**FAQ and Answers for Parents based on the chat from the Parents As Education and Career Coaches Workshop**

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**Q: Can students choose to study at two different post-secondary institutions to earn their bachelor’s (4 year) degree?**

A: Students can choose to study at two institutions for example, they may take a 2-year associate program at a college and then transfer to year 3 at a university. It’s always best to check transfer policies at institutions directly and plan the transfer with an academic advisor. **The BC Transfer Guide** <https://www.bctransferguide.ca/>is a great place to check out how courses transfer within institutions in the province.

**Q: If I am applying to a post-secondary institution in BC, is there a database or website that I can use? And how do I apply?**

A: **Education Planner BC** <http://www.educationplannerbc.ca> website is managed provincially, and the database currently contains information about programs offered in BC public post-secondary institutions only. Students can apply to most of the institutions in BC through that website. BCIT currently has an external application system.

**Q: If I am applying out of province, how do I start my application?**

A: If students are interested in institutions out of province, please start by checking their website for program details, admission requirements and deadlines because those can be quite different from the ones here in BC. Seek help and guidance from your high school counsellor or post-secondary advisor with questions or concerns.

A: My Blueprint website <https://myblueprint.ca/sd43> is a database and search engine with links to universities and programs from across Canada, as well as finances, assessments, occupations etc. Other similar systems to my Education Planner BC - out of province platforms - include: Apply Alberta and Ontario Universities Application Center (OUAC) <https://www.ouac.on.ca/>

**Q: How can students get work or volunteer experience in the current COVID circumstances?**

A: Please ask your student to check with the career center as well as checking the Career Center website for current opportunities and links. There have been several opportunities available in the school as well as in the community. Mostly offered online and some in-person with safety protocols in place for students’ safety. It is the students and parents’ responsibility to check those opportunities and make sure that they are a good fit.

Volunteering and/or work experience as well as having strong reference letters are important if you want your university applications and/or scholarship applications to stand out, that’s the case for some schools and programs not all. Having related experience in your areas of interest as well as leadership and community service adds so much value to your applications e.g. UBC personal profile, SFU Entrance scholarship and awards, Douglas Sports Science or Social work.

**Q: Before applying to scholarships does the student have to be accepted to a program?**

If the student is applying to a college or university-based scholarships and awards, s/he can **apply before getting accepted to a program** – as long as they apply to the institution before early admissions/consideration deadline eg. UBC Dec 1st and SFU Dec 15th. Check the Financial aid and awards page at your university of choice for scholarships and awards information, if you meet the criteria apply!

There are many scholarship search engines listed on the career centre/finance and awards page.

If a student is applying to an external scholarship or award (not affiliated with a university or college), they should check the criteria first before applying.

**Q. Where can someone get advice on writing scholarship essays?**

A: Please see the post-secondary and career advisor at your school or your counsellor.

**Q. What is the difference between a scholarship and a bursary?**

Please read the Financial opportunities booklet for detailed information, found on the career centre page. In general, scholarships are based on high level of excellence in a particular area such as academic excellence or athletics i.e. based upon Merit – which is usually a combination of grades and/or other criteria.

Bursaries are based on financial need.

Awards can be various criteria, or even an essay.

**Q. Should students still apply this year if they are considering taking a gap year?**

A: Based on the student’s course choices and final marks students can choose to wait or take a gap year. One thing to keep in mind is that admission requirements may change from one year to the next.

As per SFU “You may apply to defer your offer of admission for up to one full year and to any term within that year.” For example, you have been admitted to the fall term, you may apply for a one-time deferral to spring, summer, or the following fall term. Deferrals are approved for students who wish to take a gap year and for students with extenuating circumstances. Deferrals are **not granted for students who plan on attending another post-secondary institution or who are not financially prepared** to attend SFU. Each institution has its own deferral criteria. In some cases, scholarships may not be deferred, and would be rescinded, depending on the donor.

**Q: For international students who are below 19 in BC, do they need custodianships during their university study in BC or just in high school?**

A: In general, the answer is no.

**Q: Do students need a reference letter from a teacher/counsellor or workplace to apply to University or College?**

A: Depends on the institution and program of study. For example: UBC only requires references contact information, not a letter. SFU requires an online reference form to be filled. Douglas college for Sports science requires an online reference form to be filled by coaches. For some other schools and especially for scholarships – reference letters might be required and are always good to have.

**Q. Can students interested in Trades apply directly to the trade’s schools e.g. BCIT or VCC?**

A: If you are a student in grade 10/11 or 12 please speak to the post-secondary and career advisor about the trades offered through the school district before reaching out directly to the trades schools. The “Youth TRAIN in Trade” and “Youth WORK in Trade” programs are both offered through SD43 and are funded so students can be saving money, getting high school credits while taking their level 1 foundations while completing grade 11 and/or 12 at a secondary school. Graduates can apply directly to trades programs generally these programs have minimal entrance requirements.

**Q. How can students submit their transcripts to the post-secondary institutions?**

A: This is done in CLC class. Students get a basic BCeID# then they access the Ministry of Education Student Transcript System (STS) system to select schools. This MUST be done in order to release student grades for institutions or to get a copy of their transcript. (in 2024 UBC and SFU request this was completed by Jan 31.)

Please note that some schools require self-reporting as well on their student portals and/or require uploading of DVR Form (from their counsellor) in addition to the STS (especially Ontario schools). Students should check their emails regularly as well as their student accounts/portals for updates and application status. Students can visit their counsellor or career adviser for assistance.

**Q. What is a district authority award?**

A: The BC Ministry of Education offers each Secondary school a limited number of $1250 Awards based on excellence in their chosen area. There are 7 different focus areas. The number available is based on enrollment figures. Most SD43 schools receive 30-35 per year. These vouchers are for post-secondary study. [District/Authority Scholarships - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/scholarships/provincial-scholarships/district-authority-scholarships)

Other awards for high school students: [Provincial Scholarships Program information for students - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/scholarships/provincial-scholarships)