



ONCAT

Ontario Council on
Articulation and Transfer

2013–14 Annual Report



ONCAT

ONCAT was created to advance Ontario's development of an integrated postsecondary system that maximizes opportunities for student success.

Students will experience ease of mobility among publicly funded postsecondary institutions.

Students will experience reduced barriers when transferring, which will help them to graduate.

There will be increased and improved collaboration among institutions (colleges and universities) regarding transfer opportunities and articulation.

Stakeholders will have improved awareness and knowledge of transfer opportunities, outcomes, and progress.

Our Membership

Our members include all of Ontario's
44 publicly funded postsecondary institutions.

Who we are

Established in 2011, the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) is a government-funded organization created to enhance student pathways and reduce barriers for students looking to transfer among Ontario's 44 publicly funded postsecondary institutions. ONCAT is the successor organization to the College University Consortium Council (CUCC), established in 1996 as an advisory body to government with representation from the college and university sectors.

ONCAT was created as a member-driven organization to work collaboratively with all publicly funded colleges and universities to help develop the system of credit transfer, while also respecting institutional autonomy. ONCAT is the only organization in Ontario that brings together all members of the postsecondary education sector.

What we do

ONCAT's activities are part of the Ontario government's commitment of \$73.7 million over five years to develop a more comprehensive and transparent system of pathways and credit transfer. Through its membership, ONCAT works to enhance information channels for students, help postsecondary institutions collaborate in building enhanced pathways, and support knowledge gathering and research.

Algoma University	Georgian College of Applied Arts and Technology	Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology
Algonquin College of Applied Arts and Technology	Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning	Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
Brock University	La Cité Collégiale	Sir Sandford Fleming College of Applied Arts and Technology
Cambrian College of Applied Arts and Technology	Lakehead University	St. Clair College of Applied Arts and Technology
Canadore College of Applied Arts and Technology	Lambton College of Applied Arts and Technology	St. Lawrence College of Applied Arts and Technology
Carleton University	Laurentian University	Trent University
Centennial College of Applied Arts and Technology	Loyalist College of Applied Arts and Technology	University of Guelph
Collège Boréal	McMaster University	University of Ontario Institute of Technology
Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning	Mohawk College of Applied Arts and Technology	University of Ottawa
Confederation College of Applied Arts and Technology	Niagara College of Applied Arts and Technology	University of Toronto
Durham College of Applied Arts and Technology	Nipissing University	University of Waterloo
Fanshawe College of Applied Arts and Technology	Northern College of Applied Arts and Technology	University of Windsor
George Brown College of Applied Arts and Technology	OCAD University	Western University
	Queen's University	Wilfrid Laurier University
	Ryerson University	York University
	Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology	

Message from the Board Co-Chairs

We are proud to be Co-Chairs of an organization that champions student mobility and has made such great strides once again over the past year in developing a comprehensive credit transfer system in Ontario.



More than 21,500 students transfer among Ontario's colleges and universities every year. Those students want their transfer to be easy and their previous learning to be recognized. They want to know that our institutions value their time and money and are working to provide them with the best experience and education possible. At the same time, we, as institutions, are dedicated to providing students with exemplary service so that they can achieve their goals.

The complexity of our institutions combined with rapid changes in student expectations means that these ideals have not always been achieved. But thanks to the insight of our institutional colleagues, the support of student groups, and the commitment of government, ONCAT was created.

With the continuing support of all these postsecondary partners, ONCAT is making the ideal of a seamless credit transfer experience into a reality. As leaders of institutions we have seen first-hand how ONCAT, through encouraging dialogue, facilitating institutional collaboration, and developing made-in-Ontario best practices, is transforming the postsecondary sector.

From vastly increasing the number of student pathways, to collecting the first set of data on Ontario credit transfer students, to ensuring the transparency of transfer policies, ONCAT has achieved tangible results. In this report, you'll see evidence of these and so many more accomplishments.

None of it would be possible without the Ontario government's recognition of the increasing role credit transfer is playing in postsecondary education, and its commitment to supporting a collective effort driven by institutions themselves.

On behalf of the Board, we would like to thank Glenn Craney, ONCAT's Executive Director, for his clear vision and his talent at bringing people together to create solutions. We would also like to thank the ONCAT team for their hard work and dedication. Finally, we extend our deep appreciation to all of our colleagues in Ontario's colleges and universities, who work tirelessly and continually to find innovative ways to promote student success.

Together, we are changing the culture of credit transfer in Ontario.

Sincerely,

Dominic Giroux
President and Vice-Chancellor, Laurentian University

Don Lovisa
President, Durham College

Board of Directors

As a member-driven organization our board is designed to ensure representation from both the college and university sector, from students who have direct experience in transfer, and from members of the external community with an interest in the postsecondary education sector.

Dominic Giroux, Laurentian University, President and Vice-Chancellor (Co-Chair)
Don Lovisa, President, Durham College (Co-Chair)
Sharon Bate, External Representative
Cindy Hazell, External Representative
Rhonda Lenton, Vice-President Academic & Provost, York University
Julia K. Mackenzie, College Student Representative (started Jan. 2014)
Baldev Pooni, Vice-President Academic, Georgian College (started Jan. 2014)
Mary Preece, Provost and Vice-President Academic, Sheridan College
Peter Ricketts, Vice-President (Academic) and Provost, Carleton University
Jim Robeson, College/University Graduate Representative (until Dec. 2013)
Luke Speers, University Student Representative
Lane Trotter, Senior Vice-President Academic, Fanshawe College (until Dec. 2013)

Ex Officio Members of the Board

Glenn Craney, Executive Director, ONCAT
Karen Creditor, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario College Application Service
Peter Gooch, Senior Director, Policy and Analysis, Council of Ontario Universities
George Granger, Executive Director, Ontario Universities' Application Centre
Bill Summers, Vice-President Research, Colleges Ontario

Student Advisory Board

The Student Advisory Board acts as a critical student-focused sounding board for new initiatives that support student mobility in Ontario.

Mike Bleskie, College Student Alliance
Amir Eftekarpour, Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance
Tyler Epp, College Student Alliance
Kaley Kennedy, Canadian Federation of Students
Rylan Kinnon, Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance
Julia K. Mackenzie, ONCAT Board (started Jan. 2014)
Sean Madden, Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance
Tamara Popovic, College Student Alliance (until Sept. 2013)
Jim Robeson, ONCAT Board (until Dec. 2013)
Luke Speers, ONCAT Board
Mike Yam, Canadian Federation of Students

Message from the Executive Director

What a year it has been for all of us here at ONCAT. Since becoming Executive Director in 2012, I have enjoyed leading an incredibly passionate team of individuals whose drive, determination, and hard work has been instrumental in developing the infrastructure required for a comprehensive and transparent credit transfer system in Ontario.



I'm proud of the progress we have made over the past 12 months. Through engaging with our institutional partners, students, and government, we have worked to develop an integrated postsecondary system that maximizes student success.

We have launched several firsts for Ontario. On our student website, ONTransfer.ca, we now boast a Course-to-Course Transfer Guide as well as institutional profiles that highlight credit transfer policies and procedures. We also worked with institutions to collect preliminary student mobility data, which confirms what we already knew about the significant role credit transfer plays in the province.

As part of our new organizational identity, we have created a website, oncat.ca, as a venue for sharing our learning about credit transfer with institutional partners, as well as a new logo featuring two mortarboards joined by an arrow, which symbolizes our strategic priority of enhancing student mobility.

In this report, we focus on our work to enhance communication channels for students, help postsecondary institutions collaborate in building enhanced pathways, and support knowledge gathering and research. I hope you're as impressed as I am with all we've accomplished to date. However, there is much on the horizon, as many of our projects are still underway and we continue to respond to identified needs by embarking on new activities.

Collaboration is the cornerstone of our approach, and our success is due in large part to our Board of Directors, currently Co-Chaired by Dominic Giroux, President and Vice-Chancellor of Laurentian University and Don Lovisa, President of Durham College, and to our many other stakeholders, including institutional partners, student groups, and government. Thanks in particular to Don, whose tenure as inaugural Co-Chair has come to an end, for his unwavering commitment and promotion of student mobility.

We look forward to your continued support as we work together to define issues and create joint solutions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glenn Craney'.

Glenn Craney

The Team

Glenn Craney, *Executive Director*

Lia Quickert, *Communications Director*

Shauna Love, *Marketing and Student Pathways Manager*

Lena Balata, *Office Coordinator*

Melinda Cheng, *Special Project Assistant: Data Projects*

Nicole Fallon, *Project Lead*

Laura Gomes, *Project Lead*

Karl Wieler, *Senior Project Manager*

Arlene Williams, *Communications Advisor*

ENHANCE

Enhance information channels for students

enhance

By enhancing communication with students, ONCAT both increases their awareness of transfer opportunities and facilitates their ability to transfer.

- ◆ ONCAT works with students, through its advisory board, by engaging with student leaders and participating in student fairs, to ensure that there is a better understanding of the transfer and mobility opportunities afforded by our system.
- ◆ ONCAT maintains the ONTransfer.ca website, which provides students with up-to-date, authoritative information on transfer opportunities among postsecondary institutions.
 - ◆ The Program Transfer Guide allows students to see if they can apply a block of program credits to a similar program at another institution.
 - ◆ The new Course-to-Course Transfer Guide, launched on January 20, 2014, is a course equivalency search tool that, for the first time in Ontario, allows students to identify which specific courses will be accepted by institutions.

Launched
Course-to-Course
Transfer Guide

650+

NUMBER OF STUDENT
PATHWAYS AMONG
ONTARIO'S UNIVERSITIES
AND COLLEGES

35,000+

TRANSFER
OPPORTUNITIES

- ◆ ONCAT works with partner institutions to ensure that all pathways and agreements are available on the ONTransfer.ca website.
 - ◆ Since 2011, the total number of agreements has increased from about 300 to more than 650 in 2014, and we have funded the development of about 65 more, many of which are moving to the implementation stage.
 - ◆ These arrangements have created more than 35,000 student transfer possibilities throughout Ontario's college and university system.
 - ◆ There are now more than 80,000 course equivalencies in the Course-to-Course Transfer Guide.
- ◆ ONCAT is also improving the understanding of the policies and practices around credit transfer at each publicly assisted college and university.
 - ◆ For the first time in Ontario, students can easily access and compare postsecondary institutions' credit transfer policies by viewing them on ONTransfer.ca.
- ◆ ONCAT, working with its members, is also helping to create a made-in-Ontario set of best practices in credit transfer policies and procedures.
 - ◆ Once completed, this will ensure consistency and transparency in credit transfer assessment and communication practices at Ontario's colleges and universities. This work aligns with a key priority of the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU).

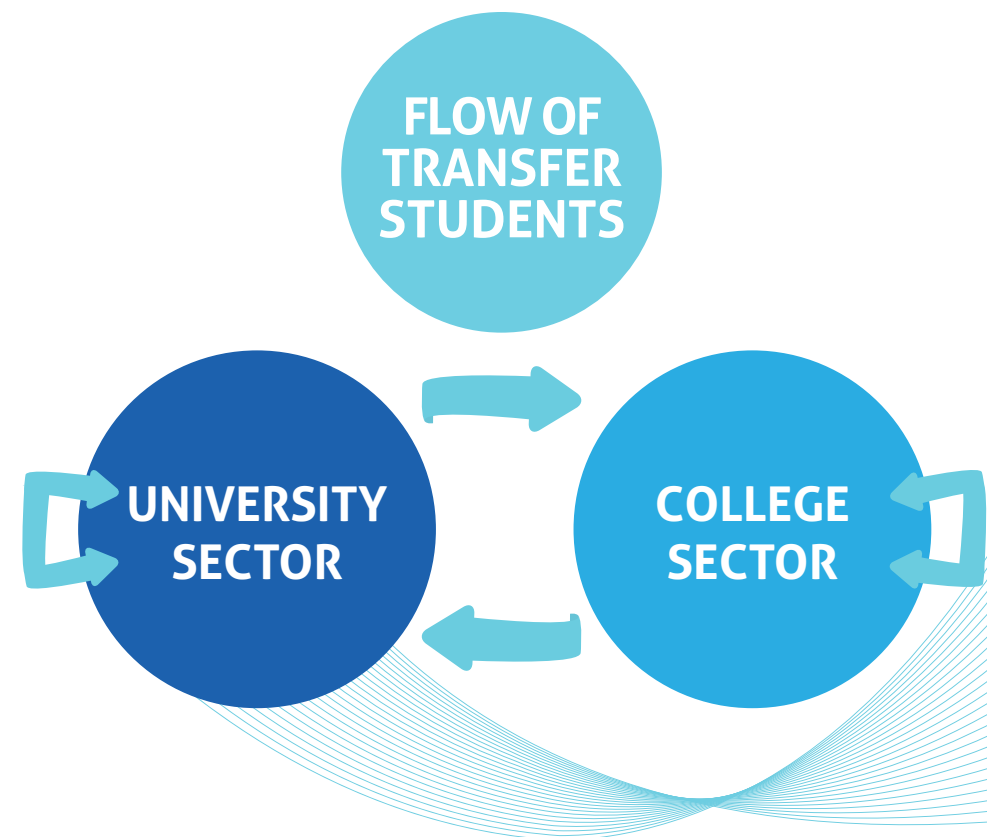
COLLABORATE Help postsecondary institutions collaborate in building enhanced pathways

collaborate

Collaboration is the cornerstone of ONCAT's approach, which focuses on bringing together member institutions to define their needs and develop joint solutions.

- ◆ ONCAT has supported more than 65 projects spanning various types of student transfer, including apprenticeship to diploma, diploma to diploma, and diploma to degree. Most of these projects are multi-institutional by nature, and are designed to identify gaps in the curriculum and develop programming to fill those gaps.
- ◆ ONCAT is facilitating a process with several member institutions in the development of Diploma to Diploma and Degree to Degree pathways which will ensure that students' courses and equivalent programs will be recognized for credit.
 - ▶ Implementation of the initial work, consisting of 14 projects in high-demand areas of the college sector such as business, pre-health, and dental hygiene, is already underway.
 - ▶ The same process is being initiated with university partners, focusing on high-demand university programs. This work aligns with a key MTCU priority.

- ◆ In October 2013, ONCAT issued a series of Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for new postsecondary project development. These project RFPs were designed to encourage academic bridge programming that will help students transfer credit from their current or previously completed studies into diploma or degree programs.
 - ▶ After careful review of all proposals by committees of representatives from the ONCAT membership, 25 projects are being funded.
- ◆ ONCAT hosts an annual Student Pathways in Higher Education Conference that brings together credit transfer experts to share and promote best practices.
 - ▶ The second annual Conference, held February 27–March 1, 2013, brought together more than 250 credit transfer professionals in Toronto and featured more than 40 interactive workshops.
 - ▶ The third annual Conference is scheduled for April 28–29, 2014.



SUPPORT Support knowledge gathering and research support

Supporting member institutions in gathering accurate credit transfer information so that students experience reduced barriers when transferring.

◆ In a first for Ontario, ONCAT collected student mobility data from institutions, setting the stage for a new era of information sharing.

▶ While the data is still preliminary, it shows that over 21,500 students transfer among institutions within Ontario each year — reinforcing credit transfer as a key postsecondary issue.

▶ ONCAT is supporting institutions in improving their data collection processes and enhancing the overall information available on credit transfer.

◆ ONCAT supports research that improves our understanding of the student transfer experience, and is gathering data on credit transfer and creating better mechanisms for its collection. Through these efforts, ONCAT is developing more robust indicators of success with respect to credit transfer, both as an organization and as a province.

◆ In October 2013, ONCAT issued a series of Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for new postsecondary student-focused research. These research RFPs were focused on enhancing understanding of the current state of the Ontario credit transfer system, with the goal of identifying opportunities to increase efficiencies and provide better service to students.

▶ After careful review of all proposals by committees of representatives from the ONCAT membership, five research projects are being funded.

21,500
APPROXIMATE NUMBER
OF STUDENTS WHO
TRANSFER WITHIN
ONTARIO EACH YEAR

◆ ONCAT is assisting MTCU in their development of a comprehensive Credit Transfer Accountability Framework for Ontario. To implement the Framework, the long-term plan of the Ministry is for all institutions to collect credit transfer data as part of the regular enrolment submission (CSER for colleges and USER for universities).

▶ As a first step, colleges and universities submitted a Credit Transfer Data Availability Report to ONCAT, which included reporting on six key data elements.

▶ The information from these reports provided a better understanding of credit transfer in the province, and outlined the challenges faced by institutions when collecting and maintaining their respective data on credit transfer.

▶ To help address these data issues, ONCAT is providing one-time grants to institutions to cover the direct costs associated with building the necessary data infrastructure.

TOP FIVE TRANSFER PROGRAMS



Future Steps

- ◆ The high level of engagement by all publicly funded postsecondary institutions reflects the significance of credit transfer activity in the province. Given the importance of credit transfer, many future activities have already been identified.

New initiatives

- ◆ In collaboration with its members, ONCAT will continue to develop student pathways in various types of directions — diploma to diploma, degree to degree, diploma to degree, as well as degree to diploma. ONCAT will take a strategic approach in consultation with its members. For example, ONCAT has identified a number of gaps with respect to the availability of pathways from diploma to degree in a number of program clusters, including Engineering and IT, Health Sciences, and Social and Community Services.
- ◆ ONCAT would also like to support partnered programming that grows from the commonalities among institutions, be it shared regional mandates or similar student populations. For example, strong institutional partnerships have emerged on the basis of common regional-economic, cultural, or linguistic grounds; ONCAT wants to find ways to support those naturally evolving partnership arrangements.
- ◆ The development of a common set of learning outcomes to support credit transfer is an emerging priority for ONCAT and its members. Beginning this year, ONCAT will fund pilot projects to begin the creation of a common set of learning outcome tools that will help institutions develop future pathways for students.
- ◆ There is still work to be done on implementing the projects already funded and underway; not all of our bridging programming has been finalized by the governing bodies at each of the participating institutions. ONCAT would like to find ways to support institutions — through financial and other means — to fully implement their newly created transfer pathways.

Knowledge gathering

- ◆ ONCAT will continue to work with institutions to collect common data. Over the course of the next year, ONCAT will work with its member institutions to ensure that they can provide the data that is required to support the implementation of the Credit Transfer Accountability Framework, an MTCU priority aimed at creating system-wide metrics and benchmarks.

Inter-Provincial Partnerships

- ◆ ONCAT, along with its provincial counterparts, including the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer, the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer, and the New Brunswick Council on Articulations and Transfer, is developing a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate for the purpose of improving understanding of and facilitating effective practice in credit transfer and student mobility across provincial jurisdictions and on a pan-Canadian basis.

Ontario Education Number (OEN)

- ◆ ONCAT, in collaboration with its members, MTCU, and the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO), will continue to look at best practices in analyzing OEN-related data and how Ontario might proceed to use the newly collected data, particularly in regard to gaining a better understanding of student mobility.

Committees

Our activities are driven by the needs of institutions as expressed through project-focused committees composed of member representatives.

- ◆ **Best Practices in Credit Transfer Committee:** A working group of member representatives tasked with identifying and recommending best practices in credit transfer policies and procedures, with the goal of developing a framework that will support institutions' efforts to create a more seamless transfer experience for students.
- ◆ **Degree to Degree Transfer Steering Committee:** A working group of a set of member universities focusing on the development of pathways among high-interest degree programs to ensure that, when transferring, students' courses and equivalent programs are recognized for credit.
- ◆ **Learning Outcomes Steering Committee:** A working group of member representatives who are developing a better understanding of the role of learning outcomes in the credit transfer process and how they can improve existing and future pathways.
- ◆ **ONTransfer.ca Committee:** Initially established as the Course-to-Course (C2C) Steering Committee to collaborate with ONCAT on the overall direction of the C2C Transfer Guide and ensure the guide met the needs of all participating institutions, this committee continues to meet quarterly to provide input on the ONTransfer.ca website.
 - ◆ **Data Subcommittee:** Established to address data issues and develop submission protocols for the C2C Transfer Guide, this committee meets monthly to resolve outstanding issues.
 - ◆ **Reports Subcommittee:** Established to determine additional report functionality for ONTransfer.ca and the Course Equivalency Management Center (CEMC) for colleges and universities, this committee meets monthly until reporting requirements are finalized.
- ◆ **Conference Planning Committee:** A committee responsible for providing advice and expertise to inform the creation of the Annual Student Pathways in Higher Education Conference.
- ◆ **Accountability Framework Pilot Group:** A working group focusing on piloting and refining institutional benchmarks for student mobility in Ontario.