



Indigenous-Focused Graduation Requirement BAA Course Criteria and Process



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Ministry of Education
and Child Care



Indigenous-focused Graduation Requirement

The goal of the new requirement is for students to graduate from the BC K-12 system with a greater breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) peoples, cultures, and histories in BC. Students should have multiple options to meet this requirement, one of which could be a BAA course. Offering students choice, and therefore the option to take more than one course, aligns with provincial commitments to Truth and Reconciliation and to developing the Educated Citizen.

Distinctions-based Approach

The Province of British Columbia recognizes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit as the Indigenous Peoples of Canada with rights recognized and affirmed in section 35(1) of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. The Province also recognizes that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit are distinct, rights-bearing communities, and is committed to a distinctions-based approach to its relationship with each.

As outlined in the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan](#), not all rights are uniform or the same among or between all Indigenous Peoples. In many cases, a distinctions-based approach may require that the Province's relationship and engagement with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples include different approaches or actions and result in different outcomes.

At this time, BAA courses developed in consultation and collaboration with the First Nation(s) on whose territory schools/districts are located will be the only courses considered for this graduation requirement.

FNA Courses

First Nations Authorized Courses will meet this new Indigenous-focused graduation requirement.

BAA Course Criteria

Courses designed to meet the new Indigenous-focused graduation requirement should provide an opportunity for educators and students to explore content beyond the boundaries of the provincial Ministry curriculum. These BAA courses can help provide choice and flexibility for students while allowing educators to respond to the priorities of local First Nations and the school/school district.

Courses developed to meet this requirement must:

- include content that provides the opportunity for students to develop a meaningful and substantial breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of specific First Nation peoples, cultures, worldviews, and histories in BC;
- ensure that learning about and from First Nation peoples and cultures in BC is a significant outcome (courses may still focus on specific curricular areas);
- be co-developed and approved by one or more local First Nation[s];
- be developed for Grade 10, 11 or 12; and
- meet all existing BAA course requirements.

While courses can reflect any credit option (1, 2, 3 or 4 credits), if the course is less than 4-credits then students will need to take additional eligible courses to meet the full graduation requirement.



Schools/districts must collaborate with, and obtain approval from, one or more First Nations on whose territory the school/district is in for the newly developed BAA course to meet the new graduation requirement. Depending on the content of the course being developed or the location of the school(s) that will offer the course, collaboration with and approval by all First Nations on whose territory a school district/authority is located may not be appropriate or required (i.e., a course with content related only to a single First Nation would only require the approval of that First Nation).

If a First Nation chooses not to participate in a co-development process, a proposed BAA course with content related to that First Nation cannot meet this graduation requirement. If the course is not approved, students would need to fulfill the requirement through one of the other mechanisms (i.e., provincially developed courses or one of the First Nations language courses).

It should be noted that Indigenous-focused BAA courses are intended to reflect the priorities of local First Nations.

BAA courses may overlap with Big Ideas and Curricular Competencies of Ministry courses however they must not:

- have significant overlap with provincial curriculum;
- be remedial or preparatory in nature;
- be a modified course; or
- be an adapted course.

Process for BAA courses meeting the new graduation requirement

One of the goals of the new Indigenous-focused graduation requirement is for students to learn about *local* First Nations. As such, the process outlined below highlights the requirements for both new courses being developed, as well as existing BAA courses that districts/schools are wishing to put forward to meet the new graduation requirement.

New BAA Courses:

- All new BAA courses being put forward to meet the Indigenous-focused graduation requirement must be co-developed with the First Nation on whose territory a school/district operates schools.
- Boards/authorities are required to complete the updated Board/Authority Authorized course form. The new form can be found here:



https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/baa_form.pdf

- The form now includes a section to indicate that the course being put forward is intended to meet the new Indigenous-focused graduation requirement, as well as instructions for attaching a formal letter(s) from the local First Nation(s) confirming their support for and co-development of the course.
- If a course is intended to meet the new graduation requirement, the new sections of the form must be completed and submitted to the Board/Authority for approval as per usual process (*see Board/Authority BAA approval Process for details*).
- A signed copy of the completed Board/Authority Authorized course form is then sent to the Ministry along with the required letter(s) from the local First Nation(s) that were involved in co-development of the course.
- The original completed course form and accompanying BAA Course Framework must be retained by the board/authority for submission to the Ministry upon request.
- New course codes will be developed for BAA courses that successfully meet the requirements outlined above – see Appendix D for more information.

Existing BAA courses:

- Any existing BAA course a board/authority wishes to put forward as meeting the new Indigenous-focused graduation requirement must be re-submitted to the Board/Authority for review and approval.
- While a co-development process with the local First Nation(s) may not have occurred with these courses, a new updated course form must be completed and signed off by the Board/Authority and then submitted to the Ministry along with formal letter(s) of support from the First Nation(s) on whose territory(s) the board/authority operates schools. The form can be found here:



https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/baa_form.pdf

- If an existing course is determined to meet the new graduation requirement criteria, and a student has taken it prior to the 2023/24 school year, it will count towards the student's graduation requirement so long as the course has not undergone changes (since the student took the course) to obtain board/authority re-approval.
- If an existing course has not gone through the re-approval process with the board/authority, it cannot be used to meet this graduation requirement.



Board/Authority and First Nations Co-Development Process

A co-development process between the board/authority and the local First Nation(s) is needed for new BAA courses that are intended to meet the new Indigenous-focused graduation requirement.

For boards/authorities located within the lands of multiple First Nations:

- Boards/authorities must work in partnership with the local First Nation(s) on whose territory the course will be offered.
- This may mean that boards/authorities will work with multiple First Nations to develop a single course, or that they will create multiple BAA courses to reflect the diversity of First Nations on whose territories the course(s) will be offered,
- If a board/authority wishes to create a BAA course that will be offered in multiple schools across the district/region, that course will need to be co-developed with each of the First Nations on whose territories the specific schools operate.

For school districts/authorities where there is no local First Nations Administrative Office:

- As with all other cases, boards/authorities are required to collaborate and seek approval from First Nations on whose traditional territories the board/authority operates.
- Even if there is no local First Nations Administrative Office in the district, the First Nation on whose territory the district/school resides must be involved and sign-off the course to be taught in the district/school.
- Boards/authorities are encouraged to collaborate with neighbouring boards/authorities who have already developed, or will be creating, a BAA course with the same local First Nations on whose territories their schools operate.

Cross-enrolment for both the provincial courses and BAA courses meeting the graduation requirement is permitted.

Course Criteria Confirmation

The approval of BAA courses intended to meet the new Indigenous-focused graduation requirement remains with boards of education and independent school authorities. For these specific BAA courses however, the Ministry will be sharing submitted course forms and letter(s) of support from the local First Nation(s) with the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC).

Together, the Ministry and FNESC will review the documentation provided by the board/authority to ensure the BAA course meets the criteria required to fulfill the Indigenous-focused graduation requirement (e.g., confirmation that a co-development process has taken place with the local First Nation[s]). The Ministry may request additional information regarding the BAA course from the approving Board/Authority as part of this review process; all additional information provided by an approving Board/Authority will be reviewed by the Ministry and FNESC.

Offshore school considerations

The overarching goal of the new Indigenous-focused graduation requirement is for students to graduate from the BC K-12 system with a greater breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of Indigenous peoples, cultures, and histories in BC. On a related note, the purpose of BC Offshore school programs is to provide students worldwide with the opportunity to study BC's curriculum, which includes learning about BC First Nations. Accordingly, the BAA option for meeting this new graduation requirement is not available to Offshore schools due to the requirement of a local co-development process.

Provincially developed courses such as Contemporary Indigenous Studies 12 are suggested options for Offshore schools as these courses allow students to compare “identities and worldviews of Indigenous peoples, and the importance of the interconnection of family, relationships, language, culture, and the land.” This provides the opportunity for Offshore school students to discuss their local Indigenous communities and explore them within the context of other Indigenous communities within BC and across Canada.

