

Council on Postsecondary Education

RETENTION INDICATOR METHODOLOGY

Reference(s): *The Council on Post-Secondary Education Act* Section 11(e); 12(c)

Approval Authority: Secretary to Council

Point of Contact: Manager, Policy Development and Analysis

Original Policy Approval: 03 March 2003 (Colleges)

02 December 2003 (Universities)

Amended: n/a

I. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline in a standard format the methodology established relating to the annual collection of data pertaining to retention at colleges and universities.

II. Policy

The attached Retention Indicator Methodology is continued as a policy of the Council on Post-Secondary Education.

III. History

The Retention Indicator Methodology was established through a committee composed of the senior statistical officers of public colleges and universities, and was led by COPSE staff. This committee met beginning in 2002 and completed its work in 2003. Pilot information was collected for the cohort entering in 1998/99 academic year for universities and 2000/01 for colleges/UCN. Data have been collected every year since and reported in the Statistical Compendium.

Retention Indicator Methodology

This document presents the methodology developed by the Council on Post Secondary Education (the Council) and Manitoba's public universities and colleges that enables indicators to be generated by the institutions to respond to Council's needs and for the institutions' own internal purposes.

Principles

- The indicators developed for the Post-Secondary Indicator Framework are not intended for, and have not been designed for use in the calculation of funding levels.
- The definitions and methodologies for colleges' indicators may be different than those for universities as there are differences in the two types of institutions. Comparisons between colleges and universities may therefore be inappropriate.
- Multi-year data will be developed to allow for trend analyses.
- Analysis and interpretation will be undertaken in partnership with the universities and colleges. Benchmarking and comparisons to other jurisdictions is expected to form an important part of that analysis.

Limitations

This section outlines general limitations and will assist institutions and COPSE in analyzing and understanding the data. It is anticipated that this section of the methodology will be dynamic and thus will continue to be revised as new limitations are identified, resolved and/or better understood.

Additional limitations may be identified for specific indicators in the sections of this document that apply to the indicator in question. In all cases, these limitations require that post-secondary institutions be involved in interpretation and analysis of the data. This will help to ensure a more complete understanding of the data.

- Each post-secondary institution in Manitoba has a different mandate, which in turn leads institutions to offer different kinds of programs. For example, the U of M provides a high number of professional programs that have a greater cost. UCN provides more upgrading programs and community-based programming.
- Universities and colleges may change a program's requirements and/or length. This will have a significant impact on trend analysis and on comparisons. For example, 1998/99 is the first year on which the U of M offers a two-year after-degree program in Education, and the first year that the U of W offers the full five-year Education program. Institutions must identify such changes in notes to their tables, and this must be accounted for in any analysis.

General Protocol for Data Use

The Council and the colleges and universities have agreed upon a general protocol for data use that applies to indicator data provided to the Council by colleges and universities.

1. The purpose of post-secondary indicators is to produce data that will allow for public reporting of progress towards government policy objectives relating to post-secondary education in Manitoba. Indicators are not intended as a tool to rank colleges and/or universities.
2. Institutions acknowledge that while the Council can determine the format for public reporting, the Council is bound by the policy decisions of government and the provisions of *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
3. Insofar as government policy allows, the data are to be reported publicly by the Council showing only aggregate figures for all colleges and all universities.
4. The data provided to the Council by institutions includes separate data for all participating institutions along with identifiers so that the Council can undertake appropriate analysis. Data for each college and university will be shared among all colleges and universities to allow for better institutional analysis, and for an ongoing assessment of the indicator methodology.
5. Rankings may not be used by institutions for promotion, recruiting or other public dissemination. However, aggregate results for the colleges or for the universities and the respective institution's own individual results may be used.

Universities' Retention Indicators Methodology

05 March 2003

This section identifies a methodology to track how post-secondary public policy affects student outcomes in all programs and institutions.

Student outcomes can be measured by a host of indicators. The primary indicators are the rates of graduation, attrition and persistence of each successive group or cohort of students who enter programs. These three indicators are addressed by the following methodology.

Limitations

In addition to the general limitations presented in the Introduction to this document, additional limitations specific to this indicator are included below.

- Currently there is no national or provincial system for tracking student transfers from one institution to another, or from province to another. To ensure better information, Manitoba universities have surveyed a representative sample of students who left their respective institution prior to graduation to develop an estimate of the numbers of students who transferred. This estimate is used to adjust the results for attrition to get a clearer picture of student success in Manitoba. This method will continue to be used until data tracking systems under development are in place to track students transferring between institutions.
- For practical reasons, students who begin a program are followed for a fixed period of time, five and seven years for university programs. Due to the nature of co-operative education programs, students in these programs are followed for six and eight years. Students continuing on beyond seven or eight years may still graduate at a later date, and may have taken a break from their studies, voluntarily or involuntarily.
- Some universities offer joint programs, such as the nursing program offered jointly with colleges and the University of Manitoba, or the joint communications program offered by Red River College and the University of Winnipeg. Thus, for some programs, there may be no graduates.

Definitions

- A cohort is to include first time, first admissions first year students, admitted to either a Direct entry or a Non direct entry program in the summer, fall and winter terms of any given academic year. The 1998-99 cohort would include all students entering in the summer of 1998 and the fall of 1998 and winter of 1999.
- Only undergraduate programs will be considered.

- Only full-time registered students will be considered. A full-time student is a student who has 60% or more of a full course load for the program in question – the definition used by COPSE. A part-time student is a student who has less than 60% of a full course load for the program in question – the definition used by COPSE.
- A registered student is a student who is registered in a program on the reporting dates for each term as required by COPSE’s Statistical Compendium.
- Only credit programs funded by COPSE are to be considered. Continuing Education non-credit programs and non-funded degree programs will not be included.
- Data to be reported in categories including:
 - Graduated: those students completing a program and receiving a credential (degree, diploma or certificate)
 - Continuing: students still enrolled in the program and not yet completed/graduated
 - Continuing/transferred elsewhere: students leaving the university to attend another post-secondary institution
 - Attrition: students leaving the program prior to completion/graduation
 - Ineligible to Proceed: failures

The first three categories will be shown and also aggregated into a subtotal for “student success” to provide a positive comparison to “Attrition” and “Ineligible to Proceed.”

Reporting Requirements

- The first cohort to be reported on began in May 1998, and ends in April 2003 (i.e. May 2003 Convocation).
- Data will be reported to COPSE in the form proscribed elsewhere in this document by June 30th of each year.
- The five reporting categories will be reported after the first (1st) year, the fifth (5th) year, and the seventh (7th) year after beginning the program. Co-operative program students are to be reported separately, using the same definitions as outlined above. However, co-op results are to be reported after first year, the sixth (6th) year, and the eighth (8th) year in recognition of the fact that the work terms for these students may extend their programs.
- Data will be divided into three main categories for public reporting:
 - First Entry Programs: Those programs requiring Manitoba high school graduation or equivalent (such as Arts and Science where students enter directly, for the University of Manitoba it would be such programs as University 1, Engineering,

School of Art, etc). These programs may also be referred to as “First Entry Programs.”

- **Second Entry Programs:** Those programs requiring previous University study as a basis of admission (such as professional programs). All full-time students entering these programs would be considered as “first time, first admissions to program.” These programs may also be referred to as “Second Entry Programs.”
- **Co-op Programs:** Those programs that have a paid work component as part of the program requirements. Students in these programs will not be included in other categories. Students will be reported after the first year of the program, the sixth (6th) year, and the eighth (8th) year in recognition of the time added to the program by the work components.
- Data will be provided electronically in Microsoft Excel format.
- Data will include the starting cohort (N), with the numbers of students in each category for each of the years shown. This will allow the data to be aggregated to show a single figure in each year and category; the data shown for each year are cumulative.
- Three such tables will be produced for each institution showing Direct (or First) Entry Programs, Indirect (or Second) Entry Programs, and Co-operative Programs (keeping in mind the different tracking years for co-op programs).

Example of a Reporting Table

Status of students entering university programs in 19XX after 5/7 years (6/8 years for co-op programs)

Category	Cohort	Year 1		Year 5		Year 7	
	N	N	%	N	%	N	%
Graduated	--						
Continuing	--						
Cont/Trans Elsewhere	--						
Subtotal	--						
Attrition	--						
Ineligible to proceed	--						
Total	X						

Colleges Retention Indicators Methodology

05 March 2003

This section identifies a methodology to track how post-secondary public policy is assisting with improving student success in all programs and institutions.

Student success could be measured by a host of indicators. One important dimension of student success is the number of students who complete their program. By developing indicators on graduation, measures focusing on attrition and continuation can also be calculated. These three indicators are covered by the following methodology.

Principles

The general principles and Protocol for Data Use presented in the Introduction apply to the methodology developed for indicators of graduation, continuation and attrition. Additional principles are included below.

- In recognition that this methodology is new to colleges in Manitoba, colleges will phase in indicators for graduation, continuation and attrition, starting with Early Childhood Education, reported in March 2003. In August 2003, colleges will report all certificate programs. Diploma programs will be included in subsequent years.
- English as a Second Language (ESL) programming, Apprenticeship and academic upgrading programs are excluded from this methodology, as are all programming that is not funded by the Council (i.e. the methodology includes programs termed as “regular day” programs, “core” programs and “base budget” programs).

Limitations

In addition to the general limitations presented in the Introduction to this document, additional limitations specific to this indicator are included below.

- Colleges and universities cannot currently track student transfers between post-secondary institutions within Manitoba. Further, currently there is no national system for tracking student transfers from one province to another. Thus, these students can only be identified as “attrition.” Until such systems exist to track student transfers, interpretation of the data must consider the fact that some percentage of students are continuing their education at another school and are not in fact dropped out.
- ACC and UCN programming allows students to enroll in one program, but take courses from another. This represents only a small number of students, however.
- Some colleges offer joint programs, such as the nursing program offered jointly with the University of Manitoba, or the joint communications program offered by Red River College and the University of Winnipeg. Thus, for some college programs,

there will be no graduates, while for some university programs, continuers may be artificially low.

Definitions

- Intake means students enrolling in a program for the first time between July 1 and 30 June (a college's academic year).
- A first time student is a student entering a program for the first time. This could include a student who has been enrolled in the college before in a different program.
- The census date will be the same as for the Statistical Compendium – 15 August of each year.
- Students are counted from the first day of the program – there is no voluntary withdrawal date.
- Students who transfer into a program, either through credit transfer arrangements, PLA or some other arrangement, are included in the cohort in the year that they enroll.
- Data to be reported in categories including:
 - Graduation Rate
 - Continuing
 - Attrition
 - Other (“non-graduates”, failures, etc).

Reporting Requirements

- The first intake year will be 2000/01, which will allow for an assessment of a 2-year diploma program (i.e. graduating in 2002).
- Colleges will provide data for Early Childhood Education diploma programs to pilot the methodology. Other programs will be included in later years.
- When reporting for all programs, certificate and diploma programs will be tracked separately.
- Colleges will track each year of a cohort, and provide data to COPSE for four years after the intake date.
- Colleges will provide data on 31 March 2003. After March 2003, data will be provided to Council by 31 August of each year.

- Data provided in March 2003 for ECE will be displayed cumulatively for each year reported, allowing for an assessment of the trends as the time period progresses. This requirement will be assessed in partnership with the colleges once data is received from all colleges.
- Data will be provided electronically in Microsoft Excel format.
- Data will include the starting cohort (N), with the numbers of students in each category for four years. This will allow the data to be aggregated to show a single figure for all colleges in each category.

Example of a Reporting Table for a Program

Category	Cohort (N)	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Graduated	--				
Continuing	--				
Attrition	--				
Other	--				
Total	X				