

HOW DO STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT TRANSFER?

Postsecondary Students' Use of Transfer Information Sources in Ontario



APRIL 2025

HOW DO STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT TRANSFER?

Postsecondary Students' Use of Transfer Information Sources in Ontario

Published by

Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) |
Conseil Ontarien pour l'articulation et le transfert (CATON)
180 Dundas Street W, Suite 1902
Toronto, ON Canada, M5G 1Z8
Phone: 416.640.6951
oncat.ca

Authors

Emerson LaCroix, Ph.D.
ONCAT

Jeffrey Napierala, Ph.D.
ONCAT

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to acknowledge the contributions of past and present ONCAT staff in developing this report: Nicolas Boileau, Henrique Hon, and Nick Hanson.

Suggested Citation

LaCroix, E., & Napierala, J. (2025). *How Do Students Learn About Transfer? Postsecondary Students' Use of Transfer Information Sources in Ontario*. Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer. https://oncat.ca/assets/oncat/ONCAT_HowDoStudentsLearnAboutTransfer_2025.pdf



Funding to support this report was provided by ONCAT (Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer). The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of ONCAT or the Government of Ontario.

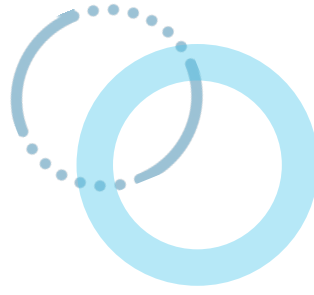


Table of Contents

List of Tables	2
Executive Summary	3
Data	3
Main Findings	3
Recommendations for the Sector	4
Introduction	5
Information Sources and Transfer Intent	6
Combining Information Sources	6
Data and Methods	7
Findings	9
Students Have Difficulty Locating the Transfer-Related Information They Need	9
Students Rely on A Variety of Sources to Get the Information They Need About Transfer	10
ONTransfer.ca	12
Internet Search Engine(s)	13
Institutional Websites	13
Transfer Students are Strategic in Their Use of Information Sources	14
Using Information Sources to Complement One Another	16
Conclusion and Policy Implications	18
Expanding Online Engagement Strategies Across the Sector	18
Enhancing the Connectivity of Institutional Information Sources	18
Developing or Increasing Capacity for Pre-Transfer Credit Assessments	19
References	20
Appendix A – Extended Description of the Data and Methods	23
Quantitative Analysis	23
Qualitative Analysis	24
Appendix B – Selected TIS Survey Questions	26
Appendix C – Additional Results from TIS	27



List of Figures

Figure 1 How much difficulty, if any, have you had in getting the transfer-related information you need?	9
Figure 2 Transfer Information Sources by TIS Version.	10
Figure C1 Students Experiencing “A Great Deal of Difficulty” or “Quite a Bit of Difficulty” by Transfer Information Source Consulted and TIS Version.	27



List of Tables

Table 1 Transfer Information Sources by Destination Type	11
Table 2 Usage Patterns of Transfer Information Sources.	15
Table A1 Sample Size by Mobility Pathway	23
Table C1 Students’ Use of Transfer Information Sources by TIS Version.	27
Table C2 Students’ Use of Transfer Information Sources by Intended Destination, TIS Version 1	28
Table C3 Students’ Usage Patterns of Transfer Information Sources, TIS Version 1	28

Executive Summary

Research has identified numerous information sources that students use to learn more broadly about their possibilities for transfer and the transfer process. While studies have also begun to consider the interplay between information sources, almost all of the existing research is situated within the American transfer context, which focuses heavily on student transfer between community colleges and four-year universities. In Ontario, our postsecondary system is distinct, and postsecondary institutions offer numerous types of credentials with the possibility for students to transfer in myriad directions. For these institutions, knowing the information sources that students access and how they use this information is crucial for developing effective transfer policies and practices. To support the sector in this endeavour, in this report, we examine the process through which students gather information as they make decisions about transferring. Importantly, by focusing on the pre-transfer stage, we can identify not only the information sources students use but also how they combine and make sense of potentially conflicting information and fill information gaps.

Data

This report is the first in a series utilizing data from *ONCAT's Longitudinal Study of Transfer Students*. For this study, we gathered data from students as they moved through key stages of the transfer process, starting when they initially explored transfer opportunities (i.e., “intending” to transfer) and ending during their first semester(s) at a new institution. For this report, our data comprise surveys (n = 2727) and interviews (n = 51) from students at the initial “intent” stage.

Main Findings

Our analysis produced three main findings related to transfer information sources, each with implications for postsecondary stakeholders. First, the top three sources that the students reported using in our survey were ONTransfer.ca, internet search engines, and postsecondary institution websites. Students generally used these sources and others to find information on specific programs of interest and investigate how many credits they could transfer.

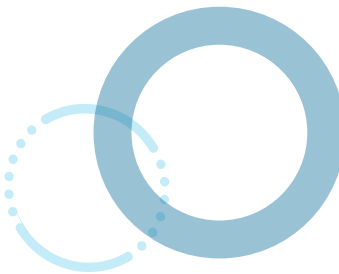
Second, the students often used multiple information sources to learn about transferring and consulted, on average, 2.7 sources. Those who consulted formal sources, such as ONTransfer.ca and institutional webpages, used fewer sources compared to those who consulted informal sources, such as social media platforms and friends. Additionally, we found that university-bound students accessed more information sources than did students going to college.

Third, the students used information sources in complementary ways. The interview data were particularly useful for understanding *how* different information sources were used in conjunction with one another. We found that no source provided all the information that the students were looking for. Consequently, transfer students need to be strategic and use different sources to plan their transfer. In this way, they levy the strength of some sources to fill the information gaps left by other sources.

Recommendations for the Sector

The findings of this study have numerous implications for transfer practices across the sector. In line with our main findings, and to further enhance existing support for transfer students, we provide the following recommendations for postsecondary institutions to consider:

1. Institutions should enhance connectivity between their respective transfer information sources. For example, institutions could directly link key resources, such as their institutional admissions pages, institutional pages on credit transfer, contact information for transfer advising services, and ONTransfer.ca. Such an approach will ensure that students can quickly receive trustworthy information that reflects institutional policies and practices.
2. When looking to enhance their interactions with transfer students, institutions might consider engaging in a variety of online forums, such as Reddit. Serving as a trustworthy voice on these platforms and directing students to institutional resources can help remedy conflicting information from other information sources and even transfer misinformation.
3. Institutions should ensure that they provide students with the most accurate, comprehensive, and up-to-date information through their institutional websites and ONTransfer.ca, which students commonly access.
4. To fully ensure that students have the most accurate information before transferring, colleges and universities should offer transfer credit assessments within their admission offer letters. Doing so will allow transfer students to make more informed choices about which institutions and programs are right for them and their educational goals and priorities. Doing so will allow transfer students to make more informed choices about which institutions and programs are right for them and their educational goals and priorities.



Introduction

The transfer process is commonly separated into three progressive stages: pre-transfer, transfer application, and post-transfer (e.g., LaCroix et al., 2024). However, scholars have been quick to note that transferring is a nonlinear process and fits within a broader pattern of nonlinear postsecondary mobility (Maier & Robson, 2020). Students often “meander” through transfer, going through multiple rounds of applications and decision-making (Jabbar et al., 2021). Nonetheless, the ease with which students move through these stages has implications for successful transfer outcomes (e.g., feelings of belonging and little credit duplication).

In the pre-transfer stage, students may be enrolled in a program of study, out in the workforce considering a return to higher education, or taking a break between postsecondary studies to pursue other interests. During their time at the pre-transfer stage, students develop their transfer intentions. They begin to think about transferring, consult different information sources, and make decisions about which institutions and programs they would like to transfer to. This intent stage is critical for developing initial expectations about the transfer process, admissions requirements, and even the number of transfer credits they might receive (Aurini, LaCroix, & lafolla, 2024; Higher Education Strategy Associates, 2021; LaCroix et al., 2024). Put another way, the pre-transfer stage occurs when students develop transfer student capital—the knowledge and skills that can eventually facilitate a successful transfer (Laanan et al., 2010; Rosenberg, 2016). Much of the existing literature on transfer intent focuses on transfer motivations (Aurini, LaCroix, Dreesha et al., 2024; Pizarro Milian & Zarifa, 2021) and the ease with which transfer students are able to gather information about transfer credits (Higher Education Strategy Associates, 2021; LaCroix et al., 2024). There is also a healthy body of research that has captured the different information sources that students use during this period (e.g., Decock & Janzen, 2016; Laanan et al., 2010; Moser, 2014). However, we have little information about how transfer students *combine* the information these sources provide, reconcile differences, and use this information to make decisions. Moreover, given that the bulk of research on transfer intent is framed within the American context, we question whether existing claims resonate with the Ontario transfer landscape and how Ontario students use different information sources to make decisions.

Our report begins with a review of the relevant literature on information sources and transfer intent. We then provide a brief overview of the data collection process and research methods that guided this study, including the quantitative and qualitative design elements from ONCAT’s *Longitudinal Study of Transfer Students*. By using a mixed-methods design, we were able to enrich our quantitative findings with excerpts from interviews. We then provide a detailed discussion of our main findings about the information sources that transfer students consult, the distinctions between college-bound and university-bound transfer students, and how these sources are used in conjunction with one another. Our report concludes with a discussion of the implications of these findings for transfer policy and practice in Ontario.

Information Sources and Transfer Intent

Researchers have indexed myriad information sources that are consequential to the way students learn about transfer and develop expectations of the transfer process (Hayes et al., 2020; Laanan et al., 2010; Moser, 2014). Emerging from these studies is a litany of potential information sources, ranging from transfer advisors and faculty to support services, websites, and peers. As the argument goes, the more accurate the information students have, the greater their likelihood of successful transfer and resisting barriers to integration, such as “transfer shock”¹ (Laanan, 2007; Rosenberg, 2016). Formal institutional resources (e.g., academic and transfer advisors) play a critical role in providing transfer students with the information they need to successfully navigate the transfer process. At the same time, students also turn to more collegial or informal information sources, such as friends and classmates, to help digest and confirm the information provided by official sources. Rosenberg (2016) not only helped index additional information sources but also noted that transfer knowledge is acquired through the process of “synthesizing information” provided by these different sources (p. 1058). Therefore, it is not only students who are responsible for gaining accurate knowledge about transfer. Their ability to successfully interpret transfer information hinges on the information that institutions provide (Jabbar et al., 2022; Rosenberg, 2016). This is an important caveat for institutions to remember, especially in light of previous findings showing that students do not always “see” transfer in the same way as transfer system planners (Lang & Lopes, 2014).

Combining Information Sources

Building on the foundation provided by studies that have worked to index the information sources students commonly use, researchers have recently begun investigating how students use these sources in coordination with one another. For example, Maliszewski Lukszo and Hayes (2020) found that sources of transfer information are used in conjunction with one another to (a) help students navigate the transfer process, (b) shape their expectations of 4-year institutions, and (c) provide them with a sense of self-efficacy in the transfer process. Other research has extended the analysis beyond transfer intent, finding that the knowledge students acquire when they begin considering transfer has implications for academic and social success *after* transfer. Cepeda et al. (2021) found that students continue to build on their foundational transfer knowledge after arriving at their new institutions and that tailored social support is needed to avoid feeling like a “glorified freshman” (p. 8).

One of the most salient discussion points in this body of literature is the role that both sending and receiving institutions play in preparing students for future success. For example, there have been mixed findings regarding the impact of pre-transfer advising on transfer outcomes (Laanan et al., 2010; Maliszewski Lukszo & Hayes, 2020; Moser, 2014). In some cases, pre-transfer advice provides students with confidence and know-how to navigate the transfer process and gives them a sense of self-efficacy in their educational journey. The timing of transfer credit

¹ Transfer shock refers to the social and academic barriers students encounter during and after transferring that impact successful integration (e.g., drop in grades, struggles forming social connections).

evaluations is also pertinent to the transfer process. As reported by the Higher Education Strategy Associates (2021), transfer students are set up for greater success when their transfer credits are evaluated “at admissions” (p. 5), since this allows them to move through the admissions process without delay. However, when the information provided by sending and receiving institutions is out of step with one another—or entirely absent—students can experience “information asymmetry” (Grote et al., 2019). Information asymmetry is a particular barrier to students developing an informed perspective on transferring and may put transfer students at a higher risk of academic and social integration challenges (Cepeda et al., 2021).

The research on transfer intent and information sources provides good insight into the value that different information sources have for transfer students. Collectively, these information sources can provide students with knowledge and self-efficacy for successful transfer outcomes. However, the empirical contexts of these studies are distinct from the Canadian higher education landscape (Davies & Zarifa, 2012; Skolnik, 2013). Ontario’s mobility pathways are numerous,² and the provincial college system was not established with the same “transfer function” as American community colleges (Skolnik, 2010). This means that the existing logic of transfer intent from studies in America (i.e., transfer from community college to university) may not hold true in the Ontario context. Specifically, the information sources available and the way they are used by transfer students are likely distinct. This raises questions about how Ontario postsecondary students access information about transfer and the implications for an ever-evolving transfer landscape in the province. To explore this distinction further, we investigate the following research questions:

1. What information sources do students use when intending to transfer between institutions?
2. To what extent are these use patterns nuanced by students’ intended transfer destinations?
3. How do students combine information from different sources?
 - a. What information sources are commonly consulted, both individually and together?
 - b. What strategies do students use when choosing information sources?

Data and Methods³

To answer our research questions, we collected quantitative data through ONCAT’s Transfer Intent Survey (TIS) and invited a sample of respondents to participate in qualitative interviews. By combining the survey and interview data, we could provide a fuller picture of students’ information-gathering processes. We used survey data to describe the types and number of sources that students used as well as interview data to understand *how* students used these sources.

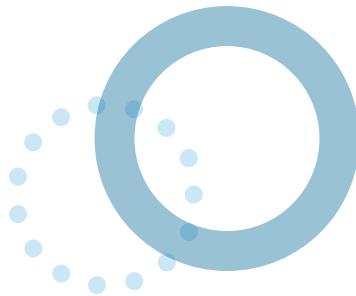
The survey respondents were recruited from the ONTransfer.ca website, a provincially sponsored source of postsecondary transfer information in Ontario that is managed and maintained by ONCAT. All students with previous postsecondary experience who were seeking

² Mobility pathways are the structural routes through the postsecondary system that students follow to earn credentials. Students can complete numerous credentials or switch part-way through a credential and pursue studies at another postsecondary institution. These routes are detailed further in Table A1.

³ For an extended methodology, see Appendix A.

additional postsecondary educational opportunities at the undergraduate or college level were eligible to participate in the survey and interviews.⁴

There are two primary versions (1 and 2) of the survey instrument. *TIS Version 1*, which was launched in late 2021, provided 2137 responses for this analysis.⁵ After revisions were made to the survey instrument, *TIS Version 2* was launched in April 2023 and closed in September 2023, resulting in 590 additional responses.⁶ After completing the TIS (both versions), students could opt in for a semi-structured interview. A total of 51 students completed virtual interviews between February 2022 and August 2022.



⁴ To clarify, the survey respondents and interview participants did not need to be enrolled in a postsecondary program to participate in this project. While non-enrolled respondents/participants might otherwise be referred to as “learners,” we refer to them as students throughout for ease of interpretation.

⁵ Respondents were filtered out of the sample if they were seeking a graduate degree, had no previous postsecondary experience, did not reach the final screen in the survey, did not report an origin or potential destination institution type, or provided highly inaccurate information about the timing of their high school graduation (and entry into postsecondary studies). Only the most recent case was taken for the small number of students who responded to the survey more than once.

⁶ It is important to acknowledge that the response window for the TIS overlapped with pandemic-era lockdowns and the cessation of in-person operations at colleges and universities. While this surely impacted transfer students and their decisions, we do not include an analysis of this potential in this report.

Findings

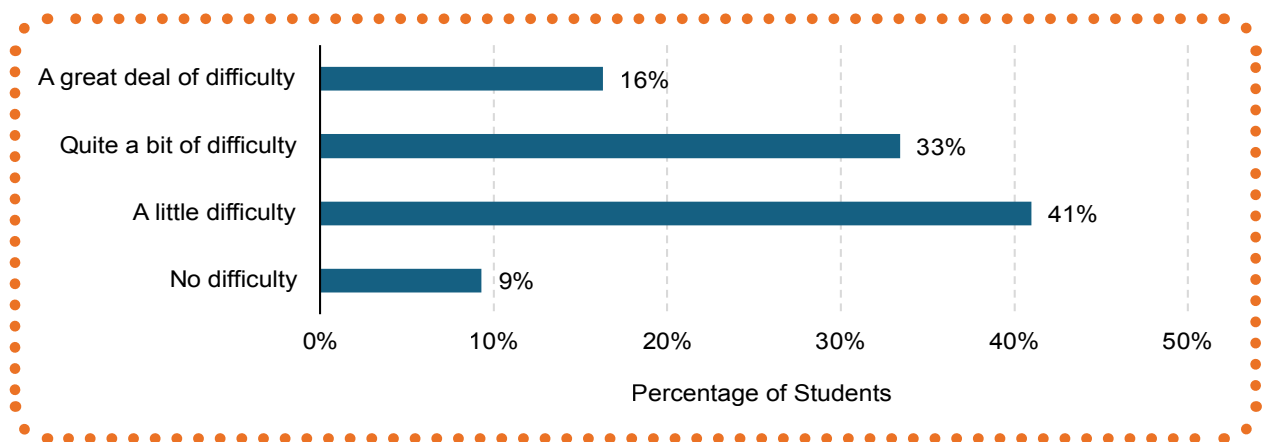
Existing research on transfer intent demonstrates that students rely on many information sources to learn about transfer. Researchers have been successful in identifying the particular sources that students rely on most and have begun crafting a narrative about what information students are looking for (Hayes et al., 2020; Laanan et al., 2010; Moser, 2014). Students tend to rely on institutional sources for “official” program information and collegial/personal sources to help digest that information and provide personal guidance in the transfer process. Our findings support these conclusions but also contribute new insights based on the specific context of Ontario and its distinct higher education system. We found that transfer students experience a substantial degree of difficulty getting the information they need and, correspondingly, they make use of numerous information sources and have distinct needs from each source. At the same time, we found that students strategically combine information sources to make up for relative information deficiencies in each source—a qualitative perspective that is not well established in the transfer literature. Institutional sources were seen as largely “trustworthy” by our participants, but they may not tell the whole story. Instead, students turn to alternative information sources to learn about the realities of transfer from a student-driven perspective. We outline these findings in greater detail in the following sections.

Students Have Difficulty Locating the Transfer-Related Information They Need

As a starting point for our analysis, we examined the level of difficulty that transfer students encountered when attempting to find the transfer information they were looking for. As shown in Figure 1, transfer information remains somewhat elusive, with students reporting considerable difficulty in finding information.⁷

FIGURE 1

How much difficulty, if any, have you had in getting the transfer-related information you need?



Note. Data are combined from TIS Versions 1 and 2. Four students in the combined sample did not respond to the question.

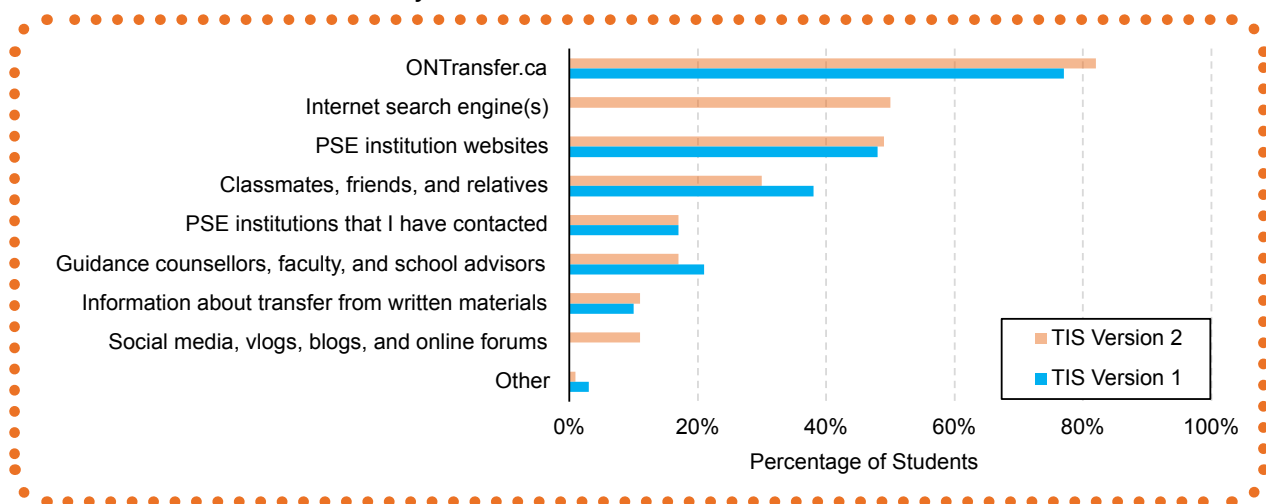
⁷ Additional analyses (not shown) found that the level of difficulty students experienced in accessing transfer information did not vary substantially across the specific information sources they accessed (see Figure C1).

Roughly half of the survey respondents reported encountering a substantial degree of difficulty in finding the information they needed for transfer. At the extreme end of the spectrum, 16% reported experiencing “a great deal of difficulty.” Conversely, only 9% of students reported no difficulty finding information. Although the contrast is stark, we know from existing studies that students are savvy when it comes to searching for information and that they can accurately identify and fill information gaps (Maliszewski Lukszo & Hayes, 2020). The findings presented in Figure 1 nonetheless suggest that, for Ontario students, there are barriers that stand in the way of transfer information. To offset this challenge, we discuss below how students gather information from numerous sources to make transfer decisions.

Students Rely on A Variety of Sources to Get the Information They Need About Transfer

Transfer students use numerous information sources when gathering insights about transfer. Here, we provide a breakdown of the different information sources that students could select on the TIS and the percentage of our sample that indicated using each source. As shown in Figure 2, ONTransfer.ca, internet search engine(s), and the institutional websites of postsecondary institutions were the three most commonly used information sources.

FIGURE 2
Transfer Information Sources by TIS Version



Note. Bars are absent for response options unavailable in TIS Version 1 (internet search engines and social media, vlogs, blogs, and online forums).

Results from statistical tests comparing percentages between TIS Versions 1 and 2 are available in Table C1.

In addition to accounting for the different information sources used by transfer students, we also found that use patterns could be distinguished depending on the type of transfer destination students had in mind. As outlined in Table 1, on average, students considering universities consulted more information sources than students interested in colleges. Additionally, students considering universities were more likely to use internet search engines and institutional websites (14% and 9% more often, respectively) than students interested in colleges. There was also evidence that students considering universities relied more on interpersonal information

sources at higher rates than students considering colleges. This was in terms of speaking with classmates, friends, and relatives as well as individuals who inhabit institutional spaces, such as guidance counsellors, faculty, and school advisors. These same students also tended to rely more on printed sources, such as posters and brochures, than college-bound students.

TABLE 1

Transfer Information Sources by Destination Type

Information source	College	University
ONTransfer.ca	80%	82%
Internet search engine(s)	40%	54%**
PSE institution websites	42%	51%†*
Classmates, friends, and relatives	27%	31%†
PSE institutions that I have contacted	20%	15%
Guidance counsellors, faculty, and school advisors	12%	19%†
Social media, vlogs, blogs, and online forums	11%	11%
Information from posters, brochures, etc.	10%	11%†
Other	2%†*	1%
Respondents	164	387
Selections	399	1064
Average sources per respondent	2.4	2.7†*

Note. The results shown are from TIS Version 2. Results from TIS Version 1 are available in Table C2. Because of the design of the survey question used to determine the institution type of the PSE destinations that students were considering (see Appendix B), both college and university could be selected. However, due to the limited size of this group (N = 39), the results are not presented in this table.

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001 for a t-test of the difference of proportions or means between destination types. Symbols are applied to the larger value.

†The difference is also statistically significant in TIS Version 1 (p < 0.05). Symbols are applied to the larger value. Tests could not be conducted for internet search engines, social media, vlogs, blogs, or online forums, since they were not present in both TIS versions.

There are many plausible explanations for these differences, especially since most of our sample was composed of students interested in a transfer from college to university (see Table A1). Such a transition brings about significant institutional adjustments owing to structural, administrative, and pedagogical differences between college and university (Hill, 1965; LaCroix et al., 2024). College-to-university students may be looking to gather as much information as possible to set expectations about their transfer and smoothen their transitions. Another explanation is that going to university is a significant cost, not only in terms of finances but also in terms of the opportunity costs of time and potential earnings (see Hu et al., 2018). This is on

top of the investment they have already made for their college-level education. Students will rightly want to be equipped with as much information as possible to be confident in their transfer decisions. Below, we qualitatively unpack these use patterns with excerpts from our participant interviews.

ONTransfer.ca

The most common source of information used by students was ONTransfer.ca. Readers should note that because the survey participants were recruited for the TIS survey from this website, they were much more likely to report it as a source than would normally be expected. The interview participants frequently discussed visiting ONTransfer.ca to explore program options and learn more about what institutions they could attend, including established program pathways, required admission averages, and pre-requisite courses. For example, Sally⁸ a college-to-university transfer student, shared that when she visited the ONTransfer.ca website, she was looking to find out “*where I could transfer that would accept some of my credits. And so, looking into my program specifically, what were the transfer options I had?*” These questions were common among the qualitative participants. According to Nashid, ONTransfer.ca was a viable option for students to get a head start on the transfer they planned to make down the road and to ensure that the credits they accumulated would work toward admission:

I was looking up what courses they wanted from me to go to that university. And so I was just looking at what they wanted and what I had that I could give them to make sure I could get into that university. (Nashid, college-to-university)

Another practical use of ONTransfer.ca is its credit evaluation function. ONTransfer.ca provides a sophisticated interface on which users can populate their credentials and the courses they have taken and generate potential transfer credits at their receiving institutions. This tool was helpful for the participants because it allowed them to visualize their levels of advanced standing at prospective choices. Sachi, who intended to eventually transfer from a college program to a university program, stated that ONTransfer.ca was valuable for seeing “*the percentage of my credits that would transfer.*” She found that at one institution, “*I think it’s 60%, versus some places where [it is] 40% and 10%. ... [This] puts into perspective how much more work I’ll have to do.*” Thus, Sachi found ONTransfer.ca useful for gauging how far into different programs she might expect to be admitted. She mentioned that this information put the variance of her potential advanced standing across different institutions “into perspective,” and it gave her more to think about when it came to selecting an institution and program of study. While transfer credit evaluation is, of course, within the purview of each postsecondary institution, knowing their potential level of advanced standing is invaluable for students looking to make informed transfer decisions.

Internet Search Engine(s)

Roughly half of the survey respondents used search engines during their information-gathering process. Search engines included platforms such as Google, Bing, and Yahoo!, which helped

⁸ All references to student names are pseudonyms. For added context, we include references to the mobility pathways the participants are following.

connect the students with the information they were seeking on a secondary website. Often, search engines connected the students with ONTransfer.ca or institutional websites. Brittany, who was undecided about her transfer, acknowledged that starting to search for information and thinking about transferring could be *“an overwhelming process at the beginning,”* especially for someone who was undecided about their transfer. Brittany’s experience serves as a reminder about how daunting the information-gathering stage can be for students and the implications this has for ensuring that they are connected with accurate and trustworthy transfer information. As Brittany later stated, *“I didn’t even know that the Ontario transfer database [ONTransfer.ca] existed. I found it through Googling.”* General queries were typical starting points for the participants. Andres’ description of search activities sums up the general process that many of our participants shared in their interviews:

So, my first resource, as I think with most people, would be to use Google. So, once I went to Google, I typed “transfer from college to university.” ONTransfer.ca came up straight away—like one of the top links. So, I used that website. (Andres, college-to-university)

For the students who knew the information they were looking for, Googling was how they accessed specific information. For example, Nashid used Google purposefully to direct him to the institutional website he was looking for: *“I Googled [destination] University. I didn’t really spend much time there. I just went to the business program and looked into everything there.”*

Search engines were helpful for getting students started on their information-gathering journeys and also as a mechanism to connect students with more pertinent information. Although search engines were highly ranked as information sources in our survey, it is important to acknowledge that they act as facilitators and not necessarily as sources in and of themselves. They merely connect students with lists of webpages, which they must then sort through on their own to find the information they are looking for.

Institutional Websites

Institutional websites were another commonly utilized source of information frequently discussed by the participants. Roughly half of the survey respondents indicated that they used institutional websites to gather information about transfer. The interview participants distinguished between the websites of their sending (i.e., current or previous) institutions and their receiving (i.e., prospective destination) institutions. While each type of institution was used for different reasons, the websites of sending institutions were discussed far less often than the receiving institution websites. In the qualitative sample, only five participants mentioned consulting the websites of their sending institutions. These websites were used mainly to explore the programs students could transfer to at other institutions as well as to learn about program pathway agreements. For example, Brittany turned to her home institution’s website to investigate potential transfer destinations: *“I actually went back to [my college’s] website. They’ve got some transfer agreements up there, and that’s how I found [a prospective university].”* Although their sending institution’s websites were familiar, these participants shared similar difficulties in finding the information they were looking for. Rather than pointing them in the right direction, the participants’ home institution websites were found to be of little assistance. Sana (university-to-university) found that her institution’s website *“wasn’t really helpful”* in connecting her with potential pathways or transfer options.

More commonly, our participants relied on the websites of their receiving institutions, which they perceived as inherently trustworthy because they communicated institutional policies and practices related to transfer, admission requirements, and program information. One participant succinctly stated that *“most universities and colleges have really good websites that are very informational and contain most of the information you need”* (Gurpreet, college-to-university). Kwan (university-to-university) mentioned that when looking at destination websites, *“I find out what programs they offer, and I can check the eligibility and requirements. So that’s the only way I do [it], because that’s the most trustworthy [way]. That’s how I find out about everything.”* Trusting information on institutional websites also allowed the students to compare and contrast information from different institutions to help them make decisions. Taryn (university-to-university) said, *“I initially started by consulting the university homepages of the different ones that I was considering, and there were a lot, but then I narrowed it down to two.”* In addition, search strategies on institutional websites were not limited to the academic side of transfer. Several participants were looking to explore the social aspects of transfer and the kinds of social support and networking opportunities they would have available at their receiving institutions. These were important factors to consider.

I think there’s classroom learning, but there’s also beyond that. ... I think if you have the opportunity to contribute in a volunteer capacity or something like that within your school, that’s a great experience as well. So that’s something I would also be looking for. (Priya, college-to-university)

Priya noted that these social considerations were important for understanding the *“whole picture”* of what campus life is like and what the student experience would be like at a particular institution. Jasmine (college-to-university) had a similar perspective. Identifying herself as a *“social person,”* Jasmine said, *“I don’t just want to go there for study. I want to engage myself. If there are clubs and students, how would I engage?”* Institutional websites were therefore used to gather relevant academic information that would help the students make informed transfer decisions. While this information is valuable, the comments by Priya and Jasmine also highlight the importance of social information to round out transfer students’ priorities. This social information is needed for students to develop a holistic perspective of transfer and see themselves in their prospective programs and receiving institutions.⁹

Transfer Students are Strategic in Their Use of Information Sources

It has been established in the existing literature on transfer intent that students make use of numerous information sources (Laanan et al., 2010; Moser, 2014); however, it is less clear how students combine different sources and the relative information they provide. To examine this further, we computed the percentage of students who used each source alone and the average number of sources that the students consulted with each source. Table 2 shows that 29% of the survey respondents used one source alone and that, on average, they consulted a total of 2.7 sources.

⁹ Social life is a well-known component of successful transfer (Tinto, 1975) and has been further established by recent Canadian research (LaCroix et al., 2024).

TABLE 2*Usage Patterns of Transfer Information Sources*

Information source	Used alone	Average total sources
ONTransfer.ca	19%	2.1
PSE institution websites	3.4%	2.6
Internet search engine(s)	2.7%	2.6
Classmates, friends, and relatives	2.0%	3.0
Guidance counsellors, faculty, and school advisors	< 1%	3.1
PSE institutions that I have contacted	< 1%	3.2
Information from posters, brochures, etc.	< 1%	3.3
Social media, vlogs, blogs, and online forums	< 1%	3.6
Total / Overall Average	29%	2.7

Note. The results shown are from TIS Version 2. The results from TIS Version 1 are similar and are presented in Table C3.

ONTransfer.ca was the source most commonly used alone, with 19% of the respondents solely consulting this source. Similarly, the students consulting ONTransfer.ca utilized an average of just 2.1 sources (or 1.1 additional sources after ONTransfer.ca). Together, these findings suggest that the information provided by ONTransfer.ca satisfies what transfer students are looking for and requires little confirmation or consultation with additional sources.¹⁰

Postsecondary institution websites, internet search engines, and classmates, friends, and relatives were also consulted alone by a small number of respondents. However, most students accessing these sources were also likely to use other sources. For example, students who sought information from classmates, friends, and relatives used two additional sources, while students accessing information on institutional websites used 1.6 additional sources.

At the other end of the spectrum, students using social media sources required the most additional supporting sources, with social media sources used in conjunction with 2.6 other information sources (3.6 total sources). Information from posters, brochures, etc. was also consulted with numerous (2.3) additional sources. This may suggest information deficiencies in these sources such that students need to consult additional sources to fill in information gaps.

¹⁰ As noted previously, the results for ONTransfer.ca are biased because the respondents were recruited from this website. In a random sample, the percentage consulting ONTransfer.ca alone would likely be much lower.

Using Information Sources to Complement One Another

In the qualitative interviews, the students elaborated on how they combined various information sources. Each information source provides its own unique window into transfer. For example, institutional websites provide users with information that program brochures and family members potentially cannot. While this is valuable, we heard many experiences of transfer students needing to access multiple information sources to create a fuller picture of transfer, both in terms of academic requirements and social networking. This helps nuance our initial findings in Figure 1, where students report having a difficult time finding the information they were looking for. From our discussions with students, we found that they strategically used sources to confirm or complement other information they had received. While an institutional website provides more “official” policy information about transferring, it might be light on details about the culture of the institution and what it is like to be a transfer student. To gather such information, multiple sources need to be accessed. Regarding the contrast between online sources and transfer advising, Gurpreet said,

If you want the real answer if your specific credits will be transferred, I think it is best to talk to the advisor because I've seen [online] guides...but those are not 100% reliable. So, you got to double-check with the advisor. (Gurpreet, college-to-university)

Institutional information sources were seen as inherently more trustworthy, as previously mentioned. Advisors and institutional websites provide the policy information that transfer students seek, especially because it relates to transfer credits. However, there was some apprehension about these “official” information sources. When looking for information about transferring from college to university, Gauri had apprehensions about the trustworthiness of information from the university and opted to search online elsewhere:

No offence to academic advisors or the universities, [but] they would be my last resource just because everybody wants students to come to their school, right? They're only showing the glamorous side of things, which is where Reddit comes in pretty handy. They talk about anecdotal experiences [and] just give you kind of an insight to things behind closed doors. (Guari, college-to-university)

While official policy information is fundamental for making informed transfer decisions, some participants looked for a more unvarnished perspective—one that was more student-centric and reflected student experiences. To gain such a perspective, we found that the transfer students relied on social media platforms such as Reddit to learn about the transfer process from those who had already gone through it. When Sally was applying for a social work degree from college, she mentioned that Reddit was useful for filling information gaps from the program website:

For the [social work program], you need to do a personal statement. The question is, “Why do you want to be a social worker?” And then it doesn't tell you how many [words]. Like, it doesn't give you any indication of how long it should be and what it should include. Also, how long it takes for certain things to be processed. So I found myself in the Reddit forums a lot. ... I just looked at old threads that were asking the same kinds of questions. (Sally, college-to-university)

She acknowledged that institutions could not be as “*frank*” with information as transfer students might be looking for. In this case, Reddit was a useful source for hearing student-centred experiences, such as what the program was like, grading practices, and exam experiences. Cases like these demonstrate how transfer students bounce between Reddit and institutional websites to confirm and complement each other. As Guari said, they would conduct an initial search on Reddit and “*just confirm*” that information “*by going to the websites.*” If one source was deficient in certain respects, the students turned to alternative sources to fill those gaps. Haley’s experience summarizes these search strategies:

I would be using the [institutional] sites mostly to see the different kinds of transfer they had. So I would find information that I didn’t know about. And then I would look it up online, write it, and say, like, “Oh, does anyone have experience with this?” And what did they say about it. And I would see maybe what tips they had or what road they went. And then I would go back on the registrar website and see what the options were for that thing they did. And just back and forth, comparing people’s experiences to the prerequisites and the requirements for that program or that option they chose and seeing whether or not I would be able to do that. (Haley, university-to-university)

Thus, information sources each have their own respective limitations. We find here that not only do students combine different information sources, but they do so strategically. By drawing on more official sources, they can learn about the transfer policies and procedures at receiving institutions. While this information is valuable, it may not reflect transfer realities or the unvarnished student experience. For this information, students turn to different sources, such as Reddit, to complement official channels.



Conclusion and Policy Implications

In this report, we documented a key aspect of the transfer process: the process through which students gather information about transfer. We focused on the intent stage of transfer, during which students are interested in the idea of transferring but have not yet applied or gone through the admissions process. Through surveys and interviews, we found that the students had trouble accessing information about transfer and thus used multiple sources to gather information and make transfer decisions.

We found that the students may have faced numerous obstacles as they transferred, but they were resilient and ultimately successful. From previous studies, we know that they can experience information asymmetry when the information they gather proves inaccurate and hampers their postsecondary transitions (Grote et al., 2019). However, it seems that, despite initial hurdles, transfer students overcome such obstacles and integrate into their new institutions (see also Aurini, LaCroix, & lafolla, 2024). This is aided by their use of multiple information sources, which enable them to transfer with informed and accurate expectations. In the following sections, we discuss some of the policy implications of this study for transfer stakeholders in the postsecondary sector.

Expanding Online Engagement Strategies Across the Sector

The findings of this report have numerous implications for postsecondary stakeholders. Postsecondary institutions must ensure that the transfer information they provide is accessible and aligned with the needs of transfer students. Moreover, student-facing professionals (e.g., transfer advisors) should be aware of the alternative information sources available to transfer students and their content because they can mislead students. We found that students turn to sources such as ONTransfer.ca and institutional websites and supplement the information these sources provide with other sources, such as Reddit, friends, family, and advisors. While these sources—and the information they provide—are undoubtedly valuable in their own ways, online forums such as Reddit may run the risk of communicating inaccurate information. For example, Reddit posts may tell individual transfer stories that have complex policy undertones that are not captured in a single post. Nonetheless, being aware of the kind of information students are looking for on these platforms may help institutions update their own websites and messaging to transfer students. Furthermore, institutions may consider engaging more as active users on these platforms to help further their engagement reach with transfer students and connect them with institutional sources.

Enhancing the Connectivity of Institutional Information Sources

Our findings revealed that students use multiple sources to confirm information and fill in information gaps from single sources. In light of this, postsecondary institutions may consider enhancing the connectivity of their information sources to ensure that students do not have to do as much external searching. One way to do this is to place the contact information of transfer advisors on webpages alongside transfer information so that students can quickly find help through trusted sources. This would go a long way in helping students develop meaningful connections with

postsecondary institutions, build their capacity to interact with advisors, and obtain the information necessary to make informed transfer decisions (Aurini, LaCroix, & lafolla, 2024).

Few of the interview participants mentioned using the institutional websites at their sending institutions to learn about program pathways and potential receiving institutions. Accordingly, there is room for colleges and universities to enhance the information they provide to their students about future learning opportunities after they graduate. Research has shown that advising students about transfer is a delicate balance between sending and receiving institutions, but there is shared responsibility nonetheless (Carleson, 2023; Elliott & Lakin, 2020). All postsecondary institutions should work to clearly communicate which programs have articulation and/or pathway agreements with other schools and link website visitors to those opportunities. This information will be invaluable for students looking to pursue further schooling and even for students making their initial postsecondary program decisions.

Developing or Increasing Capacity for Pre-Transfer Credit Assessments

A core theme of our findings is that transfer students are interested in maximizing the number of transfer credits they receive. Not only are students eager to receive numerous transfer credits, they also look to receive credits that are directly applicable to their new programs of study. While formal information sources, such as ONTransfer.ca and institutional websites, provide valuable estimates of the number of transfer credits students may receive, these are just estimates and can be imprecise in some situations. This can lead to jarring experiences for students if they do not receive all of the credits that they expect to receive. This is especially problematic when students apply to institutions operating on post-admission transfer credit models, whereby transfer credit evaluations take place after students have accepted offers of admission.

A practical recommendation is for postsecondary institutions to develop the capacity for proactive transfer credit evaluations before students are required to accept admission offers. This recommendation echoes previous commentary on the value of pre-admission transfer credit evaluation (Higher Education Strategy Associates, 2021). Ideally, evaluations would contain both the number of credits a transfer student is awarded and whether those credits work toward fulfilling program requirements. One form this could take is to confirm the credit estimations provided through ONTransfer.ca. Another would be to build a singular infrastructure at each institution for students to apply for credit evaluation in advance of—or during—their applications.



References

- Aurini, J., LaCroix, E., Dreesha, M., Brisbane, M., & Iafolla, V. (2024). *A review of qualitative student mobility research in Canada*. Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer.
<https://oncat.ca/projects+detail+1000100698>
- Aurini, J., LaCroix, E., & Iafolla, V. (2024). *The hidden cost of transfer: A qualitative examination of Ontario transfer students*. Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer.
<https://oncat.ca/publications+detail+1000100734>
- Carleson, S. (2023). The transfer maze: How systematic snags too often block the path from community college to a bachelor's degree. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.
<https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-transfer-maze>
- Cepeda, R., Buelow, M. T., Jaggars, S. S., & Rivera, M. D. (2021). "Like a freshman who didn't get a freshman orientation": How transfer student capital, social support, and self-efficacy intertwine in the transfer student experience. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 1–15.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.767395>
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. SAGE.
- Davies, S., & Zarifa, D. (2012). The stratification of universities: Structural inequality in Canada and the United States. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 30(2), 143–158.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2011.05.003>
- Decock, H., & Janzen, K. (2016). *A qualitative study of the York-Seneca transfer experience*. Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer.
<https://oncat.ca/sites/default/files/research/2013-09-Final-Report-Seneca-College-Qualitative-Study-of-the-York-Seneca-Transfer-Experience.pdf>
- Elliott, D., & Lakin, J. (2020). Running the STEM gauntlet: The complicity of four-year universities in the transfer penalty. *Research in Higher Education*, 61, 540–565.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-019-09586-4>
- Fetters, M. D., Curry, L. A., & Creswell, J. W. (2013). Achieving integration in mixed methods designs: Principles and practices. *Health Services Research*, 48(6), 2135–2156.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6773.12117>
- Grote, D. M., Lee, W. C., Knight, D. B., Erwin, A. R., & Watford, B. A. (2019). *Unnecessarily complicated: An examination of information asymmetry in the transfer process*. CoNECD – The Collaborative Network for Engineering and Computing Diversity, Crystal City, Virginia.
<https://peer.asee.org/31804>
- Hayes, S., Lindeman, L., & Lukszo, C. (2020). The role of academic advisors in the development of transfer student capital. *NACADA Journal*, 40(1), 49–63.
<https://doi.org/10.12930/NACADA-18-35>

- Higher Education Strategy Associates. (2021). *MAPIT 2.0: Reviewing transfer credit processes at Ontario post-secondary institutions*. Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer. <https://oncat.ca/publications+detail+mapit-reviewing-transfer-credit-processes-at-ontario-postsecondary-institutions>
- Hill, J. R. (1965). Transfer shock: The academic performance of the junior college transfer. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 33(3), 201–215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.1965.11010875>
- Hu, X., Ortagus, J., & Kramer, D. (2018). The community college pathway: An analysis of the costs associated with enrolling initially at a community college before transferring to a 4-year institution. *Higher Education Policy*, 31(3), 359–380. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41307-017-0063-7>
- Jabbar, H., Epstein, E., Sanchez, J., & Hartman, C. (2021). Thinking through transfer: Examining how community college students make transfer decisions. *Community College Review*, 49(1), 3–29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091552120964876>
- Jabbar, H., Schudde, L., Garza, M., & McKinnin-Crowley, S. (2022). Bridges or barriers? How interactions between individuals and institutions condition community college transfer. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 93(3), 375–398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2021.1953339>
- Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(2), 112–133. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689806298224>
- Laanan, F. S. (2007). Studying transfer students: Part II: Dimensions of transfer students' adjustment. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 31(1), 37–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668920600859947>
- Laanan, F. S., Starobin, S. S., & Eggleston, L. E. (2010). Adjustment of community college students at a four-year university: Role and relevance of transfer student capital for student retention. *Journal of College Student Retention*, 12(2), 175–209. <https://doi.org/10.2190/CS.12.2.d>
- LaCroix, E., Aurini, J., & Iafolla, V. (2024). *Exploring transfer student integration: A longitudinal qualitative study of Ontario transfer students*. Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer. <https://oncat.ca/projects+detail+1000100735>
- Lang, D., & Lopes, V. (2014). Deciding to transfer: A study of college to university choice. *College Quarterly*, 17(3). <http://collegequarterly.ca/2014-vol17-num03-summer/lang-lopes.html>
- Maier, R., & Robson, K. (2020). Exploring university-to-college transfer in Ontario: A qualitative study of non-linear post-secondary mobility. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 50(1), 82–94. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1069653ar>
- Maliszewski Lukszo, C., & Hayes, S. (2020). Facilitating transfer student success: Exploring sources of transfer student capital. *Community College Review*, 48(1), 31–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091552119876017>

- Moseholm, E., & Fetters, M. D. (2017). Conceptual models to guide integration during analysis in convergent mixed methods studies. *Methodological Innovations*, 10(2), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2059799117703118>
- Moser, K. (2014). Exploring the impact of transfer capital on community college transfer students. *Journal of First-Year Experience and Students in Transition*, 25, 53–76.
- Pizarro Milian, R., & Zarifa, D. (2021). Quantitative transfer research in Canada: Past achievements, current challenges, and future directions. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 51(3), 82–99. <https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.vi0.189115>
- Rosenberg, M. J. (2016). Understanding the adult transfer student – Support, concerns, and transfer student capital. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 40(12), 1058–1073. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2016.1216907>
- Skolnik, M. (2010). A look back at the decision on the transfer function at the founding of Ontario's colleges of applied arts and technology. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 40(2), 1–17. <https://journals.sfu.ca/cjhe/index.php/cjhe/article/view/1915/1942>
- Skolnik, M. L. (2013). An historical perspective on the idea of institutional diversity and differentiation in Ontario higher education. *College Quarterly*, 16(2), Article 2. <http://collegequarterly.ca/2013-vol16-num02-spring/skolnik.html>
- Snelgrove, R., & Havitz, M. (2010). Looking back in time: The pitfalls and potential of retrospective methods in leisure studies. *Leisure Sciences*, 32(4), 337–351. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2010.488199>
- Sparks, J. (2024). *Three tips for transfer websites*. Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer. <https://oncat.ca/news+article+three-tips-for-transfer-websites>
- Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. *Review of Educational Research*, 45(1), 89–125. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543045001089>

Appendix A

Extended Description of the Data and Methods

This study was conducted using a convergent mixed-methods design (Fetters et al., 2013). Mixed methods research “combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration” (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 123). Here, the strengths of quantitative and qualitative methods are used to offset their respective limitations (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Fetters et al., 2013; Moseholm & Fetters, 2017). In convergent designs, quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed within a close timeframe, with several options for integration throughout the research design (Fetters et al., 2013).

To answer our research questions, we collected data through an online survey, followed by interviews. Thus, our research design was an explanatory unidirectional model in which “an initial quantitative strand is conducted and followed by a qualitative study to explain the findings” (Moseholm & Fetters, 2017, p. 6). While the quantitative survey was useful for reporting the types of sources students used and the relative number of sources they consulted, it could not tell us *how* students used these sources. In this study, integration (or “mixing”) took place during three periods of the research design: (a) the sampling framework, (b) the analysis, and (c) the presentation/interpretation of findings.

TABLE A1
Sample Size by Mobility Pathway

Mobility pathway type	Interviews	TIS v1	TIS v2
College-to-college	14%	18%	20%
College-to-university	44%	46%	45%
University-to-college	8%	5%	8%
University-to-university	26%	24%	20%
Pathway unclear*	8%	8%	5%
Total	51	2137	590

*These participants indicated that they did not have a particular postsecondary institution in mind at the time of data collection.

Quantitative Analysis

Our quantitative analysis focused on a survey question that asked students about the sources they used to access transfer information.¹¹ This question allowed students to choose multiple information sources from a list that had been used in previous research on transfer intent and information sources (e.g., Laanan et al., 2010; Moser, 2014). Students also had the option to select “other” and provide alternate sources. In TIS Version 2, the list was expanded to include additional online/internet information sources that were commonly mentioned during interviews with the TIS respondents. Statistical tests on the response patterns between TIS Versions 1 and 2 (provided in Table C1) suggested that the additional categories affected response patterns to the question. As a result, aside from Figure 1, the TIS Version 2 data are shown for the results and analysis presented in Figure 2, with a supplemental analysis of TIS Version 2 provided in Appendix C.

Qualitative Analysis

Interviews took place over Zoom and were roughly 30 minutes in length. Because the interviews took place after the survey was launched and the interview participants were derived from the survey sample, some participants were actively in the process of transferring institutions. In these cases, the participants were invited to complete the transfer intent interview and share retrospective accounts of their experiences.¹²

During their interviews, the students were asked to discuss the information sources on which they had been relying and how they were using these sources. Given the previously noted literature gaps on combining information sources, probing questions were asked to elicit information about how these information sources were being used in relation to one another, as well as their relative strengths and weaknesses. The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and uploaded to NVivo qualitative analysis software. Each participant was assigned case attributes that captured their mobility pathway (e.g., ‘college-to-university’), allowing us to further interrogate the data and findings by pathway.

To ensure that the qualitative data spoke to the quantitative data, the quantitative survey constructs were used as *a priori* codes. Four codes formed the parent codes of the codebook: formal institutional resources, internet searches, personal networks, and social media and other media. Each of these codes was further saturated by numerous child codes reflecting the survey constructs, and there were particular considerations for each parent code. For example, with the formal institutional resource code, the child codes distinguished between sending and receiving institutional resources. For all child codes, the same three grandchild codes were developed: (a) reason for access, (b) how the source was used, and (c) challenges with the source. These

¹¹ The question and response categories can be found in Appendix B. Note that for the tables and graphs shown in the report, a shortened description for each information source is used.

¹² We are confident that our qualitative data ward off any validity concerns related to retrospective accounts (Snelgrove & Havitz, 2010). Given that these participants had only recently switched institutions (i.e., a semester or two before the interview), our open-ended interview questions allowed them to create a narrative informed by their recent experiences.

grandchild codes were instrumental in understanding how and why students used various information sources.

As a general process of precoding, the *a priori* codes were deductively applied to a sample of five interviews. During this stage, inductive coding was also used to further develop the codebook. For example, one participant talked about using a university's accessibility services, which was not present in the *a priori* codebook. After the precoding process, the codebook was used to analyze the remaining interviews.

Upon further examination, the data showed that the students were not solely accessing single sources but were, in fact, using multiple sources to gather information about transfer. To capture these use patterns, a second round of coding was performed to explore how the students used information sources in relation to one another. In this report, we rely on the code *sources used as confirmational or complementary*, which captures how students used sources to confirm information they had already acquired or to complement existing information and fill knowledge gaps.



Appendix B

Selected TIS Survey Questions

Transfer Information Sources, TIS Version 1

What information sources have you used so far in considering a transfer? Select all that apply.

- ONTransfer.ca website
- Classmates, friends, or family/relatives
- Guidance counsellor, faculty, or school advisor at my current/past institution
- Messaging or information about transfer from posters, brochures, etc.
- College, university, or Indigenous institute website
- Colleges, universities, or Indigenous institutes that I have contacted
- Other; please specify

Transfer Information Sources, TIS Version 2

What information sources have you used so far in considering a transfer? Select all that apply.

- ONTransfer.ca website
- Google/other internet search engine (e.g., Bing, Yahoo!)
- Social media/vlogs/blogs/online forums (e.g., Facebook, YouTube, Reddit)
- Classmates, friends, or family/relatives
- Guidance counsellor, faculty, or school advisor at my current/past institution
- Messaging or information about transfer from posters, brochures, etc.
- College, university, or Indigenous institute website
- Colleges, universities, or Indigenous institutes that I have contacted
- Other; please specify

Transfer Destination, TIS Versions 1 and 2

Do you have any specific postsecondary institutions in Ontario in mind? Select all that apply.

- Yes, I have (a) specific college(s) in mind.
- Yes, I have (a) specific university (universities) in mind.
- Yes, I have a specific Indigenous institute(s) in mind.
- No, I don't have any specific postsecondary institution in mind.

Appendix C

Additional Results from TIS

FIGURE C1

Students Experiencing “A Great Deal of Difficulty” or “Quite a Bit of Difficulty” by Transfer Information Source Consulted and TIS Version

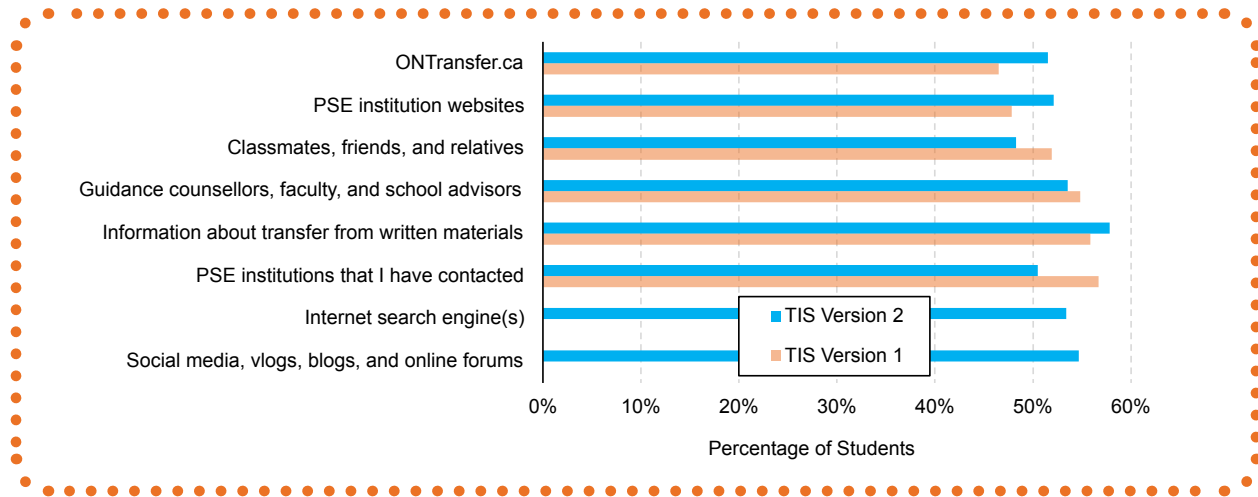


TABLE C1

Students' Use of Transfer Information Sources by TIS Version

Information Source	TIS Version 2	TIS Version 1	p-value
ONTransfer.ca	82%	77%	0.013
Internet search engine(s)	50%	n/a	n/a
PSE institution websites	49%	48%	0.910
Classmates, friends, and relatives	30%	38%	<0.001
PSE institutions that I have contacted	17%	17%	0.990
Guidance counsellors, faculty, and school advisors	17%	21%	0.025
Social media, vlogs, blogs, and online forums	11%	n/a	n/a
Information from posters, brochures, etc.	11%	10%	0.350
Other	1%	3%	0.024
Total respondents	590	2137	n/a
Total information sources used	1573	4558	n/a
Average sources per respondent	2.7	2.1	<0.001

Note. The p-values are from t-test tests of the differences in means or proportions.

TABLE C2*Students' Use of Transfer Information Sources by Intended Destination, TIS Version 1*

Information Source	College	University	p-value
ONTransfer.ca	75%	78%	0.200
Classmates, friends, and relatives	33%	39%	0.016
Guidance counsellors, faculty, and school advisors	16%	22%	0.014
Information from posters, brochures, etc.	7%	10%	0.050
PSE institution websites	41%	49%	0.001
PSE institutions that I have contacted	17%	17%	0.860
Other	4%	2%	0.015
Respondents	488	1482	n/a
Selections	939	3195	n/a
Average selections per respondent	1.9	2.2	<0.001

Note. The p-values are from t-test tests of the differences in means or proportions.

TABLE C3*Students' Usage Patterns of Transfer Information Sources, TIS Version 1*

Information source	Used alone	Average additional sources
ONTransfer.ca	23.2%	0.8
PSE institution websites	7.0%	1.0
Classmates, friends, and relatives	1.4%	1.1
Guidance counsellors, faculty, and school advisors	1.4%	1.5
PSE institutions that I have contacted	1.3%	1.7
Information from posters, brochures, etc.	< 1%	1.8
Total / overall average	35.6%	1.1

