



**FOR APPROVAL**

**PUBLIC**

**OPEN SESSION**

**TO:** Academic Affairs Committee

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**DATE:** March 16 , 2017 for March 23, 2017

**AGENDA ITEM:** 5a

**ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

UTM Bridging Pathway Program Update

**JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

Under section 5.1 of its terms of reference, the responsibilities of the Academic Affairs Committee include admissions, academic programs, and academic regulations.

**GOVERNANCE PATH:**

- 1. Academic Affairs Committee [For Information] (March 23, 2017)**

**PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

The UTM Bridging Pathway Program was approved by the Academic Affairs Committee on February 12, 2014.

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

The University of Toronto Mississauga Bridging Pathway (UTMBP) offers mature students who do not meet traditional admission requirements for UTM, and who have been away from formal education for some time, the opportunity for successful, entry to university level studies. This initiative was designed to benefit the City of Mississauga and the Regions of Peel and Halton by allowing residents the opportunity to undertake a pathway to post-secondary education in their local community. Prior to this pathway, community members were directed downtown to the Woodsworth Academic Bridging Program. There have been efforts made to improve financial support for UTMBP students which would make this pathway even more accessible to a wider audience going forward. In addition, the Office of the Registrar used the UTMBP model to create the UTM Refugee Pathways program, supporting Syrian refugees settling into the Greater Toronto Area.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no net implications for the campus' operating budget.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This item is for information.

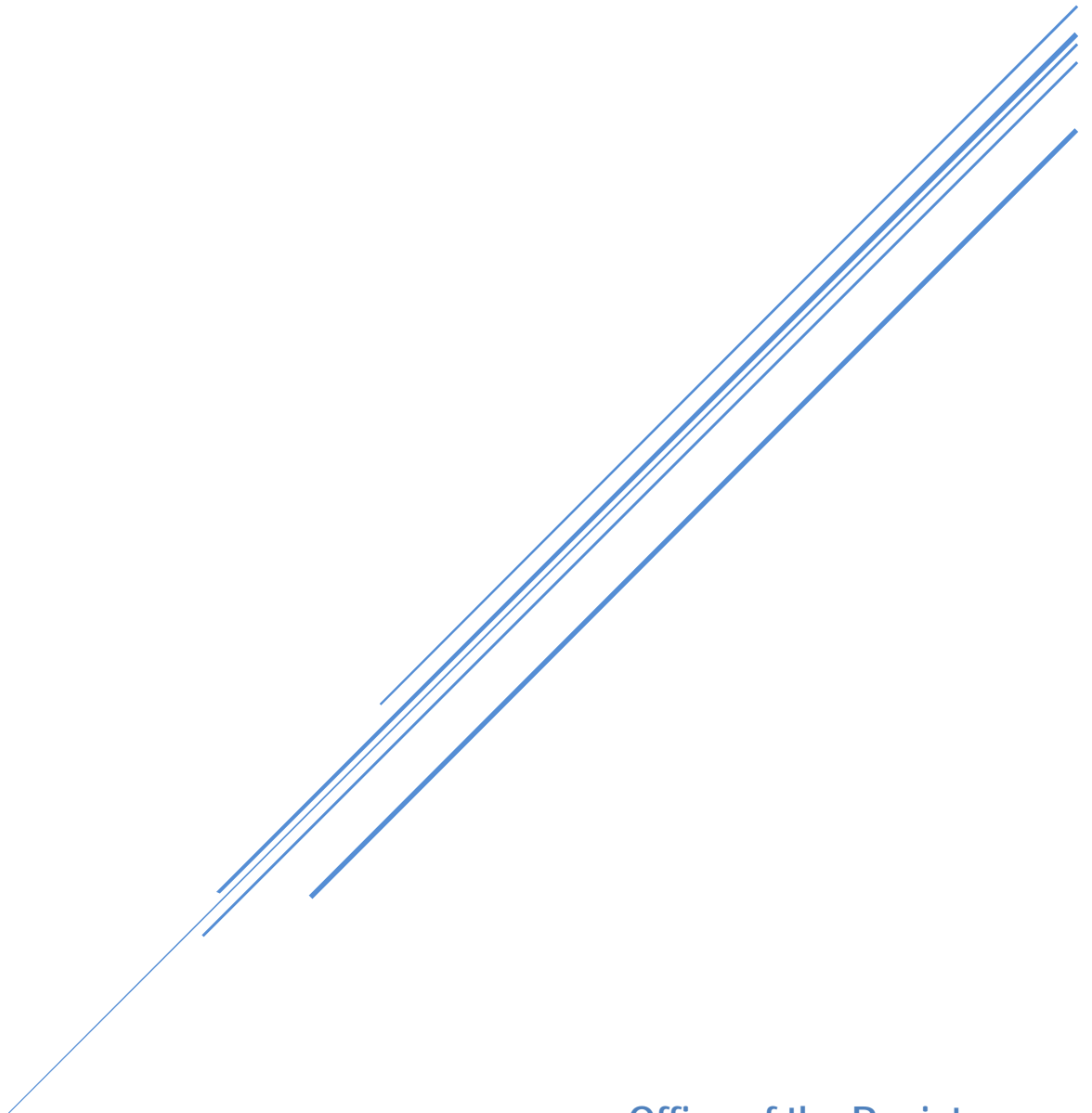
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**DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:**

Update to the UTM Bridging Pathway Program

# ITEM UTMBP

Update for UTM Academic Affairs Committee



Office of the Registrar  
March 2017

## HISTORY

In November, 2013 “New Pathway for Admission: University of Toronto Mississauga Bridging Pathway (UTMBP)” was submitted to Academic Affairs for approval and became effective as of September, 2014 – See Appendix A for the original report.

The objective of this new pathway was to give mature students, who do not meet the traditional admissions requirements<sup>1</sup> of the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM), an opportunity for successful, entry to undergraduate studies leading towards an Honours Bachelor of Arts (HBA) degree.

This initiative was designed to benefit the City of Mississauga and the Regions of Peel and Halton by allowing residents the opportunity to undertake a pathway to post-secondary education in their local community. Prior to this pathway, community members were directed downtown to the [Woodsworth Academic Bridging Program](#).

## Overview

The University of Toronto Mississauga Bridging Pathway (UTMBP) offers mature students who do not meet traditional admission requirements for UTM, and who have been away from formal education for some time, the opportunity for successful, entry to university level studies.

Selected students are required to enroll in and successfully complete a minimum of two half-credits over the fall and winter academic terms. Students who achieve 75% or better in the fall-term may take a maximum of two half courses, 1.0 credits in the winter-term. Upon completion of their first year, students with an average of 73% or higher, become eligible to proceed to full-time studies at UTM. Students who achieve between a 63-72% average will be permitted to proceed to degree studies with a reduced course load (3.0 maximum).

## Data & Results:

Session	Registered UTMBP	Admitted Full Time	Admitted Part Time	Unsuccessful in UTMBP	Successful but withdrew
2014-2015	10	3	2	3	2
2015-2016	9	6	1	2	0
<b>Total #</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total %</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>11%</b>
2016-2017	15	Pending			
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	Pending			

Table 1: The above table summarizes the number of students registered in the UTMBP during the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 sessions and the results. **Admitted full-time** includes the number of students that received a 73% or higher after completing the UTMBP, which allowed them to become full-time students (9 students admitted into full-time degree studies, which is 47%). **Admitted part-time** includes the number of students that received between 63-72% after completing the UTMBP, which allowed them to become part-time students (3 students admitted into part-time degree studies, which is 16%). After the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 sessions of UTMBP there were 12 students admitted into degree studies at UTM, which is 63% of the original registered students. **Unsuccessful in UTMBP** are those students who did not meet the overall averages required to be admitted into degree studies at UTM. After the two sessions there were 5 students or 26% of the overall registered students in this category. Lastly, 2 students or 11% of the overall registered students were successful but chose not to continue.

<sup>1</sup> An Ontario Secondary School Diploma with a minimum of 6 Grade 12 U and/or M courses including ENG4U, or the equivalent.

Session	Fall-Term Averages	Winter-Term Averages	Overall Averages
2014-2015	70%	69%	71%
2015-2016	75%	77%	75%
2016-2017	73%	PENDING	
Overall Average (Sessions)	73%	73%	73%

Table 2: The above table summarizes the overall averages obtained from the various sessions while students were in the UTMPB. The *Fall-Term Averages* are calculated based on the grades obtained in the 0.5 credits that students were allowed to enroll in. The *Winter-Term Averages* include those students who enrolled in both 0.5 credits and 1.0 credits. During the fall-term, across the 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 sessions the average was 73% with a minimum grade of 48% and a maximum grade of 96% obtained. During the winter-term across the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 the average was 73% with a minimum grade of 57% and a maximum grade of 88% obtained.

**Special note:** One student worth highlighting has an overall CGPA of 3.46, has completed 11.5 and has been approved for a course overload (enrolled in 6.0 credits).

Session	UTMBP Average	Post-UTMBP
2014-2015	74%	2.55
2015-2016	79%	2.97
Overall	77%	2.79

Table 3: The above table summarizes the results of the UTMBP and UTM grades after the UTMBP for those students who were admitted to degree studies for the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 sessions. The overall UTMBP average was 77% and the overall GPA of those who were admitted into degree studies was 2.79.

## 2016-2017 Changes

**Scholarships:** For mature students, deciding whether or not to go back to school can be challenging, knowing that it is an investment in time and money. To help relieve some of the financial pressures of going back to school the Office of the Registrar, in working with the Office of Advancement, found an existing award, the Louise and James R Bursary, which UTMBP students could apply and qualify for, providing access to \$30,000 for the UTMBP. In 2016-2017, 100% of UTMBP students received a bursary with awards ranging from \$500-\$2500 and an average scholarship of \$1300 (total \$19,500 given out). This financial support will be used in marketing material in future years in the hopes of making this pathway even more accessible to a wider audience.

**Refugee Pathway:** In the summer of 2016 the Office of the Registrar used the model of the UTMBP to create the UTM Refugee Pathway, supporting the large influx of Syrian Refugees that are settling in the Greater Toronto Area. Since promoting this program there have been dozens of requests and enquiries from refugees and sponsors looking for pathways to begin or continue their education. The UTM Refugee Pathway will help those applicants who do not have access to their official documents due to the situation in their home country, in some cases that means that their high school or university no longer exists. This allows the applicant another chance and still protects the academic integrity of UTM.

## Future

The Office of the Registrar will continue to market our pathway programs through our individual school visits, school fairs, school board connections, online and in print materials and through other professional networking events and opportunities. Like the creation of the UTM Refugee Pathway, the Office of the Registrar will continue to develop new ways to utilize this program to attract and provide a pathway and opportunity to the best and brightest.

## Student Testimonials

*Before coming to UTM, I had never really considered post-secondary education to even be an option for me. However after working in the foodservice industry for more than a decade, having very little money, and wanting something more, I knew I had to make a change.*

*The bridging pathways program has given me the opportunity to better myself in so many ways. The structure worked very well for me. The gradual progression from one course in the first semester, to two the next, then into a full year next year has afforded me the time I needed to relearn many essential skills (like how to study for a test and write an essay!). This has set me up for success and helped me develop a key component of future success: confidence. I know now that I am capable of doing well in university level courses and that will carry me far.*

*The positive effects of this program are far too numerous and far reaching for the scope of this message but the main point I would like to make is that while I know it is my efforts that have gotten me this far, the staff, the Wilhelmina Rae bursary I received, and all other facets of this program have given me a path to make what once seemed impossible into a reality and change my life for the better.*

*Thank you to Adam Fraser and all who have been a part of the creation of the UTMBP program.*

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*The UTMBP has been beneficial in helping me reach my goals and is also structured in a way that helps students slowly transition into university level academics. Many students like myself have not been in formal education institutions for many years, and therefore much of the expectations are initially unknown. The reduced course load provides us time to adapt to the quality of work required, while also adopting the necessary feedback in order to improve our critical reading and critical writing skills. This reduced load works as a controlled process, where it is easy to self-correct, and enables students who are successful in the program to be better positioned for the expectations once they take on a full-time course load.*

*The grant that was secured through the UTMBP had enabled me to focus on the coursework rather than take on a heavier commitment at work to pay for the tuition. This also contributed to further success and alleviated pressure that may have hindered my earlier progress. I am also interested in more information regarding funding available to mature students – both for financial reasons and for award purposes.*

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*Although the Bridging Program is fairly new, I appreciate U of T immensely for constructing this program for a person like myself; a person who is a mature student, has an education from an institution that is not recognized by Uof T, but is still able to be enrolled at U of T due to the Bridging Program. Because of this, with the guidance of Adam Fraser, who is extremely knowledgeable, kind, and very empathetic, I am able to continue my education at the top university in Canada, and one of the top universities in the world. This gate-way into the world of academia at the highest level, which in-turn will propel me into my career, increases myself esteem, my intellectual prowess, and my chances getting into grad school. Moreover, the funding that the Bridging Program presented to me, helped me to pay for the courses and books needed. Over-all, the Bridging Program is ideal for today's society, and I hope that others will be able to experience this program to further their education and career possibilities as I am.*

## Appendix A: Original Submission – November 2013

### New Pathway for Admission: University of Toronto Mississauga Bridging Pathway (UTMBP)

**Objective:** To establish an initiative to give mature students who do not meet the traditional admissions requirements<sup>2</sup> of the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) an opportunity for successful direct entry to undergraduate studies leading towards an Honours Bachelor of Arts (HBA) undergraduate degree.

**Rationale:** Such an initiative would not only benefit UTM but will be of great importance to the City of Mississauga and the Regions of Peel and Halton by allowing residents the opportunity to undertake a pathway to post-secondary education in their local community. The UTMBP will offer non-degree admission to a small number of students beginning in 2014-15. The success of the cohort of students admitted under this initiative would be evaluated each year with the students' success to be tracked by the Office of the Registrar using annual academic audit data and analysis of student retention and persistence through to graduation with a report prepared annually by the Office of the Registrar and distributed appropriately.

The success of students in this initiative will be enhanced by their development of essential learning skills in sessions offered by the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre and through their participation in academic advising sessions catered to non-traditional students, offered through the Office of the Registrar. Limiting a student's course load in the first year of study and offering these advising strategies will facilitate their positive transition to full-time undergraduate studies.

#### **Initiative Goals:**

The target demographic for the UTMBP is students who have been away from formal education for some time and who are typically unfamiliar with the university environment.

The UTMBP goals are as follows:

- To help students become eligible for undergraduate degree-level studies.
- To help students understand and become comfortable with academic and university culture.
- To help students develop foundational academic skills through coordinated programming with our current on-campus partners including the Career Centre, the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre, the Library and the department of Student Life.

The UTMBP learning objectives are as follows:

- Students learn how to access and use university resources.
- Students learn about the rules and regulations of the university and where to find them.
- Students will learn how to plan and navigate degree completion.

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<sup>2</sup> An Ontario Secondary School Diploma with a minimum of 6 Grade 12 U and/or M courses including ENG4U, or the equivalent.

**Marketing, Promotions, and Admission:** The Office of the Registrar at UTM will be responsible for the development of all print and online promotional materials, for developing and maintaining a website and social media strategy, for developing an online application for admission, as well as for creating a comprehensive communication plan. The Office of the Registrar's Admissions & Recruitment Office will promote this initiative on campus and in the community, working with local school boards, community services and groups, and other appropriate tri-campus partners (e.g. Woodsworth College). They will also facilitate in-person, telephone and online advising to prospective students. Prospective students will submit their online admission application directly to the Office of the Registrar. The UTM Admissions & Recruitment Office will determine eligibility for admission and forward offers directly to candidates.

In order to qualify for the UTMBP, students must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Be at least 20 years of age.
- 2) Be a Canadian Citizen, Permanent Resident, or Convention Refugee<sup>3</sup>.
- 3) Have been away from formal, full-time education for more than three years.
- 4) Have not attempted degree-level academic work (or equivalent) at a post-secondary institution such as a university or polytechnic institute.
- 5) Have not completed more than two years of full-time studies in a College of Applied Arts and Technology (or equivalent), such as a three-year diploma of an academic nature.
- 6) Meet current University of Toronto English language admission requirements.

This initiative is primarily intended for direct entry into an Honours Bachelor of Arts undergraduate degree. Some programs at UTM have additional senior-level secondary school subject requirements. The completion of any previous high school courses may be considered. Students interested in taking courses that have minimum high school prerequisites (e.g. math, chemistry, biology, physics) can review the possibility of taking these courses with the Manager of Pathways Programs based on their previous studies.

**Admissions Criteria:** The University of Toronto Mississauga Admissions & Recruitment Office will review and advise prospective UTMBP students. Once admitted as Non-Degree students the Office of the Registrar will assist with enrolment in the first year course(s) and special advising sessions will take place before classes begin.

A \$100 non-refundable application fee with completed online application will be accepted by the UTM Admissions & Recruitment Office up until June 1<sup>st</sup> of the application cycle. All admission decisions will be made by July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Students admitted to the UTMBP will be required to enroll in and successfully complete two half-credits over the Fall and Winter academic sessions, with an average of 73% or better, to become eligible to proceed to full-time studies at U of T Mississauga. Students who achieve a 63%

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<sup>3</sup> A Convention Refugee is a person who is outside of their country of nationality or habitual residence and who is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, political opinion, nationality or membership in a particular social group. (See United Nations 1951 Geneva Convention)



average will be permitted to proceed to part-time studies at U of T Mississauga. Successful completion of these two half credits would count as 1.0 credit towards the 20.0 credits required for an Honours Bachelor of Arts undergraduate degree. Students who complete the Fall term course with an average below 63% will be required to withdraw from the bridging initiative.

Students who achieve 75% or better in the Fall term course may request to take a maximum of two half courses, 1.0 credits, in the Winter term.

Specialized support sessions and workshops designed for non-traditional students will be offered by the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre (RGASC) as well as the Office of the Registrar and will allow for focused support of UTMBP students and their successful transition into academic life. UTMBP students will be required to participate in these sessions and workshops that will be offered throughout the Fall and Winter academic sessions.

Students will be permitted to enroll in any course for which they have the required prerequisite secondary school courses. Completion of both academic sessions with an average of 73% and above will qualify students for admission to full-time studies at U of T Mississauga.

**Academic Advising and Support:** The Office of the Registrar will offer appropriate advising and support for these academic bridging students. The UTMBP students would be encouraged to attend any available transition workshops or programs (e.g. Head Start (RGASC)) that introduce them to the academic and student service resources on campus (instructors, OR staff, RGASC staff, Library and Career Centre). Throughout the Fall/Winter session, the RGASC offers a variety of theme-based workshops (e.g., time management skills, exam preparation).

### **Space/Resource Implications**

All elements of the initiative will be met with existing resources. There are no space or resource implications.

### **Consultation**

The Office of the Dean Academic UTM, Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre UTM, University Registrar UTSG, Director of Admissions UTSG, along with the Director of Student Recruitment UTSG have all been consulted and are in full support of this initiative.

### **Prepared by:**

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**Diane Crocker, Registrar and Director of Enrolment Management**  
**University of Toronto Mississauga November, 2013**