



Policy Manual

2023-2024

Student Information Management System Chapters 1-2 Excerpt

Ministry of Post-Secondary Education
and Future Skills

Key Updates for 2023-24 – Student Information Management System (SIMS)	1
Chapter 1: Institution Designation for Student Financial Assistance	2
1.1 Purpose	2
1.2 Background	2
1.3 How to Become a Designated Institution	2
1.4 Designation Eligibility Criteria	3
1.5 Policy: Designated Institution Responsibilities	6
1.6 Maintaining Designation	7
1.7 Termination of Designation	9
1.8 Institution Closure	9
Chapter 2: Program & Study Period Offering Eligibility for Student Financial Assistance	10
2.1 Purpose	10
2.2 Background	10
2.3 Program Eligibility	11
2.4 Study Period Offering Eligibility	17
Chapter 15: Definitions	23

Key Updates for 2023-24 – Student Information Management System (SIMS Chapters 1-2)

- The institution designation process will be administered through a Designation Request within the Student Information Management System (SIMS).
- The assignment of user roles in SIMS will also be administered within SIMS, and SIMS users will need to obtain a Business BCeID to be granted a user role in SIMS.
- Institution users, with the appropriate user role, will enter program information and associated study period offering information separately in SIMS.
- Programs and study period offerings are entered separately to accommodate the distinction in policy for each and to support the static state of program information versus the annual changes required to the study period offering.
- Study Breaks:
 - Study breaks may not exceed 10% of the total study period offering length. The portion of breaks in excess of this threshold will be deducted from overall funded weeks.
 - Of the eligible funded breaks, no single break can exceed the allowable maximum of three consecutive weeks or 21 days.
 - Study breaks of five days or less are not entered in SIMS and are part of the overall funded weeks total.

Chapter 1: Institution Designation for Student Financial Assistance

[1.1 Purpose](#)

[1.2 Background](#)

[1.3 How to Become a Designated Institution](#)

[1.4 Designation Eligibility Criteria](#)

[1.5 Policy: Designated Institution Responsibilities](#)

[1.6 Maintaining Designation](#)

[1.7 Termination of Designation](#)

[1.8 Institution Closure](#)

Institution designation is the formal process by which post-secondary institutions are deemed eligible to administer federal and provincial student financial assistance.

1.1 Purpose

To ensure that post-secondary institutions meet the requirements to effectively administer federal and provincial student financial assistance.

1.2 Background

On behalf of the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia, the B.C. Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (the Ministry) designates post-secondary institutions to be eligible to administer federal and provincial student financial assistance. The Ministry is guided by the [pan-Canadian Designation Policy Framework on Student Financial Assistance](#) (the Framework) in developing, implementing, and maintaining its institution designation policy. Under the Framework, designated institutions are expected to focus on the retention, success, and overall employability of students so they can repay their student loans.



1.3 How to Become a Designated Institution

To be eligible to administer student financial assistance, an institution must be designated. To be designated, institutions must meet the [designation eligibility criteria](#) set out by StudentAid BC.

Institutions must comply with StudentAid BC policy and administrative procedures to demonstrate they are capable of appropriate administration of student financial assistance, are accountable, and provide students with adequate consumer protection and information to make an informed choice.

Institutions become designated by submitting a Designation Request in the Student Information Management System (SIMS).

- **B.C. public post-secondary institutions** become designated through Memoranda of Understanding. The memorandum of understanding is completed external to SIMS.

Chapter 1: Institution Designation for Student Financial Assistance

- **B.C. private post-secondary institutions** become designated by submitting a Designation Request and entering into an annual Designation Agreement. Each campus must meet designation criteria assessed through a designation request. Designation requests are adjudicated by StudentAid BC, and decisions are communicated to institutions in writing. When granted, designation is for a single program year (August 1 to July 31).
- **All other post-secondary institutions** become designated by submitting a Designation Request. Designation requests are adjudicated by StudentAid BC, and decisions are communicated to institutions in writing. When granted, designation is for a single program year (August 1 to July 31).

If an Institution Designation Request is denied, the institution's legal signing authority may request a review of the decision. For further information on the review process, institutions may contact StudentAid BC at Designat@gov.bc.ca.

Business British Columbia Electronic Identification (BCeID) Requirement:

Institutions must have a Business BCeID account to access SIMS and to complete and submit a Designation Request.

To obtain a Business BCeID, visit www.bceid.ca.

Institutions that have applied and been denied a Business BCeID, may contact StudentAid BC by email at Designat@gov.bc.ca.



1.4 Designation Eligibility Criteria

Institutions are evaluated for designation based on the following eligibility criteria:

Note: For institutions with multiple locations, each location must meet StudentAid BC's designation criteria. The institution's legal signing authority is responsible for adhering to the terms and conditions of StudentAid BC designation for all of its locations.

All institutions must meet the following three criteria:

1. **For Program Year 2023/24** institutions regulated by a B.C. regulator must offer and deliver at least one program that fully meets the program eligibility requirements.
Institutions regulated outside of B.C. may be eligible if they offer and deliver on-site at least one program that fully meets the program eligibility requirements.
2. Grant a formal citation, certificate, diploma, or degree recognizing successful completion of a post-secondary program of study at the institution.

Chapter 1: Institution Designation for Student Financial Assistance

3. Be in continuous operation for a minimum of two years immediately prior to designation, or 10 years for a medical institution located outside of North America and be in good standing with the appropriate educational accrediting, regulatory, or government body in the jurisdiction where it is located.
 - Institutions operating in B.C. with ministerial consent under the *Degree Authorization Act*, or that have a valid Designation Certificate issued under the *Private Training Act*, are exempt from the two-year requirement.

Private, out-of-province and international institutions offering programs in B.C.:

- **Career training institutions** offering training at the certificate and diploma level must first provide proof of a Private Training Institutions Branch (PTIB) Designation Certification.
- **Institutions offering driver training** must be licensed and in compliance with the *Motor Vehicle Act* and ICBC regulations.
- **Degree-granting institutions** must be in compliance with the *Degree Authorization Act*, have their degree programs reviewed by the Degree Quality Assessment Board, and receive consent from the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills.
- **Theological institutions** must have a Private Act of the Legislature and be offering programs within their legislative authority. If the institution offers programs outside their legislative authority, they must meet the relevant eligibility criteria listed above.

Institutions located and offering programs outside of B.C.:

- **Canadian institutions that participate in the Canada Student Financial Assistance Program** must be designated by their home province.
- **Canadian institutions that do not participate in the Canada Student Financial Assistance Program** must be designated for student financial assistance by an appropriate body recognized by a government agency within its jurisdiction.
- **U.S. institutions** must be approved for Title IV funding by the U.S. Department of Education.
- **Other international institutions** must be designated by the home country's government for student financial assistance and must also meet one of the following criteria:
 - Be approved for Title IV funding by the U.S. Department of Education;
 - Be listed in the current Europa World of Learning: The International Guide to the Academic World;
 - Be listed on the Association of Commonwealth Universities website; or
 - Be listed on the International Association of Universities website.
- **Institutions located outside of North America delivering medical programs** must meet each of the following criteria in addition to the relevant criteria listed above:
 - Be listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools maintained by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) and the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER); and

Chapter 1: Institution Designation for Student Financial Assistance

- Be approved by a member of the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada.

Note: Administrative information pertaining to the designation process can be found in the [StudentAid BC Administration Manual](#).

Chapter 1: Institution Designation for Student Financial Assistance

StudentAid BC Institution Designation Criteria Summary

	B.C. public institutions	Private career training institutions offering programs in B.C.	Institutions offering driver training in B.C.	Private degree-granting institutions offering programs in B.C.	Theological institutions offering programs in B.C.	Out-of-province Canadian institutions that participates in the Canada Student Financial Assistance Program	Out-of-province Canadian institutions that does not participate in the Canada Student Financial Assistance Program	U.S. institutions	Other international institutions	International institutions outside of North America delivering medical programs
Offer and deliver on-site at least one program that fully meets the program eligibility requirements.		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Grant a formal citation, certificate, diploma, or degree recognizing successful completion of a post-secondary program of study at the institution.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Be in continuous operation for a minimum of two years immediately prior to designation. ¹			●			●	●	●	●	
Be in continuous operation for a minimum of 10 years immediately prior to designation.										●
Be in good standing with the appropriate accrediting body in the jurisdiction where it is located.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Have proof of PTIB Designation Certification.		●								
Be licensed and in compliance with the <i>Motor Vehicle Act</i> and ICBC regulations.			●							
Comply with the <i>Degree Authorization Act</i> , have their degree programs reviewed by the Degree Quality Assessment Board, and receive consent from the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills.	●			●	●					
Have a Private Act of the Legislature and be offering programs within their legislative authority.					●					
Be designated by the home province.						●				
Be designated for student financial assistance by an appropriate body recognized by a government agency within its jurisdiction.							●			
Be approved for Title IV funding by the U.S. Department of Education. ²								●		
Be recognized by the home country's government for student financial assistance.									●	●
Meet at least <u>one</u> of the following criteria: 1) be approved for Title IV funding by the U.S. Department of Education, 2) be listed in the current Europa World of Learning: The International Guide to the Academic World, 3) be listed on the Association of Commonwealth Universities website, or 4) be listed on the International Association of Universities website.									●	
Be listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools maintained by the World Federation for Medical Education and the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research.										●
Be approved by a member of the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada.										●

¹ Institutions operating in B.C. with ministerial consent under the Degree Authorization Act or that have a valid Designation Certificate issued under the Private Training Act are exempt from the two-year requirement.

² U.S. institutions operating in B.C. must meet B.C. legislative requirements.



1.5 Policy: Designated Institution Responsibilities

All designated institutions must adhere to the following responsibilities on an ongoing basis:

1.5.1 Organizational Responsibilities

1. Actively monitor all students receiving financial assistance. For each borrower, the institution must keep a file containing the required information as detailed in the [StudentAid BC Administration Manual](#). These records must be available for inspection upon request by the Ministry.
Note for B.C. Private Post-Secondary Institutions: while the Designation Agreement is in effect, and for a period of two years following its termination, the Ministry will have the right to inspect operations of the institution, including inspection of individual student borrowers' records.
2. Act at the earliest opportunity to prevent overawards and fraud. The institution must immediately report to the Ministry the withdrawal date for each student who ceases to meet student financial assistance eligibility criteria. See [Chapter 9](#).
3. Notify and provide the Ministry with documentation at least 14 days in advance of any proposed substantive changes (e.g., changes in institution name, legal identity, location, ownership, general education focus or other significant changes in operation or administration of the institution). Any such changes may impact continued institution designation.
4. Ensure that recruiting tools and advertising media do not make statements that could be interpreted to suggest that students are guaranteed to receive StudentAid BC funding or make statements that are otherwise untrue or misleading.
5. Establish and publish tuition and fee policies and refund policies. Institutions must ensure that the refund policies are fair and equitable to the student's date of withdrawal as it relates to their full course of study for which tuition and fees have been paid.
6. Continuously comply with the requirements of the institution's designation and [the StudentAid BC Administration Manual](#). The Ministry may request B.C. Private Post-Secondary Institutions provide information such as attendance records, withdrawals, and tuition deducted from student financial assistance (for more examples see [the StudentAid BC Administration Manual](#)).

1.5.2 Administrative Responsibilities

Institutions must access SIMS to fulfill the requirements for administering student financial assistance. A Business BCeID is required to access SIMS. See [1.3 How to Become a Designated Institution](#) for further information.

1. For B.C. private post-secondary institutions delivering StudentAid BC eligible programs at multiple locations, the institution's legal signing authority must renew the Designation Agreement annually.
2. Ensure that institution officials who are signing authorities are familiar with the information in the StudentAid BC Policy Manual and the [StudentAid BC Administrative Manual](#), and that

this information is used in providing financial assistance information and counselling to students, in supervising and administering the institution's role in student financial assistance, and in completing and signing all documents for student financial assistance.

3. Appropriately assign authority for administrative tasks to B.C. private post-secondary institution officials by:
 - Designating one or more institution official as Enrolment Officer(s) who will have responsibility for registering the student and completing Institution, Program, and Study Period Offering Information of the student financial assistance application; and
 - Designating one or more institution official as Eligibility Officer(s) who will have responsibility for confirming student enrolment and attendance; completing the Confirmation of Enrolment; and accepting and documenting tuition payments, reporting changes to a student's scholastic standing and reporting changes to course load.
 - Providing the Ministry with the names of all institution officials responsible for confirming enrolment/attendance or signing loan documents and ensure information is current in SIMS.

The functions described above (Enrolment Officer and Eligibility Officer) must be effectively segregated such that no employee is appointed to perform both duties. If a designated institution has fewer than 10 student borrowers who receive a combined total of under \$50,000 in student financial assistance in the previous program year, an exemption may be granted upon written request and subject to Ministry approval.



1.6 Maintaining Designation

To maintain designation, an institution must continue to meet the designation eligibility criteria and adhere to the institution responsibilities. To assess if an institution is meeting its responsibilities, StudentAid BC conducts:

- Performance monitoring
- Enforcement activities

Non-compliance with StudentAid BC policies and procedures may be addressed through measures at all or one of an institution's locations.

1.6.1 Performance monitoring

The Ministry monitors a number of performance measures to assess an institution's ability to effectively administer student financial assistance, and its level of financial risk. These measures include student loan portfolio performance, institution performance, and student performance.

- Student Loan Portfolio Performance factors include:
 - Student loan default/repayment rates
 - The amount of delinquent principal and/or defaulted loans

Institution risk is defined according to the following three risk zones:

Risk Zone	Repayment Rate
Green (good)	Above the national average
Yellow (average)	Within one standard deviation below the national average
Red (poor)	Below one standard deviation from the national average

- Institution Performance factors include:
 - Continued compliance with StudentAid BC policy and administrative procedures;
 - Ensuring student financial assistance information and counselling is provided;
 - Findings of on-site inspections;
 - Length of time an institution has been designated
 - Substantive changes that may impact institution risk (e.g., number of borrowers)
- Student Performance factors include:
 - Student withdrawal rates
 - Completion rates
 - Employment rates

1.6.2 Enforcement Activities

If an institution has been assessed and is determined to be non-compliant with StudentAid BC policy and administrative procedures and/or to be of high financial risk to the StudentAid BC program, the Ministry will:

- Send formal notification to the institution, including information on areas where its performance is not acceptable
- Request that the institution provide evidence of remediation of the compliance issue, or provide a plan outlining how the issue will be addressed within a specified period of time
- Outline the potential consequences of continued non-compliance
- Monitor the institution to ensure the implementation of corrective actions as directed by the Ministry
- Increase monitoring of the institution for compliance

In the event of an institution's failure to comply and/or improve, the Ministry may:

- Suspend the institution's StudentAid BC designation status pending a demonstration that the specific issues have been addressed. No applications for student financial assistance will

be accepted by StudentAid BC from students attending the institution while the suspension is in place

- Place an institution's designation status into a period of probation: an institution's designation may be placed into probation status for a specified period. Probation status may include conditions placed on the institution's participation in the StudentAid BC program as well as increased monitoring of institutional performance. The outcomes of a probation period may include:
 - A return to full designation with no conditions
 - A new probation period subject to similar or increased conditions
 - De-designation of the institution
- Terminate the institution's StudentAid BC designation status if the institution's legal signing authority loses regulatory approval from the body(ies) responsible for post-secondary education oversight in the jurisdiction where it operates.

Institutions that have their StudentAid BC designation terminated are not eligible to re-apply for designation for a period of 12 months.



1.7 Termination of Designation

The Ministry will terminate designation if:

- The institution does not meet StudentAid BC policy requirements
- The institution ceases operation
- The institution has no students receiving student financial assistance for two consecutive years for Canadian institutions, or five consecutive years for institutions outside of Canada

If an institution's designation is terminated as a result of not meeting StudentAid BC policy requirements, the institution may appeal the decision of the Executive Director responsible to the appropriate Assistant Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills by submitting any new information not previously provided. The Assistant Deputy Minister may also consider the evidence before the Ministry in making its original decision and the reasons for that decision. The Assistant Deputy Minister will advise the institution in writing of the appeal decision, along with the reasons for the decision.



1.8 Institution Closure

Institutions must notify StudentAid BC at the earliest opportunity of any impending disruption to the institution's operations. Enrolled students will have options regarding continuation of studies. See [Chapter 9](#).

Chapter 2: Program & Study Period Offering Eligibility for Student Financial Assistance

Program Eligibility

Study Period Offering Eligibility

[2.1 Purpose](#)

[2.2 Background](#)

[2.3 Program Eligibility](#)

[2.3.1 Basic Program Eligibility Criteria](#)

[2.3.2 Additional Program Eligibility Criteria](#)

[2.3.3 Ineligible Programs](#)

[2.4 Study Period Offering Eligibility](#)

[2.4.1 Basic Study Period Offering Eligibility Criteria](#)

[2.4.2 Additional Study Period Offering Eligibility Criteria](#)

[2.4.3 Study Period Offering Costs](#)

2.1 Purpose

To evaluate whether a program and its associated study periods are eligible for student financial assistance.



2.2 Background

StudentAid BC reviews programs to assess whether they meet eligibility requirements as guided by the pan-Canadian Designation Framework. A program is a course or series of courses leading to a credential.

For programs that are eligible, according to StudentAid BC program eligibility criteria, StudentAid BC reviews associated study periods to assess whether they meet study period eligibility requirements and are eligible for StudentAid BC funding. A study period is the time between the start and end date specified in the application for student financial assistance.

Institutions must ensure that changes made during the program year, to existing programs and/or study periods, are reflected in SIMS and continue to meet StudentAid BC eligibility criteria. This includes changes to tuition amounts, books and supplies costs, start and/or end dates, study break duration, etc.

2.3 Program Eligibility

2.3 Program Eligibility

There are basic program eligibility criteria that all programs must meet and additional program eligibility criteria that may apply dependent on program delivery, program features, and program-specific eligibility criteria, for programs to be eligible for student financial assistance.

Program eligibility is an essential requirement to administer federal and provincial student financial assistance.

[2.3.1 Basic Program Eligibility Criteria](#)

[2.3.2 Additional Program Eligibility Criteria](#)

[2.3.3 Ineligible Programs](#)



2.3.1 Basic Program Eligibility Criteria

The following basic program eligibility criteria must be met by all institutions.

1. The program must lead to a formal credential (degree, diploma, certificate, or citation) issued by the governing body of the institution and be recognized by the appropriate authority that designated the institution. Institutions must also comply with all requirements of their regulating body. Please see [Chapter 1, Section 1.4](#).
2. The institution must offer and deliver the program on a full-time basis at 100 percent of a full course load. The following criteria apply to the full-time course load policy:
 - a. For academic programs, the program must have sufficient required credits per quarter/semester/term/academic year to meet the definition of a full-time course load as defined by the institution. Note that not all institutions use the same credit system.
 - b. Full-time status for non-credit career training programs of study is determined by the number of instructional hours per week as established by the institution. The minimum number of hours of study for a full-time program in a post-secondary institution is 20 instructional hours per week and 15 instructional hours per week for aviation institutions.
 - c. Institutions offering either credit- or hours-based programs must determine the institution standard for full-time. This standard must be used when evaluating program eligibility for full-time status.
 - d. In accordance with federal student financial assistance criteria, course load averaging is not permitted over an academic year or term but is permitted over a four-month semester for academic programs.
3. The program must be at least 12 weeks in duration within a time frame of 15 weeks.

4. The institution must establish entrance requirements for the program. The institution must include the following entrance requirements:
 - a. For post-secondary level academic credit-based programs, the post-secondary institution must determine entrance requirements that enable the completion of the program of study.
 - b. For programs approved by SkilledTradesBC, students must meet the entrance requirements set by that organization.
 - c. All other hours-based, non-academic programs (e.g., career training, technical, vocational) must have published minimum entrance requirements that meet **one** of the following criteria:
 1. The student has graduated from grade 12 or equivalent (B.C. high school diploma, B.C. Adult Graduation Diploma, General Educational Development) or an equivalent secondary school completion from another jurisdiction; or
 2. The student is 19 years of age or older before the start of classes and has demonstrated evidence at the appropriate level of literacy, numeracy, comprehension and/or written skills to enable successful completion of the program.
 - d. Vocational/trade programs of study at a public institution with an approved entrance requirement of grade 10 or age 17 and which have been funded through StudentAid BC prior to August 1, 1998, will continue to be eligible for funding. However, all new programs must meet the above-noted criteria.

2.3.2 Additional Program Eligibility Criteria

The program eligibility criteria below are specific to the delivery, features, or type of program, and must be met in addition to the basic program eligibility criteria listed above.

1. [Program Delivery](#)
 - a. [Online or blended learning programs](#)
 - b. [Partnerships and contracting programs](#)
 - c. [Joint Programs \(B.C. Public Institutions only\)](#)
2. [Program Features](#)
 - a. [Work Integrated Learning \(WIL\)](#)
 - b. [Field trips, field placements and travel as part of a program](#)
 - c. [International exchange](#)
 - d. [Allowed Costs](#)
3. [Program Types with Specific Eligibility Criteria](#)
 - a. [Aviation programs](#)

1. Program Delivery

a. Online or blended learning programs

Online learning, blended learning, or other programs with a non-traditional form of delivery, or a combination of traditional and non-traditional delivery, may be eligible for student financial assistance.

For Program Year 2023/24, B.C. authorized and regulated online programs offered by B.C. public and private post-secondary institutions are eligible for StudentAid BC funding if they meet basic StudentAid BC program requirements.

Institutions located outside of B.C. delivering online, blended, or other programs must meet all basic StudentAid BC program requirements. In addition, a program meets StudentAid BC eligibility criteria if any of the following are true:

- The academic or career training program with the same study period length is offered and delivered at 100 per cent course load on site; or
- A similar program where a student will earn the same number of academic credits in the same time period as a student in other StudentAid BC-eligible programs is delivered on site at the same institution; or
- A student will earn academic credits for 100 per cent of the program at the undergraduate level for a program that is recognized as equivalent at another designated institution listed in the BC Transfer Guide, Alberta's transfer guide or other comparable articulation agreements from other jurisdictions.

Note: All programs must also meet all other required StudentAid BC program eligibility criteria.

These criteria are intended to enable the non-traditional program to be compared with the traditional form of delivery both in terms of content and length of study, thus ensuring the full-time requirement is met.

b. Partnerships and contracting programs

Programs of study delivered through an agreement are eligible for StudentAid BC funding if students are:

- Only registered with one of the institutions
- Paying all of the required fees to the institution
- Receive their formal credential from that same institution

All of the participating institutions must have an agreement and be StudentAid BC designated.

Programs of study that are brokered (the institution provides a formal credential while another agency or institution provides the actual program of study) are not eligible for StudentAid BC funding.

c. *Joint programs (B.C. Public institutions only)*

Joint programs refer to B.C. institution programs where a student is enrolled in one program that is delivered by two or more institutions, either concurrently or in sequence. In order to be considered a joint program, the participating institutions must have an agreement in place defining the academic and administrative details of the joint program, and students must receive a single credential with all of the participating institutions listed on that credential.

When B.C. institutions offer joint programs, they must meet the following criteria:

- All collaborating institutions will be listed on the awarded credential.
- One institution has agreed to assume responsibility for the following administrative processes for all students enrolled in the joint program:
 - Entering program and study period offering information in SIMS;
 - Confirming student enrolment;
 - Reporting scholastic standing; and
 - Reporting withdrawals.

2. Program Features

a. *Work-Integrated Learning [WIL]*

Work-integrated learning (WIL) is a model and process of curricular experiential education which formally and intentionally integrates a student's academic studies within a workplace or practice setting.

WIL includes practicums, clinical placements, preceptorships, co-operative education placements and work terms outside the co-operative education model. A WIL experience component is part of a program in which a student applies, and practices skills and knowledge learned in the program in a workplace or practice setting. It is provided by a host organization in a formal agreement with the institution. The work performed by the student must be relevant to the learning objectives of the program. The student must be supervised by a person who is employed or retained by the host organization and who is qualified in a career occupation relevant to the program the student is completing.

In order for the WIL experience to qualify for student financial assistance it must be:

1. Required for graduation (in the case of a co-op education placement it must either be required for graduation and/or result in a credential with a co-op designation); and
2. Linked to the curriculum; and

3. No more than 50% of the program (or no more than 20% for practicums and 10% for preceptorships) unless otherwise regulated.

If a pre-degree internship is required before a certificate, diploma or degree is issued, the period of internship is an eligible period for StudentAid BC funding. Recognition of the internship is conditional upon the institution recognizing students in this situation as their own full-time students.

Post-degree internships, practicums, or articling, as part of the licensing requirements to practice in British Columbia (e.g., law or medicine), are not eligible for StudentAid BC funding. Students engaging in post-degree internships are not considered to be enrolled in post-secondary studies.

b. Field trips, field placements, and travel as part of a program

In order for the field trip, field placement or travel as part of a program to qualify for student financial assistance it must:

1. Be an essential element of the program;
2. Be mandatory for all students; and
3. Count towards credit.

c. International exchange

To be eligible for StudentAid BC funding, the following criteria must be met:

- The international exchange course credit(s) must be a part of an eligible program at the home post-secondary institution.
- Students on an international exchange must maintain full-time status at the home post-secondary institution during the exchange study period.
- The student's home post-secondary institution must have a partnership agreement or international exchange policy with the international institution.
- The international institution must be accredited as verified by one of the five accrediting bodies approved by StudentAid BC (see [Chapter 1](#)) to be eligible for student financial assistance.
- Transferability of all course credit(s) from the international institution must be approved and confirmed by the home post-secondary institution in advance of StudentAid BC funding and must be transferable (at a full-time equivalent) to the home post-secondary institution.
- After the student completes the exchange, the home post-secondary institution must review the credits obtained, confirm transferability, and promptly report any withdrawal and/or unsuccessful term as per standard StudentAid BC policy.

Tuition fees for the exchange are paid to the home post-secondary institution. See [Chapter 2](#) for a definition of tuition fees.

Students in study abroad or other international programs where registration and fees are paid to the international institution must apply for student financial assistance through the international institution. If the international institution is not designated, the process for designation outlined in [Chapter 1](#) must be followed before consideration will be given to eligibility for student financial assistance.

Note: StudentAid BC recognizes that reporting of credit from the international post-secondary institution may take longer than the standard StudentAid BC policy that requires post-secondary institutions to report withdrawals and unsuccessful terms within six weeks.

d. Allowed costs

The Moderate Standard of Living will be used for all living-cost allowance calculations (as outlined in this Policy Manual) for all international exchange programs. Students on international exchange are eligible for return transportation allowances as outlined in [Chapter 14](#). Any additional costs are the responsibility of the student and cannot be claimed as exceptional costs.

3. Program Types with Specific Eligibility Criteria

a. Aviation programs

Students enrolled in and attending aviation programs, including those for commercial pilot, endorsements (multi-engine, instrument flight training and float) and instructors are eligible for a maximum of:

- 17 weeks of funding for a commercial pilot program
- 13 weeks of funding for the instructor's rating
- 13 weeks of funding for endorsements

Applications for a 13-week endorsement program must include the multi-engine and instrument flight rules as a minimum. Costs for other endorsements may also be included. No extension of the 13-week timeframe is permitted.

Repeat funding or extensions are not permitted for any of these programs. Students must apply for each program separately and may take breaks between programs.

2.3.3 Ineligible Programs

The following programs are not eligible for StudentAid BC funding:

- Programs of study such as executive programs that are designed specifically to meet the needs of full-time members of the labour force (under review)

- Adult Basic Education, and high school level programs (the Adult Upgrading Grant is available for eligible students in these programs, see [Chapter 3, 3.3 Section 7](#)).
- Brokered courses
- English as an additional language program, unless taken concurrently with post-secondary studies and representing no more than 20 percent of program
- Periods of training required for professional licensing or accreditation after the granting of a formal credential (internship, articling, etc.)
- Prior learning assessments
- Apprenticeship programs
- Dual credit programs with high schools. Under an agreement between the Ministry of Education and Child Care and the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, these programs are not eligible for StudentAid BC funding. These programs are funded by the Ministry of Education and Child Care and are part of the K-12 curriculum.

2.4 Study Period Offering Eligibility

2.4 Study Period Offering Eligibility

There are basic study period offering eligibility criteria that all study period offerings must meet and additional study period offering eligibility criteria that specific types of study period offerings must meet to be eligible for student financial assistance.

[2.4.1 Basic Study Period Offering Eligibility Criteria](#)

[2.4.2 Additional Study Period Offering Eligibility Criteria](#)

[2.4.3 Study Period Offering Costs](#)

A **study period offering** is the first day of classes, up to the last day of classes, or the date of the last exam, whichever is later.

2.4.1 Basic Study Period Offering Eligibility Criteria

The following basic study period offering eligibility criteria must be met by all institutions.

1. A study period offering must be associated with an approved program.
2. **For Program Year 2023/24** each study period offering must be a minimum of 12 consecutive weeks and no more than 52 consecutive weeks in length. Exam periods are included in the period of study for the purpose of assessment. The study period offering start date is the first day of classes, and the study period offering end date is the last day of classes, or the date of the last exam, whichever is later. Institutions with a formalized exam period may use the last day of the month of the exam period as the study period offering

end date. The total number of days in the study period offering are calculated and divided by seven. If there are one or more additional days after dividing by seven, the next whole week is included in the study period offering calculation.

- E.g., study period offering September 20 – April 12: From start date to end date, the study period offering is 206 days, or 29 weeks and 3 days. Weeks of study would be rounded up to 30 weeks.
3. The full-time study period offering may have study breaks, which are periods of time during the delivery of a study period offering when instruction is not offered, subject to the following thresholds:
 - a. Within a study period offering, study breaks of five or fewer consecutive calendar days that would normally be instructional days do not count towards study breaks and are considered in-study time (e.g., reading breaks of up to five consecutive calendar days). Study breaks which surpass this threshold are subject to the limits listed in b. and c.
 - b. Of the eligible funded study break weeks within a study period offering, no configuration of study break weeks can be longer than three consecutive weeks or 21 consecutive calendar days. The portion of the study breaks in excess of this threshold are unfunded and will be deducted from overall funded weeks for the study period offering.
 - c. The study period offering may have breaks in study that do not exceed 10% (individually or cumulatively) of the study period offering length. Study breaks within the 10% threshold are considered in-study time and are eligible funded weeks within the study period offering. The portion of the study break in excess of the 10% threshold is unfunded and will be deducted from overall funded weeks for the study period offering.
 - d. Study break thresholds do not apply to weeks spent in work-integrated learning (WIL). Eligible funded study break weeks can be applied to the period immediately before or after a period of WIL during academic credit-based study periods and study break thresholds as per a., b., and c. (see above).

2.4.2 Additional Study Period Offering Eligibility Criteria

The study period offering eligibility criteria below are specific to the delivery, features, or type of study period offering and must be met in addition to the relevant basic program eligibility criteria listed above.

1. [Study Period Offering Delivery](#)
 - a. [Online programs or blended learning](#)
 - b. [Continuous entry](#)
2. [Study Period Offering Features](#)

- a. [Work Integrated Learning \(WIL\)](#)
 - b. [Field trips, field placements and travel](#)
 - c. [International exchange](#)
3. [Study Period Offerings with Specific Eligibility Criteria](#)
 - a. [Aviation](#)

1. Study Period Offering Delivery

a. Online programs or blended learning

A study period offering that includes online or blended learning must be associated with a program that has been approved by StudentAid BC for online delivery. See 2.3.2 Program Delivery for more information.

Students in academic programs delivered through E-learning must complete a minimum of nine credits in four months (that is, 60 percent of a full course load) to qualify for StudentAid BC funding, as outlined in their current contract with the institution. Institutions may contact StudentAid BC for further clarification.

b. Continuous Entry

Continuous entry is a flexible option for students to commence a study period at multiple points during a program year. All continuous entry study periods must have a set duration of weeks in which they must be completed.

Some instances of continuous entry are cohort-based with study periods set by the institution, whereas others are self-paced and start dates are selected by the student.

2. Study Period Offering Features

a. Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

A study period offering that includes WIL must be associated with a program that has been approved by StudentAid BC to include WIL. See 2.3.2 Program Features for more information.

b. Field trips, field placements and travel

A study period offering that includes field trips, field placements or travel must be associated with a program that has been approved by StudentAid BC to include field trips, field placements and travel. See 2.3.2 Program Features for more information.

c. International exchange

A study period offering consisting of international exchange must be associated with a program that has been approved by StudentAid BC to include international exchange. See 2.3.2 Program Features for more information.

Mandatory orientation periods for international exchange study periods are included in the study period offering for the purpose of assessment. However, optional orientation periods are not included.

3. Study Period Offerings with Specific Eligibility Criteria

a. Aviation

Funded study period weeks for students enrolled in and attending aviation programs, including those for commercial pilot, endorsements (multi-engine, instrument flight training and float) and instructors are subject to program funding maximums - see 2.3.2 Programs with Specific Eligibility Criteria.

2.4.3 Study Period Offering Costs

Post-secondary institutions must enter their study period offering costs in SIMS and confirm that the study period offering is eligible in accordance with StudentAid BC policy. The study period offering costs entered by the institution are used to determine what the institution is charging the student.

Institutions determine costs for tuition, books and supplies, and fees. These include:

1. [Tuition](#)
2. [Mandatory fees](#)
3. [Books and Supplies](#)
4. [Exceptional costs](#)

1. Tuition

Tuition is the fee payable for the teaching and instruction that students receive from the post-secondary institution. Tuition fees may be based on the course weight (e.g., full, or half-credit), the number of courses in which a student is enrolled, or the length of the study period.

Students attending institutions outside of Canada will be allowed foreign exchange rates for tuition and these costs must be converted to Canadian currency.

Tuition refunds

If a student is eligible for a tuition refund and tuition was paid from StudentAid BC funding, the institution must direct the full tuition refund amount to the National Student Loans Service Centre so that the refund can be applied to the student's outstanding debt.

2. Mandatory Fees

Mandatory fees are costs associated with attending a post-secondary institution, or enrolment in certain programs (such as registration fees, student license, student association or Alma

Mater Society (AMS) fees, membership fees for overseeing bodies) and are required to be paid by all students in the institution/program.

License exam fees (whether included in tuition or not) can be included in tuition if the license exam is mandatory and it is completed within the study period.

Optional fees, fees that do not apply to all students, and fees already included in the moderate standard of living allowance are not to be included.

3. **Books and Supplies**

Books and supplies costs are costs that relate directly to the study period.

These costs may include:

- Books
- Computer costs
- Notebooks, binders, folders
- Paper
- Pens, pencils, erasers, and related items
- Fine art supplies such as paint, clay, and film

Books and supply costs, including computer costs, are subject to maximums (see [Table 2, Chapter 14](#)).

Students attending institutions outside Canada will be allowed foreign exchange rates for books and these costs must be converted to Canadian currency.

4. **Exceptional Costs**

Exceptional costs are those that are not normally associated with attending school but are required for certain programs.

Allowable costs related directly to the program include:

- Uniforms required for health care programs
- Medical bags for health care programs
- Rental equipment
- Tools required for trades programs
- Basic first aid kit for outdoor recreation programs
- Hard hat/steel-toed boots for trades programs

Items or equipment that would reasonably be expected to be in the student's possession prior to beginning post-secondary level studies and items that are of a self-interest or hobby nature are not eligible.

Parking costs are not considered an exceptional cost.

Costs related to work-integrated learning, field trips, field placements, and travel as part of a program

The actual cost of field trips, field placements, travel as part of a program, practicums and clinical placements is allowable, provided they are an essential element of the program associated with the study period.

For students who are required to travel as a mandatory part of the program, travel expenses are allowable. Airfare is only permitted if no other means of transportation is possible, and travel is a mandatory part of the program. See the Transportation Allowance and Travel Expense maximums in [Chapter 14](#). Students who select optional courses that involve travel are not eligible to claim travel expenses under StudentAid BC.

Student Transportation Costs

Students who require the use of a motor vehicle, and who are the principal operator of the motor vehicle, should request to be assessed for additional transportation costs as part of their application. This request should only be made if public transportation is not available, the student must commute more than one hour each way to and from school, additional transportation for a work-integrated learning placement is required, or if the student has special circumstances that require additional travel.

If the student must live away from home in a different city for a period of two months or less, a weekly allowance can be claimed in recognition of the necessity of maintaining two residences (see [Table 3, Chapter 14](#)).

For more information on study period costs, please see the [StudentAid BC Administration Manual](#).

Chapter 15: Definitions

The following definitions are new or amended for this StudentAid BC Policy Manual PY 2023-2024 SIMS Chapter 1-2 excerpt; please refer to the StudentAid BC Policy Manual 2023-2024 for all other definitions.

Academic Year

For the purpose of assessment of need, the academic year is defined by the post-secondary institution and is based on the study period offering for which student financial assistance is required that starts between August 1 of the current year and July 31 of the following year. The academic year is subject to a maximum length of 12 months (52 weeks) and may include multiple terms or semesters, including spring and/or summer sessions.

Blended Learning

Blended learning is when any part of a program is being delivered online in combination with onsite instruction (see online education/learning).

Clinical Placement

In a real-life setting (such as a hospital, clinic, or laboratory) where a student performs actual clinical procedures on real patients or clients (see work-integrated learning).

Co-operative Education

A work assignment that is related to the field of study where the student is paid a competitive rate. Must be considered an essential element of the program of study (see work-integrated learning).

Designated Institution

A post-secondary institution that has been authorized by British Columbia as eligible for the purposes of the Canada Student Financial Assistance Program with respect to some or all of the programs taught by the post-secondary institution. A post-secondary institution must be designated for a student to submit an application for student financial assistance.

Exceptional Costs

Costs that are not normally associated with attending school but are required for certain programs and are submitted by the institution within a study period offering.

Exceptional Expenses

Expenses outside of standard living costs that a student may submit (with supporting documentation) during the application process for consideration in their assessment. Exceptional expenses are considered on an individual basis.

Field Placement

A field placement provides students with an intensive part-time/short term hands-on practical experience in a setting relevant to their subject of study. Field placements may not require supervision of a registered or licensed professional and the completed work experience hours are

not required for professional certification. Field placements account for work-integrated educational experiences not encompassed by other forms, such as co-operative education, clinic, practicum, and internship (see work-integrated learning).

Independent Student

Students identified as independent are considered to be financially independent of their parents, step-parents, sponsor, or legal guardian if:

- There are no parent(s), step-parent(s), sponsor(s), or legal guardian(s) due to death or disappearance;
- The student is estranged from their parent(s), step-parent(s), sponsor(s), or legal guardian(s);
- The student has been out of high school for a minimum of 48 months;
- The student has been a member of the labour force for two periods of 12 consecutive months each; or
- The student is married, in a common-law relationship, separated/divorced/widowed or is a single parent.

Instructional Hours

The time spent in a classroom, online, or other learning environment where both student and instructor are present.

Legal Signing Authority (Institution Designation Agreement)

The individual or corporation responsible for adhering to the terms and conditions of StudentAid BC designation for itself and its institution locations.

Mandatory Fees

Mandatory fees include annual admission fees required when submitting applications, student council fees, student services fees (excluding transportation cost as outlined in [Chapter 2, Section 3](#)), examination fees, graduate thesis costs and other amounts payable by the student to the educational institution that are required in connection with their course of study. They may include fees payable for membership in professional or other societies where required.

Practicum

Practical application of previously learned theory that is part of the course of study (see work-integrated learning).

Preceptorship

Period of final work experience where a student performs actual clinical or other professional procedures in a real-life setting (see work-integrated learning).

Start Date/End Date

The start date of a study period is the first day of classes. The end date is the last day of classes or the date of the last exam, whichever is later (see study period offering).

Student Information Management System (SIMS)

The computer system used to assess student financial assistance applications.

Study Break

Period of time during the delivery of a study period offering when instruction is not offered.

Study Period Offering

The time between the start date and end date specified in the application for student financial assistance. A program of study longer than 52 weeks must be broken into multiple study period offerings, and students are required to submit separate applications for student financial assistance for each study period offering. The minimum length of the study period offering is 12 consecutive weeks, and the maximum length is 52 consecutive weeks. The start date is the first day of classes; the end date is the date of the final class or exam, whichever is later.