

Inclusion of British Columbia Institutions in the Alberta Transfer System: Policy and Process

Background:

The Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) has established an effective relationship with the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT). Recognizing there is a significant amount of student mobility between the two provinces, ACAT identified a need to examine how BC post-secondary institutions might gain entrance into the Alberta Transfer System.

The purpose of this document is to propose the conditions and process under which Council would entertain an application from BC institutions for inclusion in the Alberta Transfer System. At this time, this policy does not apply to institutions from any other Canadian jurisdiction. The policy applies only to BC post-secondary institutions because,

- (a) it is likely that due to geographical proximity transfer of students between the two provinces will be high and,
- (b) this policy builds upon the transfer relationship established between the two provinces in the BC/Alberta Transfer System Protocol (<http://www.transferalberta.ca/pdfs/BCCCAT-ACATTransferProtocol.pdf>).

At a later date, based on experience gained from implementing a BC-only policy, the Council may consider expanding the policy to include institutions from other Canadian provinces and territories.

ACAT Position:

In order to benefit learners, there is a need to maximize their ability to access information about available transfer opportunities including opportunities that are available outside the Alberta borders. A clear policy and assessment process promotes the fair and consistent treatment of BC institution applications, rather than basing decisions on exceptions.

This policy also reflects ACAT's commitment to removing barriers to post-secondary student mobility among Canadian jurisdictions as outlined in the *Pan-Canadian Protocol on the Transferability of University Credits* (<http://cmec.ca/postsec/transferabilit.en.stm>).

Any decision to include a BC institution should be based on evidence that:

- a. its inclusion provides valuable advice to Alberta students about transfer options not now recorded in the Alberta Transfer Guide, and
- b. significant transfer activity exists involving Alberta students and institutions.

Criteria for Assessing Proposals from BC Institutions

The following criteria will be used by Council to assess proposals from BC Institutions for inclusion in the Alberta Transfer System:

1. ACAT will only consider applications from public and private post-secondary institutions approved by the BC government to grant degrees in that province and that are members of the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT).
2. Proposals should indicate, if such exist, the level of collaboration/discussion that has occurred in the development of the proposal with institutions in the Alberta Transfer System and evidence of support from Alberta institutions.
3. Institutions will be considered for admission into the Alberta Transfer System based on evidence of the existing level of transfer activity and traffic occurring with Alberta students and institutions which is outside the realm of the current Alberta Transfer System and Guide. In effect, the institution submitting the proposal must build a sound business case for inclusion in the Alberta Transfer System. Relevant evidence **could** include any of the following:
 - a. Number of individual courses for which transfer credit is routinely granted or for which articulation agreements are already in place or proposed.
 - b. Number of block transfer or program articulation agreements currently in place.
 - c. Number of former students from Alberta institutions who registered and/or transferred credits to the BC institution in the past five academic years.
 - d. Evidence of the success of Alberta transfer students in the BC institution to which they have transferred.
 - e. Number of visiting students at the BC institution whose home institutions are members of the Alberta Transfer System.
 - f. Number of post-secondary institutions from the Alberta Transfer System involved in articulation and transfer arrangements with the BC institution. (If evidence points to only one or two Alberta institutions involved, the BC institution may be asked to negotiate bilateral arrangements with those institutions outside of the Alberta Transfer Guide in lieu of ACAT membership).
 - g. The number of years articulation agreements with AB institutions have been in place.
 - h. Rationale for including information in the Alberta Transfer Guide and overview of planned articulation proposals upon gaining membership.(from #5)
 - i. Evidence that the institution has applied for and received exempt status from Alberta's Campus Alberta Quality Council or has degrees approved through this process.

- j. Any other evidence deemed relevant and identified by Council upon the BC institution's application.
4. ACAT will use thresholds to determine whether or not the existing level of transfer activity warrants inclusion in the Alberta Transfer System. These thresholds will be such that only those institutions with a substantial level of activity will be considered for admission. At ACAT's discretion, exceptions may be granted under special circumstances (i.e. specific disciplines).
5. Institutions should indicate whether they are requesting to have only existing course articulation agreements listed in the Alberta Transfer Guide or only new articulation agreements, or both. For new articulation agreements, estimates should be provided about the number and nature (course-to-course or block transfer/program articulation) of agreements that will be negotiated.
6. Institutions gaining admission to the Alberta Transfer System may fulfill the role of either a sending or receiving institution depending on the agreements they choose to pursue. Institutions who are members in the Alberta Transfer System do not have a designated status as either a sender or receiver.
7. Normally articulation agreements for first and second year courses and programs will be considered for inclusion in the course-to-course section of the Alberta Transfer Guide.
8. Reciprocity of transfer credit among individual institutions may occur in practice but is not assumed: BC institutions that already assign or plan to assign transfer credit to courses from an Alberta institution cannot assume or represent that their courses, in turn, will receive transfer credit at that Alberta institution.
9. Courses and programs to be included in the Alberta Transfer Guide should be taught (delivered, evaluated, transcribed) entirely by the BC institution seeking access to the Alberta Transfer System, not by other institutions through partnership or affiliation agreements unless otherwise approved by Council. The BC institution should provide a list of all such agreements to ACAT, whether with public or private institutions in Alberta.

Process for Assessing Proposals from British Columbia Institutions

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

1. BC institutions should submit a formal proposal addressing the above criteria to ACAT.
2. ACAT will review the evidence provided in the proposal against the established criteria (to be developed and published) to determine if including the BC institution in the Alberta Transfer System will be of significant benefit to students. Where necessary, additional information may be requested by either subcommittee (see below) or by Council following the subcommittee's recommendation.

3. The proposal will be reviewed first by a subcommittee comprised of Council members and other representatives from Alberta Transfer System institutions. Council will make a decision based on a recommendation from the subcommittee.
4. ACAT will inform the proponent of its decision and the underlying rationale for that decision.
5. The process for application of membership into the Alberta Transfer System is outlined in detail in the document *Admission to the Alberta Transfer System*, available at [http://www.transferalberta.ca/pdfs/ProcessToApplyFor ACAT Transfer.pdf](http://www.transferalberta.ca/pdfs/ProcessToApplyFor_ACAT_Transfer.pdf)

Process Following Admission to the Alberta Transfer System

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

1. Institutions, whether public or private, will be expected to abide by ACAT's *Principles, Policies, and Procedures* available at <http://www.transferalberta.ca/pdfs/PPP.pdf>
2. Decisions on whether or not to award transfer credit are made by each institution according to its own policies and regulations. However, Alberta institutions are expected to deal fairly with any member institution of ACAT and to provide rationale for decisions made.
3. BC institutions admitted to ACAT:
 - a. will be expected to provide designated institution Contact Persons, who would respond to ACAT requests for information, be the key contacts for other member institutions, and participate in the annual Contact Persons meeting.
 - b. would be invited to participate in various Alberta Transfer System initiatives such as articulation committees.
 - c. will be listed in the Alberta Transfer Guide, along with Aurora College and Nunavut Arctic College, under an out-of-province heading.
 - d. may be charged for the cost of articulation¹.

¹Alberta Transfer System Institutions are currently not charged for the cost of articulation; however, ACAT reserves the right to institute a policy to recover the cost of developing articulation agreements in the future.