

Academic and Career Entrance Certificate
&
Ontario Secondary School Diploma

Course Comparability Analysis

September, 2008

Background

As part of a much larger PLAR initiative, the Ministry of Education contacted the College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading (CSC) to discuss the possibility of determining how specific Academic and Career Entrance (ACE) courses compared to applicable OSSD courses.

The Ministry of Education was at that time developing a resource for use by principals in Ontario to determine transfer credits for out-of-province credentials. The purpose of this resource was to provide both consistency and a more time efficient process for school board principals. The inclusion of ACE courses in this initiative was seen as a valuable addition to this larger analysis.

In February 2007, Lynne Wallace, Executive Director of the CSC and Barbara Glass, Program Coordinator at Canadore College, CSC Chair and one of the original ACE Subject Matter Experts met with the Ministry of Education consultant. At this time, they provided background information on the development of the ACE courses, availability at colleges across Ontario and a summary of evaluation approaches. The consultant was made aware that mastery learning is an important part of the college evaluation process for ACE courses.

At the conclusion of this meeting, they were assured that the Ministry of Education would share their analysis with the CSC and identify a time when this analysis could be made available to all colleges. We were advised this summer (2008) that distribution could take place.

Process

The Ministry of Education consultant applied the same principles and used the same reporting template for ACE courses that was used for the out-of-province course analysis.

The ACE analysis was based on the Program Approval documents which had been submitted to The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Colleges Branch in 2003.

The ACE courses analyzed are as follows:

ACE Communications

ACE Apprenticeship Mathematics

ACE Business Mathematics

ACE Core Mathematics

(This course is called ACE Workplace Mathematics Equivalency in the analysis)

ACE Technology Mathematics

ACE Biology

ACE Physics

ACE Chemistry

Comments

The MED analysis is presented in a chart format. The categories are as follows:

Course Name
Date of Curriculum
Hours of Instruction
Additional Course Information
Course Description
Strands/Major Concepts
Overall Comparison
Additional Comments

Course Name

The analysis which MED has provided begins by clearly identifying which OSSD courses have been compared. Please note that because the ACE Physics course was articulated to both the Grade 11 University Stream and Grade 12 College Stream there are two charts for Physics.

Date of Curriculum

The most current available OSSD curriculum was used. In the case of mathematics and communications, this is the 2007 Secondary School Curriculum. In the case of the sciences, it is 2000. The ACE Communications curriculum which was used did not include the new Essential Skills Document Use module which is now in place.

Hours of Instruction

The hours for all ACE mathematics courses are within + or - 10 hours of the comparable OSSD course. In the case of the sciences, ACE Physics is a minimum of 30 hours more. For all the sciences the hours of instruction identified have the qualifier – at a minimum. ACE communications is 40 hours more than the OSSD equivalent.

Course Description and Strands/Major Concepts

Both these descriptions are taken from the curriculum documents provided. At the time of comparison the new Essential Skills Document Use Module in ACE Communications had not been developed. It is now included in the ACE Communications course for distance delivery.

Overall Comparison

In all cases including the comparison of ACE Physics to the Grade 11 University stream the comparison is described as “strong” or “considerable”.

ACE COMMUNICATIONS and ENG4C

There is a strong relationship between these two courses.

ACE APPRENTICESHIP MATHEMATICS and MAP4C

There is a considerable relationship between these two courses.

ACE BUSINESS MATHEMATICS and MAP4C

There is a considerable relationship between these two courses.

ACE TECHNOLOGY MATHEMATICS and MCT4C

There is a strong relationship between these two courses.

ACE CORE MATHEMATICS (WORKPLACE MATH EQUIVALENCY) and MEL4E

There is a strong relationship between these two courses.

ACE BIOLOGY and SB13C

There is a strong relationship between these two courses.

ACE PHYSICS and SPH3U

There is a strong relationship between these two courses.

ACE PHYSICS and SPH4C

There is a strong relationship between these two courses.

ACE CHEMISTRY and SCH4C

There is a strong relationship between these two courses.

Overall Comparison and Additional Comments

These two sections must be carefully read as a unit. In the Overall Comparison OSSD course expectations not found in the comparable ACE course are identified. In the Additional Comments for Apprenticeship, Business and Technology Maths it is identified that the course prerequisite, Core Mathematics, does address many of the units identified as not covered in the Overall Comparison.

The Overall Comparison and Additional Comments indicate that in the case of the sciences and math students do not necessarily complete all units. ACE courses require completion of core skills and then the units for admission and success in specific postsecondary programs. Consequently they will not have covered all the components of the OSSD course. For example students in Biology may not have studied the Botany units. Enabling students to study only those units required to succeed at the next step of their training enables adult students to move quickly on to their next step while ensuring they have the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed.

The question of why the ACE Biology was compared to the grade 11 not grade 12 Secondary School Biology course has been raised. The Ministry of Education website lists the senior sciences. There is no Grade 12 College stream Biology. Grade 11 Biology has both College and University streams. In Chemistry and Physics grade 11 is University stream only and Grade 12 has both. ACE was developed to be comparable to College Stream Secondary School courses.

No where in the analysis is the importance of the mastery learning model identified as part of the student evaluation process. In the case of all ACE courses for distance delivery, students must achieve a 70% to successfully complete a module and to complete the course.

Follow Up

The CSC has asked Subject Matter Experts to analyze both the Overall Comparisons and the Additional Comments to ensure they accurately represent ACE course content and consequently the preparedness of ACE students.

Recommended Uses of this Document

The CSC wants to thank MED for taking on this task. We are very pleased with the results which make it clear that these ACE and OSSD courses are strongly comparable. The variations are attributable to ACE courses being a preparation for specific postsecondary and apprenticeship training.

Colleges describe ACE courses as being “equivalent to an OSSD for purposes of admission to postsecondary and apprenticeship training”. Often the question is asked “Have ACE courses have been evaluated by MED to substantiate this claim?”. Now we can answer “Yes”.

You will be able to use the MED analysis in the promotion of College Upgrading programs and, more important, the promotion of College ACE students with the following internal and external contacts:

Postsecondary Programs
Apprenticeship Programs
College Admissions Staff
Admission Departments at Universities
Admission Departments at Out-of-Province Institutions
Second Career Contacts
Labour Adjustment Committees
Community Referral Agencies
Other Community Preparatory Service Providers and Partners
Literacy Networks
MTCU Contacts
EMPLOYERS

For Colleges developing University Equivalent courses some of the analysis provided especially in the Physics and Chemistry courses may be of assistance in developing course outlines and learning materials for the University stream.