



PATHWAY FOR ADMISSION

University Academic Preparation and Retention at a
Community College (ONCAT Project 2016-36)

Executive Summary

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Some university applicants are not admissible to undergraduate study because of what the university deems a lack of preparation, largely evaluated on high school grade point average. If admitted, the students would be at risk of not achieving success due to a lack of preparedness for university-level academics. Currently, these students are refused admission, and must either upgrade academically, or look for options with less competitive admissions requirements.

The University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) and Durham College (DC) have collaborated to develop an alternative pathway for students who are otherwise not admissible to the university. The pathway allows successful students to be eligible to earn university transfer credits concurrently with a pre-university program that will prepare them for admission to undergraduate study and academic success. The pathway specifically addresses communication and life skills related to academic success to improve the students' preparedness for university level study in the fall without losing valuable time upgrading in high school.

This ONCAT pre-university project built on the successes of a previous ONCAT funded project (2015-23) that allowed students who were suspended from the university to remediate at a community college over the summer, while earning credits toward a college certificate. The pre-university program was developed using a similar framework, and focused on numeracy, literacy and study skills that can be offered as a proactive option for students who are not normally admissible to the university. Successful completion of this program would allow the student to enter an undergraduate program with at least one transfer credit or to elect to enter a college program.

The pre-university program includes four core courses at the university level; they are: academic success, a double-weighted fundamentals of communications course, and a fundamentals of math course. In the academic success course, the students concentrate on improving their life skills with particular focus on time management, study skills, responsibility and financial management. The double communication course is essentially one course on individual communication and one course on group communication. The course covers fundamental literacy, verbal, and written communication and comprehension but also focusses on communicating with authority and self-advocacy. The math fundamentals course is expected to ensure numeracy skills are present for day-to-day success.

The conceptualization of the pre-university pathway program has been completed and a pilot date has been proposed. Implementation has been delayed from the initial proposed launch date as both institutions had already dedicated their efforts to successfully launching another pilot program for the summer of 2017. Through the conceptualization of this pre-university pathway program, and drawing on knowledge gained through the previous ONCAT funded project (2015-2023), a number of learnings have been generated. Notably, the recognition that building a student's self-efficacy remains a key part of their success, regardless if taking a pre-university or remedial program.