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MEMBERSHIP OF ALBERTA INSTITUTIONS IN THE BC TRANSFER SYSTEM

CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

This policy establishes the conditions under which members of the Alberta Transfer System may be considered for membership in the BC Transfer System. It outlines BCCAT's position on their inclusion, the criteria and process for assessing requests to join the BC Transfer System, and the process to be followed by institutions once membership has been granted.

SCOPE AND LIMITS

This policy provides the framework for admitting members of the Alberta Transfer System into the BC Transfer System, where there is significant evidence of ongoing student mobility between those institutions and current members of the BC Transfer System. It does not oblige other members of the BC Transfer System to accept articulation requests from any Alberta institution that has gained membership in the BC Transfer System.

The provisions of the policy are based on the transfer relationship established under the *BC/Alberta Transfer System Protocol* and the understanding that geographical proximity will lead to student mobility.

DEFINITIONS

ACAT: Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer. Established in 1974 as an advisory body, ACAT serves as a body through which stakeholders work co-operatively to ensure effective transferability of courses and programs for the benefits of students (see: acat.gov.ab.ca/new_format_include/new_acat_information.asp).

Alberta institution: any post-secondary institution, public or private, that is a member of the Alberta Transfer System

BCCAT: The BC Council on Admissions and Transfer oversees the BC Transfer System. Members of the Council are appointed by the Minister and are selected from across the BC post-secondary system to serve the overall best interests of the system. The Council is supported by a small professional staff.

BC Transfer Guide: website service hosted by BCCAT to help post-secondary students discover their transfer options, and institutions to support students in this process. The site includes formal course-to-course, block transfer, advanced placement, and international baccalaureate agreements along with program specific transfer arrangements.

Block Transfer: occurs when a group of courses, often in the form of a certificate, diploma, or associate degree, is recognized as a whole for a predetermined amount of transfer credit.

Degree Programs: associate degree and baccalaureate degree programs, which are regulated provincially, approved by DQAB, and subject to review.

DQAB: The Degree Quality Assessment Board is a provincial Board appointed by the Minister of Advanced Education for British Columbia. DQAB reviews proposed degree programs at public and private institutions in BC and makes recommendations to the Minister. DQAB conducts both institutional and program reviews.

Education Planner: website service offered by BCCAT to help prospective and current post-secondary students explore their education options.

Exempt Status: Institutions may apply to the Minister of Advanced Education for exempt status to a particular degree level (i.e. associate, baccalaureate, master's or doctoral level) if they meet the eligibility requirements. Once an institution has exempt status to a particular degree level, that institution can submit new degree proposals directly to the Minister for approval. Eligibility requirements include a ten year minimum history of offering programs, organizational capacity, and the presence of acceptable quality assurance procedures.

Formal Articulation: the process whereby one institution submits course or program outlines to another institution and requests transfer credit through BCCAT's Transfer Credit Evaluation System. Resulting transfer credit agreements are recorded in the BC Transfer Guide.

Letter of Assurance: the formal contract between a new member institution and BCCAT, stating that they agree to uphold the *Principles and Guidelines for Transfer* and the norms and standards of the BC Transfer System.

TCES: Transfer Credit Evaluation System, the online system used to send and receive formal articulation requests between institutions.

Transfer Credit: the granting of credit by one institution for courses or programs successfully completed at another institution.

PRINCIPLES

A clear policy regarding inclusion of Alberta institutions in the BC Transfer System facilitates the assessment of applications for membership fairly and consistently. Any decision to include an Alberta institution should be based on evidence that:

- (a) its inclusion would provide valuable information to BC or Alberta students about transfer options that are not now recorded in the BC Transfer Guide, and
- (b) significant transfer activity exists involving BC and Alberta students and institutions.

While the establishment of a transfer agreement between institutional members of the BC Transfer System is voluntary for both partners, all member institutions have endorsed the *Principles and Guidelines for Transfer* (bccat.ca/system/principles) including the principle of equitable treatment of students. BCCAT also recognizes that transfer agreements rest on a foundation of mutual trust and quality assurance. Each agreement listed in the BC Transfer Guide constitutes a guarantee for students. When listings are current, reliable and respected by both partners, the system is seen as credible. Mutual respect for and accountability to all members of the BC Transfer System ensures that the academic integrity of courses and programs is protected and preserved. It is the institution's responsibility to ensure that there are established policies, procedures and resources supportive of the Transfer System.

Inclusion of Alberta institutions in the BC Transfer Guide will be based on the same principles of trust, reciprocity, fairness, and quality that guide similar decision-making within BC.

PROCEDURES

Criteria for Assessing Applications from Prospective Alberta Institutions

The following criteria will be used by Council to assess applications from Alberta institutions for inclusion in the BC Transfer System:

- 1) BCCAT will consider applications from public and private post-secondary institutions in Alberta that have been approved by the Alberta government to grant degrees in that province, and that are members of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT).
- 2) Applications should indicate the level of collaboration/discussion that has occurred with institutions in the BC Transfer System, and evidence of support from BC institutions.
- 3) Institutions will be considered for admission to the BC Transfer System based on evidence of the existing level of transfer activity and traffic occurring with BC students and institutions outside the BC Transfer System and Guide. In effect, the institution submitting an application must build a sound business case for inclusion in the BC Transfer System. Relevant evidence could include any of the following:
 - a) Number of individual courses for which transfer credit is routinely granted by the applying institution in Alberta for BC courses, and/or by institutions in BC for the Alberta courses or for which articulation agreements are already in place or proposed.
 - b) Number of block transfer agreements in place or proposed by the applying institution in Alberta for BC programs, and/or by institutions in BC for the Alberta programs.
 - c) Number of students who transferred credit to BC institutions from the Alberta institution and vice versa.
 - d) Evidence of the success of students in the institution that they have transferred to, whether they are transferring from a BC institution to an Alberta institution or vice versa.
 - e) Evidence of significant amounts of credit being granted to students for transferred courses and programs.
 - f) Number of registrations in BC institutions by former students from the Alberta institution and vice versa.
 - g) Number of visiting students at the Alberta institution whose home institutions are members of the BC Transfer System.
 - h) Number of post-secondary institutions from the BC Transfer System involved in articulation and transfer arrangements. (If evidence points to only one or two BC institutions involved, the Alberta institution may be asked to negotiate bilateral arrangements with those institutions outside the BC Transfer Guide).
 - i) Number of years that articulation agreements between Alberta and BC institutions have been in place.
 - j) Rationale for including information in the BC Transfer Guide (e.g. value of this information to BC students, value of posting information on the BC Transfer Guide versus on the institution's own website).

- k) Evidence that the institution has applied for and received consent to operate in BC, exempt status through BC's Degree Quality Assessment Board process, and/ or has had degrees approved through this process.
 - l) Any other evidence deemed relevant by Council.
- 4) BCCAT will determine whether or not the existing level of transfer activity warrants inclusion in the BC Transfer System. Only those institutions with a substantial level of activity will be considered for admission. At BCCAT's discretion, exceptions may be granted under special circumstances (e.g. approval of a specialized program or of limited courses in a single discipline with high transfer volume).
 - 5) Normally, articulation agreements for courses and programs are considered for inclusion in the course-to-course and other appropriate sections of the BC Transfer Guide.
 - 6) Applications for inclusion in the BC Transfer Guide would include a description of the resources available within the institution to perform the associated functions.
 - 7) Applications for inclusion in the BC Transfer Guide would include an estimate of the number of courses and/or programs for which articulation agreements would be sought and the number of BC institutions involved. BCCAT's decision on whether to admit an Alberta institution to the BC Transfer System may be influenced by workload implications for existing institutions in the system.
 - 8) Reciprocity of transfer credit among individual institutions may occur in practice, but is not required. Therefore, Alberta institutions that already assign or plan to assign transfer credit to courses from a BC institution cannot assume, or represent, that their courses, in turn, will receive transfer credit at that BC institution.
 - 9) Courses and programs to be included in the BC Transfer Guide should be taught (delivered, evaluated, transcribed) entirely by the Alberta institution seeking access to the BC Transfer System, not by other institutions through partnership or affiliation agreements, unless such agreements are reviewed by Council with respect to its implications for course transferability. The Alberta institution should provide a list of all such agreements to BCCAT--including agreements with public and private institutions--and be prepared to share this information with other Transfer System members upon request.

Process for Assessing Applications from Prospective Alberta Institutions

The following process will be used by Council to assess applications from Alberta institutions to become part of the BC Transfer System:

- 1) Alberta institutions should submit a formal application to BCCAT c/o the Executive Director and Co-Chair, addressing the above criteria.
- 2) BCCAT staff will review the evidence provided in the application, using the established criteria, to determine if including the Alberta institution in the BC Transfer System is justified and will be of significant benefit to students. Where necessary, additional information may be requested.
- 3) Following staff review, the application will be considered by the Transfer and Articulation Committee (TAC). Council will then make a decision taking into consideration recommendations from the TAC.
- 4) BCCAT's Executive Director and Co-Chair will inform the applicant of Council's decision and the underlying rationale for that decision.

Process Following Admission to the BC Transfer System

Should an Alberta institution be accepted into the BC Transfer System, the following process and conditions will apply:

- 1) Institutions will be required to sign a Letter of Assurance, which includes a clear description of expectations of new members of the BC Transfer System and consequences if these expectations are not met. The Letter of Assurance is attached as APPENDIX I.
- 2) BC institutions will be asked by BCCAT to indicate whether they intend to enter into articulation agreements with the Alberta institution.
- 3) Decisions on whether or not to award transfer credit are made by each institution according to its own policies and regulations. However, BC institutions would be expected to deal fairly with Alberta institutions and to provide a rationale for decisions.
- 4) Alberta institutions will be expected to designate an Institutional Contact Person to respond to BCCAT requests for information and be the key contact for other member institutions.
- 5) Alberta institutions will be expected to send representatives to appropriate committee meetings (e.g. articulation committees, Institutional Contact Persons).
- 6) Although the BC Transfer System norm is that institutions do not charge each other for costs related to articulation, an extraordinary amount of articulation requests arising from an institution joining the transfer system, or one placing greater emphasis on sending requests, may result in a partner institution charging for the cost of articulation.

Monitoring of Membership

If concerns arise regarding transfer credit articulation practice or participation in the BC Transfer System, BCCAT will communicate directly with the institution with the purpose of identifying the nature of the concern and clarifying expectations, and will work with the institution to ensure the situation is rectified. However, if evidence emerges that any Alberta institution member:

- is not adhering to the *Principles and Guidelines for Transfer*;
- is not fulfilling its obligations as agreed to in the *Letter of Assurance*;
- has failed to meet the academic standards expected in the program/discipline;
- has plagiarised the work of other institutions;
- has made false or misleading claims about the transferability of its courses or programs, or about the nature of its participation in the BC Transfer Guide; and/or
- has been the subject of legitimate concerns or complaints and / or formal investigations by other institutions, professional accrediting bodies, government, local police, the RCMP, border services, or any other relevant body inside or outside BC, that have not, in the opinion of the Council, otherwise been addressed.

BCCAT will, at its discretion, report this evidence to ACAT, the Campus Alberta Quality Council, and the Alberta ministry responsible for advanced education.

Discretion to Suspend Membership

BCCAT reserves the right to deliver to the Alberta member a notice of suspension by the Council from the BC Transfer Guide and/or Education Planner, with a copy to the ACAT, the Campus Alberta Quality Council, and any other relevant agency detailing the circumstances resulting in the suspension and outlining the conditions that must be met for reinstatement. If the Alberta member does not satisfactorily address the concerns or deficiencies within 60 days of dispatch of the notice, membership privileges may be suspended. Suspension may involve removal of the institution from the BC Transfer Guide or Education Planner, or sanctions of other kinds at the discretion of the Council. In cases where there is evidence of a violation of the *Letter of Assurance*, membership may be suspended through consultation with Council.

Alberta members must inform BCCAT immediately of any disciplinary action or censure it incurs, or any investigation into its operations undertaken by government, the Campus Alberta Quality Council, any professional accrediting organization, or any other relevant body inside or outside BC. Suspension, revocation, or amendment of Alberta government approval to offer programs will result in the *de facto* suspension, revocation, or amendment of the institution's membership in the BC Transfer System. Revocation of membership, should that be the decision of Council, will occur through a Council motion.

As appropriate, BCCAT will inform ACAT, the Campus Alberta Quality Council, and the Alberta ministry responsible for advanced education about sanctions on and /or suspension of any Alberta member. Every effort will be made to safeguard the educational interests of students enrolled in institutions whose membership is suspended. The Alberta member may request reconsideration of decisions or actions of BCCAT in writing to the Council. The Council may appoint a panel to review the case and recommend outcomes.

PROCESS INFORMATION

Articulation Committee Companion bccat.ca/pubs/companion2013.pdf

How to Articulate (PDF and HTML) available at bccat.ca/articulate

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

BC/Alberta Transfer System Protocol (bccat.ca/pubs/BC-ABprotocol.pdf)

BC Degree Authorization Act (bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/00_02024_01_)

Campus Alberta Quality Council (caqc.gov.ab.ca/)

RELATED POLICIES

3.A.1: *Membership in the BC Transfer System* bccat.ca/pubs/BCTSmembers.pdf

3.A.2: *Membership of Private Institutions in the BC Transfer System* bccat.ca/pubs/privateinstitutions.pdf

3.B.2: *Listing of Transfer Agreements with Non-Member Institutions in the BC Transfer Guide*
bccat.ca/pubs/nonmemberspolicy.pdf

APPENDIX I
LETTER OF ASSURANCE: ALBERTA INSTITUTIONS

Between _____

and the

BC Council on Admissions and Transfer

Institution Address:

Degree Program(s) to be listed in the BC Transfer Guide: _____

As a new member of the BC Transfer System, the institution will undertake to adhere to the norms of the system and to follow best institutional practice in participating in articulation and transfer and in providing information about programs. The institution will abide by the terms and conditions of our membership in the BC Transfer System as set forth in this policy, *Membership of Alberta Institutions in the BC Transfer System*, and those set forth in the more general policy, *Membership in the BC Transfer System*. To that end, the institution will:

1. Familiarize itself with BCCAT's *Membership of Alberta Institutions in the BC Transfer System* and *Membership in the BC Transfer System* policies, and adhere to the requirements.
2. Comply with the *BC Principles and Guidelines for Transfer*.
3. Follow best practice, as described in BCCAT materials and resources with regard to the articulation of courses and programs.
4. Implement, in a timely fashion, the internal administrative processes necessary to have all formally articulated courses listed and updated as required in the BC Transfer Guide and in Education Planner (if participating).
5. Name an Institutional Contact Person (ICP) for BCCAT. This person will initially be _____ (email address: _____) and he/she will fulfill the role of ICP.

6. Name an Institutional Contact Person (ICP) for Education Planner, if participating. This person will initially be _____ (email address: _____).
7. Use the BCCAT web-based Transfer Credit Evaluation System for all formal articulation requests, and provide BCCAT with the name of a Transfer Credit Contact (TCC) Person. This person will initially be _____ (email address: _____). This person can be the same as the ICP.
8. Use a sufficiently detailed course outline form [such as the BCCAT Provincial *Transfer- Friendly Course Outline*: bccat.ca/outline] for all courses for which articulation is being requested.
9. Provide, as requested, all curricular and academic information that an articulating institution may deem necessary for the assessment of course or program equivalence.
10. Be informed by existing course outlines as appropriate to the discipline, but will ensure that our course outlines do not contravene intellectual property laws; nor will we use the curricular or instructional materials of others without their written consent.
11. Use the Transfer Credit Evaluation System to articulate only courses and programs clearly related to the degree program(s) that the institution is authorized to offer.
12. Transmit and receive student transcripts and award transfer credit in a timely manner. [For transcript standards, BCCAT recommends the *National Transcript Guide* (arucc.com/documents/transe.pdf) endorsed by the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges Canada (ARUCC).] Where feasible, transcripts should be transmitted electronically.
13. Send a representative to relevant articulation committees. This representative will be a full voting member of the committee. All details about articulation committees and the role of representatives can be found in the *Articulation Committee Companion*. (Please contact articulation@bccat.ca for more information.)
14. Respect provincial norms regarding instructor qualifications for courses and programs to be articulated. BCCAT's position statement on *Instructor Qualifications for Transferable Courses* can be found at: bccat.ca/articulation/qualification.cfm.
15. Agree to assess and accept for transfer credit, on a case-by-case basis, equivalent courses completed at other institutions in the BC Transfer System where course-to-course articulation has not been established and recorded in the BC Transfer Guide for structural (e.g. articulation between two receiving institutions not normally recorded) or business (not enough students to justify articulation) reasons.
16. Provide clear and accurate information to current and prospective students about transfer agreements, and will not, in any print, web-based, audio, video or other forms of publication, or when recruiting or advising students, make false, overstated, or misleading claims about the nature of institutional participation in the BC Transfer System and/or the benefits accruing to students.
17. Engage in articulation and transfer processes as sincere members of the BC Transfer System, with the aim of facilitating appropriate student mobility and transfer, and will not use this membership for purely promotional or marketing purposes.

18. Alert BCCAT immediately to any situations that may affect institutional ability to participate fully in the BC Transfer System.
19. Inform BCCAT of any investigation of institutional operations undertaken by government, the Campus Alberta Quality Council, any professional accrediting organization, or any other relevant body inside or outside BC, and inform BCCAT of the outcomes of any such investigation.

Signed on behalf
of the Institution by:

Please print name:

Title:

Date:

Copies: 1: Institutional Registrar
 2: Transfer & Technology Manager, BCCAT