

BC Jurisdictional Report

Submitted to the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC)
Prepared by the BC Council on Admissions (BCCAT), March 2010

This report is a summary of projects and activities completed by the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) during the period from April 1, 2009, to March 31, 2010. The purpose of this report 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 (2009).

Overview

The British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer was established by the provincial government in 1989. Its mandate is to facilitate admission, articulation, and transfer arrangements among BC postsecondary institutions. Specifically, the Council (a) encourages institutions to develop policies and practices regarding the transferability of postsecondary 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 admissions process for direct-entry and transfer students. The Council has no legislative or regulatory authority and is funded annually by the ministry responsible for postsecondary institutions.

Council members are selected from the education system and appointed by the minister. They strive to achieve the Council's mandate by serving the overall best interests of the education 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 postsecondary system: the Transfer and Articulation Committee, the Admissions Committee, the Institutional Contact Persons Committee, the Research Committee, and the 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: bccat.ca, bctransferguide.ca, and educationplanner.ca. (For information on the roles and responsibilities of the Council, see bccat.ca/pubs/activities.pdf.)

Communication and Adoption of Ministerial Principles

BCCAT's principles and guidelines for transfer are consistent with the CMEC principles on credit transfer. BCCAT's principles have been in effect in BC since 1975 (although modified over time) and have formed the basis of all credit-transfer arrangements in the BC Transfer System. They are available on-line at bccat.ca/articulation/principles.cfm.

Key Projects and Activities Completed in 2009-10

Each year, 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 includes reference to completed research reports, newsletters, and related publications.

The following is a brief outline of key projects and activities undertaken by the Council in 2009-10. This information will be presented in detail in the 2009-10 Annual Report, which is due for publication in April 2010 and will be posted to the BCCAT website at that time.¹

1) Joint Annual Meeting (JAM)

This year, instead of holding two separate annual meetings for Articulation Chairs and System Liaison Persons (SLPs) and the Institutional Contact Persons (ICPs), we decided to bring these two groups together for a single Joint Annual Meeting (JAM) on November 6, 2009. The meeting was well-attended, and presentations included:

- Chairing: An Olympic Event
- Building Commitment to Articulation: The Flexible Pre-Major
- Student Mobility: Who Goes Where?

The new format proved to be very successful as participants were able to share and learn about roles and perspectives in the wider context of the BC Transfer System. For further information regarding this event, go to bccat.ca/jam.

2) Degree Partnership Symposium

Following the success of the first symposium, hosted by BCCAT in 2007, we agreed to host this second event to encourage dialogue to identify best practices and pitfalls in developing and implementing degree partnerships in the BC post-secondary system. Degree partnerships are defined as arrangements that provide a guarantee to students who maintain adequate grades in a post-secondary program of continuation of degree studies at another institution. This "guarantee" that space will be available for degree completion at another institution separates degree partnerships from other models of transfer between institutions.

Senior administrators and faculty from across BC's post-secondary system attended the Symposium to learn about the mechanics of partnership agreements in a variety of program areas, challenges to anticipate when developing such agreements, benefits to students, lessons learned by colleagues, and more. See bccat.bc.ca/degree/ for details.

3) Student Mobility Research: Next Steps (Revisiting the Model)

Significant progress has been made in recent years in understanding the mobility of both traditional "transfer" students and the broader student population. The Council's work on student mobility research is conducted in close partnership with the Student Transitions Project (STP), a collaborative effort between the Ministries of Education (MEd) and Advanced Education & Labour Market Development (ALMD) and BC public post-secondary institutions to link data about students in the K-12 and post-secondary systems to answer questions on student transitions.

¹ Annual reports and other BCCAT publications are available on the BCCAT website at bccat.ca/publications. For a comprehensive review of the projects and activities carried out last year, see the 2008-09 Annual Report, at bccat.ca/pubs/ar08-09.pdf.

Recent STP research (see bccat.ca/pubs/rr_mobility09.pdf and other reports at aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions) indicates that, while significant numbers of students still take the traditional transfer route to research universities in BC, the majority of student mobility in the BC post-secondary system is among institutions other than research universities. In light of the extent of this broader student movement and the considerable changes that have occurred in the BC post-secondary system regarding institutional designations and mandates, the Council hosted a “visioning session” in Fall 2009 to revisit the research framework and definitions used for transfer students with a view to broadening the research to include the movement of all BC post-secondary students and the assessment of portability of credit and success of those students.

Following the session, BCCAT staff prepared a paper and engaged a broader audience in the discussion about the evolving nature of the transfer system and the need to alter how we conceive of and measure movement and student success within that system. The paper will be finalized after presenting it to Council in March 2010.

4) Student Success: Profile Reports

This year, BCCAT published five reports profiling students who transferred to BC universities in the period 2003-04 to 2007-08. BCCAT contracted with the Institutional Research offices at SFU, TRU, UBC, UNBC, and UVic to carry out these studies (which are published every five years). These reports provide detailed demographic and performance information about students admitted as “transfer students”, and include some comparisons with findings from the previous five-year period.

The data indicate the number of transfer students, where they transferred from, number of credits transferred, programs entered, and performance measures after transfer. Academic performance of transfer students is compared to that of students entering directly from high school. A newsletter summarizing the findings of these five reports is due for publication in spring 2010.

The five profile reports are available at:

- bccat.ca/pubs/SFUProfile0708.pdf
- bccat.ca/pubs/TRUProfile0708.pdf
- bccat.ca/pubs/UBCProfile0708.pdf
- bccat.ca/pubs/UNBCProfile0708.pdf
- bccat.ca/pubs/UVICProfile0708.pdf

5) Other Publications and Resources:

- ***Research Results: How Much Academic Instruction Occurs Outside Research Universities in BC?***
 - Produced: by Bob Cowin, December 2009
 - bccat.ca/pubs/rr_academic.pdf
- ***Research Results: A Fifteen Year Portrayal of BC Young Adults***
 - Produced: by Lesley Andres, December 2009
 - bccat.ca/pubs/rr_dec09.pdf

- **Inter-Provincial Post-Secondary Student Mobility**
 - Produced: by Jill Lawrance, November 2009
 - bccat.ca/pubs/interprovincial.pdf

- **Engage - Fall 2009**
 - Produced: by BCCAT Staff, November 2009
 - bccat.ca/pubs/engagefall09.pdf

- **Special Report: Credit Transfer: Models and Systems in BC, North America and Beyond**
 - Produced: by Finola Finlay, Associate Director, BCCAT, October 2009
 - bccat.ca/pubs/sr_transfermodels.pdf

- **The Articulation Committee Companion: 2009 Edition**
 - Produced: by BCCAT, August 2009
 - bccat.ca/pubs/companion.pdf

6) Communications and Websites

The development and improvement of BCCAT web resources is an ongoing process. This year, a number of enhancements were made to improve the efficiency and usability of BCCAT websites.

These were the main priorities for 2009-10:

- 1) Address the recommendations from the Education Planner External Review (see bccat.ca/pubs/EPreview.pdf) and from the Project Team
- 2) Refresh the designs (look and feel) of the three BCCAT websites: bccat.ca, educationplanner.ca, and bctransferguide.ca.
- 3) Integrate Industry Training Authority (ITA) trades and apprenticeship information into Education Planner
- 4) Implement a one-year time limit for articulation requests on the Transfer Credit Evaluation System (TCES) to improve the processes and efficiency of articulation.

Meanwhile, BCCAT continued to work to increase awareness of BCCAT resources to assist and encourage students with their postsecondary planning. We ran a year-long bus and SkyTrain ad campaign, and are in the process of running a similar campaign through the Vancouver 2010 Olympic period. The ads feature EducationPlanner.ca and BCTransfGuide.ca as key planning tools for students. The ads are displayed on buses in every region of BC and on the SkyTrain and Canada Line systems, and posted at selected stations throughout the Lower Mainland.

In addition, we also undertook a number of other advertising initiatives, participated at career and education fairs, and delivered presentations and demonstrations to assist students, counselors, and career practitioners in the use of BCCAT web resources.

7) System Collaboration

a) *Activities within BC*

BCCAT interacts with a number of organizations and committees serving the BC postsecondary system on joint projects, in consultation or in an advisory capacity on an “as needed” basis. BCCAT also consults with ministry staff and keeps them informed of Council activities and projects, while keeping abreast of developments within government that intersect and impact upon its work.

b) *National/Inter-provincial Activities*

BCCAT also participates in the broader transfer context, playing a leadership role in facilitating the improvement of student-friendly policies and practices to strengthen and support inter-provincial transfer. Here are three examples:

- **Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer (PCCAT)**

BCCAT staff members attended and presented at the 2009 meeting of the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT) held in Fredericton, New Brunswick in June. (See pccat.ca for details). The 2010 PCCAT meeting will be hosted by BCCAT in Vancouver (June 23-25, 2010).

In June 2008, PCCAT formed a research subcommittee to develop and oversee a research agenda. The subcommittee includes members from BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. BCCAT provides secretariat support for and coordinates the project and also chairs the sub-committee, whose first research project is to develop pan-Canadian transfer student profile reports. The project will involve the analysis of institutional records at four or five Canadian universities over a multi-year period to determine the number of students enrolled who had previously completed credits from another public post-secondary institution in another province or territory and how these students performed. The plan is to complete an individual profile report at each university plus a summary report collating the results of the individual reports.

- **BC-Alberta Transfer Policies**

The Council has finalized a policy, following extensive consultation with system stakeholders, which allows for the inclusion of Alberta post-secondary institutions in the BC Transfer System. (See bccat.ca/pubs/albertapolicy.pdf.) The policy states that only those Alberta institutions that can provide strong evidence of existing transfer activity and student traffic involving BC will be considered for admission. Meanwhile, the Alberta Council on Admissions & Transfer (ACAT) has approved a similar policy which is available at acat.gov.ab.ca/pdfs/BCInstitutionMembApplPolicyandProcess.pdf.

These policies build upon the transfer relationship established between the two provinces in the *BC/Alberta Transfer System Protocol* (bccat.ca/pubs/BC-ABprotocol.pdf) and are the result of ongoing cooperation between the two provinces to improve student transfer and mobility.

- **Tri-Council Collaboration**

In 2009, staff from the admissions and transfer Councils of BC, Alberta, and Saskatchewan (BCCAT, ACAT, and SaskCAT) met on two occasions to share information, discuss items of mutual interest, and examine where the Councils might collaborate to study or improve articulation, transfer, and student mobility within and among the three provinces.

This group has agreed to continue to meet to discuss priorities and has developed a work plan based on these priorities. Here are three examples of the projects included in the work plan:

- implementing the new BC and Alberta policies for inclusion of each other post-secondary institutions in their respective transfer systems,
- exploring the feasibility of developing a Transfer Protocol between ACAT and SaskCAT similar to or building upon the one already in place between ACAT and BCCAT, and
- conducting an environmental scan to determine the feasibility of each province developing a repository of inter-provincial transfer agreements.

NOTE: The recent decision by the Government of Saskatchewan to dissolve SaskCAT and Campus Saskatchewan raises questions regarding the future direction of some of these projects.

BCCAT will continue to play a key role on the national scene by promoting the importance of achieving a pan-Canadian system of student mobility and transfer. Our work will focus on providing advice and support to Canadian provinces who wish to develop and implement their own transfer systems and to encourage support for such activities at the ministerial level.

Plan of Projects and Activities for 2010-11

Each year, BCCAT completes a comprehensive work plan comprising projects and activities arising from the prior year and reflecting revised priorities to address emerging issues. The work plan for 2010-11 is currently in progress and will be presented to Council for consideration at the May 2010 meeting.