



Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer
180 Dundas Street West, Suite 1902
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Z8

Tel: (416) 640-6951
Fax: (416) 640-6959

www.oncat.ca

INTERPROVINCIAL TRANSFER FORUM September 2015

Background & Context

In October 2014, the four provincial 'CATs' signed an MOU to support collaboration on student mobility at a national level. The first tangible outcome of the MOU was a meeting of senior academic leaders from across Canada to discuss current issues in student mobility and to develop a concrete set of actions that would help address challenges from a Canadian perspective.

In September 2015, ONCAT, ACAT and BCCAT co-sponsored the first Inter-Provincial Transfer Forum at SFU's downtown campus in Vancouver. Attended by over 90 academic and non-academic staff from 6 Provinces, the Forum brought together key individuals able to create and implement plans for student transfer at their own institutions as well as provincially and nationally.

The Agenda

The day was structured in two parts – the first part provided information from national thought leaders and practitioners in the field while the second part allowed for brainstorming and idea generation among the participants.

Through three presentations, participants had the opportunity to identify and discuss national themes in student mobility and hear about promising practices in working interprovincial partnerships. The Forum also heard about a US partnership that is developing a common set of learning outcomes for general education requirements across 10 states (<http://www.wiche.edu/passport/home>).

The final session of the day allowed the participants the opportunity to help develop short and long term action items on four topics:

- Institutional Relationships across Provincial Borders;
- Relationships at the Program or Discipline level;
- Research and Data needs to support a national action plan; and
- Advice to the 'CATs' on how to better support institutions.

Key Themes

Over the course of the day, many topics were addressed and discussed. The following represents a number of the key themes or considerations that would underpin a successful action plan.

- **The need to put students first** – There was a strong consensus that this is the 'right' thing to do and that successful solutions will need to incorporate the student perspective.
- **The need to keep things simple** – To have a sustainable long-term solution, it will have to be simple and straightforward. We cannot get 'bogged down' in too much unnecessary detail.
- **The importance of integrating faculty** – All transfer decisions are based in academic programs. Successful solutions will require faculty input all stages of development from inception through to implementation.

- **Learning Outcomes** – There is a strong desire to root transfer processes in learning outcomes to streamline processes and focus on deep learning.
- **Practical business related issues** – Recognition that there are a lot of practical issues that need to be resolved to create a system that works. Need to commit resources to credit transfer and develop a business plan to ensure ongoing support.
- **Differences in systems across the country** – There are many differences in the culture and structure of postsecondary systems across Canada. We will have to develop a framework of solutions that each province/region can adopt to meet their own situations. Reflecting different historical developments of colleges and universities and governmental policies.

Possible Initiatives

While we are still looking to develop a full nation-wide action plan, four short-term initiatives were discussed at the Forum:

1. **Common First year / One-year Transfer Credential** – There was a fair amount of support for developing a common first year / one-year transfer credential at the national level based on learning outcomes.
2. **Research Plan** – Participants at the forum identified the need to have a strong national research plan to help make good decisions. A national research forum could be developed to review existing research and develop a common plan to address gaps and better inform next steps on credit transfer.
3. **Common Information on Transfer Agreements** – The evolution of technology makes it possible for Provinces to share agreements (both block and course-to-course) across Canada. Over time, it may be possible to evolve our electronic systems to a common platform that would facilitate information sharing.
4. **National Governance** – In the absence of a national Federal structure to guide the group, it was recognized that we will have to develop a national system of governance. One possibility would be to re-vision the Pan Canadian Council on Admissions and Transfer to be a Council of ‘CATs’ to help link provincial activities across Canada.

Next Steps

There was tremendous enthusiasm and energy from the Ontario participants. We would like to build on this energy by creating a forum where we can refine the ideas that have been identified and create a workable plan for Ontario institutions.

At the National level, the conference organizers are putting together a set of proceedings for the day. ONCAT will continue to be the conduit between the Ontario participants and the other provinces.

We expect to be in a position to announce positive plans on how to move forward sometime in the New Year.