

2005 Admissions and Transfer Experiences of Students Continuing their Studies in British Columbia

Prepared by BC Stats

Introduction

This newsletter summarizes the admissions and transfer experiences of approximately 7,000 students surveyed in the spring of 2005 who left a BC college, university college, or institute program to continue their studies in another program at the same institution or at another BC public institution. In some instances, these findings are compared with responses to similar surveys conducted in 2000 and 2002.¹

Over 17,000 former students responded to this annual survey—the *2005 BC College and Institute Student Outcomes (CISO) Survey*—out of a total of approximately 33,000 graduates or near-completers from Arts and Sciences and Applied programs. The former students were interviewed by telephone 9 to 20 months after they left a BC public post-secondary institution.²

The BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) commissioned an analysis of students' responses to the admissions and transfer questions in the survey in order to assess their experiences, expectations, information sources, and satisfaction levels. This is in keeping with BCCAT's mandate to facilitate admission, articulation, and transfer arrangements among BC post-secondary institutions and to enable a smooth transfer experience for students.

Students who continue their studies

Profile of students who went on for further studies—who are they?

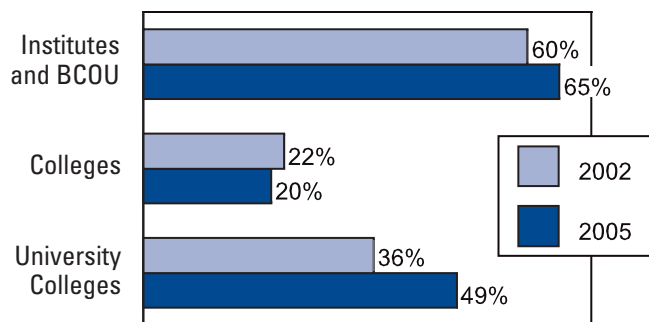
Almost half (47%) of respondents to the BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey continued their studies after leaving their original program—this figure

is similar to that found in 2002, but somewhat higher than that found earlier (43% continued in 2000). Continuers were younger, more likely to be female, and tended to have less experience in the post-secondary system. Three-quarters of students from Arts and Sciences programs pursued their studies, compared with just over one-third of students from Applied programs. However, because there are more students from Applied programs in the college and institute system, they made up more than half (52%) of those who continued.

Where do students go for further studies?

Of the 94% of respondents who continued their studies in BC and whose destination was known, the vast majority (90%) continued at a public post-secondary institution. Of those, over one-third decided to stay at the same institution. The 2005 survey found that students were more likely to stay at the same institution for further studies than they were in 2002—particularly those from university colleges. Arts and Sciences students from university colleges showed the sharpest increase in the tendency to stay at the same institution (from 27% in 2002 to 42% in 2005).

Percentage of respondents who stayed at the same institution, by institution type

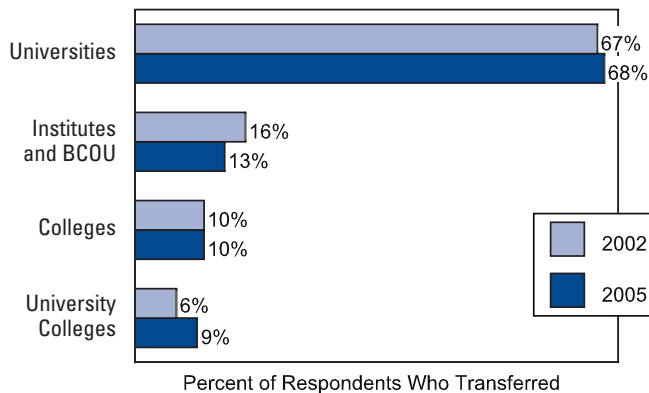


1. For more detail, please see the report upon which this document is based, "2005 Admissions and Transfer Experiences of Students Continuing their Studies in British Columbia: Findings from the BC College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey". The 2000 and 2002 survey findings are also found at: <http://www.bccat.bc.ca/publications/biblio.html#surveys>.

2. The CISO Survey is overseen by the Outcomes Working Group and is jointly funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education and participating institutions.

Almost two-thirds of respondents who continued in the BC public post-secondary system transferred to a different institution. Universities were the recipients of over two-thirds of these transfer students.

Distribution of respondents who transferred to a BC public post-secondary institution, by receiving institution type



Do students get their first choice of public institution, program, and courses?

Most students who continued their education at a different BC public institution were accepted into their institution of choice (89%), their preferred programs (94%), and all of their desired courses (83%). However, in comparison with the 2002 survey, respondents in 2005 were slightly less likely to be in their institution of choice for further studies (from 92% to 89%).

Admittance to desired courses improved since 2002 for those entering university colleges (79% to 87% in 2005), while it diminished slightly for those entering universities (83% to 79% in 2005). University colleges showing the greatest increase in access to courses were Kwantlen (75% to 88%) and Fraser Valley (75% to 84%). Consistent with the findings from previous studies, Simon Fraser University had the lowest rate (68%) among universities for students getting all of the courses they wanted—this was a decrease of 9 percentage points from the 2002 results.

What about students who wanted to continue their education, but didn't?

Although a majority of students who did not continue their studies expressed a desire to do so (57%), very

few of those had actually submitted a formal application (14%). Many of those who did not apply decided to work at a job instead (40%) or cited financial barriers to continuing their education (16%).

Students' Transfer Experience

What are students' transfer expectations?

The majority (79%) of students who transferred to a different BC public post-secondary institution expected to transfer some course credits from their original institution. Most of these transfer students (90%) indicated that they had received the course credits they expected (no change from 2002). In fact, of the 351 respondents who did not receive their expected course credits, only 16 said that none of their courses transferred.

The most common reason for not receiving expected transfer credits (mentioned by 181 respondents) was that their courses transferred but not all of the credits could be used towards their degree. The second most often mentioned reason (166 respondents) was that the original course or program was not designed for transfer to the receiving institution. This finding highlights to some degree the unrealistic expectations that some students have with regards to transferability of courses.

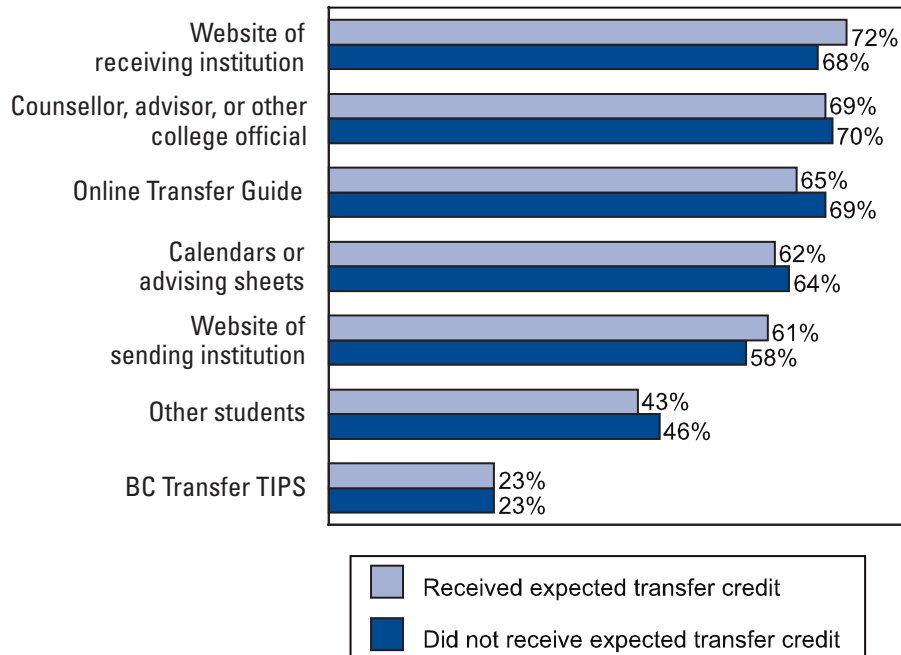
Overall, however, it appears that students' knowledge of the transfer system is improving, as only 28 percent in 2005 said they did not know or understand transfer requirements, compared with 39 percent in 2002. Information is perhaps more easily accessed with increased usage of online educational resources—both sending and receiving institutions play a key role in helping students know what to expect.

The transfer system in BC is working well — most transfer students received the course credits they expected.

What sources of information do students use?

The most important source of information for students planning to transfer was the website of the institution they were transferring to, especially for those who were successful in getting their transfer credits. Counselors, student advisors, or other college officials were

Percentage of respondents who used information source, by met and unmet transfer expectations



also key sources. Students cited a variety of other resources, including the online BC Transfer Guide, written materials such as calendars or advising sheets, and the website of the sending institution. Fewer students cited BC Transfer TIPS, a publication that is designed to provide general information about how to transfer between BC post-secondary institutions.

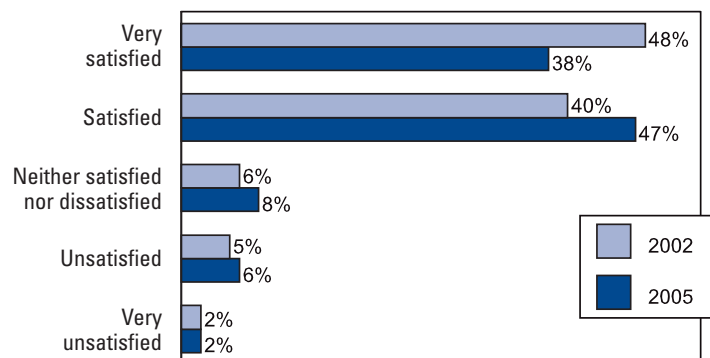
percent of respondents who received their expected transfer credits were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their overall transfer experience, compared with 43 percent of those who did not receive all of their expected transfer credits.

Are students satisfied with their transfer experience?

Respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction with their overall transfer experience—84 percent said they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied.” Only 8 percent were “unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied.” Overall satisfaction with transfer experience was slightly lower in 2005 compared to the 2002 survey, where 88 percent were “very satisfied” or “satisfied.” Even those who said they received their expected transfer credit were less satisfied in 2005.

Students’ satisfaction with their overall transfer experience was closely related to their success in transferring course credits. Ninety

Respondents’ satisfaction with their overall transfer experience



Are students satisfied with admission services and application processes?

Students who pursued further studies in BC were asked for the first time in 2005 to evaluate the admission services and application processes at their new institution. A substantial majority (83%) of respondents who transferred to a different public institution indicated that

they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with those procedures. Of note, the applicants who expected to transfer credits gave a lower evaluation of the admissions and application processes at the

receiving institution—81 percent were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” versus 89 percent of those who did not expect to transfer credits.

Students’ knowledge of the transfer system is improving—increasingly, students are turning to online information.

Conclusion

Although many students surveyed chose to further their education at their original institution, almost two-thirds decided to transfer to a different public post-secondary institution in BC. A large majority of these transfer students were satisfied with the admission services and application processes at their new institution.

Overall, transfer experiences were positive—a large proportion of the students surveyed reported they were satisfied with their transfer experience. Respondents said they were able to transfer into their institutions of choice for further studies and enrol in their preferred programs and courses. Most received the course transfer credits they expected.

Access to information is crucial to successful transfer experiences. Students appear to be better informed about transfer requirements than in previous years—the internet has provided them with easy access to information on post-secondary institutions’ websites and from the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer.

Recommendations

Institutions are encouraged to:

- develop & maintain up-to-date online information for transfer planning;
- clarify with students that even though courses transfer, they may not be applicable to a specific program; and
- read the full study upon which this report is based to be informed about the specific issues that may apply to them.

BCCAT is encouraged to develop and maintain user-friendly transfer information in a form most likely to be accessed by students and others.