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LISTING OF TRANSFER AGREEMENTS WITH NON-MEMBER INSTITUTIONS IN THE BC TRANSFER GUIDE

CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to guide BC Transfer System member institutions that wish to have formally approved block transfer¹ agreements with non-member institutions listed in the BC Transfer Guide by providing the steps they should follow, the information they should gather, and the commitments and guarantees that BCCAT requires to consider recording agreements in the BC Transfer Guide. At the June 2, 2016 meeting of Council, the decision-making authority regarding the inclusion of block transfer agreements between BC Transfer System members and non-member institutions under the existing policy was delegated to the Transfer and Articulation Committee.

SCOPE AND LIMITS

The establishment of agreements for academic degree-level credit between an institutional member of the BC Transfer System and another public, private or Aboriginal-controlled institution is voluntary for both partners.

Where credit transfer agreements established between member and non-member institutions have the goal of being listed in the BC Transfer Guide for information, appropriate procedure must be followed to safeguard the ultimate success of the agreement and the benefit to students.

The documentation of agreements on the BCCAT website is for information-sharing purposes only, and limited only to the context of the specified agreement and institutions. The documentation of non-member institutions on the website in no way implies their inclusion in the BC Transfer System, the broader acceptance of their courses for transfer credit or any form of official quality assurance.

DEFINITIONS

BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (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. BCCAT is supported by a small professional staff.

¹ “Block transfer” is understood here to include degree partnerships.

BC Transfer Guide: This website service is hosted by BCCAT and provides information on formal course-to-course, block, advanced placement, international baccalaureate and program-specific transfer agreements between participating BC Transfer System institutions.

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

Degree Programs: For the purpose of membership in the BC Transfer System, these are associate and baccalaureate degree programs.

Degree Partnership: This is the contractual arrangement that results when one institution enters into an agreement with another institution or organization to guarantee that students completing courses with a minimum grade level at the first institution will be guaranteed admission into more advanced studies at the second institution.

Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB): The Degree Quality Assessment Board is a provincial Board appointed by the minister responsible for advanced education for British Columbia. The DQAB reviews proposed degree programs at public and private institutions in BC and makes recommendations to the Minister. The DQAB also conducts organizational reviews of private institutions or public institutions from other jurisdictions offering degree programs in BC with the consent of the minister responsible for advanced education.

Home Institution: This refers to the institution from which a student transfers.

Institutional Contact Person (ICP)/Transfer Credit Contact (TCC): These designated institutional staff provide links between BCCAT and BC Transfer System member institutions. Each institution has at least one staff member serving in these roles, but there are often two or more.

Letter of Assurance: This formal agreement between a non-BC Canadian public or BC private member institution and BCCAT sets forth expectations for participation in the BC Transfer System and indicates the commitment of the member institution to uphold the *Principles and Guidelines for Transfer* as well as the norms and standards of the BC Transfer System.

Member Institution: BC Transfer System member institutions include all BC public post-secondary institutions, as well as other Canadian public and private post-secondary institutions approved by BCCAT in accordance with criteria and procedures set forth in BCCAT policy 3A: Membership in the BC Transfer System, found at http://www.bccat.ca/pubs/POL3A_BCTSMembership.pdf

Non-Member Institution: Any institution that is not approved by BCCAT is not recognized as a member institution.

PTIB: The Private Training Institutions Branch (PTIB) of the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training administers the *Private Training Act* and associated regulations. (See www.privatetraininginstitutions.gov.bc.ca)

Transfer Credit: Transfer credit occurs when courses, blocks or programs successfully completed at one institution are granted credit at another institution.

Transfer Credit System (TCS): The Transfer Credit System is the online resource used to send and receive formal articulation requests between institutions.

Transfer Institution: This refers to the institution to which a student transfers.

PRINCIPLES

The Council recognizes that transfer agreements rest on a foundation of mutual trust and quality assurance.

- *Trust* is established and maintained when institutions communicate clearly and honestly with each other and with students, adhere both to the spirit and to the letter of their agreement, and deliver what they promise.
- *Institutional quality assurance* is addressed through membership in another recognized Canadian provincial transfer system, consent by the BC ministry responsible for advanced education to offer degree-level courses or programs, or accreditation (or equivalent) by a Canadian or an international quality assurance body deemed appropriate by BCCAT. At BCCAT's discretion on a case by case basis, agreements with institutions that fall outside the auspices of these quality assurance processes may be considered for inclusion provided they have a well-established articulation relationship with one or more sponsoring member institutions of the BC Transfer System and that they demonstrate ongoing quality assurance practices to the satisfaction of BCCAT.
- *Program quality* is assured through the due diligence undertaken by the BC Transfer System member institution, which includes its assessment of the program, which in turn can include recognized industry or professional accreditation or certification.

Agreements listed in the BC Transfer Guide constitute transfer credit commitments between institutions. When listings are current, reliable, and respected by both partners, the credit transfer is seen as credible. Respect for and accountability to partner institutions 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 efficient and transparent credit transfer processes and decisions.

PROCEDURES

GUIDELINES FOR ELIGIBILITY OF AGREEMENTS WITH NON-MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

Members of the BC Transfer System that wish to list agreements with non-member institutions must assure themselves that the following elements are in place and that there is evidence of such to be presented to BCCAT:

1. The non-member institution must be a member of another recognized transfer system, have consent from the BC ministry responsible for advanced education to offer degree-level courses or programs, or have accreditation (or equivalent) by a Canadian or an international quality assurance body deemed appropriate by BCCAT. In the absence of the above, non-member institutions with well-established articulation relationships with one or more BC Transfer System members will be considered on a case by case basis.
2. On an ongoing basis, the non-member institution must provide the latest relevant institutional reports available to the transfer institution (e.g., annual report, accreditation or re-accreditation report, program review).
3. The non-member institution's accreditation status or the status of ministerial consent to offer a degree program should be current, and any history of de-designation or de-accreditation must be openly disclosed.

4. Where the norms of the profession require program accreditation, the program at the non-member institution must be accredited by the relevant regulatory, certifying, or accrediting body. The curriculum should be reasonably stable over time and regularly reviewed for effectiveness and quality.
5. There should be a business case for students transferring or evidence of students transferring or wishing to transfer.
6. There should be evidence on the part of the non-member that it understands that listing of block transfer agreements does not confer the right to articulate on a course-by-course basis with other BC Transfer System members.
7. Block transfer agreements will clearly state what credit the student will receive at the transfer institution, towards what program(s), and any prerequisite, grade, or language proficiency requirements.
8. Block transfer agreements should be based on a close assessment of the equivalence of the programs at the partnering institutions. For information on the principle of equivalence, institutions can refer to <http://www.bccat.ca/system/principles> and to: <http://www.bccat.ca/articulate/assess/equivalence>, and for more about block transfer agreements, to: <http://www.bccat.ca/articulate/block>.

The transfer institution should undertake a diligent assessment of the quality of the program at the home institution and the “fit” or relevance to its own programs. For a helpful checklist/guide to this process, see <http://www.bccat.ca/articulate/appendix/checklist>.

9. BCCAT recommends that all agreements specify a date whereby the agreement will be reviewed, and updated or cancelled, as appropriate.
10. The agreement should provide explicit details regarding the language and graphics to be used when promoting the agreement to students in any print or web publications.

In addition to the above-stated policy and procedures, it is the institution’s responsibility to ensure that there are in place established policies, procedures, and resources supportive of the BC Transfer System. For a list of such procedures, please review Appendix I of the BCCAT policy 3A: Membership in the BC Transfer System at http://www.bccat.ca/pubs/POL3A_BCTSMembership.pdf

PUBLICATION OF APPROVED AGREEMENTS IN THE BC TRANSFER GUIDE

Once an agreement has been finalized, the following steps should be taken:

1. The BC Transfer System member institution should prepare a request to the BCCAT Transfer and Articulation Committee (TAC) for approval. The request should address the elements in the previous section as appropriate. TAC will review the request and make a decision at one of its regular meetings. BCCAT will communicate the TAC decision to the BC Transfer System member, with a request that any approved agreement be forwarded to BCCAT using the Transfer Credit System. (Note: Under exceptional circumstances, course-to-course agreements may also be considered for publication in the BC Transfer Guide at the request of the member institution, and at the discretion of BCCAT, if there is a demonstrated flow of student mobility and with the presentation of a sound business case for inclusion. Criteria for a sound business case for inclusion of course-to-course agreements with non-member institutions can be provided by BCCAT upon request.)

2. The transfer institution should submit the final agreement electronically, specifying the section of the BC Transfer Guide in which the agreement is to be listed using the Transfer Credit System (TCS). Any supporting documentation should remain with the articulating institutions.
3. Upon receipt of the agreement, BCCAT will record the agreement in the BC Transfer Guide.

CANCELLATION AND REMOVAL OF AGREEMENTS FROM THE BC TRANSFER GUIDE

Transfer institutions should check all current agreements that are listed against the provisions of this policy. Any current agreement not found to be satisfactory should be cancelled. Cancellation of any agreements utilizing this policy should:

1. Be based on clear evidence that the agreement is no longer tenable (e.g., curricular change at either institution may negate the equivalence of the two programs, or few or no students may be transferring);
2. Take into account the impact on students currently enrolled, and safeguard their progression through a grand-parenting or sunset clause; and
3. Be immediately communicated to BCCAT.

PROCESS DOCUMENTS

How to Articulate: bccat.ca/articulate

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer: cmec.ca/en/

Principles and Guidelines for Transfer: bccat.ca/system/principles

RELATED POLICIES

Membership in the BC Transfer System: http://www.bccat.ca/pubs/POL3A_BCTSMembership.pdf