

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What happens if I already have collective agreement language governing apprentices?

- A. The parties have 3 options: 1) use existing collective agreement language supplemented by additional terms if the current language does not meet all the required SSEAC guidelines 2) create new terms using the plan guidelines 3) use the apprenticeship plan template provided by SSEAC.

2. Will funding be provided to cover wages?

- A. No funding will be provided for wages although while an apprentice is doing course work an annual allowance of \$2,000 will be paid to employees in receipt of EI. SSEAC will provide this funding to districts.

3. What is meant by a retention scheme?

- A. SSEAC wants to ensure apprentices in receipt of funding from the committee remain with the district during and after the completion of their apprenticeship. As such we require that the parties agree to include provisions that serve as disincentives to those employees that may wish to leave their apprenticeship early or shortly after obtaining their Trades Qualification (See Guidelines #4).

4. Can applications for apprenticeship funding contain budget items intended to pay premiums to supervising journeyman?

- A. No. As part of the Framework Letter of Understanding all trades qualified employees have received a trades adjustment and an apprentice sponsor allowance totaling \$0.60 per year except the final year which is \$0.30. Employers may appoint the employee that will perform the supervising journeyman role.

5. What does the funding cover?

- A. A funding formula is used to calculate costs for tuition, travel, accommodation, EI allowance, supplies and tools. With the exception of the incentives/reimbursement established by the plan or as outlined in existing collective agreement provisions, apprentices will be responsible to cover all remaining costs associated with their education.

6. How long can the funding be expected for?

A. Funding will be provided on an annual basis for the full term of the apprenticeship (usually 4 years). Where approval has been granted, funding will not be provided until proof of apprentice registration is shown to SSEAC.

7. Does the funding need to be spent in the same fashion as was allocated/calculated by the SSEAC?

A. The funding provided is based on a formula of anticipated costs. The money is to be spent on those items listed in question 5 above.

8. What happens to the funding once the SSEAC has discharged its obligation (ie the term of the agreement expires)?

A. SSEAC has not finalized how it will allocate remaining moneys for Apprenticeships should the term for SSEAC expire before the completion of the Apprenticeship plan. SSEAC has committed to provide all the moneys approved to districts for the Apprenticeship plan.

9. Can the parties access SSEAC funding for existing apprentices?

A. Yes. Funding may be provided for existing apprentices under the terms and conditions of the Apprenticeship Opportunities Fund. Funding will be on a go forward basis with no retroactivity.

10. Do the terms and conditions of the Apprenticeship Opportunities Fund apply to all apprentices.

A. The terms and conditions only apply to those apprentices approved for funding from SSEAC. All other apprentices, should there be additional apprentices, would be subject to any previous terms and conditions or newly negotiated terms and conditions.

11. What if our district is unable to offer the full scope of work required for an apprenticeship?

A. Districts and locals are encouraged to look at options that might include collaborating with other school districts, municipalities or other institutions in order to allow for the full scope of work exposure.

12. What constitutes a 'pass' when marking an apprentices aptitude test?

A. The mark an apprentice must receive in order to pass the aptitude test is to be determined by the employer and the union. However, when an apprentice takes their coursework each year during the apprenticeship the exam pass rate used by all BC institutions that offer training is 70%; this pass rate is mandated by ITA.

13. If an apprentice fails the aptitude test can they re-write it?

A. Yes. The aptitude test is not to be used as a barrier to entry into the apprenticeship program but rather as an indicator of a candidate's suitability or likelihood of success in an apprenticeship program. A reasonable time period, to be mutually agreed to by the parties, will be given to the apprentice between the first exam taken and the second. It is expected that the employer will alter the aptitude test questions between the two exam sittings.