



## Frequently Asked Questions for Catholic District School Boards Implementing Online Learning

<b>Q</b>	Are Catholic boards mandated to join the Ontario eLearning Consortium (OeLC) and use its PRISM system, or do Catholic boards still have the option to organize online courses internally?
<b>A</b>	To ensure a robust, province-wide system that can equitably serve all students in all pathways in all Ontario Catholic school boards, boards are highly encouraged to join the OeLC and utilize PRISM to make seats available to others in their online courses. By joining Catholic Virtual Ontario (CVO) and using PRISM to advertise seats in their online course offerings, boards can help ensure the health and sustainability of a robust Catholic system across the province.
<b>Q</b>	Could you please provide some examples or scenarios that help demonstrate why it is beneficial for Catholic boards to join the OeLC and use PRISM?
<b>A</b>	<p><b>Scenario #1</b> – Qing attends a small school in rural Ontario. She wants to become a fashion designer, but her school has never offered fashion, and it is not likely to do so before she graduates. Qing’s guidance counsellor uses PRISM to find a fashion course offered online in another Catholic board. Qing can now enrol in a course that will help keep her engaged in her learning and help her reach important goals.</p> <p><b>Scenario #2</b> – Thanks to an unexpected promotion offered to one of his parents, Rudy’s family must move from another city in Ontario to another in mid-January. When Rudy arrives at his new school, he learns that two courses he needs to take are already at capacity; the wait list for both is lengthy. Rudy is in his last semester of high school and he needs to enrol in Grade 12 physics, English, and calculus in order to be eligible for the highly competitive engineering programs to which he applied last fall. The nearby public high school has room in all three of these courses, but Rudy has attended a Catholic school his whole life and he really wants to graduate from one. Through PRISM, Rudy’s guidance counsellor finds him a seat in an online calculus and an online English course; he takes his physics course in person at the school. This arrangement allows Rudy to graduate from his new Catholic high school on schedule, with the courses he requires for his post-secondary program.</p> <p><b>Scenario #3</b> – Jamal was recently diagnosed with a rare condition that requires him to undergo regular treatments during the day. These treatments are effective, but they compromise his already fragile immune system. Jamal is confident that he can complete all four courses that he selected last spring; however, he needs some flexibility. Since Jamal’s own board does not offer any of these courses online, Jamal’s guidance counsellor uses PRISM to find him these</p>

	<p>same courses online in other Catholic boards. His guidance counsellor is also able to share pertinent information about Jamal’s personal situation with the accepting boards, with Jamal’s permission. Jamal can thus complete all four courses online in the safety of his own home, while receiving the treatment and support he requires.</p> <p><b>Scenario #4</b> – It is the middle of the first semester and Mrs. Crowchild is growing increasingly concerned with the number of students requesting to exit the AVI3M course at her school. The second semester art course was not full to begin with and now it has dwindled to six students, largely because the school’s beloved art teacher announced she would be retiring in February. A new art teacher will eventually be hired, but the unknown is scaring students. Mrs. Crowchild decides to offer the AVI3M course online through PRISM. This allows the existing six students to take the course they originally selected, the new art teacher to teach the course, other boards’ students to access the course, and the course to operate at a fuller capacity.</p> <p><b>Scenario #5</b> – Mr. Leduc is delighted that enrolment is skyrocketing at his school. However, he is also worried. Something needs to happen to accommodate the influx of students into the community, but he doesn’t have any more space in the building and he certainly doesn’t want to turn anyone away. He knows his colleagues in other high schools in the board are in the same position. The board agrees to grant the high schools another six sections in total to alleviate the pressure. The high schools meet to decide that six schools will each offer one online course throughout the school year and post them in PRISM. While everyone expects the courses will largely get filled with the board’s students, posting five seats per course to other boards allows the board not only to meet the needs of its students through its own courses, but it also opens up other opportunities in other boards.</p>
<b>Q</b>	When will the 35 newly revised TVO courses with Catholic content be available in the provincial virtual learning environment (vLE) for boards to use?
<b>A</b>	The 35 newly revised courses will be made available in the provincial vLE in time for use in the 2022-2023 school year. It is anticipated that the courses created in Phase One will be available by the middle of summer, while those created in Phase Two will be available near the end of summer.
<b>Q</b>	Once the newly revised courses are released, must Catholic teachers use these courses to teach online or can teachers still use their own content?
<b>A</b>	The newly revised courses are being revised and reviewed by practising Ontario Catholic teachers. They are based on the current Ontario curriculum, integrate the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs), embed Catholic social teachings, adhere to copyright laws, and comply with current accessibility standards. For these reasons, boards and their teachers are strongly encouraged to use the newly revised courses once they become available in the provincial vLE. Teachers are welcome to modify these newly revised courses and add their own content, if they wish.

<b>Q</b>	A memo sent several weeks ago asked boards to offer a minimum number of courses (e.g., four in each semester) and make five seats available to other Catholic boards in each course. Is there any flexibility with this request? For example, if a board wishes to offer two courses with ten seats available in each course each semester, would this be acceptable?
<b>A</b>	Sharing of seats in online courses between Catholic boards is a high priority, and thus, any attempt to ensure students gain access to online courses is appreciated. The memo provides for flexibility; it requests that boards make “an average of five seats” available to other boards in their online courses. That acknowledged, variety in course selection is equally important, if not more important, than the overall number of seats available. As guidance counsellors seek to assist students with their course selections and pathways planning, it is more helpful for them to have access to four different courses with five seats each than to have access to one course with twenty seats in it.
<b>Q</b>	When boards register a student on PRISM for a course they are not offering, how do students get assigned to that course?
<b>A</b>	<p>PRISM works differently than the province’s Seat Reservation System (SRS). Those seeking courses for Catholic students can filter in any number of ways, including by Catholic boards only. A student wishing to take a particular online course might be accepted by any Catholic board offering that course. For example, if a student wished to take ENG3U, his/her guidance counsellor could search PRISM for Catholic boards offering that course. The student would ultimately be taught by the Catholic board that accepted him/her into that course offering.</p> <p>Please note that the OeLC has created many helpful guides and tutorials related to PRISM. These are available at <a href="https://www.oelc.ca/prism-guides/">https://www.oelc.ca/prism-guides/</a>.</p>
<b>Q</b>	Must a school board manually enter all its secondary students into PRISM?
<b>A</b>	<p>Ideally, all secondary students will be added to PRISM through integration with the board’s Student Information System (SIS). With such integration, student and board information automatically gets updated in PRISM each night.</p> <p>Alternatively, boards might choose to add only the students they wish to register in online courses via PRISM. This is done by selecting the Students – Add a New Student option. Boards can also bulk upload files by schools with just the students they wish to enter in PRISM. Unfortunately, adding students manually often leads to many data errors (e.g., OENs with transposed numbers, outdated custody information) that need to be corrected.</p>