

British Columbia Offshore School Program



OPERATING
MANUAL



British Columbia Offshore School Program

OPERATING MANUAL 2023/24

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Important Notes and Changes for 2023/24

Page #	Topic	Description
throughout	Branch name	The branch name has changed to Independent Schools and International Education Branch.
throughout	Jurisdiction	The term "country" and derived forms have been changed to "jurisdiction" and derived forms.
2	Number of jurisdictions	The BC curriculum is offered in eleven different jurisdictions worldwide.
18	Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement	Wording has been revised in reference to the Indigenous-focused graduation requirement.
24	Continuity of Learning	The section on Continuity of Learning Policy has been removed.
32	Student consent form	Added "Signed consent forms to collect, use, and disclose information are to be completed upon the student's initial entrance into the BC Offshore School Program, again in Grade 7, and again in Grade 10 (NOTE: Consent remains in effect and is valid until the student has graduated)"
33	Teacher consent form	Added "NOTE: Teacher consent is valid and remains in effect until it is rescinded in writing to the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care"
35	TRAX Data Submissions	This section has been updated significantly to reflect changes in student record-keeping systems and procedures.
39	TRB address	The Teacher Regulation Branch has moved to a new location.





1 Introduction

The British Columbia (BC) Ministry of Education and Child Care regulates the delivery of BC's curriculum to students studying in schools overseas. Students who attend BC offshore schools have the opportunity to graduate with a BC Dogwood Diploma without having to leave their home country. BC offshore school graduates often come to BC for their post-secondary education, but they have also been accepted into many prestigious universities across Canada and the world.

BC offshore schools create opportunities for international relationships and global learning experiences. This is an important part of the BC Offshore School Program which aims to:

- Enable strategic relationships and build economic connections with global markets by delivering English-language education to students around the world
- Increase global recognition of BC's high-quality education "brand"
- Provide students with the tools to be successful in life, professionally and personally, and to be leaders in their communities and global citizens
- Create opportunities for BC offshore schools to develop international partnerships
- Attract more international students to study, work and live in BC

BC's curriculum is offered in schools in eleven different jurisdictions worldwide. BC offshore schools are inspected annually by qualified BC education experts to ensure that schools provide quality programming in an educationally supportive environment.

This manual is designed to help new and existing operators and administrators with all the requirements needed to successfully open and run a BC-certified offshore school.



2 How to Establish a BC-Certified Offshore School

BC's Ministry of Education and Child Care is interested in partnering with successful organizations that are known for delivering educational excellence in international settings. If you are interested in operating a BC-certified offshore school, be prepared to invest a significant amount of time and resources.

Why Choose BC?

A characteristic of a strong education system is that it strives to continuously improve. BC works hard to continue as one of the leading education systems in the world – both here in British Columbia and internationally through its network of BC offshore schools.

In fact, BC's education system is among the most respected in the world with outstanding teachers, skilled administrators, motivated and talented students, committed guardians, and dedicated education partners. Highlights include:

- The Dogwood Diploma (BC's graduation certificate) is accepted worldwide as a standard of high achievement and English language proficiency
- BC's system has quality assurance and accountability measures in place to ensure that BC education consistently offers a quality learning experience to all students
- Many high school graduates successfully gain admission to post-secondary programs in BC, across Canada, the United States, and around the world
- Students from BC perform among the best in Canada and the world in national and international assessments
- Many of our schools have a diverse student body, representing different languages and cultures from around the world

In addition to BC's high-quality and broad-ranging curriculum, students and schools also benefit from:

- The expertise and experience of BC-certified educators working at schools – their contribution enriches teaching practice and helps schools develop an international curriculum
- BC's growing economy that offers graduates the opportunity to live and work in British Columbia

Get more info online: International Education in BC

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/international-education>





HOW *to* ESTABLISH A BRITISH COLUMBIA CERTIFIED OFFSHORE SCHOOL



1. Expression of Interest

Complete and submit the 'Expression of Interest Form'.



No fees

Up to 6 weeks



2. Interview

Have an in-person interview with Ministry representatives to discuss your goals and plans for your school.



All relevant travel and accommodation expenses for the applicant.

Up to 2 weeks



3. Application

Submit application package comprising application form, local government approvals, financial statements and application fee.



Application fee.

Up to 6 weeks



4. On-Site School Application Inspection

A Ministry-appointed inspection team will perform an inspection of your school.



All relevant travel and accommodation expenses for the inspection team.



5. Pre-Certification

Sign one-year pre-certification agreement with the Ministry. During the first year of operation, pre-certified schools may begin offering the B.C. curriculum and must undergo a certification inspection.



Pay curriculum usage fee, program administration and student registration fee.



6. Certification

Sign one-year certification agreement with the Ministry and complete annual inspection.



Pay all annual fees and expenses.



Maintaining Certification

The Owner/Operator must meet the following requirements to stay certified:

- Remain in good standing with the Ministry
- Pass annual inspections
- Pay all fees and relevant expenses
- Submit an annual report by September 30

Remaining in Good Standing

The following criteria will determine whether an Owner/Operator remains in good standing with the Ministry:

- The Owner/Operator is in compliance with the requirements of the Certification Agreement (the “Agreement”)
- All certification fees and expenses are paid in full and on time
- The Owner/Operator (or individuals/entities acting on behalf of the Owner/Operator) is in compliance with relevant legislation of the jurisdiction in which the BC offshore school is operating (e.g., laws pertaining to education, employment standards, health and safety, human rights, and any other applicable laws)
- There are no current or recent actions of the Owner/Operator (or individuals/entities acting on behalf of the Owner/Operator) that could negatively impact the integrity of the program or BC’s positive international education reputation
- Any other criteria that the Ministry considers relevant during the term of the Agreement



3 Fees & Expenses

All fees are non-refundable and must be paid in Canadian dollars. The Ministry invoices BC offshore schools 30 days in advance of the due dates for all fees.

Payment options include:

- Certified cheque
- Money order
- Electronic transfer of funds (this option also requires written confirmation of the transfer and a copy of the bank transmittal)

Types of Fees

Fee Type	Fee Amount	Payable	Comments
Application Fee	\$5,000 (non-refundable)	Time of application	Applications are not processed until this fee is paid in full.
Curriculum Usage Fee	\$10,000 per School per year	Payable 30 days from invoice date	Province will invoice Owner/Operator after the Certification Agreement is issued.
Program Administration Fee	\$5,000 per School per year	Payable 30 days from invoice date	Province will invoice Owner/Operator after the Certification Agreement is issued.
Inspection fees and expenses	Includes professional services of the inspection chair and inspection team members, as well as travel, accommodation, per diem, and incidental costs.	Payable 30 days from invoice date. If the inspection will be conducted with notice, payable in advance of inspection.	Province will invoice Owner/Operator for fee amount in advance of inspection.
Student Registration Fee*	\$350 per Student per year	Invoice in December – Payable 30 days from invoice date	Province will invoice Owner/Operator for fee amount based on 1701 data submission.
Other Program Expenses			
In-person interview (following submission of the Expression of Interest)	Travel, accommodation, per diem and incidental costs of all Ministry participants will be covered by the interested party.		If the interview is held on location, payment is due 30 days prior to the interview.
Learning Audits	Includes professional services of the audit chair and audit team members, as well as their travel, accommodation, per diem, and incidental costs.		Owner/Operators will be invoiced and payment required 15 days in advance of the audit team's departure.
Professional Development	The Ministry may recover costs related to putting on capacity-developing professional development activities for offshore school educators.		As requested.

* If a Student withdraws from the School up to November 30, the School is not required to pay the per student fee (School must provide proof of withdrawal). If a Student withdraws from the School after November 30, the School is required to pay the per student fee.



Unpaid Fees

Fee or expense	Description
Program fees 30 days overdue	The Ministry issues a second invoice for the outstanding amount plus interest charges The school is placed on probation for 60 days, regardless of when the fees are submitted
Program fees 60 days overdue	The Ministry issues a third invoice for the outstanding amount plus interest charges The school is placed on probation for 90 days, regardless of when the fees are submitted
Program fees 90 days overdue	The school is de-certified Re-certification will require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Payment of outstanding fees plus interest charges · Re-applying for certification (including payment of the \$5,000 application fee) · Payment of \$10,000 as liquidated damages
Overdue inspection fees	The school inspection is cancelled Schools that are not inspected lose certification status Re-certification will require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Payment of outstanding fees plus interest charges · Re-applying for certification (including payment of the \$5,000 application fee) · Payment of \$10,000 as liquidated damages



4 School Inspections

Annual inspections by the Ministry are a requirement for certification. These inspections ensure that BC offshore schools meet and maintain BC's high standards of quality educational programs. Inspections are also an opportunity to share ideas between the Ministry, inspectors, Owner/Operators, school administration, and staff.

The Ministry also conducts unannounced inspections as part of its quality assurance process.

Pre-Inspection

School administration works with the Ministry to prepare for a scheduled inspection. This includes:

- Submitting an annual report and supporting documents to the Ministry
- Making and confirming travel arrangements for the inspection team
- Briefing the inspection team

Getting ready: Schools should be well-prepared and organized for their inspection. Here are some topics to be ready to discuss:

- Requirements and suggestions from the previous inspection report
- English language learning approaches and assessments
- School growth and development
- Curriculum implementation
- Assessment methods and reporting
- Learning resources
- Professional development
- Teaching strategies
- School policies and procedures

Also, be ready to share information about school successes, achievements, and other commendations, for example:

- Innovative/creative strategies for teaching, administration, or management
- Student success (assessments, competitions, etc.)
- Achievement awards from local organizations and governments
- School success in local cultural events and activities

Inspection

During the inspection, a Ministry-appointed team conducts a visit of the BC offshore school to confirm that it meets the requirements of the Certification Agreement. This includes:

- Observing school operations and classroom teaching
- Examining school programs and curriculum implementation
- Attending meetings with school administrators, school staff, the Owner/Operator, the Offshore School Representative (OSR), and others

Post-Inspection

Once the inspection is complete, the team meets to review findings and write the inspection report, then:

- Within two weeks of completing the inspection, the team submits the report to the Ministry
- Ministry staff review the report and submit a copy to the Owner/Operator
- The final report is posted on the Ministry's website at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/international-education/offshore-schools/offshore-schools>

Reporting to the Ministry

Annual report: The Owner/Operator must submit an annual report to the Ministry by September 30. The annual report template is posted on the Ministry website approximately one month before the submission deadline.

Audited financial statements: New BC offshore school Owner/Operators must submit externally audited financial statements to the Ministry as part of their application to become a BC-certified offshore school. Owner/Operators of schools in their first, second or third year of operation are also required to submit externally audited financial statements to the Ministry by December 31. Other schools submit externally audited financial statements to the Ministry upon request.

All financial statements must be provided in English or translated by a certified translator. Financial statements must follow international accounting standards and include a Statement of Operations and a Statement of Financial Position. The statements are kept in strict confidence.



Compliance

If the Owner/Operator is not in compliance with pre-certification or certification requirements or engages in conduct that may harm the BC Offshore School Program or the Province of British Columbia's reputation in international education, any or all schools owned and/or operated by the Owner/Operator may be disciplined, including being placed on probation or decertified.

Probation: When a BC offshore school does not meet requirements of the Agreement, the Ministry will provide the Owner/Operator with written notice, along with a timeline to resolve the issue(s). The Ministry may request that the school outline how it plans to comply. If a school does not comply by a specific date, it may be placed on probation.

If a BC offshore school is placed on probation:

- The school's probationary status is published on the Ministry website
- The school's website must be updated to clearly indicate that the school has been placed on probation
- The Owner/Operator must immediately notify all students and their parents or legal guardians that the school has been placed on probation

De-certification: School certification and the Ministry's Agreement with the Owner/Operator are terminated if an Owner/Operator does not demonstrate that it will comply with requirements.

The Ministry may terminate its Agreement in any of the following situations:

- The Owner/Operator fails to comply with the Agreement/program requirements as outlined in this Operating Manual and the Agreement
- The Owner/Operator provides false or misleading information or documents to the Ministry
- The Owner/Operator fails to pay the required fees
- A financial, administrative, or operational change occurs which results in the Owner/Operator no longer being able to fulfill its obligations to the Ministry
- The Owner/Operator fails to respond to a request or direction of the Ministry
- The Owner/Operator fails to implement any changes required by the Ministry as a result of an inspection, learning audit, or complaints review process
- The ownership of the school is changed without notice to or authorization by the Ministry
- The Owner/Operator fails to provide an educational program that meets the provincial requirements
- The Owner/Operator ceases to operate the school

If school certification is cancelled:

- The school is removed from all Ministry publications, including the Ministry website
- Students in the school cannot complete their BC Program unless they transfer to another BC offshore school or to a K–12 public or independent school within BC
- The Owner/Operator must comply if a student requests their records be transferred to another BC offshore school or a K–12 public or independent school



5 Roles & Responsibilities

This section outlines the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the administration of a BC offshore school.

Owner/Operators

REQUIREMENTS

Owner/Operators are solely and directly accountable to the Ministry for ensuring that the school meets:

- Requirements of the Pre-Certification Agreement or Certification Agreement
- Provincial educational standards, requirements, and expectations

The Owner/Operator cannot transfer, sell, or license ownership of the school (including a change to the majority shareholder or controlling interest) without the written approval of the Ministry.

Sub-contracting to other entities to provide services does not relieve the Owner/Operator from any of the obligations specified in the Agreement.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Directly operating the school, including delivery of BC's curriculum in English
- Providing financial management and administration of the school, including paying all applicable fees
- Appointing a qualified OSR to legally represent the corporate entity and having the appointment approved by the Ministry
- Improving and maintaining student achievement and ensuring that there are no significant discrepancies between provincial assessment marks and course marks
- Ensuring that the education program provided at the school meets BC education standards as described in the Agreement, for example:
 - » Achieving learning outcomes/learning standards
 - » Meeting instructional time requirements
 - » Following assessment administration instructions
 - » Meeting English language assessment and development standards
- Developing policies and procedures for:
 - » Student assessment, admissions, conduct, supervision, and discipline
 - » Appeals by guardians
 - » Evaluation and professional development of teachers and administrators
 - » Dispute resolution
- Supporting principals:
 - » Providing sufficient time for the principal to perform their administrative duties
 - » Ensuring the principal does not serve as principal for more than one BC offshore school
- Ensuring that only students with sufficient English-language capability are permitted to enter the program and that students studying in the program have access to adequate English-language development supports



- Marketing/advertising and student recruitment
- Complying with all applicable laws, bylaws, orders, directions, rules, and regulations of any city, state, provincial, national government body of the jurisdiction in which the school operates
- Recruiting, hiring, compensating, and providing suitable accommodations for administrators and teachers
- Establishing and maintaining complete and accurate records for students, administrators, teachers, and the school
- Meeting requirements for Ministry data and annual reporting
- Ensuring all staff (i.e., administrative, cafeteria, facilities) are persons of good moral character and are otherwise fit and proper to have daily contact with the school's students
- Working with the OSR to investigate complaints and resolve issues to the Ministry's satisfaction
- Reporting dismissal, suspension, discipline, conduct, and competence issues regarding the principal or any teacher to both the Commissioner for Teacher Regulation and the Director of the Offshore School Program
- Attending and participating in school inspections
- Ensuring that all communication with the Ministry is in English
- Informing the Ministry immediately if a new principal is hired and submitting résumé for eligibility verification

British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care

The role of the Ministry includes:

- Setting goals and objectives for the BC Offshore School Program
- Establishing requirements for BC offshore schools
- Developing policy and regulation for the administration of the BC Offshore School Program

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Communicating requirements and expectations to the Owner/Operator
- Developing the curriculum, including provincial education learning standards
- Authorizing the Owner/Operator to use BC's curriculum
- Developing, providing access to, and evaluating provincial assessments
- Issuing certifications of graduation (Dogwood Diplomas) to eligible students on behalf of the Minister of Education and Child Care
- Certifying eligible teachers
- Performing regular inspections of the schools and following up on any requirements in a timely manner
- Granting and renewing certification for eligible schools



Offshore School Representatives

Owner/Operators must appoint an Offshore School Representative (OSR) to be their primary contact with the Ministry.

REQUIREMENTS

The OSR must have BC education credentials and experience and must be approved by the Ministry. Here is a summary of all the criteria the person in the role must have:

- A current and valid Certificate of Qualification and be in good standing with the Ministry
- At least three years' experience working in a senior administrative capacity in the BC school system
- No affiliation with the Owner/Operator other than through the OSR's contract with the Owner/Operator
- Knowledge of the BC Offshore School Program
- Knowledge of BC's K–12 international education sector
- Expertise in current BC educational standards and practices for curriculum development and implementation, as well as evaluation of students
- Expertise in the performance evaluation of teachers and principals
- Understanding of the linkages between regulatory requirements and the delivery of educational programs in K–12 schools
- Strong oral and written communication skills in English
- The ability to identify and manage complex issues or concerns raised by education stakeholders
- An understanding of and recent professional experience working with teacher certification and regulation requirements in BC
- Knowledge of BC education-related legislation, regulations, and orders, including the *School Act*
- Knowledge and understanding of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Personal Information Protection Act*
- Knowledge and experience with school evaluation, audit, or inspection processes within a BC K–12 public, independent or offshore school within the past 10 years
- Knowledge of immigration application procedures and requirements including visas, work permits, etc.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Acting as the primary contact to liaise and communicate with the Ministry in a timely manner, including representing Owner/Operators legally in dealings with the Ministry
- Managing and resolving complaints to the satisfaction of the Ministry
- Participating in and supporting the inspection team in conducting school inspections or audits
- Assisting the Owner/Operator in making sure that the school meets all Agreement requirements
- Working with the principal and teachers to ensure that the Owner/Operator's accountabilities and timelines are clearly understood and fulfilled
- Ensuring that annual reporting and data reporting requirements are met
- Ensuring that the Owner/Operator recruits and hires only qualified and competent personnel and providing support for cultural acclimatization and obtaining visas or work permits
- Attending information sessions organized by the Ministry
- Working with the school's administrative team and teachers to address the Ministry's requirements and suggestions for the school
- Assisting with marketing the school according to the guidelines set out in the Agreement



- Assisting with arranging accommodations for administrators and teachers and dealing with any issues related to those arrangements
- Participating in the dispute resolution process
- Providing professional development to administrators and teachers
- Acting as the liaison in the delivery of Ministry documentation to the school
- Reporting to the Ministry – in a timely fashion – any critical information relating to any significant changes to the operation of the school and/or ownership that could have a negative impact on the school's operation. (This includes proposed changes to the Owner/Operator governance structure, financial situation, and student and/or teacher safety)
- Vetting the school's emergency plans for natural disasters, such as pandemics, fires, and earthquakes, as well as any event that would cause an unplanned temporary or permanent closure of the school for accuracy and functionality
- Reporting dismissal, suspension, discipline, conduct, and competence issues pertaining to any administration or teacher to both the Commissioner for Teacher Regulation and the Director of the Offshore School Program
- Reporting to the Ministry any updates to administrators' or teachers' contracts if substantive changes have been made after the annual report submission
- Informing the Ministry immediately if a new principal is hired and submitting their résumé for eligibility verification

REMOVING AN OFFSHORE SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE

The Ministry may remove an OSR due to concerns surrounding their conduct, competence, qualifications, or authorization. In this situation, the Owner/Operator must appoint a new Ministry-approved OSR at their earliest opportunity.

Principals

REQUIREMENTS

The principal must have BC education credentials and experience, and eligibility must be verified by the Ministry. Here is a summary of all the criteria the person in this role must have:

- A current and valid Certification of Qualification (COQ) or a Subject Restricted Independent School Teacher Certification (SR-ISTC)
- At least one year of experience working at the level of principal or vice-principal
- Minimum three years' experience in a BC public, independent or offshore school
- No affiliation with the Owner/Operator other than through the principal's employment contract with the Owner/Operator



RESPONSIBILITIES

The principal is responsible for:

- Administering and supervising the school's operations and implementation of BC's curriculum
- Providing direct oversight of student admissions, including the final decision and sign-off of each student's English language capabilities, admissions, and grade/classroom placement
- Providing quality assurance for the educational program being delivered and ensuring that provincial education standards and program requirements are met
- Overseeing the development of course overviews/ planning documents that meet learning outcomes/ learning standards
- Evaluating and documenting the learning environment in individual classrooms
- Establishing and communicating teaching timetables to administrators and teachers
- Establishing the program of teaching and learning activities
- Establishing appropriate student evaluation and assessment processes and reporting the results to guardians in a manner that is consistent with the Student Progress Report Order
- Supervising and evaluating the work of other administrators, teachers, and administrative support staff and documenting evaluations
- Organizing and supervising professional development activities for administrators and teachers
- Performing teaching duties as required
- Maintaining school records
- Reporting dismissal, suspension, discipline, conduct, and competence issues pertaining to any teacher or vice-principal to both the Commissioner for Teacher Regulation and the Director of the Offshore School Program
- Supervising student conduct (on and off school premises as appropriate) and discipline
- Leading or participating in the school's dispute resolution process as required
- Attending school inspections

Additionally, Owner/Operators must support principals by:

- Allowing the principal enough time to perform their administrative duties
- Ensuring the principal does not concurrently serve as principal for more than one BC offshore school
- Informing the Ministry immediately if a new principal is appointed and submitting their résumé for eligibility verification



Vice-Principals

An Owner/Operator may hire one or more vice-principals to assist the principal in their duties. However, the principal remains accountable for the duties and responsibilities outlined above.

The job description of the vice-principal must be included in their personnel file.

Teachers

All teachers are expected to:

- Hold a valid BC teaching certification or temporary authorization from the Director of the Offshore School Program
- Provide instruction to students in a manner that encourages and fosters learning
- Teach BC's curriculum
- Regularly evaluate students and communicate student learning progress to students and their guardians
- Under the direction of the principal, manage student conduct in the classroom and at school functions outside of regular school hours and facilities
- Carry out duties assigned by the principal subject to their contract of employment
- Report professional misconduct
 - » Report professional misconduct to the principal of the school to comply with local processes and procedures for reporting **and**
 - » Report professional misconduct in a signed, written report (under section 38 of the *Teachers Act*) to the Commissioner for Teacher Regulation and the Director of the Offshore School Program (i.e., any conduct involving physical harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, or significant emotional harm to a student or students)



Get more info online: **Duty to Report**

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/boards-commissions-tribunals/commissioner-for-teacher-regulation/complaint>



6 Educational Requirements & Expectations

Owner/Operators are expected to operate a BC offshore school according to the requirements described in the:

- Pre-Certification Agreement or Certification Agreement
- Operating Manual

Grades Offered

The education program offered by the Owner/Operators should begin between Kindergarten and Grade 8 and continue through to Grade 12.

Student Admissions

If the laws of the jurisdiction in which the BC offshore school operates prohibit students from enrolling before Grade 8, an Owner/Operator must request approval from the Ministry to allow students to enter after Grade 8. In this case, students may not begin the program after Grade 10. They must also be provided English language learner supports to enable success in the program.

Students who have previously been instructed in English on a full-time basis may be admitted after Grade 8, provided that they have met all English language requirements as identified under the English Language Skills section below.

Minimum Enrolment

BC offshore schools must try to maintain a minimum enrolment of 60 full-time students per grade.



Delivery of BC's Curriculum

Owner/Operators must ensure that the delivery of BC's curriculum meets all requirements of the Pre-Certification Agreement and the Certification Agreement, including:

- Meeting subject, instructional time, and learning outcome/learning standards requirements – see sections 1-6 of the **Educational Standards Order**.
http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schoollaw/j/m41_91.pdf
- Operating the education program in a way that is consistent with intellectual, human and social development, and career development goals – see part C of the **Statement of Education Policy Order**.
http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schoollaw/d/oic_128089.pdf

Curriculum copyright: the Ministry owns the copyright on all educational materials licensed to the Owner/Operator under program agreements, including all curriculum documents, website materials, and other education-related materials provided by the Ministry.

British Columbia Graduation Program (Grades 10-12)

Students in a BC offshore school who successfully complete the requirements of the BC Graduation Program (a combination of required courses, elective courses, and provincial assessments of literacy and numeracy) receive a BC Certification of Graduation or "Dogwood Diploma".

More information about graduation requirements is available in the **Handbook of Procedures**.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/graduation/handbook_of_procedures.pdf

Note: the following sections do **not** apply to BC offshore schools:

- Equivalency (may be granted per the International Student Graduation Credit Policy)
- External Credentials
- Challenge (may be granted per the International Student Graduation Credit Policy)
- Earning Credits for Post-Secondary courses
- Independent Directed Studies
- Adult Graduation
- Locally Developed Courses (distinct from BAA courses)
- School Completion Certificate Program
- Provincial Scholarships Program

Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement

As part of the Province's commitments to truth, reconciliation, and anti-racism and as outlined in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan (https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/ministries/indigenous-relations-reconciliation/declaration_act_action_plan.pdf), effective the 2023/24 school year, the Ministry is implementing an Indigenous-focused graduation requirement which all students, including at BC-certified offshore schools, must fulfill in order to satisfy graduation requirements.

A set of implementation support resources – including a handbook, Q&A, PowerPoint deck, and BAA course criteria – has been created to assist schools in preparing for the new requirement. (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/indigenous-focused-graduation-requirements>)



Offshore School Student Survey

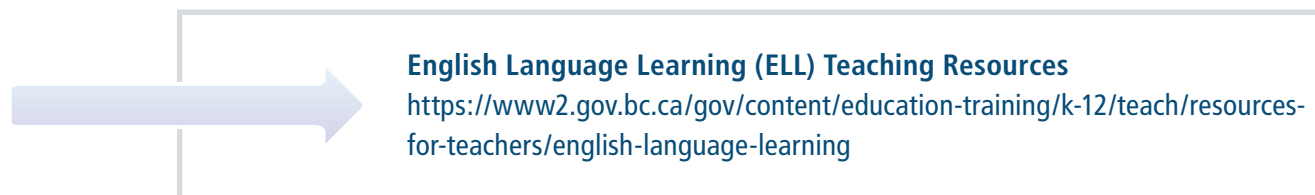
The Ministry will conduct an Offshore School Student Survey for all students in Grades 10 and 12 during the 2024/25 school year. This survey will use a subset of questions from the annual Ministry of Education and Child Care Student Learning Survey. The purpose of the survey is to support continuous improvement of the BC Offshore School Program and to provide student-focused data to assist schools with program development and inspectors during inspections.

English Language Proficiency

Students in BC-certified offshore schools are required to have a minimum level of English language proficiency to meet BC curriculum standards.

English language assessment: Students starting after Grade 7 must have an English language assessment before they can be admitted to the BC education program. The assessment must be administered by the principal, or the principal must directly supervise a BC-certified teacher in administering the assessment.

Tools used for English language assessments:



Students who do not meet the English language proficiency requirements for entry into the BC program may be granted entry into the BC program, but the Owner/Operator must ensure that the students receive the necessary English language learning support.

Language assessment results and language learning supports must be included in the Permanent Student Record. The assessment results and admission decision must be signed off by the principal. The information will be reviewed as part of the Ministry's inspection process.

Language support: Students in the BC program must receive learning support to continue developing their English language skills. Get more information online: **English Language Learning (ELL) Teaching Resources.**
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/resources-for-teachers/english-language-learning>

Board/authority authorized (BAA) English courses: Refer to the guidelines for board/authority authorized English language acquisition/culture courses at the Grade 10-12 levels.
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/baa_ell_template.pdf

When creating a new BAA ELL course or converting an existing course, please use the general BAA course guidelines to build the course – https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/baa_requirements.pdf. BAA courses cannot be modified, bridging, or remedial versions of the provincial curriculum.



Learning Resources

Owner/Operators are responsible for appointing the principal or OSR to sign off on learning resources.

French Language Courses

Canada is a bilingual country – BC provides instruction in both English and French languages. Schools that want to offer French language courses that lead to graduation must get approval from the Ministry of Education and Child Care.

Students are entitled to be issued BC graduation certificates in French and English if they:

- Are attending a BC offshore school where French is a language of instruction
- Meet graduation requirements as set out in the Graduation Program Order

Student Achievement

To ensure students meet the learning outcomes/learning standards for each BC course offered, the Owner/Operator must:

- Recruit, hire, and supervise qualified and competent administrators and teachers
- Develop a course overview/planning document for each course offered
- Have rigorous and consistent evaluation practices
- Document student achievement
- Plan and facilitate the delivery of educational resources and supports to students
- Ensure that all eligible students participate in provincial assessments

Foundation Skills Assessment

The Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) is an annual, province-wide assessment of BC student's academic skills in Grades 4 and 7. It provides:

- A snapshot of how well BC students are learning basic skills in reading, writing, and numeracy
- Information about where improvements can be made to support student achievement

BC Offshore School Program staff will contact relevant schools in the spring to inquire about their interest in participating in the assessment in the following school year.



Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) Courses

Board/Authority Authorized courses create an opportunity for BC offshore schools to develop local programs delivered in English for the unique culture of the students enrolled. Many BC offshore schools develop BAA courses to help students improve their English language skills.

Principals must make sure that the BAA courses offered in BC offshore schools follow all the requirements set out in the:

- **Board/Authority Authorized Course Order M285/04**
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schoollaw/e/m285_04.pdf
- **Board/Authority Authorized Course Requirements and Procedures Guidebook**
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/baa_requirements.pdf

All BAA courses are required to be aligned with the curriculum framework.

BC offshore schools are required to submit the BAA course form(s) and framework(s) to the Independent Schools and International Education Branch (International.Education@gov.bc.ca) for approval at least 30 days prior to the course being offered. The course code used should be chosen from the BAA core course categories (for more information on reporting BAA courses, see Chapter 5 of the **Handbook of Procedures** (https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/graduation/handbook_of_procedures.pdf)). As well, the school must maintain the required documentation in the school file for inspection.

BC offshore schools are able to review BAA courses on a set cycle and/or as needed due to changes in provincial curriculum. If not revised, those BAA courses that do not meet requirements are to be delisted by the Owner/Operator.

For further information, please refer to the **BAA Courses Requirements and Procedures Guidebook**.
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/baa_requirements.pdf

Course Equivalency

BC offshore school students are eligible to receive course credit through equivalency reviews. A BC-certified educator (under the supervision of a BC-certified principal) can review the learning outcomes of the courses for an 80% match with BC's prescribed learning outcomes/learning standards and document it on the student's file.

Courses that BC offshore school students may not receive equivalency credit for are listed in the **International Student Graduation Credit Policy**.
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/international-student-graduation-credit>



Equivalency for Ministry-developed language courses: If a BC-certified offshore school student has completed education in an international jurisdiction during the last year of elementary or at the junior secondary level and the language of instruction is one in which BC has a Ministry-developed or a Ministry-approved language course developed using the languages template, the student can receive credits for an equivalent language course at the Grade 10, 11, or 12 level.

Prior documented learning	Equivalency credit
One year of documented language arts education in the last year of elementary education	Grade 10
One year of documented language arts education at the junior secondary level	Grade 11
Two or more years of documented language arts education at the junior secondary level	Grade 12
See chapter 3 of the Handbook of Procedures for the Graduation Program https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/graduation/handbook_of_procedures.pdf	

For example, a student completing Grades 7, 8, and 9 in Costa Rica with instruction in Spanish would receive credit for Spanish 10, 11, and 12. The school would report credit for course codes SP 10, SP 11, and SP 12 with an “E” in the “Course Type” field and submit a school percentage using the student’s language arts marks from Costa Rica.

When using the Equivalency Policy for students educated in Hong Kong, schools will need to determine whether the first language or language of instruction was Cantonese or Mandarin. If it was Cantonese, award the student credit for External Language Certificate (Cantonese) 10A, 11A, and/or 12A (course code UXCL 10A/11A/12A). If the language of instruction was Mandarin, award the student credit for course code MAN 10, 11, and/or 12.

Students are entitled to receive equivalency for Grade 10, 11, and 12 level Ministry-developed language courses and Ministry-approved courses developed using the languages template according to the guidelines outlines below.

Note: Schools must maintain clear equivalency records indicating compliance with the policy.

Course Challenge

Offshore students may challenge most Ministry-developed and BAA courses, provided they complete the challenge process. The courses that international students may not challenge are listed in the **International Student Graduation Credit Policy** on the Ministry website.
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/international-student-graduation-credit>



Exempted Courses

BC offshore schools must deliver BC's curriculum in English by teachers holding a valid BC teaching certificate. However, schools may offer local language acquisition courses taught by a locally certified teacher (e.g., Mandarin taught in China). For these courses, curricular planning documents may be prepared in the local language, but course outlines must be translated into English and available for inspection.

Courses offered in languages other than English, except for local language acquisition courses as noted above, require exemption from the Ministry. Exempted courses may be taught by a locally certified teacher if the teacher is working under the supervision of a BC school administrator.

Courses in these subject areas **may** qualify for exemption:

Subject Areas (Disciplines)	Requirements
Physical and Health Education 10-12	Must meet Ministry requirements*
Arts Education 10-12	Must meet Ministry requirements*
*Courses in these subject areas must meet Ministry requirements and may be taught in the local language by a locally certified teacher. This teacher must be working under the supervision of a BC school administrator. A valid exemption letter for each course must be on file at the school and with the Ministry. Curricular planning documents may be prepared in the local language, but course outlines must be translated into English.	

Subject Areas (Disciplines)	Requirements
Approved BAA Language 10-12	Must meet Ministry BAA requirements**
Approved BAA Local History 10-12	Must meet Ministry BAA requirements**
Approved BAA Local Culture 10-12	Must meet Ministry BAA requirements**
**Courses in these subject areas must meet Ministry BAA requirements and may be taught in the local language by a locally certified teacher. This teacher must be working under the supervision of a BC school administrator. A valid exemption letter for each course must be on file at the school and with the Ministry. Curricular planning documents may be prepared in the local language, but course outlines must be translated into English.	

Courses taught in a language other than English or French may count for no more than 24 credits of the 80 credits required for graduation.

All exempted courses must be reported in the Annual Report. Exempted course outlines and local teacher teaching certificates must be translated into English and kept in the school files for inspection.

Schools are to review exempted courses on a set cycle and/or as needed due to changes in provincial curriculum. If not revised, those exempted courses that do not meet requirements are to be delisted by the Owner/Operator.

BC offshore schools must submit a written exemption request to the Ministry at least 30 days before the course is scheduled to begin.



Online Learning (OL)

BC offshore schools can expand student choices through online learning. Courses are offered by a Ministry-approved online learning service provider ("OL Service Provider") using BC-certified teachers. BC offshore school principals must consult the OL Service Provider regarding course availability and restrictions.

The Ministry-approved online learning service provider for the 2023/24 school year is Global Education – School District 73 Business Company.

Website: <https://www.globaled.ca>

Credit for courses that cover the Graduation Program and that meet the graduation requirements can only be given by a BC offshore school following an equivalency review by the school in which the student is enrolled.

Provincial Numeracy and Literacy Assessments may not be taken through online learning.

SUBMITTING OL COURSE GRADE AND FINAL MARKS

Step 1: The OL Service Provider submits final course marks to the BC offshore school.

Step 2: The BC offshore school conducts an equivalency review of each course taken through OL before entering the OL course's final marks and "E" for equivalency (Course Type) into the school information system. These records will be included in a subsequent TRAX data submission. The BC offshore school must keep a copy of the OL Service Provider's record of student grades for at least 10 years.

Step 3: The BC offshore school enters the OL courses and marks on the Permanent Student Record.

Step 4: A BC offshore school's inspection may include a review and comparison of the OL Service Provider's grades, the TRAX record, and the Permanent Student Record.



Remote Instruction Policy

The Remote Instruction Policy was implemented on July 1, 2022, to support students' equitable access to learning. If the Owner/Operator adheres to the criteria outlined in the Remote Instruction Policy, the Ministry may authorize an offshore school to offer a limited number of BC curriculum courses via remote instruction and/or have temporary coverage of courses.

Please refer to the Remote Instruction Policy document available from your Offshore School Representative for full details.

Educational Partnerships

An educational partnership is a friendly and cooperative relationship between a BC-certified offshore school and a K–12 public or independent school in BC designed to improve student achievement, promote cultural understanding, and expand professional learning.

BC offshore schools are encouraged to have an educational partnership with a school in BC. Partnerships may be formal or informal. Formal partnerships may include details about collaborate activities, goals of the relationship, responsibilities of the two schools, how the partnership will be evaluated, and processes for renewing the relationship.

Common partnership activities generally relate to learning and commonly include:

- Student-to-student and class-to-class interactions
- Art or music class performances
- School cultural interests
- Student exchanges and school tours
- Charitable or environmental projects
- Collaborative approaches to pedagogy or professional development
- For-credit and non-credit courses



EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q How many hours of instruction must a BC offshore school provide to meet the learning outcomes?

A Minimum hours of instruction are 850 hours for students in kindergarten through Grade 12.

Q How do I determine equivalency for a student from another jurisdiction?

A A BC-certified educator (under the supervision of a BC-certified principal) can determine equivalency for any student who has not attended a BC school by reviewing the learning standards, subject matter, and assessment methods of the courses the student has taken and comparing them to those in BC's curriculum to determine a match for equivalency. If there is at least an 80% match, the principal may grant equivalency, as long as it is fully documented on the student's record.

The policy that sets out the rules for equivalency is the **International Student Graduation Credit Policy**.
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/international-student-graduation-credit>

Q Our BC offshore school sends students to BC for summer courses. What are the requirements set by the Ministry for these courses so that we are sure that the students will receive credit?

A The requirements that must be met for students to receive credit for summer school courses are:

- Teachers must be BC-certified
- The course(s) must be delivered by a BC public or independent school
- Course content must follow BC's curriculum
- Courses must meet all provincial or BAA learning outcomes within the curriculum
- Students require a Personal Education Number (PEN)
- The "school of record" or "home school" for the student must report the summer school course for credit



7 Provincial Assessments

Assessment and curriculum are interconnected. Provincial assessments have been re-designed to align with current curriculum courses.

Graduation Assessments

The BC Graduation Program, in effect as of July 1, 2018, requires students to complete provincial assessments focused on literacy and numeracy. The emphasis in these assessments is on demonstration and application of literacy and numeracy skills in relevant, real-life scenarios. Administration dates are in November, January, April, and June of each year.

The Grade 10 Numeracy Assessment was introduced in the 2017/18 school year, and the Grade 10 Literacy Assessment was introduced in the 2019/20 school year. Students are required to complete first attempts at both assessments in their Grade 10 year. The Grade 12 Literacy Assessment was introduced in the 2021/22 school year, and students are required to complete it in Grade 12.

Learn more online about the **Graduation Assessments**.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/assessment/graduation>

Graduation Assessment Preparation

Schools must ensure students are prepared to write an assessment. A student may only write a particular assessment once per session.

To become familiar with types of questions and format, sample assessments and information for students, parents, and teachers are available online.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/curriculum-and-assessment/assessments/graduation>

Graduation Assessment Rewrites

Until graduation, students may write a Provincial Graduation Assessment up to three times: the original attempt and two re-writes. These attempts may occur at any assessment session during the Grade 10-12 years. The highest proficiency score attained from each assessment will appear on the student's transcript. However, for the Grade 10 Literacy Assessment, the student's transcript will only indicate requirement met (RM) and not the proficiency level.



Assessment Invigilation

BC offshore schools are required to follow the Ministry's guidelines for conducting assessments. If the Ministry has concerns about the invigilation practices of a BC offshore school, an assessment official may be appointed to oversee the invigilation of assessments at the school's expense.

Get more information online:

- **Handbook of Procedures for the Graduation Program**
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/graduation/handbook_of_procedures.pdf
- If you require support with provincial assessments, please contact assessments@gov.bc.ca.

Procedures for Assessment Participation

Before a BC offshore school can participate in a provincial assessment session, they should be familiar with the BC Graduation Program Handbook of Procedures at https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/graduation/handbook_of_procedures.pdf.

Schools are also required to install the Security Control and ensure that all workstations and devices – including students' personal devices that will be used for Provincial Graduation Assessments – meet the computer and browser requirements posted at <https://bcd.vretta.com/#/en/bced-landing/grad/tech-guides>.

Assessment Scheduling

Q The assessment schedule doesn't work for all of our students. Can we request a separate assessment session?

A The Ministry schedules four assessment sessions each year in November, January, April and June. Check the **2023/24 Graduation Assessment Schedule**
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/exams/2023-24-graduation-assessment-schedule.pdf>

The Ministry may not be able to accommodate requests for changes to assessment sessions.



8 Post-Secondary Information

BC offshore school graduates are prepared to pursue several pathways to future success. The British Columbia Dogwood Diploma is recognized internationally as a symbol of high-quality education. BC offshore school graduates have gone on to post-secondary studies in many different countries and diverse institutions including colleges, universities, and technical or trade schools.

Spotlight – BC Offshore School Pathways

A graduate of the BC Offshore School Program began his undergraduate studies at Camosun College on Vancouver Island and then transferred to the University of Victoria, where he earned a double Bachelor of Arts degree in geography and environmental studies. He holds a variety of noteworthy and prestigious professional and recreational certificates and awards. Since graduation, he has had diverse job opportunities and continues his community volunteer work with a focus on global education opportunities.



9 Operational Requirements & Expectations

In addition to the other requirements already outlined, operational requirements for BC offshore schools are listed below.

Administration & Policies

Owner/Operators are expected to effectively operate their BC offshore school by maintaining proper organizational and financial capacity, including:

- Keeping the school in good standing with the Ministry
- Maintaining a school administration structure where the responsibilities of the principal, vice-principal, teachers, and administrative staff are clearly defined, communicated, and understood

CREATE SCHOOL-SPECIFIC POLICIES

BC offshore schools must develop school-specific policies and procedures that are consistent with the terms and conditions outlined in the Certification Agreement. The policies need to be available to the entire school community on the website, in handbooks for students and parents, and/or in a school policy handbook for teachers and administrators.

Specifically, the school must have policies and procedures in place for the following areas:

- Governance and administration
- Student admissions, attendance, and records management
- Student assessment
- Student supervision and classroom management
- Parental appeals
- Human resources (e.g., hiring, compensation, accommodation, leave, and dismissal policies and procedures that align with program requirements and
- adhere to relevant human rights and employment standards legislation)
- Evaluation and professional development for administrators and teachers
- Complaints management and dispute resolution to resolve differences between principals, vice-principals, teachers, and the Owner/Operator
- Emergency plan for natural disasters, as well as any event that could cause an unplanned temporary or permanent closure of the school

School Finances

An Owner/Operator is expected to have sufficient financial capacity to operate a BC offshore school sustainably over an extended period of time. This means having a business plan and regularly reviewing finances, including monthly financial statements of revenues and expenses and annual audited financial statements. By December 31, schools in their first, second, or third year of operation must submit to the Ministry externally audited financial statements that follow international accounting standards, including a Statement of Operations and a Statement of Financial Position. Existing schools submit externally audited financial statements to the Ministry upon request.



Certification Status, School Marketing & Public Announcements

All marketing materials and print or web publications need to reflect accurately the school's certification status. That means that a pre-certified school can only advertise that it has "approval to deliver BC's curriculum"; it cannot state that the school is – or will be – certified.

A certified school can only advertise that the school:

- Has been granted certification status
- Has entered into a Certification Agreement with BC under the BC Offshore School Program
- Is operating a "BC-certified" school
- Has authority to offer education programs at the school leading to a British Columbia Dogwood Diploma

Owner/Operators must be specific in publications and on website about how much it costs for students to attend the school and must accurately describe fees charged by the Ministry vs. fees that are charged by the school.

Communications

BC offshore schools must have clear and formal processes for engaging and involving students, guardians, staff, and school administration. This may include operational staff meetings, regular written communications, staff and student/parent handbooks, and/or a school policy handbook.

The Owner/Operator must be able to show how feedback and comments from these groups influence school operations.

Facilities & Resources

BC offshore school facilities must be in proper condition for operating a school under the BC program, as outlined in the school's annual report. All school operations, facilities, grounds, and equipment must meet local health and safety standards.

In accordance with program requirements, schools must have sufficient resources – including textbooks and a library with hard copy, electronic, and Internet resources – to support the learning outcomes of BC's curriculum offered at the school.

A reliable network and Internet connectivity at standard levels of speed ensure a high degree of equitable access and improved user experience for students accessing the learning resources of BC's curriculum. Recommended bandwidth according to number of students is outlined below.

School Size	Internet Bandwidth
< 50 students	30 Mbps
51 - 150 students	50 Mbps
151 - 300 students	100 Mbps
301 - 600 students	200 Mbps
601 - 900 students	300 Mbps
901 - 1200 students	400 Mbps
> 1200 students	500 Mbps



Emergency Plans

Owner/Operators must develop an emergency plan for natural disasters (e.g., fire, earthquake) and for any event that could cause an unplanned temporary or permanent closure of the school. These emergency plans must be vetted for accuracy and functionality by the OSR.

School Records

Owner/Operators must establish and maintain school records. School records must be in English, accurate, up-to-date, and stored in a secure manner to protect privacy and prevent damage.

School records should include:

- All fully executed Pre-Certification and Certification Agreements
- Student records
- Administrator and teacher records
- Records related to the operation of the school (including financial records)
- Annual reports and supporting documentation
- Local government approval to operate a BC offshore school, including name and contact information of the government official granting the approval and an English translation

School documents – including the records of students, teachers, and administrators – may be inspected and copied by the BC offshore school inspectors as part of the annual inspection process.

Student records: Each BC offshore school must maintain a student record for every enrolled student that contains the following items:

- Personal Student Record (Form 1704)
- Copies of a minimum of the two most recent years of Student Progress Reports or an official transcript of grades
- Personal Education Number (PEN)
- Results of the English Language Assessment signed off by the principal
- A record of any supplementary English language support provided to the student
- Signed consent forms to collect, use, and disclose information are to be completed upon the student's initial entrance into the BC Offshore School Program, again in Grade 7, and again in Grade 10 (NOTE: Consent remains in effect and is valid until the student has graduated)
- Any other records pertinent to the student (e.g., disciplinary action taken, attendance records)

Student records must:

- Meet all the requirements of the Agreement
- Be maintained in English, as well as the language of the jurisdiction in which the school is located

Schools must also have written procedures about the storage, retrieval, and appropriate use of students records to ensure confidentiality of student record information and privacy for students and their families.



Get more information online: **Permanent Student Record Instructions**
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/permanent-student-record>

Secure data: Student records must be maintained using appropriate school administration software. They should also be kept safe from an internal malfunction or external invasion. Schedule regular back-ups, and consider storing data on removable media or an external drive.

Teacher and administrator records: The BC offshore school must keep records for the principal, vice-principal (as applicable), and teachers. Records should include:

- A copy of their BC Certification of Qualification (COQ) or an Subject Restricted Independent School Teaching Certificate (SR-ISTC) (NOTE: if SR-ISTC, include proof of minimum of two years of teaching experience)
- Copies of all contracts of employment between the Owner/Operator and the educator
- Signed consent forms to collect, use, and disclose information as required under the Certification Agreement (NOTE: Teacher consent is valid and remains in effect until it is rescinded in writing to the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care)
- Any human resource-related issues related to the employee
- Copies of all performance evaluations
- A record of the educator's professional development activities
- Copy of the applicable work permit or visa
- Current contact information

Local government approval: Owner/Operators must have proof that they have approval to operate the BC offshore school in the form of a letter from the appropriate government entity that expressly approves or has no objection to the Owner/Operator operating a school under a Certification Agreement with the Province of British Columbia, delivering the program to students in Grades K–12 leading to a graduation certificate, and hiring teachers with a teaching certificate issued by the Ministry ("Letter of Approval"). The Letter of Approval must always be kept on file at the school. The Ministry may take steps to verify that the documentation is authentic and valid, including contacting local, regional, or national government authorities, as required.

The Letter of Approval must be renewed annually, unless the letter provides for multi-year approval (up to a maximum of five years). The OSR is responsible for having both the Letter of Approval notarized and the English translation done by a certified translator.



Translations of local government approvals: The Ministry will only accept translations from one of the following sources:

- A certified translator in the country in which the school is located whose certification can be confirmed by a stamp or membership number with a professional translation association
- An associate or certified member of the Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council, such as the Society of Translators and Interpreters of BC (<http://www.stibc.org>)
- A document translation service pre-approved by the Ministry

GUIDELINES FOR TRANSLATIONS

All translations must be accompanied by a statement from the translator that states **all** of the following:

- That the translation is accurate and authentic
- That the translator is one of the sources listed above (the translator should include their identification number and/or seal, name, and contact information)
- The full name (in uppercase letters) and signature of the translator

Data Submission & Reporting

At regular intervals throughout the year, school authorities must collect and submit information to the Ministry about:

- School operations and finances
- Enrolment, registration, and achievement of students in the BC program – this includes completing the **Student Data Collection Form (1701)**
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/data-collections>

DATA COLLECTION: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q** Should I report our students as “resident” or “Out-of-Province/International Student” on the 1701 Data Collection Form?
- A** Report all students in BC offshore schools as “Out-of-Province/International Student” (funding code 14).
- Q** How do I report courses for students on the 1701 form?
- A** Courses are reported by the number of credits. A four-credit course is reported as 0100 and a two-credit course is 0050. Offshore schools must report all courses taken by their individual students enrolled in Grades 8–12.



TRAX Data Submissions

BC schools and BC offshore schools with students enrolled in Grades 10, 11, or 12 courses must send TRAX data submissions to the Ministry of Education and Child Care. See Chapter 8 of the **Handbook of Procedures for the Graduation Program**.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/graduation/handbook_of_procedures.pdf

You can review TRAX data transfer requirements at **TRAX Data Transfer Specifications**.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/exams/trax_data_transfer_specifications_july_1_2023.pdf

DIGITAL BACKUP OF ELECTRONIC RECORDS

Student records that are maintained using appropriate school administration software should be backed up for safeguarding in case of theft, fire, or other damage to the school computer.

Technology Requirements

BC offshore schools need to accommodate all students writing assessments within the graduation assessment timetable or as otherwise directed by the Ministry. This includes having appropriate technology available and enough Internet bandwidth for all eligible students to write electronic assessments at the same time.

Graduation

TRANSCRIPT AND DIPLOMA PACKAGES FOR SCHOOLS

Most transcripts and diplomas (i.e., from students completing in June) are produced in the last week of July and mailed to the Offshore School Representative (OSR) in BC in late July/early August for distribution to schools. However, throughout the year schools may also receive monthly transcript and diploma packages. See Chapter 6 of the **Handbook of Procedures for the Graduation Program**.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/graduation/handbook_of_procedures.pdf

STUDENT TRANSCRIPTS SERVICE (STS) – STUDENT ACCESS TO TRANSCRIPTS

Students are not automatically mailed a copy of their final transcript. However, they are entitled to order one free printed transcript (by mail) after graduation that can be sent to any address. See Chapter 6 of the **Handbook of Procedures for the Graduation Program**.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/graduation/handbook_of_procedures.pdf



TRAX Updates

Administrators should also subscribe to **TRAX updates notification service** <https://lists.educ.gov.bc.ca/list/trax.updates.lists.educ.gov.bc.ca> for important information related to assessment session processes, data transfer, and student certification. Please include the BC offshore school name in the subscription form.

BC-Certified Educators

BC offshore schools must ensure that BC-certified administrators and teachers plan, evaluate, and provide instruction to students using BC's curriculum, including reporting on student progress to parents or legal guardians.

Administrators or teachers who do not have the proper BC certification but are interested in teaching in a BC offshore school must make a timely application to the Ministry of Education and Child Care.

To receive a BC teaching certificate, an applicant must meet certain standards for educators, including the standards for provincial conduct and competence. In BC, the teaching profession is regulated by the *Teachers Act* and is administered by the Ministry's Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB).

Certification applications that are in progress: At any point in the school year, a teacher employed to teach in the BC program must hold a valid Ministry of Education and Child Care teaching certificate or have a certification application in process and have a Letter of Exemption issued by the Director of the Offshore School Program.

This applies to:

- Teachers on the first day of the school year
- New teachers hired at any point during the school year

A first exemption may be approved up to the five months from the date of issue, providing teachers enough time to submit all relevant documents to complete application requirements. In situations where the application is waiting for TRB review for completeness, or not yet complete due to situations beyond the control of the applicant, the Ministry may provide an extension of the first exemption for up to five months. Once the TRB deems the application complete, a second exemption may be offered for an additional period of up to five months. The maximum exemption period is ten months, but the Ministry reserves the right to make exceptions to this time period.

Teachers whose certification applications are denied may request that the TRB Director of Certification reconsider the decision. Those whose Certificate of Qualification (COQ) applications are denied may also apply for a Subject Restricted Independent School Teaching Certificate (SR-ISTC). Teachers applying for an SR-ISTC may be eligible to receive an exemption at the discretion of the Director of the Offshore School Program.

Exemptions will not be approved for teachers who have:

- Not paid their certification application fee
- Not cleared their criminal record check (CRC)
- Been notified of eligibility for certification but have not paid their annual practice fee
- Been found ineligible for certification



Exemptions become invalid if:

- A certification application has been denied and the applicant is requesting reconsideration from the TRB Director of Certification for a COQ or an SR-ISTC
- The applicant has been advised by the TRB that they are ineligible for certification
- The applicant is not making reasonable efforts to have all documentation provided to the TRB on an ongoing and regular basis
- The applicant is required to redo a CRC due to an error or omission on a previous CRC
- The applicant has not paid the COQ or SR-ISTC application fees

APPLICATIONS FOR AN SR-ISTC WHILE CERTIFICATE OF QUALIFICATION APPLICATION IS IN PROCESS

The Ministry has a process for BC offshore school employers to hire BC teacher candidates who may qualify for an SR-ISTC prior to completing their program in August or September.

In order to be eligible for this interim certificate, a teacher candidate must:

- Be registered in a BC teacher education program with an intended graduation date between May and September
- Have already applied for a COQ, as documents submitted for the COQ do not need to be re-submitted for the interim certificate application
- Have submitted the application for an interim certificate by June 30
- Have an offer of employment letter from a BC offshore school employer
- Pay a fee of \$35

Find more info online: **Teaching Offshore** <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/become-a-teacher/offshore-school>



TEACHER CERTIFICATION: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q How long does it take to evaluate a teacher certification application?

A Once an application is complete (i.e., all required documents are submitted), it may take up to three months or more to evaluate an application. Incomplete applications or unclear documents may delay the evaluation.

Q How can teachers share their application status with their employer?

A The easiest way is to take a screenshot of the status page online and email it to your employer. Do not share log-in information with your employer. The TRB also has a “Voluntary Consent Form”, which allows a third party to contact the TRB and request information regarding the applicant’s application, such as missing documents. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/teacher-regulation/voluntary_consent_form.pdf

Q What’s the difference between a Non-Expiring Professional Certificate of Qualification and a Subject Restricted Independent School Teaching Certificate?

A A Non-Expiring Professional Certificate of Qualification is issued to applicants who have met all of the requirements for teacher certification specific to BC. This certificate is not restricted to any subject area or grade level and is valid for employment in BC’s K–12 education system, including public, independent, and BC offshore schools.

Get more information online: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/organizational-structure/boards-commissions-tribunals/bc-teachers-council/cert_standards.pdf

A Subject Restricted Independent School Teaching Certificate restricts the holder to teaching subject(s) that are directly related to their post-secondary concentration. It is valid for up to 60 months. BC offshore schools may employ a teacher with a Subject Restricted Independent School Teaching Certificate as long as the teacher has two years of teaching experience.

Get more information online: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/teacher-regulation/istc_cert_standards.pdf

Q What needs to be submitted when applying for teacher certification with the Ministry?

A Complete lists of required documents, as well as information about the application process can be found online: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/your-application/submit-documents>

Q I have been asked to undergo vulnerable sector fingerprinting as part of the criminal record check process. The letter states that fingerprinting must be completed in Canada. Does this mean I cannot be certified?

A Vulnerable sector fingerprinting is only available in Canada. Certificate holders and applicants who are flagged to undergo vulnerable sector fingerprinting and are outside of Canada have no mechanism to fulfil the fingerprinting requirement unless they travel to Canada. If you are asked to undergo vulnerable sector fingerprinting and are outside of Canada, please contact the Criminal Records Review Program (CRRP) directly by calling 1-855-587-0815 option 2 or emailing criminalrecords@gov.bc.ca and request an “out-of-country form”. You will be asked to provide details about when you plan to return to Canada. Your response will inform the CRRP’s decision regarding your requirement for vulnerable sector fingerprinting.

Get more information online: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/maintain/record-check>



REPORTING EMPLOYEE LISTS

BC offshore schools must submit their employee list to the Teacher Regulation Branch by October 15 each year through the “Employers’ Area” portal and to the Offshore School Program as part of the Annual Report on September 30.

To access the “Employers’ Area” portal, visit <https://teacherregulation.gov.bc.ca/Employers/login.aspx>

HANDLING COMPLAINTS OR REPORTING BREACHES OF CONDUCT

If a teacher or administrator is in breach of the Professional Standards for BC Educators, the standards for competence and/or professional conduct of educators in BC, the Owner/Operator must report this breach to both the Commissioner for Teacher Regulation and the Director of the Offshore School Program.

Provide the following information in the form of a letter to the Commissioner for Teacher Regulation:

- Full name of the certificate holder being reported and their certificate number
- Note that the report is made under the Certification Agreement between the BC offshore school and the Ministry
- Name and address of the school
- Name of the principal or OSR who is reporting the matter
- Summary of reasons for reporting and description of the conduct being reported
- School’s response to the conduct
- Copies of all records respecting the matter

You may mail or email the letter and accompanying documentation or electronic media to:

Commissioner for Teacher Regulation
201-828 W 8th Ave
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1E2 Canada
Email: TRB.intake@gov.bc.ca

Independent Schools and International Education Branch
BC Ministry of Education and Child Care
PO Box 9146 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9H1 Canada
Email: International.Education@gov.bc.ca

If the Ministry receives a complaint about the conduct or competence of a teacher or administrator, the complaint will be addressed through the Commissioner for Teacher Regulation’s complaints process.

All BC-certified teachers have a duty under section 38 of the *Teacher Act* to report – in the form of a written and signed report to the Commissioner for Teacher Regulation for the Commissioner’s review – any conduct involving physical harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, or significant emotional harm to a student or students, when they have reason to believe that another certificate holder has engaged in such conduct. Teachers must also work with BC principals to follow local procedures for reporting misconduct.

Get more information online:

- **Complaints & Reports**
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/boards-commissions-tribunals/commissioner-for-teacher-regulation>
- **Professional Standards for BC Educators**
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/teacher-regulation/standards-for-educators/edu_standards.pdf



Recruiting and Employing Administrators and Teachers

The Owner/Operator is responsible for the recruitment and hiring of BC-certified administrators and teachers.

They need to:

- Follow all relevant local human rights and employment standards legislation
- Provide information about local culture and living or working conditions so that administrators and teachers can know what to expect

RECRUITING BC-CERTIFIED TEACHERS

Post a teaching position: Make a Future – Careers in BC Education (www.makeafuture.ca). Schools pay a fee for this service.

Employment contracts for administrators or teachers should clearly outline the terms of employment, including:

- Duties, responsibilities, and accountabilities
- Teaching/administration assignment
- Hours of work
- Length of the school day and school year, including key dates, events, and special functions
- Commitment to professional development
- Salary and benefits
- Travel and accommodation arrangements provided, including moving expenses if applicable
- Availability of instructional supplies
- Other relevant employment terms and conditions, for example applicable visa/work permit requirements, contract renewal/termination process, overtime, bonuses, etc.

The Ministry expects that all parties will abide by contract terms. Administrators, teachers, and other employees are responsible for due diligence before accepting any employment contract. Disputes need to be handled through the school's **dispute resolution process**.

The Ministry regulates and inspects the delivery of the BC educational program by BC offshore schools.

Owner/Operators operate BC offshore schools and are responsible for complying with all BC offshore school program requirements, as well as all laws of the country in which the school is located.

The Ministry is not responsible for the employment relationship – including any employment disputes – between a teacher and BC offshore school Owner/Operator; this is governed by a teacher's, principal's, or vice-principal's contract of employment. The Ministry is also not responsible for and does not participate in the process of obtaining or vetting work visas for BC offshore school teachers.

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that they have correct information regarding employment and immigration requirements for the country in which the school is located. Teachers may wish to contact the country's consulate or embassy in Canada with any questions related to local laws, regulations, or requirements.

Consent: Administrators and teachers must provide consent for the collection, use, and disclosure of relevant personal information. If an administrator or teacher withdraws their consent, the Owner/Operator must suspend the employment of that individual immediately and notify the Commissioner for Teacher Regulation and the Director of the Offshore School Program.



PRINCIPALS AND VICE-PRINCIPALS

Each BC offshore school must always have a principal. Each principal must have the following qualifications:

- Be fluent in English
- Hold a current and valid BC COQ or an SR-ISTC
- Be affiliated with the Owner/Operator only through their employment contract with the BC offshore school
- Have a minimum of one year of experience working at a principal or vice-principal level
- Have a minimum of three years of experience in a BC public, independent or offshore school

Principals who are missing one or more of the required qualifications must be approved by the Director of the Offshore School Program.

Each BC offshore school has the option to have one or more vice-principals. Vice-principals must have the following qualifications:

- Hold a current and valid BC COQ or
- Hold a current and valid SR-ISTC (which includes a minimum of two years' teaching experience)

Evaluation & Professional Development

The Owner/Operator is responsible for ensuring that administrators and teachers undergo rigorous evaluations on a regular basis and that the results of these evaluations factor into decisions regarding the frequency and type of professional development activities provided for each individual.

Each administrator and teacher must be provided a minimum of two days of professional development per year (preferably more) in order to ensure that administrators and teachers remain current with BC's curriculum and associated teaching strategies and can update and/or improve their professional practice as needed.

Administrator and teacher evaluation results and professional development activities must be documented in the school's files for each educator. This information may be reviewed as part of the Ministry's annual inspection.



Dispute Resolution Process

An Owner/Operator must develop and implement a formal process for resolving disputes. The Ministry expects that the school's dispute resolution process be the primary mechanism for resolving disputes between:

- Teachers
- Teachers and administrators
- Administrators
- Teachers or administrators and the Owner/Operator
- Parents/students and the school

The school's complaint process must be included in all employee and guardian/student handbooks and should be available on the school's website.

Complaints

The Ministry may investigate or act on any complaint or information regarding a pre-certified or certified school. Owner/Operators are expected to respond to requests from the Ministry concerning complaints in a timely manner.

Submit complaints about BC offshore schools in writing to the Ministry:

Independent Schools and International Education Branch
BC Ministry of Education and Child Care
PO Box 9146 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9H1 Canada
Email: International.Education@gov.bc.ca

If a complaint is valid, the Ministry may share information about it with other Canadian provincial education authorities.



APPENDIX A

Important Dates for BC Offshore Schools 2023/24

Month	Date	Activity
July	1	2023/24 school year begins
August	1	Curriculum Usage Fee and Program Administration Fee due
September	30	Annual Reports due
October, January, and May	Various	Offshore School Representative meetings
October	3	Target Date: TRAX First data submission (until November 10)
October	5	Submit School Data Collection Form (1601) to the Ministry
October	8	Submit 1701 data to the Ministry
October	On or before 15	Submit data about certificate holders from previous school year and those currently employed by Owner/Operators to Director of Certification, Ministry of Education and Child Care pursuant to <i>Teachers Act</i> , s. 80
October/November	October 30–November 3	Graduation Assessment Administration
November	30	Report student withdrawals from BC Offshore School Program
December	13	BC Offshore and Group 4 Independent School Virtual Professional Development Workshop
January	30 days from invoice date	Student Registration Fees due
January	15–26	Graduation Assessment Administration
April	2–19	Target date: TRAX Spring/interim submission of data
April	15–19	Graduation Assessment Administration
June	3–14	Graduation Assessment Administration
June	30	2023/24 school year end
July	12	Target date: TRAX Final submission of grades
July	12	Target date: Student PSI selections
July 2024	TBD	BC Offshore and Group 4 Independent School Summer Professional Development Workshop
July	31	Release date for June Assessment Results and final transcripts to post secondary institutions



British Columbia Offshore School Program



Ministry of
Education and
Child Care

