

# Adult Education Policy Framework



*Ministry of  
Advanced Education,  
Skills and Training*

**April 2018**

# Adult Education Policy Framework

April 2018

## Contents

- Introduction ..... 3
  - Purpose ..... 3
  - Context..... 3
  - Legislation and funding..... 4
- Vision, Policy Objectives ..... 5
  - Vision:..... 5
  - Policy Objectives:..... 5
- Policies: ..... 6
  - 1. Tuition-Free Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning ..... 6
  - 2. Student progression..... 6
  - 3. Individual education plans for Fundamental level students..... 7
  - 4. Transferability ..... 7
  - 5. Financial support for low-income students in Adult Education programs ..... 8
  - 6. Community and education system partnerships..... 8
  - 7. Reporting requirements and Adult Education targets..... 9
- Conclusion..... 9
- Glossary..... 10

# Adult Education Policy Framework

April 2018

## Introduction

### Purpose

The Adult Education Policy Framework is intended to provide the context, policy objectives and key policies pertaining to domestic students at public post-secondary institutions (PPSIs) in:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE);
- English Language Learning (ELL) (also known as English as a Second Language); and,
- Adult Special Education (ASE).

These programs are ‘pre-post-secondary’ level programs that provide a key pathway for many students transitioning to post-secondary education, training, and the labour market.

Policies within this Framework include those that support student access and success, course credit transferability between PPSIs, and accountability of students and PPSIs.

### Context

British Columbia has a rich history of accessible adult education programs. In recent years, these programs have undergone significant changes. Most recently, in August 2017, a tuition-free policy for domestic students in ABE and ELL programs at PPSIs was implemented. The elimination of tuition fees is aimed at improving access, allowing more students to gain the required skills to pursue their personal, education, training and employment goals.

This framework focuses specifically on ABE, ASE and ELL for domestic students in PPSIs. These programs are part of a suite of Adult Education (also known as developmental) programs that are delivered by 18 PPSIs across the province. These programs are focused on improving literacy, numeracy, English language skills, upgrading for further education, and job-ready skills. More than 20,000 students enrol in Adult Education programs at PPSIs each year before and/or while they enrol in and complete high school, career training and post-secondary programs.

Approximately 60 school districts also deliver ABE programs through their Continuing Education centres across the province. Within school districts, adult students have a choice of completing the regular BC Certificate of Graduation, or the BC Adult Graduation Diploma (BCAGD), which has the same foundational course requirements but requires fewer electives. While tuition-free ABE is also available at school districts, this policy framework focuses primarily on the public post-secondary system that delivers Adult Education programs in BC.

# Adult Education Policy Framework

April 2018

Policies in this framework identify whether they apply to ABE, ASE and/or ELL. This framework does not apply to federally funded ELL programs.

## Legislation and funding

The Government of British Columbia is committed to providing students in the province with opportunities to increase their literacy, numeracy, and academic skills to improve the quality of their lives, pursue post-secondary studies and/or obtain meaningful employment. Under the *Colleges and Institute Act*, *University Act* and the *Thompson Rivers University Act*, the following 18 PPSIs are mandated to provide ABE:

- British Columbia Institute of Technology
- Camosun College
- Capilano University
- College of New Caledonia
- College of the Rockies
- Douglas College
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University
- Langara College
- Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
- North Island College
- Northern Lights College
- Northwest Community College
- Okanagan College
- Selkirk College
- Thompson Rivers University
- University of the Fraser Valley
- Vancouver Community College
- Vancouver Island University

Funding for Adult Education programming is part of the block operating grant annually provided to institutions. Institutions have the legislative autonomy to allocate funding within their block operating grant to support programming that is aligned with their institutional priorities and mandate to best meet the needs of their regions.

# Adult Education Policy Framework

April 2018

## Vision, Policy Objectives

### Vision:

Adult learners in BC have the access and support to complete high school and pursue further education, training and employment opportunities to succeed in BC's communities and the economy.

### Policy Objectives:

This framework is guided by the following policy objectives:

#### Accessible:

- 1) Domestic students in Adult Education programs have the supports needed to progress and complete their studies and transition to post-secondary education or employment.

#### Sustainable:

- 2) Adult Education courses and programs remain sustainable within public post-secondary institutions across the system.

#### Transferable:

- 3) Adult Education courses and programs provide consistent learning outcomes and recognition, allowing students to seamlessly transfer from one institution to another.

#### Accountable:

- 4) Students and public post-secondary institutions are committed to the completion of Adult Education programs, and transition to post-secondary studies, training and employment.

# Adult Education Policy Framework

April 2018

## Policies:

### 1. Tuition-Free Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning

Overview:

In September 2017, the Province implemented a tuition-free policy for domestic students in ABE and ELL programs delivered by public post-secondary institutions across British Columbia.

**Existing Policy as of September 1, 2017:**

**All ABE and ELL programs delivered by public post-secondary institutions across British Columbia are tuition-free for domestic students.**

**While Adult Special Education (ASE) programs are not tuition-free, the Adult Upgrading Grant is available to eligible students in these programs to support tuition and other direct educational costs. As such, this policy does not include ASE programs.**

### 2. Student progression

Overview:

Government supports students to successfully progress in their education and meet their training and employment goals by providing an environment that supports progression.

It is recognized that many students in Adult Education programs have complex life experiences and may need to repeat a course for a variety of reasons.

**New Policy as of April 1, 2018:**

**Public post-secondary institutions will have student progression policies to support student progress and success in Adult Education programs.**

**Progression policies will specify that students in ABE, ELL and ASE programs are eligible to repeat a course once after failing or withdrawing from the course and that additional repeats are possible with the approval of the department head or dean.**

**While there are no provincial policies on time limits for Adult Education students to complete their programs, learning progress is monitored by public post-secondary institutions to ensure students are advancing toward their goals.**

### 3. Individual education plans for Fundamental level students

Overview:

To support student progress and success, formal individual education plans can help students plan their education pathway, set a timeline, and identification of courses required to achieve their education goal, particularly for Fundamental level (Grade 9) and low literacy students.

**New Policy as of April 1, 2018:**

**The Province recommends that public post-secondary institutions will support ABE students at the Fundamental level to create formal education plans that include education pathways, timelines, and courses to achieve the students' education goals.**

### 4. Transferability

Overview:

It is important that students have the ability to seamlessly move between BC institutions that deliver Adult Education programs. This is facilitated through the use of provincial articulation.

The purpose of articulation in Adult Education programming is to establish a process for learners to complete a course and get credit recognition for it by other institutions in the province. Doing so ensures that learners do not have to repeat courses and can move seamlessly between Adult Education programs offered by institutions in BC. This is accomplished by instructors adhering to standard and consistent learning outcomes that are collectively developed, outlined in the Articulation guides, and recognized by all the participating institutions.

The Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training (Ministry) works closely with the ABE, ESL and ASE articulation committees to update and post the ABE, ESL and ASE Articulation Guides online.

**Existing Policy Retained:**

**Public post-secondary institutions support student transition by ensuring relevant Adult Education programs are articulated in the various BC Articulation guides for ABE, ELL, and ASE.**

# Adult Education Policy Framework

April 2018

## 5. Financial support for low-income students in Adult Education programs

Overview:

The Adult Upgrading Grant (AUG) provides financial support to eligible students enrolled in Adult Education programs. This grant provides eligible students with financial assistance for tuition fees for ASE, fees, books, unsubsidized childcare, and transportation.

For full details of the AUG, including program policy updates, please refer to the *Adult Upgrading Grant Policy and Procedures Manual* available on the Ministry website.

**Existing Policy Retained:**

**The Adult Upgrading Grant is available to eligible low-income students enrolled in ABE, ELL (for supports) and ASE (for tuition and supports) at public post-secondary institutions across the province.**

## 6. Community and education system partnerships

Overview:

There are different modes of learning and environments that enhance student success. Some students succeed in community-based settings supported by community organizations or education institutions.

For example, 18 public post-secondary institutions and approximately 60 school districts across the province deliver formal ABE programs. Some of this delivery is achieved through partnerships between public post-secondary institutions and Indigenous nations and community-based organizations.

There are also community-based, informal, non-credit skills development and low literacy programs funded through the Ministry's Community Adult Literacy Program.

Public post-secondary institutions work collaboratively with multifarious delivery partners in their regions to address any gaps in access and delivery, and to limit duplication.

**New Policy as of April 1, 2018:**

**Government will facilitate public post-secondary institutions to work collaboratively and in partnership with school districts, Indigenous Nations and institutes, and/or community-based organizations to deliver effective and relevant Adult Education programs.**



# Adult Education Policy Framework

April 2018

## 7. Reporting requirements and Adult Education targets

Overview:

Public post-secondary institutions are required under legislation to provide regular data reports to the Ministry. Currently, full time equivalent and headcount data is provided for Adult Education programs.

In order to support access to Adult Education programs for students across BC, the Ministry has program targets as part of all of the 18 institutions' accountability measures. Known as "Developmental program targets," they were established in 2004-05, based on student full time equivalent data, intended to ensure a minimum level of delivery in the areas of ABE, ELL, and ASE.

The Ministry will work with institutions prior to the establishment of any new reporting requirements.

**Existing Policy:**

**Public post-secondary institutions provide relevant and timely Adult Education data to support accountability and access to ABE, ELL and ASE programs.**

## Conclusion

The Ministry reaffirms its commitment to enhance the accessibility and sustainability of the Adult Education system through these policies. This Framework includes key policies designed to enhance student access, success and transition from low literacy and high school completion to post-secondary education and employment training.

The Ministry will continue its engagement efforts to address issues that require further assessment and development to ensure an effective adult education system and student success. Providing more opportunities for adult learners not only helps make their lives more fulfilling, but contributes to a stronger economy and healthier society.

# Adult Education Policy Framework

April 2018

## Glossary

Adult Basic Education (ABE): Adult Basic Education is a category of courses and programs that are intended to provide adult learners with skills and knowledge to access further education, training and employment. The courses and programs offered under the banner “Adult Basic Education” include literacy, numeracy and, academic skills; academic upgrading; and life skills or career preparation courses. These courses provide upgrading that may allow entry into a post-secondary program, but do not themselves contribute credits towards a post-secondary credential.

Adult Education (also known as developmental): Pre-post-secondary programs consisting of Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Special Education (ASE), and English Language Learning (ELL) (also known as English as a Second Language) delivered by 18 PPSs in the province. They help adult students gain literacy and numeracy skills, complete high school, bridge into post-secondary education, career training, and employment.

Adult Special Education (ASE): ASE programs are designed for learners who have cognitive and/or multiple disabilities that hinder scholastic success. Curriculum includes literacy, numeracy, and life skills, as well as employment preparation.

Adult Upgrading Grant (AUG): The AUG is designed to provide financial support to eligible students, who meet the income thresholds, to access Adult Education programs (ABE, ELL and ASE): The AUG is a non-refundable grant that covers the cost of material fees; transportation, books and materials, tuition (for ASE), and unsubsidized childcare.

Articulation committees: Representatives from participating post-secondary institutions make up ABE, ESL and ASE Committees to facilitate the recognition and transfer of their students, courses, and credits from one institution to another in the province.

English Language Learning (ELL) (also known as English as a Second Language): ELL is a category of courses and programs to provide competencies in English for access to post-secondary education, the labour market, and participation in English-speaking culture. These courses are provided for speakers of all different languages, and provide language training that may allow entry into a post-secondary program, but do not themselves contribute credits towards a post-secondary credential.

Full-time Equivalent (FTEs): Student FTEs represent all full-time and part-time enrollments, converted to represent the number of students carrying a full-time course load. One student whose course load is equal to the normal full-time number of credits or hours required in an academic year for normal progression in a recognized program would generate 1.0 Student FTE.