



# Implementation Guide for the B.C. EQA Code of Practice

*A resource guide to assist EQA Designated Institutions meet the Standards of Conduct of the EQA Code of Practice*

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# 1. Introduction and Overview

## 1.1 Understanding the Guide

### 1.1.1 Purpose of the Guide

Education Quality Assurance (EQA) is British Columbia's designation used to identify quality post-secondary education institutions that may enroll international students on study permits.

Eligible post-secondary institutions<sup>1</sup> in British Columbia may apply for EQA designation, and if designation is granted, an institution may use provincial certification trademarks associated with the EQA brand and the institution will be recommended to the federal Department of Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for inclusion on IRCC's Designated Learning Institution (DLI) list for British Columbia.

The [EQA Policy and Procedures Manual](#) (the Manual) outlines EQA Eligibility Requirements, Institutional Contact Requirements, Corporate and Educational Requirements, Suitability Considerations, DLI requirements, and a new International Education Code of Practice (the Code) that must be adhered to by EQA designated institutions. By applying for EQA designation, institutions agree to meet the Code's standards of conduct (standards). The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (the Ministry) will require institutions to demonstrate how they meet any or all of the standards at regular intervals and at any reviews for EQA eligibility, as per the Manual.

The purpose of this Guide is to help post-secondary institutions interpret, understand, and implement the standards outlined in the Code, and establish good practices that support quality education in British Columbia.

### 1.1.2 Target Audience

All British Columbia EQA designated post-secondary institutions that host international students, including those institutions wishing to apply for EQA designation to host international students.

## 1.2 About the Code

### 1.2.1 Purpose of the Code

The Ministry provides leadership and direction for post-secondary education and skills training systems in British Columbia. The Ministry expects all British Columbia 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*.

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<sup>1</sup> Institution is the legal entity advertising, offering, and providing post-secondary education to tuition paying students in British Columbia.

The Code sets consistent standards for institutions:

- providing programs of education or training to international students;
- interacting with or engaging an education agent<sup>2</sup> who engages with prospective international students; and
- providing supports to international students so that certain conditions are in place to ensure a positive experience that furthers the students' education.

The Ministry's focus is to support and facilitate capacity building and continuous improvement of all institutions through alignment with the standards. By applying for EQA designation, institutions agree to meet the standards outlined in the Code.

### **1.2.2 Administering the Code**

The Province of British Columbia, through the Ministry, is responsible for:

- Establishing EQA designation policy, including the Code.
- Setting and enforcing quality assurance standards.
- Granting permission for institutions to use the EQA designation mark.
- Granting or revoking EQA designation.

The Ministry may undertake reviews of an institution with EQA designation at any point during the designation year to ensure the institution is adhering to the Manual, including the Code. An institution's failure to meet the standards in the Code may result in ineligibility for EQA designation or revocation of the EQA designation.

Institutions are encouraged to conduct annual **Self-Study** to assess their own compliance with the Code before certifying their compliance to the Ministry as part of their annual EQA application. Self-Study is key to quality assurance and includes the ongoing processes an institution uses to demonstrate its own effectiveness in providing quality education and services for international students. Institutional Self Study assessments and other information may be requested and considered by the Ministry as part of suitability reviews and routine monitoring.

### **1.2.3 Implementing the Code: Key Considerations**

British Columbia's international education sector includes a variety of education providers with a variety of sizes of international education programs. Institutions are expected to work proactively with students and other partners to understand student needs that may be unique to their institution.

Institutions are expected to identify students at risk and have clear and appropriate pathways for assisting them to access services when needed. Institutions have a responsibility to protect students' privacy and a legal obligation to comply with the applicable privacy legislation.

### **1.2.4 Navigating the Guide**

The Guide should be read in conjunction with the Code. It is structured around each of the Code's standards.

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

## 2. Standards of Conduct

### 2.1. Marketing and promotion

#### **Institution Requirement:**

- 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 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.

#### **Objective:**

- Prospective international students are provided with clear, accurate and up-to-date information regarding an institution and what to expect from their education and community experience prior to accepting an offer. This approach will support a positive education experience in British Columbia and strengthen the overall transparency and integrity of the international education system, protecting the institution's reputation, as well as British Columbia and Canada's reputation as a leading destination for international students.

#### **Application:**

##### ***Each institution should:***

- Seek to understand the information needs of their prospective international students.
- Develop and provide accurate information to prospective students on the institution and programs offered, including CIP codes where appropriate to determine alignment with the Post-Graduation Work Permit program field of study requirement. This information should be reviewed regularly to ensure it is clear and current.
- Ensure students are provided with timely information about:
  - Admission requirements including clear language proficiency requirements and foreign credential assessment processes.
  - Services and supports available.
  - Study and living costs.
  - Accommodation and transportation.
  - Instruction, staffing, campus location(s), facilities, and equipment available.
  - Potential learning outcomes from the program of study, including pathways for further study, and employment opportunities, including field of study eligibility for the Post-Graduation Work Permit program.
- Be aware of eligibility requirements for study and work permits for international students and ensure clear and accurate information is communicated to international students by Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultants or Regulated International Student Immigration Advisors and/or by directing students to the appropriate sections on the IRCC website.

***Possible ways to provide information to international students:***

- Links to reliable and publicly available information (for example, the institution’s website provides links to the external content regarding study or work permits on federal or provincial government websites).
- Develop an electronic and/or an international student handbook of resources for new students.
- Review the institution’s website regularly to ensure the information provided is clear, current, and as comprehensive as possible and reflects any federal or provincial policy changes.
- Develop a dedicated international student webpage that hosts all the relevant information for international students.
- Make short video clips with relevant student support information.
- Ensure content is written in plain language and can be easily understood by non-native English speakers (work with English as a Second Language professionals and professional translators).
- Offer multi-lingual content in the languages understood by prospective international students.
- Provide testimonials from current international students or alumni.
- Work with current international students to develop and review content.
- Offer virtual reality simulations that address questions or situations an international student may encounter.

***Institutions should not:***

- Make unrealistic or inaccurate claims.
- Provide false or misleading information about the study experience, costs, or the student’s access and eligibility to work or immigration pathways.
- Provide outdated information.

**Resources:**

- [StudyinBC](#)
- [BC Council for International Education](#)
- [Global Affairs – International Education](#)
- [Study Permit](#)
- [Provincial Attestation Letters](#)
- [Working in Canada as an International Student](#)
- [Post-Graduation Work Permit](#)
- [BC Provincial Nominee Program](#)
- [Canadian Code of Advertising Standards](#)
- [High Opportunity Occupations](#)

**2.2. Education agents**

**Institution Requirement:**

- 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 action<sup>3</sup> 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.

**Objective:**

- Institutions ensure agents representing the institution to prospective students are well positioned to provide prospective students with current, accurate and up-to-date information regarding the institution, as well as other relevant information regarding studying in British Columbia, and the institution has a robust management and monitoring procedure that allows the institution to identify and address concerns with agents.
- Institutions recognize their accountability for the representations made by agents to students about the institution.

**Application:**

***Each institution should:***

- Conduct and record reference checks on education agents prior to entering a contract and only engage representatives that operate with integrity.
- Enter a written contract with each education agent it engages to formally represent it. In the case of agent aggregators, it is considered sufficient that the institution enters into a written contract with the agent aggregator it engages to formally represent it. The contract should be clear that sub-agents are being engaged by the agent aggregator.

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

- The written contract must outline:
  - The responsibilities of the institution, including that the institution is responsible for compliance with the Manual.
  - The responsibilities of the education agent, including the agent's responsibility for the conduct of the sub-agents, and statements made by sub-agents.
  - The institution's process for monitoring the activities of the education agent in representing the institution and ensuring the education agent is giving students accurate and up-to-date information on the institution.
  - The corrective action that may be taken by the institution if the education agent does not comply with its obligations under the written contract.
  - The institution's grounds for termination of the written contract with the education agent.
  - Notice that the institution will provide upon request to the provincial and/or federal government information about the education agent.
- Review all contracts on a regular basis to ensure the education agents continue to maintain high levels of integrity.
- Develop training materials and provide initial training to education agents it engages to formally represent it through a written contract, as well as on-going training for all agents. Training topics should include: 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.
- Provide agents with accurate and up-to-date information they need to understand and perform the role outlined in the contract, including 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 based on the institution and programs of study. Inform agents of any updates or changes in the information in a timely manner.
- Collect information on education agents under written contract to complete an annual review of the performance of the agent.
- Outline the institution's process for monitoring the activities of the education agent in the written contract. The monitoring process may include regular meetings with the agent, regular reports from the agent, surveys of students (and/or parents of the students) recruited by the agent, performance benchmarks included in the contract, etc.
- Where the institution becomes aware, or has reason to believe, the education agent has not complied with the education agent's responsibilities outlined in the written contract, the institution must take immediate corrective action. This may include investigating, issuing a formal warning letter outlining corrective measures, setting a probationary period, or terminating the contract.
- Where the institution becomes aware, or has reason to believe, that the education agent or sub-agent is engaging in false or misleading recruitment practices, the institution must immediately terminate its relationship with the education agent or require the education agent to terminate its relationship with the sub-agent who engaged in those practices.

***Institutions should not:***

- Engage with an education agent without having a signed contract in place.
- Enter into or maintain contracts with education agents who have engaged in actions such as producing materials with unsubstantiated claims or represented the education institution in a

misleading or dishonest manner that does not align with the international students' needs to the program and level of study.

- Work with an education agent that contracts out to sub-agents who are unknown to the institution.
- Maintain a relationship with an education agent when international students demonstrate a substantial mismatch between their actual study experience and the study experience that was outlined to them in their home country by the education agent.

**Resources:**

- [Statement of Principles for the Ethical Recruitment of International Students by Education Agents and Consultants \(London Statement\)](#)
- [ICEF Canada Course for Education Agents](#)

### **2.3. Offer, enrolment, contracts, and tuition**

**Institution Requirement:**

- 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 must ensure that the transferring student has applied and been approved for a new study permit that names the accepting institution before they change institutions, unless the student meets IRCC criteria to begin studying at the accepting institution while their new study permit application is still in progress.

**Objective:**

- International students are made aware of tuition rates and refund policies and sign a letter of understanding before they accept an institution's offer and pay a deposit to ensure they can make an informed decision.
- Institutions have adequate resources and capacities to support a positive education experience for all students.
- International students are protected from unethical 'poaching' recruitment practices and student transfers are properly monitored, reported and managed in a timely and transparent manner to ensure international students comply with their study permit conditions.



## **Application:**

### ***Each institution should:***

- Be transparent about tuition rates, other required or incidental fees, and refund policies by making them available on the institution's website and in print.
- Communicate international student tuition rates, other required or incidental fees, and refund policies to international students during the application process, and confirm international students are aware of the estimated full program costs and refund policies prior to accepting an offer.
- Sign a contract with international students prior to accepting a tuition deposit to confirm students' awareness of tuition rates, other required or incidental fees, and refund policies.
- Establish a plan to manage international enrolment within the institution's Provincial Attestation Letter cap allocation and ensure enrolment does not exceed the capacity of the institution to deliver quality education programs and student support services.
- Inform the transferring international student of the new IRCC process and requirements on changing post-secondary institutions and confirm the student has applied and been approved for a new study permit that names the accepting institution, unless the student meets IRCC criteria to begin studying at the accepting institution while their new study permit application is still in progress.
- Maintain a record of student transfer as part of the student's file.

### ***Institutions should not:***

- Provide inaccurate or outdated information.
- Understate the total cost of studies, omitting other mandatory fee information, or withholding information on planned tuition or fee increases.
- Sign a contract with an international student who is unclear on the tuition rates, fees, and refund policies.
- Recruit or enrol international students beyond the institution's capacity.

## **Resources:**

- [StudyinBC](#)
- [Global Affairs – International Education](#)
- [Private Career College Tuition Refund Claims](#)
- [Designated Learning Institution Student Transfer](#)

## **2.4. Student orientation and support**

### **Institution Requirement:**

- 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.

**Objective:**

- International students are well-oriented to their education and life in British Columbia and Canada, and are adequately supported to transition to their new institution and community.

**Application:**

***Each institution should:***

- Take steps to understand and accommodate the needs of their diverse student body.
- Develop and offer an orientation program that addresses the information needs of international students from pre-arrival to post-arrival as necessary and appropriate. Information provided must be made available and easily accessible on the institution's website and could include topics such as:
  - Navigating the airport and what to expect on the first day at the institution;
  - Student life in British Columbia including cost of living, housing costs, availability of suitable accommodation, transportation and health care;
  - Student support and services available;
  - Requirements for attendance and academic program progress;
  - Complaints and appeals processes;
  - Employment rights and conditions;
  - Tenancy rights;
  - Links to the campus and broader community to help with integration (e.g., student, religious, cultural, and sports groups);
  - The diverse Indigenous peoples of British Columbia and Canada including information about the Treaties and history of residential schools;
  - Contact information for designated staff member(s) supporting international students at the institution;
  - Emergency contact information such as campus security, 911, etc.
- Prepare students for cultural differences and norms in British Columbia including in classroom settings.
- Make information available through more than one platform (e.g., Web, handbook, meetings, social media, email).
- Develop a plan to ensure key information is communicated and repeated regularly to maximize students' understanding.
- Develop processes to obtain feedback from international students on the orientation materials and procedures to ensure they are effective.
- Review the orientation materials regularly to ensure information provided is accurate, relevant, and up to date.
- Ensure designated staff member(s) supporting international students have accurate and up-to-date information on student support services and how to access them.

***Institutions should not:***

- Offer all the important information to international students once and fail to follow up and reinforce that information.
- Provide outdated information.

**Resources:**

- [Adapting to Cultural Differences in Canada as an International Student](#)
- [Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre](#)
- [While You are Studying in British Columbia – Work while you study](#)
- [Employment Standards and Workplace Safety](#)
- [Daily Life in British Columbia](#)
- [Indigenous Peoples in B.C.](#)

**2.5. Progression, attendance and academic learning support**

**Institution Requirement:**

- 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.

**Objective:**

- International students are aware of the requirements for attendance, maintaining enrolment status, and program progress and are connected to information on academic and learning support services available to help them achieve their learning goals.

**Application:**

***Each institution should:***

- Complete IRCC compliance reporting regarding the enrolment status of their international students in a timely and accurate manner.
- Monitor students' attendance to accurately report on compliance status, respecting any existing collective agreements in place.
- Develop services that will support international students' learning experience, such as academic advising, writing and language support, and ensure the services are accessible to international students at the location they are enrolled.
- Make sure information on the requirements for attendance, program progress and available academic services are communicated to international students in a variety of ways such as orientation, email and social media and the information is available on the institution's website for students to access.
- Work to ensure information and services are culturally appropriate.
- Consider the profile of vulnerable students and determine pathways to address needs and issues (e.g., peer support, extra tutoring, change of program).

- Assess whether pathways and services are appropriate and sufficient by surveying international students who have used the services. Use findings to plan and make improvements.

***Institutions should not:***

- Provide unclear or cluttered web content.
- Fail to obtain feedback on the services to ensure they are meeting student needs.

**Resources:**

- [BCcampus](#)
- [Purdue University Online Writing Lab](#)
- [Designated Learning Institution Compliance Reporting](#)

## **2.6. Student safety, well-being, and health**

**Institution Requirement:**

- 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.<sup>4</sup>
- 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.

**Objective:**

- International students are aware of the support services available to them at the institution and within the broader community in areas such as mental health, student safety, community and social supports, health and well-being.
- This contributes to an environment of belonging for all on campus where students feel seen, connected, supported, and proud of the institution's values and purpose, as well as their study experience.
- International students' health is also protected by ensuring they are registered for the Medical Services Plan (MSP) when required and have appropriate insurance coverage while waiting for MSP coverage.

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<sup>4</sup> 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.

**Application:*****Each institution should:***

- Ensure student safety, well-being, and health supports and services are in place and that all students are well-informed about them.
- Ensure international students are supported, protected, and integrated within the institution and community.
- Provide information to international students on available mental health assistance, services, and supports, such as on-campus counselling services and Here2Talk.
- Provide information to international students on available healthcare services on and/or off campus, such as on-campus medical services, walk-in clinics in the community, 811, etc.
- Provide information to international students on how to enroll in the MSP and other basic medical insurance coverage options and maintain a record of international students' health insurance as part of student files.
- Provide information to international students on non-emergency and emergency contacts information (police, fire, ambulance).
- Promote a safe and inclusive learning environment and ensure staff and students are trained to respond to discrimination and racism.
- Distribute the institution's policy on bullying/harassment and discrimination and have a clear process to document and resolve any related complaints/incidents.
- Ensure information is easily accessible on the institution's website.
- Work with current international students to better understand and accommodate diverse needs.

***Institutions should not:***

- Assume international students will feel comfortable sharing concerns with the institution in-person.
- Fail to ensure information provided is culturally appropriate and is provided in a variety of manners that students can access to maximize reach.

**Resources:**

- [Here2Talk](#)
- [Anti-racism](#)
- [BC Campus](#)
- [Health Fee for International Students](#)
- [Active Bystander Intervention](#)
- [International Student Safety Guide](#)
- [HealthLink BC 8-1-1](#)

**2.7. Housing assistance****Institutional Requirement:**

- 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.

**Objective:**

- International students have access to current and accurate information on housing options that are available in the community in which they are studying and are aware of housing costs and tenancy rights and supports in British Columbia.

**Application:*****Each institution should:***

- Provide information about any on-campus student housing options that are available to international students through the institution.
- Provide information on housing costs and resources for accommodation options that are available in the community such as homestay and apartment rentals, as well as where to search including rental agencies and websites.
- Provide information on the rights and responsibilities international students have as tenants, supports available in situations of conflict between tenants and landlords, options for tenancy assistance and support, and tips to avoid housing scams.
- Provide information on the option of obtaining renters insurance.
- Ensure information is clearly communicated to international students and is easily accessible on the institution's website.

***Institutions should not:***

- Understate the cost of housing.
- Misrepresent the availability of housing.

**Resources:**

- [Housing and tenancy](#)
- [Residential tenancies](#)
- [Rental scams](#)

**2.8. Post-graduation employment information****Institutional Requirement:**

- 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;
  - include program CIP codes in the Letters of Completion and/or other relevant documents for international students to determine eligibility for the Post-Graduation Work Permit and to submit with their applications.
- 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.

**Objective:**

- International students graduating from a post-secondary institution in British Columbia are aware of the available post-graduation pathways and services and are supported to transition into the labour market in British Columbia.

**Application:*****Each institution should:***

- Ensure international students have the appropriate CIP codes for the program of study in the Letter of Completion and/or other relevant documents to determine eligibility for the Post-Graduation Work Permit and to submit with their applications.
- Develop appropriate employment services to meet the needs of graduating students, such as resume/cover letter writing, interview preparation, etc.
- Provide information to international students on employment services and resources available on campus and in the community.
- Provide information on employment standards and workplace rights in British Columbia.
- Provide information related to the Post-Graduation Work Permit to graduating international students by Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultants or Regulated International Student Immigration Advisors or by directing students to the appropriate sections on the IRCC website.
- Ensure information is easily accessible on the institution's website.

***Institutions should not:***

- Refer graduating international students to settlement services without providing any post-graduation employment support services by the institution.
- Provide misleading or outdated information.

**Resources:**

- [WorkBC Workplace Rights](#)
- [WorkBC Career Services for Post Secondary Students and Alumni](#)
- [Post-Graduation Work Permit](#)
- [Finding Work in BC](#)

**2.9. Complaints, harassment, and dispute resolution****Institutions Requirement:**

- The institution must establish a formal process for receiving and resolving complaints made by international students, including about academic and administrative matters, student support 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 Code<sup>5</sup>. Information about this process must be available on the institution's website.

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<sup>5</sup> "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.

**Objective:**

- International students are aware of the process they should follow to raise a concern or complaint within the institution, as well as with regulators and/or the BC Ombudsperson if appropriate. The institution must have a process to track issues and review complaints, including harassment, discrimination, and bullying, and develop ways to reduce these issues in future.

**Application:*****Each institution should:***

- Ensure international students are provided with a documented process to raise concerns and make a formal complaint, as well as where to find this information on the institution's website.
- Make sure the formal process is clear, easy to follow and confidential to protect the student's privacy (unless as required by law).
- Take measures to investigate and address complaints and disputes in a timely manner.
- Document and review complaints to gain an understanding of common issues that are occurring for international students and develop potential ways to mitigate these issues.
- Gather feedback on the complaint process and revise accordingly for continuous improvement.
- Ensure international students are aware of the role of the BC Ombudsperson in the complaint process if appropriate.
- Ensure international students are aware of any disability or accessibility services that are available at the institution and how to access these services.

***Institutions should not:***

- Fail to review complaints on a regular basis to identify areas for improvement within the institution's policies and procedures.
- Fail to provide proactive student support from the beginning of the student's experience, which may result in more significant complaints and issues in future.

**Resources:**

- [BCombudsperson](#)
- [EducationPlanner Disability or Accessibility Services](#)
- [BC Initiative for Inclusive Post-secondary Education](#)
- [Post-secondary disability services: WorkBC](#)
- [Inclusion BC](#)
- [Healthy Minds Healthy Campus \(BC\)](#)
- [Disability Alliance BC](#)
- [Assistive Technology British Columbia](#)

**2.10. Critical incident and crisis management policy****Institution Requirement:**

- 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.



**Objective:**

- International students, staff, faculty, and visitors are aware of how to report a critical incident and international students in crisis and urgent situations receive a timely and coordinated response and support.

**Application:*****Each institution should:***

- Have critical incident plans in place to respond to different types of emergencies, such as accidents or injuries, accidental death, violence, attempted violence, drug/alcohol abuse, missing students, or natural disaster.
- Have a Critical Incident Response Team with members from counselling services, medical staff, and campus security.
- Provide international students with the contact information they need to respond to the types of emergencies likely to occur on or off campus, which may include providing first language support where necessary. This information should be available in multiple locations and through multiple communication channels (e.g., orientation, social media, emails, etc.).
- Have a process identified around assessment of the incident, intervention and secondary response (Police/Emergency Mental Health Response), Case Management, follow-up reporting, and post-incident responsibilities.
- Develop an evaluation process for critical incident response and make changes to the response process as necessary.
- Ensure the approach is trauma-informed that understands and considers the pervasive nature of trauma and promotes environments of healing and recovery rather than practices and services that may inadvertently re-traumatize.
- Keep a record of the critical incident and any action taken.

***Institutions should not:***

- Fail to have critical incident plans in place that are appropriate for all students that is culturally appropriate for international students.
- Re-traumatize individuals at any stage of the response.
- Act in a negligent manner by refraining to take appropriate actions to support the international student.

**Resources:**

- [Trauma-informed Care](#)
- [Here2Talk](#)
- [Ecomm911](#)
- [Crisis Centre BC](#)

### **3. Compliance with the Code**

#### **3.1. Application and Review Process**

In order to receive and maintain EQA designation, an institution must meet or exceed quality assurance standards both on application and re-application while holding EQA designation. These standards are set out in the [Manual](#), which includes the Code.

Institutions should ensure that they meet all the EQA Eligibility Requirements, Institutional Contact Requirements, Corporate and Educational Requirements, Suitability Considerations and DLI requirements set out in the Manual prior to submitting an application for EQA designation.

Institutions described in section 3.1.1(c) of the Manual will also be required to provide to the Ministry an Institutional Self-Study and undergo a Ministry Review on application.

During the application or re-application process, the Ministry will ask the institution to demonstrate how it meets the standards in the Code.

If deficiencies are identified and the institution fails to meet the standards outlined in the Code, the Ministry will ask the institution to rectify the situation. Approval of EQA designation will not be granted until compliance with the Code is demonstrated.

If an institution that holds EQA designation does not comply with the Code, the Ministry may revoke the institution's EQA designation, in accordance with the Manual.

If an education agent working on behalf of an 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.

### **3.2. Certification**

The institution president or senior administrator must sign-off on the Code as part of the EQA designation application and annual re-application process.

By signing and submitting this document the institution confirms that:

- 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.