

Private Degree-Granting Institutions Policy¹
Revision 1.0 March 2007

Preamble

An extensive consultation with institutions in the BC Transfer System confirmed support for the proposition that private institutions operating in BC with Minister's Consent for their degree program(s) should be eligible to request articulation within the System on a program by program basis. In March 2004, therefore, the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer passed the following resolution:

Motion: *On the basis of the recommendation of the TAC [Transfer & Articulation Committee], to accept for admission to the BC Transfer System a private [or out-of-province]² degree-granting institution provided that:*

- 1. the institution has undergone the DQAB quality assessment process with a positive outcome;*
- 2. the Minister has given consent to the institution to offer a degree program in BC;*
- 3. the approval to request articulation is only for those degree programs with Minister's Consent; and*
- 4. the institution agrees to accept and abide by the Principles and Guidelines for Transfer and other norms of the BC Transfer System.*

While a decision to articulate rests with the receiving institutions, any institution that declines to articulate should provide a sound rationale for its decision, and indicate to the sending institution what deficiencies or barriers must be addressed before it can re-apply.

The following document outlines the policies and processes under which this resolution is implemented. The Policy was revised and updated in March 2007 (Revision 1.0). Any and all provisions of this policy, whenever revised and approved by Council, apply to all Program Members, regardless of admission date.

This policy does not include or refer to institutions with exempt status. The BC Council on Admissions and Transfer is currently considering its position in regards to private or out-of-province institutions who are not members of the BC Transfer System and who receive exempt status through the DQAB process, as to what is required for such

¹ Previously titled: *Policy and Processes under which a Private Degree-Granting Institution Articulates Approved Degree Programs within the B. C. Transfer System*

² A separate policy will cover out-of-province institutions operating in BC with Minister's consent.

institutions to be approved to request articulation either as program or institutional members.

Provisions of the Policy

1. Ability to Articulate Degree Programs with Minister's Consent

The Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB) website records each time a new degree program at a private institution is approved. The website specifies whether the degree program has undergone the DQAB's quality assessment process with a recommendation for approval, and whether it has received Minister's Consent. According to Council's resolution noted above, both conditions must be met before an appropriate degree program, or the courses within that program, can be articulated within the BC Transfer System (see Item 4: Programs Appropriate for Articulation). A private institution with an appropriate program meeting these conditions can request that BCCAT list it as a "Program Member" of the BC Transfer System, approved to request formal articulation within the system.

2. Articulation Limited to Degree Programs with Consent

The approval to request articulation extends only to degree programs meeting the conditions stipulated in Item 1 above. It does not include other programs at the same institution, unless they also meet these conditions³. Thus, it is not the institution per se that is approved for formal articulation but selected degree program(s) delivered at the institutional location(s) indicated in the Minister's Consent. However, it is understood that the institution bears responsibility for the program(s) and for administrative support of articulation and transfer processes, therefore the term "Program Member" is used in this document, and in the BC Transfer Guide, to denote the institutional entity responsible for articulation within the BC Transfer System.

3. Special Conditions Associated with Consent

Any special conditions associated with Consent (such as a requirement to articulate courses successfully before final Consent is given, or requirements concerning learning resources, instructors, or physical plant) will be taken into account and may be reflected in the Letter of Assurance (see item 6 below).

4. Institutions/Programs Appropriate for Articulation

Programs at private institutions with unique or specific missions, those offered only at the graduate level, or those with no parallels within the BC Transfer System, may not be appropriate for articulation within the BC Transfer System. In such cases, BCCAT reserves the right not to proceed with the Program Member's admission to the BC Transfer System. BCCAT also reserves the right to refuse or delay

³ For example, a diploma program associated with the degree as an early exit point and included in the DQAB assessment process could be considered an "approved" program.

admission to an institution where, in the course of the admission process, concerns are raised such as those outlined in items 18 and 19 of this policy.

5. Formal Articulation and the BC Transfer Guide

“Formal articulation” refers to the process whereby one institution submits course or program outlines to another institution and requests transfer credit through BCCAT’s Transfer Credit Evaluation System. Resulting transfer credit agreements are recorded in the BC Transfer Guide. A variant of formal articulation involves the “Transfer Protocols,” discussed in item 13, below.

6. Provision of Assurances to BCCAT

Before the Program Member can be listed in the BC Transfer Guide and arrange formal articulation agreements, it must provide assurances to BCCAT that it will undertake to abide by the Principles and Guidelines for Transfer, as well as the other norms of the BC Transfer System by signing the *Letter of Assurance* provided at Appendix A. The Letter constitutes a contract between the new institution and BCCAT.

7. Sending and Receiving Institutions

Institutions are listed in the course-to-course section of the BC Transfer Guide as either “*sending institutions*” or “*receiving institutions*” depending on their primary function. Traditionally, with regard to transfer, colleges *send* their students to universities who *receive* students for degree completion. Currently, only university colleges as well as Thompson Rivers University and its Open Learning division are listed as both sending and receiving institutions.

8. Baccalaureate Degrees - Receiving Institutions

Where baccalaureate programs receive Minister’s Consent and subsequent approval to request articulation in the BC Transfer System, it is assumed that the primary function of the Program Member within the BC Transfer System will be, upon request, to assess the equivalency of courses offered by sending institutions and to grant (or deny) transfer credit for those courses. For this reason, they will be listed as receiving institutions/programs.

9. Associate Degrees - Sending Institutions

Since the BC Associate Degree ladders into baccalaureate arts and science degrees and can be equated to the first two years of many baccalaureate degrees, program members with provisional Minister’s Consent⁴ to confer a BC Associate Degree are listed as sending institutions. These members are initially eligible to seek formal articulation with BC Research Universities only (SFU, UBC, UBCO, UNBC & UVIC), until such time as the terms of their provisional Consent are fulfilled.

⁴ Each course in the BC Associate Degree must be articulated with one or more of the BC research universities. Therefore, until the institution can articulate 20 or more courses with one or more of these universities, consent is not finalized.

10. Reciprocity

Reciprocity of transfer credit may occur in practice but is not required. Therefore program members that assign transfer credit to courses from another institution can not assume, or represent, that their courses, in turn, will receive transfer credit at the other institution.

11. Block Transfer and Other Transfer Guides

Program Members are also approved to negotiate block transfer agreements with other institutions in the BC Transfer System. According to such an agreement, the Program Member can be listed as a sending or receiving institution in the Block Transfer section of the BC Transfer Guide. Program members may also apply, to the articulation committee that manages it, to participate in any relevant program-specific transfer guides.

12. Effective Date of Transfer Agreements

All transfer agreements are effective as of the date specified on the Transfer Credit Evaluation System. Transfer credit will not be published in the BC Transfer Guide with an effective date that is earlier than the date of Minister's Consent. Student requests for retroactive credit are handled on a case-by-case basis by institutions.

13. Transfer Protocols

If, in the opinion of a receiving institution, a sound business case does not exist for course-to-course articulation (that is, it is unlikely that enough students will transfer to justify the time and expense of articulation), that receiving institution may opt to provide assurances to a new or existing Program Member that its degree courses/programs will be recognised for transfer credit on a case-by-case basis.

If the Program Member wishes to formalise such an understanding, in order to provide appropriate assurance to its students, it can request that the institutions sign a "transfer protocol" (see BCCAT for suggested protocol templates). A transfer protocol states that transfer between the two institutions will occur, but will be managed on a case-by-case, student-request basis, such as currently happens between universities in BC. The signing of such a protocol does not prevent institutions from formally articulating specific courses where warranted. Transfer Protocols may be recorded, as requested and as appropriate, in the BC Transfer Guide.

14. Declining to Articulate Requires a Sound Rationale

While any decision to articulate rests with the receiving institution, any institution that declines to articulate with a new or existing Program Member (either through formal articulation or through a Transfer Protocol) should provide a sound rationale for its decision, and indicate to the Program Member what issues must be addressed before it can re-apply. If the Program Member perceives the decisions to be

unreasonable or unfair, and is unable to resolve the issues, it can request that BCCAT mediate the dispute.⁵

15. BCCAT Articulation Fees

While BCCAT does not currently charge any institution directly for the costs involved in being listed in the BC Transfer Guide, for mediation services, or for assistance with other aspects of participation in the BC Transfer System, it may in the future assess charges for private institutions on a cost-recovery basis.

16. Institutional Articulation Fees

In addition to possible charges from BCCAT, each institution will make its own determination as to whether and how much to charge private institutions for the costs associated with negotiating and maintaining articulation agreements.

17. Probationary Period

Approval to articulate is for a probationary period of three years from the date of admission. During that time, the Program Member must report annually to BCCAT on its articulation activities and on any matters relevant to its membership in the BC Transfer System. After three consecutive years of satisfactory performance, program membership is considered ongoing, subject to 18 and 19, below, and provided that BCCAT has had no substantive concerns during that time that were not addressed to the satisfaction of the Council.

18. Discretion of BCCAT to Suspend or Revoke Membership

If there is evidence that a Program Member:

- is not adhering to the Principles and Guidelines for Transfer;
- is not fulfilling its obligations as detailed in the Letter of Assurance;
- has demonstrably failed to meet the academic standards expected in the program/discipline;
- has plagiarised the work of other institutions;
- has made false or misleading claims about the transferability of its courses or programs or about the nature of its participation in the BC Transfer System;
- or
- has been the subject of legitimate concerns or complaints raised or investigations, undertaken by other institutions, professional accrediting bodies, the DQAB, PCTIA, government, police or border services, or any other relevant body inside or outside BC, that have not, in the opinion of the Council, been adequately addressed;

⁵ Terms or criteria established by professional accrediting bodies can impact on an institutions' ability to grant transfer credit and in such cases neither the institution nor BCCAT may be in a position to affect the decision. Mediation entails facilitating further discussions between the institutions with the goal of achieving a mutually acceptable outcome. Although BCCAT may suggest possible solutions, it has no authority to impose a binding resolution to the issues in dispute.

the Program Member may be given a notice of suspension by the Council. If the Program Member does not satisfactorily address the concerns or deficiencies within 60 days of dispatch of the notice, membership in the BC Transfer System may be suspended or revoked⁶. In cases where there is evidence of a clear violation of the Letter of Assurance membership may be revoked immediately by motion of Council. Every effort will be made to safeguard the educational interests of students enrolled in institutions whose membership is suspended or revoked.

19. Revocation of Minister's Consent

Suspension, revocation or amendment of Minister's Consent will result in the automatic review of the institution's program membership in the BC Transfer System.

20. Duty to inform

- a) BCCAT will inform the DQAB, the PCTIA and the Ministry of Advanced Education about any concerns or any disciplinary action involving the Program Member.
- b) The Program Member must inform BCCAT immediately of any disciplinary action or censure it incurs, or any investigation into its operations undertaken by government, DQAB, PCTIA, any professional accrediting organization, or any other relevant body inside or outside BC.

21. Requesting Reconsideration

The Program Member may request reconsideration of decisions or actions of BCCAT in writing to the Council. The Council may appoint a panel to review the case and recommend outcomes.

22. Revisions to this Policy

BCCAT may review, from time to time, the provisions of this policy, and make such changes as deemed necessary by the findings of such review.

⁶ Suspension may involve removal of the institution from the BC Transfer Guide until stipulated criteria have been met, or sanctions of other kinds at the discretion of the Council.

CONTRACT/LETTER OF ASSURANCE

Between _____

and the

BC Council on Admissions and Transfer

Institution Address: _____

Degree Program(s) to be listed in the BC Transfer Guide: _____

As participants in the BC Transfer System, we undertake to adhere to the norms of the system and to follow, to the best of our ability, best institutional practice in participating in all aspects of articulation and transfer within the system. We will:

- Familiarize ourselves with and disseminate within our institution BCCAT's *Private Degree-Granting Articulation Framework*.
- Comply with the BC Principles and Guidelines for Transfer.
- Familiarise ourselves with BCCAT's *Private Degree-Granting Institutions Policy*, and adhere to the requirements of this policy.
- Follow best practice, as described in BCCAT documents such as the *BC Transfer Guide*, the *How to Articulate Handbook* and the *Articulation Committee Companion*, with regard to the articulation of courses and programs.
- Implement, in a timely fashion, the internal administrative processes necessary to have all formally articulated courses listed and updated as required in the BC Transfer Guide.
- Name an Institutional Contact Person (ICP) for BCCAT. This person will initially be _____ (email address: _____) and he/she will fulfill the role of ICP as laid out in the Terms of Reference for the ICP Committee.
- Use the BCCAT web-based Transfer Credit Evaluation System for all formal articulation requests, and provide BCCAT with the name of a Transfer Credit

Contact (TCC) Person. This person will initially be _____
(email address: _____). This person can be the same as the ICP.

- Use a sufficiently detailed course outline form [such as the BCCAT Provincial Transfer Friendly Course Outline: <http://www.bccat.bc.ca/outline>] for all courses for which articulation is being requested.
- Provide, as requested, all other curricular and academic information that an articulating institution may deem necessary for the assessment of course or program equivalence.
- Be informed by existing course outlines as appropriate to the discipline, but will ensure that our course outlines do not contravene intellectual property laws; nor will we use the curricular or instructional materials of others without their written consent.
- Use the Transfer Credit Evaluation System to articulate only courses and programs clearly related to the degree program(s) with Minister's Consent.
- Transmit and receive student transcripts and award transfer credit, in a timely manner. [For transcript standards, BCCAT recommends the National Transcript Guide (<http://www.arucc.unb.ca/documents/transe.pdf>) endorsed by the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges Canada (ARUCC).] Where feasible, electronic data interchange of transcripts will be utilised.
- Send a representative to relevant articulation committees. This representative will be a full voting member of the committee. All details about articulation committees and the role of representatives can be found in the *Articulation Committee Companion*. (Please contact articulation@bccat.bc.ca for more information)
- Respect provincial norms regarding instructor qualifications for courses and programs to be articulated. BCCAT's position statement on *Instructor Qualifications for Transferable Courses* can be found at: <http://www.bccat.bc.ca/articulation/qualification.cfm>.
- Agree to assess and accept for transfer credit, on a case-by-case basis, *equivalent* courses completed at other institutions in the BC Transfer System where course-to-course articulation has not been established and recorded in the BC Transfer Guide for structural (e.g. articulation between two receiving institutions not normally recorded) or business (not enough students to justify articulation) reasons. This can be done through a *Transfer Protocol*.
- Provide clear and accurate information to current and prospective students about transfer agreements and will not, in any print, web-based, audio, video or other publications, or when recruiting or advising students, make false, overstated or misleading claims about the nature of our participation in the BC Transfer System and/or the benefits accruing to students.

- Engage in articulation and transfer processes as sincere members of the BC Transfer System, with the aim of facilitating appropriate student mobility and transfer, and not use this membership for purely promotional or marketing purposes.
- Alert BCCAT immediately to any situations that may impact on our ability to participate fully in the BC Transfer System.
- Inform BCCAT of any investigation of our operations undertaken by government, DQAB, PCTIA, any professional accrediting organization, or any other relevant body inside or outside BC, and inform BCCAT of the outcomes of any such investigation.

Signed on this _____ day of _____ in the year of _____ on behalf the
Institution by: _____
Please print name: _____

Copies: 1: Registrar
 2: Transfer & Technology Coordinator, BCCAT