

BRITISH COLUMBIA JURISDICTIONAL REPORT

**Submitted to the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
for the period April 1, 2006 – March 31, 2007**

(SUBMITTED BY BCCAT IN APRIL 2008)

This report is a summary of projects and activities completed by the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer during the period April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007. Its purpose is to inform the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) of the steps taken in British Columbia to improve student mobility and credit transfer in accordance with the principles stipulated in CMEC's Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada (October 9, 2002).

1. Overview

The British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) was established by the Provincial government in 1989. Its mandate is to facilitate admission, articulation and transfer arrangements among BC post-secondary institutions. Specifically, the Council (a) encourages institutions to develop policies and practices regarding the transferability of post-secondary credit courses so that credit granted at one institution can be applied toward credentials at other institutions, and (b) examines issues concerning capacity, demand, and student mobility, and recommends policies and practices related to the admission process for direct entry and transfer students. The Council has no legislative or regulatory authority and is funded annually by the Ministry responsible for post-secondary institutions.

Council members are selected from the education system and appointed by the Minister. They strive to achieve the mandate of the Council by serving the overall best interests of the system and do not formally represent any specific institution or constituency with which they are affiliated. The Council carries out its work with the assistance of a number of standing committees, whose members are drawn from the post-secondary system: Transfer and Articulation Committee; Admissions Committee; Institutional Contact Persons Committee; Research Committee; and Education Planner Advisory Committee. Advisory and task-specific groups are established as needed. More information about the comprehensive work undertaken by BCCAT can be obtained on its three web sites:

www.bccat.ca

www.bctransferguide.ca

www.educationplanner.ca

2. Communication/Adoption of Ministerial Principles

The BCCAT Principles and Guidelines for Transfer are consistent with the CMEC principles on credit transfer. They have been in effect in BC since 1975 (although modified over time) and have formed the basis for all credit transfer arrangements in the BC Transfer System. See bccat.ca/articulation/principles.cfm.

3. Projects & Activities Completed in 2006-07

Each year the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) prepares a detailed work plan and at the end of the fiscal year prepares an Annual Report that summarizes what was achieved. Each annual report is approximately 50 pages in length and includes reference to completed research reports, newsletters, and related publications. Annual reports and other BCCAT publications are available on the BCCAT website at bccat.ca/publications.

The major activities of 2006-07 are summarised below.

A. BCCAT Websites: Improvements & Harmonization

- *Launch of new BCCAT website* - BCCAT continued to make improvements to its family of web resources in 2006-07. In November 06, we launched a thoroughly redesigned organizational website at BCCAT.ca. The technologies used to develop the new site were built with the idea of further expansion in the future, to enable BCCAT's users to customize the site to their needs.
- *Personalization of BCTransferGuide.ca and EducationPlanner.ca* - MyEdPlanner, was launched as a new feature in EducationPlanner.ca in November. This facility allows users to create an account, save programs to their profile, and create personal education and financial plans to help map their postsecondary goals. MyEdPlanner was extended to BCTransferGuide.ca in February 07 to allow users, using the same account, to save their transfer searches and create their own customized BC Transfer Guide.
- *Harmonization of BCCAT Web Resources* -With the launch of the new BCCAT website, BCCAT also redesigned its other two websites, BCTransferGuide.ca and EducationPlanner.ca, to harmonize the look and feel of all three web resources. The goal of this project was to better enable users of these websites to recognize BCCAT as the service provider and to provide a useful bridge across the sites for students seeking further information or resources. BCCAT continues to see increases in user traffic to these sites.

B. Campus 2020: BCCAT Submission

BCCAT prepared a submission to *Campus 2020: Thinking Ahead*, a system-wide consultation initiated by the Ministry of Advanced Education. This paper envisioned an optimal post-secondary system in BC and outlined five critical areas, related closely to BCCAT's mandate, to be addressed in order to achieve that vision. . The submission was published in February 2007 as a Special Report and is available at www.bccat.ca/pubs/BCCAT2020.pdf.

C. Recalibrating the BC Transfer System: Consultation Report

In 2006-07, BCCAT completed a major phase of its investigations into the question of how best to expand transfer information and determine appropriate models to address the challenges presented by the increasing complexity of the post-secondary system. A system-wide consultation carried out in 2005-06 invited feedback on a discussion paper entitled *Recalibrating the BC Transfer System*, which explored this issue in detail. The final report is available on the web at bccat.ca/pubs/recalibration.pdf.

D. Student Engagement Research

This research was carried out in conjunction with the Student Engagement Survey of Arts & Science students undertaken by the University of British Columbia in 2005. This particular study focused on BC transfer students to assess whether there were discernable, significant, or meaningful differences between the levels of engagement of BC transfer students compared to direct entry students, and also compared to the overall survey population.

Findings revealed that the levels of academic engagement for transfer students were higher than for direct entry students, although levels of social engagement were not as high. The report and summary are available at bccat.ca/pubs/ubcengagement05.pdf and bccat.ca/pubs/rr_dec06.pdf respectively.

E. Private Degree-Granting Institutions: Policy Review

BCCAT carried out a major review of the policy document, *Policy and Processes under which a Private Degree-Granting Institution Articulates Approved Degree Programs within the BC Transfer System*, which was originally developed in 2004-05. As a result, the policy underwent substantial revisions. The revised document, now re-titled *Private Degree-Granting Institutions Policy*, is available online at bccat.ca/pubs/private.pdf.

F. Degree Recognition

In 2006-07, BCCAT continued to address issues pertaining to degree recognition and, in particular, concerns that graduates from BC institutions that have authority to grant baccalaureate degrees but are not members of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) were not being considered for entry to graduate or professional programs by some Ontario universities. BCCAT staff published a discussion paper on this topic, which is available online at bccat.ca/pubs/degreerecognition.pdf. Staff members shared drafts of the paper with a variety of people working in post-secondary education inside and outside BC, and spoke at a national symposium in Toronto. As a result of this symposium and in light of other discussions on this topic, the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) developed and adopted a formal position intended to address constructively this controversial topic.

G. Student Mobility Research: Integration with the Student Transitions Project (STP)

BCCAT was able to make good progress in 2006-07 in building a systematic approach to data collection and reporting on student mobility. The work on student mobility research occurred as part of the Admissions Committee Work Plan and in partnership with the Student Transitions Project (STP). The STP is a collaborative effort between the Ministries of Education and Advanced Education and BC public post-secondary institutions to link data about students in the province's public post-secondary and K-12 education systems in order to answer research questions on student transitions. The STP is managed by a Steering Committee with members from the two Ministries, post-secondary institutions, and BCCAT. In 2006-07, the projects in the Admissions Committee Work Plan with a focus on student mobility became part of the STP Work Plan.

One of the projects undertaken as part of the STP Work Plan represented the first study on the movement of K-12 graduates among public post-secondary institutions over a multi-year period. The project is designed to glean information on graduates, transitions, retention, drop outs, stop outs, and concurrent enrolments.

A second project was the continuation of the work done by BCCAT over the last two years of determining the number of potential transfer students in colleges, university colleges, and institutes in Fall 2006 and their subsequent enrolment in 2007 in a university with transfer as the basis of admission.

Several important gains were made this year in developing a systematic approach to mobility research, which is a key long range goal of BCCAT. First, institutional data for the BCCAT studies were collected for the first time through the regular STP submission process. Second, most post-secondary institutions have begun to validate Personal Education Numbers (PENs) through the Ministry of Education (MOE) for applicants, which is a necessary prerequisite to the ability to do expanded applicant flow studies in the future. Third, most postsecondary institutions have changed internal processes and are submitting both registrant and applicant data several times a year to MOE for PEN validation. These developments will go a long way to ensuring regular data analysis and reporting on student mobility so that institutions and government can rely on this information for planning purposes.

H. Articulation Committee Companion

A revised edition of the Articulation Committee Handbook, re-titled *The Articulation Committee Companion*, was produced in 2006-07, and the articulation section of the BCCAT website was completely overhauled, resulting in significantly improved access to resources and information for articulation committees.

I. Transfer Credit Workshop

At the request of the BC Associate Registrars and Managers Association (BCARMA), BCCAT hosted a day-long workshop on "Best Practice in Transfer Credit Administration." This workshop was well attended and very successful. It focused on aspects of transfer credit administration of vital interest to institutions but outside the purview of BCCAT, such as transfer of credits earned outside BC.

J. Participation in the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer (PCCAT)

Since its first meeting, in June 2006, BCCAT staff members have participated in the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer. This body was established to develop policies and practices which promote and facilitate inter-provincial admissions and transfer, and includes representatives from post-secondary institutions and provincial, territorial, and federal stakeholder groups. In 2006-07, the consortium was co-chaired by Frank Gelin (Executive Director & Co-Chair, BCCAT) and Lucille Walter (Chair, ACAT). See pccat.ca for details.

K. BC/Alberta Transfer System Protocol

BCCAT maintains a working relationship with the Alberta Council on Admissions & Transfer (ACAT) by sharing information or seeking assistance as appropriate. Following the establishment of an inter-provincial agreement between the governments of Alberta and BC, BCCAT collaborated with ACAT to develop and approve a Memorandum of Understanding titled the British Columbia/Alberta Transfer System Protocol. The MOU was developed by BCCAT staff and then refined based on consultation between the two agencies. The MOU was signed off by both Councils, and is available online at bccat.ca/pubs/BC-ABprotocol.pdf.

4. Plan of Projects & Activities for 2007-08:

Each year, BCCAT completes a comprehensive work plan that is tightly linked with what was achieved (or not) in the prior year and that reflects revised priorities to address emerging issues. In summary the plan for 2007-08 includes the following major projects and activities:

A. Continue with the implementation phase of “Recalibrating the BC Transfer System.”

This will include preparing a summary report on what has been accomplished to date and outlining plans to address such issues in 2007-08 as:

- exploring the general issue of university to university transfer including a measure of its magnitude, and if substantial, the willingness of our universities (particularly UBC and SFU) to formalize and record articulation agreements between themselves;
- investigating the inclusion of out-of-province institutions in the BC Transfer Guide;
- investigating the need to expand transfer agreements with BCIT; and
- exploring the circumstances under which to extend receiving institution designation to institutions who currently are designated only as sending institutions.

B. Coordinate articulation between public and private post-secondary institutions by:

- writing a handbook that will inform private degree-granting institutions of the norms and expectations of the BC Transfer System and providing the information they need to participate successfully in the articulation process;
- developing supporting documentation for BCCAT’s recently revised private degree-granting institutions policy;
- exploring options to record articulation agreements with non-degree granting private postsecondary institutions; and
- consulting regarding criteria and processes by which “program member” institutions in the BC Transfer Guide might become full “institutional” members.

C. Conduct the second phase of a project started in 2006 to examine entry and exit standards for ESL students in first year English courses.

- This project will bring together experts in ESL and university-level English to establish benchmarks for first year English.

D. Continue research on the mobility of students into and among post-secondary institutions by:

- preparing a report on the work of the Admissions Committee since its inception in 2003 that summarizes accomplishments to date;
- preparing a report on the project initiated in 2006-07 to measure the flow of Grade 12 graduates into and among BC post-secondary institutions over a multi-year period;

- conduct a second similar study which adds a year's worth of data and includes enhancements and refinements deemed important as a result of observations gleaned from the first study;
- continuing research on the mobility of potential and eligible transfer students and analyzing trends over a multi-year period utilizing prior research findings;
- assisting in the development and implementation of an expanded applicant study;
- publishing a report on the feasibility project initiated in 06-07 to measure student mobility between private and public post-secondary institutions and following up on recommendations to conduct further research in this area;
- conducting a survey of high school graduates across BC who do not proceed to a public postsecondary institution in the first year after graduation to determine their reasons for not attending and their future educational plans;
- conducting a two-phase study to gather and analyze demographic and other relevant information to determine potential post-secondary student demand over the next several years;
- conducting a study on the mobility of ABE students over a multi-year period into further education and their success in doing so; and
- analyzing available data in the Central Data Warehouse (CDW) to determine the mobility of students among CDW institutions based on the courses they have taken.

E. Many enhancements will be made to our websites including BCCAT, the Transfer Credit Evaluation System (TCES), the BC Transfer Guide, and Education Planner.

In addition, BCCAT will arrange for an independent and external review of the efficacy of Education Planner as a web-based educational planning resource to help identify future improvements.

F. Anticipate a potential role for BCCAT in support of those recommendations in the *Campus 2020 Plan* that relate to our mandate and role and that are approved by the Ministry for implementation.

G. Continue to provide a lead role in advancing transferability initiatives within Canada by:

- assisting other provinces as they establish their own mechanisms to achieve the 2002 Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada;
- encouraging initiatives that contribute to improved student mobility across Canada;
- interacting with other key jurisdictions to share valuable transfer information and experience.

[NOTE: The 2nd Annual Meeting of PCCAT was held in PEI in June 2007, where the draft Terms of Reference were finalized, and David Hinton, Registrar at the University of New Brunswick, was elected to join Frank Gelin (BCCAT Executive Director) as Co-Chair. BCCAT staff provided considerable administrative support for the organization of this meeting, and also headed up other administrative tasks connected with this group throughout the year.]