British Columbia Global Education Program

OPERATING MANUAL
for OFFSHORE SCHOOLS
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1 INTRODUCTION

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

B.C. 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 B.C.’s high-quality education “brand”
- Create opportunities for B.C. schools to develop international partnerships
- Attract more international students to study and eventually work and live in B.C.

Offshore schools in seven different countries deliver the B.C. curriculum to more than 12,000 students. B.C.-certified offshore schools are inspected annually by B.C. education experts to ensure that B.C. 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 B.C.-certified offshore school.
B.C.’s Ministry of Education is interested in partnering with successful organizations that are known for delivering educational excellence in international settings. If you’re interested in operating a B.C.-certified offshore school, be prepared to invest a significant amount of time and resources.

Why choose B.C.?

A characteristic of a strong education system is that it strives to continuously improve. B.C. 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, B.C.’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. British Columbia has become a favoured destination for new immigrants and thousands of international students because:

- The graduation certificate, the Dogwood Diploma, is widely accepted as a standard of high achievement and English language proficiency
- B.C.’s system has quality assurance and accountability measures in place to ensure that British Columbia education consistently offers a quality learning experience to all students
- Many high school graduates successfully gain admission to post-secondary programs in British Columbia, across Canada, the United States and around the world
- Students from B.C. 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 B.C.’s high-quality curriculum, students and institutions also benefit from:

- The expertise and experience of B.C.-certified educators working at offshore schools – their contribution enriches teaching practice and helps schools develop an international curriculum
- B.C.’s growing economy that offers graduates the opportunity to live and work here

Get more info online: International Education in B.C.  
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/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
· 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 others)
· 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 British Columbia’s positive international education reputation
· Any other criteria that the ministry considers relevant at the time
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fee or expense</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>When it needs to be paid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application fee</td>
<td>$5,000 (non-refundable)</td>
<td>Time of application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Applications are not processed unless this fee is paid in full</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum usage fee</td>
<td>$10,000 per school per year</td>
<td>Schools are invoiced: June 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Payment due: August 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program administration fee</td>
<td>$5,000 per school per year</td>
<td>Schools are invoiced: June 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Payment due: August 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student registration fee</td>
<td>$350 per student per year</td>
<td>Schools are invoiced: In the third week of November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The student registration fee is calculated based on each school’s 1701 data submission</td>
<td>Payment due: December 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Student withdrawal:</strong> 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</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspection fees</td>
<td>Inspection fees include the professional services of the inspection chair and inspection team members as well as their travel, accommodation, per diem and incidental costs</td>
<td>Schools are invoiced: 45 days before the team leaves B.C. Payment due: 30 days before the inspection team leaves B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools do not need to pay costs for unannounced inspections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-person application review</td>
<td><strong>Held at the school location:</strong> Travel, accommodation, per diem and incidental costs of all ministry participants <strong>OR</strong></td>
<td>If the review is held at the school location, fees must be paid 30 days before the ministry participants leave B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Held in B.C.:</strong> All relevant travel and accommodation expenses for the owner/operator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning audits</td>
<td>Includes professional services of the audit chair and audit team members, as well as their travel, accommodation, per diem and incidental costs</td>
<td>15 days before the audit team leaves B.C.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Unpaid Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overdue fees</th>
<th>What will happen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program fees 30 days overdue</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program fees 60 days overdue</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program fees 90 days overdue</td>
<td>The school is decertified. Re-certification will require:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Payment of outstanding fees plus interest charges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Reapplying for certification (including payment of the $5,000 application fee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Payment of $10,000 as liquidated damages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overdue inspection fees</td>
<td>The school inspection is cancelled. Uninspected schools lose certification status. Re-certification will require:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Payment of outstanding fees plus interest charges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Reapplying for certification (including payment of the $5,000 application fee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Payment of $10,000 as liquidated damages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regular inspections by the ministry are a requirement for certification – they make sure that offshore schools meet and maintain B.C.’s high standard of quality educational programs. Inspections are also an opportunity to share ideas between the ministry, inspectors, 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 of Education to prepare for a scheduled inspection. This includes:

- Submitting an annual report to the ministry
- Making and confirming travel arrangements (the owner/operator covers expenses for scheduled inspections)
- 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:

- Recommendations from the previous inspection report
- Professional development
- English language learning approaches and assessments
- Teaching strategies
- Learning resources
- 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 (exams, 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 visits the 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
- Attending meetings with school administrators, school staff, the owner/operator and the offshore school representative

Post-Inspection

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

- Within two weeks of returning to B.C., the team submits a report to the Ministry of Education
- 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 containing an inspection catalogue and an update on the school’s business plan. A template for the report is posted on the ministry website each year. Owners/operators need to 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 certified 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 out of compliance with pre-certification or certification requirements in any school or engages in conduct that may harm the B.C. Global Education Program – Offshore Schools or the Province of British Columbia’s reputation in international education, any or all schools owned/operated by the owner/operator may be put on probation.

**Probation:** When a school does not meet requirements, the ministry will provide written notice along with a timeline to resolve the issues. 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 its updated 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

**Decertification:** 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 and the certification 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 B.C. Program unless they transfer to another offshore school or to a K-12 public or independent school within B.C.
- 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
This section outlines the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the administration of a B.C. offshore school.

School Owners/Operators

Owners/operators are solely and directly accountable to the Ministry of Education 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 of Education.

Subcontracting to other entities to provide services does not relieve owners/operators from any of the obligations specified in the certification agreement.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Directly operating the school, including delivery of the B.C. curriculum in English
- Financial management and administration of the school, including paying all applicable fees
- Appointing a qualified offshore school representative to legally represent the corporate entity and having the appointment approved by the Ministry of Education
- Improving and maintaining student achievement and ensuring that there are no significant discrepancies between provincial exam or assessment marks and course marks
- Ensuring that the education program provided at the school meets provincial education standards as described in the certification agreement – for example:
  - Achieving learning outcomes / learning standards
  - Using provincial performance assessment standards
  - Meeting instructional time requirements
  - Following exam invigilation 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
- Making sure 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 offshore school representative 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 International Education
- Attending and participating in school inspections
- Ensuring that all communication with the ministry is in English

British Columbia Ministry of Education

The role of the Ministry of Education includes:

- Setting goals and objectives for the B.C. offshore school program
- Establishing requirements for offshore schools
- Developing policy and legislation for the administration of the B.C. 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 B.C. curriculum
- Developing, providing access to and evaluating provincial examinations and assessments
- Issuing certificates of graduation to eligible students on behalf of the Minister
- Certifying eligible teachers (through the B.C. Teacher Regulation Branch)
- Performing regular inspections of the school and following up in a timely manner on any recommendations and requirements
- Granting and renewing certification for eligible schools
Offshore School Representative

Owners/operators must appoint an offshore school representative to be their primary contact with the Ministry of Education.

REQUIREMENTS

The offshore school representative must have B.C. education credentials and experience, and needs to be approved by the ministry. Here’s a summary of all the criteria the person in this role must meet:

- A current and valid Certificate of Qualification holder who is in good standing with the Teacher Regulation Branch of the Ministry of Education
- 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 B.C.-certified offshore school, public school, independent school, or post-secondary institution
- Knowledge of the British Columbia offshore school program
- Knowledge of B.C.’s K-12 international education sector
- Expertise in current B.C. 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
- Able to identify and manage complex issues or concerns raised by education stakeholders (including the Ministry of Education), explore options for resolution and build consensus towards a satisfactory outcome
- Understanding of and recent professional experience working with teacher certification and regulation requirements in B.C.
- Knowledge of the British Columbia 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 B.C. 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 owners/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
REMOVING AN OFFSHORE SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE

The ministry may remove an offshore school representative because of concerns about their conduct, competence, qualifications or authorization. In this situation, the owner/operator may select a new offshore school representative.

Principal

The principal is responsible for:

- Administering and supervising the school’s operations and implementation of the B.C. 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.
Owners/operators must:

- Allow the principal enough time to perform his or her administrative duties
- Make sure that the principal does not serve as principal for more than one offshore school
- Inform the ministry immediately if a new principal is hired

**Vice-Principal**

An owner/operator may hire one or more vice-principals to assist the principal; 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 B.C. 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**

http://www.bcteacherregulation.ca/ProfessionalConduct/DutyToReport.aspx
Educational Requirements & Expectations

Owners/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, student 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 instruction 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 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

Owners/operators must make sure that delivery of the B.C. 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

- 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

Curriculum copyright: The ministry owns the copyright on all educational material licensed to the owner/operator under program agreements, including all curriculum documents, support 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 B.C. Graduation Program (a combination of required courses and elective courses) will receive a British Columbia 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

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

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

Offshore School Student Survey

The ministry will pilot an Offshore School Student Survey to all students in Grades 10 and 12 during the 2018-19 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 B.C.-certified offshore schools are required to have a minimum level of English language skills to meet B.C. curriculum standards.

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

Owners/operators and principals must make sure these tools are used for English language assessments:

- **English Language Learners: A Guide for ELL Specialists (PDF)**
  [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/english-language-learners/special.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/english-language-learners/special.pdf)

- **English Language Learning Standards (PDF)**
  [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/pdfs/ell/ell-standards-full.pdf#page=4](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/pdfs/ell/ell-standards-full.pdf#page=4)

If a student does not meet the English language requirements for entry into the B.C. 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 B.C. 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**: Offshore schools may develop their own board/authority authorized (BAA) English language learning courses for elective credit toward graduation.

learning Resources

Owners/operators are responsible for appointing the principal or offshore school representative to sign off on learning resources.
French Language Courses

Canada is a bilingual country – B.C. 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 B.C. 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 B.C. course offered, the owner/operator must:

- Recruit, hire and supervise qualified and competent teachers
- Develop a course overview/planning document for each course offered
- Have rigorous student assessment processes linked to Ministry of Education performance standards
  https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/bc-performance-standards
- Document student achievement
- Plan and facilitate the delivery of educational resources and supports to students
- Ensure that all eligible students participate in provincial exams and assessments
- Make sure there are no significant discrepancies between student course marks and provincial exam results
Foundation Skills Assessment

The Foundation Skills Assessment is an annual province-wide assessment of student academic skills – it provides:

- A snapshot of how well B.C. students are learning basic skills in reading comprehension, 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 International Education Branch. International.Education@gov.bc.ca

Course Equivalency

Offshore school students are eligible to receive course credit through equivalency reviews. A B.C.-certified educator (under the supervision of a B.C.-certified principal) can review the learning outcomes of the courses for an 80% match with B.C.’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/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/international-student-graduation-credit

Equivalency for ministry-developed language courses: B.C.-certified offshore school students who have completed one or more years of language arts education in an international setting during the last year of elementary school or at the junior secondary level can receive credit for an equivalent language course at the Grade 10, 11 or 12 levels. The languages of instruction for these courses must be the same as the one offered by the Ministry of Education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior documented learning</th>
<th>Equivalency credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One year of documented language arts education in the last year of elementary education</td>
<td>Grade 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year of documented language arts education at the junior secondary level</td>
<td>Grade 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more years of documented language arts education at the junior secondary level</td>
<td>Grade 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See chapter 2 of the 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
Ministry-developed Grade 10, 11 and 12 international language courses that have integrated resource packages (IRPs) and are eligible under this policy include: American Sign Language, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Punjabi and Spanish.

For example, a student who completed Grades 7, 8 and 9 in Costa Rica with instruction in Spanish could receive credit for Spanish 10, 11 and 12. The student record would have SP 10, SP 11 and SP 12 with an ‘E’ in the course type field and the percentage based on course marks from Costa Rica.

**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/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/international-student-graduation-credit) on the Ministry of Education web site.

**Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) Courses**

Board/authority approved courses (BAA) create an opportunity for offshore schools to develop local programs 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 Grade 10 BAA courses must align with the new curriculum frameworks for the 2018-19 school year. Schools have one additional year to revise Grade 11 and 12 BAA courses due to the ministry’s announcement to extend Grade 11 and 12 curriculum implementation to July 2019.

Offshore schools need to submit the BAA course form and framework to the Ministry of Education 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.

**Exempted Courses**

Offshore schools must deliver the B.C. curriculum in English by teachers who have a valid B.C. teaching certificate. Schools may also offer courses in a local language taught by a locally certified teacher e.g., Mandarin taught in China. These courses do not require an exemption.
Courses offered in other languages require exemption from the ministry. They can be taught by a locally certified teacher if the teacher is working under the supervision of a B.C. school administrator.

These courses may qualify for exemptions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PE K-12</td>
<td>Must meet ministry course requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts 10-12</td>
<td>Must meet ministry course requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAA Language 10-12</td>
<td>Must meet BAA course requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAA Local History 10-12</td>
<td>Must meet BAA course requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAA Local Culture 10-12</td>
<td>Must meet BAA course requirements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. Course outlines and local teaching certificates must be translated into English and kept in the school files for inspection.

Schools can request an exemption by sending a written 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 identified in the B.C. Global Education Program Agreement. All distributed learning courses are taught online by B.C.-certified teachers.

**Courses with provincial exams may not be taken through DL:** Offshore schools are not permitted to use a DL provider for courses with a provincial exam.

**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 enters DL courses with final marks into their school administrative 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 – do not use equivalency for entry because these courses are reported using standard course codes.

**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.
EDUCATION 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 Owners/operators are required to have an equivalency policy that aligns with the ministry’s policy and procedure. A B.C.-certified educator (under the supervision of a B.C.-certified principal) can determine equivalency for any student who has not attended a B.C. 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 B.C. 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/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/international-student-graduation-credit

Q Our offshore school sends students to B.C. 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 B.C. certified
- The course(s) must be delivered by a B.C. public or independent school
- Course content must follow the B.C. 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 exam
- The “school of record” or “home school” for the student must report the summer school course for credit

Q I have several students taking courses through distributed learning – who registers them for their exams and how is their school percentage reported to the ministry?

A The “school of record” or “home school” must send in all exam registrations for their students, whether students are taking the course at the school of record or through distributed learning. The school of record must also collect the final school percentages from the distributed learning provider and send them in along with the students’ other final marks to the ministry.
Twinning Agreements

A twinning agreement is a friendly and cooperative relationship between a B.C.-certified offshore school and a B.C. onshore school designed to improve student achievement, promote cultural understanding and expand professional learning.

Offshore schools are encouraged to have a twinning agreement with a "twin" school in B.C. – a K-12 public or independent school. 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
Assessment and curriculum are interconnected. Provincial exams are being redesigned to align with new curriculum content.

**Graduation Assessments**

The 2018 Graduation Program, in effect as of July 1, 2018, requires students to complete two 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.

The Numeracy Assessment was introduced in the 2017-18 school year. The Language Arts 12 exams will be phased out as the Literacy Assessment is introduced. Until the Literacy Assessment is fully implemented in January 2020, the Language Arts 12 exam will remain in place and will continue to be 40% of the final, blended mark for Language Arts 12 courses. Students graduating in the 2018-19 school year will take a Language Arts 12 course and associated provincial exam to satisfy graduation requirements for the 2018 Graduation Program.

| Students in Grade 10 in 2018-19 | Follow the new 2018 Graduation Program requirements  
| Write the Graduation Numeracy and Literacy Assessments any time before graduation |
| Students in Grade 11 in 2018-19 | Follow the new 2018 Graduation Program requirements  
| Write the Graduation Numeracy Assessment before graduation (unless they have written a Math 10 provincial exam which satisfies the Numeracy Assessment requirement)  
| Take a Language Arts 12 course and write the associated provincial exam if they choose or wait until the 2019-20 school year and take a Language Arts 12 course and write the Literacy Assessment |
| Students in Grade 12 in 2018-19 | Finish all the 2018 Graduation Program requirements  
| Write the Graduation Numeracy Assessment before graduation (unless they have written a Math 10 provincial exam which satisfies the Numeracy Assessment requirement).  
| Take a Language Arts 12 course and write the associated provincial exam |

**ASSESSMENT REWRITES**

Students may rewrite a Graduation Assessment (numeracy, literacy) twice in grades 10-12 (the original attempt and two more); the best of these scores will appear on the student’s transcript. Learn more online about the new **Graduation Assessments.** [https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/provincial-assessment/graduation](https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/provincial-assessment/graduation)
Exam Differential Policy

If a student’s score on a provincial exam is 25% or more below their course grade, then the exam score will be recorded as the student’s final grade. This policy applies to the Language Arts 12, Communications 12 and English 12 First Peoples provincially examinable courses aligned with the current curriculum.

The Exam Differential Policy is in effect when the number of individual course-exam differentials meeting or exceeding the 25% threshold also exceeds more than 5% of the entire group of students in an offshore school writing a specific provincial exam in a specific exam session.

Schools need to review their exam results to determine if they fall at or below the 5% threshold. If they do, schools should contact the International Education Branch at International.Education@gov.bc.ca to request another review of the results. If both reviews are in agreement, the differential will be overridden in the Transcripts and Examination System (TRAX).

The International Education Branch will also review provincial exam results to see which schools are exceeding the differential policy beyond the 5% threshold and will follow-up with those schools.

Exam Rewrites & Supports

Provincial exam rewrites are a means for students to improve an exam score. Students are permitted one provincial examination rewrite within the 12-month period following the first attempt at the examination. Principals must not schedule a “pre-write” examination for students as a means of preparing them for a provincial examination.

Additional provincial exam support is available to assist English language learners, including sample provincial exams and answer keys. http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/search/

Provincial Exam Re-marks Process

Only students are permitted to initiate an assessment/exam re-mark. A student must complete and submit a Re-mark Request Form available on the ministry’s website at: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/rereads_remarks/. 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.

Exam Invigilation

Offshore schools are required to follow the ministry’s guidelines for conducting exams. If the Ministry has concerns about the invigilation practices of an offshore school, an exam official may be appointed to oversee the invigilation of exams (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

· School Secure Web https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/tsw/princ_terms.jsp
Procedures for Exam Participation

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

**Step 1:** Check the [2018-2019 Offshore Schools Graduation Assessment Schedule](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/exams/2018-19_exam_schedule.pdf) for provincial exam session deadlines.

**Step 2:** Find Personal Education Numbers (PENs) for all students who plan to write provincial exams or wish to have transcripts produced. The PEN is a nine-digit number assigned to each student as they enter the British Columbia education system. Administrators can look up PENs by accessing the [PEN Web Application](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/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 exam sessions.

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

**Step 6:** Install e-Exam Security Control on each computer to be used for writing electronic exams.

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**Exam Scheduling**

**Q** The examination schedule doesn’t work for all of our students. Can we request a separate exam session?

**A** The Ministry of Education schedules five electronic exam sessions each year in November, January, April, June and August. Check the [2018-2019 Offshore Schools Graduation Assessment Schedule](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/exams/2018-19_exam_schedule.pdf)

The ministry is not able to accommodate requests for changes to exam sessions.
TRAX Data Submissions

British Columbia 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.


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 exams, 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.

Technology Requirements

Offshore schools need to accommodate all students writing exams 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 exams at the same time.

Every computer used for electronic exams 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 (after logging in, click on the heading “Exam materials and Forms” and go to “Procedures for Conducting Graduation Program Exams”).

### 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.*
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, including:

- Examination materials and forms
- Online exam register
- Exam 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

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

- **2018-2019 Graduation Assessment Schedule for Offshore Schools**
  https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/exams/2018-19_exam_schedule.pdf

- **2018-19 Dogwood Planner**
  https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/graduation

Administrators should also subscribe to the TRAX updates notification service http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/trx_updates/ for important information related to exam session processes and data exchanges.
Post-Secondary Information

British Columbia 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 British Columbia Ministry of Education launched the British Columbia International Student Ambassador Scholarship for international students who choose to study in British Columbia post-secondary institutions. Students in British Columbia-certified offshore schools who are planning to continue their post-secondary studies in B.C. are eligible to be nominated for this award.

Get more information online: B.C. International Education Student Ambassador Scholarship for K-12 and Post-Secondary Institutions https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/international-education/scholarships-awards
In addition to the other requirements already outlined, operational requirements for offshore schools are listed below.

**Administration & Policies**

Owners/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 of Education
- 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 B.C. 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 B.C. under the B.C. program
- Is operating a “B.C.-certified” school
- Has authority to offer educational programs at the school leading to a British Columbia Dogwood Diploma

Owners/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 B.C. program, as outlined in the school’s annual report. All school operations, facilities, grounds and equipment must meet local health and safety standards.

Emergency Plans

Owners/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 offshore school representative.
School Records, Data & Reporting

Owners/operators must establish and maintain school records and submit data and reports to the Ministry of Education 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
- 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-Provincial/International Student” on the 1701 Data Collection form?

**A** Report all students in B.C. offshore schools as Out-of-Provincial/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 B.C. program – this includes completing the Student Data Collection Form (1701) [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/data-collections](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/data-collections)

Schools must maintain enough technical capacity to be able to efficiently transfer required data and records to the Ministry of Education 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 B.C. 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 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. 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 offshore school representative 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 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 certification 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/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/assessment/classroom/permanent-student-record](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/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 British Columbia Certificate of Qualification or an Independent School Teaching Certificate (and proof of a 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 certification 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

**B.C.-Certified Educators**

Offshore schools need to ensure that B.C.-certified teachers plan, evaluate and provide instruction to students using the B.C. curriculum, including reporting on student progress to parents or legal guardians.

Administrators or teachers who do not have the proper B.C. certification but are interested in teaching in a B.C. offshore school, must make a timely application to the British Columbia Teacher Regulation Branch.

To receive a teaching certificate in B.C., a person must meet certain standards for educators, including the standards for professional conduct and competence. In B.C., the teaching profession is regulated by the **Teachers Act** and is administered by the Ministry of Education’s Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB).
TEACHER CERTIFICATION – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How long does it take to evaluate a teacher certification application?
A: Once the Teacher Regulation Branch receives all the application documents, it generally takes four to eight weeks 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 B.C. This certificate is not restricted to any subject area or grade level, and is valid for employment in B.C.’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 his/her post-secondary subject concentration. It is valid for up to 60 months. B.C. 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 TRB?
A: Get a complete list of required documents as well as other information about the application process online:
- For B.C. graduates
- For Canadian graduates
- For international graduates

http://www.bcteacherregulation.ca/Teacher/BecomingATeacherOverview.aspx

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: Teacher Regulation Branch http://www.bcteacherregulation.ca/documents/FormsandPublications/MemberServices/CRC_faq.pdf
Applications that are in progress: At any point in the school year, a teacher employed to teach in the B.C. program must hold a valid TRB certificate or have a certification application in progress and have a valid exemption letter of approval from the International Education Branch at the Ministry of Education. This applies to:

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

An exemption may be approved for teachers who are in the process of getting their certification — they may still have requirements to meet or documentation to submit. The exemption is approved for eight weeks — enough time to meet the remaining requirements. Exemptions are not approved for teachers who have not paid their annual teacher certification fees.

If an exemption expires and the teacher is still working on their requirements for certification, a school may request a second exemption for six weeks.

If the teacher is still not certified after two exemptions, they must immediately stop teaching in the B.C. program and cannot accept a teaching assignment until they have their certificate.

Applications for an Interim Subject Restricted Independent School Teaching Certificate

The Teacher Regulation Branch has a new process for offshore school employers to hire B.C. teacher candidates who may qualify for an Interim Subject Restricted Independent School Teaching Certificate 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 B.C. teacher program with an intended graduation date between May and September
- Have already applied for a Certificate of Qualification (COQ) as documents submitted for the COQ do not need to be re-submitted for the interim certification application
- Have submitted the application for an interim certificate by June 30
- Have an offer of employment letter from a B.C. offshore school employer
- Pay a fee of $35

Find more info online: Teaching Offshore [http://www.bcteacherregulation.ca/Teacher/TeachingOffshore.aspx](http://www.bcteacherregulation.ca/Teacher/TeachingOffshore.aspx) and BC offshore schools [http://www.bcteacherregulation.ca/Teacher/BCOffshoreSchools.aspx](http://www.bcteacherregulation.ca/Teacher/BCOffshoreSchools.aspx). Once inside the Applicants’ Area you can find the application form.

Hiring locally-certified teachers: Owners/operators may employ locally-certified teachers to teach exempted courses (see Exempted Courses) under the supervision of a B.C.-certified school administrator.
REPORTING EMPLOYEE LIST TO THE TEACHER REGULATION BRANCH

Offshore schools must submit their employee list to the Teacher Regulation Branch on October 15 each year, and to the 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 B.C., the owner/operator must report this breach to both the Commissioner for Teacher Regulation and the 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 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 of Education
- Name and address of the school
- Owner/operator’s name
- Name of principal or offshore school representative 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

**International Education Branch**

B.C. Ministry of Education

PO Box 9153 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 B.C. Teacher Regulation Branch’s complaints process.

All B.C.-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 Teacher Regulation Branch 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 B.C. principals to follow the local procedures for reporting misconduct.

Get more information online: **Complaints & Reports**

[https://www.bcteacherregulation.ca/ProfessionalConduct/ComplaintsReports.aspx](https://www.bcteacherregulation.ca/ProfessionalConduct/ComplaintsReports.aspx)
Recruiting & Employing Administrators and Teachers

The owner/operator is responsible for the recruitment and hiring of B.C.-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

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 of Education certifies and inspects the delivery of the B.C. educational program by offshore schools.

B.C. 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 of Education 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 of Education is also not responsible for and does not participate in the process of obtaining or vetting work visas for B.C. offshore school teachers.

B.C. 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 International Education Branch.
PRINCIPALS AND VICE-PRINCIPALS

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

- Be fluent in English
- Hold a current and valid British Columbia Certificate of Qualification or an Independent School Teaching Certificate
- Be affiliated with the owner/operator only through their employment contract with the B.C. 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 British Columbia public, independent or offshore school

Principals who are missing one or more of the required qualifications must be approved by the Ministry of Education's International Education Branch.

Vice-principals must hold either a valid Certificate of Qualification or an Independent School Teaching Certificate (and have a minimum of two years teaching experience) from the B.C. Teacher Regulation Branch.

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 B.C. 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 process.
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 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. Owners/operators are expected to respond to requests from the ministry concerning complaints.

Submit complaints about offshore schools in writing to the ministry:

**B.C. Ministry of Education International Education Branch**
PO Box 9153 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9H1
Email: 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 B.C. Offshore Schools 2018-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month, Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2018 1</td>
<td>School year begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 16-17 Professional Development Workshop for educators</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 18 Numeracy Credentialing Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 18-20 BCPVPA Leadership Development Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 1 Curriculum Usage Fee and Program Administration Fees due</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 30 Annual reports due</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 30 Collect enrolment data from your school on Form 1701</td>
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<tr>
<td>January, April, July and October various Offshore School Representative meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 5 Submit 1701 data to the ministry</td>
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<tr>
<td>October On or before 15 Submit data about certificate holders from previous school year and those currently employed by owners/operators to director of certification in the Teacher Regulation Branch pursuant to the Teachers Act s. 80</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 15 Student Registration Fees due</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2019 TBD Offshore Schools Administrators Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 30 2018-2019 school year ends</td>
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