

Eligible Students may receive StudentAid BC assistance while attending a designated school, providing their program of study is also eligible.

Programs of study at BC public post-secondary institutions must be for numeric credit, or base budget funded (excluding Adult Basic Education), approved by the school's Senate/Education Council and the Degree Quality Assurance Board. Degree programs must be approved by the Degree Authorization Approval Board of the Ministry of Advanced Education.

StudentAid BC funding is limited to students enrolling in and attending recognized full-time post-secondary level programs leading to a formal credential (certificate, diploma or degree).

### **Credit Programs**

The program of studies must be offered on a full-time basis at 100 percent of a full course load. Programs that are **only** offered on a part-time basis (less than 100 percent of a full course load) do not qualify for StudentAid BC purposes. For academic programs, the program must have sufficient credits per quarter/semester/term/academic year to meet the full-time standard of the institution - **15 credits per semester are considered full-time, no course load averaging is permitted.**

### **Course load averaging**

In accordance with federal criteria, course load averaging is not permitted over an academic year/term, but is permitted over a four-month semester for academic programs.

### **Non-Credit Programs**

Full-time status for non-credit career training programs of study will be determined by the number of instructional hours per week as established by the school. The absolute minimum number of hours of study for a full-time program in a school is 20 instructional hours per week and 15 instructional hours for aviation schools... Institutions are cautioned against allowing students to drop below 100 percent of a fulltime course load without serious consideration of the consequences which include a longer period of study before completion and graduation with a higher debt load. For example:

100 percent course load = 20 instructional hours	40 percent course load = 8 instructional hours
80 percent course load = 16 instructional hours	20 percent course load = 4 instructional hours
60 percent course load = 12 instructional hours	

When determining eligibility of individual programs of study for StudentAid BC purposes, financial aid officers (FAOs) must compare the total instructional hours per week against the school standard to ensure consistency in determining which programs are full-time and which are not.

### **Minimum and maximum program length when applying for StudentAid BC funding**

The program of study must be at least 12 weeks in duration. All students must be enrolled in a study period which is at least 12 weeks and not greater than 52 weeks in length. A study period of 12 weeks duration must be taken within a period of 15 consecutive weeks.

### **Breaks in study**

Breaks in full-time study are permitted as long as the combined break time does not exceed 10 percent of the study period weeks. No break can be longer than two consecutive weeks, with the exception of the year end break, which can be up to three weeks in length. This is to ensure students maintain full-time studies throughout their period of studies.

# StudentAid BC Program Eligibility Overview

## Practice education (unpaid)

Practice Education includes practicums, clinical placements, preceptorships and externships.

A **practicum** is a period of supervised practical application of previously learned theory that is part of the course of study required for graduation from an educational program where:

- Students are not paid.
- Students are not merely observing.
- Students are supervised and evaluated by the employer.

Practicum-type program components may qualify as instructional hours if all of the following conditions apply:

- The practicum component is required to obtain the certificate, diploma, or degree offered by the school.
- The practicum would be defined as work performed by a student as part of their education where the practical experience is:
  - Part of the course of study at a public school or a school certified pursuant to the *Private Career Training Institution Act*.
  - For a limited period of time as set out in the curriculum.
  - Under the supervision and guidance of qualified practitioners.
  - Measured and graded as part of the course.
- the *Employment Standards Act* (or equivalent) would not apply and either:
  - The practicum is required for licensing and complies with the minimum requirements of the appropriate licensing agency established through legislation. or
  - The practicum component for a non-regulated or non-licensed program area is one of the following externship types: work experience included in an educational program that is situated in a business, clinic, hospital, etc., specifically clinical placements, co-operative education, practicum and preceptorship.
- The total practicum is not more than 20 percent of the total program.

Note: An exception to the 20 percent requirement can be requested of StudentAid BC. Educational institutions must submit their request for waiver to the ministry along with the rationale (special circumstances) and copies of the Learning Contract and Mid-term and Final Practicum Evaluation reports to be used in the program.

**Clinical placement** is placement as part of an educational program in a real-life setting (hospital, clinic, lab, etc.) where a student performs actual clinical procedures on real patients/clients under the direct supervision of an instructor, and the placement:

- Is a requirement for graduation from the educational program.
- Comprises no more than 50 percent of total program.
- Instructor/student ratio is 1:8 (Note: a ratio of up to 1:12 will be considered on an exception basis by submitting a formal request to StudentAid BC).
- Students are not paid.

StudentAid BC eligible programs of study being offered at public schools are identified through the Student Financial Assistance System (SFAS) Institutional Appendix. At the start of the program year, FAOs at each school must sign a **Program Certification Form** confirming that all programs meet StudentAid BC criteria.

In cases where it is unclear if the program of study meets StudentAid BC criteria, the FAO can submit program details to StudentAid BC for a decision.

NOTE: If you need further information please contact Lorraine Bingert @ local 4450