

Apprentice Program Enhancements
External Qs and As

1. What enhancements have been made to the Apprentice program?

The Ministry of Housing and Social Development, in collaboration with ministry partners, has identified areas in the Apprentices program that could be enhanced to better support apprentices as they complete their programs and become more employable.

These enhancements are intended to align the SD - Apprentices program with other EI Part II programs and services. Enhancements are centered on two key areas:

- Enhanced Part II funding supports and conditions of eligibility for regular Apprentices while attending technical training; and
- Increased supports to unemployed Apprentice EI clients to enable participation in technical training.

From:	To:
Part II eligibility restricted to clients in receipt of EI Part I Benefits	Part II eligibility extended to all apprentices who meet the definition of an insured participant
Tuition costs not considered a reimbursable cost.	Tuition costs paid by the student are considered a fully reimbursable cost *
No living supports to apprentices whose claims are exhausted. Limited to the rate of EI benefits.	All apprentices receive the maximum EI Rate
Day care = \$25/day/child Commuting allowance = \$.175/kilometer Living away from home = \$125/week	Day care = \$35/day/child Commuting allowance = \$.25/kilometer Living away from home = \$175/week
No clearly established policy limiting the timeframe in which an apprentice must submit financial support application	Apprentices submit their application within four weeks of their course date

** Tuition enhancements are a short term measure only, intended to respond to the economic downturn by providing greater support to clients. Continued apprentice tuition support will be re-assessed as the economy recovers.*

2. Are all apprentices eligible for Employment Insurance (EI) benefits?

No. Only those who are laid off and have accumulated enough hours to qualify are eligible to collect Employment Insurance Benefits. The employer is required to issue a Record of Employment.

3. If an apprentice is laid-off to attend prescribed in-school technical apprentice training, is his/her application for EI endangered?

No. An apprentice can be laid-off for lack of work or to attend prescribed in-school technical apprentice training.

4. Is an apprentice eligible for financial assistance for living expenses to cover the two week waiting period for an initial EI claim?

No.

5. Are apprentices who continue to receive wages from their employers eligible to receive financial assistance for such things as travel, dependent care, commuting and living away expenses?

No. An apprentice who continues to be employed during the training period does not meet the eligibility criterion of being unemployed.

6. If an apprentice is living with his/her parent(s) in their normal place of residence and travels out of town to attend prescribed training, is that apprentice entitled to living-away-from-home financial assistance?

Yes. Under the enhanced policy, an apprentice living with his/her parents in their normal place of residence is eligible for Living Away from Home assistance regardless of whether or not he/she is paying for at least 50 per cent of the household costs.

7. Is an apprentice entitled to both the travel & commuting financial assistance?

Yes. Apprentices are required to find a temporary residence *as close as possible* to the location of training. In cases where the temporary residence is not within walking distance, commuting costs can be considered for apprentices who have travelled to the location of training using their private vehicles.

8. If apprentices do two levels of the technical training back to back, are they entitled to travel assistance for each level?

No. The apprentice is only entitled to one travel assistance as the two levels are considered one course.

9. Are apprentices who are registered in B.C. and taking their technical training in another province entitled to receive financial assistance through EI Part II?

Yes. The apprentice would be entitled to the same financial assistance as if he/she were attending technical training in B.C. The apprentice must contact his/her local ELMSD office to determine what, if any, financial assistance they are eligible for while training in another province.

10. What about apprentices taking technical training in B.C. but registered in another province or territory, would they be entitled to financial assistance?

Out of province registered apprentices attending technical training in British Columbia would be entitled to Part I benefits if they have an active EI claim. Part II financial assistance would be determined and paid by the province/territory where the apprentice is registered.

11. Can an apprentice's Employment Insurance claim run out while he/she is attending prescribed in-school technical training?

Yes. EI benefits will run out at the normal end of the claim.

12. Will apprentice clients with a course start date of August 31, 2009 or later but who apply prior to September be entitled to these enhancements?

Yes.

13. Will apprentices be reimbursed retroactively for any costs incurred for training they attended prior to application?

Apprentices who start training on August 31, 2009 and submit the application for financial assistance within four weeks of course start date will be eligible for reimbursement of costs for the full duration of the training.

14. Who can I contact for more information?

Please call Enquiry BC at 1-800-663-7867 or visit your local office. Local office addresses are available online at www.labourmarketservices.gov.bc.ca