

BCCAT Policy 1C

BCCAT Policy Guidelines

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BC COUNCIL ON ADMISSIONS & TRANSFER
bccat.ca | bctransferguide.ca | info@bccat.ca
@bccat_org | @bctransferguide

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BC Council on Admissions and Transfer Policy Guidelines

Council Mandate

The BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) oversees the BC Transfer System. BCCAT provides an integral link between the BC post-secondary institutions, education ministries, and public and private education sectors. The Council's mandate is to facilitate admission, articulation, and transfer arrangements among BC Transfer System member institutions, as well as to conduct research on student and credit mobility. To this end, the Council engages in the following activities:

- encouraging institutions to develop policies and practices regarding the transferability of post-secondary credit;
- researching issues pertaining to capacity, demand, and student mobility;
- recommending policies and practices related to the admission processes for direct entry and transfer students;
- facilitating the development of credit transfer arrangements through oversight of articulation committees; and,
- managing online resources to assist students in their education planning.

Council Status

BCCAT is a government-funded, arm's-length advisory committee established by the Minister responsible for post-secondary education. As expressed solely in the *College and Institute Act* [RSBC 1996], the powers of the Minister include discretionary authority to do the following:

- establish articulation committees to advise the Minister on the equivalence of courses given at one institution or university as compared to courses given at another institution or university;
- require an institution to participate in the work of an articulation committee;
- establish committees consisting of members of boards, presidents and employees of institutions and other persons.

The Council is not a governing board and has no regulatory authority. Key to Council's success is its consultative and facilitative approach in recommending transfer policies and practices, assisting inter-institutional cooperation and articulation, and providing information and resources for students who plan to move between institutions and receive appropriate transfer credit for previously completed studies. In consultation with member institutions, the Council also develops and administers policy and procedures relating to membership in the BC Transfer System and use of Council services and resources. Council members strive to achieve the mandate of the Council by serving the overall best interests of the post-secondary system and do not formally represent the specific institution or constituency with which they are affiliated.

Policy Guidelines: Purpose

In keeping with Council's mandate and the [Principles and Guidelines for Transfer](#) endorsed by members of the BC Transfer System, BCCAT *Policy Guidelines* outline the processes Council follows in developing and revising policies relating to membership in the BC Transfer System and use of BCCAT services and resources.

Policy Guidelines: Limits

In relation to its oversight of the BC Transfer System, Council may also recommend general processes and practices concerning admissions, credit transfer, and articulation. However, Council recognizes that any decision to implement recommendations is the purview of autonomous institutions acting in accordance with their own regulatory authority and institutional governance processes. As illustrated below, Council recommendations may be set forth within policies (Example 1), position statements (Example 2), or other publications, such as procedure handbooks and research reports:

Example 1: [Listing of Transfer Agreements with Non-Member Institutions in the BC Transfer Guide](#) sets forth in policy Council's recommended criteria and processes to guide member institutions formally articulating transfer agreements with non-member institutions and seeking to have those agreements listed in the BC Transfer Guide. Although decisions on criteria and processes to establish transfer agreements with non-member institutions rests entirely with autonomous institutions, the policy identifies Council's expectations for publishing agreements with non-member institutions in the BC Transfer Guide.

Example 2: [Instructor Qualifications for Transferable Courses](#) sets forth in a position statement Council's expectations regarding instructor qualifications and accessibility of institutional policies on instructor qualifications within the BC Transfer System. Although determination of instructor qualification standards and policies rests entirely with autonomous institutions, the statement identifies general practice norms of BC Transfer System institutions engaging in articulation.

BCCAT *Policy Guidelines* do not apply to policies and procedures developed in relation to the roles and responsibilities of Council (which are the purview of the Minister responsible for post-secondary education), or to those developed in relation to the operations of the BCCAT administrative office (which are the purview of the Executive Director).

Council Policy: Definition

Drawing upon BCCAT's general [Principles and Guidelines for Transfer](#), Council policy sets forth specific principles, procedures, and criteria for membership in the BC Transfer System and use of BCCAT services and resources.

Policy is a set of principles and procedures indicating expected actions in an area of practice.

Principles articulate tenets for broad areas of practice and should be applicable for extended periods without revision.

Procedures are operational processes, steps, or responsibilities necessary to enact principles. Policy procedures must reflect BCCAT and BC Transfer System practices, and require regular review.

Examples of policy principles and procedures are available in the sample policy in Appendix C.

Policy Coordination

The Communications Coordinator provides a policy coordination function for the Council. Staff work with the Communications Coordinator in facilitating the development, review, and management of policies. The Communications Coordinator is responsible for the following:

- maintaining an inventory on the status of policy development and review;
- managing a repository of policies, guidelines, and supporting materials;
- confirming appropriate processes have been followed for the approval of new and revised policies; and,
- ensuring each policy is accessible and that there is only one official version.

Principles for Policy Development or Review

Council, its committees, and BCCAT staff will adhere to the following principles in developing new and revised policies relating to membership in the BC Transfer System and use of Council's services and resources:

1. Policies will be congruent with the mandate, principles, and goals of the Council.
2. Policy drafting will be informed by BCCAT staff, committee(s), or working groups most knowledgeable about the items addressed in the policy.
3. Policy development and review will include input from the BC Transfer System, as appropriate.
4. Policies will focus on principles and procedures.
5. Policies will be made readily available to the BC post-secondary system.
6. Policies will be relevant and subject to regular review.

Procedures for Policy Development or Review


Council, its committees, and BCCAT staff will adhere to the following procedures in developing new and revised policies relating to membership in the BC Transfer System and use of Council's services and resources:

1. Development of new or review of existing policies may be initiated by Council, its committees, or BCCAT staff.
2. Revisions to policy procedures that do not impact policy principles may be adopted on recommendation by Council committee or staff with the approval of the co-chairs. Changes will be recorded by the Communications Coordinator and communicated to Council, its relevant committees, and member institutions, as appropriate.
3. To guide the development or review of a proposed new or revised policy, the Executive Director, in consultation with the Directors, will assign responsibility to a BCCAT staff sponsor.
4. The BCCAT staff sponsor will provide the Communications Coordinator with timelines as well as documents necessary to policy coordination.
5. Each proposed new or substantially revised policy will normally be accompanied by a Policy Background document including information such as the history and context, issues raised, consultation processes, and a rationale.
6. The BCCAT staff sponsor will coordinate document drafting and, where appropriate, will arrange for relevant committees, groups, and individuals with expertise to provide input and review drafts.
7. The BCCAT staff sponsor will seek approval from the appropriate Council committee before providing a draft and supporting documentation to the Communications Coordinator for submission to Council.
8. All new or substantially revised policies must be approved by Council prior to implementation.
9. Once a new or substantially revised policy has been approved by Council, the Communications Coordinator will generate the final version of the policy including the date of Council approval, archive any out-of-date version of the policy, and ensure only the most recent official version of the policy is accessible.
10. BCCAT staff will normally review policies at least every six years to ensure relevance.

Policy Documents Templates and Numbering

The Policy Background Template sets forth content elements necessary to inform discussion on new policy or review of existing policy (Appendix A). The Policy Template sets forth the content elements of Council policies (Appendix B). A sample policy illustrating the content elements identified in the Policy Template is included as Appendix C. The Communications Coordinator will number policies in thematic groupings to facilitate policy management.

Appendix A: Policy Background Template

	Policy Number:	Policy Dates:
	Sponsor:	Development or Review Initiation:
	Council Committee:	Council Approval:

Policy Name

Policy Background

History

Provide a history of the development and / or revision of the policy to date.

Issues

If creating a new policy, describe the issues that have led to the need for a policy. If doing a revision of an existing policy, describe the issues prompting revision.


Rationale

Provide a rationale for the development of the new policy or the revisions of the existing policy.

Consultation

Describe the process that has been used to develop or revise the policy: research internal to the organization, meetings with individuals and groups, identification of best practices, Council committee input and approval, etc.

Appendix B: Policy Template

	Policy Number:	Policy Dates:
	Sponsor:	Development or Review Initiation:
	Council Committee:	Council Approval:

Policy Name

Context and Purpose

Policy responds to specific contexts and purposes prompting its creation and maintenance. Provide a concise explanation of the context and intended purpose of the policy.

Scope and Limits

Policy has a specific scope and limits within which it is applicable, in keeping with the authority of the organization promulgating it. Provide statements delineating the scope and limits of the policy.

Definitions

Policy clarity requires shared understanding of key terms that may otherwise be ambiguous. Provide concise definitions for key terms within the policy document.

Principles

Principles articulate tenets for broad areas of practice and should be applicable for extended periods. Principles are normally relational to Council's [Principles and Guidelines for Transfer](#). Provide statements on general and specific principles informing the policy.

Procedures

Procedures are specific steps—identifying practices, processes, and responsibilities— required to enact principles. Procedures must reflect structures and processes of BCCAT and the BC Transfer System. Provide a list of procedural steps necessary to implement the policy.

Process Documentation

Principles and procedures are supported by handbooks, guides, forms, and other practice-based documents, which outline operational processes. Provide a list of all relevant BCCAT documents.


Reference Documents

Policy is informed by documents setting forth regulatory, governance, or normative practices, such as is evident in legislation, contracts, and statements of position. Provide a list of any relevant material.

Related Policies

Policy is interrelated with other policies, which must be considered together to provide a full understanding. Provide a list of all relevant Council policies.

Appendix C: Sample Policy

	Policy Number: 3B	Policy Dates:
	Sponsor: John FitzGibbon, Director; M. Stainsby, Director	Development or Review Initiation: Fall 2017
	Council Committee: Transfer and Articulation (TAC)	Council Approval: June 4, 2015 & March 2, 2018

Listing of Transfer Agreements with Non-Members 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](#).

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.

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](#) and [block transfer agreements](#).
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. A checklist/guide to this process can be found in <http://www.bccat.ca/pubs/resources/how2articulate2018.pdf>
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](#).

Publications 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](#)

Reference Documents

[Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer](#)

[Principles and Guidelines for Transfer](#)

Related Policies

[Membership in the BC Transfer System](#)