

Research Report

FEBRUARY 2001

BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL ON ADMISSIONS & TRANSFER

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

PREPARED BY THE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION INFORMATION

Introduction

British Columbia's public post-secondary education system fosters access and opportunity through its geographically dispersed network of 11 community colleges, five specialized institutes, five university colleges, six universities, and an agency that provides learning opportunities for people who are unable to attend regular classes. Key to the success of such a diverse system is the ability of students to move between institutions and, where appropriate, to transfer credits.

This report profiles the experiences of over 6,000 students who continued their studies in British Columbia's public post-secondary system after having participated in either an Arts and Sciences or an Applied program in a community college, university college, or institute. Based on input received from students through the Year 2000 B.C.

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College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey (see "Data Notes," page 3), the report addresses the following questions:

Admissions

- 1) Where do students go for further studies?
- 2) To what extent are students accessing their institution, program, and courses of choice?

Credit Transfer

- 3) Are students' transfer expectations being met?
- 4) Are students who report unmet transfer expectations concentrated in certain institutions or program areas?

Admissions

Where Do Students Go For Further Studies?

Of the 43% of respondents who continue their studies after leaving their original program, 93% stay in B.C., including 87% who are in the B.C. public education system.

Respondents from Applied programs are more likely to enter the private post-secondary system (10%) than are Arts and Sciences respondents (4%); many continue in the private system to study at institutions offering finance-related programs, such as accounting and financial planning.

Almost three quarters of respondents who continue in the B.C. public post-secondary system (71%) transfer to a different institution for further studies. Universities are by far the most common destination, receiving 65% of all respondents who transfer to a different institution; institutes and the Open Learning Agency (OLA) receive 17%, community colleges 11%, and university colleges 7%. The three largest B.C. universities are the top destinations, receiving 60% of respondents who continue at a different institution; B.C. Institute of Technology (BCIT) is the fourth largest destination at 11%.

Twenty-nine percent continue their studies in a different program at the same institution. About a third of university college students (32%) stay at their original institution for further studies, compared to 19% of college students; this difference reflects the fact that community colleges do not offer upper level studies.

To What Extent Are Students Accessing Their Institution, Program, and Courses of Choice?

Facilitating admissions to ensure access to post-secondary education and training opportunities is part of the mandate of the B.C. Council on Admissions & Transfer (BCCAT). One measure of progress toward this objective is the extent to

which students who continue their studies in the system are able to implement the educational plan of their choice.

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- 91% are enrolled in their institution of choice.
- 95% are in their preferred program of study.
- 86% are enrolled in all the courses they wanted.

Although rates of accessing a preferred program are uniformly high across all types of sending and receiving institutions, course availability shows some variation. Students continuing their studies at a university college (77%) or community college (78%) are less likely to access all the courses of their choice than are those who continue at a university (85%), or an institute or OLA (96%). *Note that the survey did not capture the perspectives of students who may have tried unsuccessfully to gain admission to further studies.*

Figure 1: Satisfaction with Transfer Experience

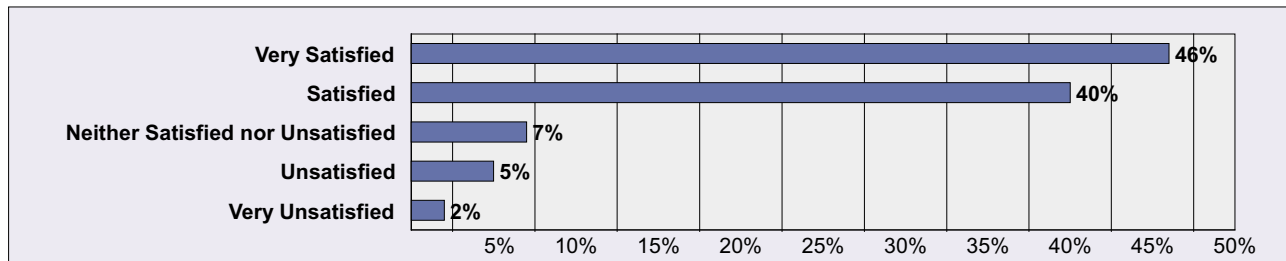
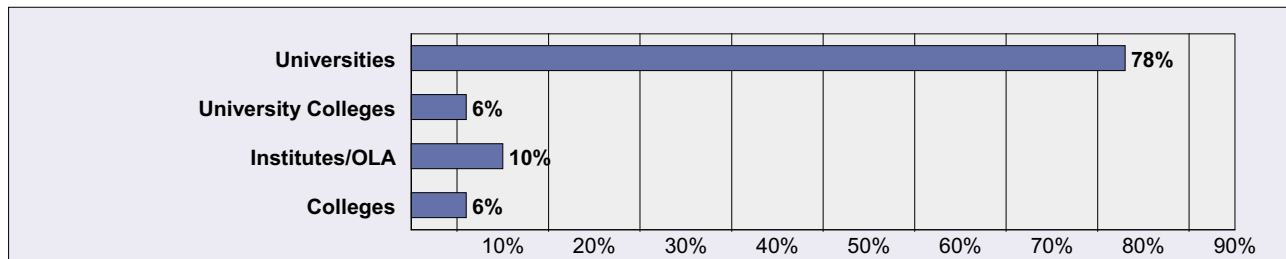


Figure 2: Where Students Who Expect to Transfer Credits Continue Their Studies



Credit Transfer

Are Students' Transfer Expectations Being Met?

Satisfaction rates with the transfer system are very high, with 86% of respondents who expect to transfer credits being “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their overall transfer experience.

Twelve percent of respondents report not receiving all the transfer credit they expected; just 1% are unsuccessful in transferring any of their credits. According to respondents, close to half (46%) of the cases of unmet expectations arise when students attempt to transfer credits from courses that were not originally designed for transfer.

Are Students Who Report Unmet Transfer Expectations Concentrated in Certain Institutions or Program Areas?

BCCAT works to facilitate articulation and transfer arrangements among the network of 28 institutions comprising the public post-secondary system in British Columbia.¹ Given the sheer number and variety of institutions involved, this can be a daunting task. The survey results provide some direction to BCCAT about areas on which to focus efforts in order to both address pockets of higher than average rates of unmet expectations and to reach the largest audience of potential transfer students.

There are no *significant* cases of particular programs or institutions accounting for a disproportionate number of respondents with unmet transfer expectations. Although there are cases where the *percentage* of respondents reporting unmet expectations is high, the *number* of respondents in these cases tends to be low. Addressing these “hot spots” is unlikely to impact significantly on the overall number of students with unmet expectations; however, it may help to alleviate student frustration and improve the overall efficiency of the system.

Hot Spots

In terms of institutions, over a quarter (26%) of respondents continuing their studies after leaving BCIT report being unable to transfer some or all of their credits to their new institution, compared to the system average of 12%. While they account for a small number of respondents overall, 26% of those respondents who transfer to either the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, or Okanagan University College report unmet transfer expectations.

Relatively high rates of unmet transfer expectations are also reported by respondents from specialized programs, such as Agriculture, Natural Re-

Data Notes:

This report is based on the Year 2000 B.C. College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey. This annual survey contacts former students between 9 and 20 months after leaving their program of study at a publicly funded B.C. college, university college, institute, or the Open Learning Agency. The survey project is overseen by the B.C. Outcomes Working Group (OWG), and is jointly funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology and participating institutions.

The study population consists of students who participated in an Arts and Sciences program or an Applied program in B.C.'s college and institute system. The Arts and Sciences cohort consists of all students who left their program at their institution with at least 24 credits. Applied students were included in the study if they had either completed or nearly completed their program of study and were no longer enrolled in their Applied program at their institution.* This report draws on the results of a set of questions that were addressed to those respondents who indicated they had pursued further studies after leaving their original program.

For more details, see the full study upon which this report is based, *Admissions and Transfer Experiences of Students Continuing their Studies in British Columbia*, at www.bccat.bc.ca

* Some university colleges surveyed Applied Baccalaureate students who had completed 24 or more credits, however these respondents represent less than 3 percent of all respondents.

1 Currently, four B.C. private institutions and one Yukon institution are part of B.C.'s formal transfer system. However, due to data availability, this report focuses on the B.C. public post-secondary system.

STUDENTS WHO CONTINUE THEIR STUDIES in the B.C. public post-secondary system after studying in a college, university college, or institute are overwhelmingly positive about their admissions and transfer experiences.

sources and Science Technology (33%), and Visual, Performing and Fine Arts (25%). Close to 60% of respondents from these programs whose expectations were not met report their original course or program was not designed for transfer, suggesting a need for targeted information campaigns.

Transfer Student Concentrations

Because of size, location and program offerings, a few institutions produce the majority of transfer students, and another few receive the majority. Although these institutions do not have high rates of students reporting unmet transfer expectations, education campaigns targeted to their students have the potential to reach a large transfer student audience and to impact significantly on the number of students with unmet transfer expectations in the system.

Sixty percent of respondents with unmet transfer expectations originate at four institutions: Kwantlen University College (20%), Capilano College (15%), Douglas College (14%), and Langara College (11%). Respondents from these institutions report unmet transfer expectations at about the same rate as respondents from all other institutions. Their concentration among these four institutions simply reflects the volume of students transferring from these institutions with an expectation to transfer credits to their new institution.

Students transferring to universities report relatively low rates of unmet transfer expectations (11%). However, due to the volume of students they receive, universities account for 73% of all respondents with unmet expectations.

Conclusion

Students who continue their studies in the B.C. public post-secondary system after studying in a college, university college, or institute are overwhelmingly positive about their admissions and transfer experiences. On the admissions side, respondents report very high rates of accessing the institutions, programs and courses of their choice. On the transfer side, this report identifies certain “hot spot” institutions and programs, as well as those sending and receiving institutions with the largest number of transfer students. While it is important for all institutions to make every effort to ensure their students are informed as to which courses are or are not transferable, targeting resources at these institutions and programs may have the most impact.

BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL ON
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