

DATA DICTIONARY



Learner Pathways System (LPS)

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Document History

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Table of Contents

1. DOCUMENT USAGE	4
1.1. DOCUMENT PURPOSE	4
1.2. AUDIENCE	4
2. GLOSSARY OF TERMS.....	5
2.1 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS	5

1. Document Usage

1.1. Document Purpose

The Data Dictionary has been developed for and will continue to evolve during the evolution of Alberta's Learner Pathways System (LPS). The Data Dictionary provides terms and definitions that support LPS data standards, representing what will be formally accepted for this data by the various key stakeholders. Details regarding data validation rules and fields for the LPS data standards can be found in the LPS File Format Guides for courses, programs, and transfer decisions.

1.2. Audience

The primary audience for the Data Dictionary is:

- The various stakeholders required to understand the definitions for a common understanding to foster improved communications and data validation for courses, programs, and transfer decisions.
- The ACAT Secretariat/Advanced Education, who must facilitate LPS data standards and the system.

2. Glossary of Terms

2.1 Terms and Definitions

Learner Pathways System Terms	Description of/Definitions for Terms
ACAT Secretariat	The ACAT Secretariat/Learner Pathways is a team of government employees in Alberta Advanced Education that provides operational leadership for the Alberta Transfer System and post-secondary learner pathways, and supports and administers the work of ACAT. The Secretariat works collaboratively with post-secondary institutions/stakeholders and government in Alberta and Canada to provide Alberta Transfer System and learner pathways operational leadership, oversight, and support for post-secondary learner pathways, mobility, and formal and informal recognition of prior learning, with a focus on learners, admissions, and transfer. For more information: https://acat.alberta.ca/about/acat-secretariat/
ACAT Website	The ACAT website is an institution/organization-focused website designed to support the Alberta Transfer System and learner pathways and mobility in Alberta's post-secondary system, as well as the ACAT Secretariat's operational leadership and oversight for the transfer system and pathways. The ACAT website is a part of the Alberta Learner Pathways System (LPS) tools and data.
Active	A Course, Program or Transfer Decision that is currently available/being offered at an institution and can be found in the institution's active catalog/calendar.
Alberta Transfer System member institutions	Alberta Transfer System member institutions are comprised of publicly funded, Indigenous, private not-for-profit, and/or out-of-province post-secondary institutions that agree to and have met the criteria for admission to the Alberta Transfer System. For more information, please see the Alberta Transfer & Pathways webpage.
Alternative Offerings (Draft Definition)	Alternative Offerings are organized, structured education, training or credentials generally offered for non-credit by adult learning providers from business/industry, professional associations/regulatory bodies, government/agencies, Indigenous and other community organizations, and/or post-secondary institutions and continuing education outside formal post-secondary credential programs (e.g., micro-credentials, online offerings, Canadian Armed Forces Military Education and Training).

Learner Pathways System Terms	Description of/Definitions for Terms
Apprenticeship education	Apprenticeship education programs are post-secondary programs in which apprentices complete approximately 80% of their training on the job with an employer sponsor and 20% through classroom instruction delivered by a post-secondary institution or other recognized training provider (Advanced Education Apprenticeship and Industry Training, 2026).
Approved programs	Approved programs in Alberta are post-secondary programs approved by the Minister of Advanced Education (or their delegated authority). • In Alberta, the <u>Post-Secondary Learning Act</u> is the primary statute that sets out the legal framework for the governance of the post-secondary education system and publicly funded institutions, including the approval of programs. Under this Act, the <u>Programs of Study Regulation</u> provides the detailed rules for approving programs. • Programs of study must meet at least one of these criteria: - o provide at least 12 credits - o provide at least 240 instructional hours - o be an apprenticeship program established under the <u>Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education Act</u>. • There are two types of programs approved by the ministry: credentialed programs (<u>Alberta Credential Framework (ACF)</u>) and non-credentialed programs. • The ministry also works closely with regulatory bodies during the review process for proposed programs that are regulated (Alberta Advanced Education, 2026).
Articulation	The process of negotiating or interrelating courses, programs, and/or credentials from one institution that are recognized by another institution to allow students to receive credit towards a specific course and/or program.
Articulation Notes	Articulation Notes (if any) for a Course, Program or Transfer Decision. Articulation Notes provide additional, relevant information related to the offering or transfer decision. For example, recent changes to the offering. Articulation Notes are only viewable by those users who have access to LPS applications. Information in Articulation Notes are not publicly displayed on the Transfer Alberta Search Tool.
Catalog	The Catalog is the central repository for Learner Pathways System (LPS) data. It has several components including High School Transitions Data, System Reference Data, Contact Information, Reports, and offerings and transfer decisions. It also includes Education-approved PSI course codes dual enrolled dual credit data.
Categories	The institution's category(s) for the Course or Program record. (Institution Defined). Categories are the grouping or classification of instructional programs by field of specialty, such as the specific faculty/school related to the course.

Learner Pathways System Terms	Description of/Definitions for Terms
	Categories are referential data defined and managed by institutions in the LPS Catalog. Categories are associated with general subject areas defined in the LPS. These subject areas are used as filters by students/users in the Transfer Alberta Search Tool.
Co-requisite	The co-requisites of the Course. A course or credit that must be taken at the same time as another course (e.g., “corequisites” of this course offering). The Institution is responsible for providing the corequisites (where applicable) to correspond with their own systems. Co-requisites are also used in the LPS.
Course Code	The institution-provided Code for the Course. (e.g., “CHEM” in CHEM 101). The institutions are responsible for providing these codes to correspond with their own systems. See also: Program Code
Course Description	Institution-provided course descriptions for their offerings (e.g., institution academic calendar descriptions). The Institution is responsible for providing these descriptions to correspond with their own systems and academic calendars. See also: Program Description / Program Description URL
Course Number	Institution-provided unique course numbers (e.g., number “101” in CHEM 101) for their courses. Institutions are responsible for providing these unique course number identifiers to correspond with their own systems. Course numbers are also used in the LPS.
Course Outline	An institution’s description of the main content, organization, and expected outcomes of a course, normally including the number of credits awarded, hours of class time, how it is evaluated, assignments, and texts. (May also be called a syllabus or master syllabus, as determined by the institution and relevant to the course being offered). Course Outlines are added to the LPS using TCES.
Course Record	A collection of established Course data fields, comprised of mandatory and optional information, in each row of the CSV Program file that can be published via DCaR. A Program Record can also be created and published directly in the Transfer Credit Evaluation System using a web form.
Course Title	The Course Title for the specific course. Institution-provided unique course titles for their courses (e.g., “Introductory University Chemistry I”). Institutions are responsible for providing these unique course titles to correspond with their own systems and transcripts. See Also: Program Title

Learner Pathways System Terms	Description of/Definitions for Terms
Courses	A specific Course offering, based on a course master and offered at a particular date and time at a post-secondary institution.
Credentials	Official documentation recognizing completion of a course of study/program area that is issued by the individual institution, to be awarded after a student has successfully completed all the curricular requirements, normally including the accumulation of a minimum number of credits. Credentials include those identified in the <u>Alberta Credential Framework</u> and other relevant credentials for LPS member institutions in the referential data set. The Institution is responsible for selecting the appropriate credentials to correspond with their own systems.
Credit Type	Credit Type is used to manage the type of credit associated with the Course, Program, or Transfer Decision. Currently, "Credit" is the only Credit Type used in the Learner Pathways System (LPS). The LPS has the flexibility to add other credit types in the future.
Credit Value	The value assigned to a Course or Program that refers to the credit value for the purpose of counting its value towards a credential, such as a certificate, diploma or degree. The Institution is responsible for providing the credit value to correspond with their own systems. Credit Value is also used to indicate the amount of transfer credit awarded in a Transfer Decision.
CSV File	Comma-separated values (CSV) files store tabular data (numbers and text) in plain text. The file contains a collection of one or more records arranged for uploading to the LPS via the Data Collection and Reporting System (DCaR). Each line or row within the file is a data record that consists of mandatory and optional data fields, separated by commas.
Data Collection and Reporting System (DCaR) - LPS Modules	The Data Collection and Reporting (DCaR) application modules for Courses, Programs, Agreements/Transfer Decisions are tools used to mass upload information from postsecondary institutions into the Learner Pathways System. In turn, the Transfer Decision data is supplied to the Transfer Alberta website's Search Tool, which helps inform learners, educational staff, and postsecondary institutions regarding learner pathways and transferability within Alberta's transfer system. DCaR allows bulk uploading of records, whereas TCES is the complementary tool where Course, Program, and Transfer Decision records are created and managed individually. DCaR also is used to collect and report the annual provincial Transfer Credit Awarded (TCA) data.

Learner Pathways System Terms	Description of/Definitions for Terms
Delete Record	A data field in the Course, Program or Transfer Decision CSV files to indicate if the record is meant to be deleted from the LPS. “No” must be entered in this field by institutions, indicating that the record IS intended to be published. If a record needs to be deleted, contact the ACAT Secretariat who has the administrative permissions to enter “YES”, indicating that the record is meant to be deleted.
Dual Credit-Related Opportunities (DCRO)	The LPS Dual Credit-Related Opportunities module (DCRO) provides Alberta school authorities, post-secondary institutions, firms (business/industry), ministries, and other applicable stakeholders the ability to view all Education-approved high school PSI course codes that may be offered for dual enrolled dual credit courses for high school and post-secondary credit, and view the corresponding dual credit partners (lead and partner school authorities, post-secondary institution partners) and post-secondary institution LPS course codes for each dual credit offering.
Effective End Date	The last date a Course, Program or Transfer Decision was Active. The Institution is responsible for providing the appropriate end dates.
Effective Start Date	The start date for the Course, Program or Transfer Decision. The first date the offering or Transfer Decision was applicable or Active. The Institution is responsible for providing the appropriate start dates.
End-Dated	Any Course, Program or Transfer Decision that is still considered valid for the date ranges specified between its start date and end date in the LPS.
From Institution	The institution the student will be transferring from. This was previously referred to as the ‘Sending Institution’. When publishing a Transfer Decision, users have to identify the “From institution”. The correct “From institution” name will then come from the LPS Reference list of Institutions.
From Offering	The Course and Number (e.g., CHEM 100) or Program Code (e.g., 10AG-AST) offered by the ‘From Institution’ included in the Transfer Decision.
Institution Course ID	A unique identifier for the Course record. This is used to uniquely identify the course record in the LPS system. It is recommended for institutions to provide their own unique course identifiers to match those used in their internal systems. Institution Offering IDs for courses could be a concatenation of Code and Number with no space (e.g. MATH1001) if desired by the institution.
Institution Decision ID	A unique identifier for the Transfer Decision record. This is used to uniquely identify the decision in the LPS. Institutions are responsible for providing these

Learner Pathways System Terms	Description of/Definitions for Terms
	unique decision IDs. Where possible, the IDs should correspond with IDs used in their local systems.
Institution Program ID	A unique identifier for the Program record. This is used to uniquely identify the program record in the LPS system. It is recommended for institutions to provide their own unique Program identifiers to match those used in their internal systems. Institution Offering IDs for programs could be the same as Program Code if desired by the institution.
Institutional Systems	Refers to the individual systems that are used by each institution within their own environment. This is their authoritative data source for the data elements relating to Courses, Programs, and Decisions.
Instruction Type	Instruction type is used to identify the type of instruction for the course. Types can range from hours to system defined types such as Lab; Lecture, Seminar; Tutorial; and others, as well as the number of hours (e.g., “20H Lab, 1000H work experience hours”). The Institution is responsible for providing instruction types to correspond with their own systems. Instruction types are also used in the LPS.
Instructor Qualifications	Description of the institution-provided Instructor Qualifications required for the course being offered. The Institution is responsible for providing the description to correspond with their own systems. Instructor Qualifications are also used in the LPS.
Introductory-level programming	Introductory-level programming is foundational or entry-level education, training, or credentials that establish fundamental skills and competencies and support post-secondary education credential program and career pathways progression (e.g., first and second-year courses, entry-level credentials and professional pathways, credential laddering and stacking, university transfer and block transfer, dual credit and high school transitions, program area pathways (e.g., subject areas/specializations, career pathways, advanced placement, etc.), approved programs by the ministry, including apprenticeship education pathways and regulated programs, work integrated learning and labour market/workforce needs, unique system-wide pathways, etc.).
Learner Pathways	The different routes that a learner can take during lifelong learning in the education system, with a focus on access to routes that support movement into, within, from, and back into post-secondary education.

Learner Pathways System Terms	Description of/Definitions for Terms
Learner Pathways System (LPS)	Alberta's Learner Pathways System (LPS) are the transfer system stakeholder technology applications and tools for learner pathways and mobility. Tools and supports include: Catalog ,Transfer Credit Evaluation System (TCES), Dual Credit-Related Opportunities module (DCRO), Data Collection and Reporting System (DCaR) modules, use of the Secure Identity & Access Management System (SIAMS) and MyAlberta.ca accounts, and the ACAT and Transfer Alberta websites (including the Transfer Alberta Search Tool).
Learning Outcomes	Statements that describe what learners should know, understand and be able and ready to do on completion of a learning process, whether the experience was formal or informal, classroom-based, or workplace-based measurable statements of student knowledge (what successful students should know) and skills (what successful students should be able to do) expected upon graduation. Learning outcomes may be included in course outlines and can be entered into the LPS TCES Course Outlines section in a distinct data field.
Mandatory Fields	Specific data fields within the CSV files (Courses, Programs, and Transfer Decisions) or the TCES web forms that require data be populated. A mandatory field requires data in order to be published in the Learner Pathways System (LPS). These fields cannot be left blank or an error will be generated and that record will be unable to be published in the Learner Pathways System (LPS). If the field truly has no information to be reported, the field should be marked with "None".
Micro-credential	A micro-credential is a recognized, focused, short-term, competency-based, learning achievement that is assessed and awarded based on clearly defined standards and learning outcomes; fulfills a specific employer, industry, personal or community need; and may stand alone, contribute to, or complement other credentials or training. Source: Alberta Micro-credential Framework. Micro-credentials are awarded to recognize competencies, skills, or knowledge gained through learning experiences that are designed to meet a specific function within an industry or community and may lead to further education. Micro-credentials may be supplementary, alternate, or supportive to a component of traditional learning credentials. Micro-credentials hold the purpose of aiding in specific, uniquely identifiable training for the purpose of advancing gainful employment, providing community skills, or laddering into other education (Alberta Post-secondary Education Micro-credential Framework, 2024) (E.g.: Alberta examples of micro-credentials include Tools and Skills in Impact Assessment, PLC Advanced Programming, Marketing for Recreation and Tourism Enterprises, Electric Vehicle Technology and Service).

Learner Pathways System Terms	Description of/Definitions for Terms
Military education and training	Military education and training in Canada are organized, structured learning for identified occupations offered by the Canadian Armed Forces through a career-long, comprehensive, integrated and sequential development process of education, training, self-development, and experience. It provides a continuous learning environment to develop and enhance the capabilities and leadership of Canadian Armed Forces members (Canadian Armed Forces Professional Development Framework, Canadian Forces Professional Development System, 2018).
Non-member learning providers	Non-member learning providers do not currently have Alberta Transfer System membership or do not meet Alberta Transfer System criteria for membership (e.g., private for-profit and out-of-country post-secondary institutions, business/industry, professional associations, community organizations, etc.). For more information, please see the Alberta Transfer & Pathways webpage .
Note	Institution-provided notes about their Transfer Decisions that will be publicly visible as a Note students can view in the Transfer Alberta Search Tool. This data field is called “Comment” in the Transfer Decision CSV file used with DCaR. See Also: Articulation Notes , which have a different use.
Offerings	A specific Course or Program, based on a course and program master and offered at a particular date and time at a post-secondary institution. See Also: Alternative Offerings and Online Offerings
Online offerings	Online offerings are education, training, or credentials (e.g., micro-credentials, courses, programs, certification) that are offered online or hybrid by adult learning providers from business/industry, professional associations/regulatory bodies, private career colleges, government, or other organizations (e.g., Hinton Training Centre Wildfire Orientation, Cando Technician Aboriginal Economic Developer, Google Data Analytics Professional Certificate, Microsoft Certified: AI Business Professional) Note: Online offerings are not defined by learning modality alone and do not refer to all post-secondary education programming that happens to be offered virtually.
Optional Fields	Data fields within the CSV files or TCES web forms (Courses, Programs, and Transfer Decisions) that are not required to be populated. Optional fields do not require data, but any data provided would benefit the Learner Pathways System and assist in data collection, analysis and entry. These fields can be left blank if no relevant information exists and the record will pass validation and be published in the LPS.

Learner Pathways System Terms	Description of/Definitions for Terms
Outline URLs	Uniform Resource Locator (URL) consists of the web address where the individual institution stores the course outline for public access.
Pre-requisite	The pre-requisites of this course. A Course or credit that must be completed before a more advanced course can be taken (e.g., “pre-requisites” for this course offering). The Institution is responsible for providing the pre-requisites (where applicable) to correspond with their own systems. Prerequisites are also used in the LPS. (e.g., CHEM 1000 before CHEM 1100).
Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)	A process for institution/organization assessment, identification, documentation, and recognition of a person’s knowledge and skills, acquired through non-formal and informal learning and experience, in relation to a certain goal. PLAR is a learner pathway that can be used towards the requirements of education and training programs via an institution or organization where offered and applicable. Refer to Open Government Recognition of Prior Learning for more information.
Program Admissions / Requirements URL	Program Admissions describe criteria stipulating education, training or experience needed for eligibility to enter an educational program or occupation. The data in the Program record is meant to be the institution’s Uniform Resource Locator (URL) (web address) that provides the institution’s admissions requirements for the program, which students must meet to get into the program. This URL should be a link to the specific admissions requirements for this program, and/or to the institution’s program admissions search tool or webpage where admissions requirements for all programs are listed.
Program Code	The Program Code for the specific program. Program Code is a combination of the institution’s Program ID and Specialization Code. Program ID and Specialization Code are recommended to be written as one string separated by a hyphen (“Program ID-Specialization Code”). For Alberta institutions that manage PAPRS data, the institution’s Program ID and Specialization Code are recommended to be the same as those in PAPRS for each program. For programs that are in PAPRS, but do not have specializations, provide only the Program ID.
Program Description / Program Description URL	The data in the Program record is meant to be the institution’s Uniform Resource Locator (URL) (web address) that provides the institution’s calendar description of the program. This URL should be a link to the specific calendar description for the program, and/or to the institution’s program search tool or

Learner Pathways System Terms	Description of/Definitions for Terms
	webpage where all programs are listed. This URL should not be a general link to the home page of the institution.
Program Record	A collection of established Program data fields, comprised of mandatory and optional information, in each row of the CSV Program file that can be published via DCaR. A Program Record can also be created and published directly in the Transfer Credit Evaluation System using a web form.
Program Title	The Program Title for the specific program. Program Title is a combination of the institution's Program Name and Specialization Name. Program Name and Specialization Name are recommended to be written as one string separated by a hyphen or a colon ("Program Name-Specialization Name" or "Program Name: Specialization Name"). For Alberta institutions that manage PAPRS data, the institution's Program Name and Specialization Name are recommended to be the same as those in PAPRS for each program. For programs that are in PAPRS but do not have specializations, provide only the Program Name.
Programs	A specific program offering, based on a program master and offered at a particular date and time at a post-secondary institution.
Record	A collection of completed data fields, comprised of mandatory and optional fields (e.g., a row relevant to a specific entity within the CSV file for Courses, Programs and Transfer Decisions) that can be published via DCaR. These records can also be created and published directly in the Transfer Credit Evaluation System (TCES) using web forms. See also: Course Record; Program Record; Transfer Decision Record
Regulated programs	Regulated programs in Alberta refer to a profession or service that is subject to specific regulations established by provincial authority. This includes: • Regulated professions, which are defined by legislation, such as the Health Professions Act, which outlines the recognition of qualifications and the requirements for practice. • Regulatory bodies, which oversee these professions, ensuring that practitioners meet ethical and competency standards (Alberta Advanced Education, 2026).
Review Date	An optional date that can be provided to trigger a reminder for the institution to review their Course, Program, or Transfer Decision records for accuracy. If this field contains no information, the Learner Pathways System (LPS) will automatically populate a review date 5 years from the date the record was entered in the LPS.

Learner Pathways System Terms	Description of/Definitions for Terms
Secure Identity & Access Management System (SIAMS) and Alberta.ca Account	SIAMS is a single secure, centralized authentication and authorization service used to securely access the Learner Pathways System (LPS) online technical applications, e.g., Catalog, TCES, DCaR, DCRO, SharePoint. Contact Persons from the post-secondary institutions require an Alberta.ca account associated with their work email to sign in through this secure service.
Student Mobility	Refers to a learner's ability to access different learner pathways (routes) during his/her program of study(s) in post-secondary education, including movement into, within, from, or back into post-secondary education. Mobility allows students to earn credits toward a credential at more than one institution, ladder from one credential to another credential, build on foundational learning and high school upgrading to enter post-secondary studies, and/or access many other learner pathways.
System-Defined Fields	Reference data fields can only be populated with a set list of predefined values (system tables). To ensure consistency in the data, these predefined values are contained in reference lists. E.g., when uploading a decision, users have to identify the "From" institution(s). The correct "From" institution(s) name will then come from the Reference list of Institutions.
To Offering	Refers to the Course Code and Number (e.g., CHEM 100), or the Program Code (e.g., 10AG-AST) offered by the 'To Institution' included in the Transfer Decision.
Transfer Alberta Search Tool	The Transfer Alberta Search Tool is available on the Transfer Alberta website and provides accessible, student/user access to institution Learner Pathways System (LPS) data for transfer decisions for courses and programs and high school transitions course arrangements (e.g., International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, Academic Upgrading, Provincial Equivalencies, and Dual Credit course arrangements for admissions or credit). Students may receive credit for courses/programs identified in transfer decisions or for high school transitions course arrangements as applicable/appropriate for each student.
Transfer Alberta Website	The Transfer Alberta website is a student-focused website designed to provide learner pathways and mobility planning tools, supports, and information to support students' pathways into, within, from, and back into post-secondary education. It includes the Transfer Alberta Search Tool.
Transfer Credit Awarded (TCA)	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

Learner Pathways System Terms	Description of/Definitions for Terms
	program during the academic year of reporting for completed coursework in alignment with identified common transfer credit practices at institutions. Refer to TCA Data Dictionary for more information. Transfer Credit Awarded is a specific type of data that participating Alberta Transfer System member institutions share annually in the Transfer Credit Awarded (TCA) provincial data set, identifying the transfer pathways that learners did take for identified undergraduate courses or programs and the number of credits that they will receive for prior learning completed at another institution pending their successful completion of their program. The correlation between transfer decisions and transfer credit awarded is that decisions are planning pathways that learners may take and credit awarded are pathways that learners did take and were assessed to receive credit.
Transfer Credit Evaluation System (TCES)	This is a web-based application where Alberta Transfer System member post-secondary institutions can publish and manage their individual Courses, Programs, Decisions, and Course Outlines records. It includes the ability to create Transfer Proposals to other institutions and use Data Dashboards. DCaR is the complementary application that allows bulk uploading and publication of records. Authorized users can view/search all published LPS data for course/program offerings and transfer decisions, course outlines, and institution contacts.
Transfer Decision Record	A collection of established data fields, comprised of mandatory and optional information, in each row of the CSV Decision file that can be published via DCaR. A Transfer Decision Record can also be created and published directly in the Transfer Credit Evaluation System using a web form. See Also: Transfer Decision(s)
Transfer Decision Type	The type of Transfer Decision as defined by the System. The Decisions can be defined as: • ‘Specific Program’ refers to a program to program decision • ‘Specific Course’ refers to course(s) to course(s) decisions where both two and from courses are specific courses. • ‘Unspecified Course’ refers to course(s) to course(s) decisions where at least one of the To Course offerings is unspecified (e.g.: MATH 1xx)

Learner Pathways System Terms	Description of/Definitions for Terms
Transfer Decision(s)	A transfer decision is a specific type of data that Alberta Transfer System member institutions share in the Learner Pathways System (LPS) provincial data set, identifying potential transfer pathways that learners may take for identified undergraduate course or program decisions that member institutions have made to recognize and grant transfer credit for prior learning completed at another institution. Transfer decisions are shared publicly with learners via the Transfer Alberta Search Tool to support their post-secondary planning.
Transferability	Refers to a student's ability to successfully receive transfer credit for an applicable course(s) and/or program(s) when they move between post-secondary institutions and/or between program areas.
User-Defined Fields	Fields that are custom fields that the user can populate information with by the user using "free text" within a system formatted.