



Our Ref. 101711

March 3, 2016

To All Post-Secondary Institution Presidents

Dear Presidents:

I am writing to provide clarification on the application of the tuition limit policy as it relates to both new and existing programs, fees and services.

As you know, Government introduced the tuition limit policy in 2005. Since that time, tuition fee increases have been limited to two percent annually. In 2007, the policy was extended to include institutional and program mandatory fees. I have attached, for your reference, a copy of the policy (see Appendix A).

Public post-secondary institutions are expected to ensure programs and courses are affordable and accessible for students. In accordance with applicable legislation, post-secondary boards (Boards) are responsible for setting, determining and collecting tuition and mandatory fees within the tuition limit policy.

The policy applies to existing programs and services. Tuition and fees for existing programs and services must not increase more than two percent per year. For new programs, Boards establish the tuition amount for the first year, and the two percent limit applies thereafter.

Post-secondary institutions are expected to keep programs current. Updates to existing programs are considered part of this ongoing process and are expected to be achieved within the tuition limit policy, but it is recognized that, at times, substantial changes may be necessary.

An existing program that is substantially revised may be submitted to the Ministry for determination as to whether the program is new for the purposes of the tuition limit policy. Prior to introducing a new level of tuition, institutions must submit a written request to the Ministry for review, outlining the revisions that led to new or changed objectives, goals, learning competencies and outcomes for the program and students. Appendix B outlines the information the Ministry requires to support a timely review.

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New mandatory fees may be introduced for new services if there is a clear benefit to students. Proactive consultation and engagement with students should be undertaken prior to Board review and approval. Institutions should also consult with the Ministry early in the process when new fees are being considered. Additionally, institutions will need to track the benefits to students of the new fees, and the Ministry will collect this information as part of the annual tuition and fees reporting process.

Boards are responsible for ensuring that these requirements have been met before approving new tuition or mandatory fee amounts.

If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Ms. Claire Avison, Assistant Deputy Minister, Governance, Legislation and Strategic Policy Division at (250) 217-9059, or email: Claire.Avison@gov.bc.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandra Carroll', written in a cursive style.

Sandra Carroll
Deputy Minister

Attachment



Appendix A

Tuition Limit Policy¹

Government has taken action to limit tuition and mandatory fee increases to the rate of inflation.

Limit

For 2014/15 and 2015/16, the limit for tuition and mandatory fees is 2%.

Timing

The tuition limit policy took effect September 2005.

Scope

The tuition limit applies to:

- Professional programs.
- Cost recovery/continuing education credentialed programs.
- All other credentialed and open enrolment programs.
- Mandatory fees, including capital construction support (e.g., building fees), consumable fees (e.g., fees charged for field trips and consumable supplies) and other mandatory fees (e.g., application fees and technology fees).

The tuition limit does not apply to:

- International student tuition and mandatory fees.
- Third-party contracts.
- New programming (first year). Institutions may set the initial tuition and mandatory fee rate for new instructional programs (not amendments to existing programs). After the first year, tuition and mandatory fees will be subject to the tuition limit policy.
- Community/continuing education non-credentialed courses. Most of these are short-term courses offered in the evening or on the weekend (e.g., first aid, photography).
- Mandatory fees for student association or society fees (collected on behalf of student associations).

¹ Source: Ministry of Advanced Education <http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/tuition/welcome.htm>

Appendix B

Revised Program: Information Considered for Purposes of the Tuition Limit Policy

For purposes of the tuition limit policy, institutions are asked to provide the following information on the understanding that additional information may be required.²

1. Rationale for the program change (include any changes that result from new requirements of regulatory or licensing bodies).
2. Outline of the main program changes (e.g. new or changed objectives, goals and learning competencies for the program and students).
3. Outline the tuition and mandatory fees (please list mandatory fees individually) for the revised program and how they compare to the current program. Outline how the tuition and mandatory fees for the revised program compare to similar programs in British Columbia (or outside of British Columbia, if there are no similar programs in British Columbia).
4. Whether tuition and mandatory fees for courses that form part of other existing programs are being kept consistent to ensure students attending the same course in a different program are not paying a differential tuition and mandatory fee.
5. The number of credits, hours and program length of the revised program and how it compares to the current program.
6. Whether the revised program will be offered if it is not considered new under the tuition limit policy. Include the start date of the revised program.
7. Impact the revised program has on existing students (i.e. do the revisions cause any existing students to face a tuition fee increase part way through the program).
8. Comparison of current and revised program changes (e.g. admission requirements, delivery method and other program requirements).
9. If the revised program requires the hiring of new staff and faculty.
10. Whether the revised program has been approved by the Education Council and Board of Governors
11. Outline the labour market demands for graduates of the revised program, how the program aligns with industry and student demand. Are there new employment opportunities created from the revised program. Will graduates have knowledge / technical skills that employers require in order to hire.
12. When the former program was last revised.
13. Other applicable information.

² Institutions are to ensure that revised programs go through the PSIPS and Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB) process as appropriate.