DATA DICTIONARY

Transfer Credit Awarded (TCA)

Version 1.07

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Document History

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1. Document Usage

1.1. Document Purpose

The Data Dictionary has been developed for Transfer Credit Awarded (TCA) provincial data collection from participating Alberta Learner Pathways System institutions. The Data Dictionary provides terms and definitions that support TCA data standards, representing what will be formally accepted for this data by the various key stakeholders.

Details regarding data validation rules and fields for TCA data standards can be found in the [TCA User Guide](), and the vision, goals, guiding principles, data questions and system measure in the [TCA Guiding Principles]() document.

1.2. Audience

The primary audience for the Data Dictionary is:

- The institutions/stakeholders required to provide and/or understand TCA data.
- The ACAT Secretariat/Advanced Education, who facilitate TCA data standards and the system.

2. Glossary of Terms

2.1 TCA Terms and Definitions/Descriptions

Terms marked with * are based on Learner and Enrolment Reporting System (LERS) definitions.
Caveats for the data set are listed in the TCA Data Caveats section at the end of this document.

Transfer Credit Awarded Terms	Definitions/Descriptions for Terms

Academic Year*	Start and end dates for the annual TCA reporting period that mirror institutional LERS enrolment reporting cycle as applicable, with the TCA academic year based on institutional fiscal year start and end dates and not by calendar year.
	
	• For Example:
	Academic Year for TCA and LERS Reporting/Institutional Fiscal Year End Dates:
	  o For March 31st institution fiscal year ends, enrolment reporting cycle is May 1 – April 30.
	  o For June 30th institution fiscal year ends, enrolment reporting cycle is July 1 to June 30.
	
	Note: Academic year is included in data submissions identified by a single year (e.g., 2021 for the 2021-2022 academic year), and annual data submissions are provided based on the institution's start and end dates for their previously completed fiscal year. For example, if your fiscal year starts May 1, 2021 and ends April 30, 2022, and you are assessing and awarding transfer credit for a student for a course(s) in January 2022, this credit would be reported in your 2021 (2021/2022) submission, not in your 2022 (2022/2023) submission.

Alberta Student Number*	A learner's Alberta Student Number (ASN). This is a value that stays with the individual during their academic career, and will follow them as they move from institution to institution. All K-12 students in Alberta have an ASN, which will follow them into post-secondary studies.
Approved Program	A structured and institutionally defined or recognized set of courses that are recorded on an institutional transcript and that are jurisdictionally, nationally, or organizationally approved, accredited or otherwise recognized (e.g., by Ministry (in alignment with the PSLA, ACF, STAEA), NIAB, WINHEC, Professional Regulatory Organizations, Professional Associations).
Birth Date*	A learner's date of birth = "YYYYMMDD".

Transfer Credit Awarded Terms	Definitions/Descriptions for Terms
Course Code at From Institution	From Institution Course Code (Course Code = Code and Number with a separating white space) for which the Learner got credit. For block transfer credit or credential laddering in a new program, indicate From Institution Course Code by identifying the specific name and/or type of credential description (e.g., FICourseCode = "Business Administration Diploma" (program + credential = preferred documentation) or "Diploma" (credential only if program + credential is not available). For High School IB, AP, or A Level FICourseCodes, the course code indicated should be the full course name/description similar to the actual IB, AP, or A Level course name and not an institution-specific short code. For PLAR Credit Awarded data, use "Prior Learning" for the Course Code at From Institution.
Course Code at To institution	To Institution Course Code (Course Code = Code and Number with a separating white space) for which the Learner got credit. For block transfer credit or credential laddering in a new program, indicate To Institution Course Code by identifying the specific name and type of credential (e.g., TCACourseCode = "Credential Laddering Diploma to Bachelor of Management Degree").
Course-by-Course Transfer Credit	Specified (direct) or unspecified (generic) transfer credit awarded for a course(s) at a receiving ("To") institution based on coursework that was successfully completed at another recognized institution.
Credit	The numerical value assigned to a course by a post-secondary institution. Credit valuation should align with an institution's definition of credit value in its Provider and Program Registry System (PAPRS) records (as applicable).
Date course taken at From institution	Academic Year in which Learner took the course at the From Institution. For PLAR Credit Awarded, the latest year of experience for which the credit is being awarded.
Date transfer credit was awarded at receiving institution	Academic Year in which the Learner was assessed to receive transfer credit at the To Institution (same academic year for which the TCA data is submitted).
From Institution	From Institution where Learner completed work to get credit. For all From Institutions, where the From Institution Location = 1 (in Alberta), 2 (outside of Alberta in Canada), 3 (outside of Canada), or 4 (unknown), From Institutions will be

Transfer Credit Awarded Terms	Definitions/Descriptions for Terms
	validated against postsecondary PESC Global Education Organization (GEO) Codes for all countries (https://geocode.pesc.org/).
	(PESC GEO Codes = seven digits (two digit alpha ISO country code followed by a five digit numeric institution code, e.g., "CA00005").
	For data with IB, AP, or A Level course codes, the From Institution name must be "High School" or "HIGHSCL".
	For data with PLAR course codes, the From Institution name must be "Prior Learning" or "PRIOR".
	Note: All Alberta institutions will have an Operating Name in PAPRS that is used in the adult learning system even if the PSI does not use PAPRS. See Provider Operating Names in the TCA User Guide for a list of all potential "To Institution" Alberta Learner Pathways System institution member operating names from PAPRS.
From Institution Location	The geographical location of the institution (or high school) where the learner completed the course(s) being awarded transfer credit. The values for FILocation will be system-generated, populated by the From Institution GEO Code in each record, based on the GEO Code's identified Country location and on the Province location for Alberta.
	Calculated value will be: "1" = Alberta "2" = Outside of Alberta in Canada "3" = Outside of Canada "4" = Unknown
	High School and Prior Learning courses will be assigned the geographical value of "4".
Notes	PSI comments on transfer credit awarded where relevant.
	For Institutions that are not required to use PAPRS or that have data requirement limitations for some programming, they will use "0" in the PAPRS Program ID and PAPRS Program Specialization Code data fields and provide program name and program specialization name details in the Notes data field.
PAPRS Program ID*	Program ID for which learners got transfer credit awarded.
	Program ID must be defined in PAPRS and be an existing PAPRS Program ID for an active program; it is the Program Code ID value that is reported by each publicly funded Alberta PSI in PAPRS and is used to identify the program name.

Transfer Credit Awarded Terms	Definitions/Descriptions for Terms
	For Institutions that are not required to use PAPRS, or that have data requirement limitations for some programming, they must use a program code of "0" and provide their institution's own Program ID and Name in the Notes data field. **Note**: Institutions do **not** include the following program/specialization types in their reporting: Non-credit data (e.g., Academic Upgrading), Open Studies data, or Graduate Studies data.
PAPRS Program Specialization Code*	Specialization Code for which learners got transfer credit awarded. Specialization Code must be defined in PAPRS and be an existing PAPRS Program Specialization Code; it is the program Specialization ID code value that is reported by each publicly funded Alberta PSI in PAPRS and is used to identify the program specialization name. For Institutions that are not required to use PAPRS, do not offer this type of programming, or have data requirement limitations for some programming, they must use a program code of "0" and provide their institution's own Program Specialization Code and Name in the Notes data field. **Note**: Institutions do **not** include the following program/specialization types in their reporting: Non-credit data (e.g., Academic Upgrading), Open Studies data, or Graduate Studies data.
PLAR Credit Awarded	Credit granted based on an assessment of informal, non-formal, or experiential learning that could be used toward a course(s) or credential. PLAR credit is granted at a student level to non-graduate students following assessment (e.g., written challenge exam, oral exam or interview, performance assessment, product assessment, portfolio assessment). Credit is granted by the receiving ("To") institution in alignment with their identified PLAR assessment practices. **Note**: PLAR credit awarded data is the value/number of credits transcripted for PLAR by course. PLAR credit awarded data **excludes** both transfer credit awarded data (transfer credit is included in other TCA data fields) and instructional credit that is awarded to students who are currently enrolled in a course(s) at the receiving ("To") institution. The broader definition for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) includes formal (e.g., transfer credit, credential recognition) and informal, non-formal and experiential learning (e.g., PLAR). In applicable contexts for some institutions, where they are unable to award formal credit for formal learning (e.g., stale-dated courses), these institutions may have PLAR assessment practices that include assessment and awarding of PLAR credit.

Transfer Credit Awarded Terms	Definitions/Descriptions for Terms
	To Institutions must enter either TCA or PLAR credit data within one record, and must enter PLAR records if the institution has applicable records for the PLARCA definition. When TCA data fields are populated, the PLAR credit awarded data field should be null.* *(In XML, a null PLARCA value is specified by not including the PLARCA attribute (data field) for the TransferCredit element (record) (e.g., PLARCA data field is removed from the record when there is no PLARCA present in that record). This is the XML standard for specifying null attribute values (see XML Sample).) Numbers or blank spaces (e.g., "0", "0.00"," ") cannot be provided for PLARCA when recording null PLARCA values or the record will fail validation. The PLARCA data field must be removed from a record when there is no PLARCA present.) If a PLAR assessment was done and zero credit was awarded, "0" (versus null) is a valid entry for PLARCA and must be entered in the PLAR credit awarded data field. If PLAR credit awarded data is provided: • From Institution – must be the following default PLAR code = "Prior Learning" or "PRIOR" • From Course Code – must be the following default PLAR code = "Prior Learning" • TCA – must be the following default PLAR code = "0" (0 = Prior Learning). • FILocation – will be system-generated as the following default geographical value for PLAR = "4".
Program Students	Students enrolled in an approved program.
Recognized Institution	All institutions that offer approved programs for which receiving ("To") Alberta Learner Pathways System member institutions award students transfer credit.
Specified Credit	A type of direct transfer credit awarded when the learning outcomes for a previously completed course or combined courses are deemed substantially equal to a specific course(s) at the receiving ("To") institution.
To Institution	Learner's PSI operating name (full and current operating name for the institution) that they transferred to, and who is awarding them transfer credit. Must be a valid, current PAPRS Institution Operating Name. **Note**: All Alberta Learner Pathways System member PSIs ("To Institutions") will have an Operating Name in PAPRS that is used in the adult learning system even if the PSI does not use PAPRS. See Provider Operating Names in the TCA User Guide for a list of all potential "To Institution" Alberta Learner Pathways System institution member operating names from PAPRS.

Transfer Credit Awarded Terms	Definitions/Descriptions for Terms
Transfer Credit Awarded	Formal credit assessed and granted by a receiving ("To") institution at a course, block of courses, or credential level that may be used towards an approved credential program for work completed at another recognized institution. Credit is awarded at a student level to full time and part time non-graduate students in their first enrolment in or upon their return to a specific credential program during the academic year of reporting for completed coursework in alignment with identified common transfer credit practices at institutions. **Note**: Transfer credit awarded data is the value/number of transfer credits awarded. Transfer credit awarded data **may include** AP, IB, and A Level data (with separate aggregate reporting available to PSIs for AP/IB/A Level data), University Transfer data, collaborative programs and dual admissions data, for-credit micro-credentials data, and data for students continuing at the institution in a different program (e.g., Change of Program, After Degrees, Second Degrees) as applicable to the institution. Transfer credit awarded data **excludes** PLAR credit awarded data (there is a separate data field for PLAR credit awarded in the TCA data set), non-credit data (e.g., academic upgrading, etc.), Open Studies data, graduate studies data, laddering within the same program area/school within the institution, and instructional credit that is awarded to students who are currently enrolled in a course(s) at the receiving ("To") institution (e.g., credit for students on Letters of Permission and for Study Abroad/Exchange Students is excluded from the TCA data set). If a student has more than one record for first enrolment in more than one program within the same data submission year, TCA data for the student should be submitted only once for the submission year based on their most current program enrolment or most current transfer credit awarded record available. See TCA Data Caveats section in this document (TCA Data Dictionary).
TCA Students who have been Awarded Transfer Credit	Students who have been granted transfer credit at a receiving ("To") institution for a course(s) or credential(s) completed at another recognized institution. **Note**: Definition is for the purposes of the TCA data set, focusing on provincial transfer credit, and understanding that institutions' definitions for "transfer student" will vary.
Unique Student	An individual learner who is identified by their own Alberta Student Number (or jurisdictional/institutional equivalent for out-of-province member institutions' data that may be included).
Unspecified Credit	A type of generic transfer credit awarded when the learning outcomes for a previously completed course or combined courses are deemed not substantially equal to a specific

Transfer Credit Awarded Terms	Definitions/Descriptions for Terms
	course(s) at the receiving ("To") institution. Credit granted is associated with a year level, requirement type, advanced standing, or an area of study (e.g., BIO2XX).

2.2 TCA Data Caveats

2.2.1 Alberta LPS member institutions participate in TCA. All Alberta publicly funded institutions participate. First Nations College and Indigenous Adult Learning Provider, private not-for-profit institution, and out-of-province institution LPS members may choose to participate for applicable data.

2.2.2 All transfer credit-related data fields are in alignment with identified common transfer credit practices at institutions (e.g., generally comparable for 80% of course content (for specified course-by-course transfer credit), course credit hours, minimum grade required, resources, and stale-dating (as applicable)).

2.2.3 The transfer credit shown in TCA data includes transfer credit assessed and awarded during the academic year of reporting. TCA data does not include transfer credit assessed but not awarded, or transfer credit awarded at time of graduation/credential audit. Based on institution-specific transfer policies and data, there will also be some variation in reporting (e.g., some institutions may report TCA data for all transfer credit assessed and some may report only transfer credit applied towards a credential). TCA data can also be affected when students change institutions, change programs, or do not complete a program.

2.2.4 Institution data is submitted annually by the academic year of reporting and not by calendar year, with the TCA academic year mirroring the LERS enrolment reporting cycle as applicable, which is based on the institutional fiscal year start and end dates for the previously completed fiscal year. (E.g., if your fiscal year starts May 1, 2021 and ends April 30, 2022, and you are assessing and awarding transfer credit for a student for a course(s) in January 2022, this credit would be reported in your 2021 (2021/2022) submission, not in your 2022 (2022/2023) submission.)

2.2.5 At this time, "credit" is defined differently depending on the institution, and may not be a universal definition across all data. TCA definitions for Transfer Credit Awarded and for Credit are provided and consistently applied in the TCA data set.

2.2.6 Some institutions' data includes a very small percentage of embedded Letters of Permission and Study Abroad data in transfer credit data that cannot be effectively identified and excluded, and excludes a small percentage of Challenge Exam data in PLAR credit data that may not have been recorded as PLAR credit.

2.2.7 Some institutions' Year 1 (2021/22 academic year) and potentially Year 2 (2022/23 academic year) data submissions may include:

- Use of the "9999" code for FIAcademicYearCourseTaken.

- Course level data only, without the full scope of TCA data for course, block and credential level.

As applicable, institution data system updates are in progress for fully capturing the identified data for future TCA submissions.

2.2.8   Year 1 (2021/22 academic year) institution data submissions for High School AP/IB/A Level data included diverse short codes and descriptions for TCA Course Codes, creating challenges for data comparability. Institution submissions for High School TCA Course Codes data provided for Year 2 (2022/23 academic year) onwards are planned to use institutions' non-short code descriptions to more closely align with actual AP/IB/A Level course descriptions.

2.2.9   Admissions processes vary, with some PSIs assessing transfer credit towards a student's program and others at a PSI level.

2.2.10   Requirements used to meet admission requirements are considered separate from course prerequisite requirements.

2.2.11   TCA data collection is focused on annual institution data reporting within one academic year. An estimated small percentage of student records from one submission year may be repeated in a later submission year(s) for students that move between programs or after a break in their studies return to the same program at an institution. As feasible, this repetition may be identified after institution data submission through identical duplicate records data analysis.

2.2.12   All TCA submitting institutions are using PESC GEO Codes as the data standard for From Institution names. GEO Codes will be used as the basis for all From Institution naming and data comparisons in the TCA data set, including in TCA SSRS data reports and TCA data cube.