

Response ID ANON-6A5W-MREB-9

Submitted to **Accelerated Courses and Switching University or Degree: Call for Evidence**
Submitted on **2016-07-19 12:49:27**

Introduction

1 Who are you responding as?

University/higher education institution

University details

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Role:

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Q1 How many students changed degree course within your higher education institution over the last three academic years? i.e. students who changed course but continued to study at your higher education institution.

2012/13::

Not known

2013/14::

Not known

2014/15::

Not known

Q2 How many students have transferred into your higher education institution over the last three academic years?

2012/13::

Not known

2013/14::

Not known

2014/15::

Not known

Q3 Are there any common patterns as to why they have transferred into your higher education institution?

Response:

Not known

Q4 How many students have transferred out of your higher education institution over the last three academic years?

2012/13::

Not known

2013/14::

Not known

2014/15::

Not known

Q5 Are there any common patterns as to why they have transferred out of your higher education institution?

Transferring to :

As background to our response to this question, we do not hold this data in this form.

Internal transfers - our data does not distinguish between:

- those students who transfer internally from another course for progression reasons (e.g. foundation to undergraduate degree); and
- those who change subjects or specialisation within a discipline.

Transfers in - our data does not distinguish between:

- those students how join us from another institution because they have transferred under a credit transfer; and
- those who have progressed (e.g. under a progression arrangement with a partner institution under which we admit students directly into the second year of a course, or from a partner institution offering a foundation course).

Transfers out - our data does not distinguish between:

- those who have withdrawn from the university for a range of reasons; and
- those who have transferred elsewhere.

HESA will be able to provide data that shows transfers between institutions.

Our response to this question is therefore based on anecdotal evidence – we do not believe that there are particular common patterns for students who transfer outside the institution. The reasons for leaving institutions are very complex and personal and are, in our experience, dependent on a mix of factors. Students put a lot of time and effort into researching the right institution and course for them and therefore put time into resolving issues that arise. We believe that it is very uncommon for students to leave solely because of dissatisfaction concerning the provider or course. This may be one factor amongst a number of factors.

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Q6 Have you got a credit transfer process in place?

Yes

Q7 If no, why not?

Why not?:

Q8 If yes, how are students made aware of your credit transfer process?

How do you inform students?:

If yes, how are students made aware of your credit transfer process?

There is information on our webpages about our 'recognition of prior learning' scheme. The documents direct students to contact the relevant academic staff directly to discuss their specific circumstances. Each situation is different and we prefer to deal with students situations on an individual basis.

For those students who do wish to proceed with a transfer, we provide a great deal of time and support to students who request a transfer, including working with the institution that they are transferring to or from, to ensure that the course is mapped and that any issues are considered. We do find with our own students that in practice, it may be possible to address the underlying issues to the satisfaction of the student so that a transfer is not necessary.

Q9 What would the impact of a credit transfer system be on the higher education sector? If you reference other sources in your answer please state the name of the source.

Impact on sector:

Supporting transfers is resource intensive and so if it became more widespread there would be a need for investment in staff and systems to support it. Mapping courses is a manual and individual process and is likely to remain so.

As we have noted above, transfers do not only happen because of dissatisfaction with a provider or a course. The main reason that students transfer is because there is a formal progression route from a course at another institution, either from a foundation course or from an international or other partner whose course has been recognised through a recognition of prior learning process, so that the student can transfer with advanced standing onto a later year of a longer course.

These mechanisms exist and are used, mainly with international partners, but there is no reason why they could not be developed further. When this happens, the mapping and other academic reviews have already taken place, so that a student who meets the required standard at the previous institution can apply and

will be considered for admission with advanced standing at the new institution. The initial work to set up these arrangements is intensive but once in place they work well.

Similar arrangements work well in so-called "articulation" arrangements, under which a student may be given a place at an institution that is conditional upon completing a course at another institution and meeting the required standing – such arrangements are in place for students transferring from international foundation courses onto university degrees, for example.

If the number of students transferring grew very significantly, it is possible that similar arrangements might be developed over time in particular disciplines. However, there would be a concern that this might lead to standardisation of courses that would reduce innovation and limit the content of courses over time – directly in conflict with the intention of the teaching excellence framework, which is to encourage ambition and innovation in teaching and learning.

Q10 What would the impact of a credit transfer system be on your institution? If you reference other sources in your answer please state the name of the source.

Impact on institution :

Facilitating transfers are very resource intensive, as we believe it is important to ensure that the transfer process for students is smooth, both academically and on a personal level. There can be other complications such as accommodation. If there is an increase in the number of students transferring we would need to invest in this support.

Q11 By what mechanisms could a system of credit transfer be more effectively embedded across the sector? If you reference other sources in your answer please state the name of the source.

Mechanisms :

N/A

Q12 What do you see as the main barriers to a more extensive credit transfer system? If you reference other sources in your answer please state the name of the source.

Main barriers:

Courses across institutions are structured very differently, for perfectly valid academic reasons. A student who wishes to transfer may find that they have not studied the same things in year 1, which set the foundations, or lead on to modules in year 2 and 3. See our response to question 9 – we do not believe that it would be the right solution for courses to become more standardised.

A transfer can be a major upheaval for a student – around 40% of our students come from within 50 miles and so have deliberately chosen a local institution; moving for them may not be possible because of cost or family circumstances. Accommodation and other costs are a major factor for some students. It would be more difficult for a student to join an existing cohort and rebuild their social networks, and there is a risk that students will feel isolated or not participate fully in a new environment – although this will clearly depend on their personal circumstances and reasons for switching. However, we believe that cohort identity is an important driver for student satisfaction.

We do not believe that there would be significant take-up even if transfer were to become more straightforward because of course standardisation – simply because of the personal circumstances of many students.

Q13 Are there any lessons we can learn from international credit transfer models, e.g. from the US? If you reference other sources in your answer please state the name of the source.

International lessons:

It appears from the call for evidence that the vast majority of the US transfers are under arrangements similar to those described above, where students transfer from a college to a university to complete their degree, and only a small percentage switch between universities.

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Q14 Does your institution offer accelerated degrees?

No

Q15 If yes, what are the advantages to the students and your institution of offering degree programmes designed in this way?

Advantages for students/institution :

N/A

Q16 If no, what are the institutional barriers that would need to be overcome to offer more accelerated degrees?

Difficulty in covering costs, Concern about adequately covering the course requirements in a shorter time period, Difficulty in getting staff available to work outside term time, Have not seen any demand from students or employers, It would be unsuitable for most of the subjects we offer, Not applicable

Other?:

We would have concerns about quality of learning opportunities with 2 year courses. Students need time to assimilate knowledge and learn practical skills, such as study skills, and have time for independent study and reading. We also believe that shorter courses would mean students would not be able to participate in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. We believe that these activities are a key way that students learn practical or "life" skills, they are an important part of

the university experience and they are a vital part of our employability offering at BU.

It is important to remember that many students rely on vacation periods to undertake paid or voluntary work, and academics often use this time for external examining, professional practice or research. There would be a risk with shorter degrees that this might encourage some universities to employ more teaching only staff. At Bournemouth University we believe that staff should be involved in research and teaching, and we would not welcome a change that would deepen the divide between teaching and research – this would conflict with one of the objectives of the Teaching Excellence Framework.

Practical and logistical difficulties could be overcome with planning and investment, but additional academic and support staff would be needed to support more intensive degrees in order to enable workload planning, especially as we would not welcome a move to employing further staff on teaching only contracts.

We would also be concerned about student well-being. Shorter courses could result in added pressure from extra work-load, with little time for relief through social or extra-curricular activities.