

# Research Results

June 2011

## The Time It Takes:

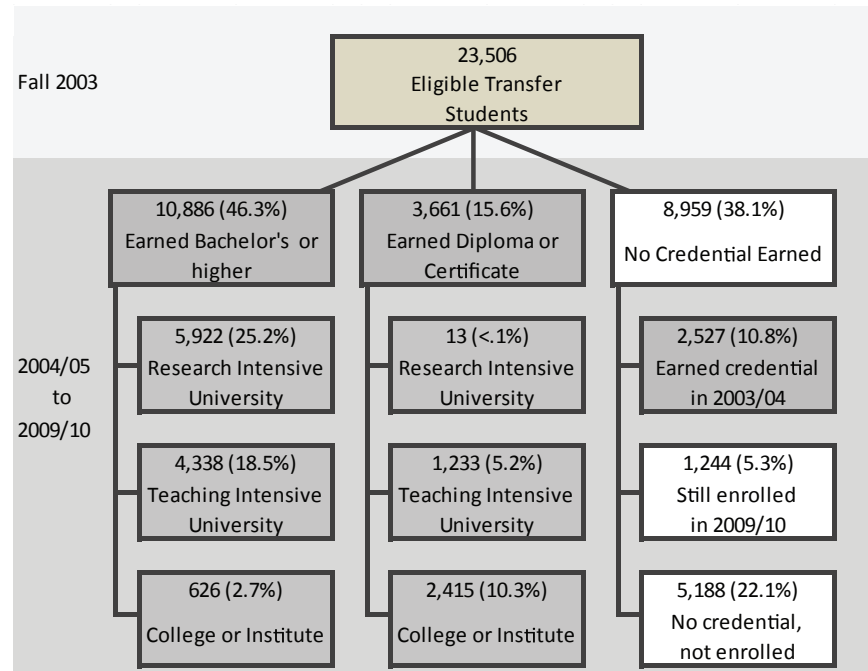
### A Longitudinal Study of the 2003 Cohort of Students Eligible to Transfer to a BC Research Intensive University

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For a number of years, the Student Transitions Project (STP) has tracked the students in BC's public colleges, institutes and teaching intensive universities (CDW institutions) who are eligible to transfer (ETR) to any of the four research intensive universities in BC in the subsequent year (i.e., students who have completed or enrolled in at least 24 credits in courses listed in the BC Transfer Guide and have maintained a GPA of at least 2.00). These students have been followed from one year to the next in order to determine how many of them enrol in a research intensive university with transfer as the basis of admission. Beyond this first year, however, little is known about the educational pathways and outcomes of eligible transfer students.

The BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) commissioned a longitudinal study of the cohort of 23,506 students who were enrolled at 19 CDW institutions in the fall of 2003 and who were eligible to transfer to a research intensive university in 2004/05.<sup>1</sup> Using enrolment and credential data from the STP, these ETRs were followed up to the 2009/10 academic year to determine (a) how many transferred

**FIGURE 1: Outcomes for the 2003 ETR Cohort**



<sup>1</sup> The full report, *The Time it Takes: A Longitudinal Study of the 2003 Cohort of Students Eligible to Transfer to a BC Research Intensive University*, is available online at [bccat.bc.ca/pubs/timeittakes.pdf](http://bccat.bc.ca/pubs/timeittakes.pdf).

to research intensive universities, (b) how many remained at CDW institutions, (c) how many left the BC public post-secondary system and (d) how many and what sorts of credentials were obtained. A summary of outcomes for the 2003 ETR cohort is depicted in [Figure 1](#). (See previous page.)

## Cohort Groupings by Enrolment Status

In order to study students' educational pathways, the 2003 ETR cohort was split into four groups based on their enrolment status in the fall of 2004: students who were enrolled at a research intensive university, teaching intensive university, college or institute or did not enrol at a BC public post-secondary institution in the fall of 2004.<sup>2</sup> The credentials obtained by students in each of these four are given in [Table 1](#).

**TABLE 1: Credentials Earned Between 2004/05 and 2009/10 by the 2003 ETR Cohort**

Credential Earned Between 2004 and 2009/10:	Fall 2004 Destination of ETR Cohort									
	Research Intensive University		Teaching Intensive University		College or Institute		Did Not Enrol		Total ETR Cohort	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	3,315 <sup>1</sup>	81.0%	3,705	50.0%	1,641	29.6%	711 <sup>1</sup>	11.0%	9,372	39.9%
<b>Certificate or Diploma</b>	133	3.2%	1,965	26.5%	2,372	42.8%	705	10.9%	5,175	22.0%
Subsequently earned Bachelor's Degree	<sup>2</sup>		803	10.8%	711	12.8%	<sup>2</sup>		1,514	6.4%
<b>No credential</b>	645	15.8%	1,738	23.5%	1,525	27.5%	5,051	78.1%	8,959	38.1%
Previously earned a post-secondary credential	213	5.2%	227	3.1%	198	3.6%	1,889	29.2%	2,527	10.8%
Still engaged in post-secondary studies in 2009/10	145	3.5%	354	4.8%	320	5.8%	425	6.6%	1,244	5.3%
No longer engaged in post-secondary studies	287	7.0%	1,157	15.6%	1,007	18.2%	2,737	42.3%	5,188	22.1%
<b>Grand Total ETR Cohort</b>	<b>4,093</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7,408</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>5,538</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6,467</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>23,506</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Some RIU and did-not-enrol students may have earned diploma/certificates prior to their Bachelor's degrees, but these numbers were not analyzed.

<sup>2</sup> This study did not specifically quantify the number of students in the RIU or did-not enrol groups who earned a Bachelor's degree after first earning a certificate or diploma. These students are included in the total number of Bachelor's degree holders above.

## Enrolled at a Research Intensive University in Fall 2004

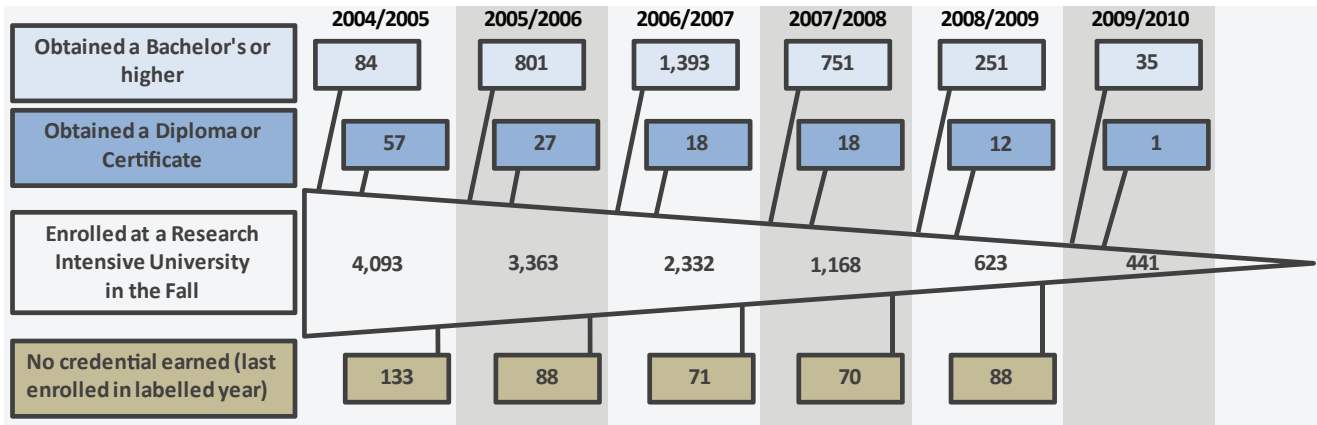
By the fall of 2004, 4,093 (17.4%) of the 2003 ETRs had moved on to a research intensive university:

- 2,147 (9.1%) enrolled as new students in the fall of 2004 with transfer as the basis of admission;
- 179 (0.8%) enrolled as new students in the fall of 2004 under another (non-transfer) basis of admission; and
- 1,767 (7.5%) continued their enrolment at a research intensive university in the fall of 2004, having previously enrolled at that institution.

Educational outcomes for these 4,093 students are depicted in [Figure 2](#) and [Table 1](#).

<sup>2</sup> The full report further breaks down students enrolled in a research intensive university into 1) those with a "transfer" basis of admission, 2) those under other bases of admission, and 3) those continuing their enrolment in a research intensive university in fall 2004, having previously enrolled at that institution. Students not enrolled in fall 2004 are broken down into those with and without a credential. Thus the full report includes analysis for seven groups of students.

**FIGURE 2: Educational Outcomes for 2003 ETRs Enrolled at a Research Intensive University in Fall 2004**



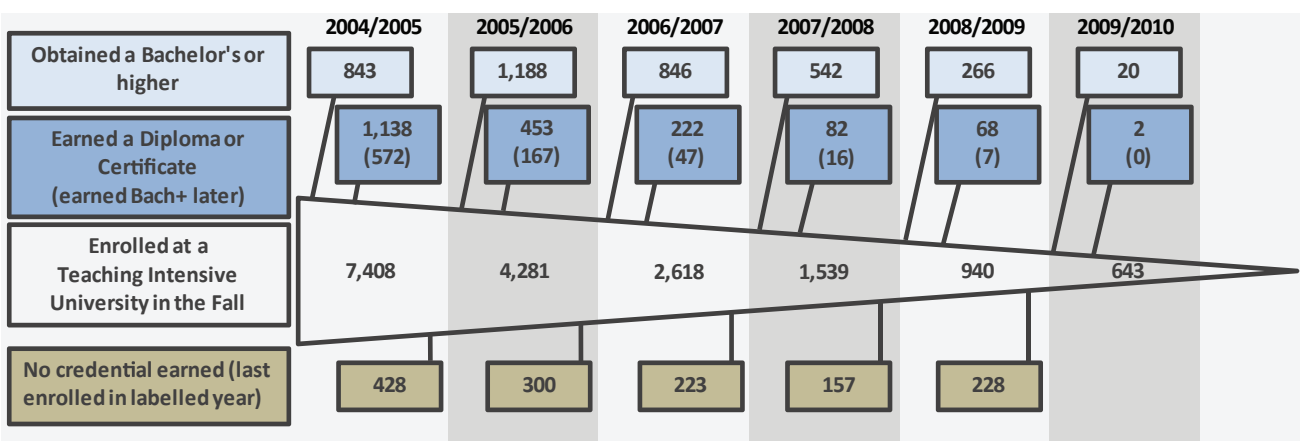
The top row shows the number of students who obtained a Bachelor's degree (or higher) in each year of the study period; the second row shows the number of students who obtained a diploma or certificate each year; the third row shows the number of students who were still enrolled at a research intensive university each fall; and the bottom row shows the number of students who left without a credential each year.

Note: Some departures from and returns to research intensive universities are not accounted for in this figure (e.g., leaving to enrol at a CDW institution; re-enrolling after earning a credential; stopping out temporarily). As a result, subtracting the number of students who earned credentials and the number of students who left without a credential from the number who enrolled in a given fall does not amount to the number of students who enrolled in the subsequent fall. This same note applies to some departures and returns to teaching intensive universities in [Figure 3](#) and to colleges and institutes in [Figure 4](#).

## Enrolled at a Teaching Intensive University in Fall 2004

In the fall of 2004, 7,408 (31.5%) of the ETR's enrolled at a teaching intensive university. A total of 931 (12.6%) of these students subsequently transferred to a research intensive university. Educational outcomes for these 7,408 students are depicted in [Figure 3](#) and [Table 1](#).

**FIGURE 3: Educational Outcomes of 2003 ETRs Enrolled at a Teaching Intensive University in Fall 2004**

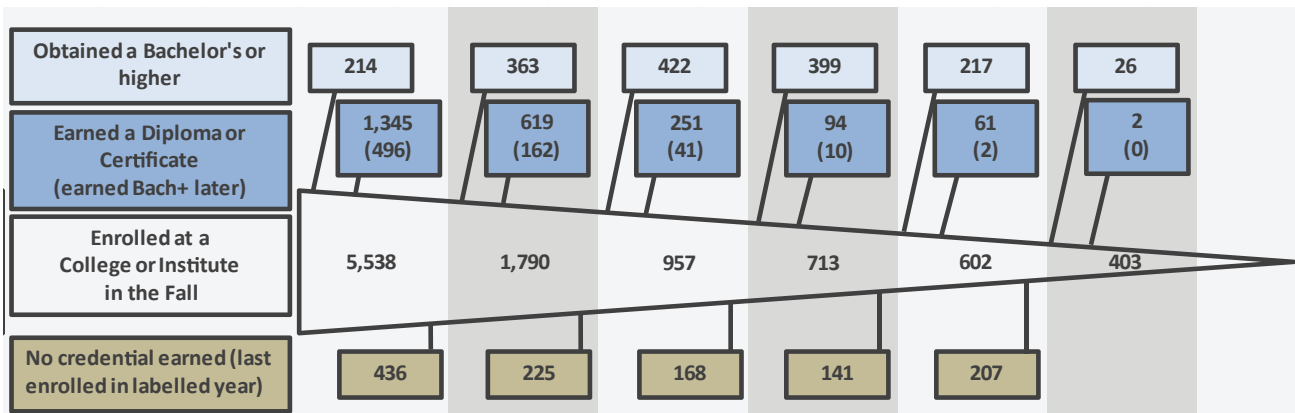


The top row shows the number of students who obtained a Bachelor's degree (or higher) in each year of the study period; the second row shows the number of students who obtained a diploma or certificate each year with the number who subsequently went on to earn a Bachelor's degree shown in parentheses; the third row shows the number of students who were still enrolled at a teaching intensive university each fall; and the bottom row shows the number of students who left without a credential each year.

## Enrolled at a College or Institute in Fall 2004

In the fall of 2004, 5,538 (23.6%) of the ETRs enrolled at a public college or institute. A total of 1,401(25.3%) of these students subsequently transferred to a research intensive university. Educational outcomes for these 5,538 students are depicted in [Figure 4](#) and [Table 1](#).

**FIGURE 4: Educational Outcomes of 2003 ETRs Enrolled at a College or Institute in Fall 2004**

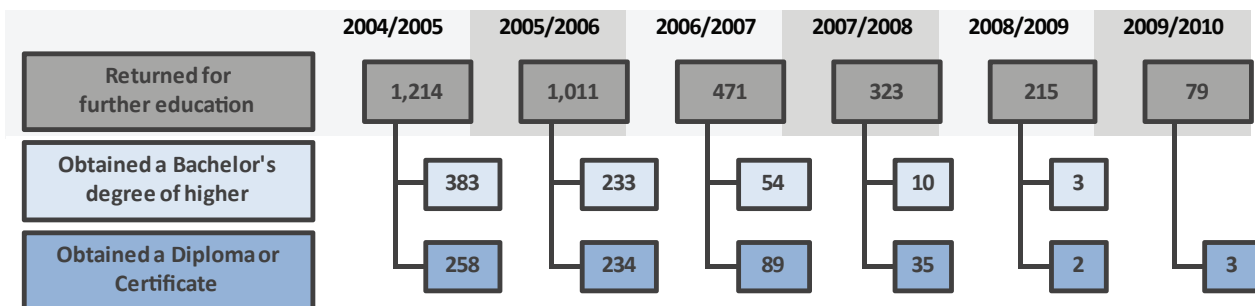


The top row shows the number of students who obtained a Bachelor's degree (or higher) in each year of the study period; the second row shows the number of students who obtained a diploma or certificate each year with the number who subsequently went on to earn a Bachelor's degree shown in parentheses; the third row shows the number of students who were still enrolled at a college or institute each fall; and the bottom row shows the number of students who left without a credential each year.

## Not Enrolled in the Fall of 2004

In the fall of 2004, 6,467(27.5%) of the ETRs did not enrol at a public post-secondary institution in BC. Among this group, 3,313 (51.2%) eventually returned for further studies in the public system (educational outcomes for these returning students are depicted in [Figure 5](#) and [Table 1](#)):

**FIGURE 5: Educational Outcomes for 2003 ETRs Not Enrolled in Fall 2004**



The top row shows the number of students who returned to the public post-secondary system each year; the second row shows the number of returning students who eventually obtained a Bachelor's degree or higher; and the third row shows the number of returning students who eventually obtained a diploma or certificate. Eighty-four additional students obtained credentials but are not depicted in this figure because the enrolment data do not indicate when they returned to the system.

## Key Findings

The key findings below are organized according to the four research questions on page 1 of this newsletter.

### **(a) How many transferred to research intensive universities?**

- By the fall of 2004, 4,093 (17.4%) of the 2003 ETRs had moved to a research intensive university, of which 2,147 (9.1%) were under the transfer basis of admission.
- A total of 6,273 (26.7%) of the ETRs had transferred to a research intensive university by fall 2009 under a transfer basis of admission.
- An additional 1,521 students (6.5%) earned credentials from research intensive universities after enrolling under other bases of admission.
- Thus one third of the original 2003 ETR cohort eventually enrolled in a research intensive university.

### **(b) How many remained at CDW institutions?**

- In the fall of 2004, 7,408 (31.5%) of the ETRs enrolled at a teaching intensive university. A total of 931 (12.6%) of these students subsequently transferred to a research intensive university.
- In the fall of 2004, 5,538 (23.6%) of the ETRs enrolled at a public college or institute. A total of 1,401 (25.3%) of these students subsequently transferred to a research intensive university.

### **(c) How many left the BC public post-secondary system?**

- 22.1% of the cohort had not earned a credential and were no longer enrolled in a public post-secondary institution by 2009/10. It is possible that they may have moved on to private post-secondary institutions or left the province to pursue further studies given that the data available are limited to BC public postsecondary education.

### **(d) How many and what sorts of credentials were earned?**

- The majority (72.6%) of the 2003 ETR cohort of 23,506 students had earned a post-secondary credential (certificates, diplomas and degrees) by the fall of 2009 (including those who obtained a credential in 2003/04) and another 5.3% were still pursuing post-secondary studies at a BC public institution in 2009/10.
- Of the 10,886 Bachelor's degrees or higher earned by the ETR cohort between 2004/05 and 2009/10, 55% were awarded by research intensive universities, 39% by teaching intensive universities, and 6% by colleges and institutes.
- In total, 25.2% of the ETRs obtained Bachelor's degrees or higher from research intensive universities and 18.2% from teaching intensive universities between 2004/05 and 2009/10.
- Between 2004/05 and 2009/10 the overall credential completion rate of the ETR cohort was 62% (i.e., not including the 10.8% of students who obtained credentials in 2003/04). Credential completion was highest among students who enrolled at a research intensive university in the fall of 2004 (84%), and lower among those enrolled at teaching intensive universities (76%) and colleges/institutes (72%). Credential completion was substantially lower (22%) among students from the ETR cohort who were not enrolled in the fall of 2004; however, 29% of these students had previously obtained a post-secondary credential.

## Conclusion

The current post-secondary system provides widespread opportunities for students to pursue a variety of credentials at different kinds of post-secondary institutions. Being able to track the movement of an eligible transfer student cohort over multiple years sheds new light on their program and institutional destinations. Over the period of the study, one third of the original 2003 cohort had moved to a research intensive university under transfer and other bases of admission. As well, about 55% of this cohort had enrolled at a teaching intensive university, college or institute in the fall of 2004 to continue their studies. A large number of the 2003 cohort (72.6%) did complete a credential at one of these institutions during the study period, while a further 5% were still enrolled. Most of these students completed bachelor's degrees or higher, with both research intensive and teaching intensive universities providing the majority of the degrees.

The current data and analyses leave open a number of questions about the impact of recent changes in BC's public post-secondary system on the pathways of post-secondary students. Are students now more likely to complete their studies at colleges, institutes and teaching intensive universities rather than transferring to research intensive universities? Are students not attending research intensive universities because of a lack of spaces for them at those institutions or for other reasons? Are more students transferring from colleges and institutes to teaching intensive universities? Are those students being granted transfer credit for prior course-work? Are research universities still the desired destination for top students? Does the current transfer system meet the needs of all mobile post-secondary students? Further research in the years ahead could help answer these questions.



Your guide through  
post-secondary education.

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