



Advancing Reconciliation Through Education

BC's Indigenous-focused Graduation Requirement

by

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BC is about to become the first jurisdiction in Canada to take a ground-breaking step forward for truth, reconciliation, and anti-racism.

Beginning in the 2023/24 school year, all secondary students working toward a Dogwood Diploma will be required to complete four credits of Indigenous-focused coursework to graduate.

This change to BC's Graduation Program is part of the Action Plan for the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, and builds on the K-12 sector's efforts to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into the provincial curriculum, educator professional development, and professional standards for BC teachers. The Indigenous-focused graduation requirement will provide students with the time and opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the experiences, cultures, and histories of Indigenous peoples in Canada, and directly supports the K-12 sector's mandate to develop the Educated Citizen.



Students and parents may want to know what the implications of this change will be for student workloads and post-secondary admissions. The new graduation requirement will not be accompanied by an increase to the total number of credits required for graduation, which will remain at 80. In addition, some of the eligible provincial courses will be able to meet multiple graduation requirements. For example, English First Peoples 12 would meet both the Language Arts 12 requirement as well as the new Indigenous-focused requirement.



Flexibility and choice are integral features of the new requirement, with students having different options for earning Indigenous-focused graduation credits. These include completing existing provincial courses (e.g. English First Peoples 10-12, BC First Peoples 12), locally developed Board/Authority Authorized (BAA) Courses, or First Nations language courses at the Grade 10-12 level. Criteria for BAA courses to meet the requirement and a full list of eligible provincial and First Nations language courses can be found online.

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The provincial courses themselves explore the diversity of Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit), cultures, histories, contemporary contexts, and worldviews with a primary focus within BC. These courses are academically rigorous, being equivalent to the English Language Arts and Social Studies curricula in terms of competency development and meeting post-secondary admission requirements. The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) has also developed comprehensive teacher resource guides for English First Peoples 10-12 and BC First Peoples 12 to support educators in delivering the courses respectfully and effectively.

So, what's next? Leading up to the launch of the new requirement, the Ministry of Education and Child Care and FNESC are working with the BC School Superintendents Association (BCSSA) and the Federation for Independent Schools Association (FISA) to provide regional workshops for educators designed to support implementation of some of the provincial course options. The FNESC-facilitated workshops will support educators in bringing authentic Indigenous resources into BC classrooms, and will be offered across BC over the 2022/23 school year.

The Ministry's Indigenous-focused Graduation Requirement web page (*QR code on previous page*) also contains a number of resources for school administrators, including an Implementation

Handbook, Q&A document, and a presentation that can be used to support conversations with staff, students, and parents. Questions and requests for assistance can also be directed to the Ministry at gradrequirements@gov.bc.ca.



Indigenous-
focused Graduation
Requirement:
Implementation
Handbook

The introduction of an Indigenous-focused graduation requirement has been many years in the making. Several organizations, including the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), FNESC, British Columbia School Trustees' Association (BCSTA), the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF), and the BC Association of Institutes and Universities (BCAIU) have expressed formal support for this change to BC's graduation program. By taking this important step, BC will be enhancing the cultural competency of future generations and setting an example for the rest of the country of what lasting and meaningful reconciliation can look like.

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Passionate

Proactive

Loyal

Flexible

Empathetic

Listeners

Ethical

Motivated

Creative

Disciplined

Responsible

Resourceful

Authentic

Optimistic

Curious

Fun

Confident

Intuitive

Consistent

Smart

Focused

Strategic

Accountable

Compassionate

Patient

Courageous

Decisive

Understanding

Honest

Respectful

Learners

Organized

Bold

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Teachers

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