

Policy Number: 3A2 (07/06/12)	Policy Dates
Sponsor: John FitzGibbon	Development or Review Initiation: March 2012
Council Committee: Transfer and Articulation (TAC) May 18, 2012 & Sept. 28, 2012	Council Approval: June 7, 2012 Additional revisions approved, Oct. 5, 2012

MEMBERSHIP OF PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS IN THE BC TRANSFER SYSTEM

CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

This policy provides the conditions under which private institutions offering two-year associate or four-year baccalaureate degrees with ministerial consent may participate in the BC Transfer System. The policy outlines BCCAT’s expectations on these institutions for their membership in the BC Transfer System, which is a pre-condition for their participation in the BC Transfer Guide website.

SCOPE AND LIMITS

This policy applies to private institutions offering degree programs with ministerial consent under the Degree Authorization Act. Private institutions and / or their programs that have not successfully undergone an approved institutional quality assurance process as determined by the Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB) and / or who have not received and maintained ministerial consent to offer degree program(s) are not eligible for membership in the BC Transfer System. This policy does not alter the conditions of membership for private institutional members of the BC Transfer System whose membership pre-dates the *Degree Authorization Act* and the establishment of the Degree Quality Assessment Board.

DEFINITIONS

Associate Degree: The Associate of Arts and Associate of Science Degrees are provincial credentials offered by many institutions in BC.

BCCAT: The BC Council on Admissions and Transfer oversees the BC Transfer System. Members of the Council are appointed by the Minister and are selected from across the BC post-secondary system to serve the overall best interests of the system. The Council is supported by a small professional staff.

BC Transfer Guide: website service hosted by BCCAT to help post-secondary students discover their transfer options, and institutions to support students in this process. The site includes formal course-to-course, block transfer, advanced placement, and international baccalaureate agreements along with program specific transfer arrangements.

Block Transfer: occurs when a group of courses, often in the form of a certificate, diploma, or associate degree, is recognized as a whole for a predetermined amount of transfer credit.

Degree Authorization Act: in 2002, the Government of British Columbia passed the *Degree Authorization Act* that enabled private universities to grant BC degrees. The act also expanded degree-granting capacity for colleges (applied baccalaureates) and university-colleges and institutes (applied masters).

Degree Programs: associate degree and baccalaureate degree programs, which are regulated provincially, approved by DQAB, and subject to review.

DQAB: Degree Quality Assessment Board is a provincial Board appointed by the Minister of Advanced Education for British Columbia. DQAB reviews proposed degree programs at public and private institutions in BC and makes recommendations to the Minister. DQAB can conduct both institutional and program reviews.

Education Planner: website service offered by BCCAT to help prospective and current post-secondary students explore their education options.

Formal Articulation: 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.

Institutional Contact Person (ICP)/Transfer Credit Contact (TCC): links between BCCAT and BC Transfer System member institutions. Each institution has at least one staff member serving in these roles and there are often two or more. One person may perform both the ICP and TCC roles, particularly at small institutions.

Letter of Assurance: the formal contract between a new member institution and BCCAT, stating that they agree to uphold the *Principles and Guidelines for Transfer* and the norms and standards of the BC Transfer System.

PCTIA: The Private Career Training Institutions Agency was created in 2004 and sets basic education standards for registered private career training institutions in British Columbia and establishes standards of quality for accredited institutions. Note: PCTIA was dissolved in 2014. The BC Ministry of Advanced Education's "Private Training Institutions Branch" is now the body overseeing these institutions. (See www.privatetraininginstitutions.gov.bc.ca)

TCES: Transfer Credit Evaluation System, the online system used to send and receive formal articulation requests between institutions.

Transfer Credit: the granting of credit by one institution for courses or programs successfully completed at another institution.

Triangulation: the assumption of equivalency for transfer purposes between two courses based on both courses being individually articulated for transfer credit with another specific course at a given institution.

PRINCIPLES

BC Transfer System membership carries responsibilities. Private institutions in the BC Transfer System must undertake to abide by the commonly-accepted standards of the system and to meet the expectations of BCCAT as detailed in this policy, in the Letter of Assurance, and in the *Principles and Guidelines for Transfer*. Taken together, these three documents describe the norms, standards, and expectations for members of the BC Transfer System.

While the establishment of a transfer agreement between institutional members of the BC Transfer System is voluntary for both partners, all member institutions have endorsed the *Principles and Guidelines for Transfer* (bccat.ca/system/principles) including the principle of equitable treatment of students. BCCAT also recognizes that transfer agreements rest on a foundation of mutual trust and quality assurance. Each agreement listed in the BC Transfer Guide constitutes a guarantee for students. When listings are current, reliable and respected by both partners, the system is seen as credible. Mutual respect for and accountability to all members of the BC Transfer System ensures that the academic integrity of courses and programs is protected and preserved. It is the institution's responsibility to ensure that there are established policies, procedures and resources supportive of the Transfer System.

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

PROCEDURES

Criteria for Assessing Applications from Prospective Private Institutions

The following criteria will be used by Council to assess applications from private institutions for inclusion in the BC Transfer System:

- 1) BCCAT will consider applications from all private institutions in BC that have been authorized by the Minister of Advanced Education (i.e. given "ministerial consent") to offer a degree program and are in compliance with Degree Quality Assessment Board expectations. The quality assessment review process must have been completed and ministerial consent been received before an appropriate degree program, and the courses and / or curriculum within that program, can be articulated within the BC Transfer System. A private institution with an appropriate program meeting these conditions can request that BCCAT list the institution as a member of the BC Transfer System, approved to request formal articulation within the system.
- 2) Programs at institutions with unique or specific missions, programs offered only at the graduate level, or programs 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 institution's listing in the BC Transfer Guide. However, eligibility for membership in the BC Transfer System may still be considered. BCCAT also reserves the right to refuse or delay membership to an institution where, in the course of the application process, concerns are raised such as those outlined in the Monitoring of Membership and Discretion to Suspend Membership sections of this policy.
- 3) Applications should indicate the level of collaboration/discussion that has occurred in the development of the proposal with institutions in the BC Transfer System, and evidence of support from BC institutions.
- 4) Normally, articulation agreements for courses and programs will be considered for inclusion in the course-to-course and other appropriate sections of the BC Transfer Guide.
- 5) Requests for inclusion in the BC Transfer Guide would include a description of the resources available within the institution to perform the associated functions.
- 6) Requests for inclusion in the BC Transfer Guide would include an estimate of the number of courses and/or programs for which articulation agreements would be sought and the number of BC institutions involved. BCCAT's decision on whether to admit a private institution to the BC Transfer System may be influenced by workload implications for existing institutions in the system.
- 7) Courses and programs to be included in the BC Transfer Guide should be taught (delivered, evaluated, transcribed) entirely by the institution seeking access to the BC Transfer System, not by other institutions through partnership or affiliation agreements, unless such agreements are reviewed by Council with respect to its implications for course transferability. The private institution should provide a list of all such agreements to BCCAT, including agreements with public and private institutions, and be prepared to share this information with other Transfer System members upon request.

Process for Assessing Applications from Prospective Private Institutions

The following process will be used by Council to assess applications from private institutions to become part of the BC Transfer System:

- 1) Private institutions should submit a formal application to BCCAT c/o the Executive Director and Co-Chair, addressing the above criteria.

- 2) BCCAT staff will review the evidence provided in the application, using the established criteria, to determine if including the private institution in the BC Transfer System is justified and will be of significant benefit to students. Where necessary, additional information may be requested.
- 3) Following staff review, the application will be considered by the Transfer and Articulation Committee (TAC). Council will then make a decision taking into consideration recommendations from the TAC.
- 4) BCCAT's Executive Director and Co-Chair will inform the applicant of Council's decision and the underlying rationale for that decision.

Process Following Admission to the BC Transfer System

Should a private institution be accepted into the BC Transfer System, the following process and conditions will apply:

- 1) Institutions will be required to sign a *Letter of Assurance*, which includes a clear description of expectations of new members of the BC Transfer System and consequences if these expectations are not met. Any relevant special conditions associated with ministerial consent may be reflected in the *Letter of Assurance*. The *Letter of Assurance* is attached as APPENDIX I.
- 2) BC institutions will be asked by BCCAT to indicate whether they intend to enter into articulation agreements with the private institution.
- 3) Decisions on whether or not to award transfer credit are made by each institution according to its own policies and regulations. However, BC institutions would be expected to deal fairly with private institutions and to provide a rationale for decisions.
- 4) Private institutions will be expected to designate an Institutional Contact Person (ICP) to respond to BCCAT requests for information and be the key contact for other member institutions.
- 5) Private institutions will be expected to send representatives to appropriate committee meetings (e.g. articulation committees, Institutional Contact Persons).
- 6) Although the BC Transfer System norm is that institutions do not charge each other for costs related to articulation, an extraordinary amount of articulation requests arising from a private institution joining the transfer system, or one placing greater emphasis on sending requests, may result in a partner institution charging for the cost of articulation.

Initial Participation in the BC Transfer System

Institutions that are members of the BC Transfer System are listed in the BC Transfer Guide. An institution is deemed to have been successfully integrated into the BC Transfer System when it is articulating successfully as appropriate to its programs; when its faculty are participating in relevant articulation committees; when it is communicating as necessary with BCCAT through the Institutional Contact Person (ICP) and others; when students have started to transfer successfully; and when no significant concerns have been raised about its membership in the system. However, under certain circumstances BCCAT reserves the right to limit institutions' functions within the system.

Baccalaureate Degrees

Where baccalaureate programs receive ministerial consent and subsequent approval to request articulation in the BC Transfer System, it is assumed that the primary function of a degree-granting institution within the BC Transfer System will be to assess, upon request, the equivalency of courses offered by sending institutions, and to grant (or deny) transfer credit for those courses. For this reason, private institutions with approved baccalaureate degree programs may be limited by BCCAT to receiving functions for a period of time.

Associate Degrees

The BC Associate Degree can be equated to the first two years of study in many baccalaureate degrees, and each course of an institution's associate degree program must be articulated with one or more of the BC research-intensive universities. Private institutions whose ministerial consent to confer a BC Associate Degree is provisional pending articulation of the appropriate type and number of courses will be limited by BCCAT to sending functions until such time as the provisional terms of their ministerial consent are fulfilled.

Monitoring of Membership

The DQAB conducts an Annual Review of each private institution member operating with ministerial consent, and conducts a Renewal of Consent Review at least every five years. For those private institutions admitted to the BC Transfer System based on the DQAB review and ministerial consent process, BCCAT will provide input for those reviews by reporting annually to the DQAB on each new member's articulation activities; on its adherence to the *Letter of Assurance* and to the *Principles and Guidelines for Transfer*; and on any other matters relevant to its membership in the BC Transfer System. It is understood, however, that institutions will take some time, possibly three to five years after ministerial consent is granted, to be fully functioning members of the BC Transfer System, and the nature of programs and curricula at individual member institutions will shape their participation as appropriate. BCCAT's review will take institutional maturity into account, and will normally focus on facilitating the induction and integration of the private institutions into the BC Transfer System.

If concerns arise regarding transfer credit articulation practice or participation in the BC Transfer System, BCCAT will communicate directly with the institution with the purpose of identifying the nature of the concern and clarifying expectations, and will work with the institution to ensure the situation is rectified. However, if evidence emerges that any private institution member:

- is not adhering to the *Principles and Guidelines for Transfer*;
- is not fulfilling its obligations as agreed to in the *Letter of Assurance*;
- has 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 Guide; and/or
 - has been the subject of legitimate concerns or complaints and / or formal investigations by other institutions, professional accrediting bodies, the Private Training Institutions Branch (www.privatetraininginstitutions.gov.bc.ca), government, local police, the RCMP, border services, or any other relevant body inside or outside BC, that have not, in the opinion of the Council, otherwise been addressed;

BCCAT will, at its discretion, report this evidence to the DQAB so that the DQAB may take it into consideration when conducting an annual review and /or a Renewal of Consent Review, or when taking other steps or actions within the scope of its authority.

Discretion to Suspend Membership

BCCAT reserves the right to deliver to the private member a notice of suspension by the Council from the BC Transfer Guide and/or Education Planner, with a copy to the DQAB and any other relevant agency detailing the circumstances resulting in the suspension and outlining the conditions that must be met for reinstatement. If the

private member does not satisfactorily address the concerns or deficiencies within 60 days of dispatch of the notice, membership privileges may be suspended. Suspension may involve removal of the institution from the BC Transfer Guide or Education Planner, or sanctions of other kinds at the discretion of the Council. In cases where there is evidence of a violation of the *Letter of Assurance*, membership may be suspended through consultation with Council.

Private members must inform BCCAT immediately of any disciplinary action or censure it incurs, or any investigation into its operations undertaken by government, DQAB, the Private Training Institutions Branch, any professional accrediting organization, or any other relevant body inside or outside BC. Suspension, revocation, or amendment of ministerial consent will result in the *de facto* suspension, revocation, or amendment of the institution's membership in the BC Transfer System. Any related change to the local or regional authorization of an out-of-province member institution will have the same consequence. Revocation of membership, should that be the decision of Council, will occur through a Council motion.

As appropriate, BCCAT will inform DQAB, the Private Training Institutions Branch, and / or the BC ministry responsible for advanced education (or responsible ministry in any other Canadian province) about sanctions on and /or suspension of any private member. Every effort will be made to safeguard the educational interests of students enrolled in institutions whose membership is suspended. The private 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.

PROCESS INFORMATION

Articulation Committee Companion bccat.ca/pubs/companion2013.pdf

How to Articulate (PDF and HTML) available at bccat.ca/articulate

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

BC Degree Authorization Act

(http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/00_02024_01)

RELATED POLICIES

3.A.1: *Membership in the BC Transfer System* bccat.ca/pubs/BCTSmembers.pdf

3.A.3: *Membership of Alberta Institutions in the BC Transfer System* bccat.ca/pubs/albertainstitutions.pdf

3.B.2: *Listing of Transfer Agreements with Non-Member Institutions in the BC Transfer Guide*
bccat.ca/pubs/nonmemberspolicy.pdf

APPENDIX I

LETTER OF ASSURANCE: PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

Between _____

and the

BC Council on Admissions and Transfer

Institution Address: _____

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

As new members of the BC Transfer System, the institution will undertake to adhere to the norms of the system and to follow best institutional practice in participating in articulation and transfer and in providing information about programs. The institution will abide by the terms and conditions of our membership in the BC Transfer System as set forth in this policy, *Membership of Private Institutions in the BC Transfer System*, and those set forth in the more general policy, *Membership in the BC Transfer System*. To that end, the institution will:

1. Familiarize itself with BCCAT's *Membership of Private Institutions in the BC Transfer System*, and *Membership in the BC Transfer System* policies, and adhere to the requirements.
2. Comply with the *BC Principles and Guidelines for Transfer*.
3. Follow best practice, as described in BCCAT materials and resources with regard to the articulation of courses and programs.
4. 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 and in Education Planner (if participating).
5. Name an Institutional Contact Person (ICP) for BCCAT. This person will initially be _____ (email address: _____) and he/she will fulfill the role of ICP.
6. Name an Institutional Contact Person (ICP) for Education Planner, if participating. This person will initially be _____ (email address: _____)

7. 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). This person will initially be _____ (email address: _____). This person can be the same as the ICP.
8. Use a sufficiently detailed course outline form [such as the BCCAT Provincial *Transfer-Friendly Course Outline*] for all courses for which articulation is being requested.
9. Provide, as requested, all curricular and academic information that an articulating institution may deem necessary for the assessment of course or program equivalence.
10. Be informed by existing course outlines as appropriate to the discipline, but will ensure that course outlines do not contravene intellectual property laws; nor will the institution use the curricular or instructional materials of others without their written consent.
11. Use the Transfer Credit Evaluation System to articulate only courses and programs clearly related to the degree program(s) with ministerial consent.
12. 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.com/documents/transe.pdf>) endorsed by the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges Canada (ARUCC).] Where feasible, transcripts should be transmitted electronically.
13. Send representatives to relevant articulation committees. These representatives will be full voting members of the committees. All details about articulation committees and the role of representatives can be found in the *Articulation Committee Companion*. (Please contact articulation@bccat.ca for more information.)
14. 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: bccat.ca/articulate/request/instructor.
15. 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.
16. 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 forms of publication, or when recruiting or advising students, make false, overstated, or misleading claims about the nature of institutional participation in the BC Transfer System and/or the benefits accruing to students.
17. 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 will not use this membership for purely promotional or marketing purposes.
18. Alert BCCAT immediately to any situations that may affect institutional ability to participate fully in the BC Transfer System.
19. Inform BCCAT of any investigation of institutional operations undertaken by government, DQAB, the Private Training Institutions Branch, 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 behalf of the Institution by: _____

Please print name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

- Copies: 1: Institutional Registrar
 2: Assistant Director, Transfer & Technology, BCCAT