



PRE-APPLICATION

Information and Guidelines for Licensing Programs
Delivered by Private Career Colleges in Alberta

**ALBERTA ADVANCED EDUCATION
PRIVATE CAREER COLLEGES BRANCH**

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INTRODUCTION

Vocational training programs offered by private institutions must be licensed by the Government of Alberta in accordance with the [Private Vocational Training Act](#) and the [Private Vocational Training Regulation](#). This legislation allows private institutions to participate in Alberta's post-secondary system and provides consumer protection to students enrolled in licensed programs.

The *Private Vocational Training Regulation* (PVT Reg) is established under the *Private Vocational Training Act* (PVT Act), which provides for the licensing of vocational programs for private post-secondary institutions by the Director of the Private Career Colleges Branch (PCC branch). The Regulation supports the Act and sets out criteria for obtaining and retaining licenses, posting security, requirements for contracts with students and student refunds.

Private vocational training (PVT) is post-secondary education delivered by private institutions that provides students with specialized skills and knowledge to prepare them for employment in a specific field. Students receive a certificate or diploma upon successful completion of the program. PVT programs are an important part of the array of post-secondary options available for Alberta students and meet a need for shorter-term, career-focused training. Examples of licensed programs offered by private institutions include: office administration, business management, computer technology, web design, massage therapy, hairstyling, esthetics, emergency medical services, health care aide, and early childhood education.

Private post-secondary institutions do not receive operational grant funding from the Government of Alberta; however, licensed programs 12 weeks and over are eligible for designation by Student Aid Alberta which may facilitate access to student loans for eligible students.

DEFINITIONS

PVT Act – refers to the *Private Vocational Training Act*, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter P-24, current as of November 1, 2010.

PVT Regulation – refers to the *Private Vocational Training Regulation*, Alberta Regulation 341/2003, with amendments up to and including Alberta Regulation 149/2016.

Director – means the Director of the Private Career Colleges branch. The Director is jointly appointed as the Director of Private Vocational Training in accordance with the *Public Service Act*.

Licensee – the legal entity (i.e Corporation, individual) that owns and operates the Institution and that has been issued a license by the Director.

Responsible Authority – an officer or member of the legal entity applying for a licence or of the Licensee who is responsible for operations of the legal entity/Licensee, and has the authority to bind the legal entity/Licensee.

Alberta Authority – is an individual who resides in Alberta and is appointed by the Responsible Authority to make decisions or provide information to the Director of PCC regarding the Institution and Licensee when the Responsible Authority does not reside in Alberta.

Institution – a private educational institution that proposes to offer or offers licensed vocational training programs.

Practicum – the practical skills or work experience component of a vocational training program that is delivered to student's off-campus by an employer.

Security – a letter of credit or surety bond posted by the legal entity/Licensee in the amount specified by the Director.

Terms and Conditions of Licensing – refers to the terms and conditions imposed on the licence by the Director in which the Licensee must comply and form part of the licence.

Fee Schedule – refers to the document that outlines the fees the Director can charge a Licensee as set by the Deputy Minister of Advanced Education pursuant to the *Government Organization Act*.

OVERVIEW OF THE LICENSING PROCESS

The licensing process has been designed to help private training institutions understand and comply with the PVT Act and Regulation. This is to ensure that rigorous program development and planning has taken place.

This process requires that applicants provide evidence of labour market information supporting the demand for graduates, evidence of curriculum relevance, program information, appropriateness of admission requirements for students, and suitability of instructor qualifications.

In addition, applicants must demonstrate the ownership structure of the legal entity and that the premises where training will be delivered complies with all applicable municipal zoning, fire, health, safety and building requirements. If there is a professional body that regulates the field, its requirements need to be met prior to applying for licensing.

Applicants will also be required to post security in the form of a letter of credit or a surety bond and sign a Terms and Conditions of Licensing Agreement prior to a licence being issued.

OVERVIEW OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

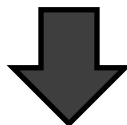
Pre-Application (Information Gathering)

- Applicants are encouraged to **contact a licensing team member** to discuss the application process, the proposed program detail, the curriculum relevance and labour market.
- Determination if licensing is required will be decided at this time as not all programming offered by private providers requires licensing under the PVT Act. Please refer to the Exemptions from Licensing Guideline.



Stage 1 - will not be initiated until the Pre-Application is reviewed

- Applicants are required to complete the forms included in this Application and Guidelines document.
- An application fee of \$300 for one program and \$100 for each additional program is payable at this stage of the process.



Stage 2 – will not be initiated until after Stage 1 has been completed.

- Applicants are required to complete a Projected Annual Tuition Revenue Statutory Declaration and post corresponding security in the form of a letter of credit or surety bond.
- Applicants are provided with security information, as well an electronic copy of the Alberta Student Enrolment Contract which must be used for all students.



Stage 3 – will not be initiated until after Stage 2 has been completed.

- Prior to licensing, the applicant must attend an information session to ensure understanding of the Terms and Conditions of Licensing.
- An annual licensing fee of \$800 for one program and \$50 for each additional program (prorated for April 1) is required prior to licensing.
- The Director (or delegate) issues the licence.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Apply well in advance of planned commencement date.
- A significant amount of time and resources are required to establish a training program. Before making financial commitments to offer a program ensure all program material is fully completed, accurate and in good order. Incomplete or insufficient applications will be returned.
- The PCC branch must be notified of any information changes that occur during the review process.
- Failure to provide sufficient evidence, program information or other documentation will delay the licensing process.
- Use of the word university or any derivation/abbreviation of the word is not permissible. This is prohibited under Section 36(3) of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*.
- If your institution offers a program solely by distance education and students will not be physically attending, the administrative functions of your institution must be based in Alberta.
- Do not advertise for your program until you receive approval from the PCC branch.
- PCC is not responsible for any costs you may incur during the licensing review process (e.g. building rental).
- A start date should be identified to alert the PCC branch as to when the institution would like to begin offering the program. It will be discussed if that can be attainable.

EXEMPTIONS FROM LICENSING

Some training is exempt under the regulations from the operation of the *Private Vocational Training Act*. Licensing is not required if:

- The training is intended to provide personal interest of enjoyment, or to update existing skills rather than to provide a livelihood;
- The vocational training tuition fee is less than \$1000;
- The program leads to the granting of a degree under the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*;
- The vocational training is provided by or on behalf of:
 - A public post-secondary institution under the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*,
 - A private institution incorporated under a private Act of the Legislature, unless a licence is required for the provision of student financial assistance,
 - An institution authorized to conduct vocational training under a licence issued under an Act of Canada or Alberta other than the *Private Vocational Training Act*, unless a licence is required for the provision of student financial assistance,
 - An employer, an association of employers or a labour union for the in-service training of its employees or members, or
 - A professional association for members of that profession.
- All the operating funds for the vocational training are provided by grants from the Government of Alberta or Canada, or agency, board, council or foundation of the Government of Alberta or Canada, or
- All the students registered in the vocational training have had their tuition paid by the Government of Alberta or Canada.

INFORMATION GATHERING

In accordance with the PVT Act, a person who wishes to provide vocational training to students shall apply, in the form prescribed, for a licence. The Director may issue or refuse to issue a licence in respect to the program that the applicant wishes to provide.

In accordance with the PVT Regulation, the Director may also request any additional information necessary to review an application and the applicant must provide the information requested.

The information gathered must include evidence of labour market demand, relevance of curriculum and provide a description of the vocational training to be provided. To assist with your information gathering, please refer to the Evidence of Labour Market Demand – General Information, the Evidence of Curriculum Relevance – General Information reference sheets and the Program Information Form. Evidence of labour market demand and curriculum relevance must be kept current to ensure it remains relevant.

The pre-application information will be reviewed to determine if licensing is required as not all programming offered by private providers requires licensing under the PVT Act. The circumstances for exemptions are listed on the Exemptions from Licensing reference sheet.

EVIDENCE OF LABOUR MARKET DEMAND- GENERAL INFORMATION

Institutions must have satisfactory evidence of the labour market demand for persons qualified in this vocation (in accordance with section 5(a) of the Private Vocational Training Regulation). This documentation is to be retained on file at the institution for the duration of the licensed program.

If there is a professional or regulatory body that sets standards for this occupation, institutions must determine whether the body collects labour market demand information to inform their approval decisions. If not, the institution must provide evidence of labour market demand to the Private Career Colleges branch as prescribed.

Evidence collected must be for the labour market in Alberta and students must be made aware of the labour market demand information for this program. Provide an indication of whether employment prospects are generally the same across the province or are they regionalized. Considering the specific job(s) for graduates of the program as listed on the Program Information sheet, answer the questions below in detail and attach relevant data from the following sites (recommended) or other sources of labour market information:

- Working in Canada <http://www.workingincanada.gc.ca/home-eng.do>
- ALIS - Alberta Occupation Profiles
<http://alis.alberta.ca/OCCInfo/Content/RequestAction.asp?format=html&aspAction=GetHomePage&Page=Home>
- NOC and Canadian Occupational Projection System
<http://www23.hrsdc.gc.ca/w.2lc.4m.2@-eng.jsp>
- Alberta Short Term Economic Forecast <http://work.alberta.ca/documents/short-term-employment-forecast.pdf>
- Alberta Regional Occupational Demand Outlook <http://work.alberta.ca/labour/alberta-regional-occupational-demand-outlook-2013-2017.html>
- Alberta's Occupational Demand and Supply Outlook 2013-2023
<http://work.alberta.ca/labour/occupational-demand-and-supply-forecast.html>

How many job openings are currently posted in Alberta for these positions? In your region? Are the majority of the programs full-time or part-time? Attach at least 5 examples of detailed job postings and descriptions that students will be qualified for immediately upon graduation.

What is the employment forecast for occupations in the field of training in Alberta? Is demand predicted to increase, decrease, or stay the same?

Are there problems or barriers that a graduate of this program may encounter in securing employment? Provide an estimation of the time that it would take for graduates to find suitable work in the field. We are looking for comprehensive responses based on current labour market data.

Failure to provide sufficient evidence will delay the licensing process

EVIDENCE OF CURRICULUM RELEVANCE- GENERAL INFORMATION

Institutions must have satisfactory written evidence from industry that demonstrates the relevance of the program curriculum (in accordance with section 5(b) of the Private Vocational Training Regulation). This documentation is to be retained on file at the institution for the duration of the licensed program. If there is a professional or regulatory body that sets curriculum standards for this occupation, a copy of that body's approval of the curriculum must be submitted with this application.

The industry sources must have a program related educational background and be in a position to hire graduates of the program. The curriculum relevance feedback submitted will be verified by the PCC branch. Information from industry should include, but not be limited to, feedback from 3 or more sources and answers to the following questions:

(Please note that the institution's responses to the evaluator's comments must be included).

Name:

Organization:

Address of Organization:

Position:

Telephone # and/or Email Address:

Website:

Name of Program Reviewed:

1. To what extent does the curriculum cover all subjects and test competence in areas necessary for job preparation? (Note, if curriculum does not cover all subjects, please list specific components that should be included)
2. Do any areas of the curriculum require strengthening? Is there a proper balance between theory and practical work?
3. What type(s) of positions would be available and how long would it take for a graduate of this program to find employment? (Please list job titles, whether positions would be entry level or above, and indicate the type of establishment that would hire them)
4. Would your organization consider hiring a graduate of this program?
5. What equipment must the institution have to successfully deliver this training?
6. *Student Admission Requirements*
 - a) What level of formal education or training does a student need prior to acceptance into the program to ensure successful completion?
 - b) What experience, aptitude or expertise would a student need? How much?
7. *Instructor Qualifications*
 - a) What minimum level of formal education or training does an instructor need? (e.g. degree, diploma, certificate) How much industry experience does an instructor need?
8. Additional comments about the curriculum (optional):

Failure to provide sufficient evidence will delay the licensing process

EVIDENCE OF PRACTICUM AVAILABILITY- GENERAL INFORMATION

A practicum is the opportunity for students to apply their skills/knowledge in a real-life environment. The practicum is delivered off-site and is designed to give students supervised practical application of previously studied theory.

Where there is a compulsory practicum component to your program, please ensure that there is on-going evidence that practicum placement opportunities exist for students who enroll in this program. Practicum Agreements may be formal or informal between the institution, the student and the practicum provider. **The Private Career Colleges branch does not approve practicum agreements, however, an agreement must be available to be submitted to the PCC branch upon request.**

If there is a professional or regulatory body that monitors practicum availability, please attach a copy of that body's approval letter.

Things to consider when arranging a practicum:

- 1.) How many students will a practicum provider be able to accept at one time?
- 2.) Ensure that the practicum provider is aware of the time constraints of the program.
They must be able to deliver all practicum hours before the end date of the contract.
- 3.) Ensure that the practicum provider has the resources, equipment, space and qualified staff available to deliver supervised practical training to students.
- 4.) Ensure that students are able to gain experience in all components covered in the program

It is your responsibility to ensure high quality practicum experiences for your students

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

It is the responsibility of the institution to set appropriate requirements (in accordance with section 5(c) of the Private Vocational Training Regulation) for each licensed program to:

- ensure that prospective students have the necessary prerequisite education and skills needed to benefit from the training, and
- reflect industry expectations for prospective graduates (E.g. formal education, work experience, criminal record check, driver's licence, immunizations etc.)

A description of the admission requirements for each program must be submitted with this application. Please refer to the admission guidelines below:

- All applicants should be interviewed with respect to suitability to the program (include any aptitude testing). **Please note that this is strongly recommended.**
- Canadian Language Benchmark level must be specified for students whose first language is not English.

Standard Admission

Students must meet ONE of the following criteria:

1. Alberta high school diploma, verified by transcript, or non-Alberta equivalent,
OR
2. Successful completion of the General Equivalency Diploma (G.E.D.)
3. Specific high school courses required for program entry must be identified.

Mature Admission

Students must meet the following criteria:

1. Must be 18 years or older.
2. Must complete an academic achievement test to demonstrate required competency. It is required that it be a standard test such as CAAT (Canadian Adult Achievement Test), TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education), CAST (Canadian Achievement Survey Test for Adults) or Wonderlic.
3. Specific high school courses required for program entry must be identified.

Upon request of the Director, Private Career Colleges Branch, institution administration must be prepared to submit documentation indicating that each student has met the admission requirements prior to the signing of the Alberta Student Enrolment Contract. This is a component of a compliance review.

PROGRAM INFORMATION FORM

Please provide the following information for each program the institution is applying to have licensed.

Institution Name: _____

Program Name: _____

Specific Job(s) for Graduates: _____

(E.g. Administrative Assistant, Massage Therapist, Graphic Designer)

Program Outline: List all Components and attach a description, including the number of hours for each.

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	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Weeks</u>	<u>Mode of Delivery:</u>
Instruction:	_____	_____	_____
Practicum: (if applicable)	_____	_____	(On-site, on-line, or combination)
Total Length =	_____ delivered over _____		
Cost: (per student)			
Tuition:	\$ _____		Note: In accordance with section 14 of the Regulation, a registration fee of up to \$500 may be charged prior to the training commencing. Once training has started, the registration fee forms part of the tuition paid. This must be taken into consideration when calculating tuition refunds in accordance with section 17 of the Regulation.
Books			
Supplies/Instruments:	\$ _____		
Other costs (please specify):			
(_____)	\$ _____		

I hereby confirm that satisfactory written evidence from industry that supports labour market demand and relevance of curriculum for this program in Alberta has been obtained.

(Signature of Responsible Authority/Alberta Authority)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

- How does my school become accredited?

Each individual program at a school/educational institution is licensed under the *Private Vocational Training Act*. Schools/educational institutions are not accredited or licensed by the PCC branch.

- Can my students apply for student loans?

Once your program(s) are licensed under the *Private Vocational Training Act*, both the program and the school/educational institution must be designated for student funding by Alberta Student Aid before a student can apply for student funding.

- How long does a typical application take to process?

Unfortunately there is no real time frame from application to approval. The time to complete a program applies can vary greatly depending upon a number of factors including;

- the quality of the application submitted,
- the number of other applications we are currently processing,
- third party delays regarding the inspections, industry feedback or the security requirements

- How far in advance should I apply?

At minimum, an application should be submitted at least 6 months prior to your anticipated start date. Keep in mind that applications can take longer than this to process.

- How do I submit an application?

We accept electronic applications through an email, including attachments, to PCC.Branch@gov.ab.ca. We also accept applications through the mail, by courier or in person.

- In what format should the evidence of labour market demand be submitted?

The evidence of labour market demand may be submitted directly from the websites reviewed or in a written format that translates the information from the applicable websites. **All** of the questions in the guideline are required to be answered. If we cannot verify the information during our review, you will be required to clarify.

- In what format should the evidence of curriculum relevance be submitted?

The evidence of curriculum relevance may be submitted in the form of a questionnaire or in the form of a letter as long as **all** of the questions have been answered directly. Institution responses to the feedback must be included or you will be asked to resubmit.

- Do the Fire/Health Inspection forms provided have to be completed?

These forms contain the information that we need on an inspection and must be completed by the applicable inspector. However, we will also accept the actual inspection reports that have been completed by the applicable inspectors.

- Do you accept cash or personal forms of security?

No, we cannot accept cash, personal letters of credit or personal surety bonds. The preferred forms of security must be posted in the name of the legal entity.

ALBERTA STUDENT AID

Designation is a status assigned by Alberta Student Aid (ASA) to eligible post-secondary programs that have been licensed by the PCC branch.

This designation allows for the provision of financial assistance to eligible private career college students by ASA.

As of May 29, 2020, ASA has introduced a waiting period of at least 12 months before new private career colleges can apply for designation status. This waiting period takes effect immediately after a private vocational training program licence been issued to an institution. ASA will reach out to the institution after the waiting period has been completed to initiate the designation process should you wish to proceed. Please note that you may offer licensed programs during this waiting period.

All institutions are required to sign an Alberta Institution Designation Agreement (AIDA), an Alberta Learner Information Agreement (ALIA) if they wish to be designated for student aid. They must also complete training with ASA, submit additional documentation in order to be designated and follow all ASA policies and procedures.

Failure to maintain compliance with the AIDA, including unacceptable Canada Student Loan repayment rates, may result in de-designation of the institution. In addition, student loan repayment rates are monitored and evaluated annually as part of maintaining compliance.

A program licensed under the *Private Vocational Training Act* and Regulation must be 12 weeks or longer and have a minimum of 20 instruction/practicum hours per week in order for students to be eligible for full-time student assistance.

Licensed programs that are less than 12 weeks in length or less than 20 instruction/practicum hours per week are not eligible to be designated by Alberta Student Aid.

Please refer to the Alberta Student Aid website at www.studentaid.alberta.ca/resources regarding further information on the designation process. If you have any questions regarding the Alberta Student Aid Designation process please send an email to AE.DesignationInquiry@gov.ab.ca.

PRE-APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Please ensure the application package includes the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Ensure that your program is not considered exempted from licensing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Refer to page 6 – Exemptions from Licensing ○ Contact PCC Branch if you are unsure if the program is considered exempt
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Complete Evidence of Labour Market Demand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Confirm if there is a professional or regulatory body that sets standards for this occupation and monitors labour market demand <p>OR, if there is no regulatory oversight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attach all relevant supporting evidence/documentation of labour market demand ○ Include at least 5 examples of detailed job postings and descriptions ○ Include employment forecast ○ Provide estimation of the time it would take a graduate to find suitable work in the field, and any problems or barriers that a graduate may face securing employment (if applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Complete Evidence of Curriculum Relevance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If there is a professional or regulatory body that sets standards for this occupation provide a copy of that body’s curriculum approval <p>OR, if there is no regulatory oversight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide industry feedback from at least 3 sources ○ Provide institution’s responses to the evaluator’s comments
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Institution Admission Requirements for Each Program</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Completed Program Information Form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attach program outline (list all components and attach a description, including the number of hours for each) ○ Ensure this form is signed by the Responsible Authority/Alberta Authority

Please send the completed pre-application package to:

Alberta Advanced Education
 Private Career Colleges Branch
 20th Floor Commerce Place
 10155 - 102 Street
 Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L5