

Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

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MANDATE AND ROLES

August 30, 2013

1. Mission

The mission of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) is to be a catalyst for beneficial change and an advocate for learners in the areas of post-secondary admission and transfer throughout Campus Alberta. ACAT provides leadership and direction, as a cornerstone of Campus Alberta, in the improvement of educational opportunities for Alberta students through inter-institutional transfer. ACAT is committed to supporting and improving communication among Alberta post-secondary institutions and to promoting the advantages of a system of education, with all that this means for educational planning for the benefit of learners.

2. Principles

- (a) Support Campus Alberta's core objectives by facilitating learners to successfully navigate the transfer system and fostering lifelong participation in the advanced learning system.
- (b) Student access to higher education and the opportunity for student mobility among institutions of higher education in Alberta shall be optimized.
- (c) Negotiation of opportunities for student mobility shall be based on the recognition that while learning experiences may differ in a variety of ways, their substance may be virtually equivalent in terms of learning outcomes and rigour.
- (d) Effective academic advising and career counselling and optimum mobility require that the student have prior knowledge of at least the minimum transfer credit which can be awarded.
- (e) Individual institutions have the primary responsibility for instructional programs, even though responsibility for higher education is shared among various constituents. The responsibility of institutions includes program design and delivery, determination of academic prerequisites and student admission criteria, and certification of the academic achievement of students.
- (f) Institutions have the responsibility and the prerogative to investigate the total educational preparation of applicants seeking admission.
- (g) Post-secondary institutions are committed to developing and maintaining clearly stated policies and procedures for consideration of transfer credit and to applying them in a consistent manner.

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- (h) After students are granted admission to an institution under a transfer arrangement, they shall be granted the same rights and privileges as students who began their studies at the institution.

3. Mandate and Accountability

Mandate

At the request of the Universities Coordinating Council and of the heads of post-secondary institutions in the province, a Council on Admissions and Transfer was established in 1974. Created under s. 7 of the *Government Organization Act* and further affirmed by *Ministerial Order No. 65/2010*, the *Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer* ("the Council") is an advisory agency accountable to the Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education ("Minister") and, in support of Campus Alberta, responsible for providing advice and guidance regarding post-secondary admission and transfer policy. The Council's mandate is also in accordance with the *Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act*. Attached are the Terms of Reference outlining the mandate and responsibilities of the Council in more detail.

Accountability

Council members must act honestly, in good faith, leaving aside personal interests to advance the mission of ACAT and the public interest. The Council is accountable to the Minister.

Minister's Accountability

The Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education is accountable to the Legislature for the operation of the Council.

4. Duties and Responsibilities

The Council:

- Is responsible for developing, reviewing and approving an Action Plan, as well as longer term strategic plans, and monitoring throughout the year the progress made against the goals and targets established in the plan. The Council will regularly review the extent to which the Council has met the current year's Action Plan.
- Will prepare and provide to the Minister an Annual Report indicating the Council's major activities and accomplishments and the extent to which its planned activities and goals were achieved.
- Will discuss with the Minister their resource support needs and adjust its operational and strategic plans in accordance with the resource supports agreed to by the Minister and resource supports available from other sources, e.g. stakeholders represented on the Council, where applicable.
- Agrees to work with the Minister to support and promote Campus Alberta, and its goals of an accessible, affordable, quality, and sustainable post-secondary system in Alberta that fosters innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaboration.
- Will hold meetings as required, but at least 2 times a year.

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- Will engage stakeholders and the public in order to gather information and become knowledgeable about different perspectives to ensure informed advice is provided.
- Will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the advice provided to the Minister is evidence-based.
- Is responsible for overseeing compliance with all relevant policies and procedures by which the Council operates, and ensuring that the Council operates at all times in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations (including the *Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act*, *Results-Based Budgeting Act*, and *Public Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act*), the Council's Code of Conduct and to the highest ethical standards.
- An annual evaluation and review of the performance of the Council, sub-committees and the Chair of the Council will be conducted. The Council reviews the results of such evaluation and discusses potential ways to improve Council effectiveness. The Council also discusses the results of the evaluation and adopts agreed upon improvements.
- Is responsible for addressing how it interacts with stakeholders and the public and will consult with the Minister on items of concern.
- May establish sub-committees that support the mandate of the Council and are accountable to the Council.
- Is responsible for the orientation of new Council members.

The Minister:

- Appoints, or recommends the appointment of, the Chair and the Council Members based on her/his assessment that the appointees have the appropriate knowledge, competencies and values to assist the Agency in achieving its objectives and performing its functions.
- Monitors the operations and performance of the Agency to ensure that it is fulfilling its mandate in compliance with Government policies.
- Informs the Agency of Government policies and direction affecting the work of the Agency.
- Conducts regular (at least every seven years) reviews of the Agency's mandate and purpose to determine if the work of the Agency is still relevant to the needs of Albertans, if it is aligned with Government priorities and if the operations and functions are being carried out in a manner that can achieve Government objectives.

The Deputy Minister:

- The Deputy Minister supports and acts under the general direction of the Minister.
- The Deputy Minister is responsible for the following activities which have been delegated by the Minister:
 - The Deputy Minister may act as liaison between Council and other agencies and branches within Enterprise and Advanced Education.
 - Maintains awareness of current Council initiatives, recommendations, and reports.

The Department:

- Is responsible for supporting Council in the following areas:

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- Providing Secretariat Staff to support the Council.
- Sustaining Council membership.
- Providing Research Funds.
- Liaising between Council and other branches within Enterprise and Advanced Education.

5. Recruitment and Appointment of Council Members

Individuals are recruited and appointed by the Government of Alberta and collectively constitute “the Council”. All appointments will be in alignment with Enterprise and Advanced Education’s established agency recruitment process and ACAT’s Structure and Recruitment Practices and Mandate and Roles. All appointments will also meet the requirements identified in the *Post-secondary Learning Act* and any additional relevant Government of Alberta or Enterprise and Advanced Education policies.

Appointment of each member of the Council is for a fixed term of up to three years, with the potential of re-appointment based on satisfactory performance. An individual’s appointment is limited to a maximum of nine years of continuous service.

Individuals continue to hold office after the expiry of the member’s term until the person is reappointed, the person’s successor is appointed or a period of 3 months has elapsed, whichever occurs first.

The Council, in consultation with the Minister’s designate, will develop a competency matrix that outlines the values, skills, experience and knowledge the Council requires as a collective and identifies how each individual contributes to these needs. When vacancies arise, the matrix will be used to identify competencies required of the new recruit. The Council will determine the gaps in the matrix and identify them to the appropriate Campus Alberta Sector(s) or representative nominating body, who will provide potential nominees to Council for review and submission to Enterprise and Advanced Education based on the competency requirements identified in ACAT’s Structure and Recruitment Practices.

The recruitment and selection process for the Chair and public representatives will be managed by the ACAT Secretariat with the assistance of Human Resources. These roles will be publicly advertised and all identified candidates will be screened against the competency requirements. A member, or members of the Council, will be included in the selection process with support from the Human Resources branch of Enterprise and Advanced Education.

After appropriate screening for conflict of interest considerations, a recommended list of names for each vacant/available Council position will be shared with the Minister for consideration. The Minister will choose an individual from the list and the Department will formalize the appointment process through a Ministerial Order.

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Remuneration

Council members are entitled to be paid travelling and living expenses in accordance with the Subsistence and Travel Allowance Regulation as though they were employees of the government. Remuneration may be extended for meeting preparation time.

Or

The remuneration of non-government members appointed to Council will be set according to Committee Remuneration Order – Schedules 1 and 2 (Corporate Human Resources).

Remuneration rates and payments will be disclosed by the ACAT Secretariat, on the ACAT website and through recruitment postings, to the public on an annual basis.

6. Interaction between Council and Department

The Council is supported by Enterprise and Advanced Education's ACAT Secretariat. The Secretariat is responsible for day to day operations of Alberta's transfer system, organizing and facilitating Council meetings, implementing policy, striking and supporting sub-committees, conducting research and Pan-Canadian initiatives.

7. Administration

Review of the Mandate and Roles Document

The Mandate and Roles document shall be in effect for not more than three years. It must be renewed or revised by the expiry date.

The Mandate and Roles document must be affirmed annually by Council.

Transparency

Copies of the Mandate and Roles document will be filed with the Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education, the Agency and the Agency Governance Secretariat. In support of the principle of transparency, this document will also be easily available to the public on the Agency's website www.transferalberta.ca or through www.acat.gov.ab.ca.



Council Chair
Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

August 30, 2013

Date



Minister
Enterprise and Advanced Education

2013/09/17

Date