

PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR TRANSFER¹

Preamble

Transfer relationships in British Columbia are governed by statements which were adopted by the Council in 1993 after thorough consultation with the institutions of the B.C. Transfer System.

The principles and guidelines are based on those formulated by the British Columbia Post-Secondary Coordinating Committee and approved by university senate and college councils in 1976 and 1977.

PRINCIPLES

1. The primary purpose for transfer among colleges, universities and institutes is to increase student accessibility to post-secondary education by facilitating student mobility between institutions.
2. Each institution in the British Columbia post-secondary system will seek to enhance accessibility by planning for, and accepting as transfers, students who have completed a portion of their post-secondary studies at another institution in the system.
3. In any transfer arrangement, the academic integrity of the individual institutions and programs must be protected and preserved.
4. Awarding of transfer credit will be governed by the policies and regulations of the Senates and Boards of the institutions concerned.
5. Course or program transfer credit should be based on equivalency of academic achievement and of knowledge and skills acquired.
6. In determining the eligibility of transfer students for admission, receiving institutions will give primary consideration to a student's post-secondary academic record, provided the student has completed at least 30 credits of post-secondary studies.

¹ This document contains 1) the British Columbia Principles and Guidelines for Transfer and 2) the BCCAT Supplemental Principles and Guidelines for Flexible and Innovative Transfer (pages 4-6).

7. While the minimum conditions for admitting transfer students will be published, receiving institutions may limit admissions to programs based on availability of resources.
8. Admission of transfer students to some programs may be based upon criteria pertinent to the program, additional to academic performance. While academic prerequisites ensure eligibility, they do not guarantee admission to a particular program.
9. If transfer arrangements are to be effective, students must be provided with information, prior to beginning their programs at sending institutions, as to course equivalencies, program prerequisites, and levels of achievement on which admission to and awarding of transfer credit at receiving institutions will be based. Receiving institutions should not make changes in these arrangements without providing adequate notice and lead time to sending institutions.

GUIDELINES

1. Although formal transfer negotiations shall take place via the designated persons at each of the institutions, discussions concerning course content, adequacy of supporting facilities and related matters should generally occur first at the local (i.e., department to department or instructor to instructor) level.

The institutions seeking transfer credit should be prepared to provide the following information: course name, course number, length of instructional period, hours per week (lecture, lab, seminar) objective of course, and - although subject to change without notice - texts and required reading, initial proposals for method of instructing and evaluation, and the qualifications of instructors.

2. Negotiations between institutions regarding equivalency should recognize that effective learning can occur under a variety of arrangements and conditions. Various methods of demonstrating or achieving equivalency may be employed, particularly for career programs, for example, course equivalency, competency tests, challenge exams, program equivalency and bridging programs.
3. Program or discipline articulation committees consisting of representatives of institutions offering the respective programs meet routinely to share information and enhance cooperation among people providing instruction in given areas of study; to promote course equivalency where appropriate; and to aid in the process of achieving inter-institutional transfer credit. Curriculum issues arising from transfer agreements may be addressed to appropriate articulation committees.

4. An institution which denies the transfer of credit requested by another institution shall state the reasons for the refusal.
5. Once an agreement has been reached on the conditions of credit transfer of an individual course or program of studies, it shall not be abrogated without reference to the designated authorities in the institution affected.
6. An institution planning changes to its curriculum which will affect the requirements for credit transfer should inform the members of the relevant articulation committees as far in advance of implementation as possible so that other institutions can consider the desirability of alterations to their courses and programs. Until others have been notified of changes, institutions have an obligation to fulfill the commitments of current course outlines.
7. The minimum GPA for admission as a transfer student is normally 2.0 (C). Receiving institutions which require higher GPAs for programs to which access is limited and for which transfer quotas have been established will normally give preference to students who have completed as much of their programs of studies as is feasible at the sending institutions.

For one of a kind programs or programs with very limited enrolments (usually professional and career) for which sending institutions offer specific transfer programs, appropriate administrators from sending and receiving institutions should, as part of a transfer agreement, establish enrolment quotas for each of the participating institutions.

8. Transfer arrangements between colleges and universities are assumed to be based on “lower division” (i.e., first and second year) studies. It is recognized that the assignment of ‘year level’ to any individual course might vary at different institutions and, therefore, specific exceptions to this rule might occur under inter-institutional arrangements.
9. Transfer of credit includes the following categories:
 - (i) Specific equivalent of a given course (assigned credit);
 - (ii) Unassigned (elective) credit in a discipline or department;
 - (iii) Unassigned (elective) credit in a faculty or program;
 - (iv) Unassigned (elective) credit for courses not identifiable with course offerings but which are evaluated as being appropriate for academic credit on transfer.

SUPPLEMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR FLEXIBLE OR INNOVATIVE TRANSFER

Preamble

After extensive study and consultation, the B.C. Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) has concluded that transfer among institutions in B.C. has become and will continue to become more complex due to the increase in the number of degree granting institutions. To maximize student access, the B.C. post-secondary education system is committed to enabling students to transfer relevant credits among institutions. In order to sustain this commitment in the face of the increasing number of receiving institutions and complex patterns of student movement among institutions, the B.C. Council on Admissions and Transfer is working to encourage the development of more innovative, flexible and efficient transfer arrangements. In doing so it recognizes the existence of necessary constraints on credit transfer, but wishes to minimize inequities and difficulties faced by students and institutions.

Therefore, the Council has developed a set of “*Supplemental Principles and Guidelines for Flexible or Innovative Transfer*”. These new principles and guidelines have not been formalized, in the sense of being developed through a process of extensive consultation with the post-secondary system. Nevertheless, Council believes that they are potentially very useful, both generally, and for application to projects to develop alternate, flexible approaches to transfer.

General Principles for Flexible and Innovative Transfer

1. Students should be able to complete all lower division degree requirements at a college, provided that the college offers a reasonable variety of courses in their chosen discipline.
2. Neither transfer nor direct entry students should be advantaged or disadvantaged as a result of the transfer process.

General Guidelines for Flexible and Innovative Transfer

1. Variations in institutional programs that reflect differing missions, context or expertise should be respected and accommodated. Accommodation strategies may include receiving institutions setting more flexible course or credit requirements for transfer students than for direct entry students.
2. Sending and receiving institutions should provide a written rationale for the designation of courses as upper or lower division when requested.

3. Each receiving institution should normally grant the same number of credits for each transfer course as it grants its own equivalent course.
4. For the purpose of assessing equivalency, comparison of courses or programs may be based on a variety of factors, including the following (as many as are appropriate):
 - comparison of detailed content elements
 - comparison of outcomes
 - comparison of general subject matter
 - comparison of depth or breadth of coverage of subject matter, even if content details or approach are different
 - comparison of assessment
 - documented evidence of student success in subsequent courses
5. Block transfer, flexible transfer or transfer innovation agreements should not undermine the ability of students to continue to transfer on a course by course basis.
6. Students and institutions should be satisfied that transfer decisions are considered in a consistent manner. Postsecondary institutions should develop and maintain clearly stated policies and procedures for consideration of transfer of credit. Students should be able to obtain an institution's rationale for a refusal, and institutions should have clear procedures for students to appeal such decisions.²

Guidelines for Block Transfer Agreements

Definition of Block Transfer: *Block Transfer is the process whereby a block of credits is granted to students who have successfully completed a certificate, diploma or cluster of courses that is recognized as having an academic wholeness or integrity, and that can be related meaningfully to a degree program or other credential.*

1. Block Transfer agreements will normally involve certificate or diploma programs from the sending institutions, but may also involve smaller blocks or clusters of courses or credits.
2. Where the receiving institution does not grant the number of credits equivalent to the number the sending institution grants for the block, it should provide clear rationale for the number of credits granted.
3. While many block transfer agreements include a provision that the student is deemed to have fulfilled all lower level requirements, others may stipulate that any lower level requirements that have not been completed must still be taken.

² Revision June 2003, to comply with Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada, Winnipeg, Manitoba, October 9, 2002

4. Block transfer agreements should be clear, in that each student should know exactly what credit he/she will receive at the receiving institution.
5. A block transfer agreement does not guarantee admission to the receiving program or confer priority status, unless such provisions are specifically built into the agreement.
6. The standards or criteria for program admission for students transferring under a block transfer agreement should be clearly stated in the agreement.
7. Sending and receiving institutions should reach agreement on what constitutes replication of coursework before a block transfer agreement is finalized. Students should not have to repeat content of which they have already demonstrated substantial mastery.
8. If a block transfer agreement provides for two years of credit transfer, transfer students should be able to finish a four-year degree in a further two years or within a reasonable additional amount of time if deemed essential by the receiving institution.
9. Block transfer arrangements should involve signed formal agreements between a sending and receiving institution.
10. Block transfer arrangements should be well documented (including in the B.C. Transfer Guide) and accessible to students.
11. Depending on the agreement, block transfer agreements may include provision for course-by-course allocation of credit, or may obviate the need for such allocation.