

# British Columbia Global Education Program



OPERATING MANUAL  
*for* OFFSHORE SCHOOLS



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

Ministry of  
Education



# **British Columbia Global Education Program**

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OPERATING MANUAL

*for* OFFSHORE SCHOOLS 2020/21

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# Important Notes and Changes for 2020/21

Page #	Topic	Description
5	Professional Development	The Ministry may recover costs related to putting on capacity developing professional development activities to offshore school educators.
8	Inspections	For the 2020/21 school year, offshore school inspections will be conducted entirely online.
23	Distributed Learning	Credit for DL courses that cover the Graduation Program and which meet the Graduation Requirements can only be given by an offshore school following an equivalency review by the school, in which the student is enrolled.
25	Provincial Assessments	Provincial exams have been phased out. The BC Graduation Program requires students to complete three provincial assessments focused on literacy and numeracy: Grade 10 Numeracy Assessment, Grade 10 Literacy Assessment and the Grade 12 Literacy Assessment. The Grade 12 Literacy Assessment will be implemented during the 2021/22 school year.
30	British Columbia International Student Ambassador Scholarships	The scholarship program has not been confirmed for the 2020/21. Please check the <b>BC International Education Student Ambassador Scholarship for K-12 and Post-Secondary Institutions</b> website periodically for updated information. <a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/scholarships/scholarships-awards/bc-international-student-ambassador">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/scholarships/scholarships-awards/bc-international-student-ambassador</a>
36	Letter of Exemption Policy	The Letter of Exemption Policy for teacher certification has been updated for the 2020/21 school year.





# Introduction 1

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

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

- Increase recognition of BC’s high-quality education “brand”
- Create opportunities for BC schools to develop international partnerships
- Attract more international students to study and eventually work and live in BC

The BC curriculum is offered in offshore schools in eight different countries worldwide. BC-certified offshore schools are inspected annually by BC education experts to ensure that BC offshore schools provide quality programming in an educationally supportive environment.

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



# How to Establish a Certified Offshore School 2

BC's Ministry of Education 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 at home and internationally through its network of 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 parents and dedicated education partners. BC has become a favoured destination for new immigrants and thousands of international students because:

- 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 curriculum, students and institutions also benefit from:

- The expertise and experience of BC-certified educators working at offshore 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 here

Get more info online: **International Education in BC**

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/international-education>

## 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 have been 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 country/region in which the 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





# Fees & Expenses 3

All fees are non-refundable and must be paid in Canadian dollars. The Ministry invoices schools 30 days in advance of the due date 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 or expense	Description	When it needs to be paid
Application fee	\$5,000 (non-refundable) Applications are not processed unless this fee is paid in full	Time of application
Curriculum usage fee	\$10,000 per school per year	Owner/Operators are invoiced 30 days in advance of the fee payment due date
Program administration fee	\$5,000 per school per year	Owner/Operators are invoiced 30 days in advance of the fee payment due date
Student registration fee	\$350 per student per year The student registration fee is calculated based on each school's 1701 data submission <b>Student withdrawal:</b> If a student withdraws by November 30, the school does not have to pay the per student fee (proof of withdrawal must be submitted to the Ministry). If a student withdraws after November 30, the school must pay the per student fee	Owner/Operators are invoiced in December  Payment due 30 days from invoice date
Inspection fees and expenses	Inspection fees and expenses include the professional services of the inspection chair and inspection team members as well as their travel, accommodation, per diem and incidental costs	Owner/Operators are invoiced 45 days prior to the inspection Payment due 30 days prior to the inspection
In-person application review (following submission of the Expression of Interest)	<b>Held in BC:</b> All relevant travel and accommodation expenses for the Owner/Operator <b>OR</b> <b>Held at the school location:</b> Travel, accommodation, per diem and incidental costs of all Ministry participants	If the interview is held on-location, fees and expenses must be paid 30 days before the Ministry participants leave BC
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 is due 15 days before the audit team leaves BC
Professional Development	The Ministry may recover costs related to putting on capacity building professional development activities to offshore school educators	As requested



# Unpaid Fees

Overdue fees	What will happen
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"> <li>· Payment of outstanding fees plus interest charges</li> <li>· Re-applying for certification (including payment of the \$5,000 application fee)</li> <li>· Payment of \$10,000 as liquidated damages</li> </ul>
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"> <li>· Payment of outstanding fees plus interest charges</li> <li>· Re-applying for certification (including payment of the \$5,000 application fee)</li> <li>· Payment of \$10,000 as liquidated damages</li> </ul>



# School Inspections 4

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

Inspections are scheduled once per year. 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 related supporting documents to the Ministry
- Making and confirming travel arrangements for the inspection teams
- 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
- Learning resources
- Professional development
- Teaching strategies
- Assessment methods and reporting

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 team appointed by the Ministry conducts an onsite or online visit of the offshore school to confirm that it meets the requirements of the Agreement. This includes:

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

## 2020/21 Inspections

*For the 2020/21 school year, all offshore school inspections will be conducted online.*

# 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

# Reporting to the Ministry

**Annual report:** The Owner/Operator must submit an annual report to the Ministry by September 30. A template for the report is posted on the Ministry website each year. Owner/Operators must complete all sections in the template.

**Audited financial statements:** New offshore schools submit externally audited financial statements to the Ministry as part of their application to become a BC-certified offshore school. 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. Existing schools submit externally audited financial statements upon request to the Ministry.

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 in any school or engages in conduct that may harm the BC Global Education Program – Offshore Schools 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 put on probation.

**Probation:** When a 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 outlines how it plans to comply. If a school does not comply by a specific date, it may be put on probation.

If a school is put on probation:

- Information about the school’s status is published on the Ministry website
- The Owner/Operator must notify all students and their parents that the school has been placed on probation

**De-certification:** School certification and the Ministry’s Agreement with the Owner/Operator are terminated if a school 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 Agreement/ program requirements as outlined in this Operating Manual (the “Manual”) and the Agreement
- The Owner/Operator fails to pay the required fees
- The Owner/Operator fails to respond to a request or a 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
- It is found that the Owner/Operator has provided false or misleading information or documents to the Ministry
- 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 provide an educational program that meets the provincial requirements
- The ownership of the school is changed without notice to or authorization by the Ministry;
- 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 will not be able to complete their BC Program unless they transfer to another offshore school or to a K-12 public or independent school within BC.
- The Owner/Operator must comply if a student requests that their records be transferred to another offshore school or a K-12 public or independent school



# Roles & Responsibilities 5

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

## 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 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 Owner/Operators from any of the obligations specified in the Agreement.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

- Directly operating the school, including delivery of the BC curriculum in English
- 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 Certification 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
  - » Parental appeals
  - » Evaluation and professional development of teachers and administrators
  - » Dispute resolution
- Supporting principals:
  - » Allowing the principal enough time to perform their administrative duties
  - » Ensuring that the principal does not serve as principal for more than one 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 and national government body of the region/country 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 Ministry's Executive Director of Independent Schools and International Education
- 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 resume for eligibility verification

## British Columbia Ministry of Education

The role of the Ministry includes:

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

### RESPONSIBILITIES

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



# Offshore School Representatives

Owner/Operators must appoint an OSR to be their primary contact with the Ministry.

## REQUIREMENTS

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

- A current and valid Certificate of Qualification and be in good standing with the Ministry
- Minimum three years' experience working in a senior administrative capacity. For example, as a superintendent, assistant superintendent, district principal or director, school principal or vice-principal, or dean in a BC- certified offshore school, public school, independent school, or post-secondary institution
- 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 – able to communicate effectively with an international audience and diverse client groups, especially when discussing policy, legislation, goals and program criteria/requirements
- The ability to identify and manage complex issues or concerns raised by education stakeholders (including the Ministry), explore options for resolution and build consensus towards a satisfactory outcome
- An understanding of and recent professional experience working with teacher certification and regulation requirements in BC
- Knowledge of the 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 in BC within a K-12 public, independent school 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 the Owner/Operator recruits and hires only qualified and competent personnel, and providing support for cultural acclimatization and getting 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 recommendations and requirements for the school
- Assisting with marketing the school according to the guidelines set out in the Agreement
- 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 plan for natural disasters, such as pandemics, fires and earthquakes, as well as any event that would cause an unplanned temporary or permanent closure of a school for accuracy and functionality
- Reporting dismissal, suspension, discipline, conduct and competence issues pertaining to any administrator or teacher to both the Commissioner for Teacher Regulation and the Ministry's Executive Director of Independent Schools and International Education
- 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 resume 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, 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 Certificate of Qualification
- At least one year of experience working at a principal or vice-principal level
- 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 the BC 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 making sure 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 parents 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 Ministry's Executive Director of Independent Schools and International Education
- 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 his or her administrative duties
- Making sure that the principal does not serve as principal for more than one offshore school
- Informing the Ministry immediately if a new principal is hired and submitting resume 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:

- Provide instruction to students in a manner that encourages and fosters learning
- Teach the BC curriculum
- Regularly evaluate students and communicate student learning progress to students and their parents
- 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 *Teacher Act*) to the Commissioner for Teacher Regulation and the Ministry's Executive Director of Independent Schools and International Education (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>



# Educational Requirements & Expectations 6

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

- Pre-certification Agreement or Certification Agreement
- Operating Manual for Offshore Schools

## Grades Offered

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

## Student Admissions

If the laws of the jurisdiction in which the 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

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



# Delivery of British Columbia Curriculum

Owner/Operators must make sure that delivery of the BC 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** (PDF)  
[http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schoollaw/j/m41\\_91.pdf](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schoollaw/j/m41_91.pdf)
- Operating the education program in way that is consistent with intellectual, human and social development, and career development goals – see part C of the **Statement of Education Policy Order** (PDF).  
[http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/legislation-policy/legislation/schoollaw/d/oic\\_128089.pdf](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 material 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 an offshore school who successfully complete the requirements of the BC Graduation Program (a combination of required courses and elective courses) will receive a BC Certificate of Graduation or “Dogwood Diploma”.

More information about graduation requirements is available in the **Handbook of Procedures** (PDF):  
[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/graduation/handbook\\_of\\_procedures.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/graduation/handbook_of_procedures.pdf)

**Note:** The following sections of the handbook do **not** apply to 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

## Offshore School Student Survey

The Ministry will conduct an Offshore School Student Survey for all students in Grades 10 and 12 during the 2020/21 school year. This survey will use a subset of questions from the annual Ministry of Education Student Learning Survey. The purpose of the survey is continuous improvement of the offshore school program and to provide student-focused data to assist inspectors during inspections.

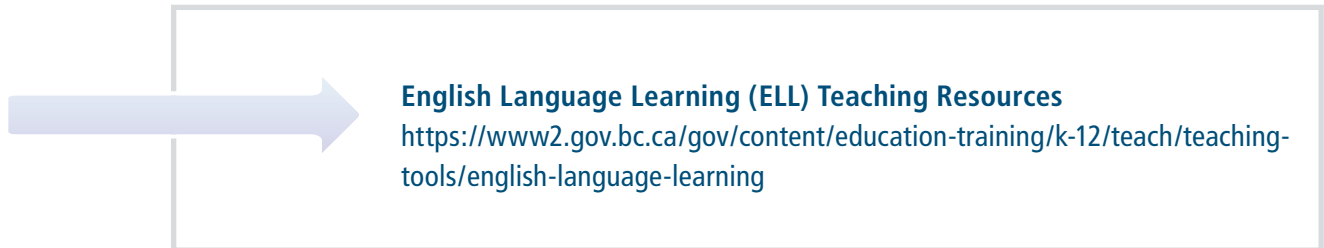


# English Language Skills

Students in BC-certified offshore schools are required to have a minimum level of English language skills 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:



If a student does not meet the English language requirements for entry into the BC program (after Grade 7), the Owner/Operator must ensure that the student receives 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. This 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** <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/teaching-tools/english-language-learning>

**Board/authority authorized English courses:** Refer to the guidelines for board/authority authorized English language acquisition/culture courses at the Grade 10, 11, 12 levels – [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/baa\\_ell\\_template.pdf](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](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.

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

- Are attending an 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 students' 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

Offshore schools interested in this assessment for Grades 4 and 7 should contact the Ministry's **Independent Schools and International Education Branch**. [International.Education@gov.bc.ca](mailto:International.Education@gov.bc.ca)

## Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) Courses

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



Principals must make sure that the BAA courses offered in offshore schools are in compliance with all the requirements set out in the:

- [Board/Authority Authorized Course Order M285/04](#)
- [Board/Authority Authorized Courses Requirements and Procedures Guidebook](#)

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

Offshore schools need to submit the BAA course form(s) and framework(s) to the Independent Schools and International Education Branch for approval at least 30 days prior to the course being offered. As well, the school must maintain the required documentation in the school file for inspection.

Offshore schools are 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 Authority (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](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/baa_requirements.pdf)

## Course Equivalency

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 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 education 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 <a href="#">Handbook of Procedures for the Graduation Program (PDF)</a> <a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/graduation/handbook_of_procedures.pdf">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/graduation/handbook_of_procedures.pdf</a>	





For example, a student completing Grade 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 UXLC 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 outlined 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 for which international students may not challenge 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> on the Ministry web site.



## Exempted Courses

Offshore schools must deliver the BC curriculum in English by teachers who have a valid BC teaching certificate. Schools may also offer local language acquisition courses taught by a locally certified teacher (e.g., Mandarin taught in China). These courses do not require an exemption. Curricular planning documents may be prepared in the local language, but course outlines must be translated into English.

Courses offered in languages other than English, except for local language acquisition courses as noted above, require exemption from the Ministry. They can 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 BAA Ministry requirements and may be taught by a locally certified teacher in the local language. This teacher must be working under the supervision of a BC School Administrator. A valid exemption letter to teach each course in the local language 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 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 de-listed by the Authority.

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



# Distributed Learning (DL)

Offshore schools can expand student choices through distributed learning. Courses must be offered by the Ministry-approved distributed learning provider (“DL provider”) identified in the Agreement. All distributed learning courses must be taught online by BC-certified teachers. Offshore school principals must consult the DL provider regarding course availability and restrictions.

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

**The Numeracy and Literacy Assessments may not be taken through DL.**

## SUBMITTING DL COURSE GRADES AND FINAL MARKS

**Step 1:** The Ministry-approved DL provider submits final course marks to the offshore school.

**Step 2:** The offshore school conducts an equivalency review of each course taken through DL before entering the DL courses’ final marks into their school information system so that these records will be included in a subsequent TRAX data submission. The offshore school must keep a copy of the Ministry-approved DL provider’s record of student grades for at least 10 years.

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

**Step 4:** Offshore school inspections may include a review and comparison of the Ministry-approved DL provider’s grades, the TRAX record and the Permanent Student Record.

# Twinning Agreements

A twinning agreement 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.

Offshore schools are encouraged to have a twinning agreement with a school in BC. These agreements may include details about collaborative activities, goals of the relationship, responsibilities of the two schools, how the twinning partnership will be evaluated and processes for renewing the relationship.

Common twinning activities generally relate to curriculum and 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



## EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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

**A** Hours of instruction for Kindergarten to Grade 12 is a minimum of 850 hours each school year. Many schools have a greater number of hours of instruction.

**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 outcomes of the courses that the student has taken and comparing them to the learning outcomes/learning standards in the BC curriculum to determine a match for equivalency. If there is 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 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 the BC curriculum
- Courses must meet all provincial or BAA learning outcomes within the curriculum
- Students require a PEN number
- Some courses require that students also write a provincial assessment
- The "school of record" or "home school" for the student must report the summer school course for credit



# Provincial Assessments 7

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

## 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 will be on demonstration and application of literacy and numeracy skills in relevant, real-life scenarios. Administration dates are in November, January and April 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 November 2019. Students are required to complete both assessments in their Grade 10 year. The Grade 12 Literacy Assessment will be introduced in the 2021/22 school year.

Learn more online about the new **Graduation Assessments**. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/assessment/graduation>

## Graduation Assessment Retakes & Supports

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. The Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment will only indicate requirement met.

Additional provincial assessment support is available to assist English language learners, including **sample provincial exams and answer keys**. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/assessment/graduation/specifications>

## Provincial Graduation Assessment Re-marks Process

Only students are permitted to initiate an assessment re-mark. A student must complete and submit a Re-mark Request Form available on the Ministry's website at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/curriculum-and-assessment/provincial-exams/graduation-assessment#review>. A student's final mark can increase or decrease based on the re-mark. It is recommended that a student request a review before a re-mark so that the student makes an informed decision.



# Assessment Invigilation

Offshore schools are required to follow the Ministry's guidelines for conducting assessments. If the Ministry has concerns about the invigilation practices of an 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 (PDF)** [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/graduation/handbook\\_of\\_procedures.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/graduation/handbook_of_procedures.pdf)
- **School Secure Web** [https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/tsw/princ\\_terms.jsp](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/tsw/princ_terms.jsp)



# Procedures for Assessment Participation

Before a certified offshore school can participate in a provincial assessment session, the following steps must be completed.

**Step 1:** Check the **2020/21 Offshore Schools Graduation Assessment Schedule** <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/exams/graduation-assessment-schedule.pdf> for provincial assessment session deadlines.

**Step 2:** Find Personal Education Numbers (PENs) for all students who plan to write provincial assessment or wish to have transcripts produced. The PEN is a nine-digit number assigned to each student as they enter the BC education system. Administrators can look up PENs by accessing the **PEN Web Application** <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/pen>.

**Step 3:** In October, submit student level data to the Ministry using Form 1701.

**Step 4:** Upload a transcript and examinations (TRAX) data submission – this will add students to the Ministry’s TRAX system, identify which courses they are taking and register them for the applicable electronic assessment sessions.

**Step 5:** Review and become familiar with the procedures for conducting and invigilating assessment sessions.

**Step 6:** Install AWIS Secure Browser for BC Assessments on each computer to be used for writing electronic assessment. [https://www.awinfosys.com/eassessment/eexams\\_computer\\_require.htm](https://www.awinfosys.com/eassessment/eexams_computer_require.htm)

## ASSESSMENT MATERIAL

*All assessment materials must be returned to the Ministry following each session. Schools must adhere to the date of return of materials. For numeracy, all response sheets must be returned to the Ministry by the stated deadline and in the required format. Any response sheets that do not meet these conditions will not be marked.*

## 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 electronic assessment sessions each year in November, January, April and June. Check the **2020/21 Offshore Schools Graduation Assessment Schedule** <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/exams/graduation-assessment-schedule.pdf>

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



# TRAX Data Submissions

BC schools and offshore schools with students enrolled in Grades 10, 11 or 12 courses must send TRAX data submissions to the Ministry of Education using **School Secure Web** [https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/trx\\_updates/einstruct.htm](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/trx_updates/einstruct.htm).

The **2020/21 Offshore Schools Graduation Assessment Schedule** <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/exams/graduation-assessment-schedule.pdf> sets out TRAX data submission deadlines.

Each TRAX data submission must include three files:

- Demographic information (DEM file)
- Non-examinable course information (CRS file)
- Examinable courses (XAM file)

The data files provide the Ministry with information about the school and its students to record student grades, administer and record provincial assessments, and produce transcripts or graduation certificates.

**Note:** TRAX data files cannot be processed between the June/July final marks submission deadline through the opening of TRAX for the new school year in October.

## 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

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.

Every computer used for electronic assessments must have e-Exam Security Control installed.

Get more information online: **School Secure Web** [https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/trx\\_updates/einstruct.htm](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/trx_updates/einstruct.htm) (after logging in, click on the heading "Exam materials and Forms" and go to "Procedures for Conducting Graduation Program Exams").





## School Secure Web

Principals and administrators can access a variety of functions and reports via **School Secure Web** [https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/trx\\_updates/einstruct.htm](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/trx_updates/einstruct.htm), including:

- Assessment materials and forms
- Online assessment register
- Assessment results
- Upload TRAX files
- TRAX data error reports
- Transcript verification reports
- Student post-secondary institution selections summary
- Unofficial transcripts

Principals need to request an ID and password from the Ministry – **contact the Offshore Schools Administrator**. [offshore.administrator@gov.bc.ca](mailto:offshore.administrator@gov.bc.ca)

## Other Resources

School staff must become familiar with the following resources so that they can accurately maintain and update TRAX records:

- **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](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/graduation/handbook_of_procedures.pdf)
- **2020/21 Graduation Assessment Schedule for Offshore Schools** <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/exams/graduation-assessment-schedule.pdf>

Administrators should also subscribe to the **TRAX updates notification service** <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/assessment/provincial-exams/trax-updates> for important information related to exam session processes and data exchanges.



# Post-Secondary Information 8

BC offshore school graduates are prepared to pursue several pathways to success. The British Columbia Dogwood is recognized internationally as a symbol of high-quality education. 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.

## British Columbia International Student Ambassador Scholarships

In 2016, the Ministry launched the BC International Student Ambassador Scholarship for international students who choose to study in BC post-secondary institutions. Students in BC-certified offshore schools who are planning to continue their post-secondary studies in BC are eligible to be nominated for this award.

**IMPORTANT NOTE FOR 2020/21:** The BC International Student Ambassador Scholarships program has not been confirmed for the 2020/21 school year. Please check the **BC International Education Student Ambassador Scholarship for K-12 and Post-Secondary Institutions** website periodically for updated information. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/scholarships/scholarships-awards/bc-international-student-ambassador>.



# Operational Requirements & Expectations 9

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

## Administration & Policies

Owner/Operators are expected to effectively operate their 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

Offshore schools must develop school-specific policies and procedures that are consistent with the terms and conditions outlined in their certification agreement. The policies need to be available to the entire school community on the website, in handbooks for students and parents, 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 would cause an unplanned temporary or permanent closure of a school

## School Finances

An Owner/Operator is expected to make sure there is enough financial capacity to continue running the school. 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 provide 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 upon request to the Ministry.



## School Marketing & Public Announcements

All marketing materials and print or web publications need to accurately reflect the school’s certification status.

That means, pre-certified schools can only advertise that they have “approval to deliver the BC curriculum” – they cannot say that the school is, or will be, certified.

Certified schools can only advertise that the school:

- Has been granted certification status
- Has entered into a certification agreement with BC under the BC program
- Is operating a “BC-certified” school
- Has authority to offer educational programs at the school leading to a British Columbia Dogwood Diploma

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

## Communications

Schools need to have clear and formal processes for engaging and involving students, parents, staff and school administration. This may include operational staff meetings, regular written communications, staff and student/parent handbooks, and a school policy handbook.

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

## Facilities & Resources

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 the BC curriculum offered at the school.

A reliable network and internet connectivity at standard levels of speed, ensures a high degree of equitable access and improved user experience for students accessing the learning resources of the BC curriculum. Recommended bandwidth per 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 (i.e., fire, earthquake) and for any event that would 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, Data & Reporting

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

School records should include:

- Letter of government approval including name and contact information of the government official granting approval and a translation of the letter into English
- 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

### DATA COLLECTION: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q** What is the difference between “resident” and “Out-of-Province/International Student” on the 1701 Data Collection form?
- A** Report all students in BC offshore schools as Out-of-Province/International Students (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 to 12.

**Data submission, reporting and inspections:** At regular intervals throughout the year, school authorities must collect and submit information to the Ministry about:

- School operations and finances
- Enrollment, 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>



Schools must maintain enough technical capacity to be able to efficiently transfer required data and records to the Ministry electronically.

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

**Secure data:** Student records must be maintained using appropriate school administration software. They should also be kept safe from an internal malfunction or an external invasion – schedule regular backups and consider storing data on removable media or an external drive.

**Government approvals:** Offshore schools must have proof that they have approval to operate the BC Offshore School Program in the form of a “Letter of Approval” 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 BC, 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. The Letter of Approval must be kept on file at the school at all times. The Ministry may take steps to verify that the documentation is authentic and valid, including meeting with 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.

The Ministry will only accept translations from one of the following sources:

- a certified translator in the country in which the school is located with the certified translator’s stamp
- an associate or certified member of 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 Independent Schools and International Education Branch

## 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 his or her identification number and/or seal, name and contact information)
- the full name (in uppercase letters) and signature of the translator



**Student records:** Each school must maintain a permanent student record (PSR) for every enrolled student that contains the following data:

- Personal Education Number (PEN)
- A record of any supplementary English language support provided to the student
- Results of the English Language Assessment signed off by the principal
- Student progress reports
- Record of courses taken
- Signed consent forms to collect, use and disclose information
- Any other records pertinent to the student (e.g., disciplinary action taken, attendance records, or other records)

Student records must:

- Meet all the requirements of the Agreement
- Be maintained in English as well as in 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 student 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/assessment/classroom/permanent-student-record>

**Teacher and administrator records:** The school must keep records for the principal, vice-principal (as applicable) and teachers – this should include:

- A copy of their BC Certificate of Qualification (COQ) or an Independent School Teaching Certificate-Subject Restricted (ISTC-SR) (NOTE: if ISTC-SR, include proof of minimum of two years 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 Agreement
- 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

## BC-Certified Educators

Offshore schools need to ensure that BC-certified administrators and teachers plan, evaluate and provide instruction to students using the BC 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.

To receive a teaching certificate in BC, a person must meet certain standards for educators, including the standards for professional conduct and competence. In BC, the teaching profession is regulated by the *Teachers Act* and is administered by the Ministry.



**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 certificate or have a certification application in progress and have a valid Letter of Exemption from the Independent Schools and International Education Branch at the Ministry.

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 five months, from the date of the request from the OSR providing teachers enough time to submit all relevant documents to complete application requirements. In situations where the application is waiting for Teacher Certification Branch (TCB) 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 TCB deems the application complete, a second exemption may be offered for an additional period of up to 5 months. The maximum exemption period is 10 months but the Ministry reserves the right to make exceptions to this time period.

Teachers whose COQ applications are denied may request that the TCB Director of Certification reconsider the decision. However, these teachers are not allowed to teach in the BC program and cannot request an exemption while they await the reconsideration decision.

Teachers whose COQ applications are denied may apply for an ISTC-SR. These teachers may be eligible to receive an exemption at the discretion of the Ministry.

Exemptions will not be approved for teachers who have been notified of eligibility for certification but have not paid their annual practice fees or have been found ineligible for certification.

### **Applications for an Interim Independent School Teaching Certificate-Subject Restricted while Certificate of Qualification Application is in Process**

The Ministry has a process for offshore school employers to hire BC teacher candidates who may qualify for an Interim Independent School Teaching Certificate-Subject Restricted 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 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/teach-in-another-province-country>





## TEACHER CERTIFICATION – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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

**A** Once the Ministry receives all the application documents, it may take up to three months or more to review an application and mail out the results. 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 screen shot of the status page online and email it to your employer. Do not share login information with your employer.

**Q** What's the difference between a Professional Certificate and a Subject Restricted Independent School Teaching Certificate?

**A** A Professional Certificate is a non-expiring certificate 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 offshore schools.

A Subject Restricted Independent School Teaching Certificate restricts the holder to teaching subject(s) that are directly related to their post-secondary subject 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.

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

**A** Complete lists of required documents as well as other information about the application process can be found online:

- **For BC graduates**
- **For Canadian graduates**
- **For international graduates**

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/teaching-tools/english-language-learning>

**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. The Criminal Record Review Program will:

- Get written consent from those who are unable to travel to Canada to complete the process when they return to Canada
- Request confirmation of the timeframe for when a certificate holder will return to be able to be fingerprinted

Based on the information collected, the Director of the Criminal Record Review Program will decide whether to tentatively clear the certificate holder prior to the fingerprints being submitted.

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



## REPORTING EMPLOYEE LIST TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Offshore schools must submit their employee list to the Ministry on October 15 each year, and to the Independent Schools and International Education Branch as part of the Annual Report on September 30.

## HANDLING COMPLAINTS OR REPORTING BREACHES OF CONDUCT

If a teacher or administrator is in breach of provincial standards for education, competence and professional conduct of educators in BC, the Owner/Operator must report this breach to both the Commissioner for Teacher Regulation and the Independent Schools and International Education Branch at the Ministry.

If a teacher or administrator is suspended or dismissed, the Owner/Operator must report the suspension or dismissal immediately to that individual, the Commissioner for Teacher Regulation and the Independent Schools and International Education Branch.

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 offshore school and the Ministry
- Name and address of the school
- Owner/Operator's name
- Name of principal or OSR who is reporting the matter
- Summary of reasons for reporting and description of 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**  
**400 – 2025 West Broadway**  
**Vancouver BC V6J 1Z6 Canada**  
**Email: [TRB.intake@gov.bc.ca](mailto:TRB.intake@gov.bc.ca)**

**Independent Schools and International Education Branch**  
**BC Ministry of Education**  
**PO Box 9153 STN PROV GOVT**  
**Victoria BC V8W 9H1 Canada**  
**Email: [International.Education@gov.bc.ca](mailto: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 Teachers 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 the 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>



# Recruiting & 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 job position: Make a Future – Careers in BC Education <http://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 requirement, 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 certifies and inspects the delivery of the BC educational program by offshore schools.

BC offshore school Owner/Operators operate and administer offshore schools and are responsible for complying with all offshore 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 an offshore school Owner/Operator, which 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.

BC offshore school 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 Independent Schools and International Education Branch.



## PRINCIPALS AND VICE-PRINCIPALS

Each offshore school must have a principal at all times. Each principal must have the following qualifications:

- Be fluent in English
- Hold a current and valid BC COQ or an ISTC-SR
- Be affiliated with the Owner/Operator only through their employment contract with the BC offshore school
- Have a minimum of at least 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 Ministry's Independent Schools and International Education Branch.

Each 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 ISTC-SR (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 the BC 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 is 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 parent/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 offshore schools in writing to the Ministry:

**Independent Schools and International Education Branch**  
**BC Ministry of Education**  
**PO Box 9153 Stn Prov Govt**  
**Victoria, BC V8W 9H1**  
**Email: [International.Education@gov.bc.ca](mailto:International.Education@gov.bc.ca)**

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



## APPENDIX “A”

### Important Dates for BC Offshore Schools 2020/21

Month	Date	Activity
July 2020	1	School year begins
August 2020	1	Curriculum Usage Fee and Program Administration Fees due
September 2020	30	Annual reports due
September 2020	30	Collect enrolment data from your school on Form 1701
October 2020 and January, April and July 2021	various	Offshore School Representative meetings
October 2020	11	Submit 1701 data to the Ministry
October 2020	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 pursuant to the <i>Teachers Act</i> s. 80
January 2021	30 days from invoice date	Student Registration Fees due
March 2021	TBD	Offshore Schools Administrators Conference
June 2021	30	2020/21 school year ends





# British Columbia Global Education Program

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2020/21



Ministry of  
Education

