

International Education Code of Practice

Effective January 2025

Context

International education enhances British Columbia's education system, and contributes to the social, cultural, and economic development of the province. International engagement benefits student learning and growth, contributes to local access to education through expanded programming, and links institutions and communities across the province to the global knowledge economy.

The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (the Ministry) provides leadership and direction for post-secondary education and skills training systems in British Columbia. The Ministry expects all British Columbia Education Quality Assurance (EQA) designated post-secondary institutions that host international students to deliver the quality education experience and supports all students expect and deserve. International education programs are expected to provide positive education outcomes in a supportive environment for international students; social and cultural benefits to communities, schools, and institutions; and valuable intercultural learning for all students, with an overall commitment to quality education.

International education programming is expected to be delivered in a manner that supports the institution's work to respond to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

Purpose of Code

The Code of Practice (the Code) sets consistent standards for institutions:

- a. providing programs of education or training to international students;
- b. interacting with or engaging an education agent¹ who engages with prospective international students; and
- c. providing supports to international students so that certain conditions are in place to ensure a positive experience that furthers the students' education.

By applying for EQA designation, institutions agree to meet the Code's standards. The Ministry will require institutions to demonstrate how they meet any or all the standards at regular intervals and at any reviews for EQA eligibility, as per the EQA Policy and Procedures Manual (the Manual).

Standards of Conduct — Institution Requirements

Institutions wishing to host international students must demonstrate their ability to meet the unique needs of international students by adhering to the following requirements:

Marketing and promotion

- The institution must ensure that the marketing and promotion to prospective international students includes clear, sufficient, and accurate information regarding the institution, the student experience, and the student's career prospects after program completion. At a minimum, this should include factual information on living costs, housing costs, availability of suitable accommodation, tenancy rights in British Columbia, and whether or not the institution and the program(s) of interest are

¹ Education agents can be individuals or organizations located in Canada or abroad offering marketing, promotion, recruitment and other services in the education sector. Education agents are known by various titles such as student advisors, education consultants, counsellors or representatives, and include subcontracted agents.

eligible for the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program following graduation. This information is key to enabling students to make informed choices about the services provided and potential access to the British Columbia labour market in the future.

Education agents

- The institution is responsible for the education agents working on behalf of the institution including all representations made by the education agents to prospective and enrolled students.
- Institutions must have practices for effectively managing and monitoring the performance and conduct of education agents in relation to international students, including:
 - The institution must conduct and record reference checks on potential education agents and undertake other best efforts to determine the education agent is not involved in any conduct that is misleading, deceptive, or in breach of any Canadian or foreign laws prior to entering into a contract with the education agent.
 - The institution must enter into a written agreement with each education agent it engages to represent it. The written contract must outline the responsibilities of the institution and the education agent, the corrective action² that may be taken by the institution if the education agent does not comply with the obligations under the written contract, as well as the institution's grounds for terminating the contract with the agent.
 - The institution must ensure the education agent maintains transparent relationships with students through written contracts that govern the relationship between the student and agent.
 - The institution must ensure education agents have and communicate to prospective students current, complete, and accurate information about the institution's quality assurance requirements, admission policies, language proficiency requirements, credential assessment, programs, instruction and courses, services, tuition, refund policies, terms, grading and academic standing policies, operating policies, and whether graduates of the institution may be eligible for the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program.
- The institution must not accept students from an education agent if it knows or reasonably suspects the agent is:
 - providing immigration advice, unless that agent is authorized to do so as a licensee in good standing with the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants, or a member of a law society of a province or territory of Canada; or
 - engaging in, or has previously engaged in, dishonest recruitment practices such as falsifying study permit documents for applicants or students or facilitating the enrolment of international students while knowing that the international student does not intend to comply with the conditions of their study permit.
- The institution must provide upon request to the EQA Unit of the Ministry complete, accurate and timely information about their education agents and agency relationships, including but not limited to copies of advertising used by agents, agreements made between the institution and agents, agent quality assessment and assurance, and the institution's agent review processes.

² Corrective actions may include providing education agents with additional information, targeted training on expectations of the agent, up to and including termination of the contract.

Offer, enrolment, contracts, and tuition

- The institution must provide accurate information that is easily located and publicly accessible regarding tuition rates, other required or incidental fees, and refund policies affecting prospective and current students, including in print materials and on the institution's website.
- The institution must limit and manage its enrolment of international students within the institution's Provincial Attestation Letter cap allocation to ensure that it has sufficient facilities, services, and supports for all students. The institution must develop and maintain an enrolment management strategy to ensure the number of international students accepted to the institution does not impact the availability and quality of facilities, services and supports for existing students.
- The institution must not knowingly enrol an international student seeking to transfer from another institution prior to the international student completing at least one session (e.g., quarter/semester/term) of their initial academic program, or a minimum of 25% of a career college program unless one of the following apply:
 - the institution from which the student seeks to transfer (the "releasing institution") has ceased to maintain the EQA designation;
 - the institution to which the student seeks to transfer (the "accepting institution") verifies that the releasing institution is aware that the international student is seeking transfer and the releasing institution has directly confirmed that the international student is enrolled, attending, and is not on academic suspension at the releasing institution;
 - the accepting institution verifies that the transferring student has completed a Designated Learning Institution (DLI) Student Transfer online showing that the student is now enrolled at the accepting institution.

Student orientation and support

- The institution must offer an orientation program for international students at the outset of their educational program that provides the information and advice necessary for the student to successfully transition to their studies and life in Canada. The orientation can be offered either virtually or at the location the international student is enrolled.
- The institution must provide a written orientation package to international students at no additional cost to the student. The orientation package must include information about living costs, housing costs, availability of suitable accommodation, requirements for program attendance and progression, the institution's policies, including the policy for dispute resolution for academic and non-academic disputes, employment rights and conditions in British Columbia, and tenancy rights in British Columbia.
- The institution must have sufficient student support personnel available at its locations to provide support to international students regarding adjusting to life in Canada and studying at the institution. The institution must designate a staff member or members to be the official point of contact for international students.
- The institution must provide to international students written information about the facilities and resources available to international students, including support services available to assist international students regarding adjusting to life in Canada and studying at the institution. The information must also be made available on the institution's website.

Progression, attendance, and academic learning support

- The institution must clearly outline and inform international students of the requirements to achieve satisfactory program progress and attendance as well as the action that is taken by the institution if the student does not meet these requirements.
- The institution must document and monitor international students' program progress and attendance of classes.
- The institution must include on the institution's website information regarding education services and learning support staff that are available to international students.

Student safety, well-being, and health

- The institution must:
 - ensure suitable mental health supports are available and accessible for international students; ensure addiction and overdose supports are available and accessible for international students in adherence to provincial guidelines (e.g. access to free Naloxone and information on overdose prevention and response);
 - ensure all students and institution staff are provided with information that promotes an inclusive culture across the learning environment, and work with learners and staff to recognize and respond effectively to discrimination and racism; and
 - ensure international students registering for programs with a duration of 15-weeks or more provide evidence of sufficient health care insurance coverage for the duration of their stay.³
- The institution must ensure that information on available supports for student safety, health, well-being, mental health, and addictions is available on the institution's website.

Housing assistance

- The institution must include information on the institution's website regarding housing options available, either on campus or in the community, as well as information about housing costs, availability of suitable accommodation, and tenancy rights in British Columbia.

Post-graduation employment information

- For institutions with programs eligible for the federal Post-Graduation Work Permit or other federal work permits, the institution must:
 - offer employment services to graduating students;
 - provide graduating international students with information on immigration resources, including information related to the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program where applicable; and
 - link graduating students to programs and supports regarding employment available to them outside of the institution.
- Institutions must not provide any immigration advice to graduating international students, except advice that is provided by a licensee in good standing with the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants or a member of a law society of a province or territory of Canada.

Complaints, harassment, and dispute resolution

- The institution must establish a formal process for receiving and resolving complaints made by international students, including about academic and administrative matters, student support

³ Under the *Medicare Protection Act*, enrolment with MSP is mandatory for all eligible residents and their dependents. International students in British Columbia with a study permit valid for six months or more are deemed residents of British Columbia and required to register for MSP.

services, misleading information provided by the institution’s education agents, and harassment and discrimination based on the protected grounds outlined in the BC Human Rights Code⁴. Information about this process must be available on the institution’s website.

Critical incident and crisis management policy

- The institution must create and implement a policy and process for managing critical incidents and crisis situations, including designating specific staff members(s) responsible for the institution’s crisis and critical incident management. This policy must be available on the institution’s website.

Compliance with the Code

- If an institution that holds EQA designation does not comply with this Code, the Ministry may revoke the institution’s EQA designation, in accordance with the Manual.
- If an education agent working on behalf of the institution engages in the conduct prohibited under the “Education agents” section, the Ministry may revoke the institution’s EQA designation in accordance with the Manual.

Certification	
By signing and submitting this document the institution confirms that:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The institution currently meets and will continue to meet the standards of conduct of the Code of Practice.• The institution has and will maintain the staff and resources necessary to meet the standards of conduct of the Code of Practice.• The institution agrees to the review process and any reporting requirements outlined in the EQA Policy and Procedures Manual.• The institution understands that failure to maintain the standards of conduct in this Code of Practice, or other EQA requirements, may result in the loss of EQA designation and removal from the DLI list.	
Please provide the name, position and signature of the person employed in a leadership position within the institution who has the authority to agree to your institution’s accountability under the International Education Code of Practice (for private institutions, the president, CEO, or equivalent; and for public institutions, the vice-president responsible for international education).	
Name:	Position: Title
Signature:	Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

⁴ “Protected characteristics” or “grounds of discrimination” under the Human Rights Code include: Age; Family status; Marital status; Physical disability; Mental disability; Race, colour, place of origin, and ancestry; Indigenous identity; Sex; Gender identity or expression; Sexual orientation; Religion; Criminal conviction unrelated to the relevant issue; Political belief; Lawful source of income.