



Adult Upgrading Grant

Policy and Procedures Manual

2019-2020

INTRODUCTION

The Adult Upgrading Grant (AUG) provides financial support to learners enrolled in Adult Education programs. This grant is intended to support learners most in need with financial assistance for fees, books, unsubsidized childcare, and transportation. Tuition fees for Adult Special Education may also be supported by the grant.

Each year, 18 public post-secondary institutions delivering Adult Education programs receive a funding allocation from the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training (The Ministry) to support the AUG. These institutions then allocate funding directly to learners in accordance with defined policies and procedures.

This manual has been revised to reflect some recent policy changes and most up-to-date information. The changes relate to income limits for AUG eligibility, the reinstatement of bulk-book purchase, and additional procedural updates related to: calculating applicant income, issuing transportation support, and repeat funding for courses.

The *Policy and Procedures Manual* may be updated or amended by the Province, in its sole discretion when necessary to provide the most up-to-date information.

Contact Information:

Louis Chen, Senior Policy Analyst

Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training

(p) 778-698-9798 (e) Louis.Chen@gov.bc.ca

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Overview of Roles:

The Ministry is responsible for the following:

- Allocate funding to institutions in a timely manner
- Ensure both Financial Aid Offices (FAO) and Adult Education program administrators are made aware of allocations
- Review reports submitted by institutions
- Engage in dialogue with institutions regarding program and course eligibility
- Maintain documentation related to the program (application form, policy manual, electronic reporting system) and ensure institutions are made aware of any changes to all AUG related documents
- Conduct AUG program reviews at institutions and application audits

Post-secondary institutions are responsible for the following:

- Provide students who are enrolled in, or planning to enrol in, Adult Education program information related to the AUG and the process required to submit an application
- Process AUG applications through the institution's Student Financial Aid Office
- Engage in a cross-institution decision-making process to ensure administration of the program and allocation of funding to students align with provincial policy and priorities
- Assess and verify student eligibility
- Meet the Ministry's reporting requirements and allocate funding in accordance with policies and procedures described in this manual
- A relevant progression policy for Adult Education programs that is actively monitored

Applicants are responsible for the following:

- Sign and submit an application for funding to their respective institution's Financial Aid Office
- Provide documentation and records requested by the AUG application form and / or Financial Aid Office (i.e. Proof of Immigration status, income)

SECTION 1 Immigration Status

POLICY

In alignment with the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act, to be eligible for funding, an applicant must be a Canadian citizen within the meaning of the Citizenship Act or a permanent resident, or a protected person within the meaning of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

PURPOSE

The AUG is a BC provincial grant, therefore, applicants must meet provincial requirements.

PROCEDURE

Classification of applicants who are eligible for the AUG:

- 1) Canadian citizens – these students will have a SIN starting with 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7.
- 2) Permanent residents – these students will also have a SIN starting with 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7, but are also required to provide their Permanent Resident Card or Record of Landing (IMM 1000), Confirmation of Permanent Residence (IMM 5292 or IMM 5509), or a Permanent Resident Visa.
- 3) Protected Person Status – applicants may receive funding while they have a SIN starting with a 9. They must provide a copy of their SIN card showing an expiry date after their study end date, as well as a “Protected Person Status Document” or a “Decision Letter” issued by the Immigration Refugee Board.

If an applicant is unable to provide documents indicated in #2 above, a government of Canada issued letter confirming permanent residence and protected person status may be accepted.

NOTE: Landed Immigrants who entered Canada under Investor and Entrepreneur programs are not eligible for the AUG, e.g., EN2-Federal, EN2- Québec, NV5-Federal, NV5- Québec. Where the FAO deems necessary, the FAO may request a Confirmation of Permanent Residence document to confirm immigration category.

The IMM 5521 is a Protected Person Status application, and must be specially requested from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. The following URL is the link to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada: <http://www.cic.gc.ca>. Successful applicants will be issued the “Protected Person Status Document”.

POLICY

Applicants applying for the AUG must be residents of British Columbia (B.C.).

PURPOSE

The AUG is only available to B.C. residents.

PROCEDURE

Applicants are considered residents of B.C. for the AUG if they fall into one of the three categories:

- a. have lived in B.C. since birth; or
- b. B.C. is the province where the student last lived for 12 continuous months, as of the study start date, not including months of full-time post-secondary study; or
- c. arrived in Canada as a permanent resident, landed immigrant, or protected person, and have not lived in any other province outside BC for 12 continuous months.

Note: A permanent resident, landed immigrant and protected person who plans to attend school in B.C., and has not lived in any other province for 12 continuous months is exempt from residency requirement regardless of the initial port of entry into Canada.

POLICY

Applicants must demonstrate financial need by providing proof of income or tax return. Spouse and parents must also provide proof of income, where applicable.

Any AUG contributions from the previous year that influenced an applicant's income (line 150) shall be deducted for the purposes of determining current year AUG eligibility.

FAOs' confirmation of previous year's AUG award is required to deduct the proper amount.

PURPOSE

This program was established to assist low income students enrolled in Adult Education programs (see section 9 for description of "Adult Education programs").

PROCEDURE

Applicants must demonstrate financial need by completing an AUG application form.

Applicants' financial statement / records must be assessed and verified by the Financial Aid Office when assessing eligibility.

The application form must be completed in full, signed and dated. Each section of the form must be completed in full or marked as "N/A" if not applicable. The application form will be assessed by the institution's Financial Aid Office to determine the amount of the AUG awarded or declined.

Proof of income may include, but is not limited to:

- A copy of Notice of Assessment from Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)
- Proof of income statement (option 'C' print) from CRA
- T4 Statement of Remuneration Paid
- T1 General (LINE 150)
- T5007 Statement of Benefits
- ROE Record of Employment
- PAY STUB
- T5 Statement of Investment Income
- Letter from employer(s) verifying income amount

Where extenuating circumstances or potential of physical / psychological harm exist that prevent the applicant from securing proof of income, a letter of support from the following individuals familiar with the applicant's employment or financial situation may be acceptable:

- Doctor
- Counsellor
- Community Elder
- Current or Former Employer
- Outreach Worker

A letter of support from other community leaders and professionals may also be acceptable. FAOs must exercise discretion when determining the validity of the source of support.

Use the following chart to determine whether an applicant is deemed a ‘dependent’ or ‘independent’ applicant.

CHART A:

Description	Independent vs. Dependent	Demonstration of financial need	Considerations
Applicant is 22 and over	Independent	An applicant’s income is based on line 150 of their tax return. Previous year’s AUG that contributed to the applicant’s income is to be deducted. If an applicant has not filed a tax return, financial need will be based on all sources of income from that previous year (apart from any AUG contributions).	Exceptions to chart B may be considered (at the discretion of the FAO) where the applicant and/or family income/assets were affected within the last 12 months by: 1. Layoff or loss of employment.
Applicant is (irrespective of age): 1. A single parent 2. Married or in a common-law relationship 3. A person with a PWD designation confirmed by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.	Independent	An applicant’s income is based on line 150 of their tax return. Previous year’s AUG that contributed to the applicant’s income is to be deducted. If an applicant has not filed a tax return, financial need will be based on all sources of income from that previous year (apart from any AUG contributions). If married or in a common-law relationship, the spousal income is considered.	2. Unexpected reduction in income in the last 12 months (retirement does not qualify as an unforeseen circumstance). 3. Strike or lockout. 4. Medical illness/injury impacting employment income. A detailed rationale from both the applicant and/or parents (where applicable) must be submitted, stating the reason(s) why the originally assessed income or other sources of income should be revised.
Applicant is under the age of 22 and does not reside with parent (s)	Independent	An applicant’s income is based on line 150 of their tax return. Previous year’s AUG that contributed to the applicant’s income is to be deducted. If an applicant has not filed a tax return, financial need will be based on all sources of income from that previous year (apart from any AUG contributions).	Documentation to support these claims must be presented for assessment; a copy must be kept on record.
Applicant is under the age of 22 and resides with parent (s)	Dependent	Eligibility is based on combined parental income on line 150 of the tax return or all parental income from the previous year. The applicant is also required to provide income information (apart from any AUG contributions). In the event that the applicant’s income is greater than the combined parental income, the applicant’s income is used and the applicant is considered a family of 1.	

“Family Size”: For **‘independent’** applicants, family size is defined as the number of persons (including the applicant, spouse and dependents under the age of 19, or dependents over the age of 19 with special needs) within the applicant’s immediate family but excluding parents, siblings, and other relatives. For applicants deemed **‘dependent’** where the combined parental income is higher than the applicant’s income, income assessment is based on the parental income and the family size is based on the applicant’s immediate family INCLUDING parents and all dependents of the parent (i.e. other children under age of 19).

For applicants deemed **‘dependent’**, whose income is higher than the combined parental income, the applicant’s income is used for assessment and s/he is considered a family of 1.

“Gross Family Income” is defined as the amount of yearly income (line 150 of income tax return or an applicant’s proof of income), plus income derived from assets including investments, businesses and property owned inside and outside of Canada, and monetary gifts.

Chart B below indicates the gross family income level applicants must be under to be eligible for the AUG. If the applicant’s gross family income exceeds the amount shown on Chart B, the applicant does not qualify for the AUG.

CHART B: Maximum Gross Family Income limits for AUG eligibility

Family Size	Income level
1	\$ 30,600
2	\$ 47,275
3	\$ 53,001
4	\$ 61,200
5	\$ 68,424
6	\$ 74,955
7 or more	\$ 80,960

SECTION 4 Income Assistance Recipients**POLICY**

It is the responsibility of applicants to declare their income assistance amount when providing financial information.

PURPOSE

Applicants must assume responsibility for ensuring that they adhere to policies established by agencies that are funding their living expenses.

PROCEDURE

Applicants are required to discuss this with their employment assistance worker as well as access the most up-to-date policies through the following URL:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/eligibility/education-and-training>

In the event that an income assistance recipient applies for the AUG, any income assistance received by the applicant is counted toward his / her 'gross income'.

SECTION 5 Students receiving full-time Canada - BC integrated student loans**POLICY**

Applicants who access a full-time Canada-BC Integrated student loan should access the AUG only if they exceed 100% course load.

PURPOSE

The Ministry avoids disproportionately supporting students enrolled in both Adult Education and post-secondary level programming.

PROCEDURE

Applicants approved for full-time Canada-BC integrated student loans who are taking a 100% course load and wish to take further developmental courses, are eligible for the AUG for additional developmental courses (provided they meet other criteria).

Applicants approved for full-time Canada-BC Integrated student loans who are enrolled in less than a 100% post-secondary course load and wish to enrol in Adult Education courses are not eligible for the AUG.

For example, an applicant receiving a full-time Canada-BC integrated student loan who is enrolled in an 80% course load (4 courses), would not be eligible for the AUG to support an additional Adult Education course. It is assumed that since the applicant is receiving a full-time student loan, that the difference between his / her actual tuition/books should be sufficient to cover the additional course. If this same applicant was to enrol in 2 additional Adult Education courses (in excess of the existing 4 post-secondary courses), he / she would be eligible for the AUG for 1 of these courses as he / she would now be enrolled in what is calculated to be in excess of a 100% course load.

POLICY

Students in Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are eligible to receive AUG funding to repeat a course once after failing or withdrawing from the course. Additional repeats with AUG funding are possible with the approval of the department Head or Dean.

This policy should be consistent with public post-secondary institutions' progression policies with respect to Adult Education courses.

PURPOSE

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.

PROCEDURE

ABE and ESL students may access additional periods of the AUG funding to re-enroll in a course for which they have received the AUG in the past, but withdrew or failed, the course.

Students cannot access the AUG to re-enroll in a course for which they have successfully completed, unless the re-enrollment is deemed necessary by the department Dean or Director for continued academic progression.

In cases where an Adult Special Education student obtained an unsuccessful grade or received an interim grade (i.e. student has not successfully mastered the course content but is making progress) and the instructor indicates that the student regularly attended classes, made progress on his/her previous attempt and requires more time to complete/pass the course, the student can be approved for further funding. Approval for further funding is at the discretion of the FAO. The FAO may request the student provide documentation from the instructor regarding attendance and progress.

Note: Effective April 1, 2018 – Corresponding to changes in Section 6, previous “Lifetime Maximum” policy is no longer in effect. Previous sections, 7 – Reinstatement, 8 - Lifetime Maximum, and 20 - Exceeding Lifetime Maximum Allocation, have been removed.

SECTION 7 Eligible Institutions

POLICY

The AUG is available to students attending BC public post-secondary institutions that have been approved to administer the AUG.

PURPOSE

Access to the AUG is limited to institutions that meet the requirements for administering the AUG.

PROCEDURE

The following institutions participate in the AUG:

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

POLICY

The AUG is available to students attending Adult Education programs delivered through partnership agreements.

PURPOSE

Provide financial support to eligible students attending community-based upgrading and Adult Education programs.

PROCEDURE

Students who attend an Adult Education course or program (see Section 9 for description of program/course eligibility), delivered through a partnership agreement between a public post-secondary institution outlined in Section 7 and an Indigenous post-secondary institution, community organization, or not-for-profit organization are eligible for the AUG if they meet the following criteria:

1. Are registered at the public post-secondary institution and issued a student ID number by that institution (see Section 7 for eligible institutions);
2. Receive Adult Education course/program credit at the public post-secondary institution for their participation in the course/program delivered through the affiliation agreement; and,
3. Meet all other eligibility criteria outlined in Sections 1-6 of this manual.

POLICY

Adult Education courses/programs are eligible. These include Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, and Adult Special Education.

PURPOSE

Funding for direct educational costs is available to successful applicants demonstrating financial need.

PROCEDURE

FAO must ensure that AUG eligible course(s)/program(s) are non-credit courses in one of the following course/program types (please note: these descriptions are for the purposes of the AUG policy and are not intended to serve as program definitions):

1. Adult Basic Education: courses that are subject to tuition-free policy and 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 credential¹; or
2. English as a Second Language: courses that are subject to tuition-free policy and 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.; or
3. Adult Special Education: courses at the adult basic education level that are designed for individuals with permanent disabilities or combinations of learning difficulties.

Federal Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs, continuing education, personal interest/hobby, or ‘discovery programs’ are not eligible for funding under the AUG.

Institutions are required to seek approval from the Ministry, prior to commencing funding, for the inclusion of any course or program as AUG eligible. To do this, institutions are required to contact the Ministry via email (see contact information in introduction) to:

- demonstrate the rationale for the inclusion of the course/program,
- provide evidence of support from the Dean or Director of Developmental Education (or similar program coordinator) or Registrar; and,
- recognize that additional funding will not be provided for inclusion of the course/program

¹ Post-secondary credential refers to an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma; a certificate at the postsecondary level (for example but not limited to Health Care Assistant; Early Childhood Education); a post-secondary diploma or degree.

SECTION 10 Allowable Costs for Students**POLICY**

Direct educational and targeted barrier-reducing costs may be considered for funding for students demonstrating financial need and enrolled in eligible AUG course(s).

PURPOSE

To provide financial assistance for direct educational and targeted barrier-reducing costs to eligible students enrolled in the AUG approved programs.

PROCEDURE

Allowable costs include:

- Tuition Fees for Adult Special Education
- Fees - including compulsory and other non-discretionary fees (including UPass)
- Books –textbooks and course packs
- Supplies – standard course supplies including special clothing (hard hat, steel-toed boots, lab coat), calculators, criminal record check for work placement, etc. at FAO discretion
- Transportation
 - Where a U-Pass or bus pass is available, no additional transportation support will be provided.
 - Where supporting the use of a personal vehicle is necessary, the AUG covers only the cost of travel to and from class during study periods.
- Unsubsidized childcare (the portion of licensed childcare cost not covered by a childcare subsidy from other agencies or governments)
 - Students must access BC's Affordable Child Care Benefit prior to requesting childcare support from the AUG.

Note:

- Institution's assessment and registration are not eligible expenses under the AUG.
- Park fee is not an eligible expense under the AUG.

SECTION 11 Allowable Costs for Institutions (administration fee)**POLICY**

An allowance of up to 8% of the allocated AUG funds may be used to cover administrative costs associated with the AUG.

PURPOSE

To provide funds to assist with the administrative costs of the AUG.

PROCEDURE

The institution is responsible for calculating the administrative allowance on the AUG funds allocated during the program year (up to 8% of funds allocated for the current year).

Institutions are required to report the exact administration fee expenditure at the end of each program year.

POLICY

Institutions may choose to reuse and bulk-purchase textbooks and course materials.

PURPOSE

To reduce the cost of textbooks purchased by the institution's AUG budget and to increase the availability of funds to eligible students enrolled in AUG approved programs.

PROCEDURE

The Ministry encourages institutions to reuse and bulk-purchase textbooks to reduce the cost of textbooks and to increase accessibility to eligible AUG students.

Textbook reuse:

Where applicable, students must return textbooks and other reusable resources purchased with AUG funds for reuse.

The FAO is responsible for developing a working system to facilitate this process.

The FAO choosing this option may apply a \$5.00 per transaction service charge/handling fee to manage this service. This fee applies only to reused textbooks.

Bulk Purchasing:

The FAO will determine the number of textbooks required in accordance with the number of students sponsored for AUG funding.

The FAO is responsible for developing a working system and seeking approval from the Ministry for all bulk book purchases. The process for seeking approval: Contact the Ministry via email (see contact information in introduction):

- Bulk book purchase intention: including ISBN
- Evidence of support from Dean or Director of Developmental Education and/or designate
- Total cost

Allow for 2-3 weeks for Ministry approval of a bulk book purchase.

SECTION 13 Funding Disbursements - Government to Institutions**POLICY**

Institutions will be contacted to provide budget forecasts at the start of each fiscal year. The allocated budget is intended to be fully expended in the fiscal year (April 1st – March 31st) it is received by the institution. The funding will be allocated across multiple payments.

PURPOSE

To allow institutions to adequately establish priorities for allocation of their AUG budget to students, and to provide opportunity for the Ministry to align funding with student demand.

PROCEDURE

The Ministry will contact institutions to request budget forecasts before the start of each fiscal year. The Ministry will collaborate with institutions to determine their funding level. A funding letter will be addressed to an executive member of the institution with a copy sent to the Financial Aid Office and the Dean or Director of Developmental / Adult Education.

Funding will be dispersed at intervals across the fiscal year and not in one lump sum payment. The Ministry may reallocate funding mid-year based on program demand. Prior to each funding allocation, institutions will be asked to provide a program demand/financial forecast that will influence reallocation of funding for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Unused funds may be required to be repaid to the Ministry.

The policy manual will be updated to reflect any revisions to funding levels and procedures.

SECTION 14 Program Year**POLICY**

The AUG program year runs from April 1 to March 31.

PURPOSE

To align with the government and the post-secondary system fiscal year cycle.

PROCEDURE

Funding will be allocated at intervals across the fiscal and it is intended to be fully expended by March 31st.

All reporting requirements for the program will follow the same fiscal cycle (see Section 15: Reporting)

SECTION 15 Reporting Requirements – Reporting Expenditures**POLICY**

Institutions are required to report AUG activity via the AUG Electronic Reporting System. This requirement is outlined in the Institutional Reporting Requirements list. Institutions are required to submit their report by the semi-annual dates outlined below. Failing to do so will result in delay of payment to the institution.

PURPOSE

Detailed information regarding institutional allocations and expenditures will assist government in demonstrating the impact of the program across participating institutions, as well as ensure that institutions are reporting consistently and allocating funding in accordance with the *Policy and Procedures Manual*.

PROCEDURE

The AUG reporting is on the list of Institutional Reporting Requirements. The Ministry requires the institution to indicate all AUG expenditures by learner, program type, and expenditure type on an ongoing basis using the AUG Electronic Database.

Access to the site will require a BCeID. The website link will be sent directly to the FAO and instructions for reporting can be found on the site.

The Ministry recognizes that a number of institutions have existing electronic record keeping practices. This electronic reporting system is not intended to ‘replace’ institutions’ existing system or result in dual data entry. The Ministry recognizes that there will be institutions that will engage in a continuous entry process and others that will engage in an upload process at set intervals. In either event, the process is standardized and reporting is reviewed semi-annually.

Reports must be submitted to the Ministry by the following dates:

October 15th and April 15th (including activity up to March 31st)

Institutions that use the system for direct entry of information will not be required to upload their data as it is inputted on an ongoing basis. They are required to ensure it is up-to-date by the dates listed above.

Please see Sections 16-18 for further reporting requirements (administration fee, courses and programs, and T4A).

The fields for reporting include:

1. Student ID number
2. Student PEN number
3. Immigration status
4. Indigenous status
5. Course Title
6. Course Type (ABE, ESL, ASE)
7. Course Code
8. Start Date
9. End Date
10. Tuition compensation for Adult Special Education
11. Fees compensation (including UPass)
12. Books compensation
13. Transportation compensation
14. Childcare compensation
15. Other compensation
16. Date of award

NOTE: The Ministry has the authority to perform random audits at any time.

SECTION 16 Reporting Requirements – Reporting Eligible Programs/Courses**POLICY**

Institutions will report all courses and programs that are deemed 'AUG eligible'.

PURPOSE

To ensure funding is being targeted to support students in 'Adult Education programs'.

PROCEDURE

The institution will be responsible for reviewing and updating their course/program list by October 15 of the program year.

This will be done via the electronic reporting system (see section 15).

Please see section 9 for eligible program/course types and the process for seeking approval of adding a course to the list of eligible courses/programs.

SECTION 17 Reporting Requirements – T4A**POLICY**

The institution is responsible for issuing T4As to students in receipt of the AUG for combined yearly award amounts totaling more than \$499 (calendar year).

PURPOSE

To ensure adherence to federal and provincial income tax regulations.

PROCEDURE

Institutions will provide written confirmation that they have issued T4As to students accordingly. Details of actual T4As should be omitted.

The letter confirming the issuance of T4As will be required by April 30th of each program year and must be uploaded to the electronic reporting system.

The letter should be addressed to the Ministry and signed by a spending authority at the institution.

SECTION 18 Reporting Requirements –Administration Fee**POLICY**

Institutions will report the total amount of administration fee at the end of each program year.

PURPOSE

To ensure institutions adhere to the administration fee policy.

PROCEDURE

Institutions are required to provide the exact administration fee expenditure at the end of each program year via the year-end expenditure report.