



# Starting a Private Training Institution in BC:

*What you need to know before  
applying for a certificate*

Private Training  
Institutions Branch





PRIVATE TRAINING  
INSTITUTIONS  
BRANCH (PTIB)



WHO REQUIRES A  
CERTIFICATE?



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OR DESIGNATION  
CERTIFICATE



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# PRIVATE TRAINING INSTITUTIONS BRANCH (PTIB)

PTIB is the branch of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training that administers the [Private Training Act and associated regulations](#).

PTIB **regulates** private training institutions in British Columbia by:

- requiring institutions offering career training to hold a **certificate**
- ensuring **compliance** through use of enforcement tools

PTIB provides **consumer protection** by:

- publishing information about institutions
- assisting students affected by institution closures
- handling student complaints
- enforcing standards to be met by institutions

For complete information about certification, see the [Private Training Act Policy Manual](#) and the [PTIB website](#).

# WHO REQUIRES A CERTIFICATE?

Institutions require a certificate if they provide, or offer to provide, at least one **career-related** program with:

- 40 hours or more of instructional time, and
- tuition of at least \$4,000.

This applies to all programs, whether delivered in class or by distance education.

These programs are called **Class A** programs.

Some exceptions apply and certain institutions, such as public institutions, are not required to hold a certificate. See Sections 1.1 and 2.2 of the [PTA Policy Manual](#) for information about excluded institutions and occupations, respectively.



# REGISTRATION OR DESIGNATION

Institutions can choose between two distinct pathways to certification:

**1. Registration certificate**

- minimum requirement for institutions offering Class A programs

**OR**

**2. Designation certificate**

- mandatory for institutions seeking:
  - StudentAidBC (SABC) designation or
  - BC Education Quality Assurance (EQA) designation





# EQA AND SABC

Only institutions that hold a **designation certificate** have access to **EQA** and **SABC**.

Institutions must apply for EQA and SABC (separate process from certificate application) and those applications are assessed by EQA and SABC program staff, not PTIB staff.

- First time applicants will not be issued a designation certificate. One of the requirements to be issued a designation certificate is holding a certificate for the past year.
- You must hold a designation certificate and have **EQA** to be included on the federal list of [Designated Learning Institutions](#) to host international students on study permits.
- International students who wish to enrol in a program 6 months or longer require study permits issued by the federal government.



## VOLUNTARY DESIGNATION

Institutions not offering Class A programs may apply for designation if they offer a Class B or Class C program.

They may not apply for registration.

**Class B programs:** career-related programs at designated/interim designated institutions, other than Class A programs, for which tuition is at least \$1,000

**Class C programs:** language programs at designated/interim designated institutions that are longer than six months, **or** for which tuition is at least \$4,000. A language program is defined as a program that has as its learning object that students gain or improve proficiency in a language.



## CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPLICANTS



It may take 12-18 months for a PTIB certificate application to be processed.



First time applicants will not be issued a designation certificate. One of the requirements to be issued a designation certificate is holding a certificate for the past year.



Sole proprietors or partnerships are not eligible for EQA, and therefore may not enrol international students. Consider incorporating if you plan to apply for EQA.



A certificate is not transferable, so it can't be sold as an asset.





## CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPLICANTS



Application fees are non-refundable.



There are a number of fees, in addition to the application fee, associated with certification. See Chapter 7 of the PTA Policy Manual.



Most first time applicants are required to provide financial security of at least \$25,000.



Estimated/projected tuition revenue from approved programs must be realistic and will be used to calculate fees and payments to the Fund.



## APPLYING FOR A CERTIFICATE

1. Attend an [orientation session](#)
2. Obtain a [BC Electronic Identification account](#) (BCeID)
3. Submit an [Institution Application Form](#) for certification that includes:
  - a) Business plan (industry analysis, marketing plan, financial plan, balance sheet)
  - b) Student enrolment contract
  - c) Student policies
  - d) Evidence of general liability insurance
  - e) Copy of business license
4. Submit program information for all programs
5. Pay Application Fees (\$2,450 for registration; \$2,600 for designation; \$500 for a Class A program)



## MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION

Once certified, institutions must:

- Re-apply annually
- Meet all deadlines (penalties are associated with late submissions)
- Provide student data annually
- Provide annual financial statements prepared by a Chartered Professional Accountant
- Pay annual fees and payments to the Student Tuition Protection Fund based on tuition revenue
- Continuously comply with compliance standards
- Offer at least one approved program



- PTIB can inspect institutions at any time. No notice is required.
- All or part of any inspection may be completed virtually.
- Inspections are conducted at all institutions applying for a new certificate.
- Inspections are conducted on a routine basis to assess compliance.
- Inspection authority includes but is not limited to:
  - Observing program delivery
  - Interviewing students and staff
  - Examining records
- Enforcement tools for non-compliance
  - Compliance orders
  - Administrative penalties
  - Certificate suspension
  - Certificate cancellation



# RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

PTIB's **website** provides resources for institutions and students: [www.privatetraininginstitutions.gov.bc.ca](http://www.privatetraininginstitutions.gov.bc.ca)

- [Private Training Act and Associated Regulations](#)
- [Private Training Act Policy Manual](#)
- [Private Training Institution Directory](#)
- [Forms, Templates and Resources Library](#)

Or, after reviewing these resources, contact us:

Toll-free: 1-800-661-7441

Email: [PTI@gov.bc.ca](mailto:PTI@gov.bc.ca)