

# The BC Transfer System: A Brief History

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The following information has been prepared as a brief history of important events in the development and maintenance of the post-secondary transfer system in British Columbia (BC) over the last six decades. The information is presented in point form and in chronological order. It includes several points related to the expansion of the post-secondary system in BC over that time period, which led to a highly differentiated post-secondary system in which transfer became a crucial factor. Please note that the list of changes in the post-secondary system is not meant to be exhaustive and, therefore, does not necessarily include all openings, closings, mergers, and name changes of institutions in BC.

The information below should be useful to anyone wanting to develop a better understanding of the history of BC's well-developed transfer system and the reasons we have created such a system. Both newcomers to BC post-secondary education and long-term employees will hopefully be able to learn from the list of historical events presented.

The list of important events has been compiled by reviewing a number of literature sources that have dealt with the historical development of BC's post-secondary and transfer systems. These include the Advanced Education Council of BC (2000), Andres and Dawson (1998), Dennison (2002), Gaber (2002), Johnston (2005), and [wikipedia- Higher education in BC](#). These references are included in the reference list at the end of the document.

The list of events below has been reviewed and revised by individuals with a long-standing knowledge of the development of BC's transfer system to ensure accuracy and completeness as much as possible. If you notice any errors in the information provided or know of an important event in the history of the transfer system that has been omitted, please contact Devron Gaber at [dgaber@bccat.ca](mailto:dgaber@bccat.ca).

<b>Prior to 1958</b>	University of British Columbia (UBC), founded in 1915, along with its satellite campus in Victoria, Victoria College (1920), are the only options in BC for students wanting to pursue advanced academic study leading to a degree and professional qualifications.
<b>1958</b>	Public Schools Act amended allowing school boards to establish two-year colleges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colleges must be affiliated with UBC, thus assuring acceptance by UBC of credits taken from colleges.</li> <li>• Students would be able to transfer to third year of a university degree.</li> <li>• No school board acted upon this amendment, but Kelowna School Board did conduct a feasibility study on formation of a college in the Okanagan.</li> </ul>
<b>1960</b>	BC Vocational School opens in Burnaby under direct management of the provincial government. The Nanaimo Vocational School had been providing vocational education since 1936.
<b>1962</b>	Release of the report <i>Higher Education in British Columbia and a Plan for the Future</i> by John B. Macdonald, President of UBC. Recommendations included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of two-year colleges which offer a range of programs, including academic programs at the 1st and 2nd year level and technical programs.</li> <li>• Colleges to be autonomous and self-governing and not part of a unified provincial system.</li> <li>• Colleges to be under school board control, supported in part by local taxation and designed to meet local needs.</li> <li>• Creation of two four-year colleges in Victoria and the Lower Mainland.</li> </ul>
<b>1963</b>	Public Schools Act amended allowing establishment of autonomous colleges under school board control: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key roles were advising on development of new colleges and ensuring colleges were adhering to consistent academic standards.</li> <li>• Board assumed a leadership role in formalizing the transfer process.</li> <li>• Membership included university representatives but no college representatives.</li> <li>• Board developed a facilitative and collaborative rather than an authoritative relationship with colleges.</li> </ul>
<b>1963</b>	University of Victoria (formerly Victoria College) becomes a full university and is given degree-granting status. Macdonald had recommended a four-year college.
<b>1964</b>	First technology students enrol at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) created at same Burnaby site as the BC Vocational School.
<b>1965</b>	Simon Fraser University (SFU) opens as a full university in Burnaby rather than as a four-year college, as was recommended in the Macdonald report.
<b>1965</b>	Vancouver City College (VCC) becomes first autonomous community college in BC, formed by bringing together Vancouver Vocational Institute (1949) and Vancouver School of Art (1925).
<b>1965-1975</b>	Nine more community colleges formed across BC based on local support through plebiscites (Selkirk, Okanagan, Capilano, College of New Caledonia, Malaspina, Douglas, Cariboo, Camosun, and Fraser Valley).

<b>1966</b>	First transfer students from VCC and Selkirk accepted at university through informal agreements.
<b>1966</b>	First research studies initiated under auspices of the Academic Board on transfer student performance.
<b>1968</b>	In November, 180 students occupy the Administration Offices at SFU to protest lack of transfer opportunities for Vancouver City College students who had enrolled in 1st and 2nd year university transfer courses. The protestors were removed by the RCMP after 54 hours.
<b>1968</b>	In December at a conference sponsored by the Academic Board, decision made to develop the first standing committees (which became Articulation Committees) to deal with transfer problems in specific disciplines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was an understanding that if educators did not solve perceived problems on their own, government may intervene.</li> <li>• Subsequently, each university published its own Transfer Guide which listed equivalent college and university courses and could be used by students in planning their education.</li> </ul>
<b>1971</b>	Provincial government melds regional community colleges with provincial vocational institutes.
<b>1974</b>	Academic Board is dissolved by government.
<b>1974</b>	The Post-Secondary Articulation Coordinating Committee is formed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of overseeing transfer and articulation in BC.</li> <li>• Membership included senior academic officer from each public college and university and registrar from each university.</li> </ul>
<b>1975</b>	Four new community colleges established by government in areas of the province not yet served by colleges (Northern Lights, Northwest, East Kootenay, and North Island), based on a recommendation in the 1974 report of the Task Force on the Community College in British Columbia.
<b>1976</b>	Post-Secondary Articulation Coordinating Committee develops first set of <i>Principles and Guidelines for Transfer</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted by all college councils and university senates.</li> </ul>
<b>1977</b>	Colleges and Provincial Institutes Act passed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceived by institutions as an attempt by government to play more of a central coordinating role in development of a college system.</li> <li>• Government assumed responsibility for 100% of both capital and operating costs at colleges.</li> </ul>
<b>1977</b>	Creation by Act of the Academic Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of three intermediary councils created to coordinate activities across colleges and institutes.</li> <li>• Academic Council given responsibility for articulation and transfer.</li> <li>• Post-Secondary Articulation Coordinating Committee continued its work as an agent of the Academic Council.</li> </ul>
<b>1978</b>	Creation by Act of five provincial institutes besides BCIT, which had existed previously (Justice Institute, Open Learning Institute, Emily Carr College of Art, Pacific Vocational Institute, and Pacific Marine Training Institute).

<b>1981</b>	Kwantlen College formed as a separate institution from Douglas College.
<b>1983</b>	Nicola Valley Institute of Technology created in Merritt to address low participation and success rates of First Nations students in other institutions.
<b>1983</b>	Academic Council and two other intermediary councils abolished through College and Institute Amendment Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councils abolished because of widespread criticism about their centralizing role at the expense of institutional autonomy, their confusion in mandate, and their lack of coordination among each other.</li> </ul>
<b>1983-1989</b>	Post-Secondary Articulation Coordinating Committee continues to meet to oversee articulation and transfer and the work of an expanding number of Articulation Committees.
<b>1986</b>	The Pacific Vocational Institute merges with BCIT.
<b>1987</b>	University academic vice presidents form transfer credit subcommittee to develop a set of policies and procedures which had to be met by private colleges before their courses could be considered transferable to universities.
<b>1988</b>	The Open Learning Agency is formed through legislation by combining the Open Learning Institute and the Knowledge Network. The new agency includes the Open University and Open College and provides a credit bank function for students.
<b>1988</b>	The Provincial Access Committee releases report entitled <i>Access to Advanced Education and Job Training in British Columbia</i> (the <i>Access for All</i> Report).
<b>1989</b>	BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) created as a result of a recommendation in the <i>Access for All</i> Report. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created to formalize and to provide more consistency and staff resources to the function of coordinating transfer in an increasingly differentiated system.</li> <li>A formal agency but with no legislative authority.</li> <li>Continued to coordinate Articulation Committees and transfer agreements among autonomous institutions using a facilitative approach.</li> <li>Funded by provincial government.</li> <li>Council membership made up of post-secondary institutional representatives but no government representatives.</li> </ul>
<b>1989</b>	Grant Fisher is named first Executive Director and Co-chair of BCCAT. During his tenure, he works with two Co-Chairs: Rendina Hamilton (Co-chair from 1989 to 1993) and John Dennison (Co-chair from 1993 to 1999).
<b>1989</b>	Three colleges (Malaspina, Cariboo, and Okanagan) become university colleges to expand degree opportunities outside the Lower Mainland and Victoria. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degrees are developed and offered under auspices of traditional BC universities.</li> <li>University colleges eventually become sending and receiving institutions.</li> </ul>
<b>1990</b>	BCCAT publishes first single, annual <i>BC Transfer Guide</i> , thus replacing individual university Transfer Guides.

<b>1990</b>	The provincial government announces the establishment of the University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George.
<b>1991</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fraser Valley College becomes a university college.</li> <li>• The Institute of Indigenous Government is established in Vancouver.</li> <li>• Columbia College and Coquitlam College become the first private institutions to join the BC transfer system and are listed in the BC Transfer Guide.</li> </ul>
<b>1992</b>	Trinity Western University becomes part of the BC Transfer System as a private receiving institution and is listed in the BC Transfer Guide.
<b>1992</b>	BCCAT, in consultation with institutions, develops curriculum requirements for provincially recognized two-year academic credentials – the Associate of Arts degree and the Associate of Science degree.
<b>1992</b>	<p>BCCAT revises and updates the <i>Principles and Guidelines for Transfer</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines not distributed for formal approval by each institution because changes were viewed to be minor and more of a housekeeping nature.</li> </ul>
<b>1993</b>	Yukon College becomes part of the BC transfer system and is listed in the <i>BC Transfer Guide</i> , after being approved by Council in November 1992.
<b>1994</b>	Langara College formed as a separate institution from Vancouver Community College.
<b>1994</b>	The Pacific Marine Training Institute amalgamates with BCIT.
<b>1994</b>	Frank Gelin is appointed as Executive Director and Co-chair of BCCAT. During his tenure, he works with three co-chairs: John Dennison (Co-chair from 1993 to 1999), Bob Brown (Co-chair from 1999 to 2005), and Dan Birch (Co-chair from 2005 to 2011).
<b>1995</b>	BCCAT develops and posts the first searchable, web-based <i>BC Transfer Guide</i> as an adjunct to the paper-based Guide.
<b>1995</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kwantlen College becomes a university college.</li> <li>• University colleges and two institutions (BCIT and Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design) given independent degree granting authority.</li> <li>• Technical University of BC announced.</li> <li>• Royal Roads University established.</li> <li>• The Institute for Indigenous Government is established.</li> </ul>
<b>1995</b>	The College and Institute Act was amended to create Education Councils which were given the authority, jointly with College Boards, to develop and implement policies pertaining to the granting of transfer credit.
<b>1996</b>	<p><i>Charting A New Course</i> released by Ministry of Education, Skills and Training as a strategic plan for the college, university college, institute, and agency system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan includes recommendation that course-by-course assessment for transfer be replaced by block transfer.</li> </ul>

<b>1996-2010</b>	Implementation by BCCAT of a comprehensive research program to measure student mobility and transfer system effectiveness.
<b>1997</b>	BCCAT leads system-wide examination of transfer policy and models to determine whether alternative approaches, such as block transfer, could replace or supplement course-to-course transfer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resulted in agreement that course-to-course transfer is a viable system but that improvements can be made by actively exploring alternative forms of transfer.</li> </ul>
<b>1999</b>	Initiation of Transfer Innovation Projects with Articulation Committees to improve transfer, recommend innovative approaches to transfer, and provide better information on transfer options.
<b>2000</b>	Revision of curriculum requirements for associate degrees and encouragement of the establishment of guaranteed transfer credit for all courses completed within an associate degree. By 2001, all traditional universities and all university colleges had formally approved such a guarantee.
<b>2000</b>	Release by BCCAT of <i>Block Transfer Handbook</i> with revised principles and guidelines for block transfer.
<b>2001</b>	Development of a web-based Transfer Credit Evaluation Form to further improve the speed and efficiency of administrative processes.
<b>2001</b>	Corpus Christi College becomes the fourth private institution in the Transfer System and is listed in the BC Transfer Guide.
<b>2002</b>	The Technical University of BC was closed and its students and programs were transferred to Simon Fraser University to become the core of SFU Surrey.
<b>2003</b>	BCCAT expands its role in the area of admissions by forming an Admissions Committee and undertaking a number of projects to help better understand student mobility, capacity, and demand.
<b>2003</b>	Subsequent to the passage of the Degree Authorization Act, colleges are given authority to grant applied baccalaureate degrees and university colleges are given authority to grant applied Master's degrees.
<b>2003</b>	The provincial government appoints the Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB) with a mandate to review and make recommendations to the Minister on applications from new private degree-granting institutions to operate in BC and to review proposals for new degree programs from all public and private post-secondary institutions.
<b>2004</b>	As part of its Admissions mandate, BCCAT launches the Education Planner website, designed to provide admissions information on undergraduate programs at post-secondary institutions across BC. The site is based on the former Opening Doors website that BCCAT began managing in late 2003.
<b>2004</b>	BCCAT develops a Private Degree-Granting Institution Policy to facilitate the admission into the BC Transfer System of institutions authorized to provide degree programs through the Degree Authorization process. This is later redeveloped as the New Members Policy in 2008.
<b>2005</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The University College of the Cariboo is designated Thompson Rivers University, and the BC Open University becomes Thompson Rivers University–Open Learning. Okanagan University College is split to become UBC Okanagan and Okanagan College.</li> </ul>

<b>2005</b>	Three private institutions (University Canada West, Sprott-Shaw Community College, and Lansbridge University) are approved to negotiate transfer agreements for specific degree programs and have those agreements listed in the <i>BC Transfer Guide</i> .
<b>2005</b>	BCCAT releases improved version of web-based Transfer Credit Evaluation System and launches the <i>BC Transfer Guide</i> as a stand-alone website. BCCAT also releases <i>How to Articulate: Requesting and Assessing Credit in the BC Transfer System</i> .
<b>2005</b>	The Student Transitions Project (STP) is formed as a partnership between the Ministries of Education and Advanced Education and public post-secondary institutions to link student data across education systems to answer questions on student mobility. BCCAT joined the STP in late 2005 because of intersection between its admissions work and the work of the STP.
<b>2006</b>	Vancouver Central College (later Alexander College) is approved by the Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB) to offer an Associate Degree and is subsequently approved to negotiate transfer agreements within the BC Transfer System.
<b>2006-2007</b>	Fairleigh Dickinson University and Quest University are approved by DQAB to offer specific degrees in BC and are subsequently approved to negotiate transfer agreements within the BC Transfer System.
<b>2007</b>	Lansbridge University has its degree-granting consent removed by the Ministry of Advanced Education and is subsequently removed by BCCAT from the BC Transfer System.
<b>2007</b>	The Institute of Indigenous Government is merged with the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology.
<b>2007-2008</b>	The University of Phoenix is approved by DQAB to offer specific degrees in BC and is subsequently approved to negotiate transfer agreements within the BC Transfer System. The University is removed from the Transfer Guide in 2008 after it announces its intention to move out of BC.
<b>2008</b>	<p>The University Act is amended to allow five institutions to be covered under the Act as “special purpose, teaching universities,” later to be called “teaching-intensive universities. The new universities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kwantlen Polytechnic University (formerly Kwantlen University College);</li> <li>• Vancouver Island University (formerly Malaspina University-College);</li> <li>• the University of the Fraser Valley (formerly the University College of the Fraser Valley);</li> <li>• Capilano University (formerly Capilano College); and</li> <li>• the Emily Carr University of Art and Design (formerly Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design).</li> </ul> <p>With this move, there are 11 universities, 11 colleges, and 3 institutes in the BC public post-secondary system.</p>
<b>2008</b>	BCCAT releases <i>Best Practice Guide: A Resource for Receiving Institutions</i> . BCCAT also releases the policy document <i>Recording Block Transfers with PCTIA-Accredited Institutions</i> . This policy allows private institutions that are non-degree granting institutions to be included in the block transfer section of the <i>BC Transfer Guide</i> .

<b>2008-2009</b>	Council approves a policy in December 2008 which allows Alberta post-secondary institutions to enter the BC Transfer System based on strong evidence of existing transfer activity and student traffic. The Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) approves a similar policy allowing BC post-secondary institutions into the Alberta Transfer System in May 2009.
<b>2009</b>	Athabasca University is admitted by Council to the BC Transfer System under the new policy, making it the second out-of-province institution in the system.
<b>2009</b>	The Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development undertakes a Business Process Review of the BC Transfer System.
<b>2010</b>	The College of the Rockies is approved to offer its first degree. With this approval, 22 out of 25 public post-secondary institutions in BC are offering degrees.
<b>2010</b>	BCCAT undertakes the first comprehensive rewrite of the <i>Principles and Guidelines for Transfer</i> since 1976.
<b>2010</b>	Robert Fleming is appointed Executive Director and Co-Chair of BCCAT, replacing Frank Gelin who retires after 16 years in that position.

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