

Call for Proposals: Stopouts' Use of Transfer

Background

Many post-secondary learners experience a spell of non-registration at some point in their academic journey, with as much as 40% of the North American college and university student population having “seriously considered” dropping out (Studiosity & Angus Reid, 2022; Gallup, 2024) and roughly 17% of Canadian undergraduates (Statistics Canada, 2025) and 23% of US university undergraduates (National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, 2025) leaving by the end of their first year. The pressures to leave disproportionately affect historically disadvantaged learners, placing them at a significantly higher risk of leaving their post-secondary studies without a credential.

A significant portion of these leavers, particularly those who leave for academic reasons, find their way back to post-secondary learning (Lopez-Rabson & McLoy, 2013; Heslop, 2023): these *stopout* students (also known as returning students) temporarily leave their post-secondary studies and return to re-enter the institution that they started at or move to a different institution. This project investigates the role of transfer in dropout-to-stopout conversion and opportunities to normalize transfer as a tool for supporting systemwide learner persistence.

Purpose/Goal

To report on the frequency and efficacy of transfer in supporting learners returning to post-secondary studies and identify opportunities to leverage transfer to prevent dropouts.

Scope

Multi-jurisdictional review (BC, Canada, and US).

Objectives

1. To examine and contextualize different use profiles for transfer within institutional sector and program, and by learner demographic subgroup.
2. To analyze the frequency and nature of transfer leveraged after a stopout.
3. To identify areas for further research.

Timeline

Completion date for this project will be no later than March 2027.

Budget

Maximum budget available for this project is \$ 25,000, inclusive of all hourly charges, travel and associated costs, and GST.

References

- Heslop, J. (2023, September 5). *STP [Student Transitions Project] Research Results: Student Mobility in the Post-Secondary System*. Government of British Columbia.
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- Pocai, J. & Davis, L. (2021). Innovative Strategies to Close Postsecondary Attainment Gaps: Reclaiming Earned Degrees Through Reverse Transfer. *Institute for Higher Education Policy*. https://live-ihep-wp.pantheonsite.io/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/IHEP_Innovative-Strategies.Reverse-Transfer-PDF.pdf
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- Studiosity and Angus Reid. (2022). *2022 Canadian Student Wellbeing Survey*. Studiosity.
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