

GRT U-Pass Fee FAQ

What is Grand River Transit (GRT)?

Grand River Transit (GRT) provides transit service in Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, Breslau Elmira, St. Jacobs and New Hamburg.

GRT operates buses, ION light rail trains, an express bus network, community and flexible transit routes, and door-to-door MobilityPLUS transit service for riders with disabilities using specialized vehicles.

What is a GRT U-Pass?

The GRT U-Pass is a transit pass included in your tuition fees as an ancillary fee that provides students with unlimited trips on all GRT buses and ION trains using your ONE Card, at an affordable price each term.

The U-Pass provides affordable transportation not only to school, but for other trips such as shopping, employment, entertainment, and to connect you to out-of-town bus service or the train station.

For registered Mobility PLUS customers, the U-Pass allows access to GRT's MobilityPLUS service.

The GRT U-Pass is only valid on the GRT network.

Visit [GO Transit](#) and [VIA Rail](#) for student options for out-of-town bus and train services.

Do all students receive a GRT U-Pass?

All students registered as full-time, in-person, and enrolled in an academic program available at Conestoga campuses/sites in Waterloo Region automatically participate in the U-Pass program. Co-op students and students on a break term will also automatically be included if they were previously registered as full-time, in-person, and enrolled in an academic program available at Conestoga campuses/sites in Waterloo Region in the previous term. This does not include full-time distance education/online students, part-time students, or apprenticeship students. Students who are not automatically included in the U-Pass can submit a request to opt-in to the U-Pass (see below).

How do you use a GRT U-Pass?

Your Conestoga ONE Card is your U-Pass and can be used on any GRT bus or ION train. When boarding a bus, tap your ONE Card on the farebox card reader. Before you board a train, tap your ONE Card on the card reader, located on the ION light rail station platform.

Learn more about riding GRT here: <https://www.grt.ca/en/riders-information/intro-to-transit-for-conestoga-students.aspx>

Where can I find information about GRT and using my U-Pass?

GRT has created an introduction to their transit services for Conestoga students available here: <https://www.grt.ca/en/riders-information/intro-to-transit-for-conestoga-students.aspx>.

What is the cost?

Effective September 1, 2024, the U-Pass Base Fee is \$118.97 per term.

The U-Pass fee is automatically assessed each school term as part of tuition fees as an ancillary fee.

Students with an “off-term” will have their U-Pass access maintained as long as they are returning and remain enrolled and eligible for a U-Pass under the terms of GRT’s U-Pass program.

Students without an “off-term” are assessed the U-Pass fee each term under the terms of GRT’s U-Pass program.

Students who complete their program are no longer eligible for GRT’s U-Pass program. Information about other GRT fare programs can be found here: www.grt.ca/fares

The following is the U-Pass fee up until the end of the 2026/2027 Academic Year (August 31, 2027).

Effective Date	Base Fee
September 1, 2024	\$118.97 per student per term
September 1, 2025	\$124.91 per student per term
September 1, 2026	\$131.14 per student per term

What should I do if my U-Pass isn’t working on the bus or ION

If your ONE Card fails to validate on a GRT bus or ION train, it may be due to technical issues, or you may not be enrolled in the U-Pass program.

Check your student invoice to ensure you were billed for the U-Pass. If you were billed and your U-Pass is not working, send an email with your student number to onecard@conestogac.on.ca and they can explore further.

If you were not billed and would like to opt-in to the U-Pass program, please complete the opt-in request form found at the following link: [Transportation \(conestogastudents.com\)](https://conestogastudents.com/transportation).

Can a student opt-out of the GRT U-Pass?

The fee is automatically included for all eligible students. All eligible students are required to pay the U-Pass fee to have equal access to transit at an affordable price. An eligible student is a student registered as full-time, in-person, and enrolled in an academic program available at Conestoga campuses/sites in Waterloo Region.

Opt-out exceptions are provided on a case-by-case basis, but are generally limited to the following:

- Students who retain a valid Canadian National Institute for the Blind (“CNIB”) registration during a given Academic Term;
- Students who pay their fees to Conestoga College, but are taking all of their academic courses at an out-of-region (outside Waterloo Region) post-secondary institution in the same Academic Term that they are charged for the U-Pass;
- Students who hold a valid Accessible Parking Permit issued by the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario;
- Students who pay their fees to Conestoga College, but are considered on professional or academic placement outside the Waterloo Region as part of their studies, which is not considered part of co-operative education;
- A pass will also be refunded if a student withdraws from their program in accordance with the Conestoga Colleges Academic dates (withdrawal deadline). No refunds are granted after the withdrawal deadline.

Opt-out requests must be submitted each semester. Opt-out requests can be submitted by completing the opt-out form found at the following link: [Transportation \(conestogastudents.com\)](https://www.conestogastudents.com/transportation).

Opt-out appeals will not be allowed.

I drive to school and pay for parking. Do I have to pay for the U-Pass?

Yes. All eligible students will be charged the U-Pass fee regardless of whether they drive and pay for a parking pass or not. The U-Pass fee is much less than parking, and eligible students who typically drive can still use their U-Pass whenever they need it during the term.

What happens if I choose not to pay the U-Pass Fee?

Students are required to remit their fees in order to avoid the collections process. Collection procedures can include having an account placed on a full hold, being removed from future terms and accounts being forwarded to the Finance Department for continued follow-up and collections, including a third-party agency. Please note that documents and transcripts are not released for students with outstanding fees.

Can a non-eligible student opt-in to the GRT U-Pass?

Students who are not automatically included in the U-Pass can submit a request to opt-in to the U-Pass, which may be approved on a case-by-case basis. Generally, opt-in requests will be accepted for students who meet the following criteria (proof is required):

- A student that is either in studies, a co-operative work term, or is an Off-Term Student immediately following a paid term who is in a course of study which has them returning to Conestoga College the following Academic Term;
- A student who is part-time, distance education, and/or undertaking a reduced course schedule as a result of an accommodation as defined in the Conestoga College Office of the Registrar, or as otherwise defined by Conestoga College and/or CSI;
- A student beginning their studies during each Academic Term for an initial use period not exceeding two (2) weeks during which their U-Passes will be valid prior to the start of that Academic Term;
- A student in the Region of Waterloo enrolled at any Conestoga College Satellite campuses that may not have been assessed the U-Pass fee;
- A student in the Region of Waterloo who is on maternity or medical leave

Opt-in requests must be submitted each semester. Opt-in requests can be submitted by completing the opt-in form at the following link: [Transportation \(conestogastudents.com\)](https://transportation.conestogastudents.com).

Does the U-Pass cover access to GRT's MobilityPLUS service?

MobilityPLUS is GRT's door-to-door transit service for riders with disabilities using specialized vehicles.

Full-time students who use GRT's [MobilityPLUS service](#) can pay to ride MobilityPLUS using their U-Pass. More information on registering with MobilityPLUS can be found here: [Using specialized services - Grand River Transit \(grt.ca\)](#). If you are already registered with MobilityPLUS, please email GRTmplus@regionofwaterloo.ca to get set up.

How was the GRT U-Pass implemented?

In the Fall 2023 semester, a student referendum was held at all Waterloo Region campuses asking students if they would be in favour of a mandatory universal transit pass. 93% of students voted in favour of GRT's U-Pass program.

Is the GRT U-Pass temporary or permanent?

The initial term of the U-Pass program agreement ends August 31, 2027. To provide a stable long-term program, Conestoga College, CSI, and GRT have the mutual option to renew the agreements when they expire without referenda, if they choose to do so.

The agreement can be renewed indefinitely if the terms of the agreement remain the same (e.g., annual fee increase no more than 5%), and all parties continue to support the U-Pass program through an annual review after the initial term of the agreement expires.

Does this apply to Brantford, Guelph and Milton students/campuses?

If you are a Brantford Conestoga College student, you have access to a U-Pass included in your tuition during the Fall and Winter semesters that provides you with unlimited access to Brantford Transit. More information can be found here: <https://www.conestogac.on.ca/parking-services/public-transit>.

Guelph Transit currently provides a discounted rate for Guelph Conestoga College students of \$2.25/ride until 32 total monthly rides, at which point riding Guelph Transit becomes free for the remainder of the month. This is the equivalent of \$72/month.

For more information: <https://www.conestogac.on.ca/parking-services/public-transit>

CSI is exploring other affordable and equitable transit fare options with Guelph Transit and will provide more information when available.

Milton Transit offers a discounted four-month term pass called the Conestoga College Term Pass. It is available for purchase through the [Token Transit app](#) at a cost of \$273/term. Students must show the app when boarding the bus (a screenshot is not accepted). Internet or mobile data is required to use the app.

For more information: <https://www.conestogac.on.ca/parking-services/public-transit>

Who can I contact with additional questions about the program?

Any questions that are not answered through the available information online should be directed to csitransportation@conestogac.on.ca.

Who can I contact with technical questions or issues with my ONE Card?

Any technical issues or questions about issues with your ONE Card that are not answered through the available information online should be directed to onecard@conestogac.on.ca.