Mature Students:
Admissions Policies in BC

A Preliminary Review and Recommendations for Research

Prepared by Dr. Fiona McQuarrie, Special Projects Coordinator, BCCAT

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Introduction

Large numbers of students in BC post-secondary institutions can be classified as mature students, either because of their admission status (most BC institutions require a mature student applicant to be at least 18 years old) or because of their chronological age. It is important to build an understanding of this population of students because of the need for adults and other types of non-traditional students to have access to post-secondary education, for any number of personal, professional, and financial reasons.

The purpose of this paper is to conduct a preliminary review of the mature student admissions category in BC post-secondary institutions. The paper has three components:

- A review of existing research on mature students, focusing on admission barriers
- A summary of current mature student admissions policies at BC post-secondary institutions
- Recommendations for possible future research on mature student admissions in BC

It is important to build an understanding of the mature student population because of the need for adults and other types of non-traditional students to have access to post-secondary education, for any number of personal, professional, and financial reasons.

Research:

Existing Research on Mature Student Admissions

There is a considerable amount of published research exploring the experiences of mature students in post-secondary education. As some of this research deals with mature students in graduate programs, the review of this research focuses on research involving mature student admissions to undergraduate programs. However, it should be noted that mature student admissions are not often addressed as a discrete research topic. Admissions policies relating to mature students are most often addressed within the context of other research, such as comparisons of the academic performance of students admitted under different admission categories, or general explorations of mature students' post-secondary educational experiences.

Despite the concise label, mature students constitute a very diverse group.

A consistent theme throughout much of the research on mature students is that, despite the concise label, mature students constitute a very diverse group (Egerton, 2001). Mature students represent a wide range of ages (Osborne, Leopold & Ferrie, 1997), life experiences (Orr, 2010), reasons for enrolling (Osborne, Marks & Turner, 2004), reasons for program/credential choice (Reddy & Moores, 2008), geographic locations (Bonnycastle & Prentice, 2011), family situations (Bonnycastle & Prentice, 2011), social and economic classes (Reay, 2002), and previous academic experience (Tones, Fraser, Edler & White, 2009). Gender has also been identified as a differentiating factor in mature student experiences (Lovell, 2003; Kell, 2006). Mature students also tend to study on a part-time basis, and generally take more evening and weekend classes than "traditional" students (Cantwell, Archer & Bourke, 2001; Hoyt & Howell, 2012).

Because of this large amount of variation, it is difficult to clearly identify the most challenging barriers to mature student admissions, as different barriers may be more or less challenging to different types of mature students. Therefore, this section will summarize the literature directly or indirectly examining mature student admissions by identifying some of its more prevalent themes.

Factors Affecting Mature Students' Decision to Apply

Osborne, Marks, & Turner (2004), in their study of mature student decision-making, identified six types of mature students and the factors that positively influenced each type's decision to undertake post-secondary study.

- Delayed traditional: interest in subject, need credential, want stability
- Late starters: cathartic experience as stimulus, current opportunity, self-belief, altruism
- Single parents: need job to support family, want to be role model, enjoy learning
- Careerists: improved career prospects, self-respect, interest in studying, employer support
- Escapees: new career, better opportunities, better pay, change in direction
- Personal growers: interest in subject, available opportunity, want to prove own capability to themselves

In the Canadian context, a study of mature students who were also immigrants found that this demographic group is more likely to enroll in post-secondary education if they find that their credentials acquired elsewhere are not recognized by Canadian employers. However, the likelihood of these individuals actually applying for admission to a post-secondary institution may decrease if they do not have a diverse social network or if they feel they do not speak English sufficiently well to engage in post-secondary studies (Adamuti-Trache, Anisef, Sweet & Walters, 2013). The availability of prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) processes at many Canadian post-secondary institutions may also affect mature students' decision to apply, depending on whether they believe they can receive academic credit through a PLAR process (Spencer & Kelly, 2005).

There are also potential mature students among those students who were admitted to a post-secondary institution and then did not complete their studies – the so-called "stopouts". Within this demographic group, the most likely to consider returning to post-secondary education are "financially strapped singles", who see further education as a way to increase their earning potential, and "progressors", who believe that "college is important to a person's success". However, the reasons why a student "stopped out", the amount of education they completed before they left, and their current family and/or work commitments may influence whether they actually apply for admission or re-admission.

Other research suggests that a potential mature student undergoes an "identity shift" before actually applying for admission, and in order to actually apply, must perceive themselves as a student, or as a possible participant in higher education (Davies & Williams, 2001). Interestingly, the construction of this new identity usually does not involve a specific post-secondary institution, but is more around participation in post-secondary education in general. However, specific features of particular post-secondary institutions - such as relevant courses or programs, the availability of support services, and tuition fees - become more important once a general decision to apply for admission has been made, and the potential student is assessing and comparing options.

The potential student's perceived ability to balance institutional or program requirements with other commitments and responsibilities usually figures heavily in his or her decision making. However, even if an institution is perceived as being highly supportive of mature students, potential mature students still may not apply for admission if they perceive that their other commitments and responsibilities will be too onerous to combine with any form of post-secondary education. Davies & Williams (2001, p. 192) also note that "a very significant factor [in the decision process is] the availability, nature, reliability, and timing of information". Incomplete, insufficient, or late information can discourage mature students from applying for admission, or make them decide not to enter post-secondary education at all. Some mature students also indicated that they were unaware of any opportunity for someone of their age or experience to attend university, and only found out about this possibility through a chance encounter with an acquaintance or business associate (Stone, 2008).

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Mature Student Admission through a Foundational or Bridging Program

A number of jurisdictions, primarily in the United Kingdom and Australia, provide a route for mature student admission through foundational or bridging programs. Mature students may be required to complete such programs prior to applying for admission to a credential-granting post-secondary program; completing the program may give them a higher admission priority and/or access to designated funding. Depending on the type of program the student plans to enter, the foundational or bridging program may be optional or compulsory, although in many compulsory programs students can be exempted from program components if they can demonstrate adequate knowledge of the content (Kenny, Kidd, Nankervis & Connell, 2011).

Foundational or bridging programs have been identified as significant not only in upgrading students' academic skills, but also in socializing their participants into the role of "student" and instilling the belief that participants are capable of university-level studies (Lovell, 1980). Students who choose to take a foundational program report doing so for a variety of reasons:

- their previous educational qualifications did not prepare them to enter the field of study they now wished to pursue;
- completing the foundational program reduced the amount of academic work needed to complete the desired credential;
- qualifying for admission through completing the foundational program was faster than acquiring the credentials needed to qualify for other admission categories;
- funding was available to support their enrollment in the foundational program; and/or,
- the scheduling of the foundational program's courses was more convenient than the scheduling of courses associated with other admission categories (Reddy & Moores, 2008).

Although these programs were designed to increase access to post-secondary education for students from under-represented social groups, some jurisdictions are seeing increasing numbers of students from "non-disadvantaged" groups. These students enroll in the programs to improve their confidence, transferable skills, or subject knowledge, or because they perceive that it is easier for mature students to gain post-secondary admission through these programs than by applying through other routes (Waller, 2006).

Some European countries also allow mature students to be admitted to higher education through different forms of validation of prior learning and work experience (Orr, 2010). Generally, this type of admission is only open to students above a certain age and/or with a specified minimum amount of work experience. In some countries, students must pass a special entrance examination to be eligible for admittance in this category.

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The Effect of Non-Academic Factors on Academic Performance

Some research suggests that even if mature students are admitted to post-secondary education with adequate academic preparation, non-academic factors specific to this student group may hinder their academic progress. Students entering through foundational programs may be more likely to withdraw or fail than students entering by traditional admission routes, although the number of mature students withdrawing or failing may vary between different subjects or disciplines (Reddy & Moores, 2008). Mature students who do not complete their programs often leave their studies "because of external circumstances that required their presence at home or in paid employment", not because of unsatisfactory academic performance (Ozga & Sukhnandan, 1998, p. 327).

Although mature students may come from a range of social and economic classes,
students from lower social and/or economic classes, once enrolled,
are likely to perform as well academically as students from other backgrounds.

The Effect of Admission Category on Academic Performance

Some research on mature students compares their academic performance after admission with students who were admitted in other admission categories. Older mature students tend to perform better than younger mature students; however, mature students without a high school qualification who enter through a bridging program may not perform as well as mature students who enter through other forms of alternative admission (Cantwell, Archer & Bourke, 2001). Mature students who enter through a bridging program, regardless of high school qualifications, may have a slightly lower passing rate in their courses and may also be more likely to get marks in the C and D range; however, female mature students are more likely to get passing grades than male mature students (Osborne, Leopold & Ferrie, 1997). Mature students may perform less strongly in the first two years of study than students admitted in other admission categories, but such differences tend to disappear in upper-level courses (Lumb & Vail, 2004). Although mature students may come from a range of social and economic classes, students from lower social and/or economic classes, once enrolled, are likely to perform as well academically as students from other backgrounds (O'Shea & Stone, 2011). It has also been suggested that students entering post-secondary studies from a foundational or bridging program tend to have better academic performance when the program is offered at the same post-secondary institution they enroll in for subsequent study (Osborne, Leopold & Ferrie, 1997).

The Effect of Institutional Policies & Practices

Mature students' difficulty in managing work and life commitments within the traditional structures and operations of post-secondary institutions is a consistent theme in the mature student literature. Osborne, Marks & Turner (2004, p. 309) describe this challenge as "so finely balanced that any small change in personal circumstances can reverse the decision [to apply for admission]". Among the institutional policies and practices that are identified as problematic are

class timetabling that does not fit the schedules of working adults or parents; strict attendance requirements; and lack of easily accessible information about options for mature students, including financial aid. Inflexibility and lack of certainty in the admissions process may also discourage mature students from applying, even if an applicant's academic options are limited because they cannot move themselves or their family elsewhere (Mathers & Parry, 2010).

The availability of institutional support services for mature students, including support during the admissions process, has also been identified as having a significant impact on mature students' enrollment and retention (Tones, Fraser, Elder, & White, 2009). The usefulness of a particular form of support for a mature student depends on the student's characteristics – for example, study skills workshops may be more useful to newer students with more limited academic experience. The forms of institutional support that were rated most highly by mature students were financial aid, counseling, staff awareness of mature student issues, and general assistance with adjustment to post-secondary education. Notably, mature students reported that the major barrier to using institutional support services was the services not being available when needed or convenient, which was a particular problem for part-time and/or evening-only students (Tones, Fraser, Elder & White, 2009).

Review:

Mature Student Admissions Policies
at BC Transfer System Member Institutions

This section summarizes admission policies relating to mature students at BC Transfer System member institutions. It is important to note that these summaries describe general or institutional-level admission only. Students admitted to an institution in any admission category, including mature student admission or its equivalent, may have to fulfill additional admission requirements for the specific program or course(s) in which they wish to enroll.

The information in this section was collected in April and May of 2012 from the institutional websites of all 39 post-secondary institutions that are members of the BC Transfer System. Once the information was assembled and organized, it was sent to institutional registrars for their review. Several registrars provided changes or corrections to the information about their institution.

All 39 BC Transfer System member institutions have a specific category for mature student admissions (30 institutions) or another admission category which could accommodate mature student applications (nine institutions). To facilitate an overview of the broader characteristics of these 39 policies, each policy has been placed in one of four categories: minimal requirements, broad requirements, broadest requirements, and other relevant types of admission. The categories are based on the number and scope of requirements of each institution's relevant policy, and are structured so that relatively comparable policies can be assessed alongside each other. A table for each of these four categories, listing the details of each institution's policy, is included at the end of this document (Tables 1-4). Two additional tables summarize the minimum age requirements (Table 5a) and English proficiency requirements (Table 5b), which are the two characteristics common to all 30 institutions with a specific mature student admissions category. The general characteristics of the policies in each category are summarized in the sections below.

Mature Student Admission: Minimal Requirements *(Table 1, page 15)*

Fourteen BC Transfer System member institutions (36%) have a mature student admission category involving some combination of a minimum age requirement and achievement of an English proficiency standard.

Eight of these 14 institutions have set 19 as the minimum age for application, registration, or attendance as a mature student. Two institutions have a minimum age of 21, one has a minimum age of 18, and two do not specify a minimum age. One institution (Douglas College) sets the minimum age at 19 on the first day of classes or at 17 if the applicant has been out of school for one year.

Twelve of these 14 institutions state that mature student applicants must meet the institution's general admission English language requirements, or do not specify an English language requirement especially for mature students. We interpret the latter to mean that the general admission English language requirement is used as the English proficiency standard for this category. Alexander College requires BC English 12 with a grade of C+ for domestic mature student applicants, and a minimum score on any of a number of externally-administered tests for international applicants. Emily Carr University of Art + Design requires a minimum grade of C in a senior-level English literature course.

Mature Student Admission: Broad Requirements *(Table 2, page 16)*

Six BC Transfer System member institutions (15%) have a mature student admission category including some combination of a minimum age requirement, high school graduation status and/or minimum amount of time away from school, English proficiency, additional skill verification, or additional required documentation.

Two of these six institutions have set 19 as the minimum age for mature student admission, two have set 21 as the minimum age, and one has set 20 as the minimum age. One (Yukon College) has a minimum age of 19, or 17 if the applicant has been out of school for at least one year.

Two institutions (Okanagan College and Trinity Western University) require that the applicant must have been out of school for at least one year prior to application or enrollment; Thompson Rivers University requires that the applicant must have been out of school for at least two years. However, Trinity Western requires that the applicant also have a high school diploma or equivalent, which Okanagan and TRU do not. The other three institutions do not require high school completion.

Every institution in this category uses either the institution's general admission English proficiency requirements for the purposes of mature student admission, or does not specify an English proficiency requirement.

Two institutions in this category require additional skill verification in the form of testing. Two require evidence of work experience or other documentation. One (Trinity Western University) requires additional coursework if the applicant does not have a high school diploma.

Mature Student Admission: Broadest Requirements *(Table 3, page 17)*

Ten BC Transfer System member institutions (26%) have a mature student admission category with requirements including some combination of an age limit, high school graduation status, English proficiency, additional skill verification, or additional required documentation. The institutions in this category also have restrictions on which programs students can apply to and/or restrictions on the use of the mature student entry status.

Three of these 10 institutions have a minimum age of 19 for application or enrollment as a mature student. Three have a minimum age of 21. One (Capilano University) has a minimum application age of 20, and two (Simon Fraser University and North Island College) have a minimum application age of 23. UBC Vancouver and UBC Okanagan do not specify a minimum application age, but require that the applicant must have been out of full-time studies for at least four years prior to the date of application.

The additional skill verification or documentation required by these institutions generally involves transcripts, personal profiles, references, and/or resumes, or specialized evaluation or assessment of each application, possibly including a personal interview.

Among the additional restrictions found in policies in this category, the three that are most notable involve restrictions on mature student enrollments. Both UBC Vancouver and UBC Okanagan only permit mature students to apply for enrollment in specified programs. North Island College (NIC) requires students to declare their admission status as mature students if they wish to have course pre-requisites waived, but only permits these waivers in the first year of study in specific courses and programs. Four institutions (NIC, Simon Fraser University, and the University of Northern BC in this category, and Emily Carr in the "minimal requirements" category) also require mature student applicants to be Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

It should also be noted that, among all the institutions reviewed, UBC Vancouver, UBC Okanagan, Simon Fraser University, and the University of Victoria make the most explicit statements about the probability of admission for mature student applicants. Both UBC campuses state on their websites: *"Since the 'Mature applicant' category is very competitive, we recommend that you also apply to your local college for their university transfer program"* and recommend refresher courses for mature students applying for admission to programs in the Faculty of Science. The University of Victoria explicitly states that the "number of applicants admitted under this category is limited". SFU's website states: *"We give preference to applicants who have successfully completed some post-secondary work, usually four transferable academic courses (12 units), and ensured that they have no background deficiencies in essay writing, mathematics, etc."* Additionally, *"[a]pplicants for degree programs are expected to meet the literacy and quantitative and analytical skills competency requirements specified for transfer students".* Although none of these four institutions offers foundational or bridging programs for mature student applicants, their references to university transfer programs and previous post-secondary academic work indicate an expectation similar to the intent of such programs: that admission as a mature student is partially based on adequate performance in post-secondary academic courses.

Other Relevant Types of Admission *(Table 4, page 18)*

Nine BC Transfer System member institutions (23%) do not have a specific mature student admission category, but have an admission category which could accommodate mature students. Two of these institutions have open admission policies, three have a "special admission" or "flexible admission" category, and four have general policies on minimum applicant age and/or English proficiency.

System-Wide Summary *(Tables 5a and 5b, page 19)*

These two tables summarize the demographic characteristics of the two admission requirements – minimum age requirement and English proficiency requirement – that are present in all of the 30 mature student admission policies in the BC Transfer System.

Policy Definitions of "Mature Student"

Five BC Transfer System member institutions (13%) appear to have policies defining the term "mature student" for the purposes of admission or registration. The definitions in these policies are presented in Table 6. (See appendices.)

Recommendations:

Recommendations for Possible Research Directions

As indicated by the literature review, mature students are an extremely diverse group whose admission to post-secondary education is affected by many institutional, demographic, and personal factors. Accordingly, within the BC Transfer System, there are also many different types of mature student admission policies, with each policy containing some degree of flexibility to accommodate mature students with different types of experience and qualifications.

While this flexibility is undoubtedly appropriate to the student demographic these policies are intended to address, it nevertheless creates a challenging environment within which to assess the effectiveness of mature student admission as a pathway into the BC post-secondary system. Because of the variations in institutional policies and in students' qualifications, it may be difficult or impossible to conclusively identify, using admission category, a population of mature students which differs in any meaningful way from large numbers of students admitted in other categories. As well, given the interest in studying barriers to admission, there is also the challenge of identifying those potential students for whom barriers discouraged even any formal contact with the institution. Finally, there is the fact that admission standards are established to facilitate student success. If some mature student applicants are not being admitted, that may not be because admission standards are creating an unduly rigid barrier, but because those applicants' qualifications may not give them a reasonable chance of academic success.

Another consideration that is raised by the research literature is the experiences of mature students once they are admitted. If, after the student has been admitted, there is inadequate institutional support for them to continue or complete their studies, what is the value of admission to the student, the institution, or the community? As the research literature indicates, mature students are likely to have significant non-academic commitments such as jobs or family responsibilities, which may make institutional support more critical for them than for other types of students. Therefore, admission policies should not be examined in isolation, since post-admission policies or practices may also affect a mature student's opportunities for academic success.

Another important consideration is that in most of the policies reviewed here, admission is in reality a two-stage process. The student must first be accepted to the institution, and then must apply and be accepted to the program of their choice (with the exception of the Justice Institute of BC, where applicants are first admitted to the program and then to the institution). This preliminary review has only examined institutional admissions policies. If mature students are admitted to the institution, but then do not have the qualifications to be accepted into their chosen program, that is obviously a significant barrier to their academic success, but one that cannot be identified by examining institutional admission policies in isolation.

> *Mature students are likely to have significant non-academic commitments such as jobs or family responsibilities, which may make institutional support more critical for them than for other types of students.*

With these caveats in mind, the potential research directions described below may provide a better understanding of the effectiveness and/or appropriateness of BC post-secondary institutions' mature student admission policies.

- The research literature on mature students identifies accuracy, timeliness and availability of information as key factors in potential mature students' decision to apply for admission. Therefore, a potentially valuable research direction would be to assess whether BC post-secondary institutions are facilitating mature student applications by making application information for mature students easily accessible, and to examine what successful practices exist in this area.

A comparison of the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful mature student applicants might identify any parts of mature student admissions policies that pose consistent barriers to admission.

- A comparative study (across years and/or institutions) of numbers of applicants and numbers of admissions in the mature student category would indicate whether there is historical, geographic, or institutional variation in the use of this admission category, or in the success rate of applicants. These numbers could also be compared with application and admission rates in other admission categories; significant differences might suggest the need for a closer examination of the reasons for the variations.

- Another potential research direction is a review of demographic characteristics of mature student applicants, including such characteristics as age, previous educational experience or qualifications, and/or work experience. This information could potentially illustrate whether the institutional criteria for admission in this category are consistent with or appropriate for the qualifications of the applicants using this admission category. It might also be possible to infer from this information whether applicants appear to have the same types of reasons for applying that are suggested in the research literature.

- An applicant who qualifies as a mature student might also qualify to apply in other admission categories (e.g. regular admission, transfer-based admission). A review of the usage of the mature student admission category by eligible applicants, in comparison to their use of other admission categories, might provide insight into why applicants choose to apply for admission as mature students. This comparison could be carried out by identifying applicants who meet or exceed the age limit in the institution's mature student policy, and analyzing how many of these students applied for admission as mature students. This could include an examination of differences between students eligible for mature student admission who did and did not apply in this admission category.

- A comparison of the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful mature student applicants might identify any parts of mature student admissions policies that pose consistent barriers to admission. Additionally, many BC mature student admission policies require qualitative elements in applications (e.g. personal statement, references, resume). The institutional staff responsible for reviewing these applications and/or deciding on applicants' admissibility could be interviewed or surveyed to ascertain how these qualitative elements are assessed, and the effect that they have on the decision whether to offer admission to an applicant.

- A related research direction could investigate what happens to applicants who are unsuccessful in being admitted as mature students, if it is possible to track this information. Do they reapply under other admission categories at the same institution? Do they apply at other institutions, as mature students or in other admission categories? This information could be useful in determining whether or how mature student admission policies are fulfilling the role that institutions intend these to fulfill in the admissions process.

- An assessment of the academic experiences of students admitted as mature students might be particularly useful if it were able to examine whether mature students were successful in gaining admittance to the institution *and* in gaining admittance to their program of choice. Discrepancies between institutional admission policies and departmental or program admissions policies potentially pose a significant barrier to mature students' academic progress and success. Focusing attention on the degree of alignment between institutional and program admission policies may assist in the development of institutional, program and/or department policies which will enhance mature students' opportunities for success.

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Appendices

TABLE 1

MATURE STUDENT ADMISSIONS POLICIES IN BC TRANSFER SYSTEM MEMBER INSTITUTIONS:
Minimum Requirements

Institution	Minimum Age Requirement	High School Graduation	English Proficiency	Other Requirements
Acsenda School of Management	19	Not required	General admission English proficiency requirements	College determines whether applicant can be classified or admissible as mature student
Alexander College	19 on the first day of classes	Not required	Domestic students: BC English 12 with grade of C+ International students: Minimum score on external test	
BC Institute of Technology	Non specific (must be at least 16 to apply for general admission)	Depends on program	General admission English proficiency requirements	
Camosun College	19 at the start of first academic term	Not required	No specification	
College of the Rockies	19 on the first day of classes	Not required	No specification	
Douglas College	19 on the first day of class or 17 and out of school for at least one year	Not required	General admission English proficiency requirements	
Emily Carr University of Art + Design	21	Not required	At least a C grade in a senior level English literature course	Must be Canadian resident
Justice Institute of BC	25	Not required	No specification	Must demonstrate appropriate knowledge, skills and other attributes for success in chosen program
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	19 on the first day of class	Not required	General admission English proficiency requirements	
Langara College	19 on the first day of class	Not required	General admission English proficiency requirements	
Quest University	None specified	Not required; applicant must not have attempted full-time studies in the last five years	Individually assessed by interview; ability to communicate at post-secondary level	Application will be assessed based on likelihood of success at the university

Selkirk College	19 at the time of registration	Not required; applicant must not be a secondary school graduate or equivalent	No specification	
Vancouver Community College	18	Not required	No specification	
Vancouver Island University	21	Not required	Minimum C grade in English 12	

TABLE 2

MATURE STUDENT ADMISSIONS POLICIES AT BC TRANSFER SYSTEM MEMBER INSTITUTIONS:

Broad Requirements

Institution	Minimum Age Requirement	High School Graduation	English Proficiency	Additional Skill Verification
Art Institute of Vancouver	20 at the start date of program	Not required	Not specified	Must achieve minimum passing scores on Accuplacer tests for Reading Comprehension, Sentence Skills, and Arithmetic
Fraser International College	21	Not required	No specification	Documented and relevant work experience and/or other acceptable qualification
Okanagan College	19	Not required; must have been out of full-time secondary school for one year prior to program commencement	General admission English proficiency requirements	
Thompson Rivers University	19	Not required; must have been out of school for at least two years	None specified	Applicant can be considered for admission if s/he lacks grade level requirement for pre-requisites, but must still meet individual program and course pre-requisites
Trinity Western University	21	Must have high school diploma or equivalent and have been out of school for at least one year	None specified	GED with minimum average score of 500 and minimum score of 450 on all sections, or BC Adult Graduation Diploma with four provincial academic courses including English and minimum average of 67 percent, accepted in lieu of high school diploma
Yukon College	19, or 17 and has not attended school for one year or longer	Not required	None specified	Must complete College Assessments if lacking academic pre-requisites for program entry

TABLE 3

MATURE STUDENT ADMISSIONS POLICIES AT BC TRANSFER SYSTEM MEMBER INSTITUTIONS:

Broadest Requirements

Institution	Minimum Age Requirement	High School Graduation	English Proficiency	Additional Skill Verification or Documentation Required	Restrictios or Other Conditions
Capilano University	20	Not required	Must meet general admission English language requirements	Written detail or other qualifications or experiences; academic transcripts for any completed education	Interview with academic advisor or program coordinator may be required
College of New Caledonia	19 on the first day of the term for which admission is sought	Not required; must have been out of the regular school system for at least one year	None specified	Must meet with counselor, administrator or instructor before submitting an application	Must meet or be exempted from specific program requirements or course pre-requisites
Corpus Christi College	19	Not required; must have been out of formal education for at least 18 months	None specified	Once student has earned a minimum of nine credits with a minimum GPA of 2.0, s/he can apply to Registrar to be evaluated for admission to Liberal Arts Diploma program	
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	19	Not required; must have been out of school for at least one year	None specified	If student does not meet minimum educational requirements for desired program, they may demonstrate requirements through assessment and/or upgrading courses	Other factors such as maturity and work experience may be considered in some programs
North Island College	23	Not required	None specified	Must meet citizenship and immigration requirements	Mature Student policy allows for course pre-requisites to be waived in the first year in selected disciplines within the University Studies program
Simon Fraser University	23	Not required	Must meet competency requirements specified for transfer students	Must not have attempted more than 24 units of transferable course work; must submit personal information profile and at least one letter of reference	Must be Canadian citizen or permanent resident
University Canada West	21 on first day of classes	Not required; must have been out of school for at least two years, and must submit high school transcript	None specified	Must submit any post-secondary transcripts, resume, and letter of intent	Must maintain an overall GPA of 2.0 to continue in the program; Admissions Committee may impose other conditions

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University of BC-Vancouver and University of BC-Okanagan	None specified	Not required; must have been out of full-time formal education for at least four years	Must meet general admission English language requirements	Must submit high school and post-secondary transcripts, statement of intent, resume, and two written references	Mature students can only apply to certain programs; UBC reserves right to determine if applicant is eligible to apply under "mature" category
University of Northern BC	21 on or before the first day of classes	Not required; must have been out of secondary school for at least three years	None specified	Must submit post-secondary transcripts and resume	Must not have attempted more than 15 post-secondary academic credits; must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents; can be admitted on probationary basis at university's discretion

TABLE 4

OTHER RELEVANT ADMISSION CATEGORIES AT BC TRANSFER SYSTEM MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

Institution	Admission Requirements
Athabasca University	Must be at least 16 years old
Columbia College	If at least 19 years old, can complete Columbia's Adult Secondary Graduation Diploma and then enter University Transfer Program.
Coquitlam College	For university transfer program: must be at least 15 years old, with high school completion and fluency in English at a university level (externally or internally tested). For English studies program: must be at least 15 years old.
Fairleigh Dickinson University	Must meet English proficiency standard
Northwest Community College	Open admission
Royal Roads University	"Flexible admission" category: must submit statement of intent, resume, and two letters of reference. Other documentation, testing or information may be requested.
Thompson Rivers University	Open admission
University of the Fraser Valley	"Special admission" category; must not meet general admission requirements (high school graduate or at least 19 years old). Must submit letter explaining reason for application in this category; transcript of all Grade 11 & 12 grades; letter of recommendation from UFV advisor or counselor; and any additional documentation (e.g. doctor's letter).
University of Victoria	"Special access" category; must be at least 23 years old at the start of the session applied for, be a resident of B.C., and not qualify under regular categories of admission. A personal letter and two references are required. Applicants whose first language is not English must provide proof of English language proficiency. The number of applicants admitted under this category is limited. Applicants who have attempted a full year or equivalent of university-level courses cannot apply in this category.

TABLE 5a

MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR MATURE STUDENT ADMISSION

(n=30)

Minimum Age	Number of Institutions with this Requirement*
16	1
17**	2
18	1
19	15
20	2
21	5
23	2
25	1
No specification	3

*Minimum age required for application, and/or acceptance, and/or enrollment, and/or attendance.

**The two institutions with this minimum age standard (Yukon College and Douglas College) only allow application at this age if the applicant has been out of school for at least one year; otherwise, the minimum age for application in this category is 19. Both age requirements are counted in this table.

TABLE 5b

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR MATURE STUDENT ADMISSION

(n=30)

English Language Proficiency Requirements	Number of Institutions with this Requirement
General admission English proficiency requirement	8
None specified for mature student category	18
Other	4

TABLE 6

DEFINITIONS OF "MATURE STUDENT" IN POLICIES OF BC TRANSFER SYSTEM MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

Institution	Policy Number and/or Name	Policy Definition of "Mature Student"
BC Institute of Technology	5003 Admissions	A person will be considered for admission as long as they meet or exceed the program entrance requirements. [For general admission, at the time of enrolment, students must be at least 16 years of age.]
Justice Institute of BC	Admissions Policy	An individual who does not have BC Grade 12 or Grade 12 equivalence, is at least 25 years of age, and meets all other admission requirements.
North Island College	4-16 Mature Student Status	A student who is 23 years of age or older in the calendar year they will be studying and declares their status during the registration process. [Note: this policy is a registration policy.]
Selkirk College	8611 Admissions	Anyone who is not a secondary school graduate (or equivalent) but who will be nineteen (19) years of age or older on the first day of classes for the term is eligible to attend the College as a mature student.
Thompson Rivers University	ED 01-0 Student Admission	Applicants must be at least 19 years of age on the first day of attendance at the University and had no formal education experience in the last two years.