QUOTTLY

The Definitive Guide to Course Sharing for Higher Education

Overcoming Roadblocks to Student Progress and Completion

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Less than 36% of students at public universities earn a bachelor's degree in four years, demonstrating an urgent need to address the obstacles that block on-time completion.

Now, forward-thinking higher education systems, consortia, and institutions are focusing on finding solutions that increase equity and access, create new pathways to completion, solve transfer challenges, and drive innovation and efficiency to facilitate on-time graduation and student success.

One powerful solution that is gaining momentum is **course sharing** – where institutions collaborate to make shared courses available to their students. By expanding student access to course options and enabling seamless and efficient transfer of credits, institutions are achieving compelling results by working together.

This ebook examines the **major obstacles** institutions and students face in achieving on-time completion and reveals how course sharing helps build **better pathways to graduation**. It also includes **case studies** that demonstrate how enterprising leaders in higher education deliver results for students and their institutions. Finally, the ebook provides **proven best practices and tips** for higher education systems, consortia, and institutions seeking to access the transformative capabilities of course sharing.

Students and Institutions Face Steep Challenges

Today's students struggle to graduate on time, access the courses they need, and navigate the transfer process. The negative impact of these struggles can be seen in the numbers:

MOST RECENT COLLEGE COMPLETION FIGURES

‹50%
College students graduate on time[1]

62.2%
National six-year college completion rate[2]

‹20%
Community college students earn an associate's degree or certificate[1]

[1] www.forbes.com/sites/markkantrowitz/2021/11/18/shocking-statistics-about-college-graduation-rates/?sh=10e838312b69

[2] https://nscresearchcenter.org/completing-college/

These statistics, and the fact that completing a bachelor's degree in six years, not four, is the new normal, reflect ongoing issues that are creating severe roadblocks for students:

Lack of access to courses needed to complete degree requirements

Lost credits due to complex transfer processes and incomplete course equivalency information

Lack of student-facing pathways to help plan and monitor progress to completion

Colleges and universities are also confronting institutional pain points that impact on-time graduation including:

Challenging budget constraints

Increasing instructional costs

Cumbersome administrative procedures

Difficulties in reaching underserved students

Declining enrollments

Barriers to On-Time Completion

A primary research survey, fielded in Summer 2022, asked more than 2,000 current college students and recent college graduates about the roadblocks they encountered on their way to earning a degree.[3] They reported three major barriers:

Course Availability

1 IN 2

students were waitlisted for courses

22%

of recent graduates changed their major or minor due to course availability

41%

of current students were forced to find classes at another institution

Transfer

1 IN 2

students changed schools

55%+

of students rated their transfer process moderately to extremely complicated

33%

of current students lost at least half of their credits during transfer

Degree Pathway

26%

of students still had not mapped out their degree plan by the beginning of their fourth year

[3] Results from Quottly's survey, Barriers to On-Time Completion, conducted June 13–14, 2022, through SurveyMonkey with a sample of 2,029 individuals 18 years of age and older (1,004 current college students and 1,025 recent graduates)

Course Sharing: Benefits to Students

- ✓ Expands access by allowing students to take courses beyond their institution

- ✓ Opens new programs and courses and expands equity to underserved students

- ✓ Supports completion and on-time graduation rates

- ✓ Ensures every credit counts by leveraging existing transfer equivalencies

Course Sharing: Benefits to the Institution

- ✓ Optimizes course capacity and fills empty seats

- ✓ Improves retention and on-time completion rates

- ✓ Supports the creation of new programs without adding instructional cost

- ✓ Streamlines administrative procedures and registration processes

With course sharing solutions, colleges and universities can improve reach, retention, and completion for their students. When institutions collaborate to introduce new courses, they eliminate equity and access barriers. And with these marked improvements in student outcomes, institutions, in turn, are positioned for greater success.

THE SOLUTION

Course Sharing

Course sharing makes it possible for colleges and universities to overcome the roadblocks to student progress and completion. **Simply put, course sharing can be defined as two or more institutions collaborating to make their courses available to each other's students for credit at their home institution.**

Systems, consortia, and individual institutions that share courses add new ways to reach their critical goals for student success.

Two Ways to Implement Course Sharing

There are two main models for course sharing currently in practice among higher education institutions, and it's important to understand the differences.

Cross registration

One version of course sharing builds on existing transfer equivalencies. At the core of this model is an up-to-date transfer articulation database.

- Built on top of this database is a searchable course exchange that provides students with the information they need to determine how a course they take will transfer.

- Students can register, pay any needed tuition, and receive a transfer grade.

- Individual institutions can also partner or join a network to build new course-sharing relationships.

- Getting started with cross registration is simple because it builds on existing transfer equivalencies.

Institutional agreements

The other approach to course sharing enables a home institution to select courses from a teaching institution to offer to its students as though the courses were their own.

- Two or more institutions execute a consortial agreement to share courses.

- The home institution evaluates the teaching institution's courses and instructors to ensure an appropriate match for a course at their institution.

- The shared courses appear on their transcript and count toward their degree and GPA.

- Financial aid automatically applies as it would for a home course.

- The result is a seamless experience for students.

Course Sharing in Action

Case studies from two public university systems reveal how forward-thinking higher education leaders are using Quottly's course-sharing solution to expand reach, retention, and completion for students.

Scaling Online Learning Options to Reach All Students in Idaho

ABOUT IDAHO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

4
four-year institutions

4
community colleges

53,000
students

THE CHALLENGE

The pandemic highlighted the need for Idaho's public universities and colleges to scale their online courses and programs to reach all their students. The Idaho State Board of Education's leaders focused on identifying technology that would minimize barriers for its students, especially those in more rural areas.

THE SOLUTION

The state created an Online Idaho initiative to centralize courses from its multiple campuses and partnered with Quottly to provide a state-level portal that integrates with the various systems at each institution. With Online Idaho, students can now find the appropriate coursework online to complete their degrees, no matter where they live or what institution they attend. The platform synchronizes student course searches, registration, and class scheduling across multiple institutions. Quottly's solution improves the student experience by shifting the administrative load for exploring and signing up for courses to the technology and the university, without upending existing workflows and administrative processes.

Scaling Online Learning Options to Reach All Students in Idaho

THE OUTCOME

Improved access, agency, and affordability for students

Unified diverse technical infrastructures in a single experience

Expanded faculty development and support

"

After teaching and learning went fully remote due to the pandemic, we realized that our institutions could consolidate and improve access to learning opportunities for Idahoans by partnering with Quottly to build a comprehensive, easy-to-navigate platform for enrolling in the fully online courses. As higher education institutions navigate times of crisis as well as calm, interinstitutional collaboration is imperative for improving student success outcomes and addressing institutional pain points.

Dr. Jonathan Lashley, Former Associate Chief Academic Officer, Idaho State Board of Education

Closing Access Gaps Across Montana's Vast Terrain

ABOUT MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

6
four-year universities

10
two-year colleges

40,000
students

THE CHALLENGE

With Montana stretching across more than 147,000 square miles, its sheer scale uniquely challenged the system's ability to close access gaps across its rural institutions and students. Course sharing enabled the state's far-flung campuses and students to benefit from a more effective, efficient system.
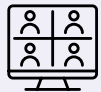
THE SOLUTION

The Montana University System partnered with Quottly to create a hub-and-spoke model for course sharing that enables students to take courses through their local college but pull from other state institutions to finish a degree. Quottly's technology ensures that students are accurately identified in each institution's student information system (SIS) and that transcripts are seamlessly shared between institutions. The result is tight integration across the state without having to consolidate all the institutions into one SIS.

Closing Access Gaps Across Montana's Vast Terrain

THE OUTCOME

Offered access to courses previously unavailable to campus-bound students

Streamlined delivery of courses and programs throughout Montana

Increased offerings of online and hybrid-access classes

> **Quottly proved to be deeply skilled at working with our large, multi-institutional teams to find creative solutions to Montana's specific challenges, all in the name of improving the experience for our current and prospective students. I could not be more pleased with our partnership.**
>
> Joe Thiel, Director of Academic Policy and Research, Montana University System

5 Best Practices:
How Institutions Can Optimize Course Sharing

The following best practices reflect Quottly's experience helping 220+ colleges and universities that serve more than 2.9 million students. Underlying all tips, however, is one fundamental principle: student-centricity. As a higher education system, consortium, or institution implements course sharing, all initiatives must center on maximizing student success.

1. Create the Framework

✅ **Identify institutional objectives that course sharing will support.**

Clarify the positive impact this initiative can have on goals and objectives for both students and the institution, including:

- **Increased enrollment and retention**

- **Improved graduation and completion rates**

- **Greater revenue from tuition and funding**

✅ **Bring the right people to the table.**

Ensure that all important decision makers are brought into the conversation. Senior representatives from the following offices should be included:

- **Academic affairs**

- **Registrar or enrollment management**

- **Counseling and advising**

- **Transfer office**

- **Financial aid**

- **Office of student success**

2. Ask the Right Questions

✅ **Consider tuition and financial aid.**

- **How will students pay for shared courses?**

- **How will you process financial aid for your students in compliance with regulations?**

✅ **Examine and explore regional and interstate accreditation.**

- **Consider how you'll comply with state mandates and laws while sharing courses.**

- **Ensure that you've considered NC-SARA if you plan on doing course sharing across state lines.**

✅ **Build on what you have in place.**

Consider creating your initial offerings based on:

- **Existing transfer equivalencies**

- **Articulation agreements**

3. Set Up the Technology

✅ **Establish integration processes for the following:**

- **SIS**
- **Payment processing**
- **Articulation databases**
- **Learning management systems**
- **Single sign-on**

✅ **Determine your potential vendor's security certifications, including SOC 2, Type II.**

4. Identify Your Measures of Success

✅ **Quantitative measures:**

- **Improve rates of progression and on-time completion.**

- **Increase number of courses offered.**

- **Expand enrollment and retention.**

- **Consolidate sections to optimize instructional resources and fill seats.**

- **Increase performance-based funding tied to completion rates.**

✅ **Qualitative measures:**

- **Improve equity and access to courses for students.**

- **Reach underserved populations.**

- **Provide better pathways to on-time completion.**

- **Increase course availability so students can access the right courses at the right time.**

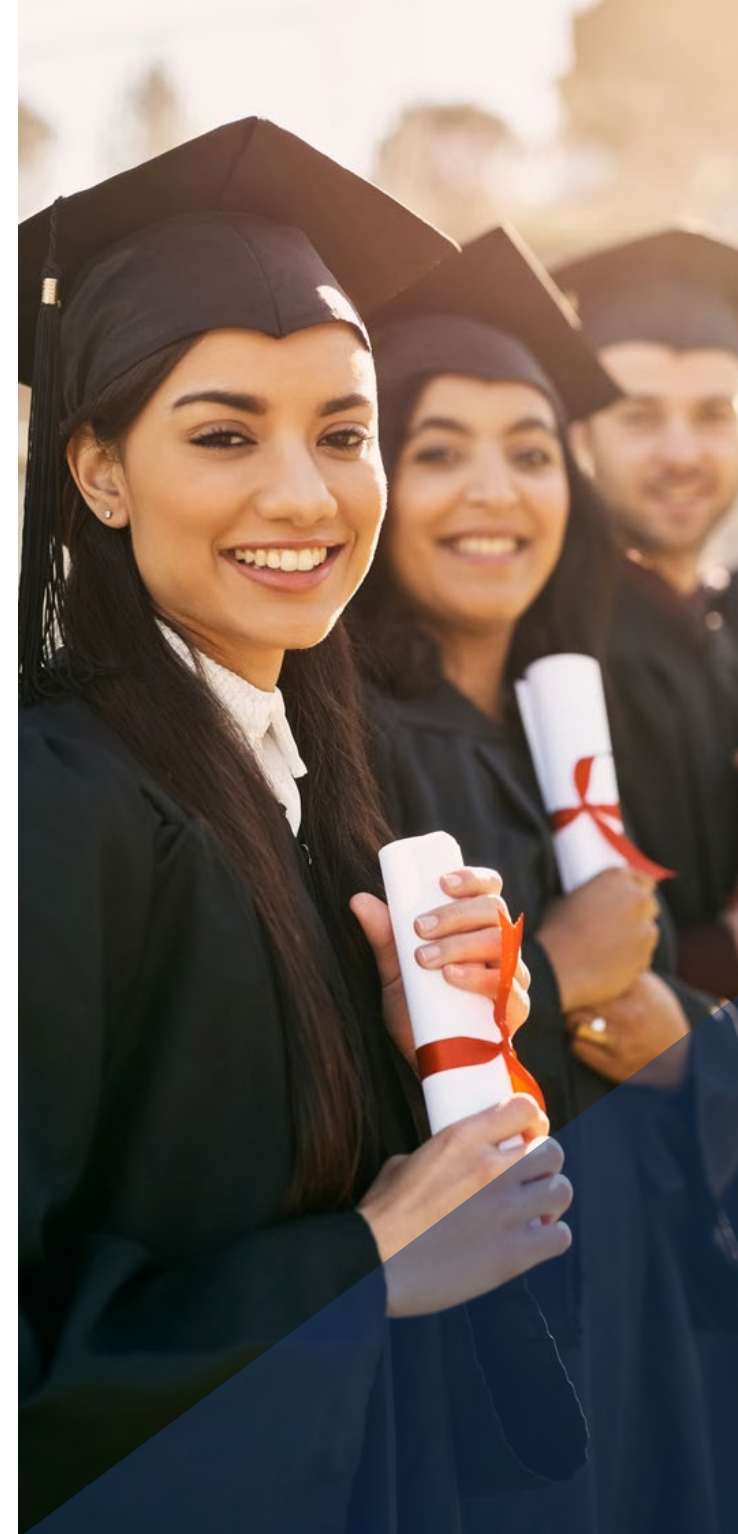- **Increase diversity in course and program offerings.**

5. Look to the Future

✅ **Join or create peer networks.**

- Learn how other states or systems have used course-sharing platforms.

- Consider forming your own consortium or course-sharing partnership to respond to unique opportunities and challenges.

✅ **Document your process.**

- Develop guides and templates that will make it easy to implement course sharing with additional institutions in the future.

- Track, analyze, and share the steps you've taken and the results you've achieved.

New Pathways to Student Success With Quottly

The challenges in higher education are real, but there is a path forward for systems, consortia, and institutions seeking to help students reach their educational goals in a timely manner. Course sharing enables students to discover and register for transferable college classes that fit their schedule and budget. At the same time, these initiatives ensure that colleges and universities can better serve their students by offering them the classes they need, when they need them, to graduate on time.

The result: more students graduate, and they graduate faster and with less debt. And while colleges and universities improve student outcomes, they also gain efficiencies by filling empty seats and offering more courses without expanding resources.

By keeping the focus on student success, we can collaborate to develop richer educational environments, provide greater equity and access for all students, and ensure long-term success for colleges and universities that are faced with monumental challenges.

Used by 220+ colleges and universities that serve more than 2.9 million students, Quottly provides a platform that helps higher education systems, consortia, and institutions work together to expand academic opportunity, create new pathways to completion, solve transfer challenges, and drive efficiency.

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