

## Learning Outcomes and Credit Transfer

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# Higher Education: Trends

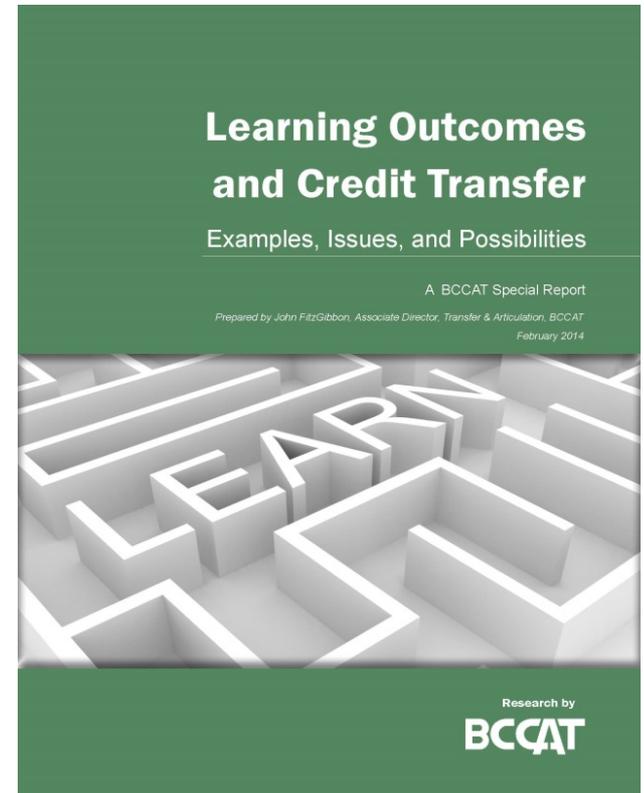
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- emphasis on enabling cross-jurisdictional mobility
- example of European initiatives
- marketing of programs domestically and internationally
- decline in numbers of traditional domestic students
- widening of labour market and jobs plans
- increased interest in quality assurance

*In a global higher education context of increasing competition for student recruitment, inter-institutional student mobility, credit transfer flexibility, and quality assurance policies, learning outcomes have become part of recent international trends in institutional, curricula and pedagogical reform having profound effects on all aspects of curriculum development, implementation and evaluation (Hubball & Gold, 2007, p. 5).*

# Learning Outcomes: Definition

- ▶ **Quality Assurance and Improvement**
  - ▶ Accreditation
  - ▶ Credentials
  - ▶ Demonstrations of learning
  - ▶ Program improvement and/or evaluation
  - ▶ Certification of graduates
- ▶ **Improvement in Teaching and Learning**
  - ▶ Sequencing of learning
  - ▶ Description of quality
  - ▶ Improvement in teaching/learning
  - ▶ Communication of achievement
- ▶ **Credit Accumulation and Transfer**
  - ▶ Assessment of prior learning
  - ▶ Credit accumulation and transfer



# Learning Outcomes in Transfer

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- Providing common reference point
- Establishing equivalency efficiently
- Assessing quality
- Describing results/outputs
- Facilitating interconnectedness of higher education

*... as Europeans undertook an epochal effort to harmonize dozens of very disparate university systems, they decided to make students' demonstrated levels of learning the touchstone for transfer protocols and for guiding student progress toward next level degree programs (Gaston, 2010, p. xii).*

# Jurisdictional Examples: BC

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## ➤ **Transfer Aims**

- Access to degree programs
- Facilitate credential completion
- Progress to subsequent credential through pathway

## ➤ **Learning Outcomes used for:**

- Describing courses and programs, esp. career, professional, vocational
- Regulatory body expectations
- Information for articulation requests
- Adult Basic Education Transfer Grid
- Block transfers, eg, Tourism, Business, Health, Human Services
- Flexible Pre-Majors, eg, Computing Education

*British Columbia has taken the California model and developed it into . . . possibly the most extensive credit accumulation and transfer arrangement in the world (Bekhradnia, 2004).*

# Jurisdictional Examples: Ontario

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## ➤ Transfer Aims

- Credential progression
- Reduce overlap in programming

## ➤ Learning Outcomes used for:

- Aligning courses and programs to program standards
- Preparation and progression—levels of difficulty, sequence
- Program pathway development

*Program standards have clearly defined learning outcomes for programs across the province so it is an efficient way to improve pathways and provide more students with choices (MTCU, 2011, p. 7).*

# Jurisdictional Examples: US

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## ➤ **Transfer Aims**

- Degree completion
- Separation of lower and upper division institutions and programs

## ➤ **Learning Outcomes used for:**

- Basis of accreditation
- Definition of lower division core/general education core
- National discussion on standards, eg, LEAP, Essential LOs, Tuning
- Qualifications Frameworks, eg, Degree Qualification Framework
- Interstate transfer, eg, WICHE Interstate Passport

*Two- and four-year campus transfer partners [are] working together in nine states to align transfer policy and practice around authentic assessment of student competencies (AAC&U, 2013).*

# Jurisdictional Examples: Europe

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## ➤ Transfer Aims

- Integration of labour market across continent
- Integration of academic and vocational education (lifelong learning)
- Facilitate student exchange

## ➤ Learning Outcomes used for:

- Describing courses and programs, eg, Tuning
- Basis for quality standards
- Basis for awarding credit (with time)
- Basis for 3-cycle degree structure
- Description of learning in credentials, ie, Qualifications Frameworks

*Bologna countries have agreed to use learning outcomes for multiple applications, including the development of new style national qualifications frameworks, lifelong learning, credit transfer and accumulation requirements, recognition needs and quality assurance purposes (Adam, 2008, p. 8).*

# Jurisdictional Examples: Australia

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## ➤ **Transfer Aims**

- Domestic mobility
- International marketing

## ➤ **Learning Outcomes used for:**

- Adopting the elements of Bologna, eg, Diploma supplement, 3-cycle degrees, qualifications framework
- Within state transfer agreements
- Vocational to higher education pathways

# Issues

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- Lack of consistency in approach
- Differing needs in relation to transfer
- Outside encouragement, eg, accreditation, professional certification
- Nature of learning
- Faculty and institutional autonomy
- Standardization
- Control—definition of credentials
- What constitutes credit
- Internationalization—international mobility
- Development and maintenance of trust

# Possible Directions

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- Agreed upon terminology
- Degree level learning outcomes, eg, Tuning, learning and thresholds
- Discussions that include wide representation
- Credit accumulation system, Qualifications Framework
- National repository for earned credits
- Plan for student mobility, especially international

## Discussion--Questions

Thank You!

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