

Foundational Learning Supports Training Benefits Grant Agreements for Public Post-Secondary Institutions

Questions and Answers

Updated: May 31, 2017

1. What is the Foundational Learning Grant Agreement?

Advanced Education (AE) is piloting Foundational Learning Grant Agreements with Public Post-Secondary Institutions (PSI) who offer Foundational Learning programs to Learners funded by AE. By signing this agreement the PSI will receive a pre-determined advance payment for tuition and fees to be applied toward eligible Learners attending your institution. Financial benefits, books and supplies will continue to be paid directly to Learners via Mobius.

2. What are the benefits of signing the Foundational Learning Grant Agreement?

The intent of the agreement is to create efficiencies for the Learner, the PSI and the Ministry. Mobius view only access will provide the PSIs with real time access to view information on Learners who have applied for funding. This will provide more certainty earlier in the process about which Learners they can expect in their classrooms allowing for better management of Learner enrollment. This will also reduce or completely eliminate waitlists.

For Learners there will be less uncertainty and stress about knowing if they are funded to attend training as real-time information will be available to PSIs, processing times will be reduced and access to call centre staff will improve due to an anticipated reduction in PSI and Learner calls to the centre.

In addition PSIs will be able to apply their respective tuition refund policy when a Learner withdraws or does not start training. Tracking expenditures internally by the PSI will allow them to immediately utilize the funding to support another Learner as there is no requirement to remit a payment back to the Ministry before accepting another Learner.

3. Why is this change being made?

With the expiry of the Accountability Framework Agreements on March 31, 2016 there has been on-going discussions with training institutions around the new model and its changes. The need for efficient and effective processes to maximize the number of Learners attending foundational training programs has been a common theme. We also heard the desire by training institutions to re-instate access to Mobius and to change the tuition payment process for funded Learners.

Over the past few months the Ministry has been evaluating ways to improve the new delivery model and these two suggestions were factored into our analysis. The pilot allows AE to make improvements and as well as evaluate the changes.

4. What additional obligations will PSIs have with the Foundational Learning Grant Agreements?
PSIs will be required to provide an interim report and a final report at times specified in the agreement for reconciliation purposes and to demonstrate funds are used for their intended purpose.

5. How much extra work will this create and will the PSIs be reimbursed?

There may be some additional work associated with tracking tuition expenditures for those who are not already doing so, but we also believe there will be less work for staff who will now be able to access up to date Learner information and not have to call the Learner or the Ministry to find out funding information. In addition using the PSI's tuition refund policy should create less work such as eliminating the need for PSIs to remit cheques back to the Ministry.

There is no reimbursement for the activities performed by PSIs under the Foundational Learning Grant Agreement. As a pilot we want to get feedback from the PSIs on whether there were overall staff savings and efficiencies under this approach.

6. Will the application process change?

No. Learners must still meet the PSIs program entrance requirements. Learners are still required to submit a financial application along with the Training Provider Information form to the Learner Income Support Office (LISO), who will assess eligibility and advise the Learner of the decision. Financial benefits and funding for books and supplies will continue to be paid directly to eligible Learners. PSIs do not need to enter tuition and fee costs on the Training Provider Information form.

7. Will the Training Provider Information form (TPI) still be required?

Yes. It is still a requirement to complete a TPI as LISO will need to know if the training is full time or part time as well as the dates of the session. Since the tuition and fees are payment directly to the PSI, this information is not required on the TPI.

8. How do PSIs know when funds can be drawn for tuition and fees for a Learner?

A prospective Learner will need to be approved for funding through LISO. Confirmation of funding can be done in one of three ways:

- As part of the Grant Agreement, the PSIs will have access to Mobius to enable them to check on the status of funding applications.
- The Learner Application Status report will indicate when an application is processed and the outcome
- The Learner can bring their Funding Decision Letter to the PSI.

9. Will all Learners who are approved for funding be eligible to receive full tuition and fees or there will be partial awards based on other resources like EI?

The tuition and fees will be applied in full to all approved Learners. There will be no partial awards.

10. How will the part-time maximum of \$5,000 per calendar year per Learner be managed?

Part time Learners have typically not exceeded the maximum of \$5,000 tuition per calendar year. We will be monitoring part-time funding utilization throughout the Term of the Grant Agreement.

11. What should PSIs expect for LISO application processing times?

The application processing times will remain at 4-6 weeks. It is anticipated that the Grant Agreements will find efficiencies that will positively impact LISO processing times as PSIs will also have Mobius access and Learner Status reports which should reduce the amount of calls to LISO. In addition, PSIs will apply their tuition refund policies which we anticipate will free up staff time.

12. What is the impact of the Grant Agreements to the supports provided by Community and Social Services staff to prospective Learners?

The impact of the Grant Agreements to the supports provided by Community and Social Services (CSS) to prospective Learners should be minimal. CSS staff will continue to provide individual career and employment information services to Albertans, including following any established business processes. CSS may receive inquiries from Learners with zero tuition on their Funding Decision letters. These inquiries should be redirected to the PSI or the LISO Contact Centre.

13. What does this new Grant Agreement process mean for other Learners accessing foundational learning?

It will be business as usual in terms of how tuition and fees are paid for Learners attending other Training Institutions that are not part of this Grant Agreement process.

14. How is Mobius access granted?

Once training is completed the PSI will complete a Request for Mobius ID – External form

<http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/AWonline/documents/EMP2007E.pdf>

And forward to your CSC. Once processed the staff will be notified directly via email of their login information. **NOTE: it is the PSI's responsibility to notify AE when a staff no longer requires access. This is done by completing the same form and forwarding to their CSC.**

15. What is the anticipated timeline for access to and training for Mobius?

The training will start as soon as the Grant Agreements are signed. We are targeting June & July. We will be in touch to coordinate the dates. Mobius IDs will be provided to staff once training is complete.

16. Is there a maximum number of staff that will be allowed Mobius access per institution?

We will work with the PSIs to determine the appropriate number of staff who will be trained and provided Mobius access.

17. How will PSIs know which Learners will have their tuition and fees paid through Mobius and which ones will be paid from the Grant Agreement?

The Grant Agreements are for training starting on or after August 1, 2017. Any training before August 1, 2017 would have been paid through Mobius.

18. What happens to unused funds?

As per the Grant Agreement, unused funds will be returned to the Minister.

19. What happens after the pilot, how will success be measured?

An evaluation will be conducted as part of this pilot to inform the next steps. Input from the PSIs participating in the Grant Agreement process will be gathered as part of the evaluation.