
Associate Degrees Awarded in British Columbia

1993-94 to 2005-06



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Background

The Associate Degree is a two year academic credential available with an Arts or Science focus. The BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) initiated development of this provincial credential at the request of BC's public post-secondary institutions. The original curricular requirements, the goal of which were to ensure both sufficient depth and breadth in Arts or Science, were approved by the Minister responsible for post-secondary education in 1991. Following system consultation through BCCAT's Associate Degree Review Task Force, the curricular requirements were amended and approved by the Minister again in 2000. (See: <http://bctransferguide.ca/associate/requirements.cfm>.) The Task Force also investigated approaches to recommending the associate degree for block transfer into baccalaureate degree programs which resulted in associate degree transfer policies being adopted by universities and university colleges. (See: <http://bctransferguide.ca/associate/transfer.cfm>.)

In March 2003, BCCAT prepared a report detailing the number and type of associate degrees awarded by BC colleges, university colleges, and institutes for the period 1993/94 to 2001/02. The data for that report were provided by institutional Registrars upon request. This document includes the original data and also adds four years' worth of new data up to 2005/06. The source for the 2002/03 to 2005/06 data is the Central Data Warehouse (CDW) to which all colleges, university colleges, and institutes began submitting program level and other data by 2002.

Private institutions were given the right to apply to offer associate degrees in BC as part of the Degree Authorization Act passed in May 2002. To date, Columbia College was approved to grant both the Arts and the Science degree in September 2004 and Alexander College (formerly Vancouver Central College) was approved to grant the Associate of Arts degree in June 2006. Columbia College conferred its first two Associate of Arts degrees in 2005/06, and is therefore included in this report.

Total Degrees Awarded by Type

Table 1 indicates that a total of 10,027 associate degrees were awarded in BC in the past 13 years (1993/94 to 2005/06). Of these, the vast majority (87%) were Arts degrees. The total number of degrees conferred increased each year up until 2003/04 when 1883 degrees were awarded, after which the total number declined in each of the following two years, with 1117 such degrees awarded in 2005/06. This change over time is depicted in **Figure 1**.

Table 1

Associate Degrees Awarded, 1993/94 to 2005/06

Year	Arts	Science	Total
1993/94	149	27	176
1994/95	192	39	231
1995/96	285	46	331
1996/97	283	54	337
1997/98	342	71	413
1998/99	395	86	481
1999/00	467	108	575
2000/01	627	115	742
2001/02	803	137	940
2002/03	1187	155	1342
2003/04	1684	199	1883
2004/05	1310	149	1459
2005/06	989	128	1117
Total	8713	1314	10,027

Figure 1:
Associate Degrees Awarded
1993/94 to 2005/06

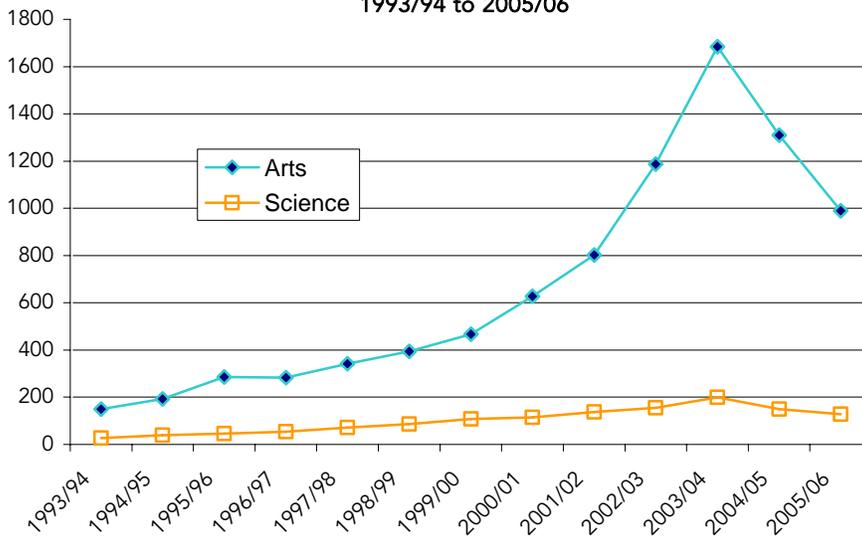


Figure 2 and **Figure 3** illustrate the year-over-year percent change in the number of Associate of Arts degrees and Associate of Science degrees respectively. For Associate of Arts degrees, the most significant annual increases occurred in 1995/96 (48.4%) and then again in 2002/03 (47.8%) and 2003/04 (41.9%). The annual number of Associate of Arts degree dropped by 22.2% in 2004/05 and by 24.5% in 2005/06, the only years this occurred with the exception of a small dip in 1996/97.

The most significant annual percent increase in Associate of Science degrees conferred occurred in 1994/95 (44.4%), followed by 1997/98 (31.5%) and 2003/04 (28.4%). Like Associate of Arts degrees, the number of these degrees also declined in 2004/05 (-25.1%), and in 2005/06 (-14.1%).

The significant drop in the number of Associate of Arts and Associate of Science credentials awarded in 2004/05 and 2005/06 is consistent with, though considerably greater than, the 4% reduction between Fall 2004 and Fall 2005 in the number of college, university college, and institute students who had sufficient credits (24) to transfer into a baccalaureate degree program. Fourteen of the twenty institutions in the BCCAT 2005 *Mobility of Transfer Students in BC*¹ research, conducted in collaboration with the Student Transitions Project, experienced a drop in these “eligible” transfer students in this interval. However, additional years of research are required to determine if there is a trend to a lower number of transfer students over time.

The drop in the number of Associate Degree graduates in the most recent two years of data may in part be explained by a change in the GPA required by students entering Simon Fraser University (SFU) on the basis of their Associate Degree. Historically, SFU has had a significant intake of Associate Degree graduates due to a longstanding admission policy which gave priority to Associate Degree holders with a minimum admission GPA of 2.0. In September 2004, the GPA threshold required for entry was increased to 2.5, and in Fall 2005 was pegged at 0.25 below the cut-off for regular transfer students, creating less of an incentive for transfer students with the intention of pursuing a bachelor’s degree to complete the more rigorous requirements of the Associate Degree first. Data also indicate that the top three sources of transfer students to SFU are Douglas, Kwantlen, and Capilano, the same institutions that award the greatest number of Associate of Arts degrees. All three of these institutions had significant declines in the number of Associate Degree graduates in 2004/05 and 2005/06.

The decline in the number of students completing the Associate Degree may also in part be attributed to the drop in university entry requirements in the Fall of 2004 and 2005. Data compiled by The University Presidents’ Council indicate that GPA requirements dropped significantly for transfer students entering second year Arts and Science at SFU and at UVic, making earlier transfer without completion of an Associate Degree much more possible. (The requirements to enter second year at UBC dropped only minimally for Arts in Fall 2005 and rose for Science in Fall 2005).²

¹ See percent change in eligible transfer students in Table 1 at http://www.bccat.bc.ca/pubs/rr_may06.pdf

² TUPC Table 2.1 can be downloaded from http://tupc.bc.ca/facts_figures/index.html

Figure 2:
Year over Year Change in Associate of Arts Degrees
1993/94 to 2005/06

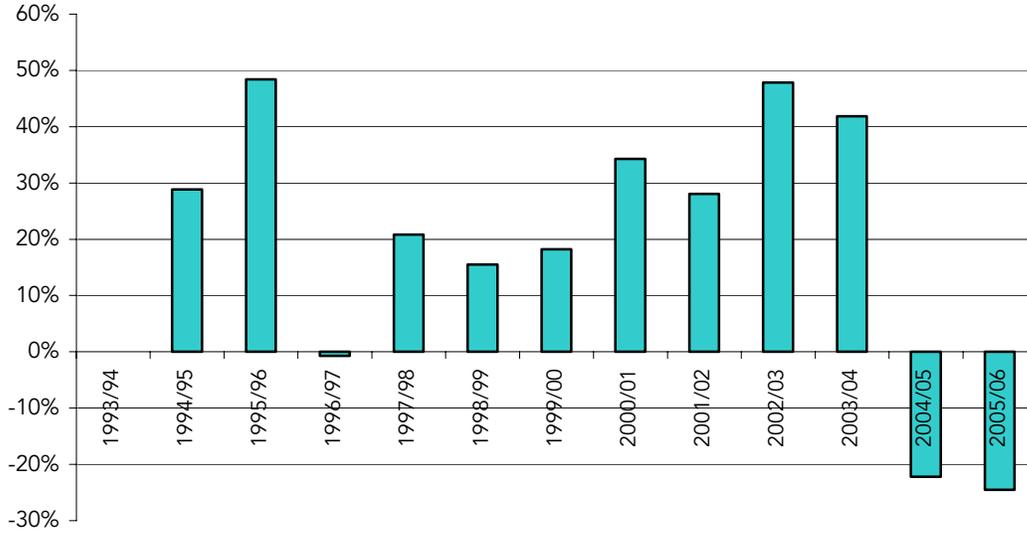
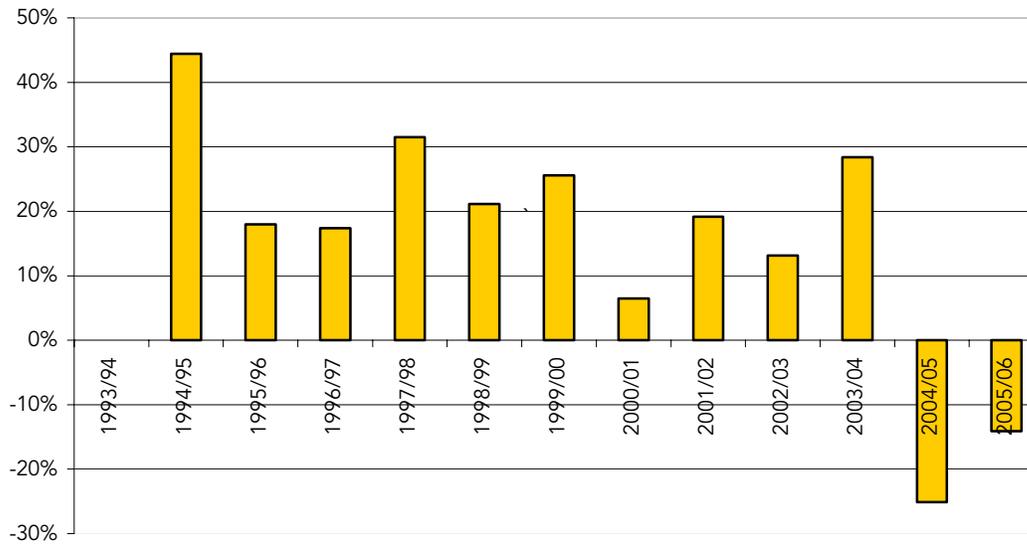


Figure 3:
Year over Year Change in Associate of Science Degrees
1993/94 to 2005/06



Degrees by Institution

Table 2 and **Table 3** show the total number of Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees respectively as conferred by each institution.

Table 2

Associate of Arts Degrees

Total by Institution - 1993/94 to 2005/06

Institution	Total Degrees
Camosun	998
Capilano	1294
CNC	161
Columbia*	2
COTR	150
Douglas	1885
IIG	84
Kwantlen	1431
Langara	1190
Malaspina	29
N. Lights	136
North Is.	163
Northwest	158
Okanagan	201
OLA/TRU-OL	40
Selkirk	110
UCC/TRU	193
UCFV	488
Total	8713

* Columbia figure is for 2005/06 only.

Table 3

Associate of Science Degrees

Total by Institution - 1993/94 to 2005/06

Institution	Total Degrees
Camosun	245
Capilano	215
CNC	44
COTR	31
Douglas	280
Kwantlen	93
Langara	128
Malaspina	10
N. Lights	3
North Is.	27
Northwest	26
Okanagan	65
OLA/TRU-OL	14
Selkirk	34
UCC/TRU	31
UCFV	68
Total	1314

Note: IIG does not offer the Assoc. of Science. Columbia has not yet awarded these degrees.

Figure 4 and **Figure 5** illustrate the number of Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees respectively that have been conferred by each institution over the 13 year period in descending order, by number of degrees. The figures show that Douglas College has conferred the largest number of both Arts (1885) and Science (280) credentials. The next largest number of Arts credentials was awarded by Kwantlen University College (1431) followed by Capilano College (1294). Langara College and Camosun College also conferred fairly large numbers of these Arts degrees (1190 and 998 respectively). Malaspina University-College conferred the smallest number of Associate of Arts degrees (29), followed by the 40 such credentials conferred by the Open Learning Agency/Thompson Rivers University-Open Learning (OLA/TRU-OL).

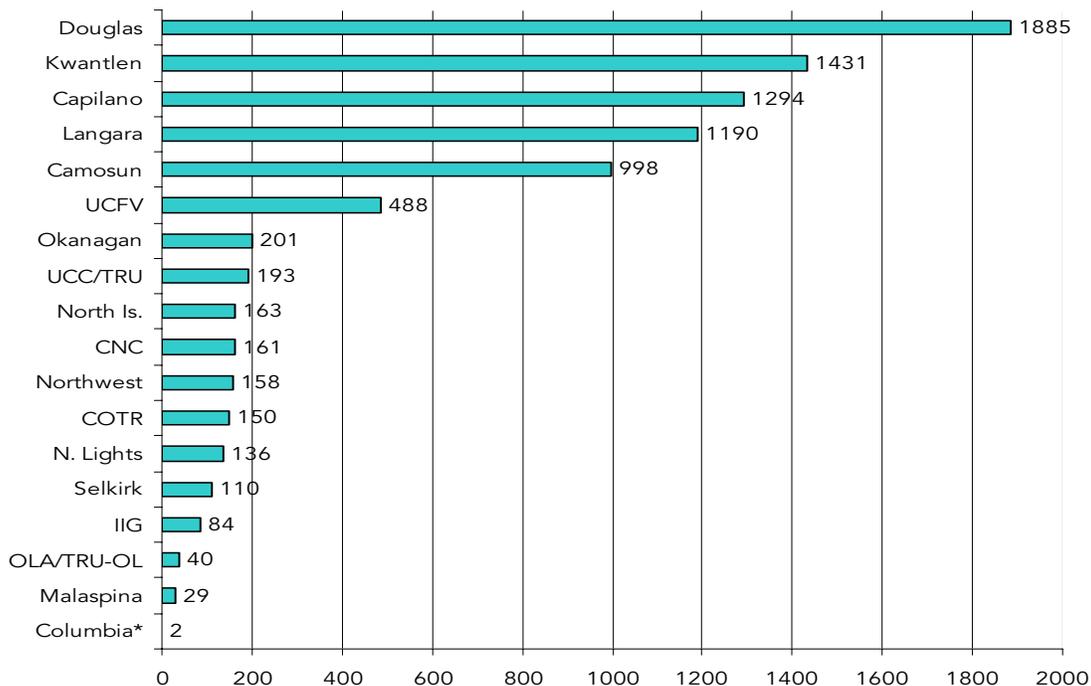
After Douglas, the next highest number of Associate of Science degrees was awarded by Camosun (245) followed by Capilano (215). Northern Lights College conferred the fewest Associate of Science degrees (3), followed by Malaspina (10) and OLA/TRU-OL (14).

With the exception of one lower mainland university college, it is not surprising that the top five awarders of both Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees are all large urban colleges. However, institutional size is not the only factor influencing the number of these degrees awarded. Note for example that Malaspina, a large Vancouver Island university college, awarded far fewer Associate degrees than a host of small regional colleges and one institute. As stated in a previous report on associate degrees, the range of factors that may influence students' uptake on the Associate degree include availability of academic courses to meet both breadth and depth requirements, the perceived value of the Associate Degree as an exit credential, promotion of the credential by the institution in literature and through advising, and local availability of other academic credentials (a function of both geography and spaces available).

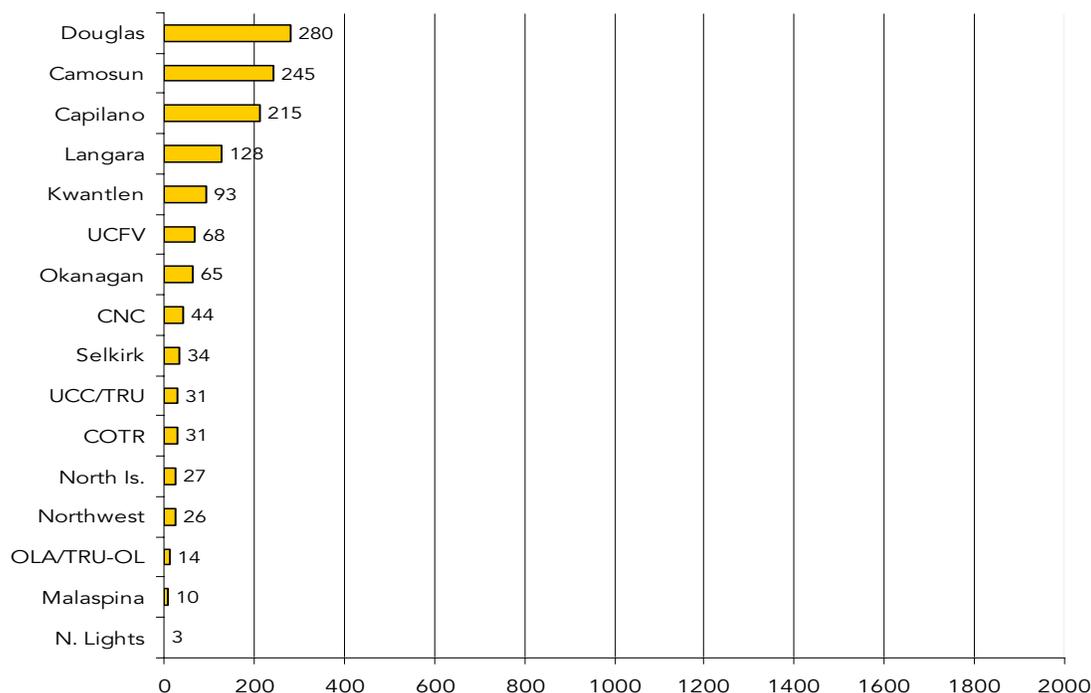
For a detailed look at the number of Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees awarded by institution each year see [Table 4](#) (Arts) & [Table 5](#) (Science).

For answers to frequently asked questions about the associate degree go to <http://bctransferguide.ca/associate/faq.cfm>.

**Figure 4:
Total Associate of Arts Degrees by Institution
1993/94 to 2005/06**



**Figure 5:
Total Associate of Science Degrees by Institution
1993/94 to 2005/06**



**Table 4
Associate of Arts Degrees Awarded by Year & Institution 1993/94 to 2005/06**

Institution	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	Inst. Total
Camosun	0	24	37	36	59	67	64	59	107	118	154	142	131	998
Capilano	26	38	50	39	56	50	71	109	123	174	244	178	136	1294
CNC	16	13	8	11	16	13	10	12	10	12	21	13	6	161
Columbia													2	2
COTR	12	8	6	16	17	6	2	8	8	18	20	16	13	150
Douglas	4	8	40	39	48	57	97	154	197	262	453	271	255	1885
IIG	0	0	0	3	5	13	19	8	14	7	5	10	0	84
Kwantlen	9	22	37	25	32	50	74	86	125	213	325	253	180	1431
Langara	20	18	26	23	23	29	31	56	88	198	286	244	148	1190
Malaspina	0	9	1	2	1	0	2	1	0	5	1	3	4	29
North Is.	13	4	13	13	6	11	11	18	24	13	15	11	11	163
N. Lights	7	3	7	10	6	5	11	17	14	16	19	18	3	136
Northwest	2	3	12	10	9	2	3	12	7	18	26	30	24	158
Okanagan*	21	23	14	23	24	28	9	9	11	11	4	21	3	201
OLA/TRU-OL**	0	1	4	4	5	1	3	5	3	3	4	4	3	40
Selkirk	5	4	6	7	4	3	1	2	11	19	14	17	17	110
UCC/TRU	4	5	8	5	16	23	24	14	15	29	18	17	15	193
UCFV	10	9	16	17	15	37	35	57	46	71	75	62	38	488
Total	149	192	285	283	342	395	467	627	803	1187	1684	1310	989	8713

Sources: Institutional Registrars for data up to & including 2001/02. Data for 2002/03 - 2005/06 from Central Data Warehouse (CDW).

Columbia College, a private institution in the BC Transfer System conferred its first Associate of Arts degrees in 2005/06.

*Okanagan refers to Okanagan University College up to 2004/05. 2005/06 figures are for Okanagan College.

** Data is for BCOU then OLA until 2004/05. 2005/06 data is for TRU-OL.

Table 5

Associate of Science Degrees Awarded by Year & Institution 1993/94 to 2005/06

Institution	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	0/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	Inst. Total
Camosun	0	9	10	14	24	22	21	12	29	33	30	27	14	245
Capilano	6	8	8	12	12	19	15	35	20	27	25	18	10	215
CNC	4	4	4	0	5	3	8	3	5	2	3	3	0	44
Columbia													0	0
COTR	3	2	1	1	1	5	2	3	1	4	4	1	3	31
Douglas	0	1	6	4	3	8	23	26	31	32	63	35	48	280
IIG*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kwantlen	2	1	2	2	4	6	7	8	9	10	23	13	6	93
Langara	1	4	2	1	1	4	4	4	17	22	17	33	18	128
Malaspina	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	3	0	2	10
North Is.	0	0	0	2	3	3	1	4	4	4	2	1	3	27
N. Lights	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
Northwest	2	0	3	3	0	1	0	1	2	2	6	1	5	26
Okanagan**	5	3	4	10	11	7	7	2	4	3	4	4	1	65
OLA/TRU-OL***	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	2	0	4	14
Selkirk	0	1	2	0	4	2	4	2	2	0	9	3	5	34
UCC/TRU	2	2	0	2	0	0	2	2	3	5	5	3	5	31
UCFV	1	4	3	3	3	3	11	9	8	9	3	7	4	68
Total	27	39	46	54	71	86	108	115	137	155	199	149	128	1314

Sources: Institutional Registrars for data up to & including 2001/02. Data for 2002/03 - 2005/06 from Central Data Warehouse (CDW).
 Columbia College, a private institution in the BC Transfer System offers the Associate of Science degree but conferred none in 2005/06.
 * IIG offers Associate of Arts degrees but not Associate of Science degrees.
 **Okanagan refers to Okanagan University College up to 2004/05. 2005/06 figures are for Okanagan College.
 ***Data is for BCOU then OLA until 2004/05. 2005/06 data is for TRU-OL.