

**INCLUSION OF ALBERTA INSTITUTIONS IN THE BC TRANSFER SYSTEM:
POLICY AND PROCESS**

Background

The Recalibrating the BC Transfer System project initiated by the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) in 2005 asked respondents to consider whether there could be justifiable exceptions to the current policy of limiting transfer information to institutions within BC. Two-thirds of respondents to the initial survey indicated that justifiable exceptions could be contemplated, but both survey respondents and participants at further consultations about recalibration recommended a cautious approach to accepting out-of-province institutions into the BC Transfer System.

The purpose of this document is to propose the conditions and process under which Council would entertain an application from an out-of-province institution for inclusion in the BC Transfer System¹. The policy applies only to Alberta post-secondary institutions because (a) it is likely that transfer of students between the two provinces is high because of geographical proximity, and (b) this policy builds upon the transfer relationship established between the two provinces in the BC/Alberta Transfer System Protocol (www.bccat.ca/pubs/BC-ABprotocol.pdf). The Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) has developed a similar policy that would allow BC post-secondary institutions into ACAT. The Council may consider at a later date, based on experience gained from implementing an Alberta-only policy, expanding the policy to include institutions from other Canadian provinces and territories.

BCCAT Position

It is a reasonable proposition that the BC Transfer System, and hence the BC Transfer Guide, should be expanded to allow for the inclusion of Alberta post-secondary institutions where such an inclusion can be justified. Developing a clear policy regarding inclusion of Alberta institutions in the BC Transfer System facilitates the assessment of applications fairly and consistently rather than basing decisions on exceptions. Such a policy would also benefit learners. Any decision to include an Alberta institution should be based on evidence that:

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

¹ Yukon College has had its courses listed in the BC Transfer Guide since 1998.

Criteria for Assessing Proposals from Alberta Institutions

The following criteria will be used by Council to assess proposals 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) Proposals should indicate the level of collaboration/discussion that has occurred in the development of the proposal with institutions in the BC Transfer System and evidence of support from BC institutions.
- 3) Institutions will be considered for admission into the BC Transfer System based on evidence of the existing level of transfer activity and traffic occurring with BC students and institutions *but outside the realm of the BC Transfer System and Guide*. In effect, the institution submitting a proposal 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 or for which articulation agreements are already in place or proposed.
 - b) Number of block transfer agreements currently in place.
 - 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 one or two BC institutions involved, the Alberta institution may be asked to negotiate bilateral arrangements with those institutions outside of the BC Transfer Guide).
 - i) The number of years that articulation agreements 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 exempt status from BC's Degree Quality Assessment Board or has degrees approved through this process.
 - l) Any other evidence deemed relevant by Council.
- 4) BCCAT will use thresholds to determine whether or not the existing level of transfer activity warrants inclusion in the BC Transfer System. These thresholds will be such that only those

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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) Institutions should indicate whether they are requesting to have only existing transferable courses listed in the BC Transfer Guide or new articulation agreements or both. For new articulation agreements, estimates should be provided about the number and nature (course-to-course or block transfer) of agreements that will be negotiated.
- 6) Institutions should indicate whether they are applying to be listed in the BC Transfer Guide as a sending or receiving institution or both.
 - a) Requests for receiving institution status would include a description of the resources available within the institution to perform the associated functions. (See: *Best Practice: A Resource for Receiving Institutions* available at www.bccat.ca/pubs/receiving.pdf.)
 - b) Requests for sending institution status 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.
- 7) Normally articulation agreements for first and second year courses and programs will be considered for inclusion in the course-to-course section of the BC Transfer Guide.
- 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 otherwise approved by Council. The Alberta institution should provide a list of all such agreements to BCCAT, whether with public or private institutions.

Process for Assessing Proposals from Alberta Institutions

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

- 1) Alberta institutions should submit a formal proposal addressing the above criteria to BCCAT.
- 2) BCCAT will review the evidence provided in the proposal against 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) The proposal will be reviewed first by the Transfer and Articulation Committee (TAC) and then Council will make a decision based on recommendations from the TAC.
- 4) BCCAT will inform the proponent of its decision and the underlying rationale for that decision.

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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, whether public or private, will be subject to BCCAT's policy under which new members are admitted (available at www.bccat.ca/pubs/newmember.pdf) and will be expected to conform to the provisions of that policy.
- 2) Institutions will be required to sign a Letter of Assurance, which would include a clear description of what is expected from new members of the Transfer System and consequences if these expectations are not met.
- 3) BC institutions will be asked by BCCAT to indicate whether they intend to enter into articulation agreements with the Alberta institution.
- 4) 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 provide a rationale for decisions made.
- 5) Alberta institutions will be expected to provide a designated Institutional Contact Person who would respond to BCCAT requests for information and be the key contact for other member institutions.
- 6) Alberta institutions will be expected to send representatives to appropriate committee meetings (e.g. articulation committees, Institutional Contact Persons).
- 7) Alberta institutions will be listed in the BC Transfer Guide, along with Yukon College, under an out-of-province heading.
- 8) Alberta institutions, both public and private, may be charged for the cost of articulation on the same basis as described in BCCAT's policy on new members in the BC Transfer System.