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## Prospective Students: Questions to Ask

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*Students in British Columbia have many choices of both institutions and programs available to them. These questions can be useful to all prospective students, regardless of what type of institution or program they are considering. Because every student will have different concerns and priorities, this list of questions should not be seen as covering all possible concerns. It is a good start toward a better understanding of the programs and institutions you are considering attending.*

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### Preparedness and Resources

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- Does the program suit my interests and career goals?
- Do I have the time, energy and financial resources required to be successful in the program?
- What type of job am I seeking when I finish the program and how much money do I hope to earn? Are my expectations realistic?
- Have I investigated my options thoroughly through research, visiting institutions and speaking with potential employers?

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### Visiting the School

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- Is the institution a pleasant and comfortable place to spend my time in?
- Did the institution make the information I asked for available to me?

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### Admissions

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- What are the pre-requisites for admission?
- How many students apply for the course or program and how many are accepted?
- Do I need to take a test to be considered for acceptance? If so, what score do I need to achieve to be considered?
- Are there waitlists for the program or courses I am interested in?

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### Financial Considerations

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- Is the tuition cost of one program much more or less than a similar program you have encountered? If so, why?
- Are books and equipment included in the tuition fee?
- Is it possible for me to borrow resource materials, or do they need to be purchased?
- If I need to repeat a course or subject, will I have to pay for it?
- What are the institution's policies for refunding tuition in case of withdrawal or dismissal?
- What is included in the price of tuition? What other costs are necessary for me to complete the program?
- Are grants, bursaries or scholarships available?
- Beyond the costs of tuition, what can I expect my cost of living expenses to be while I am attending school?

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### Student Loans

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- Is the institution you are considering *designated* under the British Columbia Student Assistance Program so that you are eligible to apply for student loans?
- Is there anyone at the institution to help you to submit an application for student assistance?
- Can someone at the institution help you to estimate your potential loan amount?
- Does your potential loan award cover both your tuition and basic living expenses?
- When will I be expected to start repaying my debt?

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## **Employment Opportunities and Job Placement**

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- Is it expected that there will continue to be opportunities in the field I have chosen?
- What types of employers have hired recent graduates of the program?
- Does the institution offer job placement services? What do these services involve?
- Does the institution have any information about how many previous graduates of the program have been successful in finding jobs?
- Is a practicum or work term component a mandatory part of the program? How long is it? Is the work term paid?
- Will the institution arrange a practicum for you or are you expected to take on that responsibility?
- Will my potential employers recognize this training?

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## **Registration, Accreditation and Licensing**

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- Does the appropriate governing body or professional association approve the institution/program?
- Is the approval up-to-date?
- If the institution is privately operated, is it registered with the Private Career Training Institutions Agency?
- Does the program have the proper consents, approvals or accreditations?
- Is the credential that you hope to achieve through the program recognized by the profession or industry?
- How many students of the program pass the licensing exams necessary to enter the profession?

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## **Institutional Policies**

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- What are the institution's policies for resolving student complaints?
- Is there an institutional code of conduct?
- What are the institution's rules for a student's attendance? Behaviour? Attire?
- Where is information on the institution's policies available?

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## **Facilities, Services and Equipment**

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- Is there any tutoring, advising or support service available?
- Are classes a reasonable size for one instructor? What's the institution's student/instructor ratio?
- Will you have reasonable access to the equipment and resources you will need in the course of your studies?
- Is there enough equipment, tools or laboratory space for each student?
- What type of equipment is used, and how does it measure up to what industry uses?
- If your training involves software, what software is being taught, and how does it relate to knowledge you will need for employment?

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## **Training and Instruction**

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- How long is the course or program?
- Does the program cover all of the subject matter you are hoping to learn?
- What percentage of the training or instruction is theory and what percentage practical experience?
- What are the qualifications of instructors?
- Do instructors have the necessary licenses or credentials in order to deliver the instruction?
- What are the completion/dropout rates for the program/institution/campus?
- What are the pass/fail rates for the program/institution/campus?

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## **Course and Program Transfer**

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- Does the institution have any transfer arrangements with other institutions?
- What opportunities for further education will you have after you graduate?
- Will other post-secondary institutions recognize the training, and if so, how much credit will they assign?