

Indigenous-Focused Grad Requirement

OVERVIEW



Proposed Change to the B.C. Graduation Program

As part of the provincial government's commitments to truth, reconciliation and anti-racism, the Ministry of Education is implementing a mandatory course or bundle of credits related to First Peoples as part of graduation requirements in British Columbia. The new requirement will build on the education sector's work to date, to integrate Indigenous content into the provincial K-12 curriculum, and support students to graduate with deeper understanding and knowledge of First Peoples perspectives, histories, and cultures.

The Ministry is seeking to engage with Indigenous communities, the education sector, and the public on a proposed model for implementing the new Indigenous-focused graduation requirement.

Background

In 2019, the B.C. government passed the [*Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*](#) (*Declaration Act*) following the Government of Canada's signing of the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP). UNDRIP establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the world and elaborates on human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of Indigenous peoples. Canada's signing of UNDRIP aligns with existing and longstanding federal legislation, including [Section 35 of the Constitution Act](#) that recognizes and affirms Indigenous rights, and further emphasises the federal government's commitment to protecting and guaranteeing human rights for all.

Colonization drastically disrupted the self-determined lives and cultures of Indigenous peoples across Canada. The *Declaration Act* is both an acknowledgment of these histories and a commitment by the Government of B.C. to affirm and restore the human rights of Indigenous peoples. *B.C.'s Declaration Act* establishes UNDRIP as the Province's framework for reconciliation, as called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's [Calls to Action](#). This historic legislation was developed in collaboration and consultation with Indigenous partners.



B.C.'s [Action Plan](#) for the *Declaration Act* includes, as part of Action 3.4, a commitment to implement a mandatory course or bundle of credits related to First Peoples as part of graduation requirements in British Columbia. Following up on this commitment, Government has directed the Ministry of Education to:



Implement a mandatory course or bundle of credits on First Peoples as a graduation requirement in B.C.



Engage with Indigenous communities, the education sector, and the public on how to implement this new graduation requirement.

Implementation of an Indigenous-focused graduation requirement is an important next step in the K-12 sector's ongoing journey towards truth and reconciliation, which has included integrating Indigenous perspectives, histories and cultures across the redesigned curriculum, professional development opportunities for educators and the B.C. Teachers' Council's Professional Standards for B.C. Educators. The new graduation requirement also aligns with ongoing provincial work on Indigenous-specific anti-racism and capacity building within school districts.



The First Nations Leadership Council, First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), and education partners including the British Columbia School Trustees Association, British Columbia Teachers' Federation, and the British Columbia Association of Institutes and Universities, have previously expressed support for a new Indigenous-focused graduation requirement.

Proposed Model

The proposed change to the graduation program would require students to complete **4 credits** of Indigenous-focused coursework in order to graduate. Students could earn these credits by successfully completing:

1. One of the existing, Indigenous-focused provincial courses;
2. A First Nations language course at the Grade 10 to Grade 12 level; OR
3. A locally-developed, Indigenous-focused course (BAA)

* SEE APPENDIX A FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE OPTIONS.

No changes would be made to the total number of credits required to graduate (80), nor would there be any changes to the Adult Graduation Program. In some instances, an Indigenous-focused course may also partially satisfy the Language Arts, Social Studies, or elective course requirements of the graduation program.

A comparison of the current graduation requirements and the proposed requirements, including 4 credits of Indigenous-focused learning can be found in the table below.

| Current Graduation Requirements | Proposed Changes (<i>highlighted</i>) |
|--|--|
| <p>At least 16 credits must be at the Grade 12 level, including a required Language Arts 12 and Career Life Connections</p> | <p>At least 16 credits must be at the Grade 12 level, including a required Language Arts 12 and Career Life Connections</p> |
| <p>52 credits are required from the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Career-Life Education (4 credits), and Career-Life Connections (4 credits) ○ Physical and Health Education 10 (4 credits) ○ Science 10 (4 credits), and a Science 11 or 12 (4 credits) ○ Social Studies 10 (4 credits), and a Social Studies 11 or 12 (4 credits) ○ A Language Arts 10, 11 and a required 12 (12 credits total) ○ An Arts Education 10, 11, or 12 <u>and/or</u> an Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies 10, 11, or 12 (4 credits total) | <p>52 credits are required from the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Career-Life Education (4 credits), and Career-Life Connections (4 credits) ○ Physical and Health Education 10 (4 credits) ○ Science 10 (4 credits), and a Science 11 or 12 (4 credits) ○ Social Studies 10 (4 credits), and a Social Studies 11 or 12 (4 credits) ○ A Language Arts 10, 11 and a required 12 (12 credits total) ○ An Arts Education 10, 11, or 12 <u>and/or</u> an Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies 10, 11, or 12 (4 credits total) |
| | <p>4 credits required from an Indigenous-focused course(s)</p> |
| <p>At least 28 credits must be elective course credits</p> | <p>Potentially no change to elective course credits - student course choice combined with school/district course offerings would determine whether elective course credits would be used to meet the new requirement.</p> |
| <p>Three graduation assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Grade 10 Numeracy Assessment → Grade 10 Literacy Assessment → Grade 12 Literacy Assessment | <p>Three graduation assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Grade 10 Numeracy Assessment → Grade 10 Literacy Assessment → Grade 12 Literacy Assessment |

Ministry data indicates that most students graduate with more than 90 credits, having well exceeded the 80-credit requirement. In addition, a small but increasing number of B.C. students are taking the Indigenous-focused courses launched as part of the redesigned curriculum. While completing 4 credits of Indigenous-focused learning will be new for approximately 95% of students, data suggests that most students will be able to complete an Indigenous-focused course requirement without having to make significant adjustments to the rest of their graduation program. This is especially likely given that many of the provincial courses that are eligible for meeting the Indigenous-focused graduation requirement can also satisfy other existing graduation requirements.

Proposed Implementation Timeline

The proposed change to the graduation program includes a phased-in implementation:

2021-2022

- Consultation and communication with education partners about how best to implement the change to the graduation program
- School districts and independent schools begin to prepare for any necessary capacity building in school districts and schools

2022-2023

- Continued communication with education partners
- Where existing courses are in place, students in Grades 10 and 11 *may* complete courses that meet the Indigenous-focused graduation requirement
- School districts and independent schools increase capacity to offer the courses (*teacher professional learning and gathering of any needed resources*)

2023-2024

- The change to the Graduation Program would take **full effect** for students graduating beginning 2023-2024

* SEE APPENDIX B FOR MORE INFORMATION



Staged implementation ensures school districts and authorities can support teachers as they increase their capacity to teach Indigenous-focused courses, and that students have ample time to make choices about which courses they will choose to satisfy the new graduation requirement.



Consultation Process

The Ministry is seeking feedback from Indigenous communities, the K-12 sector and the public on how best to implement this new graduation requirement. Input gathered will inform further development of the model (*e.g. what kinds of courses may satisfy the requirement, parameters for developing local course options, etc.*), as well as what additional supports are needed, to help ensure successful implementation.



Consultation meetings with education partners will take place in March and April, in tandem with a broader engagement process with Indigenous communities and the public.



On completion of the consultations, the Ministry will produce a *'What We Heard'* report summarizing feedback on implementation of the change to the graduation program. The Ministry will look to finalize the approach for the new graduation requirement by August 2022, to enable the sector time to implement the new requirement in line with the timelines detailed within this document.

While feedback on the curriculum, the current graduation program, and the current course funding model is valuable, this engagement process is specifically focused on the implementation of a new, Indigenous-focused graduation requirement.

APPENDIX A

Course Options That Would Meet the New Requirement

Provincial courses

- BC First Peoples 12
- Contemporary Indigenous Studies 12
- English First Peoples – Literacy Studies 10*
- English First Peoples – New Media 10*
- English First Peoples – Spoken Language 10*
- English First Peoples – Writing 10*
- English First Peoples – Literary Studies + New Media 11
- English First Peoples – Literary Studies + Spoken Language 11
- English First Peoples – Literary Studies + Writing 11
- English First Peoples 12

* 2 CREDIT COURSES (would meet half of the requirement)

First Nations Language Courses

Any Grade 10-12 course from the following:

- Gitxsanimx ~ Gitxsanimax 5 to 12 and Introductory Gitxsanimx ~ Gitxsanimax 11
- Halq'eméylem 5 to 12 and Introductory Halq'eméylem 11
- Heiltsuk 5 to 12 and Introductory Heiltsuk 11
- Hul'q'umi'num' 5 to 12 and Introductory Hul'q'umi'num' 11
- Kwak'wala 5 to 12 and Introductory Kwak'wala 11
- Liqwala/Kwak'wala 5 to 12 and Introductory Liqwala/Kwak'wala 11
- nsíylxcən 5 to 12 and Introductory nsíylxcən 11
- Nte?kepmxcin 5 to 12 and Introductory Nte?kepmxcin 11
- Nuučaan'ut 5 to 12 and Introductory Nuučaan'ut 11
- Secwepemctsin (Shuswap Language) 5 to 12 and Introductory Secwepemctsin 11
- SENĆOŦEN 5 to 12 and Introductory SENĆOŦEN 11
- Shashishalhem (Sechelt Language) 5 to 12 and Introductory Shashishalhem 11
- Sim'algaxhl Nisga'a 5 to 12 and Introductory Sim'algaxhl Nisga'a 11
- Sm'algyax 5 to 12 and Introductory Sm'algyax 11
- St'át'yemcets 5 to 12 and Introductory St'át'yemcets 11
- Tsek'ene 5 to 12 and Introductory Tsek'ene 11
- Upper St'at'imcets 5 to 12 and Introductory Upper St'at'imcets 11
- Xaayda Kil / Xaad Kil Grades 5 to 12 and Introductory Xaayda Kil / Xaad Kil 11

Board/Authority Authorized Courses

School boards and independent school authorities could authorize an Indigenous-focused, locally developed course (or courses) totalling four or more credits to enable students to meet the requirement under the proposed model. Boards and authorities would be expected to engage local First Nations and/or Indigenous leaders in the development of such courses.

APPENDIX B

Implementation Timelines for Students During Transition

For students currently in Grade 9

- In 2021/22 (Grade 9) - *No requirement*
- In 2022/23 (Grade 10) - *May complete the requirement early*
- In 2023/24 (Grade 11) - *May complete the requirement before entering Grade 12*
- In 2024/25 (Grade 12) - *Must complete the requirement to graduate*

For students currently in Grade 10

- In 2021/22 (Grade 10) - *May complete the requirement early*
- In 2022/23 (Grade 11) - *May complete the requirement before entering Grade 12*
- In 2023/24 (Grade 12) - *Must complete the requirement to graduate*

For students currently in Grade 11

- In 2021/22 (Grade 11) - *No requirement*
- In 2022/23 (Grade 12) - *No requirement – if all other graduation requirements have been met by the end of the school year*

For students currently in Grade 12

- In 2021/22 (Grade 12) - *No requirement – if all other graduation requirements have been met by the end of the school year*
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