

Chapter 13 BC Transfer Process



Mary Shier

Student Success
An Invaluable Resource for
College and University Students



This resource is a chapter from the book, *Student Success: An Invaluable Resource for College and University Students* by Mary Shier, published by BCcampus Open Education, illustrated by Gordon Shier.

Note that page numbers reflect the page numbers in the full textbook.

The full text can be found at opentextbc.ca/studentsuccess, where it can be read online, downloaded, printed, or ordered.

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Shier, M. (2020). *Student Success*. Victoria, B.C.: BCcampus. Retrieved from <https://opentextbc.ca/studentsuccess/>

Introduction

Have you ever thought about transferring from one post-secondary institution to another? Or maybe you've thought about returning to school after many years, and you wonder if any of your old courses from your first (or second or third) attempt at college might still work towards something after all these years. Maybe you're considering starting a program at a college to be close to home for a couple of years and then transfer to a university farther away to finish your program. Or possibly you attained a certificate at one institution and later you want to continue to do a diploma at another institution, and you want to see if your certificate can be used for entry into the diploma program. If you've been wondering about any of these things, you will be happy to know that BC has an amazing transfer system. You will love the BC Transfer Guide! Transfer credit is when one institution recognizes education completed at another institution. The BC Transfer Guide shows all the courses which have already been evaluated and approved for transfer. It shows which institutions have agreed to accept the courses on it. If it is in the Guide, you know that it is transferable. You can find the BC Transfer Guide at [BCTransferGuide.ca](https://www.bctransferguide.ca/) (<https://www.bctransferguide.ca/>).



FIND YOUR PATH

*Study here.
Get credit there.*

BCTransferGuide.ca

Discover your transfer options

Learning Objectives

In this chapter on the “BC Transfer Process,” students will:

- Describe the BC transfer process.
- Describe the articulation process.
- Define the following terms and describe how they relate to the transfer process: transfer credit, application for transfer credit, letter of permission, course outlines, block transfer, inter-provincial transfer.
- List reasons post-secondary students would transfer between institutions.
- Use the BC Transfer Guide.

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13.1 Transferring Between Post-secondary Institutions

British Columbia has an amazing transfer process. In fact, it is said to be the envy of the world, and many Canadian provinces and other countries are now trying to emulate it. A strong transfer process makes it much more convenient and flexible for students. This is not to be taken for granted.

Author's Story: A Transfer Nightmare

My transfer experience many years ago was a nightmare. I did my first year of engineering at one university and transferred into engineering at a different university in the same province (not BC) for my second year.

Transferring from one university to another was a job in itself. There were no transfer agreements and the receiving university didn't want to accept many of the courses from the sending university even though the courses and the course outlines were virtually identical. I had to go to the dean and argue my case for *every single* course. In some circumstances, I had to go to the professors and convince them that the courses I took were of a high enough quality. One professor wanted to see my lab notebook. Another asked to see my final project from a course; I had to request it from the sending university which didn't want to comply. Still another gave me a very challenging test on the spot and insisted I pass it or I wouldn't get credit. (I did!) It was hard work getting credit for my courses and a very intimidating process that took an incredible amount of perseverance. However, I still didn't get credit for all my courses and had to repeat some.

When I came to BC and became an education advisor, I had an amazing respect and appreciation for the beautiful thing it was to have the BC Transfer Guide. I knew it was a good fit for me to be involved in the articulation process for post-secondary transfer. I regularly show students how to use the guide to do their education planning.

— Mary Shier, College of the Rockies

The British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) oversees the BC Transfer System, enabling links between the BC colleges and universities, the government education ministries, and the public and private education sectors.

Articulation Committees

Articulation committees play a critical role in facilitating smooth student mobility between educational institutions in BC. British Columbia has articulation committees for 66 subjects that are offered in BC colleges and universities. They exist for most disciplines or programs that are delivered in more than one BC post-secondary institution. Articulation committees have provincial meetings every year, with representatives from all the BC post-secondary institutions that have courses or programs in the respective subject areas. At meetings, articulation committee members share information and discuss curriculum. They develop shared learning outcomes and discuss important changes in curriculum to ensure relevancy in their fields.



The ABE Education and Career Planning articulation working committee meeting 2019. The reps at this table are from Camosun College, College of the Rockies, Vancouver Island University, Vancouver Community College, Thompson Rivers University, Selkirk College, University of the Fraser Valley, Coast Mountain College, and College of New Caledonia. This is just one of 66 committees that meet annually.

Each university and college has a voice at the table. The representatives discuss and agree on standards that they will use to decide whether courses will transfer from one institution to another. Sometimes whole programs are transferable. If you do a certificate or diploma at a college, it could have a prearranged **block transfer** allowing you to enter year two or three of a university degree program respectively.

See Articulation Committees (<https://www.bccat.ca/articulation/committees>) for more information.



Representatives from colleges and universities throughout BC meet to ensure smooth transfer between institutions. (The BCCAT Joint Annual Meeting JAM 2019 in Vancouver.)



"Transfer" is what happens when one institution gives you credit for education you've completed at another institution.

If you get admitted to your new program, and if the courses you've taken are a good match, you can use the credits you've already earned towards your credential.



You can combine courses taken at different institutions to get your credential. [What is Transfer? Image Description]

Reasons to Transfer

Sometimes transferring institutions wasn't in the original educational plan. It may have been necessary for many different reasons. Sometimes transferring is in the plan from the start. Some students like the idea of doing their first year or two at a more convenient institution and then move to a bigger institution for their final years. Here are some of the reasons people build it into their original plans.



WHY TRANSFER?

Every year, **thousands** of students transfer between BC post-secondary institutions for many different reasons.

↳ Whether or not students **originally plan to transfer**, flexible pathways can help them achieve their post-secondary goals.

Students often start at smaller colleges and transfer to larger institutions for the later part of their credential.

There have been studies done to evaluate the impact of transferring on students. In fact, it has been shown that there are many benefits for students to build transfer into their educational plan. Students who have transferred from one post-secondary institution to another have shown great student outcomes and were just as successful as students who entered university directly from high school. See Transfer Research (<https://www.bccat.ca/research/tour/transfer>) for more information. ()

TRANSFER SUCCESS



Studies show that transfer students are:
>**very satisfied** with their transfer experience, and
>**just as successful** in their post-secondary studies
as those who enter directly from high school.

54,000+

students move between
BC public institutions
every year.

45%

of bachelor graduates attend
more than one BC public
post-secondary institution.

34%

of annual enrolments at BC's
research universities are
transfer students.

Students are transferring between post-secondary institutions more than you might expect. [Transfer Success Image Description]

Transferring between institutions and/or using courses from other institutions towards your credential is becoming more and more prevalent. In this age of people moving locations, changing career goals, and juggling more and more circumstances while getting their education, transferring becomes increasingly more practical. No longer does transfer seem like a correction in someone's educational path, but rather has become a part of people's educational plan.

Image Descriptions

()What is Transfer?: “Transfer” is what happens when one institution gives you credit for education you've completed at another institution.

If you are admitted to your new program, and if the courses you've taken are a good match, you can use the credits you've already earned towards your credential.

Process: Earn credits by completing courses at one institution. Then transfer credits and complete courses at another institution. Then complete your studies!

[Return to What is Transfer? image]

()Transfer Success: Studies show that transfer students are very satisfied with their transfer experience and just as successful in their post-secondary studies as those who enter directly from high school:

- 54,000 students move between BC public institutions every year.
- 45% of bachelor graduates attend more than one BC public post-secondary institution.
- 34% of annual enrolments at BC's research universities are transfer students.

[Return to Transfer Success image]

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13.2 Transfer Guides

The BC Transfer Guide

The BC Transfer Guide (<https://www.bctransferguide.ca/>) is available online and students can check to see if a course or program is transferable. Often courses are very similar in several institutions and are deemed transferable. When the content of a course at one institution is the same (or very close) to the content of a course at another institution, the other institution will give a student credit for its own course if the student has completed the course at the first institution. This is called **transfer credit**. It doesn't matter how the course is taught (e.g. face to face, distance, or online) and it doesn't matter if the assignments are the same. However, it does matter that the same content is taught, that the course meets the minimum number of hours, that it is an academic course, and that it is evaluated, to ensure the courses are similar.

Your Transfer Checklist:

If you are thinking about transferring, keep the following things in mind:

- Search BCTransferGuide.ca to see how your courses would transfer. (How much credit would the new institution give you?)
- Check out other transfer pathway options (e.g. block transfer, degree partnerships).
- Hang on to your course outlines! (This is how institutions determine the transferability of a course or program.)
- Request transfer credit when you move to another institution. (Credits are only transferred after a student has applied and gained admission to the new post-secondary institution.)

Updating the BC Transfer Guide is a continual process. New courses and programs are developed all the time and these can be sent to other institutions to see if they will be accepted for transfer credit at those institutions. Sometimes courses are revised and are added to or removed from the transfer grid. The online guide is regularly updated, so if what you were looking for wasn't there when you checked previously, don't assume that it still is not there. New courses and new institutional agreements are being developed and added regularly.

Not that long ago, the BC Transfer Guide was intended for enabling the transfer of post-secondary students throughout BC. But the BC transfer system now includes two post-secondary schools outside of BC (Yukon College and Athabasca University) so transfer agreements with those schools are included in the Guide. In many cases, universities from other provinces accept transfer from BC's colleges when the courses are listed as transferable to the major BC universities on the BC Transfer Guide.

In other words, educational institutions in other provinces respect and accept the rigorous process for determining transferability that BC uses, and thus will accept our transferable courses accordingly.

The Alberta Transfer Guide

The Alberta Transfer Guide (<http://transferalberta.alberta.ca/transfer-alberta-search/#/audienceTypeStep>) shows transfer options between Alberta institutions. These guides are being updated continually, and more inter-province agreements are being developed and added to the BC and Alberta Guides regularly.

Make Sure to Check

There are several things you need to check if you plan to apply for transfer credit.

1. Are the courses you have taken, or plan to take, transferable to the institution you plan to transfer to?
2. If so, do your courses meet all the criteria?
 - Did you pass?
 - Does your grade in the course meet the minimum grade for transfer? Some institutions will not accept the course for transfer credit if your grade in the course is below a certain level.
 - Does the course have an expiry date for transfer? Some courses (not all) will not be accepted for transfer after a specific amount of time has passed.
3. If your courses are transferable, are they courses that qualify to give you credit towards the program you want to take? For example, a human anatomy course may give you credit toward a nursing program, but might not give you any credit toward a plumbing trade.

Student Testimonial

“Like so many Aboriginal students, I really struggled in school and was not academically ready for university study. The smaller classes, student community, and my family all supported me while at the college. Were it not for Langara College, I never would have been able to attend UBC, graduate with a Bachelor’s Degree, and begin my career in higher education.”

— Graeme Joseph, a Langara-to-UBC transfer student and member of the Gitksan Nation (as cited in a September 2016 BC Government news article).

Not on the Transfer Guide?

If you can't find a course or program in the Transfer Guide, it doesn't necessarily mean you won't get credit for your courses. If a course doesn't show up as transferable, it's possible that it doesn't meet the criteria. However, it may mean that the course hasn't been evaluated for transfer yet. The courses may be new or may have been recently amended. Even if it doesn't transfer, it doesn't mean that the course isn't valuable or good quality. It may just mean that other institutions don't offer a similar course.

Most institutions have ***Application for Transfer Credit*** forms which you can often download from their websites. If courses are listed in the BC Transfer Guide, it's a fairly straight forward process. If you think you should get credit for relevant courses that aren't in the Guide, compare the courses you took with the courses required for your intended program and, if you think there is a close match, you may be able to get credit for the courses, and save yourself some time and money by not having to repeat the courses in the new institution. Here's where **course outlines** come in very handy. If you compare the learning outcomes of the course you took with the course you want to get credit for, and if they are very similar, it may be worth applying for transfer credit. Usually, you will need to apply for admission into the program before applying for transfer credit.

If you haven't taken the course yet, but you want to take a course from another institution than the program you are in or intend to attend, you will need a ***Letter of Permission*** from the institution you are enrolled in. It is important to submit this form before taking the course, so that you get it in writing that you will receive transfer credit. There are several reasons someone might want to take a course from a different institution than the one their program is in.

- A student fails a course and needs to repeat it but can't fit it into their existing full time schedule. It may work better to take it from another institution that offers it by distance or over the summer.
- A student wants to take a course prior to starting in a program to lighten their load once they do start.
- It is offered in a different format, which you prefer.
- It is offered by a different instructor, whom you prefer.
- It is significantly cheaper at one institution than another.
- You want to take a specific **elective** that isn't offered in the institution that you are taking the program from.

Student Testimonial

"The complexity of these different pathways completely flipped my thinking: education isn't a progression from point A to point B. It's a process that is fluid, complex, dynamic, and individual."

— Daniel Jacinto, UBC student

Regardless of whether you are filling out an Application for Transfer Credit or a Letter of Permission,

you will want to include course outlines of the courses from the outside institution. They will be required in order for the registrar to grant credit. Course outlines are usually provided on the first day of class and are official documents that describe the courses. It is important to keep these. Often when people are applying for transfer credit, they have their transcripts with grades, but this only contains the name of the course, not the course details. Note course outlines are not usually required for courses listed on the BC Transfer Guide, since these courses have already been evaluated for transfer.

Author's Tip

Keep course outlines! (Even if you aren't thinking of transferring.) You never know what educational program you may want to take in the future. Course outlines are invaluable for getting transfer credit later on. Even if you love to burn all your notes at the end of a course, save and file those course outlines!

— Mary Shier, College of the Rockies



Ruth Erskine

“The BC Transfer System and the BC Transfer Guide are part of one of the most complete and most successful transfer systems anywhere. The BC system is successful because BC's universities and colleges know how important it is for students to have as many options as possible and to be able to easily move from school to school. Every year it is very exciting to attend the meetings of the articulation committees and to see how excited the representatives are about creating the best opportunities for students.”

— Ruth Erskine, BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT)

Students have more opportunities to transfer between institutions than ever before. This means that students can be creative in how they will meet their educational goals. Students can change programs and possibly use some of their credits toward their new program or start a program at one institution and finish at another allowing for personal circumstances to be considered. These can include location, cost, size of classes, proximity to home, and many other factors. Talk to an education advisor about your options.

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13.3 Chapter Review and Activities

Exercise: BC Transfer Process

1. Describe how the articulation process facilitates transfer between post-secondary institutions.
2. Define the following terms and describe how they relate to the transfer process: transfer credit, application for transfer credit, letter of permission, block transfer, course outlines, inter-provincial transfer.
3. List reasons why post-secondary students would transfer between institutions.

Exercise: Use the BC Transfer Guide

1. Choose a college course that you have taken or would like to take. Make sure you know the course code. Go to the BC Transfer Guide online and use the Course Look up. Using the “From this course” option, choose the institution and the course code. Find out what institutions, if any, accept the course for transfer. Were there any conditions?
2. Use the Course Look Up and the “To this course” option to find out how many institutions accept College of the Rockies (COTR) English 100 course. Name the course that students would get transfer credit for at the University of British Columbia (UBC) for this course. Note that equivalent courses have different course codes at different institutions.
3. How easy was it to use the Guide?

Key Takeaways

Transferring between post-secondary institutions can be a very smooth process.

- You can transfer courses between institutions using the BC Transfer Guide.
- Often courses taken years earlier can be applied to current programs.
- There are some block transfer agreements where whole programs can be applied to another program, such as getting transfer credit for a one year certificate towards a two-year diploma or

four-year degree.

- Courses must be complete before attempting to transfer. Transferring mid-semester is not advised. You won't get credit for half a course.
- You can often streamline your educational plan by making use of the BC Transfer Guide throughout your educational journey.
- Keep your course outlines forever! They are invaluable for course transfers. They are often difficult to obtain years after the fact because courses change over time. You want the course outline that describes the course that you took.
- The BC transfer process can aid in the process to transfer inter-provincially.

Students are more mobile than ever. Students moving to new communities may need to do so in the middle of an educational program. Rather than quit, they can transfer to another institution. Rather than starting over, they can try to transfer many of their completed courses into their new program and institution.

Students may also change their program of study, as they change their minds about their career goals. Changing programs may mean changing institutions. You can look at the course requirements of the new program and evaluate which courses you have completed that might fit for courses required for your intended program. Then you can apply for transfer credit for those courses. Courses in the BC Transfer Guide are already transferable, so as long as they'll work towards your program requirements, you should get credit for them.

Having this ability to transfer courses and, in some cases, certificates and diplomas, means greater flexibility for students. It opens up options for students who may not otherwise be able to complete programs and get their post-secondary credentials.