



# Starting a Private Training Institution in BC:

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

Private Training  
Institutions Branch

June 2021





PRIVATE TRAINING  
INSTITUTIONS  
BRANCH (PTIB)



WHO REQUIRES A  
CERTIFICATE?



REGISTRATION  
OR DESIGNATION  
CERTIFICATE



CONSIDERATIONS  
FOR APPLICANTS



MAINTAINING  
CERTIFICATION



INSPECTIONS &  
ENFORCEMENT



RESOURCES AND  
CONTACTS

# TOPICS COVERED



# 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 up to one year for a PTIB certificate application to be processed.



Most first time applicants will not be issued a designation certificate.



A minimum of 1 year of certification is required and students enrolled in 50% of approved programs is necessary before an institution can be eligible for designation and to apply for access to international students or student loans.



Sole proprietors or partnerships are not eligible for EQA designation, and therefore may not enrol international students on study permits. Consider incorporating if you are applying for EQA designation.



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 a [New Certification Application Form](#) 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 (\$3,300 for registration; \$3,300 for designation; \$900 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)