

2014-15 Research Plan

BCCAT's 2014-15 Research Plan

BCCAT's statement on *Mandate, Membership, Role and Responsibilities*¹ establishes Council's mandate to "conduct research on student and credit mobility."

Research projects are informed by outreach to, and feedback from Transfer System members and the broader post-secondary community, developed within Council's standing committees, prioritized in BCCAT's annual Work Plan, and approved by Council.

The Research Plan outlines current research and provides guidance for projects being considered for future years.

1. TRANSFERABILITY AND ARTICULATION OF POST-SECONDARY CREDIT

British Columbia's credit transfer system is highly evolved and diverse. Current research priorities support the continuous improvement of specific transfer mechanisms, capture successful articulation practices, capture successful practices in advising, and support the development of articulation and transfer processes for specific types of courses. Much of this research includes surveys of transfer methods and models in other jurisdictions to ensure that BC's Transfer System continues to benefit from successful practices elsewhere.

- **Analysis of MOOCs:** This project will examine the implications of MOOCs for transfer and admissions practices and will consult with BC experts and review current literature on the subject. (BCCAT Staff)

- **Experiential Learning:** This project will review existing practices impacting the transferability of experiential learning including practica, service learning, coop, and undergraduate research. (Transfer and Articulation Committee)
- **Academic Advising/Career Path Advising:** This project is an investigation of current institutional practices and issues related to student advising for transfer and career transitions. (Transfer and Articulation Committee)

In developing and prioritizing research projects for future years, the following areas will be considered:

- Fostering effective and efficient articulation processes
- Transfer and articulation options for trades, vocational and applied programs
- Articulation and partnerships for innovative courses/blocks
- Impact of the "Enabling" initiative on articulation and transfer
- Successful transfer systems in other jurisdictions
- Implications of badges and other micro-credentials for transfer and articulation
- Implications of MOOC courses and other online delivery for transfer and articulation
- Implications of open educational resources for articulation

¹ This document is available at bccat.ca/about/council

2. CAPACITY, DEMAND, STUDENT MOBILITY AND STUDENT SUCCESS

Research on student mobility patterns, and the experiences of students who transfer allows Council, and its partners, to better understand student demand, and to ensure the effectiveness of the BC Transfer System.

Current projects measure transfer and associate degree student success, document domestic and international student decision-making and experiences within the B.C. post-secondary system, work with system partners to better understand student demand, and provide context for emerging discussions around academic credit.

- **Transfer Student Profile and Performance Report:** This report aggregates data from six universities that receive the majority of transfer students in the BC Transfer System. Student demographics, transfer credit volume and student performance data are reported. (Research Committee)
- **Exploring Available Data Sources to Measure the Success of Associate Degree Students:** This project will review the literature on Associate Degree student performance and outcomes, and survey the existing data sources available in British Columbia to measure Associate Degree student success. (Research Committee)
- **What is Academic Credit? Literature Review and Practice in BC:** The objectives of this study include reviewing international and Canadian experiences in evaluating academic credit, identifying existing practices in evaluating academic credit at public post-secondary institutions in BC, and describing emergent trends in credit assessment. (Research Committee)

- **Dual Admissions Agreements: A Review of BC Practices and Outcomes:** The research involves case studies of existing dual admissions agreements in British Columbia. The study seeks to provide insight into student motivations, experiences and outcomes. (Research Committee)
- **International Student Survey:** With the guidance of a broad-based steering committee of stakeholders, the survey will refresh findings from the first province-wide survey of international students conducted in 2008-09, and gather student feedback in a variety of emerging areas. (Admissions Committee)
- **Availability of Applicant Data in Various Admissions Processes:** Developed in conjunction with the BC Registrars Association, this research aims to describe applicant funnels tailored to a range of the program admission types, identifying the types of data available for various program types. (Admissions Committee)

In developing and prioritizing research projects for future years, the following areas will be considered:

- Impact of the “Enabling” initiative on mobility patterns²
- Developing and assessing measures of transfer system effectiveness (credits to completion, system-wide retention, etc.)
- Associate degree student mobility and success
- Aboriginal student success and persistence in the post-secondary system
- Transfer student success, including employment outcomes
- Supply and demand for educational programs and implications for transfer and admissions policies and practices
- Extra-provincial student mobility (both domestic and international)

² This initiative extended “sending” and “receiving” functions to all member-institutions of the BC Transfer System. Previously, institutions played only one of these roles. The change acknowledged the multi-directional patterns of student mobility seen in modern transfer systems like BC’s.

3. ADMISSIONS PROCESSES FOR DIRECT ENTRY AND TRANSFER STUDENTS

Admissions policies and practices have a significant impact on credit transferability and the transfer experience. Over the coming year, research projects will focus on identifying successful admissions policies and processes, promoting dialogue around anticipated change.

- **Indicators of Preparedness for Mature Students:** This project will capture current practice at a number of BC post-secondary institutes that admit students under a category which does not rely on high school achievement. In many institutions, admissions policies traditionally featured a “mature student” category to capture this type of admission. The study will examine which indicators are relied upon in determining student preparedness for post-secondary learning in these admissions categories. (Admissions Committee)
- **Implications of Proposed New Secondary School Graduation Requirements for Admissions Processes in BC:** To facilitate productive dialogue around the implications of proposed changes to high school graduation requirements, this research will outline various admissions models found across the BC post-secondary system, and provide details on how secondary school grades are utilized in admissions, placement, student awards, and course registration (prerequisite) processes. (Admissions Committee)

In developing and prioritizing research projects for future years, the following areas will be considered:

- High school performance and post-secondary success
- High school graduation requirements and post-secondary success
- Implications of broad-based admissions for student transfer and mobility

- Degree partnerships
- Shifts in mature student population and implications for admissions and transfer policies and practices
- Gender differences in postsecondary participation and persistence and their impact on admissions and transfer

4. SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Ensuring that students are aware of their educational options (including transfer) and that the information required to develop educational plans is readily available, and reliable, is an important component in an effective credit transfer system. Research in this area tracks student use of online planning resources, and patterns of course articulation to ensure that these resources operate effectively.

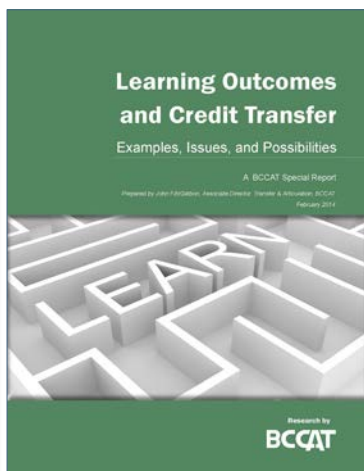
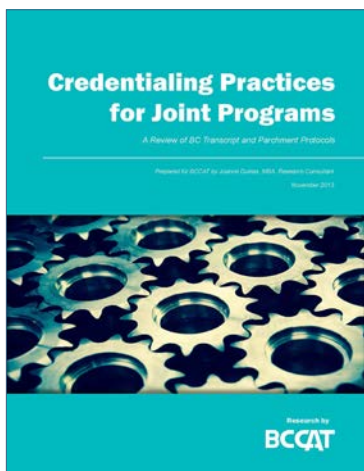
- **BC Transfer Guide Usage:** Research into student and institutional usage of the BC Transfer Guide and TCES. (Transfer and Articulation Committee)

In developing and prioritizing research projects for future years, the following areas will be considered:

- Impact of increasing online offerings (including MOOCs) on student educational planning
- Determining the educational planning needs of various groups of learners, including mature students and international students

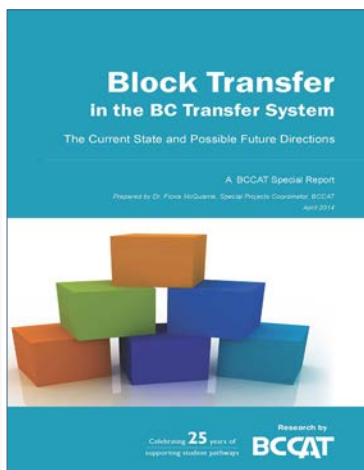
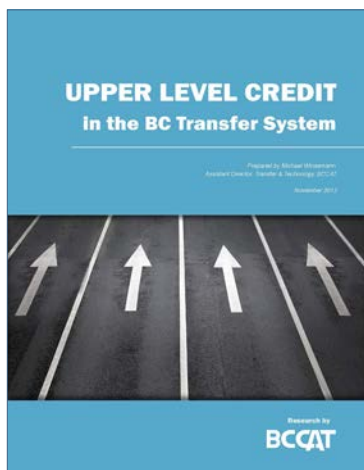
RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

BCCAT coordinates a wide range of research projects to inform and support BC's post-secondary institutions and to advance educational opportunities for BC students. Highlights of recent research publications are provided below.



• Credentialing Practices for Joint Programs

This report³ identifies the protocols at BC post-secondary institutions for credentialing joint programs on both transcripts and parchments and describes successful practices. It also offers recommendations for future research, planning and policy development. This project provided useful information for the National Transcript and Transfer Guide project which is currently underway.



• Learning Outcomes and Credit Transfer

This report⁴ looks at learning outcomes in other jurisdictions and their relevance for the BC post-secondary system. It considers using learning outcomes as the basis for credit transfer and offers some directions that BC and other jurisdictions are pursuing or exploring.

• BC Transfer System Issues

- *Block Transfer*⁵ - an analysis of the use of Block Transfer in the BC Transfer System and recommendations for next steps.
- *Upper Level Credit*⁶ - a review of upper level articulation in the BC Transfer System and recommendations and suggested guidelines for best practices.

³ bccat.ca/pubs/jointprogramcredentialing_dec2013.pdf

⁴ bccat.ca/pubs/Learning_Outcomes_and_Credit_Transfer_Feb2014.pdf

⁵ bccat.ca/pubs/blocktransfer_april2014.pdf

⁶ bccat.ca/pubs/UpperLevel2013.pdf