



March 19, 2024
Our Ref. 132440

Prince George City Council
1100 Patricia Blvd.
Prince George, BC V2L 3V9

Email Address: MayorAdmin@princegeorge.ca

Dear Prince George City Council:

Thank you for your email and letter sent to the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills regarding aviation sector education and training supports in British Columbia. I apologize for the delayed response.

I appreciate you advocating for increased aviation training and recognize the importance of this issue, especially considering the strong demand for aviation-related occupations in Canada. The most recent [Labour Market Outlook](#) expects significant job openings for a wide range of occupations in the aviation sector over the next 10 years, including air pilots, flight engineers, air traffic controllers and aircraft mechanics, as well as other sectors that demand high-cost programming where there is continued labour market demand.

The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills supports the delivery of education and training programs for careers in the aviation sector through base operating grants to BC public post-secondary institutions such as the British Columbia Institute of Technology, Northern Lights College, Okanagan College and the University of the Fraser Valley.

For example, Northern Lights College offers an Aircraft Maintenance Technician Diploma; the British Columbia Institute of Technology offers an aviation management and operations diploma, aircraft gas turbine technician certificate, airline and flight operations commercial pilot diploma and aircraft maintenance engineer diploma, while Okanagan College offers a commercial aviation diploma.

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I would also like to note that student financial assistance is available to BC aviation students via the [Canada Student Financial Assistance Program](#) and [StudentAid BC](#).

Funding provided by StudentAid BC is intended to supplement, not replace, funds available to students through individual and family financial resources, savings and income. Students in high-cost programs such as aviation or with educational expenses that exceed federal or provincial student financial assistance limits, like those incurred by the required use of aircraft to obtain flight hours for pilot training, may need to access other sources of funding to meet their educational costs.

BC aviation students attending BC public post-secondary institutions are eligible for the [BC Access Grant](#) which provides non-repayable funding up to \$4,000 per year for programs less than 2 years in length. StudentAid BC regularly reviews its policies and programs and values your input on such topics and issues which are taken into consideration for any future policy reviews of aviation funding.

As you noted, the [federal government has set a population-based intake cap](#) for provinces and territories on international student study permit applications to stabilize new growth for a period of two years, effective January 22, 2024. Within an overall national cap of 606,250 study permit applications for 2024, British Columbia has been allocated 83,000 study permit applications.

The Ministry acted promptly to ensure as little disruption as possible to international students and the post-secondary institutions where they study. Effective March 4, 2024, the Ministry began issuing provincial attestation letters to eligible post-secondary institutions, including flight schools with eligible programs, to allow international applicants to apply for study permits from the federal government.

Most new study permit applications by undergraduate post-secondary international students and graduate students in non-degree programs will require a provincial attestation letter. Institutions will request the letter from the Province for their applicants to submit to the federal government with their study permit application.

On a more personal note, as a former pilot, I have first-hand knowledge of the importance of the aviation sector and its significant impact and benefits to regional economies across the province. I will continue to examine how government can support the aviation sector and look forward to continued collaboration with the Prince George City Council and councils and aviation advocates throughout the Province.

Thank you again for writing to me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lisa Beare".

Honourable Lisa Beare
Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills

pc: Bobbi Plecas, Deputy Minister PSFS.DeputyMinister@gov.bc.ca
Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills