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| Policy Name | Granting of Credentials |
| Policy Number | C.1.3 |
| Approval Body | Board of Governors with Education Council advice |
| Sponsor | Vice President, Academic & Applied Research |
| Next Scheduled Review Date | February 2028 |
| Effective Date | February 8, 2023 |

CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

Vancouver Community College (VCC; the College) recognizes student achievement by awarding credentials according to established program and course requirements.

This policy establishes the guidelines and definitions for awarding official VCC credentials to students.

DEFINITIONS

Course Exemption: The waiving of a course that is required to complete a credential.

Course Substitution: Formal recognition of course equivalency in a VCC approved course outside the program area.

Credential: A named qualification that is awarded upon completion of a program of study that has been approved by the Board of Governors of Vancouver Community College.

Cumulative Grade Point Average: A weighted average of grades earned in all courses taken at the institution.

Program Grade Point Average: A weighted average of grades earned in courses designated as eligible for inclusion in the requirements for a credential.

Parchment: The physical and legal document awarded to the recipient of a credential.

Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR): Assessment by valid and reliable means and by a qualified specialist, of what an individual has learned outside of courses and programs.

Statement of Completion: A document provided for the successful completion of a course or group of courses that do not lead to a credential.

Transfer Credit: The granting of credit for a credit-bearing course successfully completed at another formally recognized educational institution and/or through a professional organization or other agency and/or by recognized foreign credential assessment.

VCC Award of Achievement: A document provided for the successful completion of a course or group of courses that do not lead to a credential. The course or group of courses will include a minimum of 15 hours of instruction, and successful completion will be based on assessment criteria provided in the course outline(s), including but not limited to, participation or other subject-specific criteria as determined by the program area.

SCOPE AND LIMITS

This policy applies to all formal credentials issued by the College. The policy and procedures do not apply to non formal recognition, such as Statements of Completion, VCC Awards of Achievement and non-credit courses/programs.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

1. The College develops, approves and awards credentials under the authority of the College and Institute Act.
2. In order to maximize student mobility and success, credentials are also guided by:
 - a. provincial Ministry guidelines,
 - b. professional and industry association requirements,
 - c. accreditation bodies, and
 - d. postsecondary institutions with which course and programs articulate.
3. All credentials are approved by the Board of Governors on the recommendation of Education Council.
4. Credentials will only be awarded for programs that have been approved by Education Council.
5. The College has approved the following credentials and credit ranges for each credential type. Exceptions to these credit ranges require approval by Education Council:

| Credential | Description | Credit Range |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Short Certificate | Usually less than one year of study. | 9 to 17 |
| Advanced Certificate | Provides students with specialized knowledge that builds on a previous credential. Usually less than one year of study. A certificate, diploma or Bachelor's degree is required as a pre-requisite. | 18 to 45 |
| Certificate | Usually one year of study. | 18 to 45 |
| Post-Degree Diploma | Provides students with specialized knowledge that builds on a previous credential. Usually two years. A Bachelor's degree is required as a pre-requisite. | 40 to 75 |
| Advanced Diploma | Provides students with specialized knowledge that builds on a previous credential. Usually one or more years. A diploma or Bachelor's degree is required as a pre-requisite. | 40 to 75 |
| Diploma | Usually two years of study. | 60 to 82 |
| Associate Degree | Two years of university-level study with an Arts or Science focus. It is equivalent to the first two years of a four-year baccalaureate degree. Please see the <i>BC Transfer Guide</i> for specific requirements. | 60-65 |
| Degree | Usually four years of study. | Diploma + minimum 60 or minimum 120 in total |

6. The Registrar's Office documents and issues all credentials offered by the College, including the requirements for successful completion.
7. The Registrar's Office will assess a student's eligibility for a credential based on the following criteria for the program:
 - a. A minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 is achieved.
 - b. All program requirements, approved at the point the student entered the program, have been successfully completed.
 - c. Program requirements were met within the maximum program completion timeframe.
 - d. The student has no administrative holds, which may include outstanding financial debts to the College.
 - e. The residency requirement is thirty-five per cent (35%) of the prescribed program credits completed at VCC within the last half of a program. Credits obtained through PLAR or transfer credit will not be counted towards the residency requirement.

Exceptions to these minimum requirements, and/or additional criteria above the minimum established by the College, must be approved by the Registrar's Office in consultation with individual Departments.

8. The maximum duration timelines for completing approved program credentials are:
 - Advanced Certificate – three years
 - Certificate – three years
 - Post-Degree Diploma – five years
 - Advanced Diploma – five years
 - Diploma – five years
 - Associate Degree – five years
 - Degree – eight years

Shorter or longer maximum duration timelines must be approved by the Education Council.

9. The College reserves the right to deny credentials.
10. The College may issue honorary or posthumous credentials to eligible recipients.

RELATED RESOURCES

Legislation

College and Institute Act, RSBC 1996 c 52.

VCC Policies

Grading, Progression and Withdrawal C.1.1

Assignment of Credits to Courses C.1.4

Curriculum Development and Approval C.3.14

Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition D.3.5

Transfer Credit D.3.11

VCC Procedures

Granting of Credentials Procedures C.1.3