



cmec

Council of
Ministers
of Education,
Canada

**Report of the CMEC
Credit Transfer
Working Group**

2012

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2012 CMEC Jurisdictional Updates on Activities Related to Credit Transfer

Introduction

In October 2001, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), revisited the issue of credit transfer between colleges and universities and among provinces and territories. In April 2002, ministers established the CMEC Credit Transfer Working Group to develop pan-Canadian strategies.

In October 2002, CMEC approved a strategy to improve credit transfer across Canada. Given the substantial differences in credit-transfer systems and postsecondary structures among provinces and territories, it was agreed that a pan-Canadian system of credit transfer should be built up over time, through an initial focus on developing and enhancing strong provincial/territorial transfer systems. Each province/territory committed to reviewing its current transfer arrangements and to developing a framework for action to enhance its credit-transfer system according to its own priorities over the period from 2002 to 2005.

As part of the strategy, CMEC endorsed and released a *Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada* that sets out expectations for credit transfers to guide institutions, students, and governments (APPENDIX). This statement was reviewed and revised, and received ministerial approval in July 2009.

This is the latest update on jurisdictional activities related to credit transfer since the working group was established. This report provides a summary of the actions undertaken by member jurisdictions of the working group.

Current status

Each jurisdiction has reported making progress in its credit-transfer system and in mechanisms within its postsecondary sectors. Jurisdictions that had well-developed transfer systems when this initiative began have continued to expand and enhance those systems, including such initiatives as investment in student pathways and increased access to articulation and transfer resources through on-line interactive components. Others, with less-developed credit-transfer strategies, have made progress, including such achievements as the implementation or expansion of on-line transfer guides, the establishment of provincial working groups and/or articulation committees, the development of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) outlining bilateral and multilateral agreements between provinces and educational institutions to improve opportunities for student mobility, and broader acceptance of credit-transfer opportunities as a component of an accessible postsecondary education system.

All jurisdictions have indicated that their work will continue on the issue of credit transfer within the framework of their own priorities, resources, and structures over the next several

years. This report is intended to guide changes and new initiatives in credit-transfer systems in the provinces and territories.

Alberta

Communication of ministerial principles

Established in 1974, the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) is an advisory agency accountable to the Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education, who is responsible for providing advice and guidance regarding postsecondary admissions and transfer policy. ACAT works with its stakeholders for the benefit of learners to ensure smooth transitions from secondary to postsecondary and from postsecondary to postsecondary programs.

ACAT's mission is to be a catalyst for positive change and an advocate for learners in the areas of postsecondary admissions and transfer throughout Campus Alberta.

ACAT periodically reviews its principles to ensure that they are appropriate and adhere to pan-Canadian principles. ACAT's principles were most recently updated in 2011. The revised principles are published in *Council Policies, Principles and Procedures*, available at <http://www.acat.gov.ab.ca/pdfs/PPP.pdf>.

Adoption of ministerial principles

Postsecondary institutions that are members of the Alberta Transfer System commit to abiding by ACAT's principles, policies, and procedures. In addition, member institutions must demonstrate that they are in good standing by continually working to establish transfer agreements with other members of the transfer system to the benefit of Alberta's learners, continually maintaining or developing quality credit-transfer agreements, and actively participating in the stewardship of the Alberta Transfer System.

Three-year framework for action

ACAT annually publishes a three-year action plan that is used to guide council activities. The 2012–2015 Action Plan was developed around the following three overarching goals:

1. Access and mobility
 - Enhancing student access and mobility through admissions and transfer practices;
2. Collaboration
 - Fostering and strengthening collaboration with and between Alberta Transfer System members;

3. Influence

- Having Alberta's advanced learning system recognized as a leader on learner pathways.

The approved *2012–2015 Action Plan* can be found at <http://www.acat.gov.ab.ca/pdfs/ACAT-Council-Business-Plan-2012-15.pdf>.

In addition, ACAT publishes an annual report highlighting the results achieved from the previous year. Some of the key highlights of the *2011–2012 Annual Report* included:

- Initiated a review of terminology to ensure common language and definitions within Alberta Transfer System documents.
- Developed the *Instructor Qualifications Best Practices* document to assist those involved in the Alberta Transfer System in overcoming challenges related to instructor qualifications and the establishment of transfer agreements.
- Participated in the Campus Alberta Minister's Summit on Learner Pathways. The summit brought together stakeholders from across Campus Alberta to share perspectives on admission and transfer.
- Approved Alberta Transfer System membership applications submitted by the Nechi Training, Research and Health Promotions Institute, and Yukon College. The Alberta Transfer System now consists of 39 members, and Yukon College is the fourth out-of-province member.
- Initiated a review of the Alberta Transfer System membership and admission policy.
- Formed a Learner Pathways subcommittee to continue work on block transfer and learning outcomes.
- Initiated articulation committees in the areas of business administration and child-and-youth care.
- Advocated for the enhancement of student access and mobility on the national level through participation in the Western Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer and the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer.

The approved 2011–2012 Annual Report can be found at <http://www.acat.gov.ab.ca/pdfs/Annual-Report-2011-2012.pdf>.

Priority action areas

In addition to the ongoing business of ACAT, the council identified the following priority areas in its *2012–2015 Action Plan*:

1. Learner pathways

- Reflecting its commitment to develop and broaden learner pathways, ACAT will continue to explore the expansion of block-transfer opportunities in Alberta.

- In addition, ACAT will continue its work around learning outcomes through the development of best practices and models for an outcome-based transfer system.
2. Articulation committees
 - Articulation committees bring together program heads, faculty, and Alberta Education, in a given area of study, to exchange information and discuss issues related to admissions and transfer.
 - ACAT will continue to expand the number of articulation committees in the Alberta Transfer System and leverage these committees to assist in advancing initiatives.
 3. Communication
 - Effective communication with and between Alberta's advanced learning system stakeholders is critical to the enhancement of learner pathways and student success.
 - ACAT will seek out opportunities to enhance communication with and between stakeholders.

Research

ACAT publishes the *Transfer Patterns Report* on an annual basis. The report provides information on the volume and scope of student mobility in Alberta, including data for students transferring to an Alberta Transfer System member institution from out-of-province and out-of-country. This report can be found at http://www.acat.gov.ab.ca/new_format_include/new_publications.asp.

In addition, data collected by Alberta Enterprise and Advanced Education provides broad and deep scope for research and analysis related to student mobility. The department will continue to work closely with ACAT on this research.

Working groups

The ACAT Secretariat will continue to participate in the CMEC Credit Transfer Working Group, as it provides a valuable forum through which jurisdictions can work together toward enhancing transfer opportunities across Canada. ACAT is also a participating member of the Western Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (WestCAT) and the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT).

A close working relationship is maintained between ACAT and the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT). Following the establishment of an interprovincial agreement between the governments of Alberta and British Columbia, a memorandum of understanding was developed and signed by both councils. In May 2009, ACAT approved a

policy allowing degree-granting institutions in British Columbia to apply for ACAT membership. In 2010, Athabasca University was accepted into the British Columbia Transfer System, becoming the first institution with membership in both transfer systems.

ACAT continues to work with other jurisdictions to consider mechanisms to help improve student transferability and mobility between provinces.

British Columbia

This report is a summary of projects and activities completed by the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) during the period from April 1, 2011, to March 31, 2012. The purpose of this report is to inform the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) of the steps taken in British Columbia to improve student mobility and credit transfer in accordance with the principles stipulated in CMEC's *Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada* (2009).

About the council

BCCAT was established in 1989, charged with the mandate to provide system leadership and direction through facilitating transfer, articulation, and admission arrangements among autonomous postsecondary institutions.

Achieving this mandate involves a variety of responsibilities, including support for BC institutions, developing policies, coordinating research, and providing Web-based resources to support BC students in their education planning.¹

Members of the council are appointed by the minister, having been selected from across the BC postsecondary system to serve the overall best interests of the system.² The council guides the work of four standing committees,³ each devoted to different aspects of the council's mandate. The work of the council and committees is coordinated by a small team of staff members.⁴

The council is an arm's-length body that operates under the Ministry of Advanced Education. Its consultative approach to developing policy, conducting research, and managing projects encourages inter-institutional collaboration and contributes to an accessible and responsive BC Transfer System.

Communication and adoption of ministerial principles

The *Principles & Guidelines for Transfer*⁵ affirm the CMEC principles on credit transfer and form the basis of all credit-transfer arrangements in the BC Transfer System.

¹ A chart outlining major ongoing projects and activities is available at bccat.ca/pubs/activities.pdf.

² See bccat.ca/about/council for further information regarding the council.

³ See bccat.ca/about/committees.

⁴ See bccat.ca/about/staff.

⁵ See bccat.ca/system/principles.

2011-12: An overview⁶

1. Enabling transfer

The overarching responsibility of enabling transfer in BC drives a large proportion of the council's projects and activities. This year, BCCAT led a provincial system-wide consultation on "Enabling the BC Transfer System." Respondents provided feedback on a proposal forwarded in a discussion paper. The proposal focused on how BCCAT might enable institutions to perform both the sending and receiving functions within the transfer system, given the widespread changes in student mobility patterns in recent years.

Strong support was expressed for the proposal, and there was considerable feedback on how to implement the recommendations. The final report outlines a phased approach to implementation, permitting institutions to proceed at their own pace, in keeping with their priorities and capacity. The full report, with recommendations, discussion paper, and supporting documents, is available at <http://www.bccat.ca/enabling/>.

The implementation phase will form a significant focus for BCCAT over the next two years as the council works with institutions to facilitate the orderly development of a more fully enabled credit-transfer environment. This will involve significant expansion of the *BC Transfer Guide*, which functions as a central resource for the system, to provide more comprehensive, integrated information on multi-directional transfer pathways. Ultimately, this initiative will result in a more robust and flexible transfer system for BC postsecondary students.

2. BC Transfer System: collaboration and facilitation

Collaboration and facilitation are key components of the council's role within the BC Transfer System. BCCAT collaborates with individuals, organizations, and committees across the BC postsecondary system, consulting and advising on issues and projects, as appropriate. BCCAT also liaises with ministry contacts to provide updates on council activities and projects and keep up with developments within government that intersect and impact on the work of the council.

In its role as a facilitating body, the council undertakes a wide range of projects and activities that serve to facilitate admissions, transfer, and articulation at institutions throughout the BC Transfer System. This includes providing support, resources, services, and a coordinating function, as appropriate. Some examples of such activities are provided below:

a) Articulation committee coordination

⁶ The projects and activities referenced in this report will be presented more fully in the 2011-12 Annual Review, which is due for publication in May 2012 and will be posted on the BCCAT Web site at that time. BCCAT publications are available at <http://www.bccat.ca/publications/>.

This ongoing responsibility involves coordination of 68 discipline-specific articulation committees, including overseeing articulation projects, developing resources such as the *Articulation Committee Companion*, and hosting the Joint Annual Meeting (JAM) of articulation chairs, system liaison persons, and institutional contact persons (ICPs).⁷

b) Key resources for system support

- i. Flexible Pre-Majors — Final Report of the Flexible Pre-Majors Working Group: available at <http://www.bccat.ca/pubs/FPMFinalReport.pdf>.

This final report is intended as a reference and guide for articulation committees and institutions interested in examining the use of a Flexible Pre-Major as a means of enhancing student transfer.

- ii. *Special Report* newsletter:
Transfer Credit Appeals in BC Post-Secondary Institutions: available at http://www.bccat.ca/pubs/sr_dec11.pdf.

This newsletter describes policy and processes related to the ability of students to appeal credit-transfer decisions in BC Transfer System institutions and offers recommendations on how to improve accessibility for students to appeals processes for students.

- iii. Student services for transfer students

This year, BCCAT staff examined services designed to support transfer students, including transfer days, student-service units, and counselling services. This project included a review of a variety of current US and Canadian practices. The findings were presented to BC Transfer System partners at the Joint Annual Meeting⁸ in November 2011. A paper outlining these findings is due for publication by late spring/early summer 2012.

3. Advances in BCCAT research

BCCAT coordinates a wide variety of research projects to help inform institutional planning, procedures, and policies. In recent years, our research agenda has been broadened to focus on student mobility, in light of the multidirectional movement of students among BC postsecondary institutions. Research also focuses on transfer-student success and the overall effectiveness of the transfer system. The following projects are highlights from 2011-12:

⁷ The Joint Annual Meeting (JAM) brings articulation committee chairs and system liaison persons together with Institutional contact persons (usually admissions personnel) to share information and increase understanding across the BC Transfer System.

⁸ See Section 5 a) below for more information regarding this event.

- a) *2011 Admissions and Transfer Experiences of Students Continuing their Studies in BC* (See <http://www.bccat.ca/pubs/bcstats11.pdf>.)

Every three years, the Diploma, Associate Degree, and Certificate Student Outcomes (DACSO) Survey has included an extensive set of questions pertaining to students' admissions and transfer experiences. The analysis of findings has focused on those students who continued their studies in another program at the same institution or at a different BC public postsecondary institution (about 5,500 in 2011). Of special interest are the almost 2,400 students from the 2011 survey who changed institutions and who expected to transfer credit. Of those continuing their education at a different institution, the study found that:

- Eighty per cent were satisfied with admissions services.
- Eighty-six per cent entered their preferred institution.
- Ninety-four per cent entered their preferred program.
- Eighty-five per cent registered in all the courses they wanted.
- Eighty-six per cent received all the transfer credits they expected.
- Seventy-nine per cent were satisfied with their overall transfer experience.

Drawing on the survey results in general and on feedback provided by dissatisfied students, the report makes a number of recommendations directed at both institutions and BCCAT. A newsletter-style report that focuses specifically on the small number of students (n=193) who were dissatisfied with their transfer experience is in process and is expected to be published in April 2012.

- b) Exploring the addition of transfer data to the Post-Secondary Central Data Warehouse

Over the last few years, BCCAT has been discussing with institutional and ministry representatives the possibility of including some level of transfer data in the Post-Secondary Central Data Warehouse (CDW) for CDW-reporting institutions in order to build a better understanding of the transfer behaviour of students who move to and among these institutions, which include colleges, teaching-intensive universities, and institutes. Until now, BCCAT has analyzed data on transfer students to BC research universities only.

In 2011-12, BCCAT conducted a pilot study in eight public postsecondary institutions with varying administrative systems to compare their records systems and institutional practices to a simplified table of transfer elements so as to determine if the essential information is identifiable and reportable. The resulting report showed that most of the desired data elements were available in the institutions' systems, and the institutions in

the study expressed their willingness to report the required data in the future. A task force was established made up of registrars who agreed upon a list of elements they considered important to know about transfer and were readily available in different institutions' administrative systems. The goal is to have the new elements incorporated into the CDW submission specifications for 2012, with the first submission of data being done on a voluntary basis.

c) Student Transitions Project (STP)

The council's work on student mobility research is conducted in close partnership with the Student Transitions Project (STP). The STP is a collaborative effort between BC's education ministries and public postsecondary institutions to link data about students in the K–12 and postsecondary systems in order to answer questions on student transitions. Devron Gaber (Associate Director, BCCAT) chairs the STP Steering Committee, and the STP Manager, Joanne Heslop, is seconded by BCCAT from Simon Fraser University (SFU).

Many of the BCCAT projects on student mobility under the auspices of its admissions committee are conducted through the STP using STP data and getting direction from STP subcommittees. In 2011-12, BCCAT funded the analysis and reporting for an STP study on nursing applicants to and registrants at all public postsecondary sectors in BC. The study resulted in recommendations on the need for institutions to review business and reporting practices so that future applicant data is more comparable across institutions.⁹

4. Web resources and communications

Supporting BC students in their postsecondary planning is an important part of the council's mandate. BCCAT's two student-oriented Web sites, BCTransferGuide.ca and EducationPlanner.ca, are designed to offer a variety of tools and resources to assist students with their explorations. Much of our marketing and communications activities focus on increasing awareness and encouraging the use of these Web sites.

There was a dramatic increase in Web traffic for both of these Web sites in 2011. BCtransferGuide.ca saw a 53 per cent increase in Web traffic over the previous year, while EducationPlanner.ca enjoyed a 47 per cent increase in Web traffic. Combined, these two sites saw over 1.6 million individual visitors in 2011, the highest total in their history.

This year, EducationPlanner.ca has been revitalized to better engage students as collaborators in the planning process. New features include a mobile application and intuitive tools, providing a virtual "canvas" to help students think imaginatively and creatively about their educational

⁹ See www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions for links to recent STP publications.

possibilities. The refreshed site will be launched in April 2012. A new province-wide transit advertising campaign will be launched simultaneously.

5. Interprovincial transfer and mobility

BCCAT works in collaboration with provincial/territorial and national postsecondary partners to improve transfer and student mobility within and across provincial borders. Key examples of these activities are outlined below:

a) Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT)

PCCAT seeks to facilitate the implementation of policies and practices that support student mobility both within and among provinces and territories to improve access to postsecondary education in Canada. BCCAT staff members participated in the PCCAT 2011 Annual Meeting held in Montreal at McGill University (June 20-22).¹⁰ As a member of the founding council, Rob Fleming (BCCAT Executive Director and Co-Chair) is involved in drafting bylaws and developing a business plan, which will be presented for ratification at the 2012 Annual General Meeting.

BCCAT also continues its involvement with the PCCAT Research Subcommittee. Since the subcommittee's inception in 2008, Devron Gaber, Associate Director, Admissions and Research at BCCAT, has served as the subcommittee Chair, and BCCAT has provided secretariat support. The subcommittee conducted a survey¹¹ of all English and French universities in Canada to determine the extent of interprovincial mobility and transfer at the postsecondary level and the extent of intraprovincial mobility and transfer for Ontario institutions only. The final report will be published in spring 2012 and will be presented at the PCCAT annual meeting in Ottawa in June 2012.

b) The Western Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (WestCAT)

WestCAT is a voluntary consortium that seeks to encourage and facilitate interprovincial access, mobility, and credit transfer among the four western provinces (BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba). Its work is guided by the *CMEC Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada* (2009) and functions as a complement to PCCAT. This year, the annual meeting was held in Winnipeg on September 22. BCCAT staff participated in the event, which focused on sharing information and resources supporting student mobility. BCCAT will host the next meeting in fall 2012.

¹⁰ See <http://www.pccat.ca> for details.

¹¹ This project is being sponsored by several organizations, with CMEC being the principal funder.

c) Transfer, Articulation and Pathways (TAP) Committee

The TAP Committee was established under the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) to study the merits of developing a pan-Canadian framework that embraces transferability, articulation, and credential recognition within and between postsecondary education systems. For this purpose, the committee is seeking the development of a coalition of stakeholders to recommend policies and practices. Rob Fleming (BCCAT Executive Director & Co-Chair) represents BCCAT on this committee.

d) Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC)

The participation of BCCAT's Executive Director and Co-Chair on CMEC's Credit Transfer Working Group is an important component of BCCAT's interprovincial activity. Rob valued the opportunity to meet with Dr. Andrew Parkin (CMEC's Director General) to discuss issues surrounding interprovincial mobility.

BCCAT will continue to play a key role on the national scene by promoting the importance of achieving a pan-Canadian system of student mobility and transfer. Our work will focus on providing advice and support to Canadian provinces seeking to develop and implement their own transfer systems and on encouraging support for such activities at the ministerial level.

6. BCCAT: then and now

The BC postsecondary landscape has evolved considerably since BCCAT was first established in 1989, and the work of BCCAT has expanded accordingly as the council has responded to changes along the way. This past year brought with it a significant milestone for the council. On September 30, 2011, BCCAT convened its 100th meeting. To commemorate the occasion, we invited four guests to share their reflections on the history of BCCAT, as drawn from their own experiences:

- Dr. Dan Birch [former council Co-Chair and Vice-President Emeritus, Academic and Provost, University of British Columbia (UBC)]
- Dr. John Dennison (former council Co-Chair and Professor Emeritus, Administrative, Adult and Higher Education, UBC)
- Ms. Finola Finlay (former Associate Director, Transfer and Articulation, BCCAT)
- Dr. Frank Gelin (Executive Director Emeritus, BCCAT)

Together, these four guests presented an overview of the history of BCCAT and the key developments that have shaped its role within the BC Transfer System.¹²

As fresh issues and challenges emerge, BCCAT continues to respond in innovative and efficient ways to enable transfer in BC. The projects and activities outlined in this report are current examples of the council's ongoing imperative to sustain and support transfer in the context of an ever-changing postsecondary system.

Plan of projects and activities for 2012-13

Every year, BCCAT completes a comprehensive work plan comprising projects and activities arising from the prior year and reflecting revised priorities to address emerging issues. The work plan for 2012-13 is under development and will be presented to council for consideration at the June 2012 meeting.

¹² A paper summarizing these reflections is available at <http://www.bccat.ca/pubs/thenandnow.pdf>. For further details on the history of the BC Transfer System, see www.bccat.ca/system/history.

Manitoba

The government agency with primary responsibility for coordinating the credit-transfer system is the Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE). The council acts as an intermediary between postsecondary institutions and the government, and is composed of 11 members, including a chair. Reporting to the council is a staff secretariat of 13 civil servants; the secretariat undertakes activities and projects designed to fulfill the mandate of the council and to meet the goals established by the council and by Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy. The secretariat also works in consultation with universities and colleges to support council members in the development of policy and financial accountability.

The province's public postsecondary system includes the University of Manitoba, the University of Winnipeg, Brandon University, Red River College, Assiniboine Community College, University College of the North, and *Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface*, which includes the *École technique et professionnelle*.

In accordance with *The Council on Post-Secondary Education Act*, the council's mandate is to plan and coordinate the development of a postsecondary system that promises excellence in and accessibility to education, supports coordination and integration of services and facilities, and promotes fiscal responsibility. Among its duties and powers, and in carrying out its mandate, the council serves to facilitate the implementation of appropriate credit-transfer arrangements between universities and colleges.

Communication and adoption of ministerial principles

The ministerial principles have been endorsed by COPSE and informally adopted by the public postsecondary institutions.

Important developments, 2011-2012

- In June 2011, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between Manitoba's Public Universities and Colleges for Improving Student Mobility was signed by the presidents of Manitoba's seven publicly funded institutions. A task group was formed to work on improvements in intra-institution mobility and furthering opportunities for student mobility between Manitoba's colleges and universities.
- The MOU task group focused on developing credit-transfer arrangements between secondary schools, colleges, and universities and block transfer arrangements from college diploma programs in business, graphic design, interactive media arts, communications, environmental science/technology, and engineering technology to appropriate university degree programs.

- In accordance with the terms of the MOU, the task group prepared a final report for the Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy in February 2012, including 11 recommendations for further work in credit transfer and related activities. Additionally, the task group prepared a list of existing articulation agreements between the colleges and universities. Colleges and universities have continued working on developing these agreements both intra- and inter-provincially, and internationally.
- In early 2013, COPSE will be formally reconvening the task group to continue its earlier work on articulation agreements, and to follow up on the report recommendations. As well, COPSE will be working with the group to develop a policy discussion paper exploring credit-transfer options for Manitoba, expected to be completed in spring 2013.
- The task group developed a template for documenting formal articulation agreements between colleges and universities. One agreement that has recently been reached through use of the template is a block transfer agreement between Assiniboine Community College's Practical Nursing Diploma program and Brandon University's Bachelor of Nursing and Bachelor of Science in Psychiatric Nursing programs. Another is the Natural Resource Management Technology Diploma from University College of the North that ladders into the Bachelor of Environmental Studies degree at the University of Manitoba.
- Established in the late 1970s to provide articulated university credit courses to learners residing above the 53rd parallel (which courses then qualify for mutual recognition at all Manitoba universities), Inter-Universities Services (IUS) continues to provide such opportunities pending finalization of the IUS mandate by 2013. The University of Manitoba, University of Winnipeg, Brandon University, University College of the North, and IUS continue to collaborate on a credit-transfer project to find a model that will protect existing credit-transfer agreements within IUS and also be amenable to the partner institutions.
- Manitoba continues to focus on facilitating recognition of professional education and credentials obtained in other countries. Examples of initiatives that provide credit-transfer and recognition opportunities to foreign-trained and internationally educated professionals include the Internationally Educated Engineers Qualification Program introduced at the University of Manitoba in 2003, the Internationally Educated Agrolologists Post-Baccalaureate Diploma Program introduced at the University of Manitoba in 2005, and the Bridging Program for Internationally Educated Nurses introduced at Red River College in 2007. To further the goal of foreign-credential recognition, Manitoba is participating in the federally funded Qualifications Recognition Supports and Post-Secondary Bridge Programming for

Internationally Educated Professionals/Tradespeople project, and the pan-Canadian Foreign Qualifications Recognition Working Group.

- Course-credit transfers continue to expand among the postsecondary institutions participating in Campus Manitoba — a collaborative mechanism through which the province’s colleges and universities provide courses to students residing in rural and northern Manitoba through the use of a broad selection of learning technologies.

Priority action areas

While college–university transfer and articulation, foreign-credential recognition, and general efforts to create a more seamless postsecondary continuum will remain priorities, Manitoba has established an institutional stakeholder working group to explore more formalized transfer and credit arrangements.

Research

Research on credit transfer and articulation, including best practices in other jurisdictions and the relationship between transfer and articulation and quality assurance, is ongoing, and Manitoba remains interested in partnering with other provinces in these areas.

Working group

Manitoba supports the continuation of CMEC’s Credit Transfer Working Group and endorses the support and attention accorded by CMEC to credit transfer in postsecondary education.

Pan-Canadian activity

In June 2012, COPSE presented on credit-transfer activity in Manitoba at the annual PCCAT meeting in Ottawa, as part of a three-person panel that also included representatives from Ontario and New Brunswick. In September 2012, Manitoba attended the annual WestCAT meeting in Vancouver. Manitoba remains interested in pan-Canadian credit-transfer activity, and continues to benefit from learning about well-developed systems in other provinces.

New Brunswick

Communication of ministerial principles

The implementation of various initiatives from the *Action Plan to Transform Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick* has been under way, including credit transfer and prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR).

The New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Advisory Forum, comprising university and community-college presidents, as well as the deputy minister responsible for postsecondary education, was established to oversee progress on selected action-plan initiatives and to foster collaboration.

Adoption of ministerial principles

As part of the plan to transform postsecondary education, New Brunswick's Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (PETL) department has established structural support to foster a greater capacity for credit transfer between and among postsecondary education institutions and develop an awareness strategy for improving PLAR.

Three-year framework for action

To ensure ongoing improvement and expansion of opportunities for learner mobility, it was deemed important that an infrastructure be established to continuously support stakeholders working cooperatively for the benefit of learners. Therefore, based on research of existing models in other jurisdictions and stakeholder consultations within the province, the New Brunswick Council on Articulations and Transfer (NBCAT) was officially established in November 2010. (<http://nbcats.ca>)

NBCAT is a participatory council of PETL composed of academic vice-presidents from publicly funded New Brunswick postsecondary institutions. It serves as a body through which stakeholders work cooperatively for the benefit of learners to ensure smooth inter-institutional transitions and effective transferability of courses and/or programs. In addition, NBCAT promotes the appropriate and effective use of PLAR with a link to international credential and competency assessment to support learners in their postsecondary experiences and labour-market integration.

The work of the council is carried out by staff provided by PETL, with a standing Contact Persons Committee composed of representatives from participating institutions at the registrar level. A New Brunswick PLAR Action Group (NBPLAR) was also established as an affiliate of NBCAT for the development and implementation of an awareness strategy for improving PLAR. (<http://nbplar.ca>)

Important developments 2011-2012

One of the key results of NBCAT's collaborative work to date has been the development of a provincial portal for credit transfer. This on-line product, an effective and efficient tool to simplify the credit-transfer process, was officially launched on March 15, 2012.

(<http://portal.nbcac.ca>)

Currently, the portal is targeted toward credit-transfer information within and between New Brunswick institutions, but the longer-term goal is to expand it incrementally to include those from outside the province.

There is continued work under way for articulation and transfer agreements in the fields of nursing, business, and engineering.

- 1) Nursing: A needs survey and a gap analysis were completed for both anglophone and francophone licensed practical nursing (LPN) and bachelor of nursing (BN) programs in New Brunswick [New Brunswick Community College (NBCC), University of New Brunswick (UNB), UNB Saint John (UNBSJ), *Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick (CCNB)*, and *Université de Moncton (UdeM)*]. A report was completed and endorsed for support to move forward with the LPN-BN recommended plan for an articulation agreement between NBCC and UNBSJ. CCNB has received PETL support to revamp its LPN curriculum to ensure a clear transfer pathway to UdeM's newly revised BN program.
- 2) Business: A consultant was hired to do a thorough analysis with participating faculties and identify transfer opportunities and any gap-bridging requirements. A final report was completed and, based on the results, it was found that there was sound pedagogical support for such agreements, with a recommendation to explore the possibility of a "Block of Common Credit Recognitions." An NBCAT working committee is presently exploring this avenue.
- 3) Engineering: A survey of computer-science (CS)/information-technology (IT) students and graduates identified an interest in pursuing their education should credit-transfer options be made available. Based on the results of this survey, NBCAT has established an Engineering-IT/CS working committee to explore all potential pathways.

Since the creation of NBCAT's standing NB PLAR Action Group, officially established in May 2010, there has been significant progress. New Brunswick stakeholders using PLAR methodologies in their delivery of services have formed the NBPLAR Action Group (NBPLAR). These stakeholders include organizations from postsecondary, social-development, non-profit, regulatory, and workplace sectors.

To date, and within the next couple of years, there will be an increase in awareness, a better understanding, and common use of PLAR best practices and common tools in New Brunswick. Employers will better value the aptitudes of current and new workers, including Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, and newcomers, in order to rank them according to the true worth of their skills.

Priority action areas

The Atlantic credit-transfer memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed in September 2009 is a commitment to ensure that students receive maximum benefits from postsecondary education. NBCAT is reflective of this commitment.

The establishment of NBCAT has had considerable impact on the development of ongoing communication and reliance among participating institutions and stakeholders province-wide. It has significantly influenced the development of potential articulation agreements between the colleges and universities. In 2012-13, NBCAT will be undertaking more activities and research that will help inform and shape policy and practice.

Acknowledging the importance of articulations and transfer and PLAR, New Brunswick will continue in the direction it has taken with the establishment of NBCAT to facilitate learners' access to postsecondary education through inter-institutional transfer and the recognition of formal and informal learning experiences.

Research

In 2012-2013, NBCAT will undertake continuous research that will help inform and shape policy and practice.

New Brunswick will continue to support and participate in the work of the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT), with an ongoing interest in partnering and sharing best practices with other jurisdictions for quality assurance at the pan-Canadian level.

Working group

We support the continuation of the CMEC Credit Transfer Working Group and will continue to work to enhance and develop credit-transfer agreements in the province of New Brunswick.

Newfoundland and Labrador

Communication of ministerial principles

Newfoundland and Labrador has a credit-transfer mechanism between Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic (CNA) that has existed for more than 20 years. New agreements are signed between our public postsecondary institutions and those in other parts of Canada and around the world on a regular basis. One of the recent agreements at CNA is with Athabasca University for graduates of CNA's three-year Medical Laboratory Sciences, Medical Radiography, and Respiratory Therapy diplomas. CNA students will be eligible for admission to Athabasca University's Bachelor of Health Administration (Post Diploma) program with 42 credits transferred.

The latest edition (2011-2012) of the Transfer Guide for Newfoundland and Labrador is available on-line at <http://www.aes.gov.nl.ca/postsecondary/transferguide/index.html>. The on-line version also provides a searchable Online Course-by-Course Transfer Database, making it easier to access information. The 19th edition of the Transfer Guide is scheduled for release in print and on-line versions in spring 2013. The Transfer Guide provides students with an established course-by-course precedent guide as well as program/block credit-transfer agreements. The guide also provides information about the public postsecondary system, institutional transfer policies, and programs and courses linked to high schools.

In 2009, Memorial University and CNA joined with other Atlantic colleges and universities in the signing of a memorandum of understanding through the Atlantic Provinces Community College Consortium (APCCC) to strengthen transferability and mobility within Atlantic Canada and to ensure that students receive maximum benefits from postsecondary education in the region. The memorandum of understanding was signed by 22 institutions in Atlantic Canada.

Adoption of ministerial principles

Newfoundland and Labrador supports CMEC's *Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada*, and has shared this statement of principles with Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic.

Three-year framework for action

In 2005, the government released *Foundations for Success: White Paper on Public Post-Secondary Education*. This policy document was commissioned as part of the government's continued commitment to provide affordable and accessible postsecondary education opportunities. This document has resulted in a number of areas of collaboration in the public postsecondary education system, focusing on shared program areas at Memorial University and CNA.

In 2006, the government established the Skills Task Force. Its mandate was to identify skills gaps and their potential impact on the provincial economy, and to identify and develop strategies to address the needs of major projects. Its findings and recommendations were published the following year in *All The Skills to Succeed: Report of the Newfoundland and Labrador Skills Task Force*. This strategic direction has resulted in significant advances in postsecondary education in the province. The government regularly consults with all stakeholders in the implementation of the task force's recommendations. Throughout the spring of 2012, Newfoundland and Labrador held a number of apprenticeship forums across the province to follow up on the Skills Task Force; these forums included student, industry, postsecondary institution, and government representatives.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador established the Department of Advanced Education and Skills in fall 2011. Its mandate includes ensuring that the province has skilled workers and highly educated graduates to support a fast-growing economy. The Department of Advanced Education and Skills has developed its 2011–2014 strategic plan, available on-line at http://www.aes.gov.nl.ca/publications/strategicplans/advance_education_and_skills_strategic_plan.pdf.

Priority action areas

Priority action areas have been identified by the Department of Advanced Education and Skills as part of its strategic planning process, and the department continues to support Newfoundland and Labrador's postsecondary institutions' credit transfer and articulation activities.

Research

Research directions will be determined by the Department of Advanced Education and Skills as part of its strategic planning process, and research initiatives are continuing at postsecondary institutions. Memorial University and CNA have autonomy over their research directions and priorities.

Working group

Newfoundland and Labrador supports the continuation of the CMEC Credit Transfer Working Group because it provides a valuable forum for jurisdictions to work together toward enhancing credit-transfer opportunities across Canada. Newfoundland and Labrador supports CMEC's efforts in promoting and supporting a pan-Canadian approach to credit transfer and supports CMEC's continued collaboration with all stakeholders with an interest in credit-transfer issues.

Northwest Territories

Communication of ministerial principles

Although the Department of Education, Culture and Employment supports the principles outlined in the Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada, the ministerial principles have not been formally communicated or adopted.

Adoption of ministerial principles

Aurora College, the only public postsecondary institution in Northwest Territories, is aware of the principles and agrees with their intent.

Three-year framework for action

Northwest Territories and Aurora College continue to work toward the goal of increased partnerships and credit-transfer agreements with other jurisdictions. Aurora College will continue to articulate its programs as broadly as possible. The college is a member of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) and attends pan-Canadian articulation meetings through the Association of Canadian Community Colleges. Aurora College is a degree-granting institution and partners directly with other degree-granting institutions to expand program delivery options. At an international level, the college works with member institutions of the University of the Arctic for transfer credits.

Priority action areas

Aurora College's general priority is to ensure that its students are able to transfer to other postsecondary institutions in a seamless manner. The college has an ongoing process of working on articulation agreements. The college's student population is similar to that of Yukon and Nunavut, but smaller in relation to that of other Canadian provinces. This makes it challenging to provide the range of programming possible in larger jurisdictions; partnerships and transfer agreements are thus essential to meet the needs of Northwest Territories residents and employers for postsecondary education.

Working group

Northwest Territories supports the efforts of CMEC, the provinces and territories, and postsecondary institutions to enhance credit transfer within and among jurisdictions. A pan-Canadian credit transfer system would benefit everyone. The territorial jurisdictions would stand to benefit from a CMEC-sponsored pan-Canadian protocol on university- college transferability. Northwest Territories would benefit from CMEC's continuing efforts to undertake further research on the effectiveness and fairness of current systems of credit-transfer recognition.

Nova Scotia

Communication of ministerial principles

Public postsecondary institutions in Nova Scotia are aware of the CMEC Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada.

Adoption of ministerial principles

Nova Scotia supports the adoption of the principles outlined in the CMEC Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada.

Three-year framework for action

All Nova Scotian universities and the Nova Scotia Community College continue to increase the number of institutions recognized (both college and university) and the number of credit equivalencies recognized and accepted. Some institutions have, and others are moving toward, an on-line equivalency list for prospective students to consult. Others are developing articulation agreements with colleges with the intention of promoting the credits offered for graduates of the respective diploma programs within such institutions. The Nova Scotia Community College continues to follow the *Guide to Block Transfer Agreements* prepared by the Atlantic Provinces Community College Consortium (APCCC).

In June 2009, Atlantic-region community colleges and universities signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that allows students to have a more seamless educational experience and improve completion times by encouraging transfer agreements between and among public universities and community colleges in Atlantic Canada. The MOU is endorsed by the Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU) and APCCC and their member institutions. The MOU recognizes that member institutions are responsible for overall evaluation and programming, and will make these decisions based on their institutional standards. The MOU further recognizes that academic integrity is paramount to all institutions and must be protected and preserved. Both AAU and APCCC recognize the participation of Atlantic ministers of education and training in the establishment of the MOU. This support further solidifies the strong working relationship between universities and colleges and the four provincial governments. Nova Scotia supports any actions to increase credit-transfer arrangements/agreements between the university and the community-college systems and among institutions in this province and other jurisdictions.

Priority action areas

The New Brunswick-Nova Scotia Partnership Agreement on Regulation and the Economy (PARE) signed by the premiers of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in February 2009 recognizes the complete transferability of community-college and university credits as an initiative to promote

between the two provinces. This agreement may expand to include partnerships with Prince Edward Island and with Newfoundland and Labrador. Credit-transfer arrangements and articulated programs are expanding within the system and in the Maritime/Atlantic region. Opportunities for further initiatives are ongoing.

In the “Policy Options to Consider” section of the *Report on the University System in Nova Scotia* released in September 2010, it was cited that shared course access provides added value to students while offering the potential for increased specialization and decreased redundancy among institutions. While this occurs to a degree in Nova Scotia, greater cooperation could benefit students if it were to yield a more seamless process in terms of credit transfer. Issues such as recognition of prior learning, credit transfer, foreign credentials, and other innovations to enhance system integration and expand participation in higher education were part of discussions between the universities and the province in 2011 that led to the development of the *Memorandum of Understanding Between the Province of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Universities: Excellence Through Partnership 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15*. Under this MOU, the parties agreed to develop and implement a work plan to achieve significant change in measures to improve credit transfer for Nova Scotia students.

Working group

Nova Scotia supports the continuation of the CMEC Credit Transfer Working Group. The working group is an excellent forum for jurisdictions to work together in efforts to enhance credit-transfer opportunities across the country. Nova Scotia supports CMEC’s activities that promote and support a pan-Canadian approach to credit transfer. Nova Scotia will continue to participate in the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT).

Nunavut

Communication of ministerial principles

The work of implementing the Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy (NALS) is proceeding. The strategy was tabled in the legislature in November 2006 and jointly released with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. The strategy contains principles and recommendations that focus on quality assurance and credit transfer. As part of the work, we are paying attention to ensure that Nunavut's strategies are consistent with the principles of CMEC. At this time, Nunavut does not have a credit-transfer agency, although terms of reference have been prepared for a territorial coordinating body that will consider, among other issues, credit transfer.

Adoption of ministerial principles

Nunavut, in its adult learning strategy, has adopted the basic Inuit societal values of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, as well as basic tenets arising from the ministerial principles; however, as there is no credit-transfer agency in the territory, the principles have not been completely adopted in Nunavut. Furthermore, certain objectives are foundational to the adult learning strategy and the development of a credit-transfer approach. These objectives include: promoting greater cooperation and collaboration among agencies involved in education and training in Nunavut (e.g., developing partnerships that are consistent with the goals established for Nunavut's development) and fostering and promoting the active involvement of Inuit in developing Nunavut's economy. On April 1, 2013, the Department of Education will begin to implement a postsecondary education (PSE) designation policy. The policy is adapted from and complementary to the pan-Canadian Designation Policy Framework and sets out the criteria that need to be met in order for programs to receive funding through the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students (FANS) program.

Three-year framework for action

Nunavut has identified many issues associated with the adult learning strategy. Strategies proposed to deal with those issues include developing a Nunavut program for prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR), including a system of credit recognition and transfer, and introducing a mature high-school-graduation diploma, which would become the benchmark for entry into postsecondary and adult programs. Progress has been made in this area, and Nunavut's only postsecondary institution applies PLAR in assessment and recognition of some programs.

NALS identified multiple barriers to PSE as well as to vocational and apprenticeship training opportunities faced by Nunavummiut, chief among them being literacy levels as reported in the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey. NALS recommended the implementation of PLAR to help increase access to PSE by addressing the literacy question, among others.

So far, steps have been taken by the only postsecondary institution in Nunavut to implement PLAR. The Department of Education recognizes this as an important step and is engaged in the ongoing process. It is equally important to note that the Department of Education also recognizes the progress made in other program areas with similar aims, that is, to increase access to PSE — for example, the current project on mature student graduation. Collectively, these various measures address, in part, the recommendations of the NALS and the department's commitment to these outcomes in the longer term.

Research

Nunavut supports the research agenda for the working group, especially as we look toward developing our credit-transfer agency/mechanism.

Working group

Nunavut supports the need for CMEC's Credit Transfer Working Group. A senior staff member from the adult learning sector will be identified as the working group member. Nunavut is working toward an integrated system that supports credit recognition and transfer.

Ontario

Communication and adoption of ministerial principles

This report is a summary of recent projects and activities undertaken by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) and its credit-transfer partners. This report is intended to inform the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) of the steps taken in Ontario to improve student mobility and credit transfer in accordance with the principles stipulated in CMEC's *Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada* (2009).

Advances in transfer and articulation projects

MTCU continues to support province-wide projects to increase pathways between postsecondary credentials and institutions consistent with the new provincial credit-transfer system.

These include pilot projects and other innovative strategies designed to further college-university, university-college, university-university and college-college collaboration and the establishment of a more seamless postsecondary education system in the province.

Status of transfer agreements

- There are currently 489 credit-transfer pathways between postsecondary institutions in Ontario — 264 of which are multilateral and 225 are bilateral. This represents an increase of 160 pathways since 2009.
- Forty-six institutions are currently involved in one or more pathway agreements. This includes all publicly assisted colleges and universities and some other sending institutions.

Under the new credit-transfer system, the government will continue to support the expansion of these agreements and pathways to create more transfer opportunities for students in demand areas.

New credit-transfer system

In January 2011, the government announced a commitment of \$73.7 million over five years to help colleges and universities develop new credit-transfer pathways and provide additional supports and better information to transfer students.

The ministry, through a steering committee and several working/task groups, has designed the new credit-transfer system, which features the following key components:

- a policy framework to guide the implementation of the new credit-transfer system;
- a new, student-friendly credit-transfer Web site, ONTransfer.ca, to provide transparent information on transfer opportunities for students;
- the Credit Transfer Innovation Fund to develop and expand credit-transfer pathways for students in demand areas;
- institutional grants that provide new supports for transfer students, such as transfer advisors and orientation programs; and
- the new Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT), responsible for central coordination of the credit-transfer system.

Initially, the province focused on expanding college-to-university transfers; this focus has been broadened to include university-to-university, college-to-college, university-to-college transfers, and pathways to and from apprenticeship.

Credit-transfer accountability framework

MTCU is currently working with stakeholders, including colleges, universities, the Council of Ontario Universities, Colleges Ontario, ONCAT, the Ontario University Application Centre, and the Ontario College Application Service, to finalize and implement an accountability framework, which includes:

- interim and fully developed performance measures;
- data elements required for research, funding, and policy purposes;
- audit requirements; and
- plans, timelines, and potential cost implications for implementing changes to institutional data systems to collect and report credit-transfer activity.

The framework is being phased in and is expected to be fully implemented and collecting relevant and reliable data in 2015-2016.

Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT)

In 2011, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities announced a new provincial transfer framework and the establishment of a new coordinating body, ONCAT, to replace the College University Consortium Council (CUCC).

ONCAT was established to facilitate and support academic collaboration and the development of transfer pathways among Ontario's publicly funded colleges and universities in order to optimize postsecondary options for students and reduce duplication of prior learning. ONCAT became fully operational on March 31, 2012.

The specific functions of ONCAT include:

- supporting innovation and growth in the number and types of student-transfer pathways and consistency across the province for students who transfer between Ontario institutions;
- conducting research;
- fostering the development of effective credit-transfer policies, programs, and agreements based on research and best practices; and
- developing/maintaining ONTransfer, Ontario's new credit-transfer Web site.

ONCAT is funded by the government of Ontario, and its membership includes 44 publicly funded Ontario colleges and universities. It is governed by an 11-member board of directors elected by members of the corporation. Dr. Maureen Callahan served as the Acting Executive Director of ONCAT until the appointment of Glenn Craney as its Founding Executive Director by the board of directors in October 2012.

Credit Transfer Innovation Fund

A portion of the ministry's five-year, \$73.7-million investment in credit transfer is being directed to the Credit Transfer Innovation Fund (\$23.5 million) The Credit Transfer Innovation Fund, administered by ONCAT, funds the creation of transfer opportunities among Ontario institutions, particularly in high-demand program areas.

In 2011-12 and 2012-13, ONCAT allocated approximately \$7 million in funding to Ontario institutions to support the development of over 55 innovation projects involving the vast majority of institutions. The funding supports the development of innovation projects that include:

- new pathways for students who want to move from college to university;
- new pathways for students who want to move to/from an apprenticeship (i.e., apprenticeship to college, college to apprenticeship);
- pathways for students who move from one college to another college within the same program; and
- pathways for students who move from a college diploma program to a college degree program.

ONCAT also provides funding for credit-transfer-related research at Ontario's PSE institutions. Research topics include:

- student success after transfer;
- student knowledge and experience of transfer;
- an exploration of mapping college learning outcomes to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) standards to facilitate international transfer;

- best practices in transfer student support; and
- transfer opportunities for Ontario students outside of Ontario.

Credit-transfer Web site – ONTransfer.ca

A new, bilingual transfer Web site, ONTransfer.ca, was launched in September 2011 to improve transparency and access to information and features:

- a new, student-friendly look and feel;
- new and updated plain-language content on how transfer works in Ontario, steps to transfer, frequently asked questions, and a glossary to explain common terminology in credit transfer;
- new links to valuable resources, including transfer advisors and institutional transfer policies;
- a new search function that allows users to search and compare transfer pathways; and
- information about the new council, ONCAT, including its mandate, membership, and governance.

Phase 2 of the credit-transfer Web site is under way and includes:

- video tutorials to assist students using the transfer Web site and guide;
- developing a course-to-course equivalency database;
- developing functionality to allow users to save and access previous search results by logging in; and
- upgrading search functionality to provide more refined results.

Credit-transfer institutional grants

Almost \$40 million in new supports is being provided to institutions to support students by:

- providing dedicated transfer advisors and orientation programs;
- increasing student participation in credit-transfer assessment and pathways; and
- improving information systems for tracking/reporting on credit-transfer activity and student success.

Two-year agreements for grants (2011-12, 2012-13) supporting transfer students are in place with all publicly assisted colleges and universities. New agreements will be established for 2013-2014.

Postsecondary education consultations

In June 2012, MTCU released a discussion paper, “Strengthening Ontario’s Centres of Creativity, Innovation and Knowledge,” to initiate sector consultation on transforming Ontario’s postsecondary education system. The section entitled “Ideas to Drive Innovation and Strengthen Quality” includes content relating to credit transfer, credential compatibility, and student mobility.

In the summer and early fall of 2012, the ministry hosted nine round-table discussions with stakeholders throughout various regions of Ontario on the themes outlined in the discussion paper.

Report from the Commission on the Reform of Ontario’s Public Services

The Commission’s report, *Public Services for Ontarians: A Path To Sustainability and Excellence*, also called the Drummond Report, was released February 15, 2012, and included a recommendation to further develop a comprehensive and enforceable credit system for Ontario.

- Recommendation 7-7: “Create a comprehensive, enforceable credit-recognition system between and among universities and colleges. This is an absolutely essential feature of differentiation.”

Working group

Ontario continues to fully participate in the CMEC Credit Transfer Working Group and the Pan-Canadian Consortium for Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT).

Prince Edward Island

Communication of ministerial principles

The ministerial principles have been distributed to the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) and Holland College (HC).

Adoption of ministerial principles

Both provincial postsecondary institutions are aware of the principles and agree with the intent.

Three-year framework for action

We have ongoing meetings as a provincial working group to ensure that UPEI and HC continue to develop processes and procedures to enhance the service between them as well as with institutions across Canada and internationally.

Priority action areas

UPEI and HC continue to work together to provide seamless transfer of students moving between the two institutions. Both institutions continue to provide transfer credits to students; in 2009–10, 30 per cent of HC transfer-credit applications originated from students requesting transfer credit for UPEI courses. The next-highest sending institution was HC itself, with 20 per cent of total transfer-credit applications. UPEI has just released the *Got a Diploma? Get a Degree!* brochure, which lists all the diploma-to-degree pathways available to students with the accompanying transfer credits.

Currently, there are 30 articulation agreements between HC and UPEI. Since the last report, HC and UPEI have added a new articulation agreement in the following program:

- HC Wildlife Conservation Technology – UPEI Bachelor of Wildlife Conservation

HC and UPEI continue to explore partnerships locally, nationally, and internationally, with articulation agreements and memoranda of understanding for a wide variety of programs with a wide variety of institutional partners. HC is exploring new possibilities with schools in New Zealand, Australia, and New England. UPEI is exploring, among other initiatives, new possibilities in Kenya, Korea, and China.

Both UPEI and HC are signatories to the MOU Between Atlantic Canadian Universities and Community Colleges For the Encouragement of Transfer Agreements (2009).

Working group

Prince Edward Island is represented on the CMEC Credit Transfer Working Group and is a member of the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer. The working group meets on an ongoing basis.

Quebec

Communication of ministerial principles

In September 2012, the Government of Quebec created a ministry for advanced education, research, science and technology, the *ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie*, which will henceforth assume responsibility for all postsecondary education.

Universities in Quebec have full jurisdiction over prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR). This issue also comes under the purview of the *Comité de liaison de l'enseignement supérieur* [postsecondary-education liaison committee], which brings together representatives from cégeps, universities, and the *ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie*. The ministry has forwarded the *CMEC Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada* (2009) to the members of this committee.

Adoption of ministerial principles

Section 22 of the *College Education Regulations (General and Vocational Colleges Act)* governs prior learning assessment by cégeps. The *Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial* [college education evaluation committee] ensures that cégeps have and apply a prior-learning-assessment policy. Universities follow the Pan-Canadian Protocol on the Transferability of University Credits and enjoy full autonomy with respect to prior learning assessment and recognition.

Priority action areas

Increasingly, cégeps and universities are developing pathways between technical programs and university undergraduate programs. While some universities recognize only three credits from a technical program, others recognize up to 36 credits for bachelor's programs, through the DEC-BAC agreements. In 2007, 14 universities had agreements with between one and 42 colleges for the transfer of between three and 36 credits. Since then, the number of agreements between universities and colleges has continued to rise — one university now has approximately 100 DEC-BAC agreements.

The ministry's strategy to internationalize postsecondary education has also given a boost to prior learning assessment and recognition. For example, the joint doctoral program established between France and Quebec in 1996 enables doctoral students to study for three terms at a foreign university and earn a joint Ph.D. Thus, universities recognize doctoral training received at a foreign institution. This type of agreement is being expanded to include universities in other countries, such as Germany, Belgium, and Switzerland.

The ministry's short-stay grant program (\$10 million) allows students to pursue accredited training in their program of study at foreign universities or at universities elsewhere in Canada. In either case, students actively participate in choosing the institution. This requires Quebec universities to recognize credits issued by other institutions. The practice is based on each university's degree-granting authority and rights.

Quebec has also facilitated agreements on labour mobility with France and with other Canadian provinces. These agreements do not cover credit transfer between institutions per se, but rather set standards for the recognition of academic credentials or training. If required, individuals seeking mobility can undertake additional training to acquire the full range of competencies required to practise a profession. Professional regulatory bodies are therefore involved in adopting and implementing these types of recognition standards.

Lastly, the Executive Summary of the *Action Plan for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition in Canada*, released by the Halifax-based Prior Learning Assessment Centre,¹³ mentions three issues within the broad area of prior learning assessment and recognition:

- credit transfer
- assessment of academic and professional credentials
- assessment and recognition of non-formal, informal, or experiential learning (which can include university credits or credentials)

Quebec believes that the third issue is quite separate from the first two, noting that the *Centre interdisciplinaire de recherche-développement sur l'éducation permanente* [interdisciplinary centre for research/development on lifelong education] of the *Université du Québec à Montréal* participated in drafting the summary.

In 2012, the postsecondary education sector in Quebec was shaken up by a lengthy student protest movement related to tuition-fee increases. While the priorities for action with respect to credit transfer remain unchanged, the Quebec government is organizing a summit on higher education in February 2013 to address collaboration between institutions, among other issues.

Working group

The *ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie* considers: 1) that the CMEC Credit Transfer Working Group has made substantial headway on the six principles of the *Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada*; 2) that credit transfer between institutions is primarily under the jurisdiction of

¹³ <http://www.priorlearning.ca/cms/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/200810PLAR-Report-ExecSumEN.pdf>

postsecondary educational institutions; and 3) that the CMEC ministerial statement continues to provide effective guidance to stakeholders in the field.

However, issues related to the assessment and recognition of experiential learning are quite different from those related to credit transfer. If necessary, and if expanding the assessment and recognition of experiential learning is deemed a priority, it might be useful to look to the college sector, where experiential learning is a frequent theme. Strategically, it might be advantageous to set out the principles governing the recognition of experiential learning in a separate ministerial statement.

Saskatchewan

Communication of ministerial principles

A description and link to the *CMEC Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada* (2009) can be accessed from the Advanced Education Web site located at <http://www.ae.gov.sk.ca/rpl/ct>.

Adoption of ministerial principles

The Honourable Rob Norris, Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration, approved the amendments to the statement on August 6, 2009.

Three-year framework for action

No formal three-year credit-transfer framework has been developed for Saskatchewan. The ministry continues to encourage provincial postsecondary institutions to consider how to enhance student mobility and work toward a more seamless credit-transfer system. The following key action supports this goal:

- Between 2006 and 2010, the ministry invested \$1,270,534 to support projects on credit transfer and prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR). For a summary of these projects, visit: <http://www.ae.gov.sk.ca/rpl>.

Priority action areas

Saskatchewan is in a reflective/planning phase and is looking to best practices in other jurisdictions for prospective strategies. The postsecondary system includes two universities, one technical institution, two Aboriginal institutions, and a number of federated/affiliated colleges.

Although the Saskatchewan Council for Admissions and Transfer (SaskCAT) has been dissolved, there is ongoing articulation of courses and programs among institutions. Saskatchewan expects to continue to participate in interprovincial initiatives such as the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT) and the Western Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (WestCAT).

Research

In 2012, the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina participated in the PCCAT student-mobility research project.

Working group

Saskatchewan supports the continuation of the CMEC Credit Transfer Working Group. From 2010 to 2012, Saskatchewan's representative chaired this working group.

Yukon

Communication of ministerial principles

The ministerial principles were communicated to the postsecondary institution.

Adoption of ministerial principles

The ministerial principles were adopted by the postsecondary institution.

Three-year framework for action

Yukon College will continue to articulate its programs as broadly as possible. The college will continue to participate as a member of the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT), updating course and program transfer information. College faculty regularly attend British Columbia provincial postsecondary articulation meetings. The college is also an active member of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges.

Priority action areas

Yukon College has recently become a member of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfers (ACAT), and priority will be placed on implementing transfer credit agreements with members of this council for both course and program transfer arrangements.

With respect to the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfers (PCCAT), Yukon College will continue to monitor developments concerning Canada-wide student-mobility policies and practices.

Other action areas for Yukon College include:

- developing and updating credit-transfer database and equivalency table;
- reviewing the existing postsecondary education credit-transfer system and, where necessary, implementing system improvements;
- updating and maintaining credit-transfer policies and programs on the portal web site;
- developing and updating information forms, brochures, and Web initiatives related to academic course transfers; and
- research on recruitment of high-quality college-transfer applicants.

Yukon has only one postsecondary institution, Yukon College. The main campus is located in the capital, Whitehorse. There are small satellite campuses in various communities throughout the territory offering access programs, career and job-readiness courses, part-time continuing education courses, and certificate, diploma, and degree courses in a

classroom setting, remotely by video, and through Internet technology.

Yukon's abiding priority is ensuring that its students are able to transfer without difficulty to postsecondary institutions outside the territory. Establishing articulation agreements is an ongoing process for Yukon College.

Research

The Yukon Research Centre is dedicated to Yukon-based research on climate change adaptation and the development and commercialization of cold-climate technologies that address the needs of northerners and their communities.

The centre, based at Yukon College, takes a multidisciplinary approach that combines applied and pure research, natural and social sciences, and traditional knowledge toward creating leading-edge solutions for northern climate challenges.

Working group

Yukon supports the continuation of the work being completed by the CMEC Credit Transfer Working Group and looks forward to continued participation.

CMEC Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada

Preamble

The primary purpose for establishing credit transfer agreements among institutions of higher education is to increase opportunities for students to access postsecondary education by facilitating student mobility between institutions and sectors.

Students need reasonable assurance that they will be able to continue their studies at other postsecondary institutions to complete their educational plans and be able to obtain appropriate credit transfer for work previously completed.

In addition, by ensuring that learners receive appropriate recognition for learning already achieved, efficiencies in both time and money can be gained by students, institutions, and governments. The ability for learners at all stages of their lives and careers to easily move into, between, and out of postsecondary education is a key component in building a postsecondary education system that makes lifelong learning a reality.

Credit transfer agreements will vary between provinces and territories and may include a variety of approaches to recognizing previous academic achievement including, but not limited to, establishing course-by-course equivalencies, granting unassigned credit, agreeing to grant specified blocks of credit transfer for completed credentials, or the development of prior learning assessment and recognition processes.

The following statement of principles recognizes that credit transfer can occur between all different types of postsecondary institutions, public and private.

Principles

1. The effectiveness of transfer agreements in optimizing student mobility requires that students, prior to beginning their studies at another institution, have knowledge of, and current information about, available credit transfer opportunities and limitations. Institutions should be committed to providing current and reliable information about transfer of credit policies and the procedures to be followed to obtain credit transfer in a routine manner.
2. Students and institutions should be satisfied that transfer decisions are considered in a consistent manner. Postsecondary institutions should develop and maintain clearly stated policies and procedures for consideration of transfer of credit. Students should be able to obtain an institution's rationale for a refusal, and institutions should have clear procedures for students to appeal such decisions.

3. Postsecondary institutions within each province/territory should be committed to working with other postsecondary institutions, transfer agencies, and governments, as appropriate, to enhance and maintain credit transfer opportunities. Negotiations between institutions regarding equivalency of credit should recognize that the substance of learning experiences may be equivalent in terms of content, rigour, and outcomes although the learning has occurred in a variety of ways.
4. Ministers recognize that all credit transfer agreements should be consistent with the academic integrity of programs and the right of postsecondary institutions to determine program design and delivery, to determine academic prerequisites, and to establish admission criteria and certification requirements of academic achievement. Ministers also recognize that the academic integrity and autonomy of the individual institutions and programs must be protected and preserved.
5. Neither transfer students nor direct-entry students should be advantaged or disadvantaged as a result of the credit transfer process.
6. Transfer students should be made aware that program-specific criteria and other factors, in addition to academic performance, may be used as admission criteria. That is, while possession of academic prerequisites makes an applicant eligible for admission, it does not guarantee admission to a particular program.