

Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The primary purpose for establishing transfer credit agreements among institutions of higher education is to increase opportunities for students to access postsecondary education by facilitating student mobility between institutions and sectors.¹

Increased capacity for student mobility based on transfer of credit between Canadian post-secondary institutions in all provinces is required to support our increasingly mobile student population and workforce. It is important to recognize the level of student mobility in Canada and the student need to carry their post-secondary credits with them. Transferability of credits also supports lifelong learning in the Canadian model of decentralized post secondary institutions. Transferability of College and University credit will enhance Canadians' ability to maximize their education in an era of ever increasing student mobility.

The Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT) was struck in 2006, as a mechanism to follow through upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC www.cmec.ca) protocol on Interprovincial Transfer. The 2010 Report of the CMEC Working Group on Credit Transfer describes the development of transfer in all provinces and territories. The report further foresees these developments as leading to consideration of a national system of transfer that would enable student mobility across Canada by establishing transfer arrangements between provinces.

There is presently no organization that works towards transfer across all provinces and all post secondary sectors. So PCCAT intends to bring together stakeholders from across Canada to collaborate on an effective and systematic approach to increase the transferability of post-secondary credit between post-secondary institutions across Canada. PCCAT will be an organization of institutions and members who will engage to achieve the goal of pan Canadian student mobility.

GOAL

The Pan Canadian Consortium on admissions and Transfer (PCAT) is dedicated to enhancing student mobility by expanding the transferability of credit inter-provincially in Canada.

OBJECTIVES

Explore and promote best practices in interprovincial Transfer of post secondary Credit:

- Increase awareness of transfer credit systems and best practices among stakeholders, target audiences, and end users across Canada.

¹ CMEC Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer In Canada, Report of the CMEC Working group on Credit Transfer 2010, appendix p.1.

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- Support the development and dissemination of Pan Canadian Guiding Principles on transfer credit.
- Identify strategies to address and mitigate barriers related to the establishment of sustainable transfer credit systems.

FUNCTIONS

1. Promote and facilitate interprovincial transfer credit, articulation and other student mobility initiatives;
2. Influence government policy on student mobility and advocate for such policies;
3. Establish partnerships with associations and bodies with a similar mandate focused on increasing student mobility;
4. Identify and catalogue findings from existing research on interprovincial transfer credit;
5. Identify research opportunities and seek funding to conduct research on transfer and outcomes for transfer students;
6. Be a clearing house for research on student mobility;
7. Maintain a website that provides information on the work of PCCAT;
8. Participate, collaborate and coordinate with stakeholders across Canada to expand transfer credit opportunities and systems and propose solutions to overcome those barriers;
9. Identify barriers and challenges to establishing an inter provincial transfer credit system and propose solutions at both the national and provincial levels;
10. Liaise with registrars' offices in Canadian institutions;
11. Liaise with other organizations involved in instituting interprovincial transfer credit initiatives. Organizations to include but not be restricted to the following:
 - Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC);
 - Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC);
 - Polytechnics Canada (PC);
 - National Association of International Educators (NAFSA);
 - Canadian Association of Prior Learning and Assessment (CAPLA); and
 - The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC);
12. Consider the international implications of student mobility.

MEMBERSHIP

The overarching goal for Consortium membership is to be inclusive, while taking into account issues of practicality. Membership should come from across post-secondary sectors and provincial jurisdictions. Consortium members will therefore be drawn from all 13 Canadian jurisdictions, Provinces and Territories and will include post-secondary institutions, transfer agencies, interested organizations and individuals.

PCCAT will recruit membership from across Canada to ensure jurisdictional representation. A letter of invitation will be sent to post secondary institutions, agencies and other organizations across Canada inviting their participation in PCCAT.

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ORGANISATION

The Consortium will oversee the implementation of strategic Goals, Objectives and Tasks. Decisions of the Consortium are made by consensus, taking into consideration the views of consortium members.

The sub-committee recommends the following organizational structure for the consortium:

The Consortium will be managed by a Council that will include representation from all regions of Canada and the different post-secondary sectors. Once the Council is formed there will be two co-chairs. The Council will incorporate the Consortium as a Society and will establish by laws for the Consortium.

The Council will approach CMEC to talk about the need for resources and capacity if the PCCAT is to be successful in meeting its objectives.

At the annual meeting the Consortium will select Council members for two year terms which can be renewed to a maximum of four years. Every effort will be made to rotate the co-chairs among all participating jurisdictions.

The Council will be responsible for:

- Running the business of the Council;
- Establishing a relationship with CMEC.
- Coordinating the scheduling and developing the agenda for each Consortium meeting;
- Ensuring Consortium members are informed of Consortium business;
- Arranging one face to face meeting of the Consortium annually;
- Arranging meetings of the Consortium executive via conference calls
- Facilitating an annual strategic planning session of the Consortium that includes:
 - A review of the Terms of Reference; and,
 - The development of a work plan that outlines priorities for action, outcomes, timeframes and assignment of responsibility.
- Establishing ad hoc committees as needed to carry out tasks.

Prospective Consortium members should demonstrate a commitment to:

- Work collaboratively to realize the Consortium's Goals and Objectives;
- Be available and willing to undertake or advise on activities related to achieving the desired outcomes of the Consortium; and/ or,
- Give time to help build the organization as well as to support Consortium initiatives.

Prospective Consortium members should value:

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- Direct, transparent communication;
- Collaboration, inclusiveness, coherence, objectivity;
- Efficiency, making maximum use of resources and structures;
- Proactive, thoughtful and considerate participation which encourages the expression of differences of opinion; and,
- Integrity of the Consortium and the legitimate institutional roles and responsibilities of all Consortium members.

NEXT STEPS

For 2011-12 a Founding Consortium Council will be established to oversee the operations of the Consortium for the next year and develop the plan to legally establish PCCAT as a society, develop by laws and establish membership criteria. The Founding Consortium Council should also begin to establish relationships with CMEC and other organizations that may be able to support PCCAT. This Council will consist of one representative from each region of the country (British Columbia, Prairies, Ontario, Quebec, Atlantic Canada). The Founding Council will determine over the next year the structure it uses to achieve the PCCAT objectives (e.g. Chair/Co-Chairs). We also recommend that, for the sake of consistency, one of the current co-chairs be on the Founding Consortium Council