BC Student Outcomes Research Forum
Terms of Reference

1. BC STUDENT OUTCOMES

1.1. OVERVIEW

Since 1988, the BC Student Outcomes program has collected and communicated quality information from former British Columbia post-secondary students through several annual surveys. The survey results describe former students' satisfaction with their programs as well as their education and labour force outcomes. The BC Student Outcomes program is a collaborative enterprise across all B.C. public post-secondary institutions (PSIs), the Ministry responsible for post-secondary education, BC Stats, and other agencies.

1.2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDENT OUTCOMES PROGRAM

The purpose of the BC Student Outcomes program is to collect and disseminate information from former students about their post-secondary education and their labour market and educational transitions. The findings serve to:
- ensure sound and reliable data for the development of post-secondary education and labour market policy
- provide timely and relevant information for program evaluation and educational planning
- ensure that information is available to help prospective students make informed decisions about education and training
- contribute to the accountability and success of the B.C. post-secondary education system
- contribute to a comprehensive understanding of post-secondary education in B.C.

1.3. BC STUDENT OUTCOMES PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The BC Student Outcomes Research Forum (the Forum) oversees all aspects of the BC Student Outcomes program from data collection to the reporting of survey results. The Forum is co-chaired by one or two representative(s) from the Ministry responsible for post-secondary education (the Ministry) and one or more elected representative(s) from the participating post-secondary institutions.

BC Stats is responsible for providing operational support, day-to-day management, advice, and reports, and for implementing decisions concerning the outcomes surveys, as directed by the Forum. BC Stats is responsible for developing an annual plan and budget for approval by the Forum and the Ministry.

1.4. FUNDING

The Ministry, the participating post-secondary institutions, and SkilledTradesBC provide financial resources to BC Stats for the BC Student Outcomes program. The Ministry provides the majority of the funding, with the participating institutions contributing additional funding to offset the cost of collecting data from their former students. Ministry funding is specifically intended to collect data to support educational and labour market planning and ensure sound and reliable data are available at the institution and system level for post-secondary policy development and accountability initiatives. Ministry funding is also intended to support post-secondary institutions in their efforts to collect high quality information from their former students and to assist in the storage, analysis, and dissemination of that information. In addition to funding, institutions contribute expertise and staff time to ensure that the BC Student Outcomes program maintains a consistently high level of quality and relevance.

The Ministry and BC Stats sign an annual Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that articulates key deliverables related to the BC Student Outcomes program and reflects the advice from the Forum. SkilledTradesBC and BC Stats also sign an annual MOU that outlines accountabilities and key deliverables related to
BC Student Outcomes program surveys of former apprenticeship and trades foundation students.

2. BC STUDENT OUTCOMES RESEARCH FORUM

2.1. PURPOSE OF THE FORUM

The Forum oversees the BC Student Outcomes program, which includes the collection and dissemination of survey data related to the outcomes of former students (e.g., labour market and educational transitions) on behalf of the participating institutions and the Ministry responsible for post-secondary education. The Forum:

- ensures the purposes of BC Student Outcomes are met effectively and efficiently
- promotes the use and dissemination of Outcomes information
- facilitates analyses of these data independently and in conjunction with other data sources

2.2. OPERATIONAL TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE BC STUDENT OUTCOMES RESEARCH FORUM

The Forum, as the body that oversees the BC Student Outcomes program, consists of members who are actively involved in the key elements of data collection, analysis, and reporting of outcomes data. The Forum operates as a partnership among participating institutions, system agencies, and the Ministry responsible for post-secondary education; the partnership is one of shared interests, shared funding, and shared expertise.

The activities of the BC Student Outcomes program are either initiated by the Forum or referred to it by the Ministry responsible for post-secondary education, BC Stats, or any other member organization. The Forum is responsible for setting the direction for relationships with external bodies.

The Forum makes appointments to its working teams and appoints *ad hoc* committees as required. The Forum is responsible for strategic planning for the BC Student Outcomes program and for approval of the program budget.

Forum Teams, on behalf of The Forum, approve the format and content of Student Outcomes publications, reporting tools, and website. The Forum advises on new or *ad hoc* surveys. The Forum decides the overall surveying sched- ule, approves the questionnaires, and determines specifications for survey eligibility.

Data collection activities are focused primarily on these groups of former students: diploma, associate degree, and certificate students, trades apprentices, trades foundation students, trades-related vocational students, and baccalaureate graduates. Other student groups may be included in the future.

BC Stats acts as a responsible steward of the BC Student Outcomes' databases on behalf of the participating institutions, the Forum, and the Ministry responsible for post-secondary education.

2.3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE BC STUDENT OUTCOMES RESEARCH FORUM

The Forum is a representative body, made up of individuals from participating institutions (see Appendix 1), from the Ministry responsible for post-secondary education, and from other major provincial organizations involved in the collection, storage, or use of post-secondary student outcomes information. Members of the institutional research community must constitute at least half of the Forum.

The Forum representatives include:

- PSI members: one representative from each participating B.C. public post-secondary institution; these members are involved in institutional research and planning functions and, together, have experience with the broadest possible range of programs and institutional structures
- Ministry members: up to four members designated by the Ministry responsible for post-secondary education
- The Executive Director, or designate, of the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT)
- A liaison representative from SkilledTradesBC
- As the Forum has need, it may add members from system-wide organizations, including:
    - a liaison representative from the BC Registrars' Association (BCRA)
    - a liaison representative from the Senior Academic Administrators' Forum (SAAF)
    - a liaison representative from the Council of Senior Student Affairs Leaders (CSSAL)
- As The Forum has need, it may add members from other institutional groups and may appoint others (e.g., Information Technology Directors, MARCOM – Marketing Communications; Student Affairs; Alumni Affairs) by a majority vote at a meeting at which there is a quorum, which can be achieved via in-person or electronic attendance.

Forum representatives from the PSIs, the Ministry responsible for post-secondary education, and SkilledTradesBC (and other appropriate agencies, e.g., BCCAT) are voting members of the Forum. As such, each Forum representative has voting privileges at the Annual General Meeting and for all decisions requiring full Forum support. Other Forum members—that is, those involved in the teams or *ad hoc* committees—are welcome to attend Forum meetings and will receive Forum communications.

(See below for Forum team and committee voting policies.) An official list of current Forum representatives is maintained on the [SharePoint site](#) and the [Student Outcomes website](#).

BC Stats staff attends all Forum meetings, participates in discussions, and prepares minutes for approval. BC Stats is a non-voting member of the BC Student Outcomes Research Forum.

Representatives for the Forum are selected through one of the following ways:

- The institutional research office at each institution designates one person to be its representative on the Forum.
- The organizational representatives of the Forum are chosen by their respective organizations.
- Ministry representatives to the Forum are appointed directly by the Ministry responsible for post-secondary education.

Forum team and committee members are appointed by their organization or institution.

Terms of Service on the Forum:

- All institutional and organizational Forum members (both Forum representatives and team and committee members) are appointed to a three-year term, and the number of terms is not limited. Every effort is made to ensure that terms of service overlap to provide functional continuity and knowledge transfer.
- As the Forum comprises working team and committee participants, all members must be actively involved in, or responsible for, or familiar with institutional and outcomes research at their institution or in their organization.
- If it is the opinion of the Forum that a system-wide organization no longer has an effective role to play, the Forum may remove the organization from the Forum with a two-thirds vote of a meeting at which there is a quorum. This may be done at the Annual General Meeting or by the Management Team.

2.4. CHAIRS OF THE BC STUDENT OUTCOMES RESEARCH FORUM

The Forum will have two or more co-chairs: at least one will be an institutional member and at least one will come from the Ministry responsible for post-secondary education. The institutional co-chair(s) will be elected by a majority vote at the Annual General Meeting of the Forum every second calendar year. Institutional co-chair(s) will hold the position for a two-year term. If an institutional co-chair resigns, the Management Team may appoint an acting chair until the next Forum meeting.

The Ministry co-chair will be a Ministry-designated representative. This position is ongoing. When needed, new Ministry co-chairs are named by the Ministry.

2.5. TEAM STRUCTURE

The work of the Forum is carried out through five teams: Management Team, Communications Team, Technical Team, Survey Team, and Research & Analysis Team.

The **Management Team** performs executive functions for the Forum, having the authority and responsibility for all Forum decisions between annual Forum meetings. The Management Team reports to the Forum, at the Annual General Meeting and through email, as required.

The Management Team is responsible for setting operational policy and priorities, monitoring the Student Outcomes Program Plan, guiding budget development, and dealing with management and organizational issues. The Management Team's responsibilities also include managing external relationships (with government, system agencies, and other external bodies), developing and distributing the Forum's annual report, and overseeing *ad hoc* committees.

The Management Team co-ordinates work of the other Teams, requesting Teams undertake projects as required, receiving their recommendations, and responding appropriately. The Management Team is responsible for developing and monitoring an annual Forum workplan. The Management Team can appoint *ad hoc* committees from one or more of the Teams, for specific purposes (for example, conducting a policy and procedures review).

The Management Team is co-chaired by the same individuals who co-chair the Forum and includes representatives, usually the (co-)chairs, from each of the other Teams. The immediate past Forum institutional co-chair is automatically a member of the Management Team.

The Management Team reviews team membership annually to ensure balanced PSI representation.

The **Survey Team** determines the questionnaire content for each survey and reviews both the cohort definitions (to ensure they are consistent with the overall direction of the BC Student Outcomes program) and the surveying schedule set by the Forum. The Survey Team is responsible for annual reviews of all survey instruments: to improve alignment of questions across surveys, to ensure question consistency where possible, and to improve question wording when required. This work is done in consultation with BC Stats. The Team liaises with Management Team, Technical Team, Research & Analysis Team, and Communications Team as required. Members are encouraged to participate on one or more of the other Teams.

The **Communications Team** is responsible for identifying potential audiences for outcomes publications, identifying data elements useful to the various audiences, developing communications strategies, preparing and presenting information about BC Student Outcomes to interested audiences, and evaluating the effectiveness of communications initiatives. The Team's responsibilities also include recommending reporting formats, determining reporting themes appropriate to each survey population, outlining an annual Highlights (or similar) document, and advising on website content. The Communications Team reviews and approves all Outcomes publications for release. Not all Communications Team members are expected to review all publications.

The Communications Team is co-chaired by an individual from the Ministry responsible for post-secondary education and an individual from a member organization.

The **Technical Team** is responsible for reviewing methodological concerns and technical issues related to both data collection and cohort specifications. The Technical Team's responsibilities include advising on program coding issues, helping to develop data dissemination tools, researching methodological

issues, and maintaining currency of definitions and alignment with other statistical agencies and data-bases. The Technical Team advises the Survey Team on cohort definitions and other issues, as requested or approved by Management Team.

The **Research & Analysis Team** is responsible for managing the Research Plan and making recommendations to Management Team and the Forum regarding changes to the Research Plan. The Team advises the Forum on relevant methodological research and interjurisdictional research and undertakes original research as needed. The Research & Analysis Team leads the implementation of tactics from the Re- search Plan and will review and refresh the Research Plan as needed. The Team liaises with Management Team, Technical Team, and Survey Team as required.

The Forum's Research & Analysis, Technical, and Communications Teams provide support and advice to the Management Team, the Survey Team, and to BC Student Outcomes overall. Team projects are undertaken at the request of Management Team or with Management Team approval.

Team membership, which is confirmed annually by the Forum, is for a three-year term and the number of terms is not limited. The Survey Team chair(s), Communications Team chair(s), Technical Team chair(s), and Research & Analysis chair(s) are elected by a majority vote of the respective team's members, as and when needed. The vote may be conducted in-person, over the phone, or electronically. Forum teams include institutional members and representative(s) from the Ministry. Subject matter experts or individuals from other areas of post-secondary education can be asked to join a team, if needed. Brief job descriptions are available in Appendix 2.

2.6. OBLIGATIONS OF THE FORUM MEMBERS

The Forum is a collaborative effort among all B.C. public post-secondary institutions and associate organizations. There is an expectation that all PSIs and member organizations will be involved by providing membership to at least one Forum team each year. With the work spread across all institutions and organizations, the expectation is that none will be overburdened.

An individual accepting an appointment as a representative to the Forum must agree to the following:
- To make all reasonable efforts to attend the annual Forum meetings and prepare adequately for them.
- To participate actively in decision making at meetings of the Forum and at team meetings, where appropriate.
- To act in a manner befitting their professional standing and their organization or institution. All Forum members are expected to adhere to accepted professional standards of ethical conduct.
- To respect that BC Student Outcomes is subject to privacy protection provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (*FOIPPA*) and to act in accordance with those provisions.
- To respect that BC Stats operates under the legal authority of the *Statistics Act,* which provides legislated guarantees to protect the privacy and security of individual responses.
- To adhere to the provisions of the Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) that is in place between BC Stats and their institution or between BC Stats and the Ministry responsible for post-secondary education or between BC Stats and SkilledTradesBC.

- To ensure that colleagues and staff with access to Student Outcomes data are aware of and adhere to the provisions of the ISA between their organization and BC Stats.
- To be prepared to undertake work on behalf of the Forum and BC Student Outcomes outside of regular meetings.
- To notify other institutional Forum representatives when publishing information based on the shared Student Outcomes data, if that information is presented for other individual institutions, rather than in aggregate. Publishing refers to reports or information available to an external audience, through posting on a website or through some other means of dissemination outside an individual institution.

Team members should be prepared:
- To attend team meetings, when they are called, and prepare adequately for them.
- To volunteer to help with at least one of the projects or tasks assigned to the team, each year.
- To agree to the same stipulations as outlined above for Forum representatives.

For a list of Forum members see [The Forum SharePoint](#), under Lists.

2.7. MEETING PROCEDURES

Forum business may be conducted through in-person meetings or by remote conference (i.e., teleconference or video conference). The Forum as a whole and Forum teams and committees may approve motions via email or at meetings where a quorum is present. A quorum exists when a simple majority of voting members are present, and with at least 50% of present members being from a post-secondary institution, either in person or via remote conference. Decisions made via remote conference are as binding as those made in face-to-face meetings. Minutes will be kept of all the Forum meetings and of meetings of the Forum teams and committees; these will be available to all members.

The Forum meets annually to satisfy its responsibilities for approving the program plan and budget, and to share knowledge, ensure the strategic, research, and communications plans are achieved, and make operational decisions that affect the program and its surveys. The Forum may meet at other times at the call of the co-chairs.

Each team meets at the call of its chair(s).

Forum members are expected to attend the annual meeting of the Forum. If a Forum representative is unable to attend a Forum meeting, they may designate a person to attend (either in-person or remotely) on their behalf. Designated persons who attend meetings (with notice to the Forum co-chairs) may vote. Management Team members can designate others to attend Management meetings on their behalf, on occasion but not as a practice. Team and committee members may also designate a person to attend (either in-person or remotely) on their behalf. These proxies who attend meetings may vote on team and committee business. This may happen on occasion, but not regularly.

Guests may attend Forum meetings but may not vote.

2.8. VOTING PROCEDURES

The Forum strives to achieve consensus. Matters before the Forum (with the exception of removing an organization's membership—see item 2.3 *Membership of the BC Student Outcomes Research Forum*) may be passed by a simple majority vote. All voting members (that is, Forum representatives) present at a Forum meeting (whether in-person or remotely) may vote on matters before the Forum. All team and committee members present at their respective team or committee meeting (whether in-person or remotely) may vote on matters before the team or committee. For both full Forum meetings and those of teams and committees, absent members can vote by their proxy and may ask an attending member to speak to any is- sue on their behalf.

Votes of the Forum can be conducted by electronic means. To constitute a quorum, a simple majority of members must vote within the given timeframe. All electronic votes will be open for a minimum of seven calendar days.

In the event of a disputed matter before the Forum, where one party determines that the outcome may conflict sufficiently with their organization's interests to warrant reconsideration, the member may re- quest that the matter be referred to the Management Team for further consideration. Any deferred matter must be considered by the Management Team as soon as possible, prior to implementation of the decision.

2.9. REVIEW OF FORUM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Forum review its policies and procedures at least once every three years. Any amendments to the Terms of Reference are ratified by the full Forum membership either at the Annual General Meeting or via email.

APPENDIX 1

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Post-Secondary Institution

British Columbia Institute of Technology
Camosun College
Capilano University
Coast Mountain College
College of New Caledonia
College of the Rockies
Douglas College
Emily Carr University of Art + Design
Justice Institute of BC
Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Langara College
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
North Island College
Northern Lights College
Okanagan College
Royal Roads University
Selkirk College
Simon Fraser University
Thompson Rivers University
University of British Columbia
University of the Fraser Valley
University of Northern British Columbia
University of Victoria
Vancouver Community College
Vancouver Island University

Organization or Agency
Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
SkilledTradesBC
BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT)
BC Registrars' Association (BCRA)
Council of Senior Student Affairs Leaders (CSSAL)

Appendix 2

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

The expectation is that each year, every institution has at least one representative on the working groups of one of the Teams (Survey, Communications, Technical, Research & Analysis) so that the work can be distributed equitably, and no one institution or person is overwhelmed with responsibility.

In terms of work and time commitments, it is expected that they will be minimal, only a few hours a month for most members. The Survey Team usually meets in September to discuss the survey questions and cohort specifications for the surveys of former apprenticeship, trades foundation, trades-related vocational, and diploma, associate degree, and certificate students. The baccalaureate graduates' questionnaire is reviewed in the spring. Communication Team members are responsible for identifying audience needs, developing and evaluating the communications plan and strategies, and reviewing publications as required. There are typically a half dozen publications in any given year. The Technical Team is involved in technical aspects of data dissemination and reviewing cohort specifications. Team members may be required to do research for the team as required. The work is usually spread out during the year, with meetings likely to be held in the fall and spring.

Team Co-Chairs
Team co-chairs are responsible for working with their teams to allocate tasks as determined either by the Management Team or identified by the team itself. Co-chairs attend the Management Team meetings to represent and report on their team's activities. Management Team meetings are approximately every two months. BC Stats supports the work of the teams and the co-chairs by planning meetings, keeping meeting records, preparing meeting handouts, and helping with team projects.

Team Members
Team members are expected to work collaboratively with their co-chairs to accomplish their team's tasks. Team members are expected to attend their team meetings as called or to collaborate online via email.