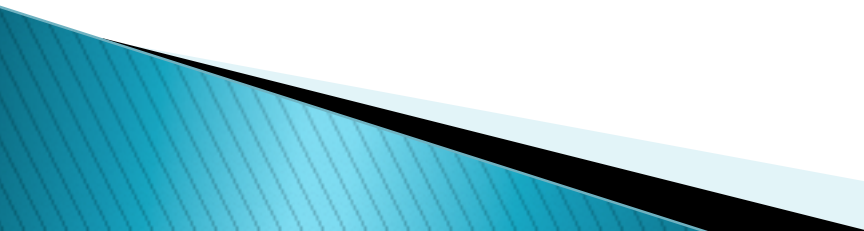


# Enhancing College to University Transfer in Ontario, Canada

Community College Baccalaureate Association Conference  
February 2011  
San Diego, California

# Overview

- ▶ Postsecondary system design in Ontario – some context
  - ▶ Postsecondary credit transfer in Ontario – some history
  - ▶ A new direction for credit transfer – process and outcomes
  - ▶ Toward a new transfer framework
  - ▶ Lessons learned
  - ▶ Questions and answers
- 

# PSE in Ontario – Some Context

## PSE System Design


- ▶ 20 universities, 24 colleges, Francophone and Anglophone institutions
- ▶ Binary system – two distinct mandates for colleges and universities
- ▶ No lower division transfer mandate for colleges
- ▶ Little history of formal coordination between PSE sectors
- ▶ Degree granting authority restricted
- ▶ High levels of university autonomy



# PSE in Ontario – Some Context

- ▶ Traditional academic mandate for universities
- ▶ 1967 – Colleges established with mandate for advanced, applied, occupationally-oriented education
- ▶ 1990s – Vision 2000 – new vision for colleges
  - Increased emphasis on general education and generic skills
  - Shift to **learning outcomes** for courses and programs
  - **Development of provincial program standards**
    - Identify graduate knowledge, skills and abilities
    - Define common outcomes for all program graduates
    - Colleges commit to meeting program learning outcomes for all graduates

# PSE in Ontario – Some Context

- ▶ Growth of the knowledge economy
    - More students want blend of theory and application
    - More jobs require degree
    - More college graduates look for degree completion opportunities
    - New university–college collaborative programming developed to meet need
  - ▶ Students increasingly mobile – access a greater issue
  - ▶ 2001 – some colleges authorized to offer degrees in applied areas of study
    - Provincial program standards for diploma programs form basis for system–wide pathways to college degrees
- 

# Credit Transfer in Ontario – Some History

- ▶ Some joint activity, ad hoc arrangements, “understandings” evolved
- ▶ 1996 – College University Consortium Council (CUCC) established
- ▶ 1999 – sector agreement on minimum transfer reached
- ▶ By October 2010:
  - 516 transfer pathways
  - Majority are bilateral agreements
  - Majority lack specificity regarding number/use of credits
  - 70 degree completion block transfer pathways – 33 are bilateral, 37 are multilateral
  - 406 college to university degree completion agreements with some specified or unspecified credit transfer; 25% specify at least one of the credits that will be granted
  - 40 college–university Collaborative programs – majority are bilateral and lack transfer pathway from diploma program

# Moving Forward – 2009



- ▶ Government establishes student mobility as a provincial priority
- ▶ Ministry creates Credit Transfer Steering Committee and Working Group
  - Council of Ontario Universities
  - Colleges Ontario
  - Three student organizations
- ▶ Goal is to enhance credit transfer
  - Access and choice
  - Clarity and certainty
  - Build on unique characteristics of the Ontario system

# Design Questions

- ▶ **Credit transfer**
  - Inter- or intra-sectoral or both?
  - Lower-division transfer mandate?
- ▶ **Pathways**
  - Bilateral or multilateral?
  - System-wide, regional, institutional or a combination?
- ▶ **Participation**
  - Mandated or voluntary?
  - Incentives, accountability indicators or both?
- ▶ **Transfer credits and processes**
  - Transparent and student friendly?
  - Clear and certain?
  - Provincial or institutional standards?
  - Course-based or block credits?
- ▶ What **resources** and **supports** for transfer students are provided?
- ▶ Is there a **research** capability to track institutional performance and student success?





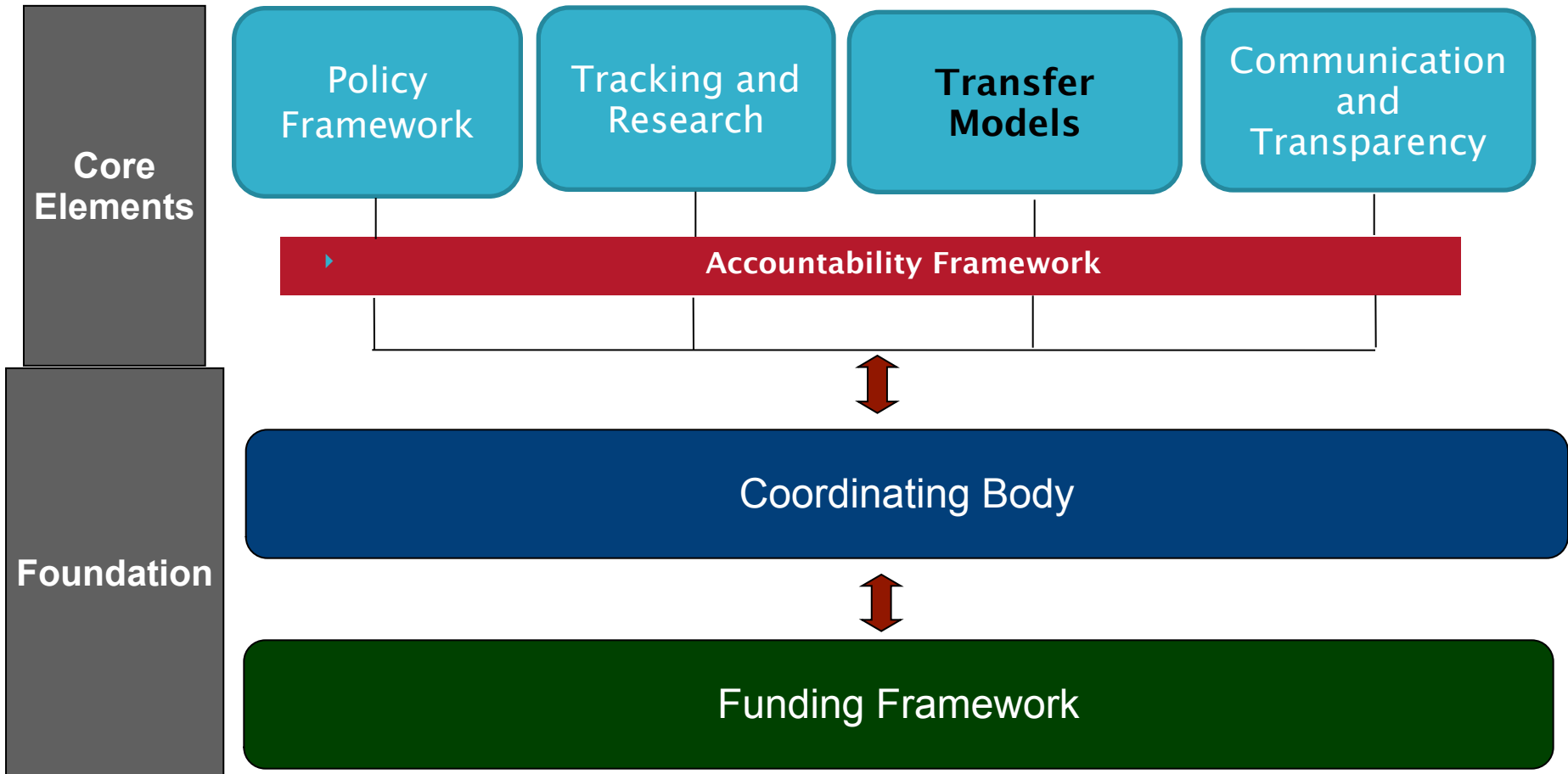
# Consultation and Research



- ▶ Implications of system design
- ▶ Stakeholders' views
- ▶ Best practices – literature, other jurisdictions
- ▶ Agreement on principles
- ▶ Credit transfer vision endorsed by Steering Committee, August 2009

# Credit Transfer System Vision

By 2015, Ontario will have a comprehensive and consistently applied credit transfer mechanism that facilitates and promotes student mobility, by assisting qualified students to move between publicly funded postsecondary institutions without repeating prior, relevant learning successes.



# Transfer Models: Inspirations

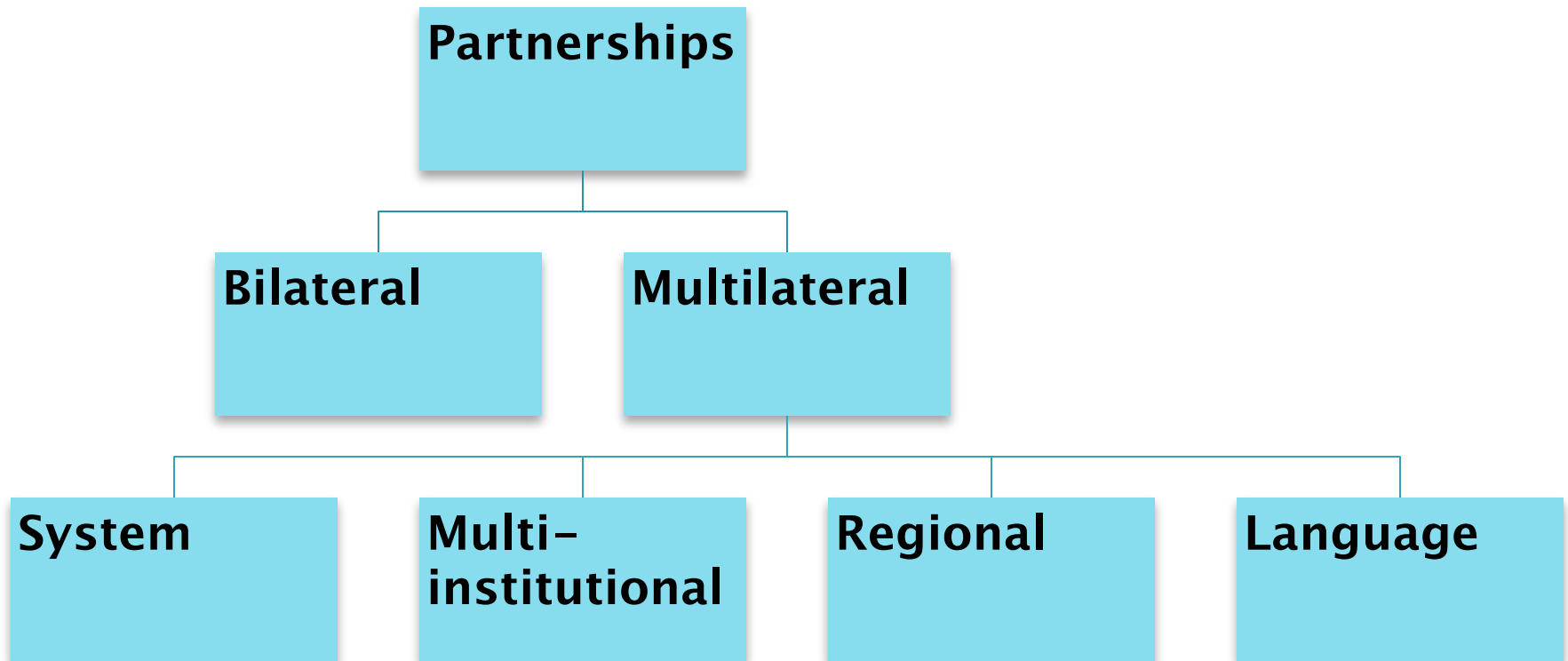


- ▶ CUCC Change Fund projects
- ▶ Ontario program standards – college diploma to degree pathways
- ▶ Experience with pathways to college degrees
- ▶ Canadian transfer conference, 2009 – Michael Skolnik keynote address
  - University programs for transfers from college applied programs:
    - “Career ladder program” – upper level courses in the area of the major (College degrees in applied studies)
    - “Management ladder degree” – often a BAS (Business Administration)
    - “Upside down degree” – often a Bachelor of General studies

# Ontario Credit Transfer Framework

- ▶ Transfer pathways
  - Institutional – college to college, university to university
  - Sectoral – college to university, university to college
  - Credential – certificate to diploma to degree
  - Student status – in progress or graduate
- ▶ Elements of transfer pathways:
  - Partners in the student pathway
  - Curriculum analysis – process through which learning equivalency is determined
  - Credit transfer mechanism – how credit is applied to the student's program

# Element One – Partners



# Element Two Curriculum Analysis

```
graph TD; A[Element Two Curriculum Analysis] --> B[Course-by-course comparison]; A --> C[Analysis of Program Learning Outcomes]; A --> D[Recognition of credential for entry to specially designed degree completion program; based on level of learning competency];
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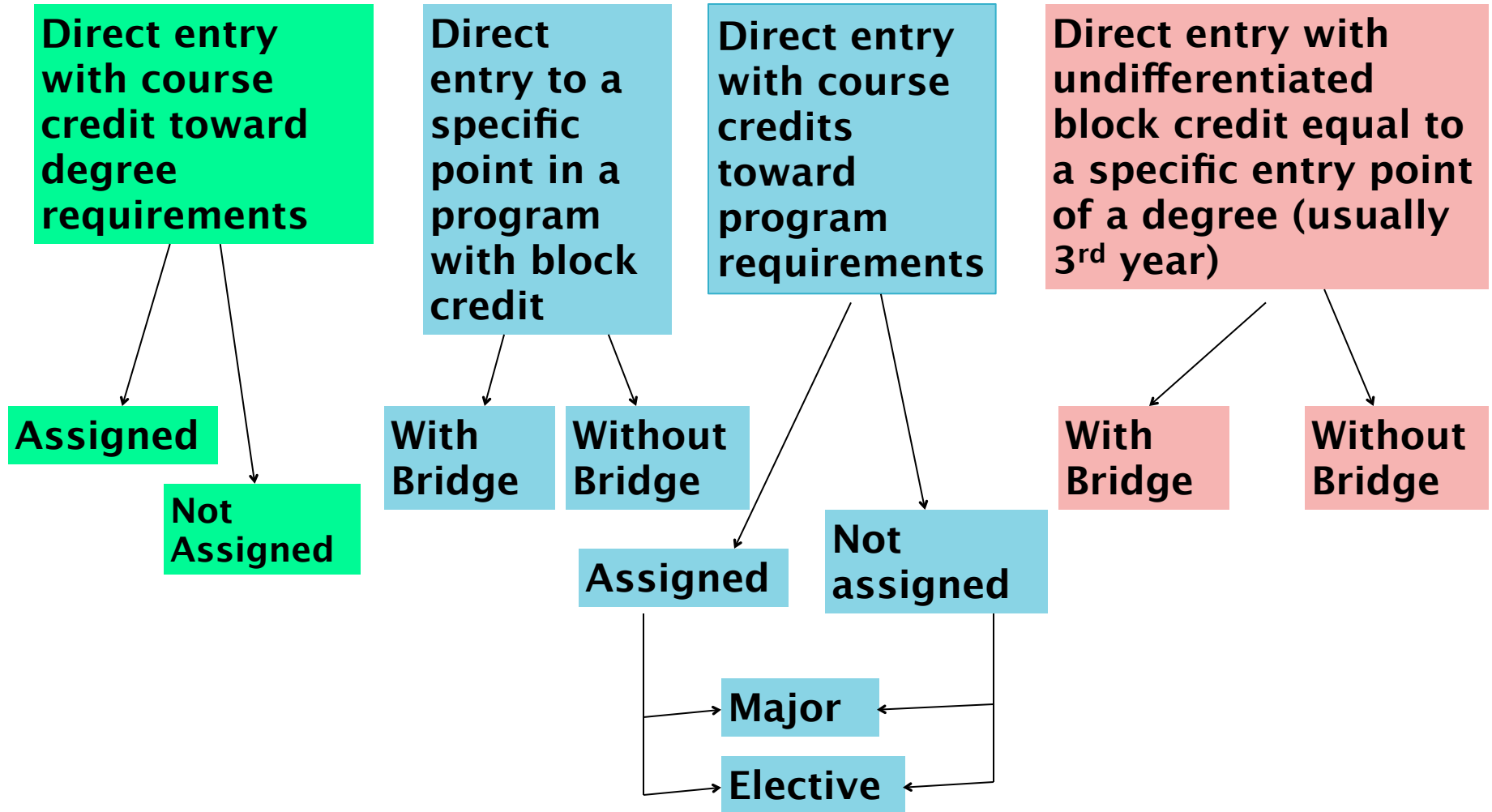
**Course-by-course comparison**

**Analysis of Program Learning Outcomes**

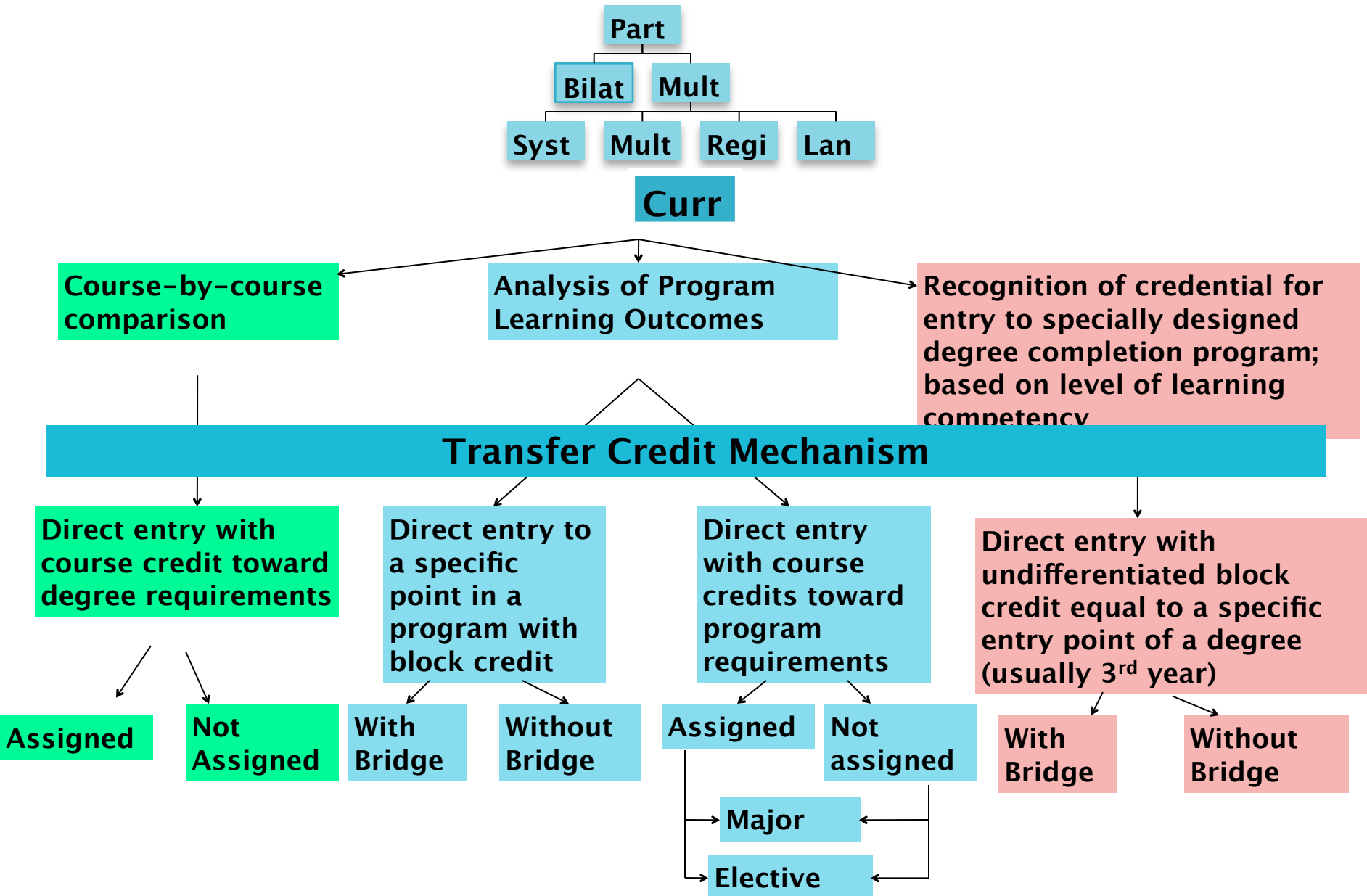
**Recognition of credential for entry to specially designed degree completion program; based on level of learning competency**

# Element Three

## Transfer Credit Mechanism

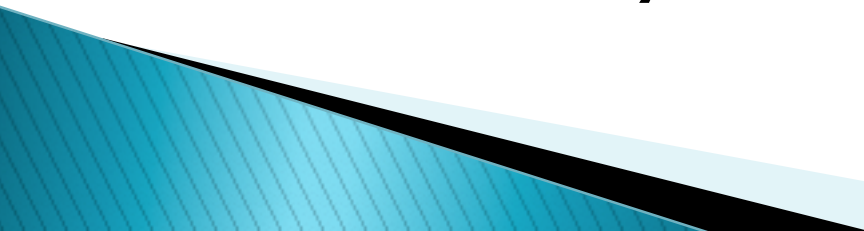


# Ontario Credit Transfer Models






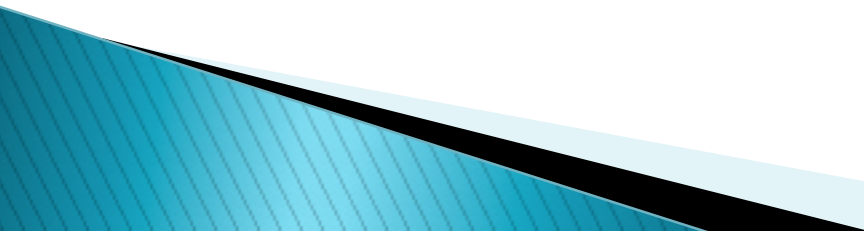
# Answers to Framing

- ▶ First phase – **inter-sectoral** transfer; college diploma to university degree
  - ▶ **Multilateral/system** degree completion pathways
  - ▶ Graduates of college programs
  - ▶ **High affinity** programs with **provincial standards**
  - ▶ **Specially designed programs** for general or low affinity programs
  - ▶ **System-wide course transfer** for General Arts and Science
  - ▶ **Institutional determination** of nature of participation
  - ▶ **Accountability measures**
- 

# Next steps

- ▶ **Innovation fund** to facilitate development of preferred pathways
  - ▶ Development of **accountability indicators**
  - ▶ Development of **transfer portal**
  - ▶ Expansion of **coordinating function**
  - ▶ Development of **research capacity**
- 

# Lessons Learned

- ▶ Political commitment
  - ▶ Ministry leadership
  - ▶ Engagement of stakeholders
  - ▶ Research and consultation
  - ▶ Design must reflect PSE system – play to strengths
  - ▶ Openness to issues, concerns, design possibilities
  - ▶ Iterative, organic – build on unique strengths
  - ▶ Patience
- 

# For Further Information

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