

Transition Guidelines for Offshore Schools

BRITISH COLUMBIA
GLOBAL EDUCATION PROGRAM



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Transition Guidelines for Offshore Schools

[New School Applications]

As of January 2013, applications for new offshore schools will be accepted between September 1st and December 31st annually. Applications submitted outside of this time period will not be accepted by the Ministry. For transition purposes, applications for new schools will be accepted between January 17, 2013 and February 28, 2013 in addition to the regular time period beginning in September of 2013. Applicant schools must meet all new program requirements, including new application requirements, as identified in the *Operating Manual for Offshore Schools*. Note that the Ministry's process for reviewing new school applications has also changed – prospective applicants are encouraged to thoroughly review the *Operating Manual for Offshore Schools* in full prior to submitting an application to the Ministry for review.

[New Agreements/Annual Certification Renewal]

As of January 2013, offshore school certification must be renewed on an annual basis. This means that Owner/Operators of certified schools will be required to sign onto new Certification Agreements annually, provided that annual reporting requirements have been met and the annual inspection process has been completed to the Ministry's satisfaction (i.e. inspection passed). For transition purposes, existing certified schools will be required to sign onto new Certification Agreements at the end of the 2012/13 school year (for the 2013/14 school year). Additional information regarding the annual certification renewal process/requirements can be found within the *Operating Manual for Offshore Schools*.

[Inspections]

Spring 2013 inspections will proceed as planned (between mid-February and early April). An updated Inspection Catalogue, based on feedback received from fall 2012 inspections and new program requirements, will be provided by the Ministry in mid-January. The Ministry recognizes that some flexibility will be required during the spring inspection process, given that schools will have had little time to adjust to new requirements and expectations, and is currently working to improve the user-friendliness of the Inspection Catalogue to further ease the transition process.

[New/Updated Requirements for Schools– Key Changes]

A number of new and updated requirements have been established for schools, as identified in new program materials (i.e. the *Operating Manual for Offshore Schools*, the initial *Curriculum Delivery Agreement*, and the *Certification Agreement*). The attached transition guidelines pertaining to each of the key requirements have been established for existing schools – SEE **Appendix A** for more detailed information. All new/updated requirements apply to new applicant schools effective immediately. Current and prospective Owner/Operators are encouraged to thoroughly review the new program materials to establish a full and complete understanding of application and certification requirements.





[APPENDIX A]

KEY CHANGES TO THE REQUIREMENTS FOR OFFSHORE SCHOOLS

DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENT

Only agreements between the Province and an individual private corporation or society will be permitted (i.e. no direct agreements between government and public schools).

Owner/Operator must not be in contravention of any relevant legislation (i.e. immigration, employment standards, human rights legislation).

Owner/Operator must have financial and organizational capacity to operate a BC school (as defined in program agreements and further outlined in the *Operating Manual for Offshore Schools*).

All communications, both written and verbal, between the Ministry and the Owner/Operator (or other parties communicating on behalf of the Owner/Operator) must be in English.

Students must enter the BC education program on a full-time basis no later than Grade 8, with the exception of students who have previously been instructed in English on a full-time basis. These students may be admitted after Grade 8, provided that they have met all English language requirements.

TRANSITION PROCESS

Applies to all new applicant schools effective immediately.

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Not applicable to existing schools, though existing schools are encouraged to meet this requirement to the extent that it is possible. Students enrolling in existing schools must have received sufficient English language development supports prior to being enrolled, as demonstrated through the English language assessment process. Please refer to the *Operating Manual for Offshore Schools* for more information on the requirements related to English language assessment and development.





DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENT

Each school must have a minimum of 60 full-time students within each grade.

Owner/Operator must be a “suitable candidate” for certification as determined by the Ministry.

Owner/Operator must be in “good standing” with the Ministry in order to maintain certification.

New program governance structure consisting of the Owner/ Operator, Offshore Program Consultant (not mandatory), Principal (and Vice-Principal), and teachers – see **Section 2** of the *Operating Manual for Offshore Schools* and program agreements for additional details regarding the approved roles and responsibilities for each party.

*Offshore Program Consultants are the only third party service provider/subcontractor permitted under the new program governance structure.

TRANSITION PROCESS

Applies to all new schools effective immediately.

New applicant schools must be able to clearly demonstrate prospective enrolment of at least 60 full-time students per grade as part of the application process, and confirm that annual enrolment targets are being met through the annual reporting and inspection processes. New schools will have a maximum of three years from the time the school opens to meet this requirement.

Exemptions will be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

Applies to all schools effective immediately (see *Operating Manual for Offshore Schools* for additional information).

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Applies to new applicant schools effective immediately (Ministry’s pre-approved list of candidates for the role of Offshore Program Consultant will be available in the spring of 2013).

Applies to existing schools beginning in the 2013/14 school year.

If an Owner/Operator wishes to hire an Offshore Program Consultant, the Owner/Operator is required to select a qualified Offshore Program Consultant from the Ministry’s pre-approved list of candidates (available in the spring of 2013). Once the Owner/Operator has selected an Offshore Program Consultant from the Ministry’s pre-approved list, the Owner/Operator must provide to the Ministry a written request for approval of that individual/entity along with confirmation that individual/entity has the ability to legally-represent the Owner/Operator in dealings with the Ministry. The Ministry will notify the Owner/Operator in writing whether the request has been approved. An Offshore Program Consultant should not be officially hired by the Owner/Operator until the Ministry has provided written confirmation that the request has been approved.





DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENT

TRANSITION PROCESS

(CONTINUED...)

If the Owner/Operator chooses not to hire an Offshore Program Consultant, the liaison function outlined in the *Operating Manual for Offshore Schools* and program agreements will be the responsibility of the school's Principal.

Individuals or entities wishing to serve as an Offshore Program Consultant within the program must apply through the Ministry's pre-qualifying process, which closes on February 18, 2013. Further information on the pre-qualifying process, including application and qualifications requirements, can be found on the BC Bid website at www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca/open.dll/welcome.

If an Owner/Operator is selecting the Principal to serve as liaison, no later than June 1, 2013, the Owner/Operator must submit a written request to the Ministry for approval, which includes confirmation that the Principal can legally-represent the Owner/Operator. The Ministry will notify the Owner/Operator in writing whether the request has been approved. The Principal should not perform and liaison duties until the Ministry has provided written confirmation that the request has been approved.

Students in offshore schools must pass provincial exams in order to graduate, and are expected to write provincial exams for a specific grade during the year in which they are enrolled in that grade.

Applies to all schools effective in the 2014/15 school year. Each school must submit to the Ministry as part of its 2013/14 Annual Report, a plan outlining the supports that will be in place to ensure student success in provincial examinations.

Offshore students are not eligible to receive course credit through equivalency reviews, but are permitted to challenge certain courses (as outlined in the *Operating Manual for Offshore Schools*).

Applies to all schools effective beginning in the 2013/14 school year.

All courses are eligible to be delivered through Distributed Learning, with the exception of provincially-examinable subjects.

Applies to all schools effective beginning in the 2013/14 school year.

Exams will be invigilated by a Ministry-appointed official during the first year a certified school has eligible students write the exam.

Not applicable to existing certified schools.
Effective immediately for all schools not currently certified under the program.





DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENT

TRANSITION PROCESS

Students in offshore schools must pass an English language assessment, as described in the *Operating Manual for Offshore Schools*, prior to being enrolled in the BC program. The Principal is responsible for signing-off on all English language assessments and subsequent student admission decisions.

Applies to all schools effective beginning in the 2013/14 school year.

Final inspection reports will be made public on the Ministry's website.

Applies to all schools effective beginning in the 2013/14 school year.

All schools must establish a "twinning" relationship with a BC K-12 public or certified independent school as outlined in the *Operating Manual for Offshore Schools and Certification Agreement*.

Applies to all schools effective beginning in the 2013/14 school year.

25% of graduating offshore students are expected to have studied at a K-12 public or certified independent school in BC for a minimum of one semester as outlined in the *Operating Manual for Offshore Schools and Certification Agreement*.

At least 25% of graduating students at each school should have completed an onshore semester by the end of the 2015/16 school year.

Additional information to follow in 2013.

Changes to program fees and costs (as outlined in *Operating Manual for Offshore Schools* and program agreements).

Applies to new applicant schools immediately.

Applies to existing schools effective beginning in the 2013/2014 school year.

Ministry has the ability to perform:

- an unannounced inspection of any school at any time; and/or
- a Learning Audit of any school at any time if there are concerns about the quality of educational programming and/or student achievement.

Applies to all schools effective immediately.

Schools must submit an Annual Report to the Ministry by September 30th consisting of:

- Completed Inspection Catalogue
- Business Plan update

Applies to all schools effective beginning in the 2013/14 school year.

Annual reports must be developed and submitted using the approved templates provided by the Ministry, which are subject to changes at the Ministry's discretion. An updated Inspection Catalogue will be provided to Owner/Operators in July of each year, and the most up-to-date Business Plan template can be found within the Application Package (SEE **Appendix B** of the *Operating Manual for Offshore Schools*).

