

**“BEST PRACTICES”
PASSPORT TO EDUCATION PROGRAM
SOME COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

ISSUING OF STAMPS

1. *How are schools allocated stamps from the Ministry of Education?*

For each of Grades 10, 11 and 12, there is a set amount of 9000 stamps which will be pro-rated amongst eligible BC schools. The allocation of stamps is determined from the annual 1701 enrolment count for each of Grades 10, 11 and 12 as at September 30th and is based on the number of students who are enrolled in five or more courses in one school calendar year in a graded secondary school program, and who are a Canadian citizen or permanent resident at the time of registration in their school. Citizenship information is determined from TRAX information submitted on Form “2004 Grades 10 – 12 Submission of Grades”, which is sent by schools to the Ministry. Students in Grades 10 – 12 must be reported to TRAX and the citizenship information must be complete and correct by the February submission of grades deadline date in order for students to be included in the allocation. (Adult students registered in five or more courses in a graded secondary school program are included in the count used to calculate stamp allocation.)

For students registered in a regular school and a Distance Learning (DL) school in September, and are enrolled in five or more courses in one school calendar year between the two schools, the stamp allocation shall go to the “School of Record” (priority school for funding).

As of 2010/2011 Continuing Education Centers are allocated stamps based on their September 30th enrolment report of students enrolled in five or more courses in one calendar year in a graded secondary school program, and who are a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.

2. *Can we get more stamps if we use up our allocation?*

The financial liability for the program is set once stamps are sent out from the Ministry and additional stamps cannot be supplied. Each school is responsible for managing its allocation of stamps, so it is important that the selection of recipients is based on the number of stamps received for your school.

3. *Should we hold back stamps from each grade?*

We recommend that the school retain a small percentage (1 or 2 stamps) per grade for a set time period (e.g. 6 months) in the event that a qualified studenta(s) is overlooked in the original calculation of winners. These stamps should be awarded after the appropriate time period is over and the school should inform the Ministry of these winners.

4. *Where should stamps be kept?*

To prevent the loss or theft of stamps, we recommend that stamps be stored in a secure location such as a safe or locked filing cabinet.

5. *What should we do if a student is overlooked or there is a tie between students?*

Schools are advised to prepare for unforeseen circumstances (e.g. in the event that a qualified student is overlooked in the original calculation of award winners), by holding back a small percentage of stamps (1 or 2) for a set time period after making your award announcement. Once the time period is over, the held stamps can then be awarded. Ties must be broken with reference to the Ministry's award guidelines. Schools are not permitted to break ties by lot, lottery or any other means of decision by chance. Students should be informed of the time period in which they may come forward to report errors or complaints. The Ministry is not responsible for an administrative error at the school level. Should there be an error by the school and a student is missed, the school might look at awarding the monies from local funds.

6. *Do the stamps have to be in a booklet or can we hand them out separately?*

To prevent the fraudulent use of the passport stamps, schools should affix the passport stamp(s) in the student's booklet and then stamp an imprint of the local school stamp on the page of the booklet, leaving the serial number clear. As well, the award recipient's name and Personal Education Number (PEN) should be clearly written in the front and/or inside cover of the passport booklet.

7. *Why is the Personal Education Number (PEN) required on the booklet?*

The PEN number assists the Ministry in locating the exact student in the system in order to process their award in a timely manner and links the student to the "Record of Issued Stamps" information the Ministry has received from the school earlier. Schools are encouraged to use PEN in all administrative processes.

8. *When is the best time to give students their stamps?*

The passport booklet (with stamps affixed) should be kept in a student's file until graduation or the student leaves the school. It is recommended that a student be informed at the end of the year that they are the recipient of a passport stamp by letter or some form of announcement. Upon graduation the student should be given the booklet to use towards their post-secondary education. When giving the Passport booklet to a student, a copy of the "***Student Information Sheet***" and a copy of the "***Redemption Form***", which clearly details the procedures for use of the award, should be handed out with the award or students should be pointed to the website to download the forms.

9. *What do we do with a student's award if they move to another school or leave school?*

If a student leaves to attend another school, the passport booklet should be sent, with the student's file, to the new school. If a student leaves the school system, the booklet can be mailed to the student or kept in their file until they come to pick it up.

10. *How long should we keep awards that have been issued to students but not been picked up?*

The passport award (booklet with stamps) should be kept in the student's file until the student picks it up from the school or until expiry (five years from September 30th of the expected date of graduation). Expired awards can be returned to the Ministry for destruction.

CRITERIA FOR AWARDING STAMPS

1. *How do we establish the criteria for our school?*

In order to earn a Passport Award a student must meet the following criteria:

- **For Grade 10 and 11 stamps (each worth \$250):**
 1. Two-thirds of the weighting must be on the academic component using a student's course grades for the best five provincially authorized courses and/or Board Authority authorized (BAA) courses that result in a percent or lettergrade. These grades must be final or projected final grades. External credentials, including AP (Advanced Placement) or IB (International Baccalaureate) courses may be used. (Locally developed courses should not be included.)
 2. One-third of the weighting should recognize the non-academic components such as effort, work habits, citizenship and school/community involvement. Schools should set more specific criteria for this component, following these general guidelines.
 3. A student does not have to be a graduate to earn a Grade 10 and/or Grade 11 stamp.
- **For Grade 12 stamp (worth \$500):**
 1. Two-thirds of the weighting must be on the academic component using a student's course grades for the best five provincially authorized courses and/or Board Authority

authorized (BAA) courses that result in a percent or lettergrade. These grades must be final or projected final grades. External credentials, including AP (Advanced Placement) or IB (International Baccalaureate) courses may be used. (Locally developed courses should not be included.)

2. One-third of the weighting should be based on a student's Graduation Transition Standards, also recognizing effort, work habits, citizenship and school/community involvement. Schools should set more specific criteria for this component, following these general guidelines.
3. A student should be a graduate to earn a Grade 12 stamp.

2. *What do we do with students in an accelerated program?*

In the case of accelerated programs or where a student's academic career does not follow a regular pattern, **schools must use their own discretion** to determine award winners based on the courses completed in the current school year or on courses completed at the grade level of the stamps awarded.

3. *What do we do with students in an exchange program?*

If the student was not included in the school enrolment count for funding at September 30th, and are not a Canadian citizen or permanent resident (landed immigrant), they may not be considered for a passport award.

4. *How should students be informed about the award criteria and why?*

The award criteria should be clearly communicated to students in writing. A clear explanation of the award criteria will assist in dealing with any complaints after the passport stamps have been awarded. Some schools have the criteria and other information on the Passport Program posted in front foyers for students to access or attach an information sheet to report cards.

5. *What about International students? Are they eligible?*

International students are not eligible for passport awards. Students must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents (landed immigrants) as at September 30th of the year registered.

6. *What about students that transfer mid-year to another school?*

For students that transfer mid-year to another school, the two schools should discuss with each other whether the student in question has met all the criteria before being awarded a stamp by the school the student was registered in first.

RECORD OF ISSUED STAMPS

1. *Why do we need to complete a Ministry "Record of Issued Stamps" list?*

This lists the serial numbers of all the stamps issued to your school and assists both the school and the Ministry in linking the serial numbers to the names and PENs of the student to whom they have been awarded. This form (or a similar form created by your school) should be completed and faxed to the Ministry (250)356-0271 by November 30th. **A copy must be retained by the school.**

Those schools using a certified administration system such as Take Two (CIMS), Campus America, Harts (Windsor), or Chancery (Mac School, Win School), can extract their Passport file and upload it to the School Secure Access website for processing your file to the Ministry by November 30th. Please access the Awards website www.bced.gov.bc.ca/awards for the link.

LOST/DESTROYED STAMPS

1. *What do we do when a student has lost their stamp(s)?*

If a student reports a lost award (stamps), the school must send a "Request for Declaration" form, (downloaded from the website), to the Ministry of Education, stating the student's name, PEN, and the

year, grade and serial number of each lost stamp they were issued. There is a \$25.00 administrative fee, which must accompany the request form, which can be paid by a cheque made out to Minister of Finance (cheques are held for three weeks before processing the request), money order, VISA or MasterCard. The Ministry will send to the school a “Declaration of Lost Stamps” formal letter to be signed by the Principal and then given to the student. This is the replacement for the lost award/stamp(s).

UNUSED (UNAWARDED) STAMPS AND EXPIRED STAMPS

1. What do we do if not all stamps are awarded and we have stamps left?

If not all of the allocated stamps are awarded, the unused stamps must be returned to the Ministry of Education, for cancellation, before the next year’s distribution of stamps in May. Please do not hold on to past years stamps and award to new students as this will change the sequence of the expiry dates.

2. What do we do with expired stamps (awards)?

Any Passport awards/stamps that have expired (five years from September 30th of the expected date of graduation from secondary school) can be sent back to the Ministry for destruction.

CONTACTS

1. Who does a student contact if they wish to find out if the post-secondary institution they want to attend is designated (approved for Canada Student Loans)?

A student can check the websites: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc (“Search for Designated Schools” link) and www.itac.ca (Industry Training Authority).

2. Who is the Ministry contact for schools and/or students?

Ministry of Education, Awards Program
PO Box 9886, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9T6

Maryke Vink, Awards Administrator, (250) 356-2443
Shirley Jackson, Awards Clerk, (250) 356-2449
Facsimile: (250) 356-0271
Website: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/awards