

# THE PASSPORT TO EDUCATION PROGRAM POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The 2014/2015 school year will be the last year that Passport stamps will be allocated. Only Grade 12 stamps will be sent to eligible schools in May 2015.

Students who have already received Passport to Education Awards (stamps) in past years will continue to be able to redeem their award towards tuition at their designated post-secondary institution until the expiry date stated on the stamps.

## **1. PURPOSE**

The Passport to Education Program recognizes and rewards student achievement in grade 12 in a broad range of academic and non-academic areas according to criteria and guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education. The intent of the program is to motivate all students to study consistently during the years leading to graduation, and to encourage secondary school students to pursue further education through post-secondary institutions and job-training programs. Passport awards are used to assist students with tuition towards their post-secondary education and/or job training programs.

## **2. ELIGIBILITY AND QUALIFICATIONS**

In order to be eligible for a Passport to Education Award, a student:

- must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident (landed immigrant) at the time of registration in their secondary school. (International students are not eligible)
- must be enrolled in grade 12 courses in:
  - a British Columbia public school
  - a Group 1, 2, or 4 British Columbia Independent School
  - a Continuing Education Centre

In order to earn a Passport to Education Award, a student must:

- meet the basic eligibility requirements
- meet the criteria and guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education and established by the secondary school.

## **3. POLICIES**

### ***Allocation***

- 3.1** For Grade 12 only there is a set amount of 9000 stamps which are pro-rated amongst eligible BC schools.

The allocation of stamps is determined from the annual 1701 enrolment count for each of 12 as at September 30<sup>th</sup> and is based on the number of students who are enrolled in five or more courses in one school calendar year in a graded secondary school program, and who are a Canadian citizen or permanent resident at the time of registration in their school. Citizenship information is determined from TRAX information submitted on Form "Submission of Grades", which is sent by schools to the Ministry. Students in Grade 12 must be reported to

TRAX and the citizenship information must be complete and correct by the February submission of grades deadline date in order for students to be included in the allocation. (Adult students registered in five or more courses in a graded secondary school program are included in the count used to calculate stamp allocation.)

For students registered **in a regular school and a Distance Learning (DL)** school in September, and are enrolled in five or more courses in one calendar year between the two schools, the stamp allocation shall go to the “School of Record” (priority school for funding).

As of the 2010/2011 school year Continuing Education Centers are allocated stamps based on their September 30<sup>th</sup> enrolment report of students enrolled in five or more courses in a graded secondary school program, and who are a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.

Stamp value for 2014/2015:            Grade 12 - \$500

### *Criteria*

#### **3.1 For a Grade 12 stamp (worth \$500):**

1. Two-thirds of the weighting must be on the academic component using a student’s course grades for the best five provincially authorized courses and/or Board Authority authorized (BAA) courses that result in a percent or lettergrade. These grades must be final or projected final grades. External credentials, including AP (Advanced Placement) or IB (International Baccalaureate) courses may be used. (Locally developed courses should not be included.)
2. One-third of the weighting should be based on recognizing effort, work habits, citizenship and school/community involvement. Schools should set more specific criteria for this component, following these general guidelines.
3. A student should be a graduate to earn a Grade 12 stamp.

It is important that the criteria conform to the guidelines set out above and is clearly communicated to students in writing. A clear explanation of the criteria will assist in dealing with any complaints after the stamps have been awarded. Note: Ties must be broken with reference to the Ministry’s guidelines. Schools are not permitted to break ties by lot, lottery or any other means of decision by chance.

### *Accelerated Programs*

- 3.3** In the case of accelerated programs or where a student’s academic career does not follow a regular pattern, **schools must use their own discretion** to determine stamp (award) winners based on the courses completed in the current school year or on courses completed at the grade level of the stamps awarded.

### *Awarding Stamps*

- 3.4** At the end of each school year, allocated stamps should be awarded to those students meeting the established criteria. Stamps should be affixed in the student’s passport booklet and marked with the school stamp or seal so as not to obscure the serial number). The booklet should be put in the student’s file to be given to them upon graduation or if they leave the school.

Should a student transfer to another school mid-year, the two schools will discuss with each other whether the student in question has met all the criteria of the two schools before being awarded a stamp by the school where the student registered in September.

For students **registered in a regular school and a Distance Learning (DL) school** in September, the two schools will discuss with each other whether the student in question has met all the criteria before being awarded a stamp by the “School of Record”.

- 3.5** The school is the **official holder** of information in which students are awarded passport stamps. When awarded, the stamp serial numbers must be linked to the students’ PEN number and recorded on the “Record of Issued Stamps” form provided by the Ministry (or a similar format developed by the school) and forwarded to the Ministry by November 30<sup>th</sup>.

### *Redeeming Awards*

- 3.6** Booklets (stamps) cannot be split up for redemption. The entire award will be redeemed when sent in. To redeem their accumulated stamps (Passport award), students must be registered, attending and paying tuition in a program at an accredited and designated (approved for Canada Student Loans in BC) post-secondary institution. **A qualifying educational program or course should last at least three consecutive weeks, and requires a student to spend no less than 10 hours per week on courses or work in the program. A one-day course is not an acceptable program.** Passport to Education awards **may also be redeemed to pay for tuition fees for Apprenticeship Programs**, Entry Level Trades Programs and Foundation Industry Training Programs offered by designated post-secondary institutions. These are restricted to programs offered by public post-secondary institutions, and a limited number of other training providers who have been designated by the Industry Training Authority (ITA) to deliver specific programs. To verify if you can redeem a Passport to Education award for a particular **Apprenticeship Program**, first check the “Search for Designated Schools” link at the website [www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc). If you do not find the institution there, check the ITA website at [www.itabc.ca](http://www.itabc.ca) for additional approved training providers.
- 3.7** If a student attends an accredited and designated post-secondary institution **in British Columbia**, the passport award can be applied directly to the student’s tuition fees by the student giving it to the institution upon registration only if the institution wishes to redeem the award on behalf of the student. The Ministry will then pay the institution and the institution will put the monies towards the student’s outstanding tuition.

If a student has already paid all their tuition and/or is attending an accredited, designated post-secondary institution **outside British Columbia**, they should send a completed Redemption Form (from the website), the Passport to Education booklet (with stamps affixed), SIN, proof of registration at the PSI, proof of tuition fees paid (or a large portion paid). The tuition fees paid should be as close to matching the amount (or over) of the full Passport award. A current address to mail the cheque should be supplied for the Ministry to pay the student directly.

**Note:** If a student has already completed their post-secondary schooling at an accredited and designated post-secondary institution, **and their Passport award has not yet expired**, they can still redeem the award by sending it with proof of completion (transcript or completion certificate) of the program, their SIN and current address, to the Awards Program, **before the award expires**.

### *Expiry Dates/Expired Awards*

- 3.8 The Ministry cannot process expired Passport stamp(s), or extend the expiry date of the Passport stamp(s).** Once a stamp expires the financial liability of the program is reduced and the funds to redeem the stamps are no longer available. Only extenuating circumstances, such as a medical problem that did not allow the student to attend a post-secondary institution during the full five-year period, can be forwarded in writing, with appropriate backup from a licensed doctor, to the Awards Administrator for review.

### *Lost Passport Award (stamps)*

- 3.9** In the case of Passport Awards (stamps) known to be lost or destroyed, students must contact their secondary school to report the lost award (stamps). The school will complete a “Request for Declaration of Lost Stamps” form (from the website) and send it to the Ministry with a \$25.00 administrative fee, payable by cheque (held for three weeks before processing), money order, VISA or MasterCard. The Ministry will prepare a “Declaration of Lost Stamps” formal letter with the Ministry seal and send it to the school to give to the student. This **formal letter is the replacement of the lost award (stamps)** and must be redeemed the same as the booklet, with proof of registration and proof of tuition fees paid attached.

## **4. PROCEDURES**

### **4.1 THE SCHOOL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:**

- using the Ministry’s criteria and guidelines for awarding passport stamps, and providing information on the program to students, in writing
- identifying the recipients of passport stamps in each grade based on the number of stamps they have been allocated from the Ministry. **(The Ministry does not issue extra stamps)**
- entering stamps and Personal Education Numbers (PENs) in passport booklets and **retaining booklets on behalf of students until graduation** or if student leaves the school, and providing the booklet (award) and information sheets on procedures to redeem the Passport Award to the student upon graduation or if a student leaves the school
- recording and keeping secure, the names and Personal Education Numbers (PENs) of award recipients against the serial number of the stamp issued on a “Record of Issued Stamps” list. This list should be completed and faxed to the Ministry of Education by November 30<sup>th</sup>. The original list must be retained for school records.

**Note:** Those schools using a certified administration system such as Take Two (CIMS, Campus America, Harts (Windsor), or Chancery (Mac School, Win School), can extract their Passport file and upload it to the School Secure Access link on the Awards website.

- in the case of stamps or booklets known to be lost or destroyed, requesting replacement of the award by completing the “Request for Declaration of Lost Stamps” form found on the website and sending this form to the Ministry.  
Note: There is a \$25.00 fee, which must accompany each “Request for Declaration of Lost Stamps” form issued, per student regardless of the number of stamps, payable by cheque (held for three weeks before processing), money order, VISA or MasterCard.
- retaining a small percentage (1 or 2) of their stamp allocation each year, per grade, for a set time period (e.g. 6 months), in the event that a qualified student is overlooked in the original calculation of winners; awarding these stamps after the appropriate time period is over, and informing the Ministry of these winners.
- returning any unawarded stamps to the Ministry, to be cancelled, before the next years’ distribution of stamps in May.

#### **4.2 THE STUDENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:**

- the safekeeping of a booklet, stamp, declaration form issued to him/her from this program;
- reporting any loss or destruction of his/her award to the high school;
- if he/she believes the school has made an error in awarding the stamps, bringing the complaint to the Principal, within the time period set by the school, for review;
- ensuring that any post-secondary institution or training school in which he/she intends to register in is accredited and designated in BC, for Canada Student Loans by checking [www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc) at the “Search for Designated Schools” link, OR the “Industry Training Authority” website [www.itabc.ca](http://www.itabc.ca) at the “Training Providers” link;
- redeeming stamps within five years from September 30<sup>th</sup> of a student’s expected graduating year from secondary school and before the expiry date of the stamps; e.g. by registering, attending and paying tuition in an accredited and designated post-secondary institution within five years, before the expiry date of the Passport award;
- using the Passport award for tuition fees first and then other educational expenses;
- if the institution or the training school attended is **in** British Columbia, presenting the Passport booklet or Declaration form at the time of registration in exchange for a corresponding fee reduction. If tuition has already been paid, by sending a completed Redemption Form (from the website), the Passport to Education booklet (with stamps affixed) or Declaration form, proof of registration, proof of tuition fees paid (or a large portion paid), Canadian SIN and current address to mail the cheque;
- if the institution attended is **outside** British Columbia, paying the necessary fees (at least the amount of the award) and sending a completed Redemption Form (from the web), the Passport to Education booklet (with stamps affixed) or Declaration form, proof of registration, proof of tuition fees paid (or a large portion paid), Canadian SIN and current address to mail the cheque; If the institution is approved by ITA (Industry Training Authority), a student should follow the same procedures (above) as if attending an institution outside of British Columbia.

#### **4.3 THE DESIGNATED POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION/TRAINING SCHOOL WILL: (if in British Columbia):**

- collect each student’s Passport booklet, or Declaration form, at the time of enrolment and before the expiry date of the Passport award;
- offset the amount indicated in the booklet or form against the tuition fees;
- submit all Passport booklets and/or Declaration forms collected, with an invoice of amount claimed, to the Ministry of Education for reimbursement, within a month of the expiry date (by October 30<sup>th</sup>). **This rule is for institutions only.**
- provide tax information slips (e.g. T4A) to students for the amount of the passport stamps; **Note:** Most major BC post-secondary institutions will follow this process, but some institutions may choose not to. If an institution does not choose to follow this process (or students have paid tuition in full), please follow the instructions below:

#### **(if outside British Columbia):**

- collect all fees in full
- provide the student with proof of registration letter (or stamp and sign the back page of the booklet), and proof of tuition fees paid (or a large portion paid), so the student can redeem their award directly from the Ministry prior to the award’s expiry date.

#### **4.4 THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION WILL:**

- in May, provide schools with stamps, following the allocation procedures on the basis of the school's official September 30<sup>th</sup> enrolment figures, and blank booklets for the stamps.
- provide a "Declaration of Lost Stamps" formal letter which replaces any lost, stolen or destroyed award/stamp(s), when the "**Request for Declaration**" form, (from the web) which includes the name of the student, PEN, the grade, school code and serial number of the missing stamp(s) is received from the issuing school.  
**Note:** A \$25.00 administration fee paid by cheque (Minister of Finance), money order, VISA or MasterCard must accompany the "Request" before a "Declaration" (replacement) will be produced.
- check that all claims for payment/reimbursement are submitted with appropriate documentation
- pay all claims within six to eight weeks if they are submitted with appropriate documentation before the expiry date of the award
- provide tax information slips (T4A) to students who redeem their stamps directly through the Ministry.

***For more information, contact:***

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