



CONESTOGA

Connect Life and Learning

**Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning**  
**College Administration** - 299 Doon Valley Drive, Kitchener, ON N2G 4M4 Canada  
519.748.5220, [www.conestogac.on.ca](http://www.conestogac.on.ca)

**Final Status Report**  
**ONCAT Project 2016-32**  
**Enhancing the PSW to PN Bridge through Responsive**  
**Pathway Redesign**  
**December 22, 2016**

## **Executive Summary:**

Conestoga College ITAL (Conestoga) has worked to enhance an educational pathway between the Personal Support Worker certificates (PSW) to Conestoga's Practical Nursing diploma program (PN).

The goal of this project was to redesign a pathway to the Practical Nursing (PN) Diploma for Personal Support Workers (PSW). Through an integrated program design, curriculum was intentionally developed to meet the diverse learning needs of the Personal Support Worker. The implementation of the new PSW to PN redesign and related curriculum enhances the student experience while ensuring that graduates obtain the knowledge, skills, and judgement to successfully complete the Canadian Practical Nursing Registration Exam. Standardized admission processes further strengthened the bridge resulting in what we expect will be improved student retention and success.

This unique pathway provides opportunities for PSWs to continue to work part-time gaining valuable experience in the health-care field, while working towards their diploma; typically requiring one to two days per week. This certificate to diploma pathway provides students an opportunity to explore health care as a PSW, helping meet their goals of becoming a nurse, for those wishing to do so. The opportunity to provide highly engaging and interactive learning opportunities allows PSWs to engage in continuing education and has implications for meeting needs-based workforce demands. This format will engage students who may otherwise be unable to enter full-time programming. It is our intent to increase student retention and success by strengthening integrated knowledge-practice learning by utilizing online, clinical and simulation-based learning opportunities. Improved retention, student success and satisfaction were key priorities of this pathway redesign. This pathway redesign strengthens both the academic rigor of the pathway and better supports the needs and expectations of our future students.

## Project Overview:

### Phase One – Program Mapping and Gap Analysis:

Relevant program design matrices, learning outcomes, and all course outlines for the PSW program were reviewed by the PN team. Additionally, program maps demonstrating how the program learning outcomes are met through the individual program curriculum were supplied.

Faculty completed a comprehensive gap analysis for the pathways ([Appendix A](#)), and the following recommendations were shared with the team to ensure strong pathways between the programs:

- a) Representatives recommends the following bridging courses be offered to bridge students, as shown in detail in [Appendix B](#):

Course Title	Course Code	Delivery Hours	Credits
College Reading & Writing Skills	COMM1085	45	3
Safety in the Workplace	OHS1320	15	1
Human Physiology	PNUR1143	45	3
Introduction to Pharmacotherapeutics 1	PNUR1153	15	1
Professional Nursing 1	PNUR1157	45	3
Adult Development and Aging	PNUR1165	30	2
Information and Communication Technologies	PNUR1174	15	1
General Elective		42	3
Nursing Concepts 2	PNUR1228	60	4
Pathophysiology and Pharmacotherapeutics 2	PNUR1243	60	4
Professional Nursing 2	PNUR1257	45	3
Human Development and Health Promotion	PNUR1265	30	2
Nursing Lab 2	PNUR1275	30	2
General Elective		42	3

- b) Representatives recommend the following courses be added to the bridge curriculum for delivery beginning in the 2016/17 academic year:

Course Title	Course Code	Delivery Hours
PSW to PN Concepts 1: Assessment	PNUR****	28 hours
PSW to PN Nursing Lab & Practice 1	PNUR****	28 hours
PSW to PN Nursing Practice 2	PNUR****	132 hours

### Phase Two – Pathway Development:

Both program teams recognized the importance of creating accessible pathways of education for students, while maintaining program integrity and providing improvements to strengthen student success. Phase Two of the project included the development of a program pathway, including bridging courses that addressed gaps in knowledge, skills and/or abilities identified through the gap analysis completed in Phase One ([Appendix A](#)).

Once the bridge was developed, the minimum GPA and other relevant eligibility standards for students seeking admission to these established pathways were determined. Also identified were the courses for which transfer credit is to be granted to students entering via each established pathway, as well as the remaining courses to be completed at Conestoga. See [Appendix B and C](#) for details regarding the academic bridge and [Appendix D](#) for

complete pathway details.

## Phase Three: Pathway Publication and Final Report

Conestoga's PSW and PN teams have partnered to complete all analyses and conclusions that support the objectives of project 2016-32, including: a curriculum and gap analysis of the pathways ([Appendix A](#)), a corresponding explanation of bridge curriculum and scheduling ([Appendix B](#)), required pathway documentation ([Appendix D](#)), and a detailed financial statement (provided in a separate excel sheet, as requested by ONCAT).

Complete pathway details will be submitted at [ontransfer.ca](http://ontransfer.ca) by March 15, 2016. The Credit Transfer and Registrar's Offices of the partner institutions will be appropriately informed of the new pathway details..

## Viability Report and Best Practices:

Through the Major Program Review and ONCAT proposal, it was determined that the PSW to PN bridge would serve as a sustainable option for PSW graduates to obtain their Practical Nursing diplomas.

The following best practices were brought forward:

- 1) PSW to PN Bridge students require additional socialization to the nursing professional role. It was determined that all PSW to PN bridge students would enter into PN program at level 3 (Appendix C). This served to increase professional socialization, critical thinking, and concentrated efforts as a full-time student earlier to promote successful program completion, increase retention and student satisfaction.
- 2) PSW to PN Bridge students prefer a faster pathway. The previous pathway was 3 years and 8 months in total. Students had a difficult time connecting knowledge over the longer timeframe. It was determined that students would best succeed over a shorter duration. The redesigned bridge can now be completed in as little as 2 years and 4 months.
- 3) PSW to PN Bridge students require deeper connections across curriculum. Curriculum was mapped across both programs, and a new integrated curriculum approach was designed through impactful and intentional design — one that emphasizes interprofessional practice realities. Lab, clinical courses, and theoretical concepts for clinical reasoning and practice were stacked within a semester to promote student success, and further integrate learning across the semesters (new from previous design).
- 4) Private Career college PSW graduates had historically struggled to complete the PSW to PN Bridge successfully, resulting in attrition and decreased student retention. It was decided that PSW grads with private career college certificates would be required to complete one of Conestoga's Enhanced Personal Support Worker Programs to be eligible for entry into the PSW to PN Bridge.
- 5) Previous PSW to PN Bridge students struggled with math concepts, translating across pharmacology and clinical courses with the PN program. It was decided that a new Math entry requirement would be introduced to help students succeed in the PSW to PN Bridge, and increase requisite knowledge in support of student preparedness. This also promotes consistency between the PSW to PN Bridge and PN program admission requirements.
- 6) The admission process was identified as an area that required standardization. The full admission process has now moved from the School of Health and Life Sciences & Community Services to the Registrar's office to ensure consistency, improve efficiency, and ensure adequate rigor to the admission process.

## **Appendix A: Findings of Gap Analysis**

The following is a curriculum and gap analysis of PSW to PN based on a learning outcomes framework.

### Method:

**The collaborative process outlined below formulated the method of the PSW to PN pathway redesign:**

#### **Phase One: Major Program Review [MPR] (February to April, 2016)**

Team-based critical review and reflection grounded the MPR process. Through analysis of the MPR, the team identified gaps and opportunities for enhancements and planning towards a new pathway for PSW to PN. The team focused on enhancing student success and retention, while addressing the rigor, quality and sustainability of the program.

Nursing and PSW Program Advisory Committees and key stakeholders were engaged in meaningful and strategic discussions. Key stakeholders included employers, instructors, the PN program and PSW program staff, and current students.

The three 125-hour Enhanced Personal Worker Programs (1. Acute Care; 2. Community-Based Care, and; 3. Palliative-End-of-Life Care) were reviewed and implemented as eligibility criteria for PSWs with a credential from a private career college in order to best prepare them for continued academic success.

#### **Phase Two: Program Mapping & Design (April to June, 2016)**

The I<sup>4</sup> pedagogical framework was used to guide program redesign and curriculum development in addition to the CNO entry-to-practice competencies.

Learning outcomes from Conestoga's PSW program (version 1609) were compared against the learning outcomes from the PN diploma. A gap analysis was done to identify PSW outcomes that achieved outcomes defined for Practical Nursing. For each PN program outcome, gaps and their remediation were assessed and documented. Please see the table in the GAP ANALYSIS: Personal Support Worker (1609) Practical Nursing (1609).

The breadth of knowledge and experience the PSW brings to the PN program was acknowledged during program design and mapping of learning outcomes and course outlines from the PSW and PN programs. This process identified curriculum overlap that required reinforcement and gaps needing to be addressed.

#### **Phase Three: Program Implementation & Delivery (June to September, 2016)**

Potential PSW to PN Bridge students were contacted in June with updated program admission requirements, the new admission process, and delivery design for the new Bridge starting Fall 2016.

The first cohort of the program was implemented for Fall 2016, with an intake of 32 students.

#### **Phase Four: Accreditation & Program Approval (ongoing)**

The new PSW to PN design will be submitted for program approval with the Ministry of Advanced

Education and Skills Development.

### Findings:

Many of the applied competencies developed in the PSW program address the technical competencies in semester 1 of the PN program. Opportunities to exempt PSW students from partial courses of an applied nature were identified.

### Recommendations:

5 key areas were found to have gaps between the PSW program curriculum and the PN program curriculum:

- Entry-to-practice competencies from the College of Nurses of Ontario
- Professional, legal and ethical standards specific to nursing
- Critical thinking
- Leadership
- Comprehensive nursing assessments across the lifespan, including nursing diagnosis, planning, implementation and evaluation

PSW graduates wishing to bridge to the PN program need to take 3 tailored courses in the bridge to meet additional competencies.

### Conclusions:

A pathway for PSW students is feasible based on the capabilities of PSW program graduates. The pathway will acknowledge the PSW knowledge, skills and work experience in applied areas of the Practical Nursing program, resulting in a part-time pathway from PSW to PN.

## GAP ANALYSIS: Personal Support Worker (1609) Practical Nursing (1609)

<b>Practical Nursing Outcomes Conestoga College</b>	<b>Personal Support Worker Outcomes Conestoga College</b>	<b>Gap in Knowledge and Skills</b>	<b>Remediation of Gap</b>
1. Achieve the Entry to Practice Competencies of the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) and the Program Standards of the [Ministry].	No outcomes apply here.	The gap here is very significant difference between PSW and PN graduates. While PSW graduates will graduate with strong knowledge and skills around communication skills and basic care, they will be completely lacking knowledge and skills pertaining to assessments, nursing skills required for entry to practice, nursing process, critical thinking, and decision making.	Students will be required to take PN semester 3 and 4 full-time to promote socialization to the role of the professional nurse
2. Communicate with clients, families and communities to enhance person-centred care.	4. Participate as a member of the interprofessional care team and maintain collaborative working relationships, accept and integrate constructive feedback, and use effective and appropriate communication and relationship skills to provide supportive client-centered care in a variety of care settings. 5. Provide client-centered and client-directed care that promotes independence and is based on ethical principles, sensitive to diverse client and family values, beliefs and needs and which follows the direction of the interprofessional care team.	PSW graduates typically have an advantage upon main stream PN students in terms of communication outcomes and the gap is in the context of the nursing differences of the nursing role and communication.	PSW to PN bridge students will take: Information and Communication Technologies Professional Nursing 1, 2 and 3 to enhance skills
3. Manage information within a professional, legal, and ethical framework using technology appropriately.	11. Observe, report and document relevant client information using the appropriate mode of verbal or written communication and written or electronic documentation in a timely manner and in accordance	PSW graduates come with a basic understanding of documentation legislation and ethics; however, it is pertinent to the PSW role.	PSW to PN bridge students will take Information and Communication technologies course and Professional Nursing 1, 2 and 3 to enhance knowledge on ethical

<b>Practical Nursing Outcomes Conestoga College</b>	<b>Personal Support Worker Outcomes Conestoga College</b>	<b>Gap in Knowledge and Skills</b>	<b>Remediation of Gap</b>
	<p>with the required employer policies and procedures and applicable legislation.</p> <p>14. Identify and report situations of neglect and potential, alleged or witnessed/actual incidents of abuse of clients, family, care partners, and/or PSWs and respond in accordance with all applicable legislation and employer policies and procedures.</p>	<p>PSW graduates lack knowledge on professional, legal and ethical standards specific to nursing</p>	<p>frameworks and professional and legal nursing implications</p>
<p>4. Demonstrate collaborative practice and leadership supportive of care delivery and team effectiveness..</p>	<p>10. Assist in the provision of client-centered, culturally relevant, palliative and end of life care to clients, their families and care partners including observing, reporting, documenting and transferring accountability in accordance with the plan of care/service plan.</p> <p>No outcomes directly apply to leadership</p>	<p>The gap here is in regards to leadership skills for the PSW.</p>	<p>All students will take Professional Nursing 4: Leadership</p>
<p>5. Conduct equitable and just relationships with clients and members of the health care team.</p>	<p>9. Assist family and care partners who are caring for dependent individuals, considering clients' and family choices, the direction of the plan of care/service plan, and the PSW's professional boundaries.</p> <p>12. Understand how to establish and maintain helping and professional relationships with clients, their families and care partners and support systems which reflect open communication, advocacy, professional boundaries, employer's policies and adherence to confidentiality and privacy legislation.</p>	<p>The gap here is incomplete. The PSW graduate has a foundational communication skills knowledge, but require additional learning in the role and context of the nurse.</p>	<p>Students will take: Professional Nursing 1 Professional Nursing 2 Professional Nursing 3: Foundations for Community Practice</p> <p>In addition, students will complete 2 clinical courses, and consolidation where these skills can be applied.</p>



<b>Practical Nursing Outcomes Conestoga College</b>	<b>Personal Support Worker Outcomes Conestoga College</b>	<b>Gap in Knowledge and Skills</b>	<b>Remediation of Gap</b>
6. Assess clients across the life span, in a systematic and holistic manner.	11. Observe, report and document relevant client information using the appropriate mode of verbal or written communication and written or electronic documentation in a timely manner and in accordance with the required employer policies and procedures and applicable legislation.	PSW graduates have a basic understanding of observations with a focus on how age related changes impact care, and holistic care. There is a gap here in regards to systematic nursing assessment.	Students will need to take a shortened version of the following courses to address the gap: Nursing Lab and Practice 1 Nursing Concepts 1: Assessment  Students will complete all other nursing lab, practice and concepts course in entirety to meet this gap
7. Plan safe and competent nursing care, based upon a thorough analysis of available data and evidence-informed practice guidelines.	No outcomes apply here.	PSW graduates have a basic knowledge and skill to perform basic care that is including in nursing care (bathing, transfers, feeding, and supporting care) There is a gap here in regards to providing the full scope of nursing care, analyzing data and evidenced informed practice guidelines	Students will need to take a shortened version of the following courses to address the gap: Nursing Lab and Practice 1 Nursing Concepts 1: Assessment  Students will complete all other nursing lab, practice and concepts course in entirety to meet this gap
8. Select and perform nursing interventions using clinical judgment, in collaboration with the client and, where appropriate, the health care team that promote health and well-being, prevent disease and injury, maintain and/or restore health, promote rehabilitation, and/or provide palliation.	No outcomes apply here.	The gap here is complete - i.e. this is an area not covered in the PSW certificate program as it is specific to nursing, so bridge students will have to complete all the material pertaining to this outcome.	Students will need to take a shortened version of the following courses to address the gap: Nursing Lab and Practice 1 Nursing Concepts 1: Assessment Nursing Practice 2  Students will take in entirety the 2 <sup>nd</sup> through 4 <sup>th</sup> semester of the PN program to achieve this outcome.
9. Evaluate the outcomes resulting from all interventions in the nurse-client interaction and modify the plan of care as required.	No outcomes apply here.	The gap here is complete - i.e. this is an area not covered in the PSW certificate program as it is specific to nursing, so	Students will need to take a shortened version of the following courses to address the gap:

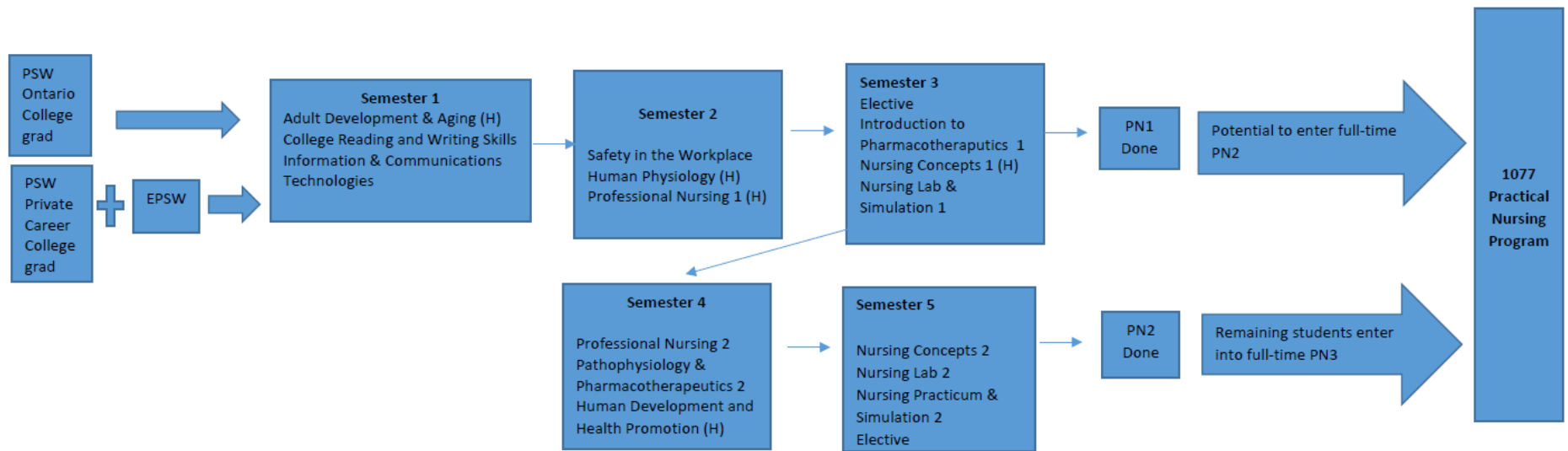
<b>Practical Nursing Outcomes Conestoga College</b>	<b>Personal Support Worker Outcomes Conestoga College</b>	<b>Gap in Knowledge and Skills</b>	<b>Remediation of Gap</b>
		bridge students will have to complete all the material pertaining to this outcome.	<p>Nursing Lab and Practice 1 Nursing Concepts 1: Assessment Nursing Practice 2</p> <p>Students will take in entirety the 2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> semester of the PN program to achieve this outcome.</p>
10. Promote healthy and safe work environments in a variety of health care settings.	<p>11. Observe, report and document relevant client information using the appropriate mode of verbal or written communication and written or electronic documentation in a timely manner and in accordance with the required employer policies and procedures and applicable legislation.</p> <p>3) Act responsibly and be accountable for one's own actions while recognizing the boundaries of knowledge and skills within the PSW role that necessitates using problem solving, time management, stress management and critical thinking skills and strategies and requires collaboration with the client, family, care partners, supervisor and/or other members.</p>	The gap here is incomplete- i.e. PSW students have baseline knowledge on healthy and safe work environments, but require additional knowledge on the nurses role in achieving this outcome	<p>Students will need to take a shortened version of the following courses to address the gap: Nursing Lab and Practice 1 Nursing Concepts 1: Assessment Nursing Practice 2</p> <p>Students will take in entirety the 2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> semester of the PN program to achieve this outcome.</p>
11. Practice in a self-regulated, professional and ethical manner, complying with relevant legislation and with the standards of both the regulatory body and the practice setting to provide safe and competent client care.	No outcomes apply here.	The gap here is complete- PSW graduates require knowledge on the nursing professional as self-regulated, ethics, and standards of practice for the regulatory body.	<p>Students will take: Professional Nursing 1 Professional Nursing 2 Professional Nursing 3: Foundations for Community Practice</p> <p>In addition, students will complete 2 clinical courses, and</p>

<b><i>Practical Nursing Outcomes Conestoga College</i></b>	<b><i>Personal Support Worker Outcomes Conestoga College</i></b>	<b><i>Gap in Knowledge and Skills</i></b>	<b><i>Remediation of Gap</i></b>
			consolidation where these skills can be applied.

## Appendix B: Bridging Documentation

New Program Summary Map PSW-PN Bridge Map							
	Semester 1 Foundations for Practical Nursing	Semester 2 Exposure to Professional Practice 1	Semester 3 Exposure to Professional Practice 2	Completion of PN1 Potential to Enter Full- time	Semester 4 Development of Professional Practice 1	Semester 5 Development of Professional Practice 2	Full Time PN3
Science		<b>PNUR1143</b> Human Physiology	<b>PNUR1153</b> Introduction to Pharmacotherapeutics		<b>PNUR1243</b> Pathophysiology & Pharmacology 2		<b>1077 Practical Nursing Program</b>
Nursing Theory	<b>PNUR1165</b> Adult Development & Aging	<b>PNUR1157</b> Professional Nursing 1	<b>PNURXXXX</b> PSW to PN Concepts 1: Assessment		<b>PNUR1257</b> Professional Nursing 2		
					<b>PNUR1265</b> Human Development & Health Promotion	<b>PNUR1228</b> Nursing Concepts 2	
Nursing Practice	<b>PNUR1174</b> Information and Communication Technologies	<b>OHS1320</b> Safety in the Workplace	<b>PNURXXXX</b> PSW to PN Nursing Lab & Practice 1			<b>PNUR1275</b> Nursing Lab 2	
						<b>PNURXXXX</b> PSW to PN Nursing Practice 2	
General Knowledge for Personal Development	<b>COMM1085</b> College Reading and Writing Skills		Elective			Elective	

## Appendix C: PSW to PN Bridge Pathways - Courses and Semesters



## Appendix D: Pathway Documentation

<b>PATHWAY DETAILS</b>	
Title of Pathway: Use Official Program/Credential Titles	From: Personal Support Worker To: Practical Nursing
Pathway Type: <i>Degree Completion, Certificate to Diploma, Diploma to Diploma, Degree to Diploma, etc.</i>	Certificate to Diploma
List other postsecondary institution/s involved in the creation of the pathway:	None
Pathway Implementation Date (Senate approval):	September 2016
Pathway Implementation Date (posting to the ONTransfer.ca website):	Pending program approval
Contact Procedure for Pathway Implementation:	Conestoga's Credit Transfer Office Phone: 519-748-5220 ext. 3656 <a href="mailto:CreditTransfer@conestogac.on.ca">CreditTransfer@conestogac.on.ca</a>
Eligibility for the Pathway (student eligibility for the pathway):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSW certificate from a 1 year Ontario College program</li> <li>• Minimum average of 75% are required:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade 12 English, C or U</li> <li>• Grade 12 Mathematics, C or U</li> <li>• Grade 11 or 12 Biology, C or U</li> <li>• Grade 11 or 12 Physics or Chemistry, C or U, or Grade 11 or 12 Science, C or U</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicant currently working as a PSW</li> </ul>
Applicant must have graduated from the program at the sending institution:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PSW certificate from a 1 year Ontario College program</li> </ul>
Minimum program GPA or % required to be eligible for this pathway:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum average of 75% are required:</li> </ul>
Minimum GPA or % required in specific courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum average of 75% are required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grade 12 English, C or U</li> <li>Grade 12 Mathematics, C or U</li> <li>Grade 11 or 12 Biology, C or U</li> <li>Grade 11 or 12 Physics or Chemistry, C or U, or Grade 11 or 12 Science, C or U</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Total number of transfer credits / full courses to be granted at receiving institution (please express as a numerical proportion, i.e. 90 of 120)	Minimum 6 out of 24 credits
Transfer Credits Granted (please describe pathway clearly and succinctly):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Students who successfully completed an English language course eligible for credit transfer will receive credit transfer for COMM1085</li> <li>-Conestoga PSW grads will receive exemption from OHS132- Safety and the Workplace</li> <li>- Students may be eligible for credit transfer of electives pending previous academic history</li> <li>-Students will be granted exemption of hours from first semester PN lab and concept courses ( newly designed shorter course are offered to Bridge students, to account for previous knowledge and experience).</li> </ul>
Total number of program courses that must be	25% or 7 of 29 (PSW to PN bridge + PN program)

<p>completed at the receiving institution in order to graduate (please express as a numerical proportion, i.e. 90 of 120):</p>	
<p>Anticipated time to complete the credential if enrolled full-time:</p>	<p>PSW to PN Bridge + PN program- 2 years 4 months  First 1 year 8 months are offered part-time  Last 8 months - full-time</p>
<p>List of eligible institutions and their programs</p>	<p>Ontario College 1-year PSW programs  Other colleges will be reviewed on an individual basis  Private career college students will be required to complete the Conestoga College Certificate;- Enhanced Personal Support Worker to be eligible for consideration to the bridge</p>