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MEMBERSHIP IN THE BC TRANSFER SYSTEM

CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

This policy responds to changes in the designation of institutions in the BC Transfer Guide. It replaces the existing *Designation as a Receiving Institution in the BC Transfer Guide* policy with a policy that covers institutions providing both sending and receiving functions.

The purpose of this policy is to guide institutions that wish to have formally articulated courses within the BC Transfer System and have those articulations listed in the BC Transfer Guide by providing the steps they should follow, the information they should gather, and the information that would be considered by BCCAT. BCCAT recognizes that some institutions may have different program structural organization that make it difficult to participate in transfer and articulation activities to the same level as other members of the BC Transfer System.

SCOPE AND LIMITS

This policy covers institutions that wish to join the BC Transfer System for the first time and to be included in the BC Transfer Guide. The policy also covers institutions that have changed functions as a result of the implementation of the *Enabling the BC Transfer System*. Under that Initiative, institutions that were listed as either sending or receiving were enabled to take on both functions. This policy also applies to those institutions that already perform both sending and receiving functions and the principles and procedures itemized here provide the expectations, processes, and services that should be in place at each member institution of the BC Transfer System.

In order to articulate within the BC Transfer System, institutions must have been admitted to membership based, in part, on having provincial authorization to offer one or more degree programs and having successfully met (and continuing to meet) quality assurance process and practice expectations recognized by the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer. All public institutions have been authorized through acts of the provincial legislature to operate and grant credentials in keeping with their legal scope and mandate.¹ 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) are eligible to seek membership in the BC Transfer System. All new private member institutions in BC that have been authorized by the Minister of Advanced Education (i.e. given "ministerial consent") to offer a degree program and are in

¹ See the Ministry of Advanced Education site at: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/institution-resources-administration/degree-authorization/degree-quality-assessment-board>

compliance with Degree Quality Assessment Board expectations are eligible to seek membership in the BC Transfer System.

Upon admittance to the BC Transfer System, all new private institutions with two-year and / or four-year degree programs that have undergone the rigorous quality assessment processes of the Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB), and that have been given ministerial consent for delivery, are eligible to articulate formal agreements pertaining to their approved program curriculum and have them listed in the BC Transfer Guide. BC Transfer System members may also request that their block transfer agreements with PCTIA accredited institutions be listed in the BC Transfer Guide.

Institutions not meeting any of the appropriate requirements are ineligible for membership, unless otherwise determined by Council². Under extraordinary circumstances and at its discretion, Council may consider other provincial degree-level program approval and / or quality assurance processes as a criterion for inclusion in the BC Transfer System and /or for listing articulation agreements in the BC Transfer Guide.

DEFINITIONS

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.

Institutional Contact Person (ICP)/Transfer Credit Contact (TCC): links between BCCAT and BC Transfer System member institutions. Each institution has at least one staff member serving in these roles and there are often two or more. One person may perform both the ICP and TCC roles, particularly at small institutions.

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

² Prior to 2004, admission to the BC Transfer System was through an approval process managed by the University Presidents' Council (now called the Research Universities' Council of British Columbia or RUCBC). The policy and process involved an evaluation of the private institution to assess its suitability for inclusion in the transfer system. Four private institutions were approved and admitted to the BC Transfer System in this way: Columbia College, Coquitlam College, Corpus Christi College, and Trinity Western University. Yukon College, a publicly funded institution, is a member of the BC Transfer System through an agreement between the BC provincial government and the Yukon territorial government.

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.

Triangulation: the assumption of equivalency for transfer purposes between two courses based on both courses being individually articulated for transfer credit with another specific course at a given institution.

PRINCIPLES

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 \(bccat.ca/system/principles/\)](http://bccat.ca/system/principles/) including the principle of equitable treatment of students. The Council 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. Respect for all members of the BC Transfer System will ensure 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.

PROCEDURES

The following procedures should be in place in all institutions articulating formally through the BC Transfer Guide. In all cases, where possible and appropriate, institutions will:

- a) have institutional transfer credit policies in place that are consistent with BCCAT policies and that facilitate access to BCCAT and institutional resources, materials, and services necessary to support transfer and articulation.
- b) have in place a process to inform decisions to request formal transfer agreements, including steps to identify and prioritize those courses and institutions where articulation would be mutually beneficial. Institutions should identify suggested transfer credit where possible and provide a sound rationale for requesting articulation, such as:
 - i. evidence of existing student mobility;
 - ii. significant student interest in transferability of specific courses;
 - iii. reasonably similar course or program offerings between the institutions;
 - iv. historic agreements or partnerships between the institutions;
 - v. regional proximity between the institutions.
- c) conduct an analysis of the kind and amount of transfer credit best suited to the strategic objectives of the institution. For example, the institution could limit its activity to one or more of the following:
 - i. course-to-course agreements;
 - ii. block transfer agreements;
 - iii. program-specific transfer information; and/or,
 - iv. transfer information limited to certain institutions.

- d) conduct a review of existing equivalencies in internal database(s) for accuracy and currency and consider entering these equivalencies into the BC Transfer Guide if course learning outcomes and content are commensurate. Internal databases of credit equivalencies may be used to inform and prioritize formal articulation requests. Once equivalencies are published in the BC Transfer Guide, institutions are committing to maintain and honour these equivalencies over the period for which the formal articulation agreements are valid.
- e) use triangulation, where appropriate, to extrapolate equivalencies from the BC Transfer Guide. However, institutions are not obliged to accept transfer credit for another course simply because it is articulated with another course at a separate institution³.
- f) have an institutional transfer credit assessment system in place, including processes for how credits are recorded, by whom, and for which categories of student.
- g) have a procedure in place to process transfer credit applications and to advise students of transfer credit granted after registrar approval.
- h) have a process in place for ensuring that articulation agreements are current and comprehensive.
- i) have in place institutional service standards and procedures to remind individuals to respond to requests in a timely manner when dealing with articulation and transfer requests, while respecting the workload and other priorities of the evaluators.
- j) have transfer credit appeal processes in place, including ensuring that these are advertised and are understood by students.
- k) identify or have in place an Institutional Contact Person (ICP) and Transfer Credit Contact (TCC), if appropriate for receiving and sending requests through a secure Transfer Credit Evaluation System (TCES) account (for description of ICP and TCC roles see: bccat.ca/articulation/icp/).
- l) identify or have in place a contact person for each academic unit or department who will facilitate the assignment and completion of articulation requests.
- m) have in place a credit assessment process for determining whether to grant unassigned or general credit by academic area (department, program, or school) or faculty, and year level (e.g., ARTS 1xx) for a prospective articulated course that is not directly equivalent to a course offered at the institution and / or does not correspond to a field of study offered by the institution.
- n) use BCCAT training materials and web resources as appropriate to orient and train staff for course assessment, student advising, admissions, and use of the TCES and BC Transfer Guide.
- o) record existing and new transfer credit agreements and other transfer credit assessments in the institution's student information system.
- p) participate regularly in articulation committee and ICP/TCC meetings as appropriate.

³ Detailed examination of outlines can sometimes reveal significant differences in learning outcomes and / or course content that would prevent the triangulation of course credit equivalency from occurring.

PROCESS INFORMATION

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

REFERENCE LINKS

- *Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer*: www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/216/ministerial-statement-credit-transfer-2009.pdf
- *Principles and Guidelines for Transfer* bccat.ca/pubs/principlesoftransfer.pdf

RELATED POLICIES

- *3.A.2: Membership of Private Institutions in the BC Transfer System*: bccat.ca/pubs/privateinstitutions.pdf
- *3.A.3: Membership of Alberta Institutions in the BC Transfer System*: bccat.ca/pubs/albertainstitutions.pdf
- *3.B.2: Listing of Transfer Agreements with Non-Member Institutions in the BC Transfer Guide*