



ONCAT Funded Data Project – Advancing Student Transfer Through Data Mobility

Project Overview:

This ONCAT funded Project seeks to identify Ontario post-secondary readiness for implementing trusted data exchange that facilitates student transfer. The Project goals include (i) identifying the current state and readiness for exchanging student data; and (ii) capturing expert advice on required policies and infrastructure changes needed at the local and system levels to facilitate change.

Background:

ARUCC is creating an innovative, trusted, national student data exchange network to facilitate transfer and mobility which is directly aligned with ONCAT's goal of understanding and removing systemic barriers that impede seamless transfer. Several OURA and CRALO registrars are ARUCC members - early discussions with these groups indicate the need for more research of Ontario institutions practices and complexities to inform changes in this area. Provincial and national organizations across Canada are endorsing a move to improve student data exchange. At the national level, the ARUCC initiative and this specific Ontario Project submission serves broader international goals such as those embedded in the recent study by the University of Ottawa Centre for International Policy Studies and the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto (see <http://goglobalcanada.ca/>). Internationally, this Proposal aligns with the Lisbon Recognition Convention (<https://www.cicic.ca/1398/An-overview-of-the-Lisbon-Recognition-Convention/index.canada>) and the Groningen Network Organization (<http://www.groningendeclaration.org/>), each of which seek to improve student transfer through data exchange and enhanced recognition of prior post-secondary studies.

Partners: OURA and CRALO

Both OURA and CRALO are important partners in supporting change provincially in this area; each has provided a letter of support for this project. While Ontario post-secondary institutions are well served locally and at the provincial level with transcript exchange capacity, gaps exist in the breadth and depth of information shared for transfer applicants and new immigrants who are seeking recognition of their former post-secondary credentials through the transfer process. Provincial priorities related to student transfer, student success, and meaningful sharing of learning outcomes achievement amplify the timeliness of this project.

Research Questions:

1. What is the current state of student information system capacity at Ontario post-secondary institutions with respect to student data exchange and sharing of student data at the individual record level?
2. What policies or infrastructure gaps exist within Ontario post-secondary institutions that impede enhancement of student data exchange and subsequent student transfer?
3. What expert advice does Ontario post-secondary registrarial leadership and allied organizations including ONCAT, OUAC, and OCAS have for advancing institutional capacities and change readiness for data exchange to advance transfer?
4. What best-in-class examples both within Ontario and beyond provincial borders exist to inform change readiness and capacities in this area?
5. How might students and the Ontario post-secondary institutions benefit from participation in a national data exchange network? What opportunities will this create for advancing seamless intra-provincial transfer between Ontario post-secondary institutions?
6. What is required institutionally and provincially to advance individual student data exchange?

Replicability? Scalability? Sector Resource Contributions?

Working collaboratively with CRALO and OURA to further research specifically focused on Ontario institutions is essential to advance change readiness at publicly funded post-secondary institutions. The research project, findings, and the final report aspire to:

- identify specific student data exchange enhancements needed at the institutional and provincial levels to advance implementation of an enhanced student data exchange environment that supports seamless transfer;
- support other ONCAT initiatives and projects seeking to advance transmission of learning outcomes achievement to improve transfer; and,
- inform policy development and resource prioritization regarding data exchange in support of student transfer.

Research Approach:

Environmental scan through online surveying and direct consultation with post-secondary community

Rationale for Research Approach:

- Provide equal and meaningful engagement opportunities
- Develop comprehensive and nuanced understanding of current practice

- Facilitate identification and assessment of opportunities, complexities, and requirements
- Inform a deep understanding of individual institutional change readiness
- Ensure final, member informed data exchange recommendations

Research Components:

- Survey: closed and open-ended questions to facilitate quantitative analysis and qualitative input
- Consultation: Facilitated feedback opportunities via several formats and venues

Research Phases:

- Project Launch (May 31, 2018)
 - Contract awarded/signed
 - Project process/plan confirmed with ONCAT
- Environmental Scan (concluded by November 30, 2018)
 - Survey to identify current practices and expert opinion targeting institutions and allied organizations
 - Regional meetings with relevant institutional experts in Ontario, and supporting meetings with executive and/or expert leads at OURA, CRALO, OCAS, OUAC, and ONCAT
 - Interviews with expert leads of a select group of Ontario post-secondary institutions that reflect the province's institutional diversity
 - Other meetings as appropriate
 - Interviews with select lead data exchange experts outside Ontario
- Assessment of Outcomes and Research (January 20, 2019)
- Finalization of the Draft findings report (January 20, 2019)
- Development of final report (February 1, 2019)