sampling of credentials were as follows:
 - For a two-year diploma, credit weighting ranged from 12 to 63 total credits, with some institutions stating this varied by program. The majority indicated 60 total credits.
 - For an undergraduate degree (general), 15 to 126 credits were noted, with the majority indicating 120 credits were typically required.
 - For a master's program response varied widely from 6 to 90 credits required. Sometimes the credit totals were program dependent or expressed in terms of course work per year. In this category, there is little consistency.

Fifty-one (51, 66%) out of 75 report explanations of their credit systems and weighting on transcripts.

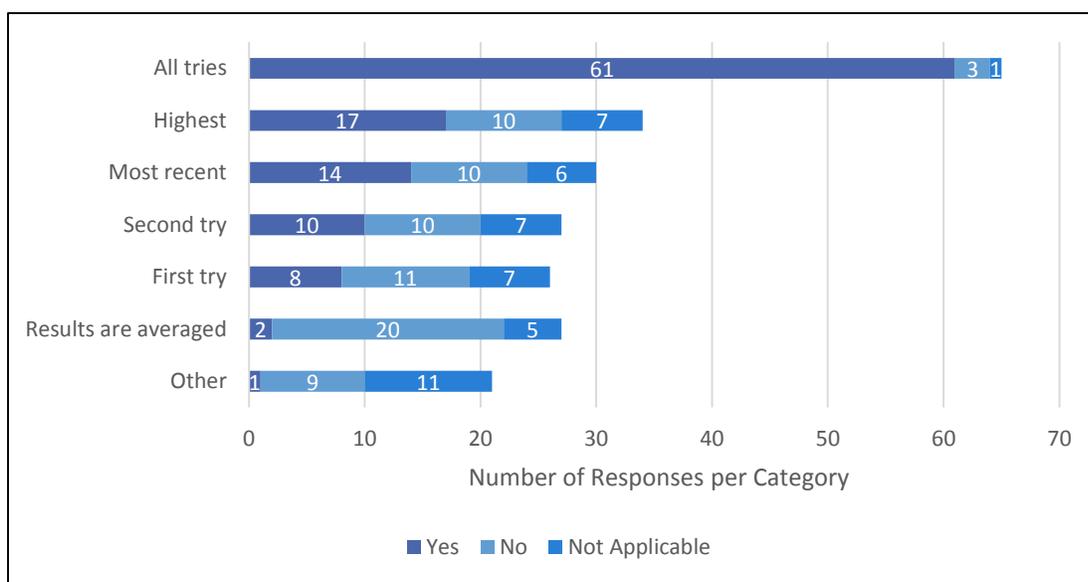
With the broad array of differing practices and publication approaches amongst Canadian institutions regarding credit weighting systems, best practice would point to ensuring that a guide to interpreting an institution's credit system be available on a transcript key or legend. Opportunities to suggest standards for this area should be explored further in a next phase.

Repeated Courses

The ARUCC Transcript Guide is silent on standards related to repeated courses; therefore, it is an area that deserves further probing. Most institutional respondents reported students were allowed to repeat courses at their institution (69, 91%) although there is a small number (7, 9%) who do not allow this for successfully completed courses.

It is further evident from the findings that institutions take a varied approach when coding the results on transcripts (Figure 19).²¹ The respondents indicated that most note all tries; however, the next popular approach is to code the highest result. The findings indicate varied approaches and yet a seeming common practice (i.e., ‘all tries’), which is highly transparent.

Figure 19: Repeated Courses Approach on Transcripts



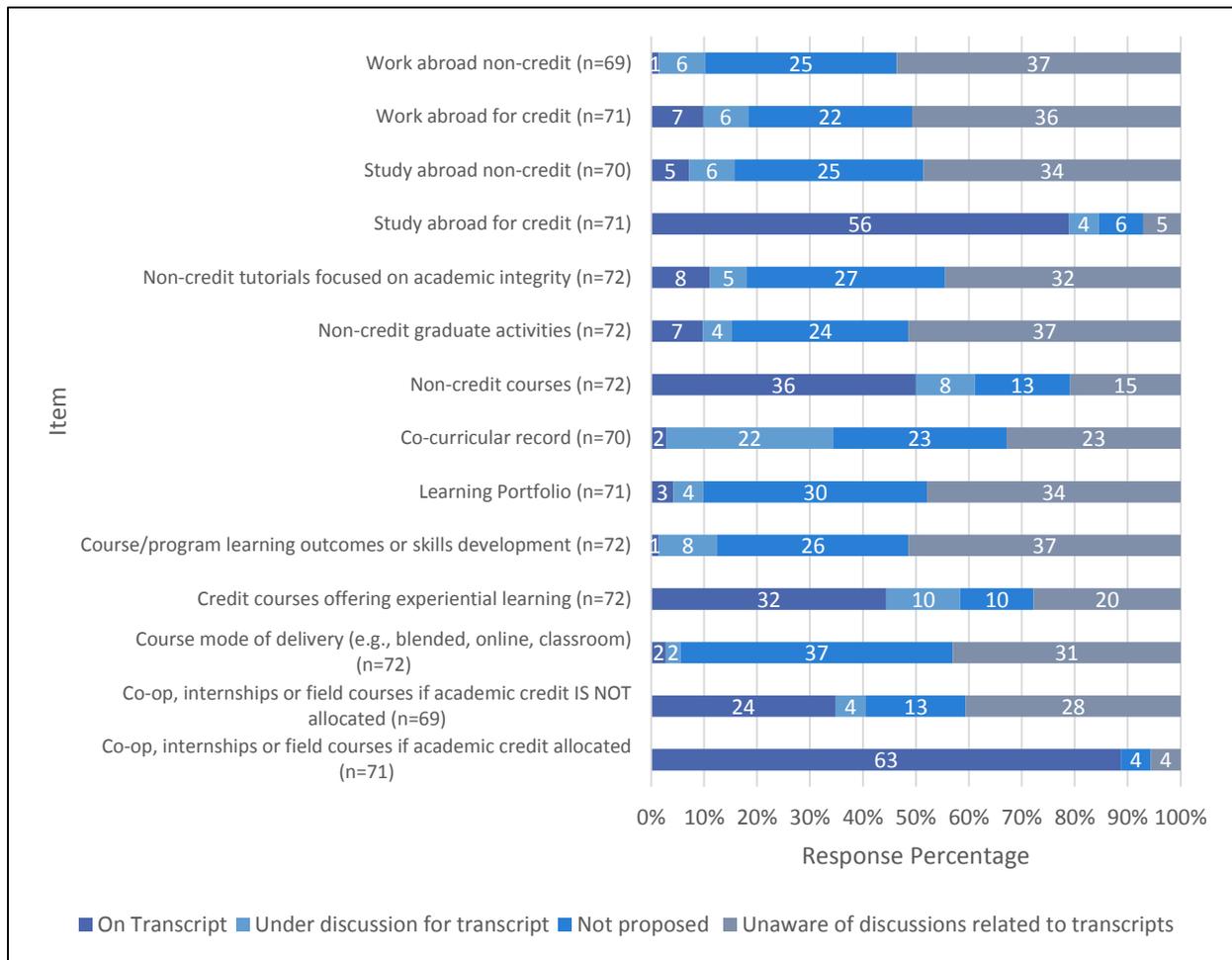
Alternative Learning Options Offered or Arranged by a Particular Institution

One of the areas that bears closer examination is to understand the practices and perspectives related to alternative learning options²² available to students and offered or arranged by their own institution. The respondents with direct expertise in the area of transcripts and student records were asked to identify the institutional practices or intentions for transcripts related to a group of items that could be loosely captured under this area. Figure 20 provides the details.

²¹ Not all the 65 institutional respondents to this question provided a response to each of these categories.

²² For the purposes of this report, ‘alternative’ learning (e.g., study abroad, etc.) refers to learning options organized for a school for its students that is other than equivalent learning (e.g., PLAR, challenge credit). ‘Equivalent’ learning, again for the purposes of this report, is intended to refer to PLAR and challenge credit.

Figure 20: Transcript Practices and Plans for Alternative Learning Options Offered by an Institution

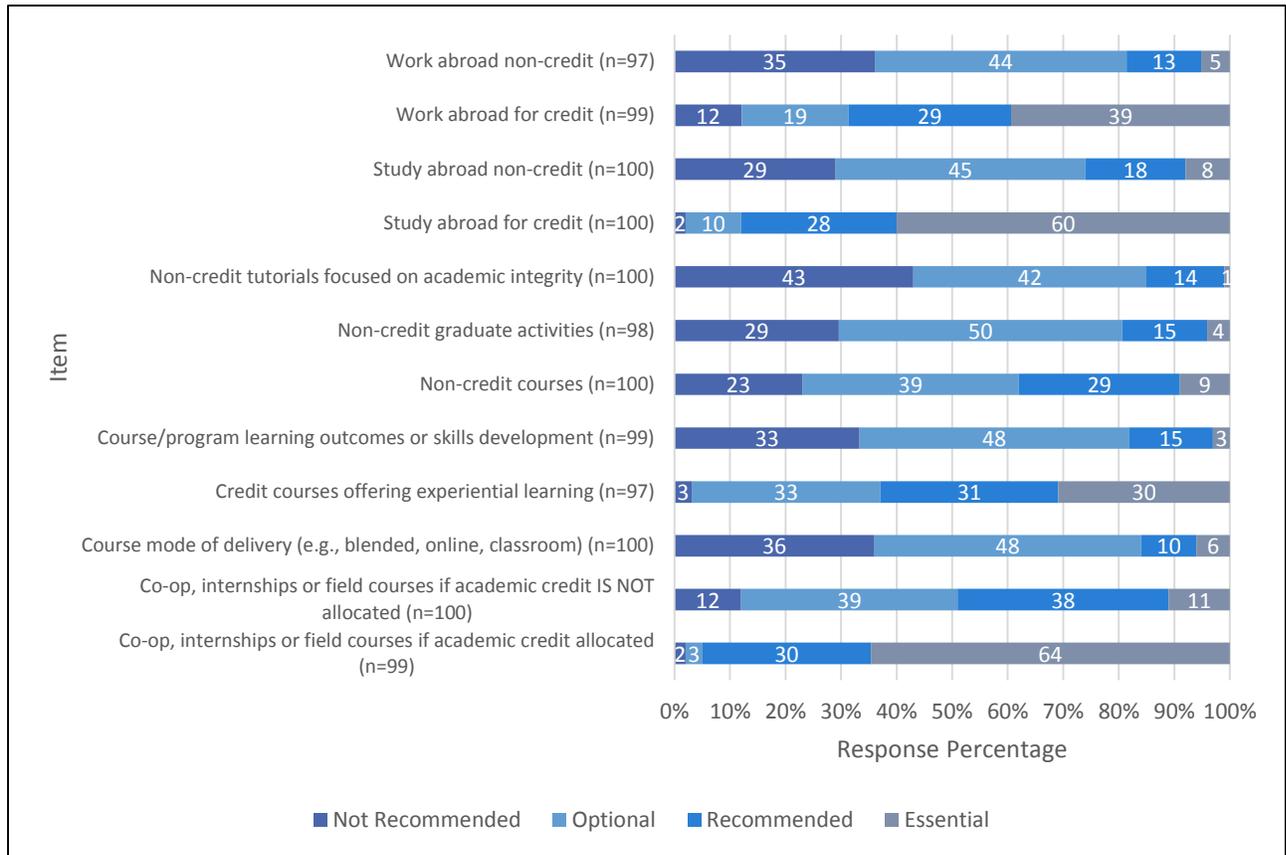


Points of divergence are evident regarding non-credit activities, the co-curricular record, learning outcomes, and credit courses offering experiential learning.

Respondents provided some additional qualitative commentary to support their responses to this question. One institution reported applying a course credit model for non-credit work abroad as a means to capture the information on a transcript; another reported having the capacity to produce a separate non-credit transcript; and a select few indicated that the co-curricular record was a separate document or that their institution did not deliver study or work abroad or non-credit courses so these items did not apply.

All 119 respondents including those that did not have direct involvement with managing transcripts or students records were invited to identify the items offered or arranged by a particular institution for its own students that, in their opinion, should be on a transcript. Figure 21 provides the data.

Figure 21: Respondent Perspective for Transcript Components for Alternative Learning



Overall, there appears to be convergence around confirming existing practices such as for-credit work or study abroad, non-credit courses, courses offering experiential learning (i.e., to have them on the transcript), and non-credit and credit co-op (i.e., to have both represented on the transcript). There appears to be divergence of opinion surrounding reconsidering current practices related to for-credit work abroad, non-credit study abroad, non-credit tutorials focus on academic integrity, non-credit graduate activities, learning outcomes, and course mode of delivery.

A future phase of the ARUCC PCCAT project should explore if there are potential recommended standards evident for alternative learning options offered by an institution to its own students.

Equivalent Learning (e.g., PLAR, Challenge Exams)

The area of equivalent learning was probed in the survey. Out of 75 respondents, 42 (56%) indicated they used an explicit identifier for equivalent learning experiences. Eighteen (18, 24%) did not and 15 (20%) answered 'not applicable'. For those that did use an identifier, details were requested. Seventeen (17) indicated they used notations such as 'PLAR', 'PL', 'PLA', 'Prior Learning Credits', or terms such as 'Prior Learning Assessment.' Some noted 'CHAL', 'CH', or 'Challenge Exams' in the transfer credit section of the transcript. When coding equivalent learning as transfer credit, respondents reported assigning codes such as 'TR', 'CR', 'ECR' or 'SL' without a grade (and noted no grade was included in the GPA calculation). Others used 'credit granted' or 'credits earned'. Notations reported as commonly used on French language transcripts include 'EQ' (no grade), 'K' for course exemption or a 'V' for a successfully completed course taken outside of Quebec. When no explicit identifier was used in the case of 18 respondents, challenge exams and PLAR were noted as transfer credit or given internal course credit (7 respondents). Some respondents reporting including grades in the assessment or providing specific course exemption or indicated they are considering this topic for the future. One institution reported using 'NC' (i.e., 'no credit') to indicate unsuccessful challenge exams.

The research indicates there is no apparent common practice for whether or not an institution codes equivalent learning or conversely even how it is coded. This validates the findings of the Canadian jurisdictional research. A future phase of the ARUCC PCCAT project will want to consider transcription of equivalent learning such as PLAR and challenge courses when developing standards and practice recommendations.

Assessment of International Transcripts

The international jurisdictional research emphasized the value of qualifications frameworks and supplements as tools, along with transcript guidelines and standards, to facilitate coherency, transparency, and objective review of transcripts. As a test of the accuracy of this view and as a means to validate the value of these kinds of mechanisms, the national survey also incorporated questions surrounding the use of qualifications frameworks. Of those that have expertise in the area of transcript standards and practices, 69 responded to the question "Do you reference qualifications frameworks when looking at credentials from other countries?" Forty-six (46, 67%) indicated 'yes'; 23 (33%) indicated 'no'. Forty-nine (49, 70%) out of 70 respondents indicated the existence of a pan-Canadian international credential framework would improve the assessment of international transcripts. Two (2, 3%) indicated 'no' and 19 (27%) indicated 'depends'.

Some of those that responded 'depends' indicated that the level of detail and the availability of sample international institutional transcripts would be important. Two indicated that variable program or accreditation requirements might hamper this process. Another expressed a worry about how a credentials framework would align with their particular province's framework; a related concern was raised about preserving institutional autonomy. One person indicated support as long as the outcomes

resulted in improved qualified assessment. Currency of information was raised and it was also acknowledged that contradictory advice sometimes results from using outside sources.

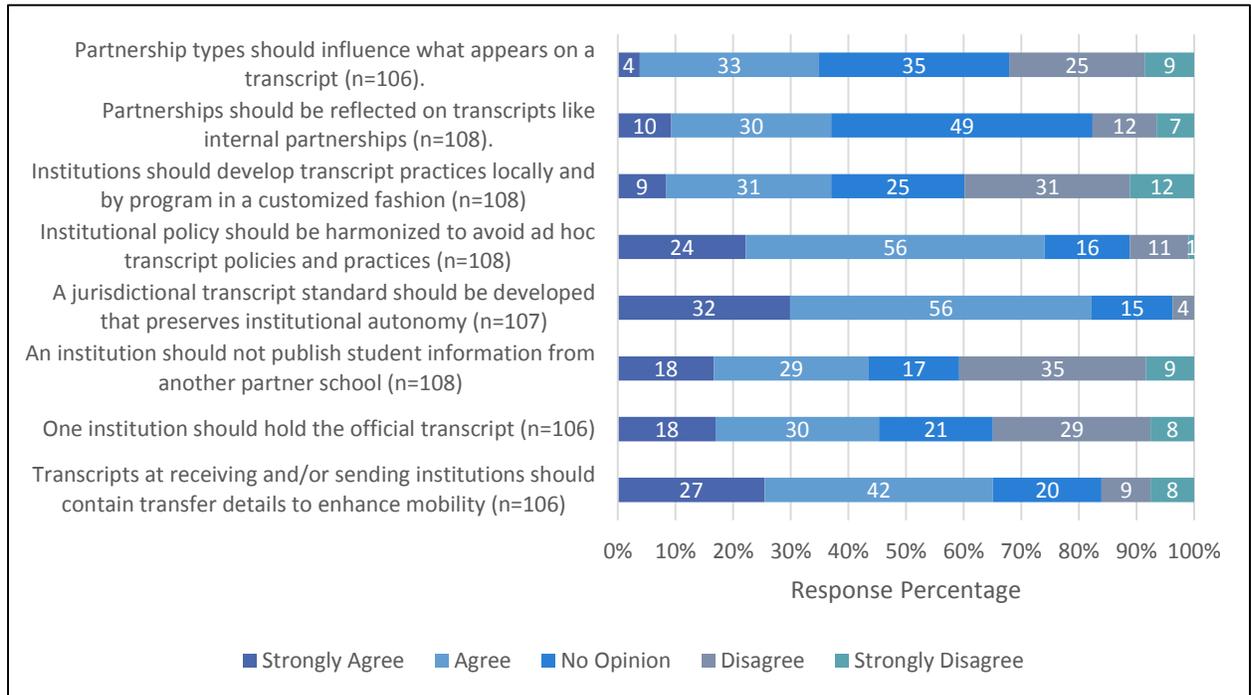
This line of questioning also presented an opportunity to ask institutional respondents if there were particular international transcripts that represented promising practice. Examples suggested included “some” of the US universities (no names provided although North Dakota schools were identified in one of the workshops) and the Taiwanese postsecondary institutions (i.e., the specificity accorded start dates, graduation dates, program names, grading scales, institutional names, ministry approval, and signing authorities was applauded). Specific examples provided included the University of Baghdad, College of Engineering, the International Islamic University in Malaysia, the International Baccalaureate transcripts, and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

The findings suggest validation for the role of qualifications frameworks when examining transcript standards. The next phase of the ARUCC PCCAT project will want to deepen the identification and analysis of promising transcript examples from other jurisdictions with the support of Canadian institutions.

Transfer Credit

Transcripts and the treatment of transfer credit became a necessary area of exploration during the research as a means to understand transfer credit nomenclature and how it is operationalized. It was also critical to capture perspective on principles as presented in Figure 22.

Figure 22: Respondent Perspective of Treatment of Transfer Credit on Institutional Transcripts



Most of the respondents out of the original 119 (whether from an institution or not) responded to these questions. Agreement or strong agreement was evident for the following:

- Institutional policy should be harmonized to avoid ad hoc transcript policies and practices (80, 74%);
- A jurisdictional transcript standard should be developed that preserves institutional autonomy (88, 82%);
- Transcripts at receiving and/or sending institutions should contain transfer details to enhance mobility (69, 65%).

There appears to be almost equal division of perspective on the following:

- Partnership types should influence what appears on a transcript;
- Institutions should develop partnerships locally and by program in a customized fashion;
- An institution should not publish partner information from another school;
- One institution should hold the official student record.

Although not all the questions were featured in both studies, some of these findings closely align with the data from the BCCAT *Credentialing Practices for Joint Program* study (Duklas, 2013, pp. 20, 21, and 24). Specifically, in the following areas: transcription of joint program details, harmonizing institutional policy, and concurrence with one institution being the holder of the official record information for those students enrolled in joint programs.

All respondents to the survey (both institutional and non-institutional) were asked if they have involvement in setting transfer credit standards or practices. Of the total 119, 102 responded and of those, 76 (75%) indicated 'yes'. In response to the question "Do you have or are you developing a transfer credit guide, standard, glossary, or terminology policy whether at your institution or organization?" 63 (72%) of 87 respondents indicated 'yes'. When asked if their organization's policies and practices represented promising practice, 36 out of 48 indicated 'yes' as a result of their sense of alignment within their jurisdiction and positive student feedback. Five of these 36 specifically indicated they felt their institutional policies and practices were indicative of their leadership across Canada. As previously mentioned, a sampling of the list of policies provided by respondents is in Appendix H.

Those that responded 'no' (12) typically cited lack of currency, inconsistencies, and decentralized internal processes at the institutional level.

All survey respondents were asked to share their opinion on what should be in a transfer guide. Table 12 provides an overview of the current practices and the proposed future state for transfer credit guides. Areas not currently in transfer guides, but which respondents indicate should be included represent particular opportunities to close existing gaps.

Table 12: Current State versus Preferred Future State for Transfer Guides

Guide Component	In Guide currently (<50%)	In Guide currently (50% or higher)	Should be in a Guide (50% or higher)
Listing of transfer credit agreements		✓	✓
Course grade required to be considered for transfer credit		✓	✓
Entering average required to be eligible for transfer credit	✓		✓
Fees if applicable for credit assessment	✓		✓
Lifespan of approved course equivalencies	✓		✓
Limitations on age of courses to be considered for transfer credit	✓		✓
Limitations on types of courses that are eligible for transfer credit (e.g., PLAR, online, field courses)	✓		✓
Limitations on amount of credit that can be transferred		✓	✓
Process for applying for transfer credit		✓	✓
Process through which transfer credit equivalencies are assessed		✓	✓
Residency requirement		✓	✓
Timelines for credit transfer assessment		✓	✓
Transfer credit appeal process	✓		✓
Glossary of transfer credit terminology		✓	✓

Nomenclature

As the primary focus for the transfer credit portion of the project was on terminology, current practices was an important area to probe.²³

Figure 23 provides the findings regarding agreement nomenclature use in Canada.²⁴ The most common agreement terms used are listed in order of popularity below. The italicized terms were also found to be common in the BCCAT *Credentialing Practices for Joint Program* study (Duklas, 2013, p. 11).

- Memoranda of Understanding;
- *Block transfer agreements;*
- *Articulated agreements;*
- *Pathway agreements;*
- *Numeric titling agreements;*
- Bridge/bridging programs or agreements.

²³ The terms tested on the survey are in use across Canada and emerged from a web review of exiting transfer credit policies and glossaries.

²⁴ Respondents did not always identify a response for each term; Number of respondents per term ranged from 78 to 85.

Figure 23: Agreement Nomenclature in Use in Canada

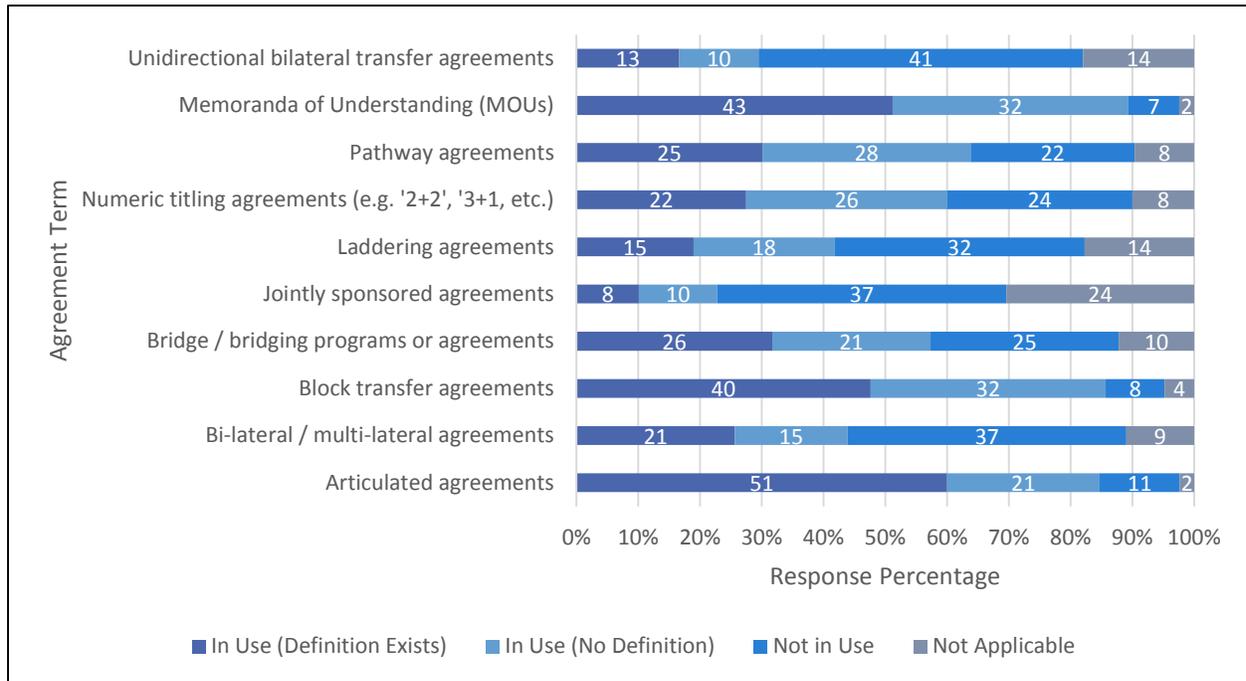
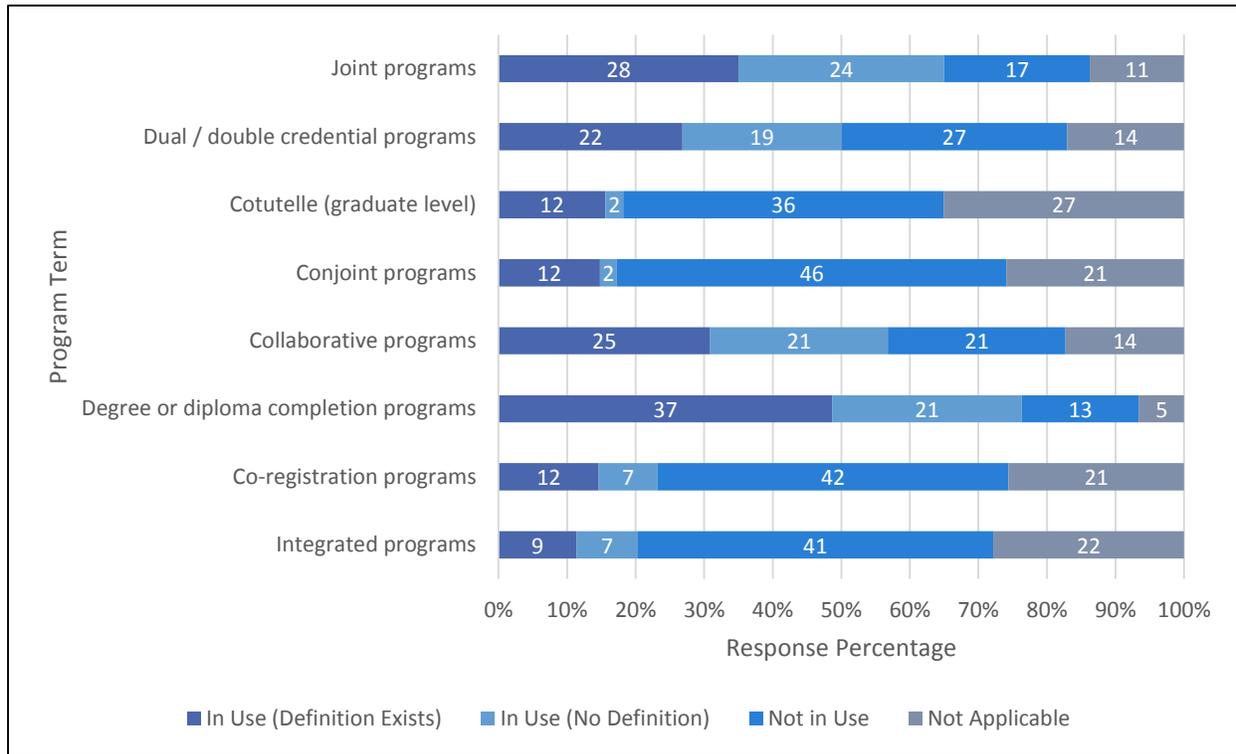


Figure 24 highlights the terminology in use in Canada to describe transfer credit ‘programs’. The most popular listed in order of occurrence are below. The items in italics were also found to be common in the BCCAT *Credentialing Study for Joint Programs* study (Duklas, 2013, p. 12).

- Degree/diploma completion programs;
- *Joint programs*;
- *Collaborative programs*;
- *Dual/double credential programs*.

Despite these terms being commonly used, many respondents noted that formal definitions do not exist.

Figure 24: Program Nomenclature in Use in Canada



The findings suggest that varied terminology is in use across Canada to describe transfer agreements and programs. There is also evidence from other research to suggest that these types of terms might potentially have different meanings even within the same sector, which can cause challenges. As one example, the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS) conducted a study (Hall, 2012) that somewhat replicated a joint programs study conducted for the Institute of International Education (Obst, Kuder, & Banks, 2011). The purpose of the CAGS study was to examine Canadian implementation of dual/double and joint degree options including cotutelles (Hall, 2012, p. 2). One of the findings concluded that “the terms ‘joint’ and ‘dual’ are defined differently on ... [campuses]... than at the beginning of [the CAGS] survey... [and that]....such definitions can cause problems” (p. 12). While certainly not the primary finding of the research, it does serve to provide another illustration that nomenclature usage is affecting understanding.

As another recent provincial example, Christine Arnold (2014) in *Transfer Literacy: Assessing Informational Symmetries and Asymmetries*, reported findings from a study that involved a document analysis of over 70 transfer documents and focus groups with more than 100 administrators across 13 Ontario postsecondary institutions (six colleges and seven universities) (p. 5). One of her many findings focused on the nomenclature confusion students experience in the area of transfer and the implications the resulting asymmetries have for ‘transfer literacy’ (pp. 5, 20-23).²⁵ Her study goes into extensive

²⁵ Transfer literacy is defined by Arnold as “the ability to comprehend credit transfer procedures, policies and outcomes. It refers to a set of knowledge and skills that allow individuals to advise and/or make informed decisions about admission and

detail on the confusion caused for students with regard to agreement terminology differences and one of her primary concluding recommendations is to “create standard credit transfer terminology” (p. 7).

Given Arnold’s recommendation, it is relevant to note that the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance has, on the part of universities, addressed inter-institutional partnerships in its framework (2010, pp. 4-6) in that it has defined the following terms:

- Collaborative program;
- Conjoint degree program;
- Cotutelle;
- Dual credential program;
- Joint degree program.

As reported in Arnold’s study, the detail inherent to agreements is such that nomenclature challenges remain readily apparent “because the terms used in these agreements and the structure on institutional websites vary” (Arnold, 2014, p. 50). Organizations such as the councils on admission and transfer in various regions define transfer programs on their websites and use terms such as ‘accelerated program’, ‘articulation agreement’, ‘bridge course or program’, ‘collaborative program’, ‘degree completion program’, ‘joint or integrated program’, etc. Although these various initiatives are helpful and informative, the definitions for agreements and programs across all these platforms are sometimes similar but are not necessarily always fully congruent.

Table 13 identifies the usage for some of the more common operational transfer credit terms. The most popular are highlighted in the far right column; those with a red checkmark were reported in use by 80% or more of the respondents. These findings provide a beginning indicator of the more common terms in use across Canada, which will assist with informing the next phase of the project. Developing common definitions for these terms might also be a productive start for the next phase of the ARUCC PCCAT project.

mobilization of academic credits between colleges and universities to avoid the repetition of course work, lack of financial assistance and misaligned institutional and program fit” (Arnold, 2014, p. 4).

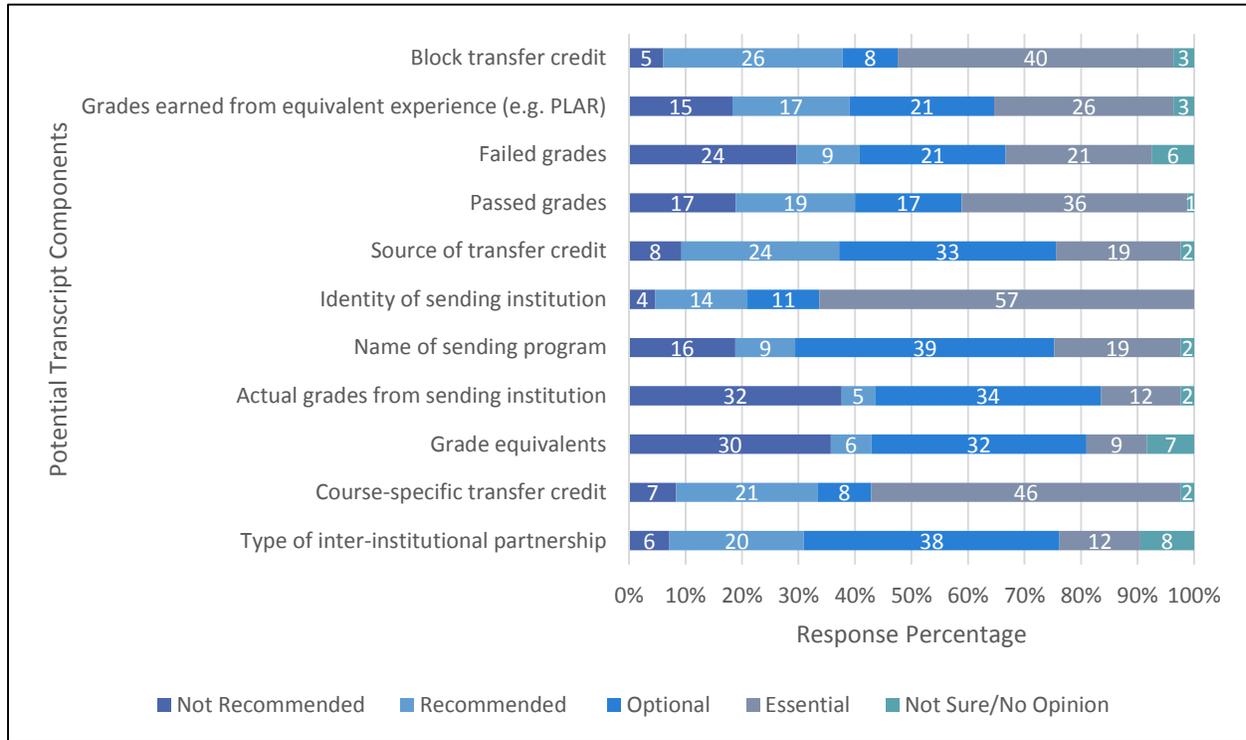
Table 13: Operational Nomenclature Usage

Term	In Use (<50% of Responses)	In Use (>50% of Responses) ✓ > 80% or Higher Responses
Advance credit	✓	
Advanced standing		✓
Assigned credit	✓	
Block transfer		✓
Challenge test		✓
Cluster credit	✓	
Course credit exclusion	✓	
Course equivalency/ equivalent		✓
Course substitute		✓
Course transfer map	✓	
Credit		✓
Dual credit		✓
Elective credit		✓
Equivalent credit		✓
Exemption		✓
Inter-university transfer	✓	
Letter of permission		✓
Not to do	✓	
Program transfer		✓
Residency requirement		✓
Specified credit	✓	
Transfer courses		✓
Transfer credit		✓
Transferable courses		✓
Unassigned or unallocated credit		✓
Unspecified credit	✓	
Waiver		✓

Practices for transfer credit at the operational level in the area of transcripts were also probed in the survey. Of the 78 respondents to the question ‘Are any of these inter-institutional partnerships reflected on your transcripts?’ 26 (33%) indicated yes. It is noted that within the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide, adding the names of all partner institutions is considered ‘essential’ whether the relationship involves degree or non-degree studies. It is silent regarding partnership type.

The respondents included both those within and outside of institutions but who have involvement in setting transfer credit standards. They were asked to identify which of the following items in Figure 25 should be on a transcript. The scale used in the ARUCC Transcript Guide was employed (i.e., ‘not recommended’, ‘recommended’, ‘optional’, ‘essential’). While the Guide touches on the topic of transfer credit, the community suggested greater detail was needed; hence, why this line of questioning was added to the survey.

Figure 25: Potential Transcript Components Related to Transfer Credit



As these findings illustrate, there is strong support in the community to encourage greater detail on institutional transcripts about transfer credit and inter-institutional partnerships. Since the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide is similarly supportive of such an approach, these findings provide the impetus for moving more assertively in this direction. Having noted this, approximately 30% do not recommend adding grades or grade equivalents. This appears to be an area of potential consultation as there is also a significant number that indicated passed grades should be added. There were 65 respondents that provided additional suggestions as to the defining principle of what transfer credit information should appear on a transcript. The comments generally fell into the following three categories:

- Clarity – emphasizing where the transfer credit came from, what was specifically awarded, what type was awarded, and how much credit was awarded;
- Transparency – display the information necessary to ensure any other organization that might read or assess the transcript fully understands what was awarded but to do so for successfully transferred courses only;

- Level of detail – provide sufficient detail so that it is clearly understood how the transfer credit awarded applies to the program or the credential.

The question was also asked if a supplementary document with the details of transfer credit should accompany a transcript. Of the 82 respondents to this question, 58 (71%) indicated ‘no’. A number reported that they already do this and provided specifics on what is identified. These approaches indicate a level of positive transparency and are indicative of best practice.

Survey: Emerging Themes

All respondents to the survey were asked to contribute to a series of questions regarding emerging trends, particular components that would benefit from standards development, and potential risks. Each was also asked to identify any best or promising examples.

Emerging Trends

Eighty-one (81) respondents offered reflections on trends impacting transcripts and transfer credit nomenclature development. The following nine areas were highlighted:

- Electronic transcript data exchange standards – This item came up often.
- Online learning – Questioning revolved around transcription of mode of delivery, and how to validate, assess, and transcribe it (if appropriate). This was a common theme.
- Mobility, internationalization, and transfer opportunities – A number of respondents suggested that international standards might offer some insights on additional future approaches and considerations.
- Inter-institutional partnerships and related programming - There was acknowledgement that growth in the number, breadth, and types of partnerships is creating challenges for policy, transcription, and nomenclature development.
- Government focus – Respondents noted the interest by governments in mobility and the investment in infrastructures to ensure support and research in the area.
- Learning outcomes/competency based models – There is growing interest in these topics as potential mechanisms to inform and influence transcription and transfer credit practices.
- Equivalent learning (e.g., PLAR) – Transcribing and assigning transfer credit consistently and accurately in the area of equivalent learning are becoming increasing areas of focus.
- Co-curricular records²⁶ – Interest in developing co-curricular records continues to grow.
- Dual credits – This is a growing interest area that is likely to impact transcription and transfer credit practices.

²⁶ Co-curricular records are not new to Canada. The University of Manitoba was likely one of the first Canadian universities to offer students a co-curricular record (Neil Marnoch, personal communications, February 4 2014). It was created in the mid-90s, called a “transcript annex”, and was an additional page to the transcript. It provided a limited array (approximately 20) of activities. The University has subsequently launched a co-curricular record separate from the transcript that contains approximately 300 activities.

Potential Components for Future Standards Development

Forty (40) respondents provided insights on how future standards development might be facilitated by the addition of specific components. Most confirmed the importance of emerging trends and the need to improve standards and nomenclature in a manner that encouraged objective and transparent review processes in the areas of transcription and transfer credit. There were cautions expressed about the importance of ‘getting it right’ in Canada before adopting international approaches, interest in significantly improving transcription practices and guidelines in the area of transfer credit, and operational recommendations such as discouraging complete institutional customization, and both encouraging and discouraging reporting mode of delivery and identifying course work taken at satellite campuses. While the views were somewhat different with regard to the latter two, the basic principle of not disadvantaging the students was the underlying shared premise.

Risks to Developing Standards

Survey respondents (62) offered cautions and codicils to standards development. These recommendations fall into five general categories:

- Institutional autonomy versus uniformity – A number recommended a set of guidelines and a lexicon of suggested terms that were not prescriptive and respected institutional autonomy and regional (i.e., provincial) and linguistic (English/French) diversity.
- Misinterpretation – The respondents emphasized the need for context and not simply a lexicon of terms or an inventory of standards. Rationales were recommended to situate guidelines into a nuanced framework informed by principles.
- Nimbleness and innovation versus restrictive constraints – Any guidelines and terminology should be appropriately cast so as not to restrict institutional mobility and innovation. This was considered particularly important in light of changing technology.
- Resources – There were concerns raised about the impact of standards and terminology on systems in light of limited resources.
- Jargon versus simplicity – The respondents urged future standards and terminology lexicons to be transparent and simplistic with an emphasis away from becoming jargon.
- Privacy regulations and legal considerations – Careful consideration of student privacy and potential legalities were stressed as considerations that affect and therefore should inform transcription practices particularly.

Promising Examples

Twenty six (26) respondents provided perspective and cited promising examples. Collaborative governance and consultation bodies were both cited as important enablers for developing promising practice. Electronic transfer of transcript data was noted a number of times as enabling standards development and sharing of student information (whether as PDFs, XML or EDI). General commentary at the operational level suggested being mindful of international jurisdictions and their interpretation of Canadian transcripts (the Diploma Supplement was highlighted as a best practice in this context), emphasizing the value of promoting detailed transcript legends, and greater use of cumulative average calculations on transcripts (e.g., by program). ONCAT, BCCAT, CICIC, and ACAT’s Glossaries were each

identified as promising best practices although some thought these tools should be expanded.²⁷ Finally, some mentioned the value of their institutional and provincial course equivalency databases as facilitating on many levels including in the area of standardizing nomenclature. McGill's is particularly interesting in this regard as it is not restricted to Canadian institutions – i.e., students can search course equivalencies (and non-equivalencies) from around the world.²⁸

The BCCAT Joint Program Transcription study and the ARUCC PCCAT Transcript and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Study identified promising practices; therefore, a future phase of the project will want to enhance awareness of these promising practices and facilitate opportunities to identify alternate options and related policies and nomenclature to assist practitioners.

Qualitative comments from respondents reinforce and validate the major themes highlighted through the quantitative survey, workshops, and jurisdictional research conducted for Canada and internationally.

²⁷ <https://alis.alberta.ca/ps/ep/aas/ta/faq/glossary.html#transferstudent>

²⁸ <https://nimbus.mcgill.ca/ceq-pub/search/searchEquivalency>

Implications and Concluding Remarks

The focus of the research was to identify the current and potentially common practices in Canadian higher education institutions and related organizations for transcript and transfer credit nomenclature and to identify promising practices and related initiatives in four international regions (Australia, Europe, UK and the US).

The objectives supporting the research included testing concurrence with the core principles and definitions embodied in the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide and identifying enhancement requirements. Additionally, it was important to confirm the current protocols and points of difference respecting transcript and transfer credit terminology at Canadian postsecondary institutions as other research has shown that practices are variable and causing confusion and reporting challenges. The research also served to inform an understanding of the community's perspective on emerging trends and risks, and common, promising, or successful practices. The overarching objective of the findings was to provide a baseline against which future standards development on behalf of ARUCC, PCCAT, and their members in the areas of transcription and transfer credit nomenclature may be undertaken.

A variety of research approaches was followed incorporating web-based review of approximately 70 Canadian institutions, relevant literature review, regional workshops with 103 participants across the country, 25 individual stakeholder interviews, an advance online poll to 27 of the participants on the project's national advisory committee, and a national survey targeted primarily at the membership of the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC) and the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT). The survey was in the field during the month of March 2014 and was completed by 119 individuals representing 105 institutions, for an organizational response rate of 57%. The project also received 145 samples of transcripts and transfer credit material from 44 postsecondary institutions and the XML data standards for electronic transcripts from the Canadian PESC User Group.

Research findings demonstrated a high level of convergence among the themes derived from the advisory group, stakeholder interviews, jurisdictional research, and survey findings. This serves to validate and confirm the reliability of the research. At a high level, key learnings from this research include the following:

- There is a tremendous will and engagement among ARUCC and PCCAT colleagues, as well as allied organizations to work towards refinements that will improve clarity, transparency, and mobility for students.
- There is significant evidence of common practices across the country, which speaks to the success of combined efforts of national and provincial organizations and local institutions to support best practices and to the enduring influence of resources such as the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide.
- While there is strong support for moving forward with transcript and transfer credit nomenclature standards, there is an equally strong assertion that institutional autonomy be respected and that such standards become recommended, not required practice.

- Student mobility and the processes and structures that support it are the subject of increasing focus worldwide. There is significant opportunity to benchmark and learn from promising practices in regional, national, and international jurisdictions.

More specific findings from the research are highlighted below.

The transcript research revealed the following:

- The community of postsecondary and non-postsecondary survey respondents confirmed the currency of most of the transcript principles and definitions entrenched in the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide, an exercise which confirms the fundamental strategic core of the document.
- There is growing evidence of ambiguity surrounding understandings of what constitutes an 'official' transcript and questions about the related privacy and security considerations.
- Although 75% of survey respondents indicated they used the Guide, the workshop findings suggested there seems to be a lack of usage or awareness of the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide. A statement routinely made was that this project actually improved awareness of the ARUCC Transcript Guide.
- While there is evidence of common practices, there are examples of varied practices in terms of display and usage of transcript components to a very detailed level even for those noted as 'essential' in the Guide.
- There were also specific examples provided for enhancement needs to the Guide particularly related to assignment for select transcript components, transfer credit and inter-institutional partnerships, cumulative grading practices, credit weighting systems, repeated courses practices, alternative learning opportunities (e.g., non-credit, study abroad, etc.), equivalent learning (e.g., PLAR), and co-curricular record information. The community also expressed interest in having examples (or recommendations) of promising transcript layouts.

There were also recommendations to leverage the Internet and other technological solutions and to present the outcomes in a user friendly, dynamic, online format.

The transfer credit nomenclature and related policy research revealed significant variability in approaches with respect to transfer credit guides and use of terminology at the strategic and operational levels for both inter-institutional agreements and individual transcript assessment for transfer credit within provincial jurisdictions and across Canada. A number of organizations provided examples of policies and definitions. The different terms to describe types of agreements and programs for partnerships were extensive, although it became possible through the research to identify the more commonly used terms. As another illustration, how institutions define 'credit' is relatively consistent at a higher level; however, it serves as an example where challenges arise when further probing occurs. The variable approaches to defining credit *weight* and the lack of consistency with providing transparent and explicit explanations of credit *weighting systems* on transcripts emerged as two significant gaps.

The information for both transcript practices and transfer credit nomenclature provide a significant platform from which to continue the consultation and development of standards and glossaries. The

community signaled significant appreciation for this project, its principled and collaborative approach to broad and deep consultation, and its potential for providing outcomes of direct use and relevance to institutions and regulatory bodies across the country.

The research also revealed a lack of awareness of shared or promising practices either in Canada or available internationally. Although select examples were provided and are mentioned throughout the report (e.g., BCCAT, ACAT), respondents to the national survey or in workshops named relatively few promising practices outside their jurisdiction. With respect to international promising practice, awareness of the American AACRAO Transcript Guide appears limited and only one person mentioned the AACRAO Transfer Credit Practices database. Vary rarely was the European Diploma Supplement identified and the Australian and UK credential certificates were never mentioned. These findings legitimized the cross-Canada and international research. Examples of international credentialing models and information about qualifications frameworks and other tools to support student mobility became necessary inclusions in the research and subsequent report in light of their implications for transcript standards and transfer credit nomenclature development.

The community was also polled for their insights on potential emerging or longstanding and yet unresolved considerations that should inform future consultations for the ARUCC PCCAT project. One finding was the interest in encouraging the alignment of core components of transcripting protocols and transfer credit terminology. This was both a subtext and a direct desire often expressed throughout the consultation process both in person and through the qualitative commentary provided in interviews, in the advance poll, and through the national survey. There was also significant and continual acknowledgement of the impact of regional, programmatic, and linguistic nomenclature differences that are often widely embedded in institutional policies and/or regulations. Comments were shared that these differences contributed, as a result, to misalignment with what is normally considered principled best practice; might signal a better practice and potential standard to be commonly endorsed; and/or were indicators of a uniqueness of a particular slice of the postsecondary sector that requires preservation. As a smaller finding, there was evidence of perceptions of difference (i.e., expressed as 'we are different and unique institutions and therefore need to be recognized as such'). Actual data comparisons have revealed a number of common themes and practices, which are noted throughout the report.

The community signaled the need to contemplate and potentially define standards for: (i) transcripting and transfer credit assessment (and related terminology); (ii) alternative learning delivery such as online learning and experiential learning; (iii) competency-based education (e.g., learning outcomes); and, (iv) equivalent learning (e.g., PLAR, challenge exams, etc.). Also requested were examples of promising practice and establishing shared norms for transfer credit nomenclature.

The complementary opportunities presented by the work of the member organizations of the Canadian PESC User Group and individual institutions in the area of electronic data exchange and eTranscripts were evident as was the desire by the community to understand and contribute to electronic transcript standards development. The findings were coupled with suggestions to avoid allowing the delivery

model, systems, and data exchange standards to drive principles and practices for transcripts and transfer credit nomenclature.

The international research confirmed the value of a central body or collaborating agencies such as the model established by ARUCC and PCCAT as a necessary ingredient along with alignment with jurisdictional and internationally available qualifications frameworks to ensure the comprehensive development of standards and nomenclature that support the movement of students. Examples were provided of international jurisdictions that have successfully created standards and/or credentialing models that enhance transparency, consistency, and portability. Creation of standardized approaches to credentials also seems to be a characteristic of these international jurisdictions (e.g., shared graduation credentials, definitions, standards, and principles).

In keeping with the above, additional considerations that helped to inform the six recommendations are outlined in Table 14. These points are emphasized in the interest of ensuring the next project phase is mindful of these areas of further exploration.

Table 14: Additional Areas Important to Future Project Phases

Topic	Areas requiring further exploration	Additional considerations
2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide enhancements and Transfer Credit Nomenclature	Examining and assessing specific recommendations provided during this phase of the research to inform development of a new guide and glossary	The recommendations from this phase of research will inform a revised online Transcript Guide resource and a national transfer credit glossary. Areas requiring enhancement were extensive (e.g., alternative learning, co-curricular record information, equivalent learning, transfer credit, inter-institutional programs, credit systems, nomenclature for inter-institutional and transfer credit partnerships, programs and assessment, etc.). For the transfer credit glossary in particular, an analysis of variable approaches should occur to identify competing and contradictory definitions.
Specific transcript components	Creating a future enhanced guide for transcription informed by research findings	Common practices need to be carefully considered in consultation with the community when suggesting a way forward for particular standards. Examples requiring enhancements include areas such as grading systems; transcript legends; credits and credit weighting; repeated courses; program transfer notations; conditional approval of progress; successful completion of internships; graduate school milestones or other requirements (e.g., completed, unsatisfactory, in progress, ethics requirements, thesis ranking for oral and written components, promotion to PhD, graduate workshops, exhibitions for Fine Arts students); undergraduate standing each term.
Alternative learning options (e.g. study abroad, non-credit, etc.) arranged by individual institutions for their students	Creating recommended transcript principles and standards for alternative learning options informed by common practices	The community has signaled the currency of the 2003 transcript principles which endorse the preservation of the academic nature of the document as a primary characteristic of the “official” transcript, i.e., it represents a ratified artifact of the academic educational experience at an institution. Careful consideration needs to be given to developing standards for alternative and near academic options (e.g., non-credit, study abroad, and non-course related milestones relevant to program success or requirements such as academic integrity, Workplace Health and Safety Training, English language proficiency, etc.).
Equivalent learning options (e.g. PLAR,	Creating recommended principles and standards for the transcription standards and	The variable representation on transcripts of equivalent learning is extensive in Canada, which findings suggest is impeding mobility.

challenge credit, etc.)	transfer credit nomenclature for equivalent learning options informed by common practices and jurisdictional models	
Transfer credit guides	Creating standards for transfer credit guides	
Principles	Ensuring simplicity and clarity in the creation of standards and nomenclature.	Avoiding jargon
Data exchange standards	Integrating the PESC electronic data exchange standards as appropriate (and identifying areas of complementarity and alignment with transcription standards and transfer credit nomenclature)	The project should also monitor the international Groningen Declaration, which focuses on data portability and student mobility.
Future consultation	Developing methods for continuing to engage the community in a manner that deepens the input and enriches the assessment and endorsement of both transcription standards and transfer credit nomenclature	Existing annual, bi-annual, and biennial meetings of core associations are appropriate and opportune venues to encourage engagement in the next project phase.
Enhance awareness of promising practices	Developing a mechanism to routinely highlight awareness and external validation of promising practices	
Other associations	Developing a communications plan that informs other organizations of the launch of the new guide and glossary	Canadian associations: Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS), provincial Registrars' Association, Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities of Canada, Canadian Bureau of International Education, Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS), Polytechnic Canada, the Private Post-Secondary Association of BC (PPSABC), and the Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment International associations: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), Association of Biblical Higher Education, Association of Commonwealth Universities, Association of American Universities, Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities (APSCU), the Pacific Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (PACRAO), Upper Midwest Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (UMACRAO).
Qualifications Framework developments with a specific focus on credentialing and nomenclature examples in international jurisdictions	Comparing the existing international credentialing models and transfer credit nomenclature to Canadian examples to inform next phase consultations (future planned changes in these international jurisdictions should be identified along with associated underlying driving principles)	<i>If applicable to the scope of the project</i> , further explore and integrate AUCC's alignment efforts of the Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework to the Bologna three-cycle framework. As a significant strength, Canada has a Qualifications Framework that is endorsed and adopted by the jurisdictions across the country.

Recommendations

The following six recommendations are noted to inform the next phase of the ARUCC PCCAT project.

#1 Enhance the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide

The next phase of the ARUCC PCCAT project should further assess these findings, confirm that which is still current and relevant in the ARUCC Transcript Guide, and propose a series of potential content enhancements, changes, and additions that should then be presented for consultation, review, refinement, and endorsement by the community.

#2 Determine where to house the new Guide

An analysis should be conducted in the next phase to explore how best to present the information and ensure its currency and final location.

- a. Leveraging the capacity of the Internet and housing it within the ARUCC website are two potential considerations.
- b. The timing and availability of resources may be such that actual implementation could occur in a later phase.
- c. Ensure the final guide and/or glossary is informed by and provides specific links to promising practices either in Canada or in other jurisdictions to enhance awareness of alternate approaches.

#3 Develop a national transfer credit glossary

Explore the feasibility of creating (and potentially implementing) a single national glossary for transfer credit nomenclature the specifics of which would be endorsed and supported by PCCAT, ARUCC, and the councils on admission/articulation and transfer. The glossaries and terminology guides presented in this report, together with the frequently used terms identified through the survey will provide a helpful starting point for this work.

- a. Ideally, it would be populated initially as part of the ARUCC PCCAT project. To maintain currency, the functionality should allow for local updating (e.g., by institutions or other relevant organizations e.g., transfer councils) and be linked to local sites.
- b. Its initial creation should be informed by the existing glossaries on websites overseen by councils on admissions/articulation and transfer as referenced in this report, with additions resulting from evidence of more commonly used terms, such as those identified through this research.
- c. The core audiences that would benefit would be institutional stakeholders, and, ideally, guidance counsellors, parents, and students.
- d. Currency, relevance, adoption, and usage will be influenced and somewhat complicated by institutional policies and systems and, potentially, government regulations and/or reporting requirements. Therefore, the first iteration may wish to focus initially on publishing the more commonly shared terms along with their associated definitions (whether for agreements, programs, or operational level terms) and to do so in a manner that acknowledges and accommodates any diversity and/or jurisdictional provincial nuances.

- e. In terms of currency and utility, the model provided by the CICIC and the AACRAO transfer credit databases provide interesting approaches, which should be examined as part of the next phase.

#4 Develop a sustainable and complementary communication, awareness, and distribution plan for these resources

The guides and glossaries ultimately must be supported by a complementary communications plan to ensure regular awareness and usage of the tools.

#5 Establish an awards program to recognize Canadian promising practices

The two associations should consider developing a national awards program, ideally adjudicated by both ARUCC and PCCAT that acknowledges potential promising practice in Canada.

- a. In this way, promising practices would be routinely shared and profiled and receive external validation and confirmation of their stature as a potential best practice.
- b. If accepted, the next phase of the project could readily include creation of an awards framework for review and potential adoption by one of or both of the two national associations.

#6 Support the development and adoption of electronic transcript exchange standards

The next phase of the ARUCC PCCAT project should continue to ensure that the Canadian PESC User Group member organizations are consulted and engaged in this process.

- a. At minimum, the findings suggest it would make sense to incorporate a subset of electronic transcript data standard information into a future transcript guide similar to the example provided by the American AACRAO Transcript Guide.
- b. Further, the ongoing project should be mindful of the opportunities presented by international opportunities such as the Groningen Declaration.

Recommendations 1 through 6 could readily inform and shape the next phase of an ARUCC PCCAT project focused on transcript standards and transfer credit terminology.

Although the following suggestion is potentially beyond the purview of PCCAT and ARUCC, the diversity of nomenclature available to describe inter-institutional agreement and program references is such that it may be necessary for some kind of high level transfer terminology framework to be created, reviewed, and refined for consideration by appropriate provincial and national bodies with interest in the area of transfer. Based on an examination of the examples provided by international and select domestic organizations, each term and its associated definition would be well served if the following characteristics were addressed as a minimum: its core defining feature and the credential or credentials that should be awarded (e.g., one or two credentials, diploma plus degree, etc.). The evidence and the examples provided by the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS) research (Hall, 2012) on usage of the term 'joint program', Arnold's (2014) research on diverse nomenclature and its impact on 'transfer literacy', the qualifications frameworks research gathered as part of this study, and the example provided by the Ontario Universities Quality Assurance framework (with specific reference to

the definitions provided in that document for inter-institutional partnerships) are compelling. These findings coupled with the diversity of practice evident in this report and the previously published *BCCAT Credentialing Practices for Joint Programs* (Duklas, 2013) suggest some direction is needed. Specifically, there is an opportunity to encourage further dialogue and potential resolution at the most strategic level and through the appropriate decision authorities in a fashion that is informed by academic principles and expertise. The work of international organizations in the area of inter-institutional partnership development should also be considered when exploring potential definitions.

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Appendix A – ARUCC PCCAT Advisory Committee Members

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Appendix B – Glossary

Acronym / Shortened Title	Name	Region
AACRAO	American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers	US
AARAO	Atlantic Association of Registrars and Admissions Officers	Eastern Canada
ACAT	Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer	Alberta
AEC	Attestation d'études collégiales	Quebec
AHEGS	Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement	Australia
APAS	ApplyAlberta	Alberta
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework	Australia
ARC	Academic Registrars Council	UK
ARCQ	Association des registraires des collèges du Québec	Quebec
ARUCC	Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada	Canada
AUCC	Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada	Canada
AVED	BC Ministry of Advanced Education	British Columbia
BCCAT	British Columbia (BC) Council on Admissions and Transfer	British Columbia
BCI	Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire (formerly CREPUQ)	Quebec
BCRA	British Columbia Registrars' Association	British Columbia
BEC	Bulletin d'études collégiales	Quebec
CAAT	College of applied arts and technology	Ontario
CAGS	Canadian Association of Graduate Studies	Canada
CAPLA	Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment	Canada
CCAIE	Canadian Council for the Advancement of Education	Canada
CCM	College Course Map	US
Cdn PESC User Group	Canadian Post-Secondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) User Group	Canada
CEDS	Common Education Data Standards	US
CEEC	Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial	Quebec
CEGEP	Collèges d'enseignement général et professionnel	Quebec
CEP	Programmes Proposals Evaluation Commission	Quebec
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation	US
CICIC	Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials	Canada
CIP	Classification of Instructional Programs	Canada
CMEC	Council of Ministers of Education, Canada	Canada
COPSE	Manitoba Council on Post-Secondary Education	Manitoba
COU	Council of Ontario Universities	Ontario
CQLR	College Education Regulations	Quebec
CRALO	Ontario colleges' Committee of Registrars, Admissions and Liaison Officers	Ontario
CREDIT	College Credit Recommendation Service	US
CREPUQ	la Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec (now BCI)	Quebec
CSPSE	Centre for Skills in Post-Secondary Education (Conference Board of Canada)	Canada
CUDO	Common University Data, Ontario	Ontario

DCS	Diploma of College Studies	Quebec
DEC	Diplôme d'études collégiales	Quebec
DQAB	BC Degree Qualifications Assessment Board	British Columbia
EACEA	Education Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency	Europe
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System	Europe
EHEA	European Higher Education Area	Europe
EHEAQF	European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework	Europe
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education	Europe
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register	Europe
EQF	European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning	Europe
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area	Europe
eTMS	Electronic Transcript Management System, Ontario College Application Service (OCAS)	Ontario
FHEQ	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications	England, Wales, Ireland
FQEHEA	Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area	Europe
GERTA	North Dakota University System: General Education Requirement Transfer Agreement	US
GPA	Grade point average	International
HEAR	Higher Education Achievement Report	UK
HEQCO	Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario	Ontario
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency	UK
IPEDS	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)	US
IPESA/PIEA	Institutional Policy on the Evaluation of Student Achievement / Politique institutionnelle d'évaluation des apprentissages	Quebec
IUT	Inter-University Transfer Agreement	Quebec
LOP	Letter of Permission	Canada
MELS	Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport	Quebec
MESRS	Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche et de la Science (MESRS)	Quebec
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course	International
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding	International
MPHEC	Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission	Atlantic provinces
MTCU	Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities	Ontario
NARIC	National Recognition Information Centre	UK
NBCAT	New Brunswick Council on Articulations and Transfer	New Brunswick
NCES	National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES)	US
NDUS	North Dakota University System	US
OCAS	Ontario College Application Service	Ontario
OCQAS	Ontario College Quality Assurance Service	Ontario
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development	International
OEN	Ontario Education Number	Ontario
ONCAT	Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer	Ontario

OQF	Ontario Qualifications Framework	Ontario
OUAC	Ontario Universities' Application Centre	Ontario
OURA	Ontario University Registrars' Association	Ontario
PCCAT	Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer	Canada
PESC	Post-Secondary Electronic Standards Council	Canada
PETL	Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour	New Brunswick
PLAR/PLA	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition	International
PSIS	Postsecondary Student Information System	Canada
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education	UK
Quality Council	Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance	Ontario
RREC	le Règlement sur le régime des études collégiales, Loi sur les collèges d'enseignement général et professionnel (College Education Regulations, General and Vocational Colleges Act)	Quebec
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework	Scotland
SRACQ	Service régional d'admission au collégial de Québec	Quebec
SRAM	Service régional d'admission du Montréal métropolitain	Quebec
SRASL	Service régional d'admission des cégeps du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean	Quebec
SSD	Secondary School Diploma	Quebec
TAARS	Transfer Agreement Archival Retrieval System	Alberta
TÉLUQ	Télé-université	Quebec
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency	Australia
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	International
UQAM	Université du Québec à Montréal	Quebec
WARUCC	Western Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada	Western Canada
WES	World Education Services	International
WestCAT	Western Consortium on Admissions and Transfer	Western Canada

Appendix C – Stakeholder Interviewees/Personal Communication Sources

Interviewee/Source	Organization	Title
Alison Pickrell	University of Saskatchewan	Director of Enrolment and Student Affairs
Ann Marie Lyseng	Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT)	Senior Manager, Learner Pathways and ACAT Secretariat
Bonnie Day	Marianopolis College	Manager, Registrar Services and Systems
Cathy van Soest	BCcampus	Client Services Manager
Clara Spadafora	McGill University	Senior Manager, Management of Academic Records
Dave Neale	Campus Manitoba	Executive Director
Diana MacKay	Conference Board of Canada	Director, Education
Dr. Rob Fleming	BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT)	Executive Director
Dr. Robert Adamoski	BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT)	Associate Director, Research
Eric Dohei	Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT)	Manager, ACAT Secretariat
Erin Ohara	Council on Post-Secondary Education, Government of Manitoba	Senior Policy Analyst, Policy and Legislative Affairs
Gilles LeBlanc	Association des registraires des collèges du Québec (ARCQ)	Vice-président, ARCQ
Glenn Craney	Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT)	Executive Director
Greg Link	Thompson Rivers University Open Learning	Director of Admissions and Enrolment Services
Jeff Adams	University of Manitoba	Executive Director, Enrolment Services
Jeffrey Kehler	Council on Post-Secondary Education, Government of Manitoba	Policy and Program Analyst
Kinney Butterfield	Strategic Policy and Programs Division, Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities	Team Lead – Strategic Policy Transformation Branch
Margarita Sianou	World Education Services (WES)	Deputy Executive Director, Evaluation Services
Martin Hicks	Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO)	Executive Director, Data and Statistics
Michèle Clarke	Colleges and Institutes Canada	Director, Government Relations and Policy Research
Mike Sekulic	Grant MacEwan University	University Registrar
Murray Kerr	Brandon University	Director of Admissions
Natasha Sawh	Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC)	Coordinator, CICIC
Phil Bélanger	New Brunswick Council on Articulations and Transfer (NBCAT)	Executive Director
Russ Isinger	University of Saskatchewan	University Registrar
Tom Brophy	Brandon University	Associate Vice President (Student Services and Enrollment Management) and University Registrar
Sylvie Richard	Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS)	Registrar
Vincent Petitclerc	Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche et de la Science (MESRS)	Coordonnateur de la sanction et des objets d'études collégiales

Appendix D1: Methodology

Definitions

Select definitions were used to assist the research process (see Appendix D2). Having noted this, the nature of a standards and nomenclature project implies that different definitions and use of terminology are under review. As such, grounding research in specific definitional terms becomes somewhat challenging. This was particularly true for this study given that foundational documents such as the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide and provincial and/or institutional glossaries were being researched and reviewed. However, it became important to identify initial definitions to ensure respondents to the national survey and participants in the workshops were speaking a common language at select points.

Target Audience

The research was targeted at ARUCC and PCCAT members. ARUCC membership is institutionally-based and typically includes registrars and directors of admission along with their support teams, whereas PCCAT is composed of individual members from both postsecondary institutions and other organizations within the private, government, and non-profit sectors. Typically, PCCAT members are also policy and curricular pathway developers and transfer student advisors who may or may not come from an institutional setting. Therefore, the target audience for the research project primarily comprised registrars and those with roles in organizations and institutions with direct involvement in transfer credit policy development and management.

The various workshops, stakeholder interviews, poll, and survey were developed recognizing the above and that more than one individual at any given institution or organization may need to respond to research questions. More than one response per institution was encouraged to ensure maximum expertise was represented in the research process.

Communications

Appendix D3 contains the communications plan for the research process. It was deliberately crafted to complement the diverse constituencies involved in ARUCC and PCCAT.

Distribution channels were also carefully considered. All communication went to the listservs of both national organizations. The project launch letter was also distributed to academic leadership across the country (such as institutional vice president academics). To raise awareness about the project, an electronic version was sent to designated contact members of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), Colleges and Institutes Canada, the Canadian PESC User Group, the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, and the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS). Appendix D4 contains the original project launch letter.

A generic project email was established to facilitate ongoing contact between the research team and members of ARUCC and PCCAT (arucc.pccat.project@gmail.com). It was widely advertised in all project materials.

Advisory Group

The research process was supported by a national Advisory Group, formed with the intention to ensure breadth and depth in the subsequent consultation stages. Membership on this committee was voluntary and resulted from a call to ARUCC regional associations via formal request from the president/chair of the respective regional associations. In addition, PCCAT executive members were asked to identify interested volunteers. The Project Lead along with the senior research associates conducted additional outreach with the intended goal of ensuring representative membership from regions and institutions across Canada. Appendix A contains a list of participants in the Advisory Group.

Advance National Poll

To inform the questions on the national survey and subsequent research, a bilingual (French/English) online advance poll was distributed to the advisory group members. It was in the field for a two-week period in January 2014. The poll identified early indicators of usage and enhancement needs for the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide; advice on the research process and the national survey; and successful or promising practices in Canada and internationally. Appendix D5 contains the poll questions.

Jurisdictional Research

Regional Workshops

Workshops in each region were offered via teleconference, in-person, or both. Sessions were organized in consultation with regional registrarial associations; specifically, WARUCC, OURA, CRALO, BCI, and AARAO. The Quebec CEGEP organization (ARCQ) and the Quebec Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche et de la Science (MESRS), the higher education ministry that governs CEGEP transcript protocols, were also consulted.

The invitation for the workshops was distributed through the ARUCC and the regional registrarial association email lists under the signature of the President of each organization. At least two reminders were sent through the same distribution channels. Appended to the invitation was an online registration form which included open ended questions to allow registrants to make suggestions for additions to the workshop discussion. Appendices D6 and D7 contain samples of the invitation and registration form.

A standardized approach characterized the methodology for the workshops. Materials provided to registrants in advance included an introductory presentation about the national project, a structured agenda, a summary of the project scope, and open-ended questions to guide the discussions. All of these materials were available in both English and French. Appendix D8 contains the workshop agenda package.

In the case of the OURA/CRALO and the BCI workshops, the sessions were co-located with the annual OURA conference and the BCI bi-annual meeting respectively to facilitate maximum attendance. In the case of WARUCC, three separate teleconferences were held to achieve the same end. The AARAO workshop ran as a standalone opportunity in Nova Scotia at Dalhousie University's Agricultural campus; it was supported by teleconferencing capacity.

Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews were conducted to ensure individuals and organizations with extensive involvement in the areas of either transcript standards or transfer credit pathway and nomenclature development or both were captured in the research process. Provincial and national organizations with involvement in these areas were targeted as the goal was to obtain a comprehensive understanding, identify promising practice, and situate the research project within a Canadian context.

Standardized questions were developed as a guide for the initial group of interviewees, which are available in Appendix D9. Additional organizations identified as a result of recommendations from particular interviews expanded the list from the original number and further interviews were subsequently conducted with this second group.

All interviews were conducted over a two-month period in January and February. Appendix C provides the complete list of people interviewed.

Web and Literature Research

Web and literature research extended the analysis across Canada and internationally. The goal with the in-Canada research was to amplify and place into context the findings from the poll, the workshops, and the national survey. The Canada and regional findings are captured in various sections of this report and the appendices (particularly Appendix E).

An examination of four international regions revealed high level themes that suggest promising practice: Europe, Australia, United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US). The rationale for choosing these regions was directly related to the extent of transfer credit, joint program, and/or transcript standards development occurring in each.

For example, with the US, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) has published a comprehensive transcript guide, the *AACRAO 2011 Academic Record and Transcript Guide* (2011). The same organization maintains a long standing commitment to transfer pathway development and publishes resources such as a comprehensive, online resource, *Transfer Credit Practices of Designated Institutions* (2012) that provides details on transfer practices at institutions across the US.

European counterparts have innovated the Diploma Supplement, which is a multi-country example of supplementing transcripts with a document that confirms consistency and quality. Australia and the UK offer similar examples.

As another validation for the regions selected for international jurisdictional research, according to a 2011 survey and study published by the Institute for International Education, *Joint and Double Degree Programs in the Global Context: Report on an International Survey*, these regions were the most active participants from a sample set of 245 higher education institutions (Obst, Kuder, & Banks, 2011, p. 10). Institutions from these regions are partnering with others from around the world including with schools

from India, China, Europe, UK, and the US (2011, p. 13). Australia tends to have a similar level of activity with Indonesia and Singapore.

Institutional Sample Collection and Web Review

A review of select institutional websites of large and small colleges and universities in Canada demonstrated the array of published information about transcript policies and content, transfer credit policies, and student mobility nomenclature. Academic calendars published on the web, as well as registrarial websites and academic senate/council policies, were examined for institutional norms that were not always transparent. The results are included in section of the report that focuses on the website and sample review (beginning on page 63).

Along with the invitation for the national survey, members of ARUCC and PCCAT were asked to submit samples of their institutional or organizational policies for transcript and transfer credit (with respect to the latter, particularly as it related to transfer credit terminology). In consultation with a representative of the ARUCC executive, an online Dropbox was created to support sample submissions. Alternatively, institutional representatives could send samples via email to the ARUCC PCCAT Project Lead or submit them in person at a workshop. Submission protocols were provided to institutional representatives (both English and French) in the Dropbox (see Appendix D11).

Institutions were asked to submit samples of the following:

- Transcripts;
- Transcript keys/legends;
- Grading scales;
- Transcript policies;
- Transfer credit policies and/or protocols;
- Transfer credit nomenclature documentation (if available);
- Sample transfer credit agreement that speaks to credentialing and transcription protocols (if available);
- Any standards documents in addition to AACRAO and ARUCC Transcript guides.

National Bilingual Survey

A comprehensive, online survey was developed and refined as a result of feedback captured from the research and consultation process. It was developed and tested by the researchers, members of the Advisory Group, and members of ARUCC PCCAT Project Steering Group.

The goals of the survey questions included the following:

1. Identify gaps and confirm the currency and relevancy of the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide and, potentially, the 2011 AACRAO Transcript Guide.
2. Capture and aggregate the array of transcript practices and transfer credit terminology evident in Canada.

3. Begin to understand the levers that govern approval of current transcript standards and transfer credit terminology in the various jurisdictions.
4. Capture a preliminary understanding of the overarching principles that should govern future standards development.
5. Garner a stronger appreciation of the perspectives of the various stakeholders involved in transcript and transfer credit work.

It was not the intention of the survey instrument to advance actual standards as such consultation and research will inform the next phase of the multi-year project.

The instrument was structured into four parts: the first section captured organizational demographic information to facilitate future data analysis. The second focused on identifying institutional, governmental, or jurisdictional transcript protocols and the third section focused on highlighting transfer credit practices and terminology. The last section of the survey requested respondents identify promising practices, emerging trends, and perspectives on principles and future directions.

Given the diversity of expertise required to inform this research, the entire population of the ARUCC and PCCAT membership base was invited to participate in the survey. There are 182 member institutions in ARUCC at present. Further, most institutions participate in the regional associations, particularly those that are publicly funded.²⁹ The existence of online survey capacity with advanced customization facilitated the efficient collection of data from across the sector and from multiple stakeholders. Logic was built into the survey to allow respondents from these various backgrounds, both institutional and non-institutional, to participate.

Due care was taken to ensure broad distribution and to maximize response rates. In keeping with the bilingual mandate of the two lead organizations and to enhance access, the survey was available in both French and English.

The distribution channels for the survey instrument were online and through listservs held by ARUCC, PCCAT, WARUCC, OURA, CRALO, AARAO, and BCI. It was also forwarded to the Quebec ARCQ and Quebec MESRS, to the CICIC credential evaluator listserv, and to select other private schools that are not currently members of either PCCAT or ARUCC.

Potential respondents for the national survey were reminded in the workshops to complete the national survey and were sent an advance notification one week prior to the launch. The latter referenced the many sponsors for this research with the intention to demonstrate the provincial and national interest in this project.

The survey was launched on March 5th and two reminders were sent each of which emphasized the March 28th closure. Presidents of each regional association were asked to further distribute the survey and these notifications to their provincial membership listservs. A notice of closure was sent on April 2nd.

²⁹ As ARUCC and PCCAT have private sector membership, the survey was also distributed to the private sector membership.

Permission of Use and Disclosure

At each stage in the research process, respondents to polls and surveys and participants in workshops were asked to provide permission to use their input and samples for the research project. As publication of the report would be without restriction on both the ARUCC and PCCAT websites, any individual quoted in the final report provided written permission of use either during the stakeholder interview process or during the draft report stage. In addition, all respondents and interviewees were advised of the plan to publish the final report. The following is an example of a permission of use and disclosure statement which was used for the national survey instrument:

“By completing this survey, you are considered to have provided permission for your responses to be used to inform the research for the ARUCC/PCCAT National Transcript and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Project. The findings from the survey will be used to contribute to the development of a final report which will be submitted to ARUCC and PCCAT and subsequently made available publicly. Individual responses will remain anonymous in published reports unless specific permission is obtained from the original author.”

Appendix D2: Definitions

- 1. Co-curricular record**
A document that summarizes a student's activities beyond the classroom and the learning outcomes achieved for pursuing those efforts in a manner that is branded by the institution (Elias & Drea, Winter 2013).
- 2. Cotutelle**
A customized program of doctoral study developed jointly by two institutions for an individual student in which the requirements of each university's doctoral programs are upheld, but the student working with supervisors at each institution prepares a single thesis which is then examined by a committee whose members are drawn from both institutions. The student is awarded two degree documents though there is a notation on the transcripts indicating that the student completed his or her thesis under cotutelle arrangements (Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance, 2010, p. 6).
- 3. Inter-institutional**
Used to describe joint programs that occur between institutions; including dual degree, co-registration.
- 4. Intra-institutional**
Used to describe joint programs that occur within two different programs, faculties, or schools within an institution.
- 5. Joint Program**
[A] programme offered jointly by different higher education institutions irrespective of the degree (joint, multiple and double) awarded [sic] (European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education, 2007, p. 1).
- 6. Learning portfolio**
A flexible, evidence-based tool that engages students in the process of continuous reflection and collaborative analysis of learning. As written text, electronic display, or other creative project, the portfolio captures the scope, richness and relevance of students' intellectual development, critical judgment, and academic skills. The portfolio focuses on purposefully and collaboratively selected reflections and evidence for both improvement and assessment of students' learning (Zubizarreta, 2009, p. 20).
- 7. Mobility**
The ability to move freely from one jurisdiction to another and to gain entry into an academic institution, trade, or profession without undue obstacles or hindrances.... (Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC), 2013).

8. Session

Defined as studies, course or series of courses covering a period of time from between four to eight months³⁰ (Duklas, ARUCC Academic Calendar Study, 2014).

9. Term

Defined as studies, course or series of courses covering a period of time that is four months of study or less³¹ (Duklas, ARUCC Academic Calendar Study, 2014).

10. Transcript

An official document that identifies courses taken (title and course number), credits and grades achieved, and credentials or qualifications earned³² (Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC), 2013).

11. Transfer of credits/credit transfer

The acceptance or recognition of credits by a host institution on the basis of successful completion of courses at another educational institution within or outside the jurisdiction in order to minimize the duplication of learning. Also called credit transfer (Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC), 2013).

³⁰ A recently published ARUCC Academic Calendar Study identified this terminology is sometimes used interchangeably with 'term'; hence, the need for a definition for this study.

³¹ A recently published ARUCC Academic Calendar Study identified this terminology is sometimes used interchangeably with 'session'; hence, the need for a definition for this study.

³² The definition of 'transcript' entrenched within the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide is being assessed through the ARUCC PCCAT national project.

Appendix D3: Research Communications Plan

Communication milestone timeframes	Deliverable
By end of December	<p>Project launch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish project email: arucc.pccat.project@gmail.com • Develop project launch communications • Develop initial workshop format: organize and schedule first workshop (OURA/CRALO), support online registration and related communications • Establish advisory group: conduct call for volunteers via regional associations
By January 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and distribute project launch notification: finalize and launch project launch letter via distribution channels • Establish advisory group: finalize membership in national advisory group • Create and launch advance poll: develop and launch advance poll (English and French)
By end of January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close and analyse advance poll • National survey: finalize draft and beginning testing survey with advisory group members; develop supporting communications (to include: a/ initial pre-notification letter to target audience for national survey; b/ launch email; c/ two reminder emails; d/ survey closing notice) • Regional workshops: finalize methodology, agendas, handouts and supporting communications (English and French) • Sample collection: develop and launch online portal for institutional sample collection
By end of February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops: complete regional workshops • Sample collection: continue capturing institutional samples • National survey: continue testing, developing and translating survey
March 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National survey: launch bilingual (English and French) online survey and supporting communications – to ARUCC, PCCAT, WARUCC, OURA, CRALO, AARAO, BCI, ARC, CICIC-CMEC listservs
March 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications: survey & sample submission reminder
March 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications: survey & sample submission reminder
End of March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National survey: close survey • Sample collection: close sample collection exercise
April 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit draft report
May 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit final English report
May to June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translate final report

Appendix D4: Research Project Launch Letter



ASSOCIATION OF REGISTRARS OF THE UNIVERSITIES AND
COLLEGES OF CANADA

ASSOCIATION DES REGISTRAIRES DES UNIVERSITÉS ET
COLLÈGES DU CANADA

INFORMATION RELEASE

Date: January 10, 2014

From: Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer (PCCAT); Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC)

To: ARUCC and PCCAT members; registrarial regional associations; Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS); provincial councils on admissions/articulation and transfer and related bodies (BCCAT, NBCAT, ACAT, ONCAT, HEQCO); Association of Canadian Community Colleges and its members;³³ Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and AUCC members; Canadian Information Council for International Credentials, Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CICIC – CMEC); Canadian Postsecondary Electronic Standards User Group (Cdn PESG)

Re: Launch of the ARUCC/ PCCAT National Transcript and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Standards Research Project

Dear Colleagues:

We are writing to you today to introduce you to an exciting research project being launched by the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC) and the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT). The research will focus on identifying current transcript and transfer credit nomenclature practices evident across Canada and in other jurisdictions. The results of the research will inform future consultation toward the objective of developing a comprehensive Canadian standards guide for transcripts and transfer credit nomenclature.

Student mobility and progression are among the hallmarks of 21st Century student success. Students move between and among colleges, institutes, universities and the workplace. Ensuring their qualifications and achievements are well understood and recognized is essential, whether they remain in their home provinces, transfer across Canada and/or venture outside our boundaries for international experience and education.

³³ Now called Colleges and Institutes Canada

Institutional academic transcripts should be the passports to mobility in their presentation of both the institution and the student record, providing a transparent means to enable fair recognition of qualifications.

The last decades have witnessed a proliferation of educational opportunities, and varying policies, procedures and nomenclature have been developed to present credentials, transfer credit, institutional partnerships and other relevant information on the transcript. The evolution of large-scale vendor administrative systems has had an impact on student transcripts. The recognition of prior learning and credentials on transcripts varies across institutional and geographic boundaries. The confluence of these factors often results in creating impediments and barriers to student mobility and progression.

We have engaged a project team led by Joanne Duklas, Duklas Cornerstone Consulting, and her associates Karen Maki, Jo-Anne Brady and Joanna Pesaro to conduct the research project under the leadership and direction of a joint ARUCC/PCCAT Steering Committee (Robert Adamoski, BCCAT; Glenn Craney, ONCAT; Rob Fleming, BCCAT; Kathleen Massey, McGill University; Hans Rouleau, Bishops University; Angelique Saweczko, Thomson Rivers University). The project team brings a wealth of experience in academic reporting and student pathways, a solid understanding of current and emerging issues relevant to student mobility and progression, and a network of contacts throughout the sector.

The research project will review current practices and identify the gaps and the required enhancements to the 2003 ARUCC National Transcript Guide in particular and with transfer credit nomenclature more generally. The project team will work closely with members of ARUCC and PCCAT, and other stakeholders, to gain insights into existing practices, challenges and opportunities for improvement. Extensive consultation with university and college registrars, international offices, graduate studies professionals and other professionals engaged in developing and promoting transfer pathways will occur over the next few months. A variety of methods will be used to solicit information and feedback including polling, a comprehensive national survey to ARUCC and PCCAT members, sample collection, workshops and individual consultations. This will be complemented by select stakeholder interviews and research into other jurisdictions to understand thematic challenges along with unique practices and solutions across the postsecondary sector, both locally and globally. The data collected in this research phase will inform subsequent stages to ultimately culminate in the creation of a Standards Guide. The guide will be intended to be descriptive rather than prescriptive, to provide a valuable and essential aid to producers and reviewers of student transcripts.

This project will realize many tangible and tangential benefits to Canadian postsecondary education in that it will advance the mobility objectives at many levels within and surrounding the sector. We hope that you will support the project and encourage participation in the consultation process in the first quarter of 2014. If you have any questions or comments about this data collection phase of the project, please e-mail arucc.pccat.project@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Hans Rouleau
Registrar, Bishops University
President, Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC)

Phil Bélanger
Executive Director, New Brunswick Council on Articulations and Transfer (NBCAT)
Chair, Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT)

Appendix D5: Advance Poll

The information provided by respondents to the poll will be used to assist the researchers for the national project. The intention of the poll is to begin to identify potential gaps and enhancement requirements to the 2003 ARUCC National Transcript Guide. In addition, the researchers are seeking advice on the research process; the format of a national survey to collect data on transcript and transfer credit nomenclature practices and standards; and successful practices locally available and in other jurisdictions. To that end, the first and second parts of the poll contain questions regarding the national survey and transcript standards and practices. The last section contains questions regarding transfer credit nomenclature.

Questions regarding this poll or the project should be directed to arucc.pccat.project@gmail.com

POLL INFORMATION:

It will take approximately 30 minutes to complete the following poll. To assist with formulating your responses, please review the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide available online at <http://arucc.ca/documents/transe.pdf> Thank you for contributing to this important research project.

PERMISSION AND NOTICE OF USE:

By completing this survey, you are considered to have provided permission for your responses to be used to inform the research for the ARUCC/PCCAT National Transcript and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Project. The findings from the poll will be used to inform the development of a national survey and a final jurisdictional report. Individual responses will remain anonymous in published reports unless specific permission is obtained from the original author.

1. Please provide your contact information.
This information will be used if your responses require additional clarification and follow up by the researchers.
2. Which association membership is held by your institution?
3. Identify which individual(s), position(s) or office(s) would be best suited at your institution to respond to a national survey regarding transcript and transfer credit nomenclature standards?
The two national associations are seeking to ensure the research identifies transcript and transfer credit nomenclature practices affecting all levels and types of postsecondary institutions. Please consider these components when responding to this question.
4. Identify the components of the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide that have proven most useful in your work at your institution.
Check all the sections below in the Guide that apply. The Guide is available online at the following URL should you wish to review it while responding to this question: <http://arucc.ca/documents/transe.pdf>
 - Basis of admission
 - Current transcript issues and issues for further study
 - External learning recognized by the issuing institution
 - Identification of issuing institution
 - Identification of the student
 - Record of studies pursued
 - Student academic statuses and other statuses
 - Statement of graduation

- Transcript issuance information
 - Other, please explain
5. What enhancements to the 2003 ARUCC National Transcript Guide would you recommend?
The Guide is available online at the following URL should you wish to review it while responding to this question: <http://arucc.ca/documents/transe.pdf>
 6. Do you use the AACRAO 2011 Academic Record and Transcript Guide in your professional work?
 7. If yes, identify the components of the 2011 AACRAO Academic Record and Transcript Guide that have proven most useful in your work at your institution?
 8. Are there particular challenges you have encountered when developing or implementing transcript policies, processes or standards at your institution?
 9. Given your response, were there particular benefits your institution or organization would have realized if you had enhanced national guidelines on best practices in transcript policies, standards etc.? Please explain how and provide examples.
Provide URL links to policies or practices you reference in the above (not including the ARUCC or AACRAO guides). If the documents referenced are not available online, send them to arucc.pccat.project@gmail.com
 10. Please provide examples of successful practice that you are familiar with related to transcript standards policy development either at your institution or elsewhere.
This information will assist the researchers with expanding the jurisdictional research and identifying successful practice.
 11. Are you aware of any successful practices either within or external to your jurisdiction related to transfer credit nomenclature practices?
 12. Given there are no transfer credit nomenclature policies, standards or practices at your institution or provided provincially, what challenges and opportunities does this present?
 13. In your work, provide examples of successful practice in your own or other jurisdictions related to transfer credit nomenclature standards and/or policy development that you have encountered. This information will assist the researchers with expanding the jurisdictional research. If you have no suggestions, skip this question.
 14. What emerging issues or trends do you anticipate are likely to impact transcript and/or transfer credit nomenclature standards? Are there particular components that would be informed by enhanced standards development? How?
 15. Are there any other suggestions or comments you would like to share regarding the ARUCC/ PCCAT national project to assist with the research process?

Appendix D6: Sample Workshop Invitation

We are pleased to invite you to an in-person consultation opportunity for the ARUCC PCCAT Transcript and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Standards project. This event is co-sponsored by AARAO, ARUCC and PCCAT. The information release for the project is attached.

The in-person workshop details are as follows:

Online registration form:

http://fluidsurveys.com/s/AARAO_ARUCC_PCCAT_Workshop_Registration_Form/

Date: February 24

Time: 10 to 2

Location: CA Douglas Board Room
Cumming Hall
Dalhousie University – Agricultural Campus
62 Cumming Drive
Truro, Nova Scotia

Project Leader for Workshop: Joanna Pesaro, Senior Research Associate (The bios for both Joanna and Joanne Duklas, the ARUCC PCCAT Project lead, are attached.)

Each institution is asked to send at least one representative who should come prepared to share and discuss the following:

- Their institution's current transcript and transfer credit policies and practices
- Recommendations for principles to guide standards development
- Any implementation challenges with implementing transcript and transfer credit standards
- Examples of best or promising practice either at their institution or elsewhere

Participants are also asked to review in advance the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide as we will be discussing identified gaps and needed enhancements. <http://arucc.ca/documents/transe.pdf>

Sample transcripts, legends, grading scales, and transfer credit nomenclature are requested submitted in advance by February 14 via the password protected Dropbox for the project. Also needed are examples of transcripts showing notations related to transfer credit and inter-institutional (external) partnerships. Once you register for a session, you will be sent an invitation to join the online Dropbox. After you accept the invitation you will be able to upload your samples.

The agenda for the workshop will be distributed closer to the day.

Thank you for supporting the ARUCC PCCAT project!

Appendix D7: Sample Registration form

REGISTRATION INFORMATION: Please complete the following form to register for the ARUCC / PCCAT workshop. This consultation opportunity is intended to provide a venue for registrarial and admissions administrators and pathway coordinators to contribute to the National Transcript and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Standards Project. There is no charge for participation. Due to space limitations, institutions are asked to limit participation to no more than two representatives. Thank you for contributing to this important research project.

1. Please provide your contact information.
2. Which association membership is held by your institution?

Check all that apply.

- Atlantic Association of Registrars and Admissions Officers (AARAO)
- American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)
- Association of Registrars for the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC)
- Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer
- Other, please specify... _____

3. Is anyone else from your institution attending the ARUCC/PCCAT workshop?
4. Please provide the contact information for the additional person attending the workshop.
5. To assist the ARUCC/PCCAT workshop organizers, please identify what transcript practices and standards you would like discussed in the workshop.
6. To assist the ARUCC/PCCAT workshop organizers, please identify what transfer credit nomenclature practices and standards you would like discussed in the workshop.
7. Are there any other suggestions or comments you would like to share regarding the ARUCC/ PCCAT national project to assist with the workshop or the research more generally?

AFTER YOU COMPLETE THIS REGISTRATION FORM, YOU WILL BE SENT AN INVITATION TO AN ONLINE DROPBOX. ONCE YOU ACCEPT THAT INVITATION, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO LOAD YOUR INSTITUTION'S SAMPLES OF TRANSCRIPTS AND TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY / TERMINOLOGY TO THE DROPBOX SITE. WE ASK THAT YOU DO THIS NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 14. THESE SAMPLES WILL BE USED BY THE RESEARCHERS AND FELLOW WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS TO INFORM THE DISCUSSIONS AND THE PROJECT RESEARCH.

1. Do you give your permission for the institutional samples you provide to be used as research documentation for the ARUCC / PCCAT National Transcript and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Standards Project?

Appendix D8: Workshop Agenda Package

Date: February 24

Time: 10-2

Teleconferencing details:

Toll Free: 1-877-394-5901, access code: 4030745

Location:

CA Douglas Board Room
Cumming Hall
Dalhousie University – Agricultural Campus
62 Cumming Drive
Truro, Nova Scotia

AGENDA

Welcome and introductions

Workshop goals

Project: clarification / questions regarding purpose, scope or methods

Roundtable discussion: transcript standards

Roundtable discussion: transfer credit terminology

Roundtable discussion: research, best practice, overall recommendations

Next steps

Closing comments

Encl.

Appendix A: project scope snapshot

Appendix B: discussion questions

Additional documents

Project overview presentation

Project scope snapshot

This phase of the project is specifically focused on highlighting the current practices across Canada in two areas: transcript protocols and transfer credit terminology. The ultimate goal of the overall project is to create a new transcripts standards guide and a glossary of transfer credit terminology.

It is not the intention of the national survey to identify the standards that should feature in a future transcript or transfer credit guide / glossary of terms. That phase of the project is intended to occur at a later stage. However, the findings from this national survey will provide a solid foundation from which to move forward the standards and terminology discourse in Canada.

Further, the scope of the project does not include data exchange protocols as this is the focus of another project led by the Canadian Post-Secondary Electronic Standards Council (Cdn PESC) User Group. It also does not include a review of privacy legislation in each province in relation to transcripts and transfer credit.

Goals of the national survey

The overarching goals of the national survey include the following:

- Capturing insights from ARUCC and PCCAT members on the current state as it relates to transcript and transfer credit nomenclature protocols
- Identifying promising and/or successful practices
- Informing the parallel jurisdictional research and literature review
- Create a common understanding of the current practices in Canada

Specific objectives

The survey is intended to do the following:

- Identify gaps and confirm the currency of the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide and, potentially, the 2011 AACRAO Transcript Guide
- Capture and aggregate the array of transcript practices and transfer credit terminology evident in Canada
- Begin to understand the levers that govern approval of current transcript standards and transfer credit terminology in the various jurisdictions
- Capture a preliminary understanding of the overarching principles that should govern future standards development
- Garner a stronger appreciation of the perspectives of the various stakeholders involved in transcript and transfer credit work

Workshop Discussion Questions

Transcript standards

ARUCC Transcript Guide: <http://arucc.ca/documents/transe.pdf>

- Does your provincial/regional association have additional standards or guidelines with respect to transcript standards?
- Do you (and your staff) use the ARUCC Transcript Guide?
 - If not, why not?
- What are the key strengths of the Guide?
- What are the gaps in the Guide that we have an opportunity to address?
- What are the key differences between institutional types?
 - College and university transcripts?
 - Certificates, diplomas and degrees?
 - Undergraduate and graduate levels?
 - Apprenticeships?
- What are the unique issues for transcripts for joint partnerships?

Transfer credit terminology

- Does your provincial/regional association have standards or guidelines with respect to transfer credit nomenclature?
- What challenges do you experience in assessing transcripts from other institutions for transfer and transfer credit?
- What complaints/confusion do you hear from students with respect to transfer credit nomenclature?
- Are there differences in transfer credit terminology...
 - Among colleges, universities and institutes? Undergraduate and graduate levels?
 - With apprenticeships?
- Are there any issues that are specific to joint programs and other forms of academic partnerships?

Jurisdictional best practices, research, and overall recommendations

- If you were to imagine a university, college or institute or perhaps even another jurisdiction that seems to be getting it right either in transcript standards or transfer credit, what specific examples come to mind?
 - Why?
- What seems to be the key ingredients that make them successful?
- What types of standards or terminology, either for transcripts or transfer credit that are currently used at your institution might be useful to others?
- How might a transcript and transfer credit terminology standards guide assist you
 - In the policy realm? In the operational realm? With reporting?
- If you were to identify a priority focus for the new guides, what would that be?
- What should be the principles for such a guide?
- Do you have any recommendations for other research reports, jurisdictional practices or thought leaders that we should be sure to include in this project?

Appendix D9: Stakeholder Interview Questions

1. What is your assessment of the current state of standards for transcripts and transfer credit nomenclature in your jurisdiction? (i.e., Is the jurisdiction just starting to consider standards? Is there support and engagement within the jurisdiction? Is there a mature system that others can learn from?)
2. What are the key strengths or enabling features of transfer and mobility in your jurisdiction? Are you aware of particularly promising practices in other jurisdictions that we should be aware of?
3. What do you perceive to be the barriers or challenges?
4. How might the presentation of transfer credit and overall student mobility on transcripts be improved to help improve the students' experiences?
5. What is your advice regarding current practice and standards refinement?
6. Note that we are concurrently conducting a poll of registrarial and mobility leaders in each Canadian jurisdiction to inform development of a comprehensive national survey. Do you have any specific recommendations for the survey?
7. Are there any jurisdictional reports (jurisdictional overview; research or policy-based reports) that would be relevant to this project and that they are able to share with us or refer us to?
8. Who are key thought and action leaders in your jurisdiction that we should be sure to include in our consultations?
9. Are you aware of any emerging issues or trends do you anticipate are likely to impact transcript and/or transfer credit nomenclature standards, or that would be informed by enhanced standards development?
10. Are there any additional comments or advice for the project team?
11. Request permission to use their interview input and any relevant documentation in the final jurisdictional report. Do they wish to receive a summary of the interview to confirm that it clearly represents their input, or if any responses require clarification or additional information?

Appendix D10: Sample Survey Communications

Sample survey launch letter:

Dear Colleagues,

You are receiving this note as a member of the ARUCC or PCCAT listservs.

We are writing at this time to ask for your participation on a national survey soliciting information and perspectives on current and potential future principles and practices related to Canadian university and college transcripts and transfer credit nomenclature.

http://fluidsurveys.com/s/ARUCC_PCCAT_Transcript_Transfer_Credit_Survey/langeng/

We are asking that you complete the survey by: Friday, March 28, 2014

This survey is a significant component of the joint ARUCC/PCCAT consultation and research project that may ultimately inform an update to the ARUCC National Transcript Guide and the development of a searchable database of transcript practices and Canadian transfer credit nomenclature that was described in the fall 2013 ARUCC Contact Newsletter. As we announced in our January 10, 2014 letter, a research team led by Joanne Duklas, Duklas Cornerstone Consulting, is undertaking the consultative process under the leadership of a joint ARUCC/PCCAT Steering Committee.

The information provided on the survey will be complemented by research gathered through consultation at regional association meetings, workshops, institutional interviews, and inter-jurisdictional research. The intention of the survey is to identify gaps and potential enhancements to the 2003 ARUCC National Transcript Guide and to identify successful practices and emerging trends across Canada in transcript standards and transfer credit terminology. The research team will compile the results of the full research and consultative process in a final report that will be presented at the ARUCC Biennial 2014 meeting in Quebec City in June.

We encourage you to actively participate in the research by completing the survey to ensure that your institution's practices and terminology are captured and reflected in the final report.

The research team would also value receiving samples of your institutional transcripts and policies or guidelines related to transfer credit nomenclature where applicable. If you have samples to share or questions regarding the survey in particular or the research project in general, contact arucc.pccat.project@gmail.com.

Thank you in advance for taking your valuable time to provide your input through this survey. Your experience and insights will be of tremendous assistance.

Sincerely,

Hans Rouleau
Registrar, Bishops University
President, Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC)

Phil Bélanger
Executive Director, New Brunswick Council on Articulations and Transfer (NBCAT)
Chair, Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT)

Sample reminder letter:

Dear Colleagues,

We are writing to follow-up on our March 5, 2014 correspondence encouraging you to participate in the national survey soliciting information and perspectives on current and potential future principles and practices related to Canadian university and college transcripts and transfer credit nomenclature. If you have not yet responded to the survey, we urge you to take the time now. The survey may be accessed through http://fluidsurveys.com/s/ARUCC_PCCAT_Transcript_Transfer_Credit_Survey/

We recognize your time is valuable and stretched; however and if you have not yet had a chance to respond to the survey, we seek your assistance to ensure our research team has a robust set of data that may be used to inform future consultation targeted directly at the development of transcript and transfer credit nomenclature standards. Such standards will assist institutions and students in the pursuit and recognition of student educational pathways and academic performance.

A reminder also that the research team is requesting that you contribute samples of your institutional transcripts and policies or guidelines related to transfer credit. If you have not already done so, contact arucc.pccat.project@gmail.com and an invitation to the online Dropbox for samples will be arranged. The samples will be used only to assist the researchers to identify current practices.

Questions regarding the survey in particular or the research project in general should be directed to arucc.pccat.project@gmail.com.

The survey will close on March 28. Thank you for providing your valuable experience and insights through this survey.

Sincerely,

Joanne Duklas

ARUCC PCCAT Project Lead

Appendix D11: Sample Submission Protocols

Sample Instructions, Notice of Use and Permission to Use

An online Dropbox has been created to house samples for the project. An invitation to the Dropbox was sent to you along with these instructions. Once you accept that invitation, you will be able to access and load samples to this Dropbox through a personal password that you create. The notice of use and permission statement is below. The privacy policy for Dropbox is available for viewing in Dropbox.

Types of documents required:

- Transcripts (scanned versions of paper transcripts and, if possible, an example of an electronically submitted transcript if the latter is different from the paper transcript)
- Transcript keys/legends
- Grading scales
- Transcript policies
- Transfer credit policies and/or protocols
- Transfer credit nomenclature documentation (i.e., terminology used at your institution regard transfer credit or advanced standing)
- Sample transfer credit agreement that speaks to credentialing and transcription protocols (if available)
- Any standards documents you might use in addition to AACRAO and ARUCC Transcript guides (note, we have the BC Transcript Maintenance Agreement information for private schools and do not require this to be uploaded)

Transcripts

The following instructions are intended to ensure the transcript samples provided adhere to privacy regulations and are as complete as possible.

- **File saving protocol:** in the file title, ensure you type your institution's name along with the name of the document being shared (e.g., "MyUniversity_SampleTranscript1"). Upload your document to the Dropbox folder for the province that is home to your main institutional campus.
- Rather than load a real student transcript, it is advisable to create a test student file and to populate relevant information on the sample transcript.
- It is important for the researchers and institutional participants in the workshops to clearly see and understand how records information regarding students is captured on a transcript; therefore, please ensure your test example features specific details on programs, degree and course information, grades, notations, exit and progression information and anything else that your institution normally shares.
- Ideally, include an example of a record that demonstrates how transfer credit and inter-institutional joint programs are featured (including dual degrees if applicable).
- Be sure to upload the grading scales and transcript legends/keys used at your institution.

- If your institution has more than one grading scale or transcript legend, load all of them. Identify in the file title which faculty, school or program uses that particular transcript (or grading scale).
- Ensure your transcript samples have “SAMPLE” noted (and avoid overlaying this on top of any relevant information).

Transfer credit nomenclature

The following instructions are intended to assist you with loading your transfer credit samples.

- **File saving protocol:** in the file title, type your institution’s name along with the name of the document being shared (e.g., “MyUniversity_TransferCreditNomenclaturePolicy”).
- Upload your document to the provincial Dropbox folder that is home to your main institutional campus.
- If your transfer credit nomenclature policy or regular transfer credit policy is available on the web, please note the URL in a word file and load it to Dropbox.
- A brief description of terminology / nomenclature used in day-to-day practice.

Notice of use

The samples provided will become part of the research documentation for the project and will only be used for the ARUCC PCCAT National Transcript and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Standards Project. All material loaded will become resource documentation for this project. The samples will be housed in a password protected online Dropbox, which will be passed to ARUCC upon completion of the project. Any institutional representative that loads samples to the Dropbox will be able to see the samples loaded by other institutions, which is helpful to those participating in consultation sessions as they will be able to review materials in advance. The samples will remain behind the online password protected Dropbox and will not be publicly shared. At no point will a particular example be published unless specific permission is formally sought and granted by the issuing institution.

Permission

By loading your institution’s samples to the Dropbox, you provide permission to ARUCC and PCCAT and its contracted researchers to review and use the materials to inform the research for the ARUCC PCCAT National Transcript and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Standards Project and to publish findings derived from a review of the documentation. Specific samples will not be published without explicit permission being provided from your institution.

Appendix E: Canadian Regional Findings

Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework³⁴

In 2007, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for advanced education adopted the *Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Education in Canada* (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada [CMEC], 2007). The statement contains three sections: Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework; Procedures and Standards for New Degree Program Quality Assessment; and Procedures and Standards for Assessing New Degree-Granting Institutions. The Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework contains two sections: descriptions of degree categories, similar to those used in the EU and many other jurisdictions; and degree level standards, which “stipulate demonstrable transferable learning skills and level of mastery for a body of specialized knowledge in six dimensions” (p. 5), for the bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degree. Components of the framework are summarized in described in detail in the CMEC Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Education in Canada (pp. 2-7).

As is illustrated in the provincial/regional jurisdictional overviews below, select sectors and/or jurisdictions have developed their own qualifications frameworks some of which are limited in scope. Typically, these provide further specificity for their jurisdictions’ credentials, while aligning with the national degree framework.

Quality Assurance in Canada

The *Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Education in Canada* (CMEC, 2007) outlines broad parameters for standards and procedures in quality assessment for new degree programs. The standards reference alignment with the national degree qualifications framework and evaluation against published criteria for a set of commonly used elements, including academic content, program content, program delivery, governance, human resources, physical resources, credential recognition, regulation and accreditation, and program evaluation (pp. 8-10). The statement is written in a manner that is broad enough to be accommodated within the autonomous provincial and institutional quality assurance bodies.

Canada does not have a formal accreditation system for postsecondary institutions; however, institutional and provincial quality assurance processes for degree, diploma, and certificate programs in universities, colleges, and institutes typically serve as a proxy for accreditation, given their focus. Further, membership in national sector organizations, such as AUCC is sometimes also considered a proxy for accreditation. In addition, a number of professional associations and agencies perform an accreditation function at both the program and graduate level for regulated professions such as medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and engineering.

Regional Focus

Given the uniqueness of each region, even within each province/territory, the research suggested a more focused lens on specific areas would be a beneficial addition to the research. While it was not possible to research every province or territory, the regional association structure that aligns with

³⁴ <http://www.cicic.ca/docs/cmec/QA-Statement-2007.en.pdf>

ARUCC provided a ready framework to shape both the consultation process and the capture of findings (i.e., Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, and Western Canada). Detailed findings for each are described below.

Atlantic Canada

Overview

The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) is an agency of the Council of Atlantic Premiers that provides advice to Ministers responsible for postsecondary education in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. Newfoundland and Labrador is not a member of MPHEC and operates as its own jurisdiction. For that reason, a ‘Spotlight on Newfoundland and Labrador’ is provided below. In 2005, the Commission’s mandate was renewed, with the proclamation of *The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Act*, giving primary focus to “improving and maintaining the best possible service to students as life-long learners” (Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, n.d.a.). The nine objectives articulated in the revised mandate span quality assurance, access, cooperation and collaboration, data and research, and system-wide efficiency.

There are currently seventeen post-secondary institutions within the scope of the MPHEC, fifteen of which are publicly-funded universities. Of these, three... also offer college-level or technology-based certificate and diploma programs... [and] the remaining two institutions... offer primarily college-level programs” [sic] (Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, n.d.a.).

In 2009 the *Atlantic Provinces Community College Consortium* and the *Association of Atlantic Universities* signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) outlining guiding principles, operating principles, and implementation guidelines to enhance transfer and mobility opportunities for students in the Atlantic provinces. The MOU (2009) recognizes institutional autonomy, yet outlines common approaches to transfer agreements (by block transfer, course-by-course transfer, or entry to a specified year), basis of admission, and coordination and dissemination of information pertaining to transfer pathways.

Maritime Degree Level Qualifications Framework

The MPHEC adopted the Maritime Degree Level Qualifications Framework in 2006, as an adaptation of the Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework adopted by CMEC (2013).³⁵ The qualification framework covers requirements for degrees at the baccalaureate, masters and doctoral level. Each credential is described according to the following elements:

1. Overall program design and outcome emphasis;
2. Preparation for employment and further study;
3. Length of program;
4. Demonstration of learning on the following eight dimensions:

³⁵ More details on the Maritime Degree Level Qualifications Framework is available at <http://www.mphec.ca/resources/DegreeLevelFrameworkEn.pdf>.

- i. Depth and breadth of knowledge in the field
- ii. Depth and breadth of knowledge outside of the field
- iii. Conceptual and methodological awareness
- iv. Level of analytical skill
- v. Professional capacity/autonomy
- vi. Level of communication skills
- vii. Awareness of limits of knowledge (pp. 21-24).

Data and Research

Data collection, analysis, and publication are a key part of MPHEC's mandate. Reports are produced on enrolment and credentials granted, measures of student outcomes, research funding, tuition fees, and trends in Maritime higher education (Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, n.d.b.). In addition, MPHEC has conducted a number of studies measuring transfer activity among universities in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and PEI. The MPEC Maritime University Statistics website also includes definitions of commonly used terms although these are not at the level of specificity of transfer credit nomenclature or transcript standards.

Spotlight on Newfoundland and Labrador

The public postsecondary education system in Newfoundland and Labrador includes one university, Memorial University, with six campuses (including one in Harlow, England and one on the French island of St. Pierre), and one college, College of the North Atlantic, with 17 campuses, including one in Qatar. Together, the two institutions enrol approximately 26,000 students (Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC), 2010).

Newfoundland and Labrador's Council on Higher Education is a joint venture of Memorial University, the College of the North Atlantic, and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, with responsibility to make recommendations for system-wide policy, planning, coordination, and articulation (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2007). The Council also publishes the annual *Newfoundland and Labrador Transfer Guide* (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Advanced Education and Skills, 2012), that provides details of credit transfer agreements for courses and programs, both within the provincial postsecondary system (including Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses) and from provincial institutions to out-of-province institutions, such as University of New Brunswick and Athabasca University. The Transfer Guide also includes comprehensive sections on terminology (pp. 85-87) and admissions and transfer policies (pp. 93-103).

Spotlight on New Brunswick

The Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (PETL) is responsible for postsecondary education in New Brunswick. The system includes four publicly funded universities and two publicly funded colleges with a total of 18 campus, in addition to two specialized institutions, the New Brunswick College of Craft and Design and the Maritime College of Forest Technology/Collège de technologie forestière des Maritimes. There are also a number of small, private denominational universities/colleges, for-profit private degree granting institutions, and private training institutions. Degree granting institutions in New Brunswick adhere to the Maritime Degree Level Qualifications

Framework. New Brunswick is an officially bilingual province, with 32% of the province French-speaking and 64% English-speaking (Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC), 2014).

Credit transfer in New Brunswick is considered a ‘work in progress’ (Philip Bélanger, personal communication, January 21, 2014). The New Brunswick Council on Articulations and Transfer (NBCAT) was established in 2010 as a participatory council with a mandate that included the improvement of educational opportunities for New Brunswick learners through inter-institutional mobility. The Council, through its *Committee of Contact Persons*, has a continuing responsibility for facilitating credit transfer and prior learning assessment amongst participating postsecondary institutions. In support of this responsibility, NBCAT has adopted a set of principles for credit transfer, based on the following key documents: the *Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada, Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 2005*; the *Memorandum of Understanding between Atlantic Canadian Universities and Community Colleges for the Encouragement of Transfer Agreements, June 2009*; and *New Brunswick’s Guide to Transfer of Credits between Community Colleges and Universities, August 2000* (NB Council on Articulations and Transfer [NBCAT], n.d.). The ultimate goal is to create a more integrated postsecondary practice in New Brunswick that is respectful of institutional autonomy and makes progress towards the province’s plan aimed at transforming postsecondary education (Philip Bélanger, personal communication, January 21, 2014).

NBCAT has also articulated a set of principles to support the objectives outlined in the *Memorandum of Understanding between Atlantic Canadian Universities and Community Colleges for the Encouragement of Transfer Agreements* (2009) and New Brunswick’s own goals with respect to enhancing transfer and mobility, including a recognition of the following:

- Students should not have to repeat formal learning experiences.
- Learning contexts may be different; however, they can still be equivalent with respect to content and standards.
- Credit transfer can occur in many forms, including Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR).
- Appropriate policies and procedures are required to ensure that credit transfer initiatives are implemented in a consistent and transparent manner (NB Council on Articulations and Transfer [NBCAT], n.d.).

Like the Atlantic provinces’ MOU, NBCAT’s principles also recognize that individual institutions retain autonomy with respect to program structure and content, admissions, and decisions about transfer credits.

New Brunswick Credit Transfer Portal

The New Brunswick Credit Transfer portal³⁶ was developed by the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, in collaboration with postsecondary institutions. The portal includes both course-to-course equivalencies and a database of formal transfer agreements, listing sending and receiving institutions and high level information on qualification requirements and transfer credits to be

³⁶ See www.portal.nbcat.ca

awarded (typically block credit). Information is populated and updated by the individual institutions. While initially there was some reluctance, institutions have responded positively to the enhanced efficiencies – for students and administrators – resulting from having course equivalencies on the portal. NBCAT continues to work with postsecondary institutions to improve the course evaluation process, to build new pathways, and to promote the credit transfer portal to students, parents, guidance counsellors, and employers.

While individual institutions in New Brunswick have transfer guides or policies designed to assist students, there is not a jurisdictional guide to transcript or transfer credit nomenclature. NBCAT (Philip Bélanger, personal communication, January 21, 2014) notes that an effective transfer guide will service a number of purposes, including assisting students and institutions to build a commonly understood terminology, as well as providing a tool to help achieve quality assurance. The relevance to the ARUCC PCCAT research project is best illustrated through the following comment: “The more commonalities we can build in our terminology and understanding, the more effective we can become” (Philip Bélanger, personal communication, January 21, 2014).

With respect to data and research, NBCAT is working with MPHEC to try to expand research to include college transfers in addition to degree level mobility. In the meantime NBCAT has developed a benchmarking model, shared with MPHEC, that can track the number of credit transfers awarded in each of its member institutions in New Brunswick (including colleges) by category and source (in province, out of province, international) (Philip Bélanger, personal communication, January 21, 2014).

Quebec

Overview

In September 2012, postsecondary education in Quebec became the responsibility of the newly-created Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie (MESRST).³⁷ Prior to 2012, all levels of education were under the auspices of le Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) (Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie, 2012-2013, p. 3). MELS retains responsibility for primary and secondary school education. Postsecondary education is offered through both public and private institutions, the majority of which offer instruction in French. According to the “Système de Gestion des données uniques sur les organismes” (Éducation, Loisir, et Sport Québec, n.d.), an online searchable institutional database maintained by the Ministry, Quebec’s postsecondary education landscape includes 20 universities (three of which are English) and an array of institutions classified under “collégial”: 48 public CEGEPS (Collèges d’enseignement général et professionnel), 25 subsidized private colleges, 26 licensed, non-subsidized private colleges, and a further category of “collégial” institutions called “Écoles gouvernementales du collegial.”

Quebec students enter the college system after completing Secondary/Secondaire V, equivalent to 11 years of study, and earning a Secondary School Diploma (SSD). Students planning to enter university are

³⁷ As of April 2014, the MESRST has been renamed the Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche et de la Science (MESRS) (Vincent Petitclerc, personal communication, May 6, 2014).

enrolled in a variety of college/CEGEP pre-university programs that lead to a Diploma of College Studies (DCS); in French, le Diplôme d'études collégiales (DEC), which generally take two years of full-time study to complete. Students may also be enrolled in technical DCS/DEC programs that are normally completed within three years of full-time study that lead to employment but does not preclude university study. College/CEGEP graduates start university in Quebec after completing the requirement for the DCS/DEC and may complete an undergraduate degree in three years of full-time study depending on the program.

Quebec universities offer a full range of educational opportunities at both the undergraduate and graduate levels while the Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS) offers programs at the master's, doctoral, and postdoctoral levels at four locations in Quebec (Sylvie Richard, personal communication, March 31, 2014; Institut national de la recherche scientifique, 2011). In French, levels are called *cycles* with *le premier cycle* referring to undergraduate study. Master's/doctoral programs can be referred to as *deuxième/ troisième cycle* respectively, or as *Études supérieures* or *Études avancées*.

According to CICIC, "the Université du Québec, the largest university in Canada, is made up of six constituent universities, two specialized schools, one research centre, and the Télé-université specializing in distance education. It is the only university in the country that truly constitutes a province-wide system, similar to some state universities in the United States" (Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, 2010b).

Qualifications and Quality Assurance Frameworks

A/ College system

The Quebec college system is regulated through the *College Education Regulations, General and Vocational Colleges Act*; in French *le Règlement sur le régime des études collégiales, Loi sur les collèges d'enseignement général et professionnel* (RREC) (College Education Regulations, 2014). The RREC sets out the parameters for awarding a college credential issued by the Ministry upon the recommendation of the college. This includes frameworks for admission, student achievement, and the required components of a college program. Government regulation stipulates that all colleges/CEGEPs must articulate their own rigorous, transparent, cohesive policy as per the *Institutional Policy on the Evaluation of Student Achievement - IPESA/Politique institutionnelle d'évaluation des apprentissages - PIEA* (College Education Regulations, 2014, p. Division VI).

Quality assurance is achieved through the Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial (CEEC), an independent public quality assurance organization mandated specifically to enhance the quality, credibility, and recognition of education offered in Québec's colleges (Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial, 2009, pp. 11-12).

Other Jurisdictional Supports and Collaborative Efforts

To promote collaboration, communication, and exchange of ideas on issues of relevance to registrars and registrarial staff, the Association des registraires des collèges du Québec (ARCQ) was formed in 1979 (ARUCC, Fall 1979/Winter 1980).

As part of this project, the ARCQ executive were consulted and through their vice-president, Gilles LeBlanc, provided initial insights, guidance and referrals on college system practices and policies of interest to this project (Gilles LeBlanc, personal communication, January 31, 2014).

B/ Universities

The Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire (BCI), a consortium of Quebec universities, has a broad mandate to provide oversight and institutional support, and to liaise with government, professional associations and other relevant organizations such as funding agencies. Membership is voluntary. Since 1963 and prior to January 2014, BCI was known as the Conference of Rectors and Principals of Quebec Universities; in French, la Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec (CREPUQ) (Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire (BCI), 2014).

As outlined on its website, BCI's mandate spans the spectrum of academic and administrative considerations of a university and works through a mechanism of standing committees and subcommittees comprising senior administrators for all major sectors of university activities. Amongst BCI's many responsibilities, the following is a sampling only as it relates to the ARUCC PCCAT National Transcript and Transfer Credit Nomenclature Standards Research Project. Further details of BCI's various activities can be found on its website:

- Periodic audits of current academic programs through the Program Evaluation Review Commission; in French, la Commission de vérification de l'évaluation des programmes (CVEP);
- Evaluation of proposals for new programs by its New Program Evaluation Commission; in French, la Commission d'évaluation des projets de programmes (CEP);
- Administration of the agreement to transfer credits that permits a student registered at one Quebec university (home university) to take a course at another Quebec university (host university) that cannot be taken at the home university (Inter-University Transfer Agreement – IUT). This also involves managing the online system for the IUT process.
- Coordination of student exchange programs;
- Electronic transmission of college transcripts to Quebec universities;
- Statistics (admission, student exchange programs, university libraries, etc.).

BCI also provides a permanent forum for the exchange of ideas for administrators, which promotes the harmonization of policies and procedures in many different areas. One such forum or sub-committee is composed of Quebec university registrars, where BCI provides support for dialogue and collaboration. (Bureau de Coopération Interuniversitaire [BCI], n.d.a.).

Quality Assurance

Existing Programs: BCI's Program Evaluation Review Commission (CVEP) audits institutional policies and practices within the frame of reference defined in the *Policy of Québec Universities on the Periodic Evaluation of Current Academic Programs* (Bureau de Coopération Interuniversitaire, n.d.b.). Each university is required to create an evaluation policy for existing programs while these institutional evaluation policies and practices are reviewed by BCI's Commission de la vérification de l'évaluation des programmes (CVEP).

Cyclical academic unit reviews are intended to go beyond program reviews; they will allow the University, the Faculties, and the units themselves to assess their objectives, priorities, activities and achievements, and to compare themselves to equivalent units in peer institutions, with a view to improving quality and maintaining excellence. Academic unit reviews will help to ensure that the unit's objectives are aligned with Faculty and University priorities and plans, as well as meeting the requirements of the BCI Policy (McGill University, 2011, p. 1).

New Programs: New programs leading to a university degree (bachelor's, master's, or doctoral) are submitted to la *Commission d'évaluation des projets de programmes (CEP)* through BCI, which renders an opinion as to academic quality. The Minister reviews the opinion. Decisions on funding for new programs are made based on the provisions in the document entitled *Procédure liée à l'examen d'opportunité des projets de programmes conduisant à un grade présentés au ministre de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport aux fins de financement*. These complementary mechanisms are designed to assess each institution's proposed programs and to ensure the relevance of university program offerings (Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials [CICIC], 2010c).

The following evaluation criteria are used by the CEP in its deliberations of new programs:

1. Relevance of the Program Profile, which includes
 - the match between the level of training and the degree granted;
 - the clarity of the program and degree titles and their relevance to the program's learner outcomes;
2. Academic Framework (admission requirements, duration and course load, grading, etc.);
3. Activities (program structure and content, adequacy of proposed activities for producing the learning outcomes);
4. Human Resources (qualifications and contributions of the faculty members involved);
5. Material Resources (support for students' program activities such as libraries, computer facilities, laboratories, classrooms, financial assistance for graduate studies, etc. (Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec, 2013)).

Key Resources for Transcript Standards

The college system - Bulletin d'études collégiales (BEC)

According to Vincent Petitclerc (personal communication, February 13, 2014), the Coordonnateur de la sanction et des objets d'études collégiales of the MESRS, the MESRS regulates and oversees transcript standards and protocols for all Quebec colleges and CEGEPS (private, public, French- or English-

speaking), enshrined in Le Règlement sur le régime des études collégiales, RREC/College Education Regulations, CQLR, Article 31.

As a result, the college system benefits from having the same transcript template, available in both French and English depending on the college's language of instruction, and follows the coding as set forth in the RREC regarding course withdrawals, equivalencies, grading scale and practices, etc. Recipients of college transcripts can expect to find all elements in the same place from college to college as well as a consistent presentation of program and credential progression (Bonnie Day, personal communications, February 20, 2014).

Through the Coordonnateur de la sanction et des objets d'études collégiales, the MESRS makes available and updates regularly a transcript administrative guide for registrarial staff. In Section 5.3.6 (under "Remarques"), the Guide includes a description and usage of key codes and elements found in the transcript such as AB, DI, EA, EC, EQ, EX, IN, IT, SU. Each transcript is accompanied by a legend, which explains all such abbreviations used in the transcript. In addition, the definition of certain terms used such as *equivalence*, *substitution*, *dispense*, *unité* are found in RREC RLRQ c C-29, r 4; in English: College Education Regulations, CQLR c C-29, r 4 (College Education Regulations, 2014). The Coordonnateur de la sanction et des objets d'études collégiales (MESRS) works closely with his ARCQ colleagues and is also aware of and has used transcript resources such as the ARUCC Guide (Vincent Petitclerc, personal communication, February 11, 2014).

Universities

As part of a consultation with BCI's sub-committee of Quebec university registrars on February 20, 2014, it was reported that each individual institution is responsible for setting its own transcript standards and practices. Of note, the University of Quebec network of universities issues harmonized transcripts, with some minor institutional differences.

The sub-committee of Quebec university registrars produces a guide called *Guide des registraires du Québec : pratiques et priorités* updated January 2012, which touches on all the various responsibilities of a university registrar to offer practical tips, advice, and resources. As one example of particular relevance to this project, in the section on transcripts the Guide refers Quebec registrars to the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide for guidance (Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec, 2012). As an aid to credential assessors, BCI publishes and makes available online a comparative table of grading and progression standards and practices for each of the Quebec universities. BCI makes clear, however, that institutions publish their own grading policies and are the only official source for this information (Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec [CREPUQ], 2005).

Transfer Credit Nomenclature Standards

College/CEGEP

Each college is responsible for determining its own transfer credit policy. This is done in the context of IPESA, which specifies the process of matching performance criteria/learning outcomes, as provided by

the MESRS, with actual achievements. Some regional admission centres such as the *Service régional d'admission du Montréal métropolitain* (SRAM) also offer a comparative evaluation service for colleges.³⁸ Regardless, the academic decisions on equivalencies remain an institutional purview. The terminology used, however, is defined through the IPESA framework. The RREC includes definitions for course, credit, program, standard, objective along with dispensation, substitution, equivalency to cite a few examples (Vincent Petitclerc, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Certain terms that deal with “equivalencies” are prescribed by the RREC and have specific usages. For example, *equivalence* (EQ on the transcript) means that “a student has previously attained the objectives and standards of the course for which the EQ is requested...” but only granted for attainment of course competencies if “it has taken place in one of the following circumstances: (i) through previous studies, but NOT at another CEGEP; and (ii) through on-the-job-training. If a student has taken a course deemed comparable within the same college or at another college/CEGEP (course replacement), the term “substitution (SU)” is applied” (Vanier College, 2011).

Universities

According to CICIC, “There is no provincial guide covering equivalencies or transfers, but Quebec university registrars use specific resources, in particular to determine possible equivalencies. One such resource is the *Guide des niveaux de formation pour l'admission générale des candidats non québécois* published under the auspices of the Conférence des recteurs et principaux des universités du Québec (now BCI) (Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials [CICIC], 2010c). Responsibility for recognizing training from another country lies with Quebec institutions (schools, colleges, and universities). As well, the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité, et de l'Inclusion (MIDI) provides academic equivalency assessments, mostly for labour market purposes, but these can also be used by educational institutions” (CICIC, 2010c).

However, guidelines for inter-Quebec partnerships are available through a document produced by BCI (Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec, 2013). Definitions are provided for programs offered “conjointement, par extension ou en association” (Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec, 2012, p. 4). A listing of all the partnerships by program are included in the Guide.

Individual institutions publish their own policies on transfer. As one example, McGill University designed a *Basic Math and Science Equivalence Table*³⁹ to assist with transfer credit assessment. According to Clara Spadafora (personal communications, February 5, 2014), the table holds a collection of transfer

³⁸ With some exceptions, applicants to CEGEPS apply for admission through one of three regional admission services, not to individual CEGEPs: Quebec City (Service régional d'admission au collégial de Québec - SRACQ), Metropolitan Montreal (Service régional d'admission du Montréal métropolitain - SRAM), and Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean (Service régional d'admission des cégeps du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean - SRASL) (Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur, de la recherche, de la science et de la technologie, 2013).

³⁹ <http://www.mcgill.ca/mathscitable/>

credit information that has been used to assess for and apply transfer credit to McGill student records. The content is maintained and updated regularly.

Ontario

Overview

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) has legislative responsibility for Ontario's postsecondary education system. In November 2013, MTCU released Ontario's *Differentiation Policy Framework for Postsecondary Education* (Government of Ontario, 2013a), which set "the foundation for broader postsecondary system transformation by publicly articulating government expectations and aligning the mandates of Ontario's colleges and universities with government priorities" (p. 6). The framework outlined new policy levers, including proposed metrics for each of the six components of the differentiation policy framework (jobs, innovation and economic development; teaching and learning; student population; research and graduate education; program offerings; and institutional collaboration to support student mobility) (pp. 14-16), and a Strategic Mandate Agreement process, through which institutions "articulate their unique mandates, strengths, and aspirations...and outline...how [their] mission and activities align with Ontario's vision for postsecondary education" (p. 17).

Ontario's policy statement for credit transfer (Government of Ontario, 2011) was articulated by the MTCU in February, 2011, as follows:

Ontario will have a comprehensive, transparent and consistently applied credit transfer system that will improve student pathways and mobility, support student success and make Ontario a postsecondary education destination of choice. The credit transfer system will assist qualified students to move between postsecondary institutions or programs without repeating prior, relevant learning (p. 1).

The Policy Statement, which was endorsed by postsecondary institutions, also outlines the goals, guiding principles, strategy, roles, and responsibilities of the government, postsecondary education institutions, and the role of ONCAT.

ONCAT was established by MTCU in 2011 "to enhance student pathways and reduce barriers for students looking to transfer among Ontario's 44 publicly funded postsecondary institutions (Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer [ONCAT], 2014). It is led by an executive director who reports to a board of directors, comprising senior leaders in the college and university sectors, students, and community members. Representatives of each of the 44 member institutions make up the ONCAT Council. Key activities of ONCAT include enhancing the provision of information about transfer and mobility opportunities for students; supporting postsecondary institutions in building and enhancing mobility pathways; and sponsoring a research and data collection program to improve understanding of transfer patterns and experiences in the province (ONCAT, 2014). ONCAT is funded by the Government of Ontario.

The Ontario Qualifications Framework

The Ontario Qualifications Framework (OQF)⁴⁰ was developed by the provincial government and “includes apprenticeship certificates, the qualifications for private career colleges, the qualifications awarded by publicly-assisted colleges of applied arts and technology (CAATs) and degrees offered by publicly-assisted universities and other authorized providers” (Government of Ontario, 2009a).

The OQF (Government of Ontario, 2009b) is represented as a continuum of credentials, including five levels of certificates (levels 1 – 5), three levels of diplomas (levels 6 – 8), a post-graduate certificate (level 9), bachelor’s degree (level 10), honours bachelor’s degree (level 11), master’s degree (level 12), and doctoral degree (level 13).⁴¹ The framework describes each credential according to the following eleven elements:

- Overall program design and outcome emphasis;
- Preparation for employment and further study;
- Typical duration;
- Admission requirements;
- Provider;
- Qualification awarded;
- Depth and breadth of knowledge;
- Conceptual and methodological awareness, research and scholarship;
- Communication skills;
- Application of knowledge;
- Professional capacity/autonomy.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance for Ontario universities is guided by the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (the Quality Council), which stipulates the process and requirements for new degree program proposals, program revisions, and cyclical quality assurance audits for undergraduate and graduate programs in the Quality Assurance Framework (Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance, 2012). Notably, the Quality Assurance Framework requires institutions to report on how both new and existing degree programs meet the University Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Level Expectations, a learning outcomes-based framework built on the OQF (pp. 30-34). It also defines inter-institutional partnerships and credentialing expectations, a unique feature for Canadian quality assurance documents (pp. 4,6).

The Ontario MTCU publishes provincial program standards that define the vocational requirements and essential employability skills, both expressed in terms of learning outcomes, for the majority of high enrolment college diploma programs (Government of Ontario, 2013b). The Ontario College Quality Assurance Service (OCQAS) is the independent, arms-length body that delivers credentials validation and quality assurance services for the college system in Ontario. Like the quality assurance process for universities, OCQAS stipulates process and content requirements for proposals for new certificate,

⁴⁰ <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/postsec/oqf.pdf>

⁴¹ <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/programs/oqf.pdf>

diploma, and degree programs, and for cyclical review of existing programs offered through Ontario's colleges (Ontario College Quality Assurance Service, 2014).

In addition to the system-wide quality assurance structures, colleges and universities have internal quality assurance processes that are regulated through their institutional governance structures. Final funding approval for new programs in the college and university systems rests with the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Ontario's Transfer Database: ONTransfer.ca

ONCAT manages ONTransfer.ca which features over 600 college-to-college, college-to-university, and university-to-university transfer pathways available to students in Ontario. It offers both a Program Transfer Guide and a Course Transfer Guide. Site functionality enables students to enter the program they have completed, enter the program they would like to complete, and then search and compare pathways available to them according to elements such as required grades, transfer credits to be awarded, and expected time to completion. General transfer policies and links to transfer advisors at each institution are provided. The site also includes guidance to assist students at all levels – high school, college, and university – to plan their postsecondary pathway at any stage. A comprehensive glossary and guide to the postsecondary education system in Ontario is provided.

Research and Reporting

Postsecondary institutions currently report data on transfer students to the MTCU through funding and accountability agreements. A number of initiatives currently underway in Ontario are designed to improve the collection and availability of data with respect to student mobility. The introduction of the Ontario Education Number (OEN), extended to the postsecondary education sector in 2013 by MTCU, will enable institutions to confidently track students as they move among institutions. Work is underway in the Ministry on the development of a *Credit Transfer Accountability Framework* in consultation with ONCAT and postsecondary institutions. The goal with this new framework is to provide key indicators to support a more robust and significantly expanded range of data elements, in order to better measure credit transfer activity and progress against system-wide goals. The development of the Accountability Framework will be informed by the results of ONCAT's data availability survey and pilot studies currently underway with colleges and universities to assess the readiness of institutions to begin reporting on data elements (Kinney Butterfield, personal communications, March 18, 2014). The Accountability Framework will also include a detailed glossary of terms.

With centralized application centres for both the college and the university systems, Ontario also has a wealth of applicant-level data, including previous postsecondary institutions attended, available to individual institutions and to the system, through the Ontario College Application Service (OCAS) and the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC). Further, sector policy, research, and advocacy organizations for the university and college sectors also collect system-level data and publish issue-focused reports, fact sheets, and position papers. The Council of Ontario Universities (COU) maintains

the Common University Data, Ontario (Council of Ontario Universities, 2013),⁴² and Colleges Ontario publishes annual Key Performance Indicator reports for all colleges (Colleges Ontario, n.d.).

Largely through the support of the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) and ONCAT, there has been a recent proliferation of research studies – both published and in progress – on system policy and design, including design for transfer (Hicks, Weingarten, Jonker, & Liu, 2013; Higher Education Strategy Associates, 2012; Trick, 2013; Weingarten, Hicks, Jonker, & Liu, 2013); students’ experiences of transfer (Decock, McCloy, Liu, & Hu, 2011; ONCAT, 2013; Wilson, McCaughan, & Han, 2011); and academic performance of transfer students (Drewes, Maki, Lew, Willson, & Stringham, 2012; Gerhardt, Arai, Carroll, & Ackerman, 2012; ONCAT, 2013; Stewart & Martinello, 2012).

Western Canada

Overview

Amongst the western provinces and territories different types of attention are paid to different aspects of postsecondary education including in the areas of transcript standards and transfer credit. Therefore, while the provinces/territories are grouped in accordance with the ARUCC structure, it is not meant to suggest that a universal brush is being applied to describe the western region as to do so would be misleading. While there are similarities, there are differences.

For example, there are very mature transfer credit frameworks in both BC and Alberta led by BCCAT and ACAT respectively. ACAT was highlighted as a best practice example for both PLAR and transfer credit in the research for this project. The *ACAT Transfer Best Practices* was cited in the workshops and in stakeholder interviews as an illustration (Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer, 2013). BCCAT was often mentioned as a best practice model in the advance poll, the national survey, and across a number of workshops and interviews in various regions in Canada. Both organizations conduct extensive research and collaborative activities in the areas of admission and transfer. The breadth and depth of activities in these two provinces is why each are spotlighted below.

From a system perspective, Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Yukon, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba are currently at different evolutionary phases for a variety of reasons particularly in the area of transfer because of the complexity and the number of institutions within each region (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), 2011). The Northwest Territories has only one institution, Aurora College, which maintains membership in ACAT and Colleges and Institutes Canada (p. 22). Nunavut is pursuing an *Adult Learning Strategy* focused on quality assurance and transfer and has considered developing a coordinating body for transfer (p. 25). It maintains a strong focus on sustaining and supporting Inuit values and advancing supports such as PLAR. The Yukon has only one college and therefore maintains membership in organizations such as BCCAT, WARUCC, ARUCC, and ACAT to facilitate sharing of best practices and maintenance of a focus on transfer (p. 39). In the case of Saskatchewan, the provincial government closed down the Council on Articulation and Transfer and renewed its focus on PLAR (Government of Saskatchewan, n.d.). In Manitoba, the government recently closed satellite service locations under the purview of Campus Manitoba, the organization with the mandate to facilitate

⁴² <http://www.cou.on.ca/statistics/cudo>

transfer and online learning in the province (Government of Manitoba, 2013). Having noted this, there are some interesting developments emerging such as in Saskatchewan and Manitoba which are spotlighted below.

As a significant example of the interest in inter-provincial exchange focused on facilitating dialogue and collaboration in the region, the various jurisdictions have come together beginning in 2010 to form the Western Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (WestCAT) (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), 2011, p. 13; WESCAT, 2009). Its mandate is “to encourage and facilitate inter-provincial access, mobility, and transfer of credits for students moving among British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba” (WestCAT, n.d.).

Provincial Qualifications Frameworks

Other than the Canada-wide Degree Qualifications framework and unlike Atlantic Canada with its MPHEC, western Canada does not have a region-wide qualifications framework nor is one being suggested as each province/territory maintains responsibility for postsecondary education and related quality assurance. Further, regions in the west and WestCAT (WestCAT, n.d.) have endorsed the CMEC Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Education in Canada, which includes the Canadian Qualifications Framework (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 2007). In all cases, there is a government ministry with responsibility for postsecondary education and typically quality assurance in each region is governed by some form of Degree Authorization Act and/or institutional charter.

Spotlight on Alberta

The Ministry of Innovation and Advanced Education has responsibility for postsecondary education in Alberta. The Campus Alberta concept was created in 2002 to formalize and encourage collaboration among the province’s 26 publicly funded postsecondary institutions (Government of Alberta, n.d.a). The Roles and Mandates Policy Framework for Alberta’s Publicly Funded Advanced Education System (Government of Alberta, Advanced Education and Technology, 2007), outlines six categories of postsecondary institutions in Alberta, and defines the learner focus, types of academic programming and research activity for each category of institution. The six categories of institutions are:

- Comprehensive Academic and Research Institutions;
- Baccalaureate and Applied Studies Institutions;
- Polytechnical Institutions;
- Comprehensive Community Institutions;
- Independent Community Institutions;
- Specialized Arts and Culture Institutions.

The Campus Alberta Quality Council (Government of Alberta, 2011) is an arms-length agency responsible for the review of all new degree program proposals (at the baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral levels) and the periodic review of existing degree programs in Alberta, whether offered by resident, non-resident, public, or private institutions. The Council makes recommendations to the Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education. The comprehensive *Campus Alberta Quality Assessment and Quality Assurance Handbook* (Campus Alberta Quality Council, 2013) defines the processes and

requirements, including typical admission requirements, degree structure, number of credits, and content areas for specific degree programs (e.g., Business Administration, Education, Nursing, Music).

In new program proposals and program review reports, institutions must demonstrate that programs meet expectations of the *Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework* (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 2007) on the following six dimensions: depth and breadth of knowledge, knowledge of methodologies and research, application of knowledge, communication skills, awareness of limits of knowledge, and professional capacity/autonomy.

For credit programs at the certificate and diploma level, the Education and Training Program Coordination Branch of the Ministry of Innovation and Advanced Education reviews and approves new program proposals.

Recently, the Ministry of Innovation and Advanced Education introduced annual letters of expectation, as another lever in guiding institutional alignment with the government's desired directions for advanced education. The letters of expectation, which define the goals, objectives, and desired outcomes for each institution, are signed by the deputy premier and board chair for each institution (Government of Alberta, Innovation and Advanced Education, n.d.b).

Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT)

The Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) was established in 1974 as an independent body to support stakeholders with the development of policies, procedures, and guidelines that promote student mobility through all levels of the postsecondary education system. Its focus includes ensuring the transferability of courses and programs, and enhancing access through initiatives such as prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) (Government of Alberta, Advanced Education and Technology, 2009).

The ACAT website includes links to *Transfer Alberta* (Government of Alberta, Advanced Education and Technology, 2014), a searchable registry of transfer agreements. The transfer database, called the *Transfer Agreement Archival Retrieval System* (TAARS), enables students to search by course or program for transfer, and to search for transfer opportunities by sending or receiving institution. It also maintains historical records of agreements. Transfer pathways also include Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate, and apprenticeships. The website provides information to assist students in planning their postsecondary education journey. It also includes a comprehensive glossary, which has recently been revised and updated to a single common glossary used across all Transfer Alberta sites (Ann Marie Lyseng, personal communication, February 4, 2014). Transfer Alberta is introducing a mobile app in summer of 2014. Like BCCAT, the Guide and glossary were mentioned in the Project's advance poll, stakeholder interviews, and the national survey as examples of Canadian best practice.

Data and Research

The Alberta Student Number (ASN), introduced in 2001, supports the tracking of student mobility throughout the Alberta postsecondary education system; however, it does not currently enable the tracking of actual credit transfer. ACAT posts an extensive range of reports and publications on its

website, including student enrolment and tracking reports, by institution; graduate reports; and annual transfer patterns reports (Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer, 2009).

ACAT's new 'Spotlight' publication (2014), which provides updates on the work of ACAT and profiles trends, best practices, research, innovative admissions, and transfer initiatives, is proving to be very successful in communicating information with institutions. The challenges that remain are (a) how to get institutions to share information with ACAT, and (b) for ACAT to be more effective in reaching students and parents in the general public with its message (Ann Marie Lyseng and Eric Dohei, personal communication, February 4, 2014).

Spotlight on British Columbia

In BC, the Ministry of Advanced Education maintains responsibility for postsecondary education overseeing public and private or out-of-province institutions along with private career training organizations. Degree granting private and non-BC public institutions are required to obtain government authorization under the Degree Authorizations Act to deliver degree programs in the province (2013). The government further designates institutions under the Education Quality Assurance (EQA) program, which results in a "seal of quality" being assigned to those offering approved postsecondary education (Government of British Columbia, Ministry of Advanced Education, 2013).

BC Quality Assurance

In BC, the current quality assurance mechanisms include those available and mandated by institutional senates and governing councils, the BC Education Quality Assurance (EQA) designation (BC Centre for International Education [BCCIE], n.d.), and the Degree Qualifications Assessment Board (DQAB) (Ministry of Advanced Education, n.d.). The BC EQA is a "brand of quality" designation for postsecondary institutions. It is a "seal" with global recognition that is intended to symbolize quality and consumer protection. Its requirements are mandated by the BC Ministry of Advanced Education (AVED) and it is administered by the BC Centre for International Education. The DQAB is the provincial body responsible for quality assurance assessment of degree-level programming. It makes recommendations to approve new degree programs at BC postsecondary institutions in accordance with the BC Degree Authorization Act, as well as the College and Institutes Act, and the various public University Acts.

BC Council on Admissions and Transfer

Transfer is heavily promoted on the Council website and reflects a close to 50 year historical focus on student mobility (British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer, 2014a). The BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) was created in 1989, marking its 25th anniversary in 2014. It is now tasked with overseeing the BC transfer system and "facilitating admission, articulation and transfer arrangements among BC post-secondary institutions" (British Columbia Council on Admission and Transfer (BCCAT), 2014b). It further coordinates transfer activities, promotes student mobility, conducts related research, and maintains online tools to support educational planning. In research interviews for the ARUCC PCCAT project, BCCAT was routinely cited as an example of best practice in the area of systems and structure to support student transfer. BC is also a province that demonstrates complex and high volumes of student mobility. Extensive research conducted by the Student Transitions Project and supported by BCCAT has tracked the volume of student movement between postsecondary institutions

at 55,000+ in 08/09, 09/10 & 10/11, with annual increases in 11/12 and 12/13 (British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer, 2013).

Transcripts and Transfer Credit

The section on Background and Context at the beginning of the research report amplifies the degree to which BCCAT has supported and influenced national research and engagement with admissions transcript standards and transfer. Beginning with the 1998 creation of a *BC Transcript Guide* and the launch of *BCTransferGuide.ca* in 2005, it also launched Canada's first web-based *Transfer Credit Equivalency System* in 2001, the 2008 *Best Practice Guide: A Resource for Receiving Institutions*, and a subsequent one for sending institutions (British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer, 2014a).

BCCAT also initiated and sponsored the initial research beta study for the ARUCC PCCAT national project, *BCCAT Credentialing Practices for Joint Programs* (Duklas, *Credentialing Practices for Joint Programs*, 2013). This province-wide research project amplified the nomenclature challenges in the area of joint program terminology and provided insights regarding joint program identification on transcripts and parchments (2013, pp. 12-17). The findings concluded that inter-institutional partnerships and related nomenclature do impact credentials; however, the degree, approaches and level of detail varied by institution. The participants in the survey for the BCCAT joint program credentialing practices study were also asked questions regarding transfer nomenclature and principles related to credentialing, which served as a basis for the ARUCC PCCAT study. As an example, one finding from the BCCAT study was support for reflecting joint program details on both transcripts and parchments as a means to enhance transparency, clarity, and mobility (2013, p. 20). The ARUCC PCCAT national survey contained similar questions to capture perspectives on this issue nationally.

According to BCCAT, the BC system has a long and established foundational history in the area of course-to-course transfer with mechanisms in place to resolve curricular changes that emerge (Rob Fleming and Robert Adamoski, personal communication, January 23, 2014). An ongoing focus is to ensure that effective course and block credit assessment processes do not overlook other potential issues (e.g., relating to credential laddering to the baccalaureate level). The area of establishing credential level learning outcomes is one that needs further exploration in Canada. According to BCCAT, qualifications frameworks represent an interesting mechanism to assist with furthering discussions and reducing the hurdles students are experiencing when moving between sectors and jurisdictions across Canada (Rob Fleming and Robert Adamoski, personal communication, January 23, 2014; FitzGibbon, 2014).

Within the BC jurisdiction, the general sense is that transcription practices aren't creating significant challenges for students; however, there appears to be variability around reportable items such as admission categories (e.g., basis of admission) and whether these are captured in information systems, and consistently featured on transcripts (Rob Fleming and Robert Adamoski, personal communication, January 23, 2014). Potential hurdles emerge due to a gap in systematic identification of transfer students. As one result, students may not obtain a transfer credit assessment of prior postsecondary studies unless they request a review. Reporting may also be impacted.

Of special note and in relation to the area of transcription, the private schools in BC are governed by a Transcript Maintenance Agreement administered by the Degree Qualifications Assessment Board (DQAB), the provincial body responsible for quality assurance assessment of degree-level programming (Ministry of Advanced Education, n.d.). The Agreement defines explicitly what should be present on a transcript. In Table E1, the differences to the 2003 ARUCC transcript guide are highlighted to illustrate the points of divergence in transcript standards for one regional sector.

Table E1: Comparison of BC DQAB Transcript Maintenance Agreement Requirements and ARUCC Transcript Guide

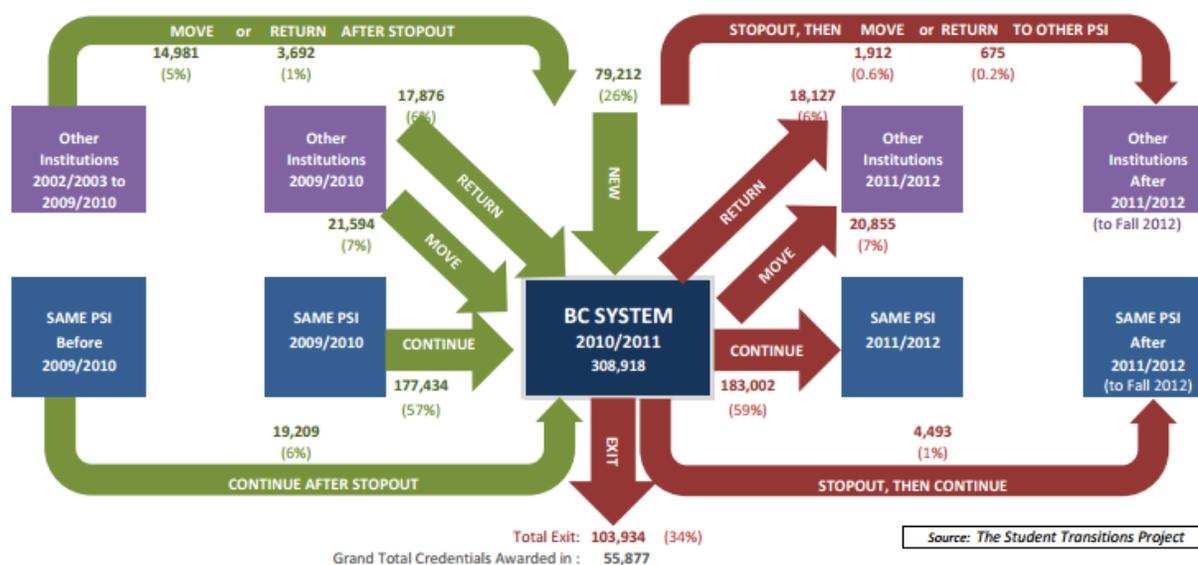
Transcript Component	Details	ARUCC Transcript Guide
Student information:	The student's name, contact information and student ID number.	Essential (Student contact information discretionary for privacy reasons)
Basis of Admission	The qualifications that form the basis for the student's admission to the institution.	Not Recommended (Essential for student database)
	Information about any credits transferred, entrance examinations and prior learning assessment used for admission or advanced placement.	Recommended for transfer credits, courses/credits accepted (Discretionary for grades accepted, cumulative transfer of credits, block transfer, LOP, student exchange, PLAR; Entrance exams essential for student database)
	The name(s) of any other postsecondary institution(s) attended by the student, and the dates of attendance.	Not Addressed
	The name and completion date of any degree, diploma or certificate earned by the student before registering at the institution.	Not Addressed
Academic History	The dates of the student's admission and completion or withdrawal from his/her program(s) of study.	Essential (Period of attendance, withdrawal date from institution essential; withdrawal from program/course discretionary)
	The date(s) of each academic semester or term during which the student studied at the institution.	Essential (Period of attendance)
	A list of all courses completed, in progress or withdrawn from at the institution.	Essential
	A list of credits and grades earned by the student.	Essential
	The student's grade point average per academic term and overall.	Recommended
	A notation of academic suspension, dismissal or probation if any of these actions has been taken against the student.	Recommended (Essential for suspension or dismissal)
	Academic awards or honours given to the student.	Internal Recommended; External Not Recommended
	The name of any degree earned by the student and the date the degree was granted by institution.	Essential
Institutional Information	The institution's name, location and address.	Essential
	The institution's grading key.	This addresses trust and validation principle
	The name and authorized signature of the registrar or similar official.	This addresses trust and validation principle
	The institution's seal.	This addresses trust and validation principle
	The date on which new information was last added, and the date the transcript was issued to the student or other body.	Essential

Source for DQAB transcript information: Ministry of Advanced Education. (n.d.). Private and Out-of-province Public Institutions – Ministry's Requirements. Retrieved from <http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/degree-authorization/private/ministers-requirements.htm#maintenance>, March 28, 2014.

Data and Research

BCCAT publishes a robust repository of research studies all of which are accessible on its website at <http://bccat.ca/publications/>. Figure E1 provides an overview of student mobility numbers from British Columbia's Student Transitions project (BC Ministry of Advanced Education, n.d.). While comparable data is not available from other Canadian provinces, it demonstrates that students are combining attendance at a number of schools all the way through their educational journey; suggesting that a shift is occurring with regard to long-held understandings regarding the concepts surrounding transfer, transcript standards, and transfer credit nomenclature more generally (Rob Fleming; Robert Adamoski, personal communication, January 23, 2014). According to BCCAT, the value of projects such as the ARUCC PCCAT study are such that a detailed examination and creation of standards and glossaries would be beneficial to advancing mobility.

Figure E1: Student Pathways to BC Public PSE Institutions 2010/2011 and Future Student Pathways, up to Fall 2012



Source: BC Ministry of Advanced Education. (n.d.). *The Student Transitions Project*. http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/

Spotlight on Manitoba

Overview

In Manitoba, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Literacy is responsible for postsecondary education with the support of the Council of Post-Secondary Education (COPSE), a provincial government agency that is

...responsible for planning and coordinating the development of a post-secondary education system that promotes excellence and accessibility, facilitates the coordination and integration of services and facilities, and promotes fiscal responsibility and accountability.... COPSE reviews and approves university and college programming and provides advice and policy direction to the Government (Council on Post-Secondary Education, n.d.).

Transfer

Campus Manitoba is part of the government's support framework for transfer with a specific mission to serve "as a conduit to provide access to college and university courses and programs for Manitobans through distributed learning mechanisms including the Internet. Campus Manitoba supports students by providing services that remove barriers and enable the achievement of educational goals" (Campus Manitoba, n.d.). It has recently been re-envisioned⁴³ (Government of Manitoba, 2013) and now will focus on two new spheres of activity: (i) establishing a new platform that helps Manitoba deal with technology and online learning, and (ii) addressing and advancing Manitoba's lack of progress on the provincial transfer credit platform (Dave Neale, personal communication, January 21, 2014; Jeffrey Kehler, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

In early spring of 2014, Campus Manitoba will be launching *eCampusManitoba.com*, which will be initially focused on the provision of online learning courses. Embedded within this site will be a transfer credit component that will demonstrate how courses transfers are occurring between institutions. Conceptually, this site will be similar to E-Campus Alberta.⁴⁴ Campus Manitoba is also being asked by the provincial government to establish a provincial course database which may lead to the creation of a Manitoba council on admissions and transfer as well as the migration of existing systems to a provincial database (Dave Neale, personal communication, January 21, 2014; Jeffrey Kehler, personal communication, February 13, 2014). This database is considered the foundational entity to ensure long-term deepening of pathways and student mobility in the province. Currently, intra-provincial collaboration has been confirmed through institutional signatories to a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2011 the work of which is being sustained through a recently struck working committee led by Campus Manitoba (Council on Post-Secondary Education, 2011).

Data and Research

The Manitoba Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE) maintains responsibility for research and is currently undertaking a project with vice president academics at provincial institutions to create a taxonomy of credentials in the province. The process will build on the Statistics Canada credential taxonomy and consider the Ontario Qualifications Framework and the CMEC Qualifications Framework. COPSE is also considering a potential 'student movers' study to expand on early research.

Spotlight on Saskatchewan

Overview

In keeping with the CMEC Canadian Qualifications Framework, Saskatchewan authorizes degrees for both private and public institutions under the Degree Authorization Act and those approved are granted a *Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Board Seal of Approval* (Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance, 2012). The Saskatchewan government has also adopted the *Recognizing*

⁴³ Campus Manitoba's original mandate was to provide regional online support through 14 learning centres, which were subsequently closed in June 2013.

⁴⁴ See <http://www.ecampusalberta.ca/>

Prior Learning (RPL) in Saskatchewan: Provincial Policy Framework in 2004 and has made this a recent focus in the province (Government of Saskatchewan, n.d.).

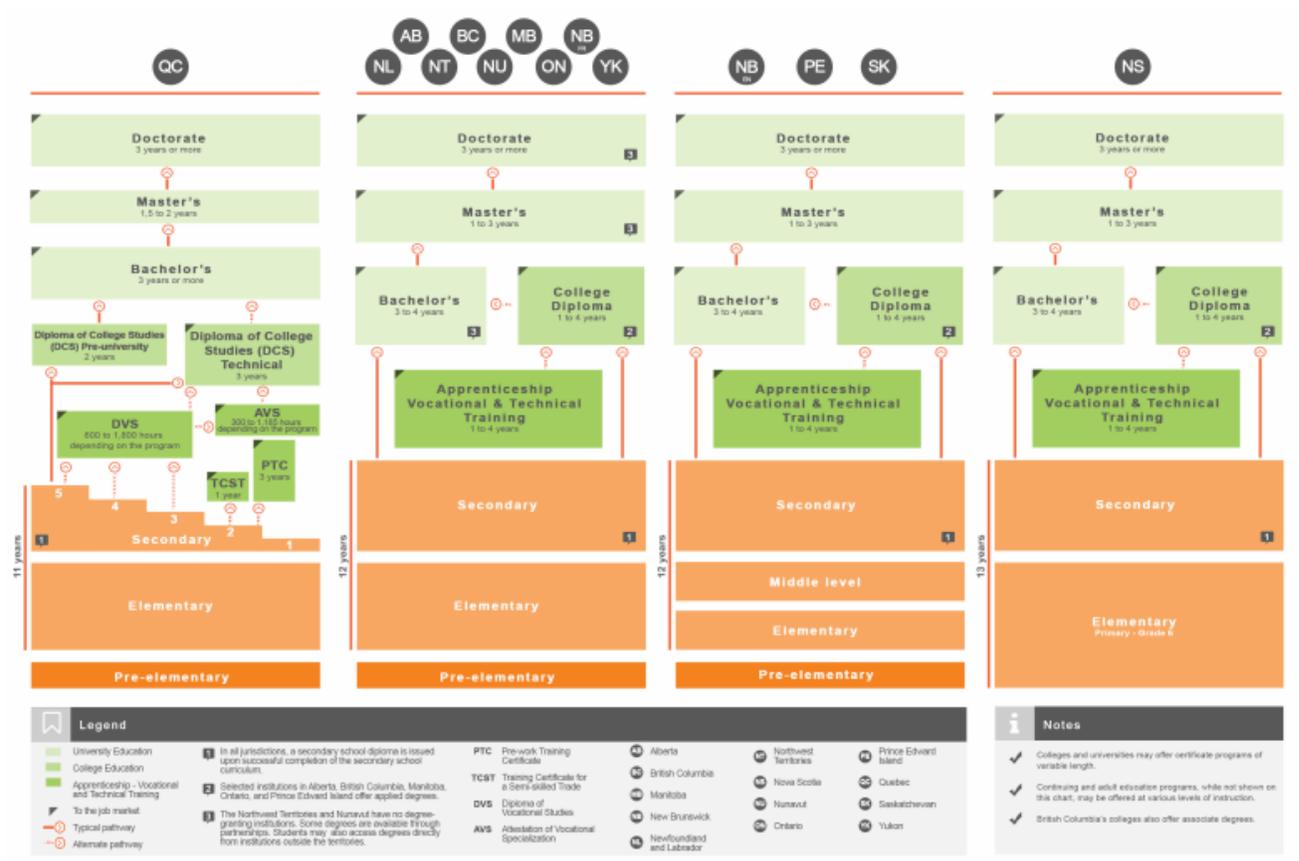
Transcript and Transfer

Approximately three years ago, the government closed the Council on Admissions and Transfer and dismantled the online transfer guide. However and more recently, an *Action Committee on Growth and Sustainability* was created with the broad purpose to bring together senior leaders from SIAST, the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina, and the Ministry of Education to work collaboratively on problems of common interest. A *Sub-Committee on Credit Transfer and Learning Pathways* was established, and a memorandum of understanding is being developed in which the institutions will commit to leading and articulating a province-wide, student-centered, credit transfer model. This initiative is encouraging a renewed interest and engagement in transfer activities, building on the many local transfer credit developments at the level of institutions (Alison Pickrell, Russ Isinger, personal communication, January 24, 2014). Moreover, select institutions are undertaking further research in the area of transfer, to better understand student pathways, and the success of transfer students.

Interestingly and as an illustration of promising practice in the area of transcript and records management, the University of Saskatchewan is one of the few institutions in Canada with a formal nomenclature policy in place, a document that ensures a common and coherent understanding of the adopted terminology related to areas such as admissions, records, and transfer.⁴⁵ Its intention includes ensuring common language and support for the decision accountability structure particularly in relation to registrarial activities (Russ Isinger, personal communication, January 24, 2014).

⁴⁵ See <http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/documents/nomenclature.php>

Appendix F: Canadian Educational Systems



Source: Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC). (2014). Canada's Education Systems. Provided by Natasha Sawh, Coordinator, CICIC. June 11, 2014.

Appendix G: International Research

Australia

System Overview

The Commonwealth Department of Education is responsible for higher education and research in Australia. Each State and Territory government also has a Department of Education, though the specific departmental names may vary. The tertiary education system in Australia comprises higher education and vocational education and training. The university system includes 37 public and three small private Australian universities. Internationalization is a prominent feature of Australian higher education, with international students making up 25.7% of the student population in 2012 (Department of Industry Innovation Science Research and Tertiary Education, 2013). There are approximately 140 other higher education providers in Australia, but they are mostly small, and account for 7% of all higher education students.

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) is an independent agency established by the Australian Government, with responsibility for regulatory and quality oversight of the system (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013a). In addition, TEQSA maintains and publishes a National Register of higher education providers, which serves as the authoritative information source of registered higher education providers in Australia (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, Commonwealth of Australia, 2013).

Qualifications Framework

All higher education and vocational education and training credentials in the tertiary education system are governed by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013), a comprehensive framework which is collectively owned by the Commonwealth, State and Territory education, training and employment ministers. The AQF is the national policy for all regulated qualifications. Introduced in 1995 and updated in 2011, the AQF provides a taxonomy for learning outcome expectations expressed as knowledge, skills, application of knowledge and skills, and volume of learning for each type of qualification. In addition, the framework defines typical expectations for pathways, assessment, and accreditation for all qualifications in higher education and vocational education and training. Beyond providing a framework that builds confidence in Australian qualifications, the objectives of the AQF demonstrate a national commitment to transfer and mobility, with reference to the development and maintenance of pathways; easy movement between education and training sectors and the labour market; support for lifelong learning; and support and enhancement of international mobility of graduates (p. 9).

The ten levels of the AQF include senior secondary certificates of education, four levels of certificates and a diploma, advanced diploma, associate degree, degree, and post-graduate qualifications. The qualifications that can be accredited using the accreditation process in the vocational education and training sector include certificates I – IV, diplomas, advanced diplomas, and graduate certificates and diplomas. The qualifications that can be accredited using the accreditation process in higher education

include diplomas, advanced diplomas, associate degrees, and degrees, and all post-graduate qualifications.

Key content of the AQF includes:

- AQF Level Descriptors, which distinguish between level and qualifications types to give the freedom to add or remove qualification types without destroying the integrity of the AQF and its levels.
- *AQF Qualification Type Specifications*, which define detailed specifications for each type of qualification along five dimensions (summary, skills, application of knowledge, and volume of learning), nomenclature requirements, pathways available to holders of each qualification, and responsibility for accreditation and development of each type of qualification (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013, pp. 21-63).
- *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy*, which describes the entitlements of graduates of each type of qualification to receive a 'testamur' and record of results documenting the program they have completed, as well as specific requirements to ensure the security, integrity, consistency, and transparency of these documents (pp. 69-74).
- *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy*, is designed to support and enhance student progression into and between AQF qualifications, and to maximize the credit students receive for learning already achieved in previous qualifications. The Pathways Policy outlines a series of principles to be used in credit transfer decisions, including the recognition of learning, "regardless of how, when and where it was acquired" (p. 78), that assessments be evidence-based and consistently applied; allow for credit to be used to meet specific program requirements; and be formally documented for the students. Notably, the Pathways Policy specifies that institutions negotiating credit transfer agreements take into account learning outcomes, volume of learning, program of study, including content, and learning and approaches to assessment (pp. 77-80).

Further, the Policy also asserts, as a basis of negotiations, specific expectations for the proportion of advanced standing credit to be awarded towards a higher level AQF qualification in the same or a related discipline (p. 79).

- *AQF Qualifications Register Policy*, developed to ensure that information about AQF Qualifications is publicly available, that AQF and non-AQF qualifications are readily distinguishable, to ensure the accuracy of any publicly available registers or databases about AQF qualifications, and to ensure that appropriate records are kept of all AQF qualifications issued (pp. 83-85).

The AQF also includes a glossary, defining key words and phrases in the context of their use in the levels, qualification type specifications or policies. It represents an interesting approach to achieving alignment across the spectrum including through to the area of transcription and transfer nomenclature.

Data and Research

Australia's National Centre for Vocational Education Research conducts, as one aspect of its many functions, the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth research program that tracks students as they move from school to post-school contexts. Data are available on a cohort basis and a series of research reports, technical reports, briefing papers, and discussion papers provide an evidence-based

understanding of school and post-school transitions for Australian youth. Available reports address a wide range of issues, including school-work transitions, employment outcomes, and preferred educational pathways; however, there do not appear to be studies focusing specifically on jurisdictional mobility (Department of Education, Commonwealth of Australia, 2014).

Key Strengths and Emerging Opportunities

Australia appears to have invested considerably in the development of purpose-built standards and structures in support of student mobility. The comprehensive Australian Qualifications Framework provides a national standard against which all nationally recognized credentials qualifications can be compared (including postsecondary institutions). One feature of the AQF that appears to stand-out for its potential to enhance transparency, clarity, and as a result, student mobility, is the AQF Pathways Policy, which documents the expected level of advanced standing credit to be awarded toward a higher qualification in the same or a related content area.

While not part of the European Higher Education Area, Australia has undertaken to align the AQF with the Bologna Process. Australia has also aligned its qualifications framework with those of several countries in the Asia Pacific and has been an active participant in discussions of a potential Asia Pacific Qualifications Framework (APEC Secretariat, 2009).

Europe

System Overview

While each country in the European Union (EU) is responsible for its own education and training systems, policy directions are established by the European Commission to address issues of common concern, including skills deficits in the workforce and global competition. In Education and Training 2020, the European Union (European Union, 2014a) has defined its framework for education and training, with member states agreeing to the following four objectives to address these challenges by 2020: “making lifelong learning and mobility a reality; improving the quality and efficiency of education and training; promoting equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship; and enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training” (p. 1).

The Bologna Process is at the core of the EU’s efforts to enhance compatibility and coherence of participating nations’ academic qualifications in order to achieve the above objectives. In the 15 years since its inception, the Bologna Process has come to be recognized internationally as a model of multinational cooperation to enhance quality, transparency, and mobility for learners in the higher education system in Europe, and on a global scale, to support the participating nations’ capacity to compete and succeed. A key outcome of the Bologna Process has been the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), launched in 2010, with 28 member states and 47 countries. (European Union, 2014b). “The EHEA was meant to ensure more comparable, compatible and coherent systems of higher education in Europe” (European Higher Education Area [EHEA], 2010). The number and type of institutions varies by country, but typically includes a mix of publicly and privately funded institutions, both academically and professionally oriented (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency [EACEA], 2012, p. 22). There is also substantial variation in the size of the student

population among the 47 member countries, with students from the following five countries making up more than 50% of total EHEA student numbers: Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, Germany, and the United Kingdom (2012, p. 19).

The Bologna Process has been able to bring about system-wide change through the “implementation of trust-building tools aimed at increasing transparency across national jurisdictions and at bringing about convergency of systems” (2012, p. 9). Key Bologna structures, resources, and tools that have been developed to achieve a high level of comparability, compatibility, and exchange among higher education systems in Europe include: the three-cycle system and the overarching European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework (EHEAQF), which aligns with the existing European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF); the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS); the Diploma Supplement; and quality assurance structures (2012, p. 9).

Qualifications Frameworks

While the Bologna Declaration initially called for the adoption of a two-cycle system based on undergraduate and graduate qualifications, the system was adapted at the 2003 Berlin conference to include studies at the doctoral level as the third cycle. Subsequent conferences defined expectations for completion of a qualification at one level to provide access to qualifications at the next level (i.e., completion of a first-cycle degree should give access to a second-cycle degree), and identified the need to include pre-first cycle qualifications (2012, pp. 31-36). In *A Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*, the Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks (2005) recommended the adoption of a three-cycle Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area, and that “the Dublin Descriptors be adopted as the cycle descriptors for the framework” (p. 101).⁴⁶ Further, guidelines were proposed for the range of credits typically associated with completion of each cycle and the criteria and procedures through which nations could assess the compatibility of higher education frameworks with the European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework (EHEAQF) (pp. 102-103).

In parallel to the development of the European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework, the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) was adopted by the European Union in 2008 to encompass all education and training qualifications in Europe, including those aligned with the Bologna Framework. The EQF is a learning outcomes-based framework with eight levels, ranging from one (basic) to eight (advanced), describing what learners know, understand and are able to do. The EQF is inclusive of all types of education, training and qualifications, from school education to academic, professional, and vocational learning (European Union, 2014c). “While the EQF directly incorporates the cycle descriptors of the Bologna Framework, it does have its own separate level descriptors” (European Higher Education Area, 2008, p. 2).

The EQF provides a common reference framework for European higher education institutions to compare national qualifications systems. Through the “Compare Qualifications Frameworks” feature on

⁴⁶ The term “Dublin Descriptors” was coined in March 2004 after a meeting in which it was agreed to adopt the terms to describe the characteristics of the cycles’ awards all of which, along with the Diploma Supplement, emerged as part of the Bologna process (European University Association, 2004).

the EQF portal, participating countries are able to compare national qualifications frameworks and levels along a set of 10 benchmark criteria and procedures that have been agreed to by the EQF advisory group (European Union, 2010). Comparison results are displayed in terms of how the qualifications levels of the selected country relate to the eight reference levels of the EQF in terms of learning outcomes: knowledge, skills, and competences (European Union, 2013).

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) work together to encourage cooperation among individual countries' quality assurance agencies in meeting the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG). The overarching objective is to "create an overall quality culture rather than a tick-box procedure" (European Union, 2014g, p. 9). The internal and external advantages of an enhanced focus on quality assurance is articulated by the EU's Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, as follows:

Quality assurance is the basis for building trust in our education systems and we need to make greater use of its potential as a catalyst to modernise our universities and vocational education colleges. Our aim is to drive up standards in a way that encourages diversity and employability rather than uniformity (European Union, 2014h, p. 1).

The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) were developed to respect the principles of institutional autonomy and national variations in responsibility and authority for quality assurance. Principles of the ESG stress that quality assurance should focus on the following:

[T]he interests of students as well as employers and the society more generally in good quality higher education; the central importance of institutional autonomy, tempered by a recognition that this brings with it heavy responsibilities; [and] the need for external quality assurance to be fit for its purpose and to place only an appropriate and necessary burden on institutions for the achievement of its objectives" (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency [EACEA], 2012, p. 63).

Data and Reporting

Key achievements in implementation of the Bologna Process are reported in *The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report* (EACEA, 2012). Despite acknowledged challenges in standardized data collection across all 47 countries of the EHEA, the report provides extensive statistical data, explanatory notes, and scorecard indicators across a range of areas including: student mobility; social and economic data on student life; outcomes and employability; and quality assurance. The report also includes a comprehensive glossary and methodological notes.

United Kingdom

System Overview

Responsibility for Higher Education in the United Kingdom is delegated to England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Higher education institutions are independent, self-governing bodies established by Royal Charter or legislation, and most are partially funded by government. There are 133 members of Universities UK, which includes the executive heads of all of the universities in the United Kingdom and some colleges of higher education (Universities UK, 2013a). In addition, there are over 550 institutions that offer courses leading to a degree, but who do not have the authority to award degrees; a university or higher education college that has degree granting authority validates their courses (Government of Alberta, 2007).

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is an independent body that provides advice, guidance, and support to UK colleges, universities, and other institutions to support the best possible higher education experience for students in the UK (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, n.d.). The QAA publishes the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2014), which defines expectations in terms of academic standards, quality, and information provision that must be met by all higher education providers. It also conducts peer reviews of institutions and publishes reports of the findings. In addition, the QAA publishes a wide range of research reports and reference guides on academic standards and quality, and provides advice to government on proposals for new institutions wanting degree granting authority.

Qualifications Frameworks⁴⁷

The QAA has developed two frameworks that describe and organize the achievements represented by higher education qualifications in the United Kingdom, including degrees, diplomas, certificates, and other academic awards granted by a higher education provider with degree awarding authority. One framework applies to higher education qualifications in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and a second defines qualification requirements in Scotland (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, n.d.b.).

*England, Wales and Northern Ireland*⁴⁸

The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2008) has five levels, three at the undergraduate level and two post-graduate levels. These are numbered 5-8 in the FHEQ, building on levels 1-3, which precede higher education in the National Qualifications Framework. Each level in the framework has a descriptor that reflects the distinct levels of intellectual achievement associated with that qualification (p. 7). The descriptors include two parts: a statement of outcomes that a holder of the qualification should be able to demonstrate and a statement of the more general capabilities that a student would be expected to have developed (p. 14). Many

⁴⁷ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuringstandardsandquality/qualifications/Pages/default.aspx>

⁴⁸ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/The-framework-for-higher-education-qualifications-in-England-Wales-and-Northern-Ireland.aspx>

academic programs also develop subject-specific benchmarks that define specific outcomes for learning in a particular subject area (p. 26).

Complementary to the FHEQ is the Higher Education Credit Framework for England, recognizing that credit is widely used by higher education providers in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland (p. 27). The FHEQ also includes sections on naming qualifications, awarding qualifications, definitions, and an annex that describes the alignment between the FHEQ and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQEHEA). The generic qualification descriptors for each cycle of the FQEHEA use the Dublin Descriptors from the Bologna Process and are built on the following elements: knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge and understanding, making judgments, communication skills, and learning skills (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2011, pp. 21-25).

As reported in the overview for the European Union, the Bologna Process was developed “as a means of promoting mutual recognition of qualifications, demonstrating transparency of systems and easing the mobility of staff and students across higher education in Europe” (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2010, p. 1). One of the key features of the Bologna Process is that each country has responsibility to develop a national qualifications framework, and to validate that framework against the overarching FQEHEA. The verification report was completed and approved by the UK’s Quality Assurance Agency in 2009 (2010).

The UK has aligned the Higher Education Qualification Levels for England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, the Higher Education Credit Framework for England, and the first, second, and third cycles of the *Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area* (Universities UK Guild HE, 2013).

Scotland⁴⁹

The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland is part of the more comprehensive Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2001). Like the FHEQ for England, Wales, and Ireland, both the SCQF and the higher education framework are “outcomes-based structure[s] that make explicit the nature, level and volume of outcomes” (p. 3). The SCQF features twelve levels, with the Honours, Masters, and Doctoral degrees placed at levels 10, 11 and 12 respectively in the framework. At the Honours Degree level, the Scottish higher education framework is in “broad alignment” with the FHEQ, and at the post-graduate level, the two frameworks share “common structures, qualification titles, and qualification descriptors” (p. 4). Below the Honours Degree level, the SCQF reflects the unique range of qualifications in Scotland.

Each qualification in the SCQF is defined by both a generic qualification descriptor and a description of the typical number of credits required to achieve and be able to demonstrate the learning of that outcome. Qualification descriptors include three parts: a general description of the qualification, a statement of general outcomes that students achieving that qualification should be able to demonstrate, and a statement of wider general abilities that holders of the qualification should be able to demonstrate (p. 7). Many academic disciplines also include subject-specific benchmarks. The inclusion of credit requirements is designed as a measure of the volume of outcomes. “[O]ne credit point

⁴⁹ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/FHEQ-Scotland.aspx>

represents the learning outcomes expected to be achieved by the average learner at the relevant level in 10 hours of total learner effort” (p. 7). It is noted, though that “credit is a measure of outcome, not of study time” (p. 7).

The SCQF explicitly states that while the framework is designed

...to support lifelong learning by enabling, where appropriate, the transfer of credit between programmes and between institutions....It is not a mandatory process, and individual institutions remain solely responsible for all matters of credit recognition towards their awards (p. 8).

The SQCF also includes an annex on qualification nomenclature (pp. 23-24), which details terminology requirements relating to the level, nature, and subject of each qualification.

To assist students in understanding the relationships among qualifications frameworks and the resulting potential transferability of their qualifications across the United Kingdom, Scotland, Wales, Europe, and the European Higher Education Area, the QAA has produced a simple brochure, *Qualifications can cross boundaries – A rough guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland*, that provides a comparison of the regions’ respective qualifications frameworks (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2013).⁵⁰

Data and Research

The Higher Education Statistics Agency collects a wide range of data from universities and colleges of higher education, on behalf of government in the UK. HESA provides data to authorized users and publishes reports on the performance of higher education institutions, research output, mobility, graduate employment, student access and retention, and learning/learning outcomes, among other topics (Higher Education Statistics Agency, n.d.).

Universities UK conducts and publishes wide ranging higher education policy and analysis research, including participation rates, funding, economic impact, globalization, mobility, and regulation. It also publishes annual ‘patterns and trends’ and ‘facts and figures’ reports, providing snapshots of the system (Universities UK, 2013b).

United States

System Overview

Higher education in the United States is a decentralized, complex system with approximately 4,500 colleges, universities, and junior colleges, including but not limited to public and private universities and colleges, liberal arts colleges, community colleges, and technical colleges. Adding to the complexity is a combination of national, state, and institutional responsibility for postsecondary education. The national government, through the US Department of Education (USDE) establishes policies related to federal funding, predominately research and financial aid, administers the distribution of those funds, collects

⁵⁰ http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Quals_cross_boundaries.pdf

data and oversees research, identifies and focuses national attention on major issues in education, and enforces federal laws prohibiting discrimination in programs that receive federal funds (United States Department of Education, 2013). States are engaged in transcript and transfer practices applicable to their two- and four-year public institutions. Examples include common course numbering (e.g., Florida) and block transfer mandates (e.g. Oregon). Beyond the scope of federal and state engagement, institutions continue to exert a significant degree of autonomy, especially among private institutions.

Qualifications Frameworks and Quality Assurance

The United States does not have a national framework for qualifications; however, the Lumina Foundation for Higher Education (2011), prompted and informed by the development of qualifications frameworks in other countries (p. 3), introduced a Degree Qualifications Profile “that proposes specific learning outcomes that benchmark the associate’s, bachelor’s, and master’s degrees....[defining] expected learning outcomes that graduates need for work, citizenship, global participation and life” (p. 1). Through focusing on “conceptual knowledge and essential competencies and their applications, the Degree Profile illustrates how students should be expected to perform at progressively more challenging levels. Students’ demonstrated achievement in performing at these ascending levels creates the grounds on which degrees are awarded” (p. 1). The Degree Profile describes five basic areas of learning: Broad, Integrative Knowledge; Specialized Knowledge; Intellectual Skills; Applied Learning; and Civic Learning (p. 4).

Quality assurance in higher education in the United States is achieved through the accreditation process. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) is a private, non-profit organization that coordinates accreditation activity. It comprises approximately 3,000 degree-granting colleges and universities and “recognizes” 60 institutional and programmatic accrediting organizations. According to CHEA,

Accreditation in higher education is a collegial process of self-review and peer review for improvement of academic quality and public accountability of institutions and programs. This quality review process occurs on a periodic basis, usually every 3 to 10 years (Council for Higher Education Accreditation , 2012, p. 2).

Accreditation is required by both the federal and state governments for provision of funds to institutions and students in the form of financial aid.

While there are no specific criteria, standards, or framework for transcripts or transfer as part of the accreditation process, Judith S. Eaton (2012), in *An Overview of U.S. Accreditation* reflects as follows:

Accreditation is important to students for smooth transfer of courses and programs among colleges and universities.... Although accreditation is but one among several factors taken into account by receiving institutions, it is viewed carefully and is considered an important indicator of quality (p. 3).

“All degree-granting, accredited colleges and universities represented in the National Centre for Educational Statistics (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) are eligible for

inclusion in the Carnegie Classifications” (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, n.d.). The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education™, developed by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, is “...a framework for recognizing and describing institutional diversity in U.S. higher education” (n.d.). Institutions are classified in categories predominately according to the degrees granted (associate, bachelor’s, master’s, doctorate [research, professional or other doctorate]).

Appendix H: Transfer Credit Policies and Nomenclature⁵¹

Institution	Transfer Credit Resource	Provides nomenclature definitions?
Acsenda	http://acsenda.com/ASM%202013%20Nov_Calendar%20Full.pdf	Yes
Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer	http://alis.alberta.ca/ps/ep/aas/ta/faq/glossary.html transferalberta.ca	Yes
Alexander College	http://www.alexandercollege.ca/admissions/academic-calendar/ http://www.alexandercollege.ca/academic-programs/bc-transfer-system/	Yes
Athabasca University	UG Transfer credit policy: http://ous.athabascau.ca/policy/registry/ugtransfercredit.htm GR transfer credit policy: http://ous.athabascau.ca/policy/registry/gradtransfer.htm Transfer credit search site: https://secure3.athabascau.ca/tcas/ Student appeals policy: http://ous.athabascau.ca/policy/registry/stud_acad_appeals.htm Student appeals procedures: http://ous.athabascau.ca/policy/registry/stud_appeals_procedure.htm Transfer credit section in calendar: http://calendar.athabascau.ca/undergrad/current/page06_08.php Calendar glossary: http://calendar.athabascau.ca/undergrad/current/page12.php	Yes
BCCAT	www.bccat.bc.ca http://www.bctransferguide.ca/ http://www.bctransferguide.ca/resources/glossary/	Yes
Briercrest College	http://www.briercrest.ca/media/685046/Full%20college%20calendar%202014-15.pdf#page=15	Yes
British Columbia Institute of Technology	http://www.bcit.ca/admission/transfer/ http://www.bcit.ca/admission/transfer/plar.shtml http://www.bcit.ca/files/pdf/policies/5103.pdf http://www.bcit.ca/files/pdf/policies/5100_glossary.pdf	Yes
Brock University	http://www.brocku.ca/webcal/2014/undergrad/	No
Canadian Association of Graduate Studies	http://www.cags.ca/documents/agreements/GRDT_TRNSF_AGRM.pdf http://www.cags.ca/documents/publications/best_practices/Best_Practices_Dual_Joint_Degrees.pdf	Yes
Canadian Mennonite University	http://www.cmu.ca/academics.php?s=calendar http://www.cmu.ca/docs/academic/CMU_Academic_Calendar_2013-14.pdf	Yes
Canadore College	http://www.canadorecollege.ca/transferguide http://www.canadorecollege.ca/sites/default/files/images/Policies%20and%20Procedures/A9%20RPL%20Policy-14.pdf http://www.canadorecollege.ca/sites/default/files/images/Policies%20and%20Procedures/A8-Graduation-14.pdf	Yes
Cape Breton University	http://www.cbu.ca/academic-calendar	Yes
Capilano University	www.capilano.ca/current/transfer www.capilano.ca/www.capilano.ca/current/policies/Academic-Policies.html	Yes
Centennial College	http://www.centennialcollege.ca/transfercrredit http://www.centennialcollege.ca/pdf/policies/RecognitionofPriorLearningPolicy.pdf http://www.centennialcollege.ca/pdf/policies/TransferCreditProcedures.pdf	No Yes Yes

⁵¹ These URLs either were provided by the institutional respondents to the national survey or resulted from a review of institutional websites as part of the study.

Certified General Accountants Association of Canada	www.accountantstocanada.org www.accountantstocanada.org ; http://www.cga-ontario.org/LAPS_BAdmin_TC.aspx	No
CICIC	http://www.cicic.ca/en/410/guide-to-terminology-usage-in-the-field-of-credentials-recognition-in-canada.canada	Yes
Concordia University College of Alberta	www.concordia.ab.ca/calendar www.albertatransfer.ca www.transferralberta.ca	Yes
Corpus Christi College	http://corpuschristi.ca/policies/academic	No
George Brown	http://www.georgebrown.ca/GBCCA/current_students/registrar_office/academic_policies_(pdf)/office_of_the_registrar_policies.aspx http://www.georgebrown.ca/transferguide/ GBC Registrar's Office Policies	Yes
Georgian College	Info sheets - http://www.georgiancollege.ca/admissions/credit-transfer/Policies_2_3_and_5 - http://www.georgiancollege.ca/admissions/policies-procedures/	Yes
Government of Manitoba Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE)	http://www.copse.mb.ca/credit_transfer.html	Yes
Government of Quebec	http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=3&file=/C_29/C29R4.H TM	No
Grande Prairie Regional College	http://www.acat.gov.ab.ca http://www.acat.gov.ab.ca/pdfs/PPP.pdf	Yes
Grant MacEwan University	http://www.macewan.ca/wcm/ExecutiveandGovernance/BoardofGovernors/PolicyManual/#2 ; policies C2010, C2030, C2035 http://www.macewan.ca/wcm/ExecutiveandGovernance/BoardofGovernors/PolicyManual/#2	No
Kings University	registry.kingsu.ca/calendar http://registry.kingsu.ca/calendar/CalendarPDF/Glossary.pdf registry.kingsu.ca/Calendar/CalendarPDF/Application_Admission_Registration.pdf#page=11	Yes
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	kpu.ca	No
Langara College	http://www.langara.bc.ca/registration-and-records/resources/glossaries/index.html	Yes
McGill University	http://www.mcgill.ca/study/university_regulations_and_resources/undergraduate/ug_gi_transfer_credits http://www.mcgill.ca/students/transfercrredit/current/ http://www.mcgill.ca/study/2014-2015/university_regulations_and_resources/undergraduate/ug_gi_advanced_standing_transfer_credits http://www.mcgill.ca/study/2014-2015/university_regulations_and_resources/undergraduate/ug_gi_transfer_credits http://www.mcgill.ca/study/2014-2015/university_regulations_and_resources/undergraduate/gi_quebec_inter_university_transfer_agreement_mcgill_students http://www.mcgill.ca/study/2014-2015/sites/mcgill.ca.study.2014-2015/files/undergraduate_programs_courses_and_university_regulations_2014-2015.pdf	Yes
McMaster University	http://future.mcmaster.ca/admission/transfer-credit/	No

Medicine Hat College	www.transferralberta.ca https://www.mhc.ab.ca/~media/Files/PDF/Calendar/2013_2014/2013_2014Calendar_edit.ashx	Yes
Mount Allison University	Transfer credit policies are included in the following sections of the academic calendar: http://www.mta.ca/academic_calendar/_3.html#_3.10 http://www.mta.ca/academic_calendar/_10.html#_10.5 http://www.mta.ca/academic_calendar/_2.html#_2.1 http://www.mta.ca/academic_calendar/_10.html#_10.10.2	Yes
Niagara College	http://www.niagaracollege.ca/content/CreditTransferandDegreeCompletion/DegreeandDiplomaOpportunities/GlossaryofTerms.aspx	Yes
North Island College	http://www.nic.bc.ca/services/recordsandregistration/glossary.aspx	Yes
OCAD University	http://www.ocadu.ca/prospective_students/transfer_pathways/#Advanced+Standing http://www.ocadu.ca/Assets/pdf_media/ocad/students/office_of_the_registrar/1020+Letter+of+Permission.pdf http://www.ocadu.ca/students/records_registration/forms.htm#Change+of+MajorProgram http://www.ocadu.ca/Assets/pdf_media/ocad/prospective/application_forms/ToFFAQ.pdf www.uoit.ca/transferecredit www.uoit.ca/ted	Yes
Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer	http://www.ontransfer.ca/www/index_en.php?page=glossary	Yes
Queen's University	http://www.queensu.ca/admission/apply/transferecredit/definitions.html	Yes
Red River College of Applied Arts, Science and Technology	http://www.rrc.ca/files/File/policies/new/A14%20Prior%20Learning%20Assessment%20and%20Recognition.pdf http://www.queensu.ca/admission/apply/transferecredit/definitions.html	Yes
Royal Roads University	https://student.myrru.royalroads.ca/academic-regulations/section-1-credit-and-registration	Yes
Ryerson University	http://www.ryerson.ca/calendar/2014-2015/pg3534.html http://www.ryerson.ca/calendar/2013-2014/pg3534.html http://www.ryerson.ca/currentstudents/transferecredits/prospective/faq/index.html	Yes
Seneca College	http://www.senecacollege.ca/degreetransfer/guide/	No
Simon Fraser University	http://www.sfu.ca/students/calendar/2014/summer/fees-and-regulations/admission/undergraduate-admission.html#transfer-credit http://www.sfu.ca/students/admission-requirements/canadian-transfer/college-university.html.html	Yes
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology	http://www.sait.ca/about-sait/policies-and-procedures.php http://www.sait.ca/programs-and-courses/full-time-studies/academic-calendar-information/glossary-of-terms.php	Yes
St. Francis Xavier University	http://sites.stfx.ca/registrars_office/academic_calendar http://sites.stfx.ca/registrars_office/sites/sites.stfx.ca/registrars_office/files/Academic_Calendar2013_2014.pdf	Yes
St. Thomas University	http://w3.stu.ca/stu/administrative/registrar/services/calendar2013.aspx	Yes
Thompson Rivers University	http://www.tru.ca/policy.html http://www.tru.ca/policy/allpolicy.html	Yes
Trent University	www.trentu.ca/transfer	Yes
Trinity Western University	https://www1.twu.ca/undergraduate/admissions/transfer-students/credit http://www.alexandercollege.ca/academic-programs/bc-transfer-system/ http://bccat.ca/system/policies/	Yes

University of Alberta	http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/Glossary/Information/240.html	Yes
University of Fraser Valley	https://www.ufv.ca/admissions/admissions/transfer/ https://www.ufv.ca/media/assets/secretariat/policies/Transfer-Credit-(107).pdf http://www.ufv.ca/media/assets/human-resources/learning--development/training-for-dept-heads/Transfer+Credit+Request+2012.pdf https://www.ufv.ca/admissions/forms/ http://www.ufv.ca/calendar/winter-summer-2014/General/RegulationsAndPolicies.htm https://www.ufv.ca/about_ufv/glossary/ http://www.ufv.ca/calendar/winter-summer-2014/General/Glossary.htm	Yes
University of Laval	http://www.ulaval.ca/sg/reg/Reglements/Reglement_des_etudes.pdf (document en voie de révision)	Yes
University of Lethbridge	http://www.uleth.ca/ross/sites/ross/files/imported/academic-calendar/2014-15/glossary.pdf	Yes
University of Manitoba	http://umanitoba.ca/student/admissions/documents/articulation-agreements.html	Yes
University of Northern BC	http://www.unbc.ca/calendar/undergraduate/regulations	Yes
University of Regina	http://www.uregina.ca/gencal/ugcal/ http://www.uregina.ca/gradstudies/grad-calendar/index.html	Yes
University of Saskatchewan	http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/documents/StudentMobilityTerminology.pdf http://policies.usask.ca/policies/academic-affairs/nomenclature-report.php	Yes
University of Sherbrooke	http://www.usherbrooke.ca/programmes/references/reglement/definitions/	Yes
University of Toronto	www.uot.ca/transfercredit www.uoit.ca/calendar	Yes
University of Victoria	http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2013/	Yes
University of Waterloo	Graduate Studies Calendar http://gradcalendar.uwaterloo.ca/page/GSO-Transfer-Credit Canadian Universities Graduate Transfer Agreement http://cags.ca/agreements.php Ontario Visiting Graduate Student Plan http://www.cou.on.ca/policy-advocacy/graduate-education/ontario-visiting-graduate-students http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/index.html http://gradcalendar.uwaterloo.ca/page/GSO-Transfer-Credit http://gradcalendar.uwaterloo.ca/page/GSO-OVGS http://gradcalendar.uwaterloo.ca/page/GSO-CUGTA http://gradcalendar.uwaterloo.ca/page/GSO-Regulations http://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-studies/faculty-and-staff/admissions-recommendation-process-and-procedures/dual-phd-degrees-cotutelle	Yes
Western University	http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/admission.html	Yes
Wilfrid Laurier University	https://www.wlu.ca/page.php?grp_id=2256&p=9615 https://www.wlu.ca/page.php?grp_id=2016&p=16861 http://www.wlu.ca/page.php?grp_id=1928&p=6567 http://www.wlu.ca/calendars/glossary.php?cal=1&y=61 http://www.wlu.ca/calendars/section.php?cal=1&s=644&y=61	Yes
York University	http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/index-policies.html ; http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/ ; http://futurestudents.yorku.ca/transfercredit ; http://www.ontransfer.ca/	Yes

Appendix I: Advisory Group Demographics

The Advisory Group for the project was volunteer; therefore, its composition is relevant to the findings as it provides a beginning indicator of the type and degree of engagement the project encouraged. It also provides an early example of the depth and breadth of consultation that occurred to support this initiative.

At the time the advance poll was distributed, the membership totalled 27. Ultimately and once the national survey was ready to be tested, the Advisory Group comprised 35 college and university representatives from both Canadian public and private postsecondary institutions. Twenty-two (22) were from universities and 13 were from colleges. A representative from the Canadian PESC User Group was also a member. Although predominantly English, there were representatives from bilingual institutions. Figure I1 provides the breakdown of members by province; Figure I2 illustrates the data by registrarial regional association.

Figure I1: Provincial representation on National Project Advisory Group

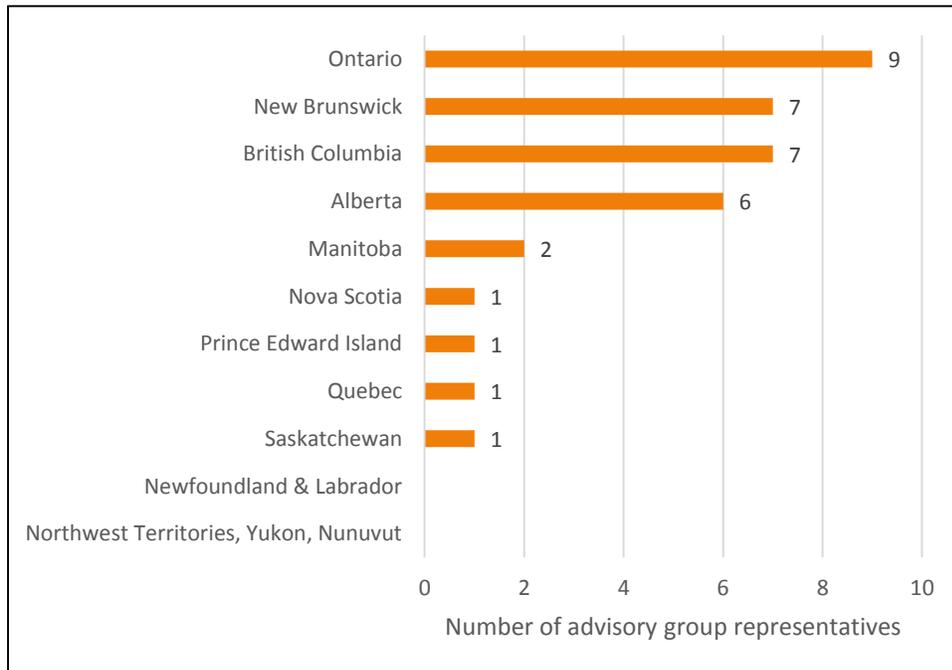
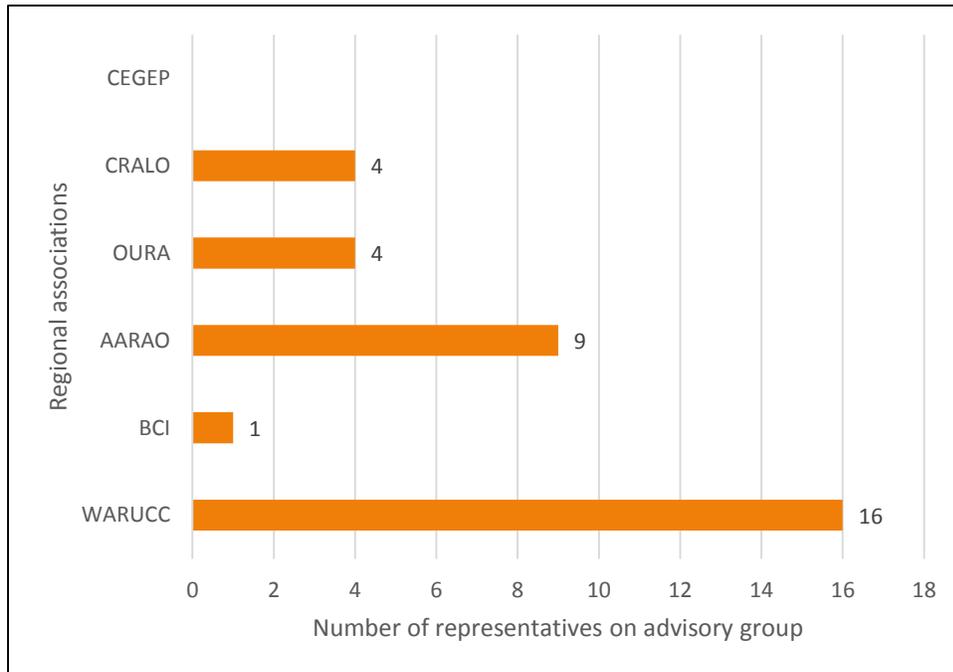


Figure I2: Representatives by regional association



The participation was high particularly from the eastern and western provinces. The advisory group proved a critical resource for the advance poll and when encouraging engagement in the workshops and national survey.

Advance Poll Findings

In response to the question asking “Who should complete the national survey?” the answers were unanimous that it be the registrars’ offices in the first instance – registrars, associate registrars, records and admission directors. There were also references to articulation or pathway coordinators, whether located in a registrarial office or in a VP (Academic) office. Thirteen respondents (52%) out of 25 indicated more than one individual at their institution would need to participate in the national survey because of the requisite expertise. Therefore, the decision was made to allow a census approach for the survey and not restrict access to one respondent per institution.

In response to the question asking “What types of samples in addition to transcripts and transfer credit glossaries and policy documents would be helpful to the research process?” other documents recommended for review included:

- BC’s Transcript Maintenance Agreement for private and out-of-province public institutions functioning in BC;
 - This Agreement is overseen by the Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB) of the Ministry of Advanced Education (BC Ministry of Advanced Education, n.d.).
- Electronic transcripts – formats, policies and guidelines;

- The definitions and practices related to international credentials offered by the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC);⁵²
- Letter of Permission (LOP) forms, transfer credit forms, recruitment material (to see various customs and practices).

Of 23 respondents, 19 (83%) indicated they use the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide. Of the 17 that responded to which sections have proven most useful in their work, 15 (88%) indicated the material on *Student Academic Statuses and Other Statuses* was the most used. Otherwise, all other sections seemed relatively equal in usefulness. The respondents ranked the following sections' usefulness, which are listed in descending order (n=17):⁵³

- Student academic status and other statuses (15, 88%);
- Statement of graduation (12, 71%);
- Basis of admission; transcript issuance information (11, 65% each);
- External Learning recognized by the issuing institution; identification of the student; record of studies pursued; current transcript issues and issues for further study (10, 59% each);
- Identification of the Issuing Institution (6, 35%);
- Other (3, 18%).

In the section under "other", respondents stressed the value of establishing protocols for awards/scholarships and 'Co-curricular transcripts'.

Of 21 respondents, only 7 (33%) use the AACRAO 2011 Academic Record and Transcript Guide. Of those who do, the most useful components identified included:⁵⁴

- Database and academic transcript components (note: database elements were explicitly excluded from the 2003 ARUCC Transcript Guide) (4, 57%);
- Information on the transcript key; current issues; database, academic record and transcript distinctions; security of records (3, 43% each);
- Fraudulent Transcripts; transcription of non-traditional work; electronic transcripts (2, 29% each).

The following additional themes were apparent:

- Electronic transcripts – Respondents suggested attention should be paid to policies, guidelines, and formats for e-transcripts as this delivery approach represents an opportunity to provide more information about the student than available on the paper version. This validates the importance of the project being led by the Canadian PESC User Group. In keeping with this theme, PESC was cited as a successful practice for electronic transcript standards, which is not surprising since the value of electronic data exchange is well known as are the opportunities for different models (Fain, 2014).

⁵² <http://terminologies.cicic.ca>

⁵³ Respondents could choose more than one response. Twenty-three (23) out of 25 responded to this question.

⁵⁴ Respondents could provide more than one answer to this question.

- Principles and rationales – A suggestion was made to be transparent regarding the rationales for including certain components on a transcript. There also seemed to be a suggestion that provincial requirements introduced areas of difference between local and national best practice. An example was provided by the area of ‘basis of admission’ (e.g., the DQAB Transcript Maintenance Agreement requirements in BC mentioned previously).
- Student mobility, equivalent learning, and clarity around transfer credit – Consistent transcript and transfer credit practices were identified as a vehicle for enhancing student mobility. Therefore, suggested areas of improvement to future guides included introducing consistent practices for identifying sources of transfer credit on transcripts and for program partnerships, and PLAR. It was suggested by respondents that when developing a guide and/or glossary it would be valuable to probe transfer credit sources, their differences, what credit is applied to which program, and how such assignments should feature on a transcript.
- Awards and Scholarships – How and when to feature awards and scholarships on a transcript appears to be an area deserving guidance in a future guide.
- Additional challenges – According to respondents, there is a need to examine concepts such as ‘unofficial’ versus ‘official’ transcripts; privacy and record security; identification of mode of instruction; the nuances introduced by different types of partnerships and degrees; and academic versus non-academic discipline. Additional examples identified included co-curricular activities; learning portfolios; transfer allocation based on learning outcomes; granting credit for MOOCs (i.e., ‘massive open online courses’); and more. These topics were suggested as potential areas of exploration particularly in terms of their impact, if any, on transcription and credentialing protocols.
- Guide structure – Comments were shared about carefully considering the structure of a guide and its resulting utility, a topic of discussion for a later project phase.

The other series of questions focused on explicitly probing the area of transfer credit. Seventeen (17, 81%) of the 21 schools responded in the affirmative with regard to having a transfer credit policy either locally or provincially authored. Five of the 17 indicated theirs was currently under review. Seven of the 17 indicated a provincial source for their transfer credit policy (i.e., published by either BCCAT or ACAT). Seven (7) responded to the question “Are you aware of successful practices?” Five (5) cited BCCAT’s online transfer guide as a best practice.

At an operational level, the respondents recommended consistent policies and practices (or consistent communication of institutional practices) are necessary to resolve the following types of questions:

- What should be the minimum grade required to allocate transfer credit?
- Should the grade from the sending institution be transferred?
- Should that grade (or equivalent) be included in grade point average (GPA) calculations?
- How should this information be presented on a transcript (according to source or timing)?
- Should there be standard terminology and a harmonized approach for transcribing credit for equivalent learning (e.g., prior learning assessment, challenge exams)?
- What is and what should be the role of faculty and program areas in transfer credit assessment and approval? Are there any best practices in this area?

- How should different types of transfer be transcribed (e.g., course-to-course transfers, block transfers, articulation agreements, etc.)?

Appendix J: Catalogue of Postsecondary Institutional Samples Provided

Province	Name of Institution or Organization	Transcript	Transcript Legend/Key	Transfer credit nomenclature	Transfer credit policy	Transcript information page	Prior Learning Assessment policy	Academic standing policy	Other
Alberta	Athabasca University	x	x	x	x				
Alberta	Concordia University College	x				x			
Alberta	Keyano College	x							
Alberta	Medicine Hat College	x	x		x				
Alberta	Red Deer College	x					x	x	x New Course Development/Transfer of Courses and Programs PESC XML College Transcript Implementation Guide
Alberta	University of Alberta	x	x						x Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) - Principles, Policies and Procedures Calendar Section on Transcripts Transfer Credit Articulation Procedure (Aug 2009)
Alberta	University of Calgary	x							
British Columbia	Capilano University	x			x				
British Columbia	Simon Fraser University	x	x						
British Columbia	Trinity Western University	x	x		x				
British Columbia	Upper Canada West	x	x						
Manitoba	Booth University College	x	x		x				
Manitoba	Brandon University								x Transfer Credit Equivalency Form Transfer Credit Equivalency Form explanation of categories
Manitoba	Canadian Mennonite University	x							
Manitoba	University of Manitoba	x	x	x (Proposed)	x				

Province	Name of Institution or Organization	Transcript	Transcript Legend/Key	Transfer credit nomenclature	Transfer credit policy	Transcript information page	Prior Learning Assessment policy	Academic standing policy	Other
New Brunswick	Université de Moncton				x		x		x
New Brunswick	New Brunswick College of Craft and Design								x Transfer, Equivalency, Challenge and PLAR Credit Assessment Form Course release request; # credits awarded Experiential Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (application and contract)
New Brunswick	New Brunswick Community College	x					x		
Nfld and Labrador	Memorial University	x	x		x				
Nova Scotia	Cape Breton University	x	x						
Nova Scotia	Institute for Human Services Education	x			x		x		x Summary of Block Transfer - Advanced Standing arrangements o Athabasca o UPEI o Mount St. Vincent
Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education			x					
Nova Scotia	Université Saint-Anne	x	x	x					x Grading scale
Ontario	Brock University	x	x						
Ontario	Canadore College	x					x Draft Jan 2014		x Transfer credit FAQ/Instructions
Ontario	Centennial College	x	x		x		x		x Grading Policy Equivalence and Substitution Procedures

Province	Name of Institution or Organization	Transcript	Transcript Legend/Key	Transfer credit nomenclature	Transfer credit policy	Transcript information page	Prior Learning Assessment policy	Academic standing policy	Other
Ontario	Conestoga College	x			x		x		
Ontario	George Brown College	x			x				x Registrar Office Policies Grading scales http://www.georgebrown.ca/transferguide/
Ontario	Georgian College	x			x		x	x	x Grading scale
Ontario	McMaster University		x						
Ontario	Ryerson University			X					
Ontario	University of Ontario Institute of Technology	x							
Ontario	University of Waterloo	x	x		x				x Graduate examples Confirmation of Transfer Credits Letters (IB and postsecondary)
Ontario	York University	x		x	x		x Collaborative and PLAR		
Ontario	University of Toronto	x	x						
Ontario	Western University	x							
PEI	Holland College	x	x						x DACUM Letter – letter from Registrar explaining change in rating for competency based learning
Quebec	Bishop's University	x							
Quebec	McGill University	x	x		x				
Quebec	Université de Montréal	x	x						
Quebec	Concordia University	x							
Sask.	Briercrest College and Seminary	x				x			
Sask.	University of Saskatchewan			x					

Appendix K: Transcript and Grading Practices⁵⁵

Institution name	Transcript Website
Athabasca University	http://ous.athabascau.ca/policy/registry/graduategrading.htm
Bow Valley College	http://www.bowvalleycollege.ca/Documents/Executive/Policies/Learners%20and%20Academic%20Practices/Grading%20Policy_April11.pdf
Concordia University College of Alberta	https://onlineservices.concordia.ab.ca/pdf/transcriptinformationsheet.pdf
Grant MacEwan University	http://www.macewan.ca/contribute/groups/public/documents/document/pfw_003528.pdf
Lethbridge College	https://www.lethbridgecollege.ca/sites/default/files/imce/policies_procedures/Academic_Programming_%26_Instructional/grading-app-a.pdf
Medicine Hat College	https://www.mhc.ab.ca/~media/Files/PDF/Calendar/Archives/2010-11RegsPolicies.ashx
Mount Royal University	http://www.mtroyal.ca/cs/groups/public/documents/pdf/ssdata_transcript_legend.pdf
Norquest College	http://www.norquest.ca/resources-services/student-life/student-policies/grading-practices.aspx
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology	http://www.nait.ca/91989.htm
Olds College	http://www.oldscollge.ca/Assets/OldsCollege/shared/BottomNav/Administration/policies/D/D19%20Grading.pdf
Portage College	http://www.portagecollege.ca/Services_for_Students/Grading_System.htm
Red Deer College	http://rdc.ab.ca/current-students/class-info/grades-exams/grading-system
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology	http://www.sait.ca/Documents/About%20SAIT/Policies%20and%20Procedures/Academic%20Student/pdf/AC-3-1-1_GradingProgressionProcedures.pdf
The King's University College	https://registry.kingsu.ca/Calendar/CalendarPDF/Academic%20Information.pdf
University of Alberta	http://www.registraroffice.ualberta.ca/en/Assessment-and-Grading/Students/Grading-System-Explained.aspx
University of Calgary	http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-2.html
British Columbia Institute of Technology	http://www.bcit.ca/files/records/pdf/keytogrades.pdf
Camosun College	http://camosun.ca/about/policies/education-academic/e-1-programming-&-instruction/e-1.5.pdf
Capilano University	http://www.capilanou.ca/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=23108
College of the Rockies	https://www.cotr.bc.ca/reg-info/cotr_web.asp?IDNumber=163
Columbia College	http://www.columbiacollege.ca/registrations-and-records/college-calendar#grading-system
Coquitlam College	http://www.coquitlamcollege.com/pdf_downloads/HandBook.pdf
Douglas College	http://www.douglas.bc.ca/calendar/general-information/grading.html
Emily Carr University of Art and Design	http://www.ecuad.ca/studentsservices/academic_advising/grade_point_average
Justice Institute of British Columbia	http://www.jibc.ca/sites/default/files/governance/policies/pdf/Policy_Grading.pdf
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	http://www.kpu.ca/calendar/2013-14/academic-affairs/grades.pdf
Langara College	http://www.langara.bc.ca/registration-and-records/resources/grading-and-withdrawals/grades-notations.html
Assiniboine Community College	http://public.assiniboine.net/Portals/0/Documents/pdfs/current-students/2013-14%20Academic%20Policy%20Handbook.pdf
Brandon University	http://www.brandonu.ca/calendar/files/2011/03/ugrad-2011-2012.pdf
Canadian Mennonite University	http://www.cmu.ca/students.php?s=registrar&p=policies

⁵⁵ These websites resulted from internet research for the study.

Providence College & Theological Seminary	http://www.providenceuc.ca/resource/file/college/registrar/UCCatAcadInfo.pdf
Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick	http://www.ccnb.nb.ca/media/28459/renseignements-et-r%C3%A8glements-version-finale-ccnb-english-2013-2014-2013-04-15-ca-.pdf
Mount Allison University	http://www.mta.ca/academic_calendar/ch06.html
College of North Atlantic	http://www.cna.nl.ca/registration/academic-regulations.asp#10
Memorial University of Newfoundland	https://www.mun.ca/regoff/calendar/sectionNo=REGS-0661
Acadia University	http://central.acadiau.ca/registrar/faculty_information/grading_system
Atlantic School of Theology	http://www.astheology.ns.ca/webfiles/AST-2013-2014-Academic-Calendar.pdf
Dalhousie University	http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/student_services/academic-support/grades-and-student-records/grade-scale-and-definitions.html
Saint Mary's University	http://www.smu.ca/webfiles/SMUUndergraduateCalendar20142015.pdf
Algonquin College	http://www3.algonquincollege.com/directives/policy/aa14-grading-system/
Centennial College	http://centennialcollege.widencdn.net/embed/download/c1d4d61fd98191feda8de63600a3aff1 http://www.centennialcollege.ca/printshop/academicpolicies.pdf
George Brown College of Applied Arts & Technology	https://www.google.com/url?q=http://www.georgebrown.ca/GBCCA/current_students/registrars_office/academic_policies_(pdf)/office_of_the_registrar_policies.aspx&sa=U&ei=fhAU5KqDMHJygz24HoBw&ved=0CAUQFjAA&client=internal-uds-cse&usg=AFQjCNE0IF75TjCh8HR3ZIA9MaZt4W5sgQigCim6yAGVkiGoAw&ved=0CACQFjAC&client=internal-uds-cse&usg=AFQjCNE3vHRIUGhjiOzvVNzd6w3v_khT4w http://www.georgebrown.ca/policies/
Seneca College	http://www.senecacollege.ca/registrar/records/senecatranscript.html http://www.senecacollege.ca/academic-policy/
Concordia University	http://gpe.concordia.ca/documents/grading-1.pdf
McGill University	http://www.mcgill.ca/study/2014-2015/university_regulations_and_resources/undergraduate/gi_grading_and_grade_point_averages
Briercrest College	http://www.briercrest.ca/media/265597/Seminary%20Academic%20Handbook%202012-13.pdf
Campion College c/o University of Regina	http://www.uregina.ca/student/registrar/assets/docs/pdf/The_Grading_System_at_UR.pdf
University of Toronto	http://www.transcripts.utoronto.ca/guide/ (Guide of reading a transcript)
Carleton University	http://carleton.ca/registrar/your-record/transcript/transcript_validation/
Western University	http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/student_records/transcripts/index.html http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2014/pg99.html
Queen's University	http://www.queensu.ca/registrar/currentstudents/transcripts.html
University of Saskatchewan	http://students.usask.ca/current/academics/grades/grading-system.php
Okanagan College	http://webapps-5.okanagan.bc.ca/ok/calendar/Calendar.aspx?page=GradingPractices
First Nations University of Canada	http://www.fnuniv.ca/current-students/grading

Retrieved April 6, 2014

Appendix L: Regional Workshop Background Information

Table L1 identifies the six regional workshops held across Canada to support the research for the ARUCC PCCAT study. The leadership within the different provincial associations allied with ARUCC facilitated the organization of these sessions and determined the approach; hence, the value of the regional focus.

Table L1: Jurisdictional Workshops

Target audience	Date	Attendance	Location	Regions covered
WARUCC #1	February 4	12	Teleconference	Alb, BC, Man, Sask, (note: no attendees from Yukon, NWT or Nunavut)
WARUCC #2	February 4	13	Teleconference	As above
WARUCC #3	February 6	15	Teleconference	As above
OURA/CRALO	February 12	34	Toronto	Ontario
BCI (formerly CREPUQ)	February 20	12	BCI Office, Montreal	Quebec universities
AARAO	February 24	17	Dalhousie, Truro, Nova Scotia	NB, PEI, Nfld & Lab, NS

Participants in the workshops primarily came from the leadership within registrarial operations. Positions represented included executive directors of enrolment services, registrars and/or associate registrars, admissions directors/clerks/coordinators, recruitment coordinators, graduate studies managers, coordinators of transfer credit services and/or pathway development, PLAR advisors, managers of frontline student services, and assessment officers. Also represented were assistant or associate vice presidents and one dean.

Workshop registrants were asked to provide permission for use of their transcripts for the project. Out of 81 registrants⁵⁶, 84% (68) indicated “Yes”, which demonstrates the degree of willingness of registrarial colleagues to share their practices as a means to work towards a best practice. Those that did not provide samples did not always provide a rationale; those that did indicated that their institutional policy and/or practice prevented them from widely sharing their institutional transcripts.

Thematic Findings

By requesting that each workshop participant register in advance, it was possible to capture their thoughts on higher level issues related to the study. Interestingly the thematic findings were consistent regardless of location. Table L2 provides a summary. These insights assisted in preparing for workshop discussions and further research.

⁵⁶ The total number of people that registered in advance for the workshops equaled 109.

Table L2: Themes Provided at the Point of Workshop Registration

Transcript and Workshop Themes from Advanced Registrants	Number of Times Topic Mentioned	Enhancement Examples
Transcript standards for equivalent or alternate learning and transfer credit	26	Create a standard for representing the following on transcripts: transfer credit, advanced standing, block transfer, PLAR, non-credit, grades, joint degrees, recording courses, grades, NCR?CR? What's counted? And where?
Electronic exchange of transcript data	9	What are the data formats and standards?
Guide enhancement	7	Evaluate practices in other jurisdictions for ideas; explore emerging trends e.g., consider technology, new forms of partnerships; explore alternate platforms for sharing best practices e.g., develop a web-based portal to search for standards and definitions; ensure all levels and sectors are represented; conduct a "comparative regional cross walk of terms" to identify similarities and differences e.g., units versus credits, withdrawals, no credit retained, etc.
Notations (How, what, when should these be on a transcript)	4	Some examples needing attention: disciplinary decisions, convocation decisions, academic decisions, course codes and nomenclature
Transcript key (review, clarify)	4	Should the components in the Guide be re-evaluated in the current context? How can these be aligned to match or facilitate electronic data exchange?
Transcript presentation/layout	3	Samples: display of former names; accreditation status; definition of credit or unit and its weighting
Data sharing methods	2	What are some of the best practices for transcript data sharing? PDF? Electronic? Other?
Grades format	2	What is the best practice standard?
Definition of "official" transcript	2	What does "official" really mean?
Privacy standards (third party access)	2	What approaches comprise best practice?
Other	2	Timing of assessment of transfer credit - does this impact the amount allocated? How does transfer credit decisions impact on government financial aid? If not, should it?
Provincial identifier	1	Should it be on or off transcript?
Experiential information	1	Should it be on the transcript? How?
Security	1	How can security measures improve transcript security?
Credit algorithms (credit system versus credit hours)	1	What exists at the different institutions? How do they define "credit"?
Co-curricular record	1	Create a standard and a method for representing co-curricular information; should it be on a transcript?

Appendix M: National Survey Data

Private versus Public

Figure M1: Functional Area Represented by Respondents - Public versus Private

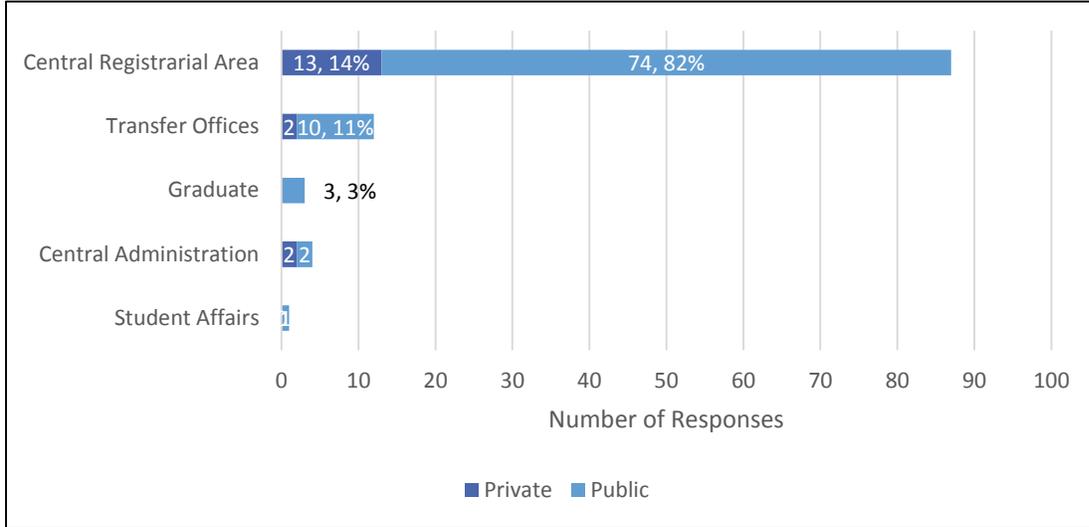


Figure M2: Respondents by Province - Public versus Private

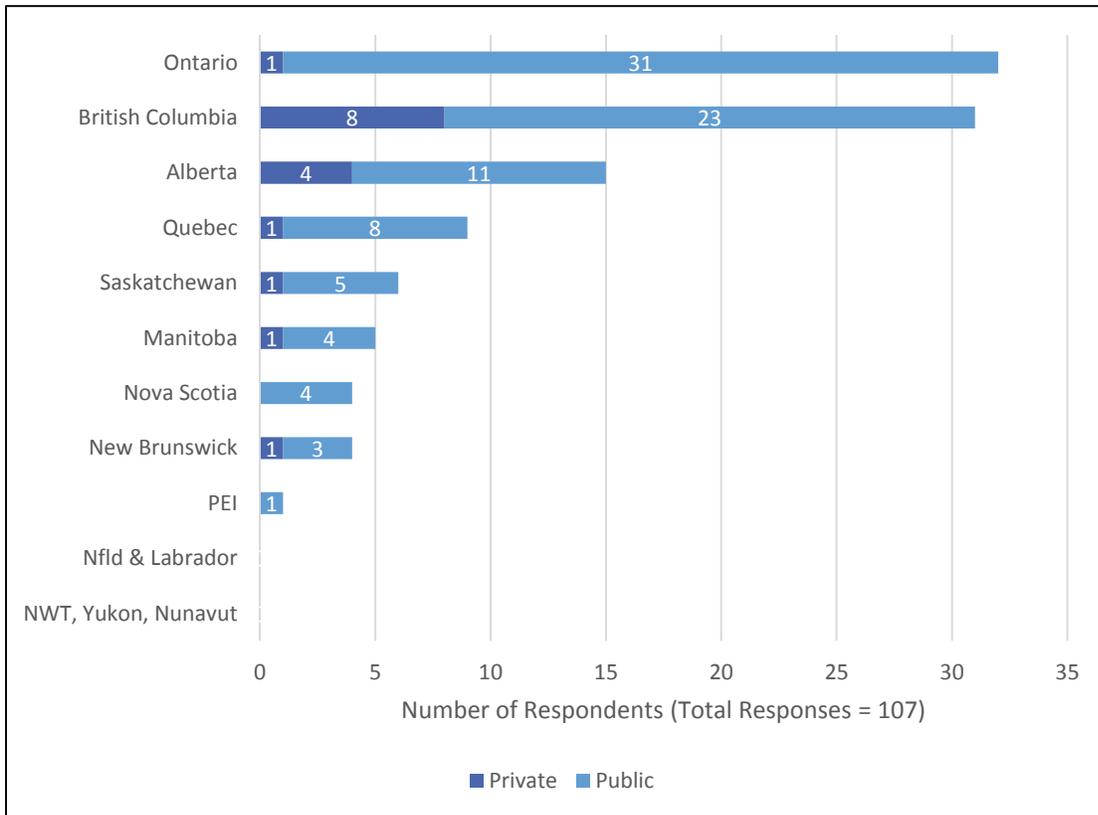
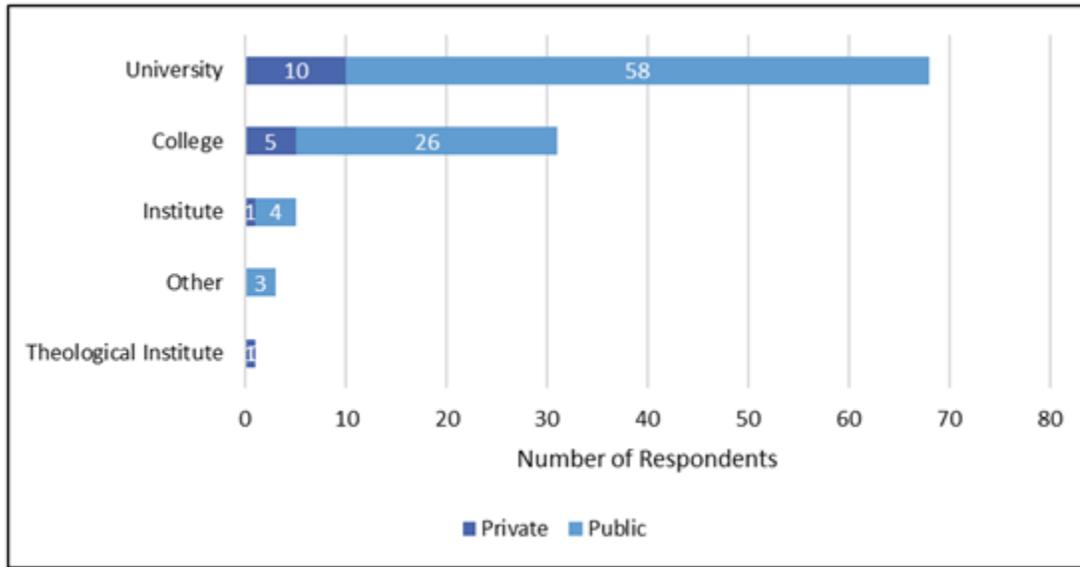


Figure M3: Institutional Type; Private versus Public



Association Memberships

Figure M4: Association Memberships Identified by Survey Respondents (n=107)

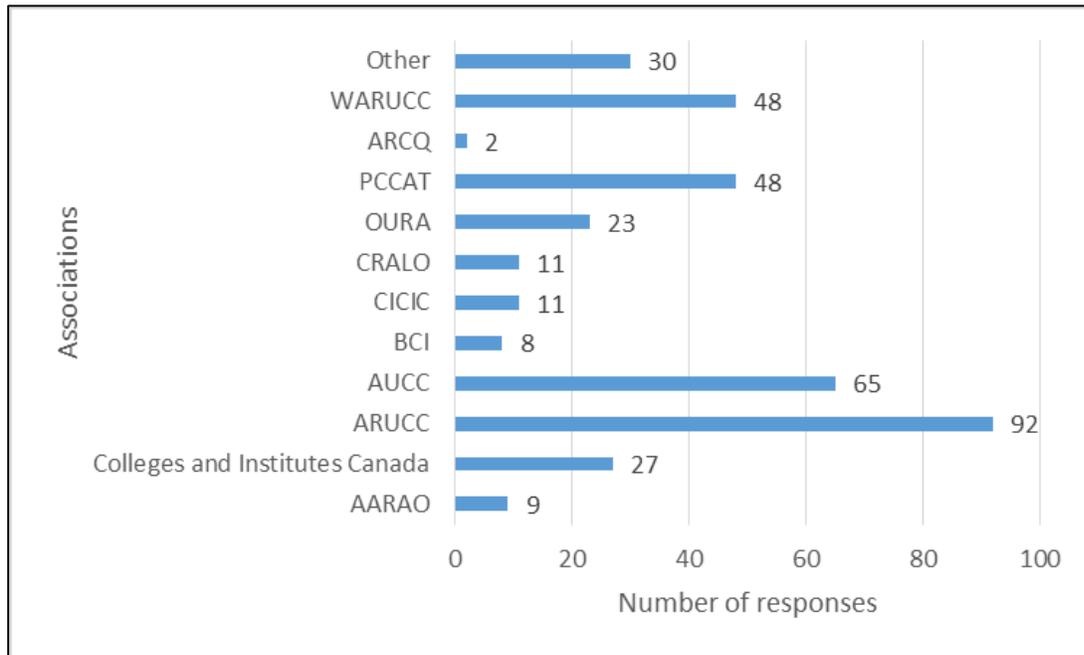
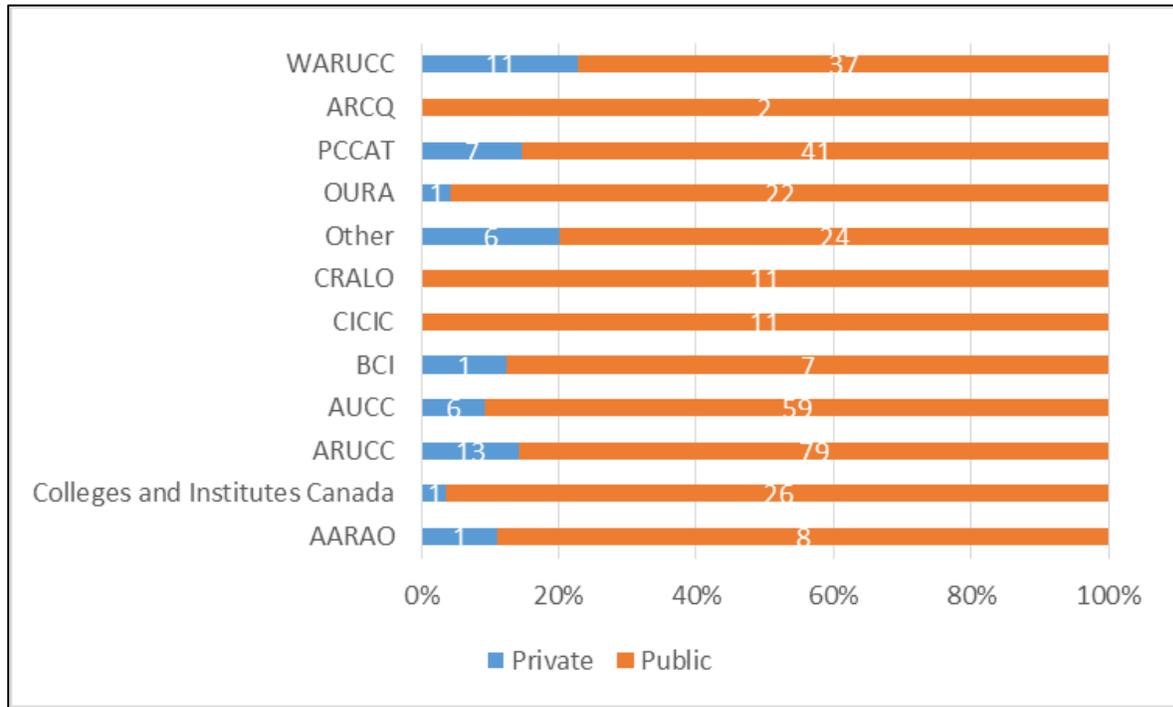


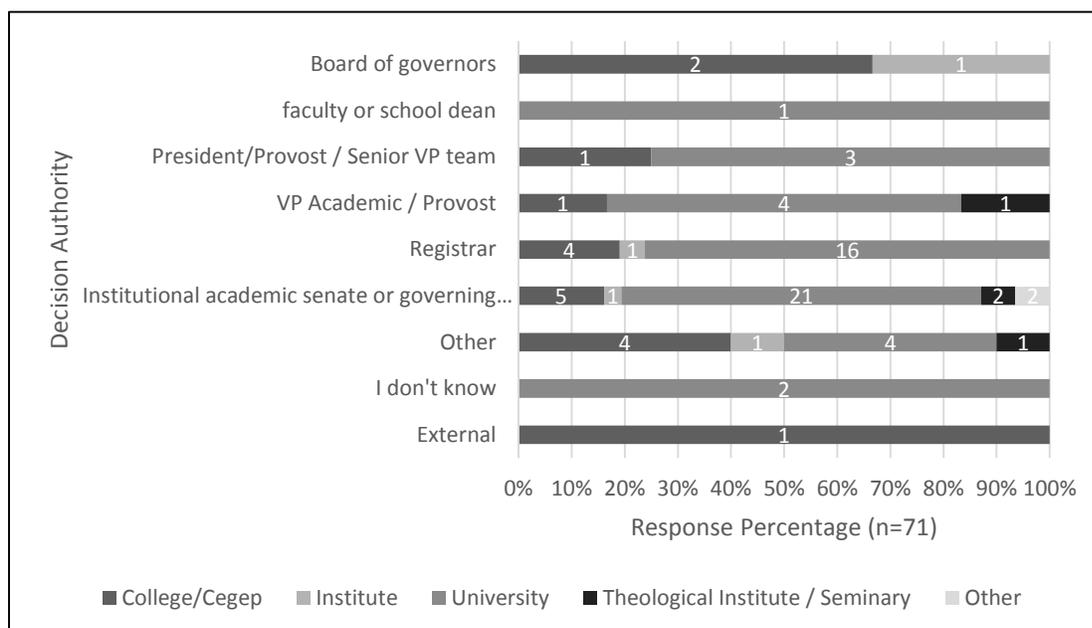
Figure M5: Association Memberships as Reported by Individual Members; Public versus Private



The other memberships held by the respondents (or their institution) are quite extensive and further demonstrate the broad range of associations many of which touch on the world of transcripts and transfer credit. The ones that have some type of engagement in transcript standards and/or transfer credit policy/nomenclature are important to highlight as this information may inform future project phases. The Canadian associations include the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS), provincial Registrars’ Associations, the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities of Canada, the Canadian Bureau of International Education, the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS), Polytechnic Canada, the Private Post-Secondary Association of BC (PPSABC), and the Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment. The international association memberships mentioned by respondents that have engagement in the areas of transcripts and/or transfer credit include the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the Association of American Universities, the Association of Biblical Higher Education, the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities (APSCU), the Pacific Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (PACRAO), and the Upper Midwest Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (UMACRAO). The latter two are regional associations of AACRAO.

Decision Authority

Figure M6: Approval Authority by Institutional Type



Student Demographic Profile of Institutional Respondents

Table M1: Student Demographics of Institutions

Heads	Part-time Students				Full-time Students			
	Private	Public	Overall	% of Whole	Private	Public	Overall	% of Whole
0-4,999	15 (24%)	48 (76%)	63	64%	15 (36%)	27 (64%)	42	42%
5,000-9,999	1 (6%)	17 (94%)	18	18%	1 (6%)	15 (94%)	16	16%
10,000-14,999	0	9 (100%)	9	9%	0	8 (100%)	8	8%
15,000-19,999	0	1 (100%)	1	1%	0	12 (100%)	12	12%
>20,000	1 (13%)	7 (88%)	8	8%	0	23 (100%)	23	23%

Transcript Responsibilities and Usage of Transcript Guides

Figure M7: Respondents Involvement with Transcript Standards and Practices

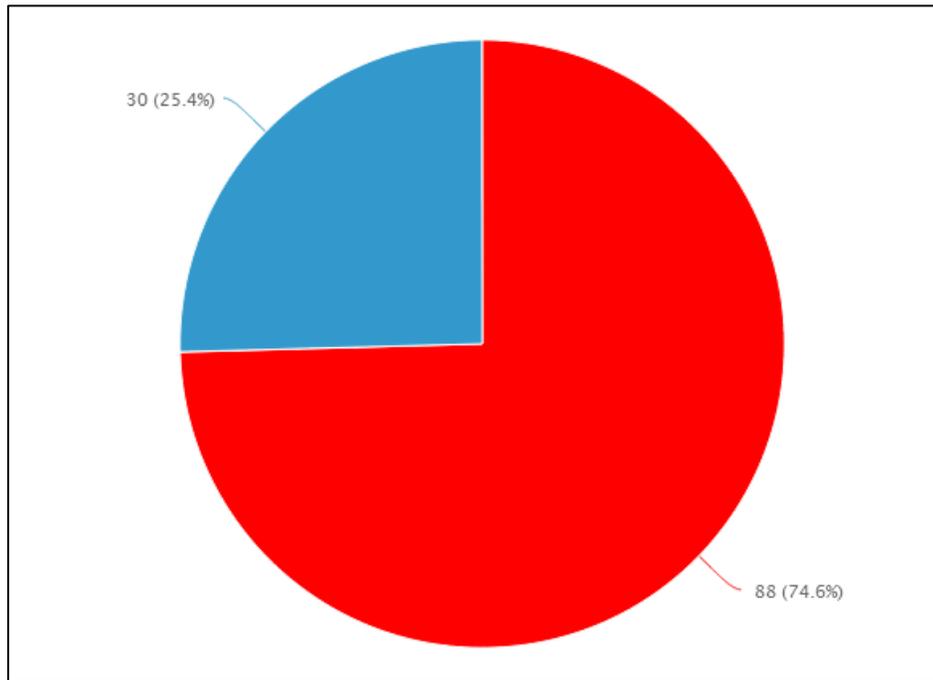


Figure M8: Institutions Allowing Students to Repeat Courses

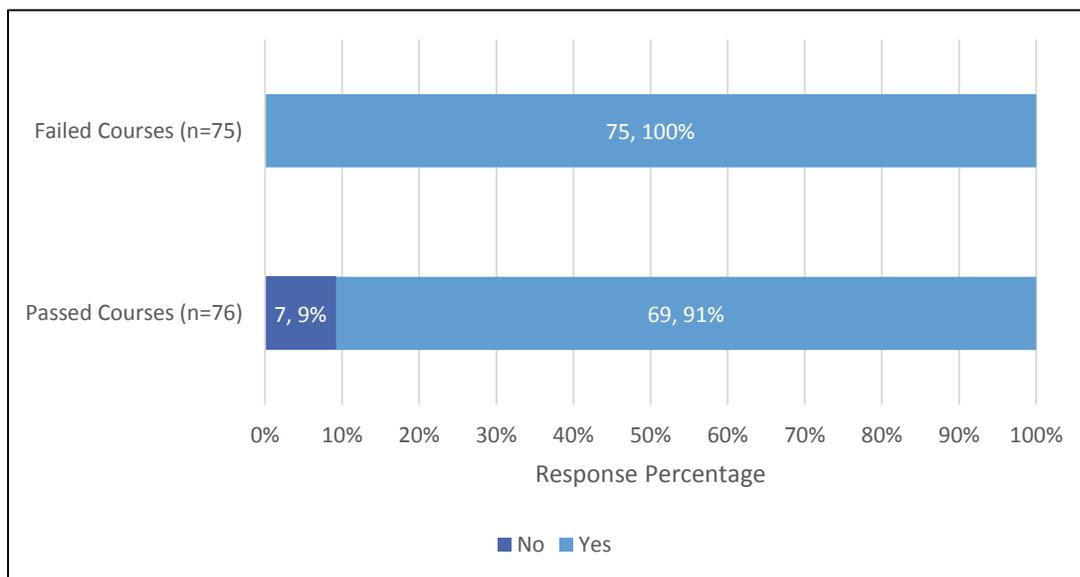


Table M2 - Which of the following are included on the transcript?

	Transcript component	On transcript	Not on transcript	Not applicable	Total Responses
Identifying information	Date transcript issued to student	77 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	77
	Location of institution	70 (92%)	6 (8%)	0 (0%)	76
	Location of institutional satellite or branch campus student attended	8 (10%)	44 (57%)	25 (33%)	77
	Name of institution	77 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	77
	Provincial education number assigned to each student	21 (28%)	47 (63%)	7 (9%)	75
	Student date of birth	58 (75%)	18 (23%)	1 (1%)	77
	Student email	1 (1%)	74 (97%)	1 (1%)	76
	Student identification number assigned by your institution	75 (97%)	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	77
	Student mailing address	31 (42%)	43 (58%)	0 (0%)	74
	Student name	75 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	75
Basis of admission	The actual basis of admission category	15 (20%)	58 (77%)	2 (3%)	75
	Name of the secondary school attended prior to entry	5 (7%)	69 (90%)	3 (4%)	77
	Date the student received a secondary school credential (i.e., the graduation date)	6 (8%)	68 (88%)	3 (4%)	77
	Admission test scores	2 (3%)	69 (91%)	5 (7%)	76
	Credential awarded from secondary school (or equivalent e.g., GED)	7 (9%)	66 (87%)	3 (4%)	76
	Post-secondary credits earned in secondary school	32 (42%)	38 (49%)	7 (9%)	77
	Previous colleges or universities attended	34 (44%)	41 (53%)	2 (3%)	77
	Period of attendance at prior post-secondary institutions	12 (16%)	62 (82%)	2 (3%)	76
	Credential received from prior post-secondary studies	16 (21%)	59 (78%)	1 (1%)	76
	Date credential received from prior post-secondary studies	10 (13%)	65 (84%)	2 (3%)	77
Equivalent learning	PLAR, challenge tests	42 (56%)	18 (24%)	15 (20%)	75
Grade related components	Class averages (e.g., class rank, class averages, grades distributions, etc.)	15 (20%)	56 (74%)	5 (7%)	76
	Overall cumulative average by academic career (i.e., all studies at a particular level)	40 (53%)	31 (41%)	5 (7%)	76
	Overall cumulative average by program	22 (30%)	48 (65%)	4 (5%)	74
	Session average ("session" is defined as studies from between four to eight months)	24 (32%)	40 (54%)	10 (14%)	74
	Term average ("term" is defined as four months of study or less)	43 (57%)	30 (40%)	3 (4%)	76
	Narrative evaluation	9 (12%)	53 (70%)	14 (18%)	76

	Demonstrated competencies	6 (8%)	54 (70%)	17 (22%)	77
Grades included on a transcript when courses are repeated	Highest	17 (50%)	10 (29%)	7 (21%)	34
	Most recent	14 (47%)	10 (33%)	6 (20%)	30
	First try	8 (31%)	11 (42%)	7 (27%)	26
	Second try	10 (37%)	10 (37%)	7 (26%)	27
	All tries	61 (94%)	3 (5%)	1 (2%)	65
	Results are averaged	2 (7%)	20 (74%)	5 (19%)	27
	If failed at another institution	20 (27%)	55 (73%)	0 (0%)	75
	Other	1 (5%)	9 (43%)	11 (52%)	21
Program information	Program name	75 (97%)	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	77
	Program type (e.g., Diploma in..., Certificate of..., Honours Bachelor of ...)	67 (87%)	10 (13%)	0 (0%)	77
	Major	50 (67%)	8 (11%)	17 (23%)	75
	Minor	39 (53%)	14 (19%)	20 (27%)	73
	Specialization	46 (61%)	14 (19%)	15 (20%)	75
Course / credit information	Credits per course/units per course	75 (99%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	76
	Course grade	73 (97%)	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	75
	Course identifier	73 (96%)	3 (4%)	0 (0%)	76
	Course location	9 (12%)	59 (80%)	6 (8%)	74
	Course in progress	65 (87%)	8 (11%)	2 (3%)	75
	Name of course	74 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	74
	Course mode of delivery	5 (7%)	67 (89%)	3 (4%)	75
	Credit summary	45 (62%)	25 (34%)	3 (4%)	73
	Credits earned	64 (84%)	11 (15%)	1 (1%)	76
	Credits taken	56 (74%)	19 (25%)	1 (1%)	76
Progression and milestone information	Accreditation requirements met	5 (7%)	52 (69%)	18 (24%)	75
	Graduate comprehensive exams completed	15 (20%)	35 (46%)	26 (34%)	76
	First year / "Freshman" year completed	1 (1%)	61 (79%)	15 (20%)	77
	Graduate thesis/dissertation completed/defended	28 (37%)	20 (27%)	27 (36%)	75
	Graduation date	68 (88%)	7 (9%)	2 (3%)	77
	Practicum or apprenticeship requirements complete	37 (49%)	22 (29%)	17 (22%)	76
	Requirements for graduation met	30 (39%)	42 (55%)	5 (7%)	77
	Professional certification received	2 (3%)	53 (70%)	21 (28%)	76
	Credential received	63 (83%)	10 (13%)	3 (4%)	76
	Date credential conferred	61 (82%)	7 (10%)	6 (8%)	74
	Date program completed	33 (43%)	41 (54%)	2 (3%)	76
	Advancement or admission to candidacy (or graduate internal promotion)	4 (5%)	40 (52%)	33 (43%)	77
	Satisfactory completion of institutional qualifying exams	3 (4%)	36 (48%)	36 (48%)	75
Graduate thesis/dissertation title identified	20 (26%)	28 (36%)	29 (38%)	77	
Extra-curricular, non-academic information		13 (17%)	57 (74%)	7 (9%)	77

Credit system / weighting		23 (31%)	51 (68%)	1 (1%)	85
Awards and scholarships	Internal	23 (31%)	52 (69%)	0 (0%)	75
	Need-based bursary awards	75 (99%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	76
	External awards and scholarships	14 (18%)	62 (82%)	0 (0%)	76
	Other honours (e.g., dean's honour list)	58 (76%)	18 (24%)	0 (0%)	76
Sending institution information	Block transfer credit	48 (66%)	18 (25%)	7 (10%)	73
	Course-specific transfer credit	55 (76%)	17 (23%)	1 (1%)	73
	Name of sending institution	56 (78%)	14 (19%)	2 (3%)	72
	Name of sending program	3 (4%)	62 (87%)	6 (9%)	71
	Type of inter-institutional partnership (e.g., joint program, dual degree, co-registration, etc.)	13 (18%)	50 (69%)	9 (13%)	72
	Sources of transfer credit (e.g., exchange, letter of permission, college / university transfer, secondary school (IB, AP, GCE))	23 (32%)	42 (58%)	7 (10%)	72

Figure M9: What occurs with grades on the institutional transcript when credit is transferred?

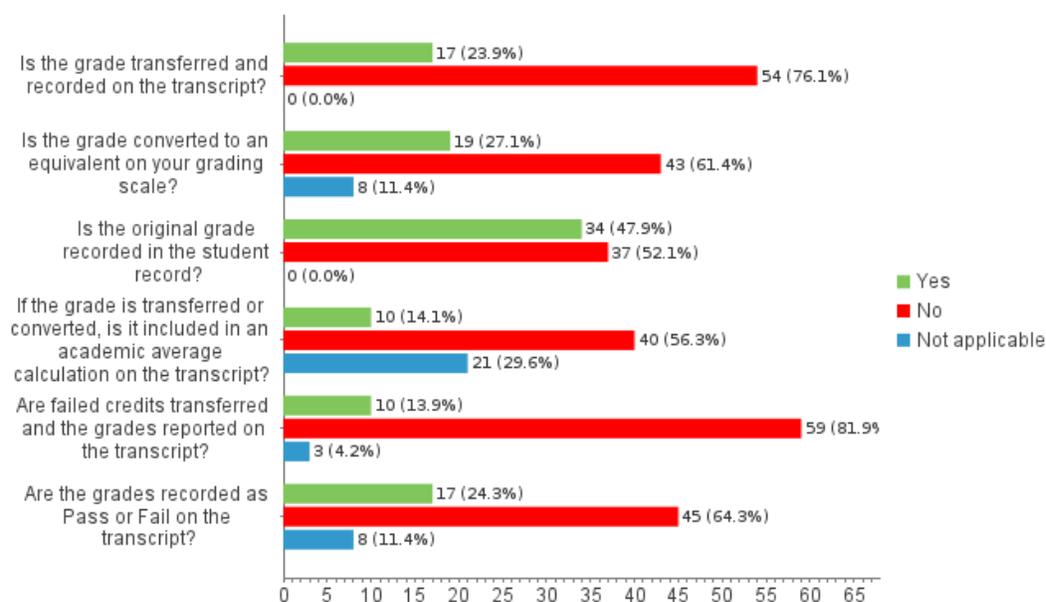


Figure M10: Identify the applicable transcript notation practice for each source of transfer credit or timing of assessment.

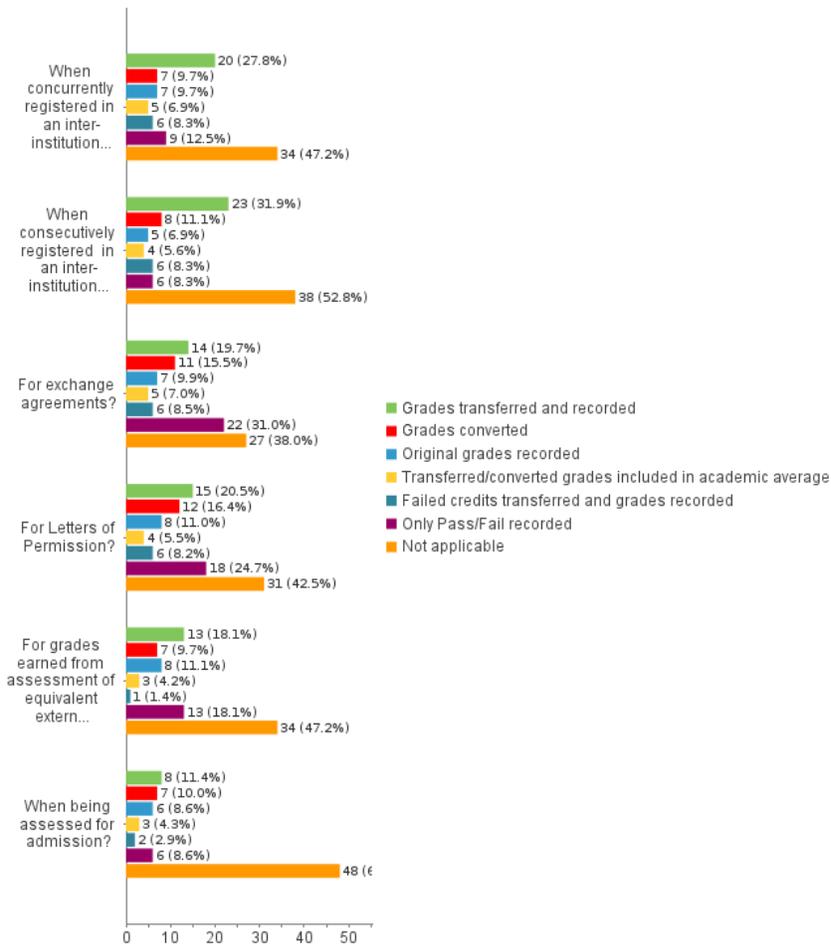


Table M3: Which position or approval body has the final authority to establish transfer credit nomenclature at your institution?

	Count	Percentage
Faculty or school council	1	2%
Faculty or school dean	1	2%
Institutional Senate / governing council	28	44%
Board of governors	3	5%
Program area	1	2%
Registrar	12	19%
Vice President Academic / Provost	5	8%
Don't know	2	3%
Other	10	16%

Transfer Guides, Transcription Practices and Terminology Usage

Table M4: Which components are currently in the transfer guide or policy at your organization?

	Included	Not included	Not applicable
Listing of transfer agreements	40 (66%)	19 (31%)	2 (3%)
Course grade required to be considered for transfer credit	54 (89%)	6 (10%)	1 (2%)
Entering average required to be eligible for transfer credit	24 (39%)	23 (37%)	15 (24%)
Fees, if applicable, for credit transfer assessment	17 (27%)	11 (18%)	34 (55%)
Lifespan of approved course equivalencies	25 (40%)	26 (42%)	11 (18%)
Limitations on age of courses to be considered for transfer credit	30 (48%)	20 (32%)	12 (19%)
Limitations on types of courses that are eligible for transfer credit (e.g., PLAR, online, etc.)	29 (47%)	21 (34%)	12 (19%)
Limits to amount of credit that can be transferred	51 (82%)	7 (11%)	4 (7%)
Process for applying for transfer credit	52 (84%)	5 (8%)	5 (8%)
Process through which transfer credit equivalencies are assessed	34 (57%)	23 (38%)	3 (5%)
Residency requirements	46 (77%)	4 (7%)	10 (17%)
Timelines for credit transfer assessment	31 (50%)	26 (42%)	5 (8%)
Transfer credit appeal process	24 (39%)	28 (45%)	10 (16%)
Glossary of transfer credit terminology	31 (50%)	25 (40%)	6 (10%)

Table M5: Which of the following should be in an organization's transfer policy or guide?

	Not recommended	Optional	Recommended	Essential
Listing of transfer agreements	4 (5%)	20 (23%)	33 (38%)	31 (35%)
Course grade required to be considered for transfer credit	0 (0%)	3 (3%)	17 (19%)	68 (77%)
Entering average required to be eligible for transfer credit	4 (5%)	20 (23%)	28 (32%)	36 (41%)
Fees, if applicable, for credit transfer assessment	4 (5%)	8 (9%)	29 (33%)	47 (53%)
Lifespan of approved course equivalencies	2 (2%)	13 (15%)	36 (41%)	36 (41%)
Limitations on age of courses to be considered for transfer credit	2 (2%)	9 (10%)	32 (37%)	44 (51%)
Limitations on types of courses that are eligible for transfer credit (e.g., PLAR, online, etc.)	4 (5%)	8 (9%)	32 (36%)	44 (50%)
Limits to amount of credit that can be transferred	0 (0%)	3 (3%)	18 (21%)	67 (76%)

Process for applying for transfer credit	1 (1%)	3 (3%)	29 (33%)	55 (63%)
Process through which transfer credit equivalencies are assessed	3 (3%)	15 (17%)	35 (40%)	35 (40%)
Residency requirements	2 (2%)	7 (8%)	19 (22%)	59 (68%)
Timelines for credit transfer assessment	1 (1%)	13 (15%)	47 (53%)	27 (31%)
Transfer credit appeal process	1 (1%)	11 (13%)	45 (52%)	30 (35%)
Glossary of transfer credit terminology	0 (0%)	9 (10%)	42 (48%)	36 (41%)

Table M6: Which of the following inter-institutional partnership terminology is in use at your institution?

	Term used; official definition exists	Term used; official definition does not exist	Term not used	Not applicable
Articulated agreements	51 (60%)	21 (25%)	11 (13%)	2 (2%)
Bi-lateral / multi-lateral agreements	21 (26%)	15 (18%)	37 (45%)	9 (11%)
Block transfer agreements	40 (48%)	32 (38%)	8 (10%)	4 (5%)
Bridge / bridging programs or agreements	26 (32%)	21 (26%)	25 (31%)	10 (12%)
Collaborative programs	25 (31%)	21 (26%)	21 (26%)	14 (17%)
Conjoint degree programs	12 (15%)	2 (3%)	46 (57%)	21 (26%)
Cotutelle (graduate level)	12 (16%)	2 (3%)	36 (47%)	27 (35%)
Dual / double credential programs	22 (27%)	19 (23%)	27 (33%)	14 (17%)
Joint programs	28 (35%)	24 (30%)	17 (21%)	11 (14%)
Jointly sponsored agreements	8 (10%)	10 (13%)	37 (47%)	24 (30%)
Laddering agreements	15 (19%)	18 (23%)	32 (41%)	14 (18%)
Numeric titling agreements (e.g., "2+2", "3+1", etc.)	22 (28%)	26 (33%)	24 (30%)	8 (10%)
Pathway agreements	25 (30%)	28 (34%)	22 (27%)	8 (10%)
Integrated programs	9 (11%)	7 (9%)	41 (52%)	22 (28%)
Co-registration programs	12 (15%)	7 (9%)	42 (51%)	21 (26%)
Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)	43 (51%)	32 (38%)	7 (8%)	2 (2%)
Unidirectional bilateral transfer agreements	13 (17%)	10 (13%)	41 (53%)	14 (18%)
Degree or diploma completion programs	37 (46%)	21 (26%)	17 (21%)	5 (6%)

Figure M11: Are any of these inter-institutional partnership terms included on the institutional transcript?

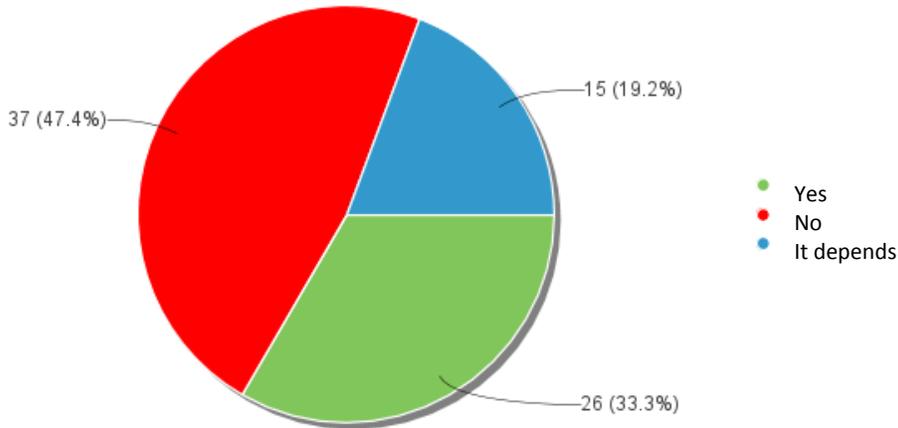


Table M7: What transfer credit terminology is currently in use at your organization?

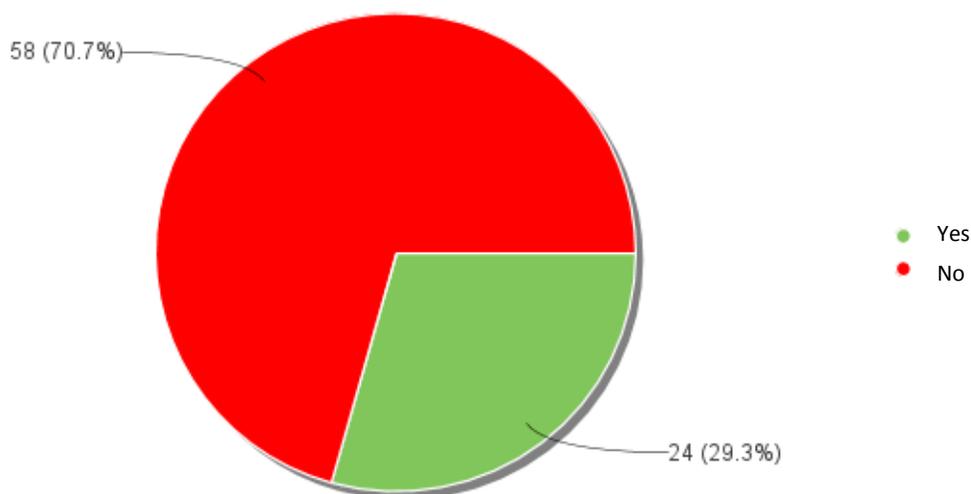
	Term used; official definition exists	Term used; official definition does not exist	Term not used	Term not relevant for our type of institution
Advance credit	15 (19%)	12 (15%)	47 (60%)	4 (5%)
Advanced standing	49 (59%)	24 (29%)	9 (11%)	1 (1%)
Assigned credit	22 (29%)	10 (13%)	41 (54%)	3 (4%)
Block transfer	40 (49%)	30 (37%)	11 (13%)	1 (1%)
Challenge test	38 (48%)	18 (23%)	21 (26%)	3 (4%)
Cluster credit	2 (3%)	3 (4%)	63 (83%)	8 (11%)
Course credit exclusion	17 (22%)	14 (18%)	41 (53%)	5 (7%)
Course equivalency/ equivalent	47 (57%)	34 (41%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)
Course substitute	25 (31%)	21 (26%)	31 (38%)	4 (5%)
Course transfer map	4 (5%)	5 (7%)	61 (79%)	7 (9%)
Credit	69 (82%)	13 (16%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)
Dual credit	22 (28%)	20 (25%)	32 (41%)	5 (6%)
Elective credit	44 (57%)	23 (30%)	8 (10%)	2 (3%)
Equivalent credit	29 (38%)	28 (36%)	19 (25%)	1 (1%)
Exemption	35 (45%)	26 (33%)	13 (17%)	4 (5%)
Inter-university transfer	11 (15%)	5 (7%)	51 (67%)	9 (12%)
Letter of permission	49 (59%)	17 (21%)	12 (15%)	5 (6%)
"Not to do"	4 (5%)	2 (3%)	59 (76%)	13 (17%)
Program transfer	26 (33%)	16 (21%)	32 (41%)	4 (5%)
Residency requirement	60 (74%)	10 (12%)	9 (11%)	2 (3%)
Specified credit	24 (31%)	13 (17%)	39 (50%)	2 (3%)
Transfer courses	30 (38%)	25 (31%)	22 (28%)	3 (4%)
Transfer credit	67 (80%)	13 (16%)	4 (5%)	0 (0%)

Transferable courses	31 (39%)	29 (37%)	18 (23%)	1 (1%)
Unassigned/ unallocated credit	23 (29%)	17 (21%)	36 (45%)	4 (5%)
Unspecified course	12 (15%)	13 (17%)	49 (63%)	4 (5%)
Unspecified credit	22 (29%)	15 (20%)	37 (48%)	3 (4%)
Waiver	18 (24%)	20 (26%)	34 (45%)	4 (5%)

Table M8: Which of the following transfer credit information should be on a transcript?

	Not recommended	Recommended	Optional	Essential	Uncertain / no opinion
Block transfer credit	5 (6%)	26 (32%)	8 (10%)	40 (49%)	3 (4%)
Course-specific transfer credit	7 (8%)	21 (25%)	8 (10%)	46 (55%)	2 (2%)
Grade equivalents (i.e., grades converted to local receiving institution's scale)	30 (36%)	6 (7%)	32 (38%)	9 (11%)	7 (8%)
Actual grades from sending institutions	32 (38%)	5 (6%)	34 (40%)	12 (14%)	2 (2%)
Identity of sending institution	4 (5%)	14 (16%)	11 (13%)	57 (66%)	0 (0%)
Name of sending program	16 (19%)	9 (11%)	39 (46%)	19 (22%)	2 (2%)
Type of inter-institutional partnership	6 (7%)	20 (24%)	38 (45%)	12 (14%)	8 (10%)
Source of transfer credit	8 (9%)	24 (28%)	33 (38%)	19 (22%)	2 (2%)
Passed grades	17 (20%)	13 (16%)	17 (20%)	36 (43%)	1 (1%)
Failed grades	24 (30%)	9 (11%)	21 (26%)	21 (26%)	6 (7%)
Grades earned from assessment of external equivalent experience	15 (18%)	17 (21%)	21 (26%)	26 (32%)	3 (4%)

Figure M12: Is there a document regarding transfer credit in addition to the transcript that should be provided to a student?



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