

FROM THE TRENCHES

Hearing the Experience



Athabasca University: A Canadian Open University

by Bonnie Getty

According to the latest study done by CCHE, *Fifteen Years Later: Home-Educated Canadian Adults*, homeschooled students are furthering their postsecondary studies more so than the rest of the population. It is very clear in the study that homeschooled students not only finish high school, but also further their studies at a bachelor's degree level, diploma level, or a variety of other ways. Those adult homeschooled students that were admitted to Canadian universities and colleges, for the most part, have faced challenges with the application process. Today, students are required to overcome the same obstacles to apply to Canadian universities or colleges. Most universities will admit homeschooled students on an individual basis and have a "Homeschooled Students Applicant Checklist" form for students to view. This process may involve creating a portfolio of some or all of the courses completed during high school at home, providing transcripts, scoring well on a college entrance exam, such as an ACT or SAT, or writing equivalency entrance exams. Ontario colleges prefer an official provincial transcript which means that the highschool student, who is studying at home and wishes to apply to a college program, would need to take courses from the Ministry of Education to receive the official paperwork. Is there an easier way for home-educated high school students to be admitted into Canadian universities or colleges? That way could be as a transfer student with a transcript from Athabasca University in Alberta.

Athabasca U is a university accredited with seven organizations around the world, including the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC). It is an open university with one admission policy - that a prospective student be 16 years of age. Therefore, previous academic experience for one of their undergraduate programs or any of their courses is not required, neither is a high school diploma. This could provide home-educated high school students another option for postsecondary education. The students could begin an undergraduate program online at home, complete high school at home then go on to take their victory lap with Athabasca U, or simply complete some courses online during their high school years. The last option would allow the students to apply as a transfer student to other universities. A student would pay fees according to the number of courses or program taken. Athabasca University provides numerous services to their students, as well as a student ID card. The university offers other programs besides their bachelor programs: a certificate of completion program, university certificates, university diplomas, masters' degrees, doctorates, graduate diplomas

or certificates online. Application is a very simple process beginning by filling out a form. Athabasca University, Canada's Open University, is dedicated to the removal of barriers that restrict access to and success in university-level study, as well as increasing equality of educational opportunity for adult learners worldwide.¹

A prospective student will find Athabasca University's website easy to navigate and find the answers to many of the questions they may have regarding undergraduate/graduate studies, courses offered, how to apply, or program fees.. This university is more than willing to speak to anyone regarding their homeschool. Please visit www.athabascau.ca for more information.

You may also call their toll free number at 1-800-788-9041 (Canada/US).

¹ <http://www2.athabascau.ca/aboutau/index.php>