

Guidelines:

Brokering Programs

This guideline provides advice to Alberta institutions concerning the brokering of programs within the province.

A brokering agreement is an arrangement between two post-secondary institutions:

- a credentialing institution (owns the program or specialization), and
- a host institution (temporarily offers the program or specialization).

Brokering agreements support increased student access to programs of study. These arrangements allow institutions with no or little experience in a program area to gain and develop knowledge and expertise in that program area over time. These arrangements also facilitate the delivery of specified programs or specializations in areas of the province where these programs would otherwise not be available.

Scope

Brokering a program is a term used to describe a specific form of agreement between two institutions that permits the host institution to deliver the credentialing institution's ministry-approved program. A brokering agreement can be renewed or extended prior to its end date or termination.

While a brokering agreement can occur between two or more parties, public or private, the scope of this guideline includes only those brokering arrangements between **two public post-secondary institutions in Alberta**. This guideline is not applicable:

- for scenarios whereby multiple (i.e., more than two) Alberta institutions work together to develop a program for brokering;
- when the brokering agreement involves out-of-province or international institutions; and/or
- for providing advice to Alberta institutions that license their curriculum to other institutions (or for similar arrangements with other institutions) where the owner of the program is not providing a credential.

In addition, this guideline applies to ministry-approved certificate and diploma programs only. Other partnership arrangements, such as collaborative programs, are outside the scope of this guideline and are the focus of the Collaborative Programs guidelines.

Guiding Principles

- A brokering arrangement allows a host institution to deliver a ministry-approved program or program specialization, usually for a licensing fee, owned by the credentialing institution.
- Brokering a program is a way to increase student access to a program that is not otherwise available at the host institution or in the host institution's region.
- A brokering arrangement can expand program accessibility while preventing unnecessary program duplication and proliferation.

Pre-planning

Prior to negotiations with the credentialing institution, the host institution should identify:

- student demand for the program,
- the regional and community socio-economic merits of the program,
- the gap that the proposed program will fill in Alberta's adult learning system,
- labour market demand for the program, and/or
- learning pathways for the program.

These factors should inform, support and facilitate the development of the brokering agreement.

Institutions should submit proposals according to timeline requirements and deadlines.

Terms of Agreement and Termination of Agreement

The credentialing and host institutions must establish and sign a brokering agreement.

- The details of this arrangement will clearly state the terms, including the duration of the brokering agreement.
- A draft agreement prior to full execution (i.e., prior to sign-off by partner institutions) should be submitted to the Director of the Post-secondary Programs branch of Advanced Education for review and comment by the appropriate branch manager.
- When fully executed and signed, the credentialing institution attaches a copy of the brokering agreement to the Provider and Program Registry System (PAPRS) record, as this system allows only the credentialing institution to initiate the workflow and add attachments.

The credentialing institution owns the ministry-approved program and as such, grants the credential.

- The credentialing institution may acknowledge the host institution's participation on the parchment that is awarded, as specified in the agreement.
- The type of credential must be articulated in the agreement. The proposed brokered program should be of the credential type that the host institution is able to offer, in accordance with the Roles and Mandates Policy Framework of Alberta's publicly funded advanced education system.
- Which institution records graduate completions must be specified in the agreement.

Definitions

- **Accessibility:** Brokering is intended to increase accessibility for students and meet regional demand from employers.
- **Credentialing Institution:** Owns the ministry-approved program, provides academic oversight and issues the credential upon completion.
- **Host Institution:** The institution "leasing" the program from the credentialing institution. The host institution delivers the brokered program, but does not grant the credential.
- **Partnership:** Brokering is an active working partnership based on a formal agreement between two institutions.

Brokering Considerations

- Pre-planning
- Terms of Agreement and Termination of Agreement
- Funding
- Admission Requirements
- Curriculum and Course Delivery
- Program Changes
- Faculty and Staff Recruitment
- Dispute Resolution
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy
- Learner Enrolment Reporting
- Records Management and Retention
- Transcripts and Convocation

Terms of Agreement and Termination of Agreement Continued

Who counts the students, for the purposes of enrolment reporting, must be included in the agreement.

- Typically, the host institution counts 100 per cent of the enrolments.
- Enrolments are reported by institutions through the ministry's Learner Enrolment and Reporting System (LERS).
- In some cases, individual agreements between the brokering parties may include alternatives for enrolment reporting. For example, parties involved may agree to split the enrolment reporting 50/50 versus the host institution reporting 100 per cent of enrolment. The specific arrangements need to be documented in a signed brokering agreement and the brokering agreement must be added to the PAPRS record by the credentialing institution (and on file with the Post-secondary Programs branch of Advanced Education).

Generally, students are governed by all rules, regulations, academic policies and procedures of the host institution, including those for student appeals and fee payment.

If during the term of the signed agreement, the brokering agreement is amended or extended, the credentialing institution submits these amendments to the ministry.

- Any changes made by the credentialing institution, including a change to the end date of the agreement, will automatically be reflected in the host institution's program record, and as such, must be clearly communicated by the credentialing institution to the host institution prior to the credentialing institution's submission of the PAPRS change template to the ministry.

If the current agreement is terminated, the two partners may renegotiate a new one.

The end date of the brokering arrangement is mandatory in the PAPRS workflow, so a formal termination proposal is not required. When the approved end date is reached, the agreement ends on the system.

A brokerage arrangement should span a period of three to five years unless otherwise specified in the brokering agreement and for a warranted reason.

Upon termination or expiration of the brokering agreement, the host institution will do the following:

- ensure all active program students have completed the program or that appropriate accommodations have been made.
- return course materials to the credentialing institution,
- cease to make use of all course materials related to the brokered program, and
- remit all amounts owing to the credentialing institution.

Funding

The brokering agreement must include funding details for the host and credentialing institutions.

Typically, the tuition revenue is allocated to the institution where the students are registered, which is generally the host institution.

- If a tuition freeze is in place, the setting of tuition and fees at the host institution must align with the pre-existing tuition for the program at the credentialing institution. In essence, the tuition rate is the credentialing institution's tuition within a defined margin in alignment with the Tuition Fee Regulation.
- The set tuition and fees must align with the Tuition Fee Regulation.

The host institution commonly pays a negotiated or licensing fee (which may be based on a flat fee that includes the cost of curriculum development and other costs, or a percentage of the tuition fee) to the credentialing institution.

- The host institution assumes the majority of costs for the brokered program.
- The fee covers the costs of the credentialing institution's participation in the program.

Funding for brokering arrangements is negotiated between the participating institutions. Typically, Advanced Education is not involved in this negotiation.

Admission Requirements

The admission criteria for the brokered program at the host institution must align with the credentialing institution's admission requirements unless otherwise specified in the brokering agreement. All admission criteria agreed upon by the brokering partners must be specified in the agreement.

- The host institution assumes responsibility for students' applications, evaluates students' admissibility, and may be required to submit these applications to the credentialing institution for approval.
- The credentialing institution may review and provide advice concerning the admissibility of applicants.

Curriculum and Course Delivery

The host institution will deliver the curriculum as determined by the credentialing institution, including direct instruction and supervision of the program and students. The brokering agreement must also include the geographic location of the brokered program's delivery.

- Typically, the curriculum is identical to that offered by the credentialing institution, unless there is prior agreement between the host institution and the credentialing institution for revision. The host institution will not alter or delete from curriculum or course materials unless by mutual written agreement.
- When initiating the PAPRS workflow, the credentialing institution copies the Program ID and Specialization Code for their ministry-approved program into the program record created for the brokered program at the host institution. The host institution is unable to change these fields.
- The host institution will provide appropriate equipment/supplies to support program delivery, and will ensure that program materials, and course outlines are current as per the credentialing institution's requirements.
- The host institution can conduct standard program/course assessments and transmit grading information to the credentialing institution.
- The host institution will acknowledge the credentialing institution on program materials at the discretion of the credentialing institution.
- The host institution will record the student academic progress (grades) and submit grades to the credentialing institution to create a duplicate record.
- The credentialing institution will issue student transcripts and parchments. Transcripts and the parchment may acknowledge the host institution, subject to the terms of the agreement.
- The host institution will assess and grade student's assignments and examinations.
- The credentialing institution will oversee academic matters of the brokered program, such as course outlines, examinations and course modules.

Program Changes

It is advisable for the host and credentialing institution to maintain regular communication throughout the duration of the brokering agreement to share and update course and program information.

Periodically, the credentialing institution may revise and update curriculum materials and in such cases, will advise the credentialing institution of changes in a timely manner.

The credentialing and host institutions will communicate with one another and assess outcomes, in alignment with roles specified in the agreement.

The host institution may not make any changes to characteristics of the brokered program, without approval or direction from the credentialing institution.

If the credentialing institution requests approval for a change to the brokered program that will impact delivery (such as load or curriculum changes), the credentialing institution must provide the host institution reasonable notice that is in alignment with the terms of the agreement or what seems reasonable between the two institutions. The credentialing institution must communicate these changes to the host institution and to the ministry.

Faculty and Staff Recruitment

In the brokering agreement, the credentialing institution must include the minimum qualifications required of instructors teaching in the brokered program. Typically, instructional staff are employed by the host institution and subject to the rules, regulations, and academic/non-academic policies as defined by the host institution. The instructional staff of the host institution must meet the minimum qualifications specified by the credentialing institution. These qualifications must also align with regulatory requirements.

The host institution is responsible for replacing instructors and/or tutors whose performance, in the opinion of the credentialing institution, has been unsatisfactory. Unless otherwise agreed to, the host institution provides all necessary program supports which may include academic advising, scheduling classes and examinations, and other related tasks.

The host institution is responsible for conducting instructional staff evaluations – these may be shared with the credentialing institution. In some cases, where the host institution does not have the requisite faculty qualifications, the credentialing institution may make their faculty available to teach students at the host institution, however, the faculty would normally be contracted as employees to the host institution. In consultation with the host institution, the credentialing institution may assist in the recruitment, selection and/or approval of instructional staff.

Dispute Resolution

Both the host and credentialing institutions may have disputes or unresolved issues concerning the brokering agreement or the delivery of the brokered program. These issues shall be referred to the credentialing institution's senior academic officer, who will consult with the host institution's senior academic officer for resolution. Deans should and could resolve disputes/issues at their level whenever possible.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Both the host and credentialing institutions may receive an application to disclose the brokering agreement or related documents. To the extent that the law requires or permits disclosure, each party consents to such release or disclosure of information by the other. Each party agrees to assist the other in complying with the requirements of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) act. Neither party is to be held liable if one party, in responding to a FOIP application, errors in disclosing confidential information.

Learner Enrolment Reporting

Enrolment reporting will follow the terms and conditions laid out in the brokering agreement. Typically, the host institution counts the full load equivalents and unique student head counts, while the credentialing institution counts the graduates.

Records Management and Retention

Brokered programs at host institutions are not formally approved by the ministry because they have been previously approved and recorded in PAPRS.

When two partnering institutions reach a brokering agreement, the credentialing institution must initiate the proposal workflow in PAPRS (as described on page 83 of the Approvals User Guide available to all Alberta publicly funded post-secondary institutions). Only the credentialing institution has the ability to add attachments to the program record – because the credentialing institution’s program is already approved, neither the host institution nor the ministry reviewer is able to add documents to the PAPRS record. One of the attachments must be the brokering agreement.

On the PAPRS system, the host institution cannot see what the credentialing institution submits to the ministry (or any of the attachments added by the credentialing institution), and as such, is unable to make any changes, even to the program ID and specialization code of the program being brokered. Ministry staff are also not able to change the program ID and specialization code.

Once the record is signed off by the ministry reviewer and the two records are linked by Post-secondary Programs staff in PAPRS, the host institution is contacted by the reviewer to activate the program record. This is done on the Current Activation screen, accessible from the Specialization Details and as described on page 88 of the Approvals User Guide available to all Alberta publicly funded post-secondary institutions.

The host and credentialing institutions agree to retain all related records for at least one year after the agreement expires or terminates, subject to applicable legislation respecting document retention.

Anytime during the brokering agreement, the credentialing and host institution can change the end date of the agreement. For any changes to the end date of the brokering agreement, the credentialing institution must initiate the process through a brokering new change proposal (see page 89 of the PSI Approvals User Guide). If a new agreement is renegotiated with a different enrolment split, a new brokering workflow must be initiated. Again, please note that any changes to the end date require a new change proposal while any changes to the enrolment split require ending the current agreement and creating a new one.

The credentialing institution will receive students’ registration information from the host institution to create duplicate records of student registration.

The host institution’s student records must provide all student information to the credentialing institution. This includes student identification information, admission status, course registration and final grades, and other relevant information as deemed necessary by the credentialing institution.

The credentialing institution must create complete student records to support the issuance of student transcripts and parchments. The student records will include all the information received from the host institution plus program completion status (e.g., graduation status/parchment achieved).

Transcripts and Convocation

The host institution will record the student academic progress (grades) and send the grades to the credentialing institution to create a duplicate record. The credentialing institution will issue the student transcripts and parchment upon successful completion of the brokered program. As well, the credentialing institution will keep the student records and issue transcripts for any students who start, but do not finish the program.

Convocation typically occurs at the host institution. Specific details should be outlined in the agreement.

Further Information and Assistance

For additional information contact:

Director, Program Design and System Innovation
Alberta Advanced Education
780-643-9472

Related Guidelines:

- Program Proposal Timelines
- Enrolment Planning
- Collaborative Programs

Other related documents:

- Alberta Advanced Education Program Review and Approval Process
- PAPRS PSI User Manual
- Roles and Mandates Framework

To obtain a copy of other guideline documents, or to ensure that you have the most recent copy of this guideline, please send a request via email to ae.psp-paprs@gov.ab.ca.