

Private career college students' rights and responsibilities

Know what to expect and what you need to do when signing up for programs offered by registered private career colleges.

Private career colleges in Ontario are regulated under the [Private Career Colleges Act, 2005](#) which is administered by the Superintendent of Private Career Colleges.

This Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities is provided for your information and convenience only. It is not a legal document. Find detailed and specific information about the measures available to protect private career college students in the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005* and the regulations made under that act.

Before you enrol

Make sure the private career college (PCC) is registered and that the vocational program you are enrolling in is approved by the Superintendent under the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005*. You can find out at ServiceOntario.

Note:

If you enrol in an institution that has not been registered, or in a vocational program that has not been approved, the student protection measures available in the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005* are not available to you.

Communicate in writing

There may be times when you need to communicate important information to your private career college, for example, to give notice that you want to withdraw from a program and receive a refund of fees or if you have a complaint against the college.

When you communicate formally with your private career college you should do so in writing. The document should be delivered to an official at the college by email, fax, registered mail, or by personal delivery.

Keep copies of any written communications between you and the private career college.

Documents you must receive

The private career college is responsible for providing you with a copy of your [contract](#), [transcript](#) and the [credential](#) earned after you graduate.

Contract

When you enrol in a vocational program with a private career college, you must sign and receive a written contract. The private career college must give you a copy of the signed contract.

The written contract **must** contain:

- the approved program name
- your address, telephone number and, if applicable, e-mail address
- the program's start and expected end date
- the program's language of instruction
- the program's admission requirements
- a schedule of hours of instruction
- the location of instruction, and if instruction is to be provided online, the website address
- the location of any additional training location and/or practicum and the website address if additional training and/or a practicum is provided online
- the fees payable by you set out in Canadian dollars, including an itemized list of fees for any products or services, including books, equipment, administration fees (such as processing applications, or conducting admissions tests)
- a payment schedule indicating the time and amount of each payment

The contract must also include a place for you to acknowledge that you have received a copy of this Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities issued by the Superintendent of Private Career Colleges and the college's:

- fee refund policy
- student complaint procedure
- sexual violence policy

- student expulsion policy

and, if required by a superintendent's policy directive:

- a program disclaimer

PCC administrators:

Print a copy of this Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities and attach it to the student's contract you keep on file. The student must also acknowledge receiving this information.

Consent section

The written contract must also have a consent section for the collection and use of your private information and the following statements, **in bold**, that:

- the contract is subject to the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005* and the regulations made under the act
- the private career college does not guarantee employment for any student who successfully completes a vocational program offered by the college
- you are entitled to a copy of the signed contract immediately after it is signed

Note:

If you notice that your contract does not have the elements listed above, notify the private career college as soon as possible or contact the ministry:

pcc@ontario.ca

Transcript

If you have not received a copy of your transcript within 90 days of ending your studies, you should contact the private career college to request a copy. It is recommended that you also make and keep a digital record of the transcript when you complete or leave your program for your own records.

You also have the right to access your transcript for 25 years after you complete or leave the private career college.

If the private career college closes, you will be able to access your transcript from an [approved third-party transcript issuer](#). We suggest that you ask your college for the name of the third-party issuer when you complete or leave your program.

Credential

A private career college that issues credentials must issue you any applicable credential (diploma or certificate) within 60 days of successfully completing a program. The college does not have to issue your credential until you have paid your fees in full although you are always entitled to a copy of your transcript.

Concerns and complaints

Student complaint procedure

Every private career college must have a student complaint procedure to resolve complaints raised by a student. Under the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005* and its regulations, the Superintendent of Private Career Colleges can consider a student's **complaint only after**:

- the student has followed the college's student complaint procedure
- has complained directly to the college
- is not satisfied with the outcome

If you request the Superintendent of Private Career Colleges to review your concern or complaint submit it using the ministry's [Program Approval and Registration Information System](#) (PARIS.) At your first visit, you will be asked to [create a student account](#).

Your complaint or concern can be tracked easily and addressed directly through your account. You may also request a review of you complaint by email:

pcc@ontario.ca

Once you submit your complaint and any supporting documents, the superintendent or a delegate will review the documents and advise you on next steps.

You can [log-in to your PARIS account](#) at any time.

Sexual violence policy and accommodation

All private career colleges must have a stand-alone policy to address sexual violence involving students. In addition, all private career colleges must, without fee, appropriately accommodate the needs of students affected by sexual violence.

The sexual violence policy must be included in every enrolment contract between a student and a private career college. It must also be published on each private career college's website or, where the private career college does not have a website, posted in a conspicuous location at each campus of the private career college.

Sale of students' goods and services

If you make goods or provide services as part of the requirements to complete your program, a private career college can:

- sell these goods
- provide these services to the public
- arrange for the delivery of these services to the public

The college cannot profit from these sales. It can only charge an amount that allows the college to recover its costs.

Fee collection

A private career college is only allowed to:

- charge or collect fees for a program in Canadian dollars
- charge or collect compulsory fees that are equal to or less than the fees approved by the Superintendent of Private Career Colleges and published on [ServiceOntario](#)
- charge or collect optional fees for a program if they are approved by the Superintendent

Before a contract is signed, a private career college can charge a fee up to \$500 to process your application and do assessments or admissions tests. These fees must be included in your contract at the time you sign it.

Itemized list of fees

Private career colleges must provide to the Superintendent of Private Career Colleges an itemized list of all fees charged to students, expressed in Canadian dollars. This includes:

- tuition fees
- cost of books
- any administrative charges
- any other compulsory or optional fees

The Superintendent publishes the fees (except optional fees) on [ServiceOntario](#).

Unapproved or inaccurate fees

If a private career college charges or collects any compulsory fee that is not published on [ServiceOntario](#) or that is higher than what is published, you are entitled to a full refund of the unpublished fee or the difference in amount between what is published and what was collected. The same applies if the college charges or collects any optional fee that is not approved by the Superintendent of Private Career Colleges.

Note:

A private career college cannot require you to obtain a product or service from a particular person or vendor as a condition of admission into the program. There may be required products or equipment for the training (for example, a laptop), but you are free to purchase those products or equipment anywhere you wish.

Receipts

A private career college is required to issue you a receipt every time you pay a fee. You should keep all receipts for your own records.

Refunds

A private career college is required to issue [a fee refund](#) within 30 days in many cases outlined below. You should check if the private career college specifies the timeframe of their refunds in the refund policy attached to your contract. There is also a [cooling-off period of two days after signing the contract](#).

Only the compulsory program fees published on [ServiceOntario](#) or optional program fees approved by the Superintendent of Private Career Colleges are covered by the refund policy. An optional program fee might be the cost of a field trip or conference that is related to your studies but not required content of the program.

To get a refund on books or equipment you received from the college under a contract you must return them:

- in the same state they were in when supplied to you
- within 10 days of withdrawing

All refunds must be in Canadian dollars.

The college **cannot** deduct money from a refund you are entitled to for a vocational program if you owe money:

- to the private career college for other services
- for other non-vocational programs offered by the college

The same refund policy applies when you withdraw from a program or are expelled from a private career college, as long as you are expelled in accordance with the college's expulsion policy or sexual violence policy.

Cooling-off period

You can cancel a contract for the provision of a vocational program within two days of signing it if you provide written notice to the private career college. It is important to keep a copy of your written notice. You are entitled to a full refund of fees paid for the program, including any application fee, from the college.

Types of refunds

Full refund

In the following circumstances, you can cancel a contract and make a written request for a full refund. Once you cancel a contract and the refund is applied, you cannot continue your studies and are not entitled to receive a transcript.

- the private career college collects any fees for the program before the college is registered or before the program is approved under the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005*
- you are expelled from the private career college in a manner or for reasons outside of the college's expulsion policy or sexual violence policy
- the private career college collects more than 20% of the total fees for the program up to \$500 before signing a contract with you
- a total of more than 10% of the program is taught by unqualified instructors
- the contract does not include all the mandatory terms required ([refer to the Contract section](#))
- the private career college, while still operating, discontinues the program before you can complete the program

In addition, you also may seek a full refund if a private career college or its representative makes untrue statements for the purposes of convincing you to enrol in the program and the statements constitute a fundamental breach of the contract. The categories of inappropriate statements include:

- a false or misleading statement
- a statement that guarantees admission to or successful completion of the program or employment after completing the program
- a statement that guarantees the right to enter Canada or receive a visa or work permit

It is best to make a request for a full refund as soon as you find out about the issue or it may be more difficult to support your claim.

Partial refund before a program begins

You are entitled to a refund of fees paid for a program minus 20% of the program fees up to \$500 if you:

- withdraw from the program more than two days after signing a contract and **before** the program begins
or
- do not meet the program's admission requirements when the program starts

Partial refund after a program begins

If you withdraw from a program after the program begins, you may be entitled to a refund of fees paid for the program, depending on how much of the program a private career college has delivered.

In most cases, the private career college can keep 20% of the program fees up to \$500, plus the fees for the portion of the program delivered.

However, if the private career college cancels the contract for the program because you do not attend the first 14 days, the private career college can only keep 20% of the program fees up to \$500.

International students

If you are attending or planning to attend a private career college under a student visa, some special rules apply.

Fee collection

You should make sure that you are familiar with the rules mentioned in the [Fee Collection section of this page](#).

A private career college is allowed to charge international student fees in relation to a vocational program but these fees cannot be higher than what is published on [ServiceOntario](#).

Fee refund

You can cancel a contract with a private career college or withdraw from a program for any reason. The same refund policy for domestic students also applies to you.

International students unable to get a student visa

A rule applies to an international student unable to obtain a student visa to enter Canada. As long as you deliver a written notice of this fact to a private career college before half of the portion of a program has passed, you are entitled to a refund of fees paid for the program, except that the college is allowed to retain 20% of the total fees for the program or \$500, whichever is less.

Insurance

Every private career college is required to have insurance in case you have an accident in class or while on an offsite practicum. If you are injured while attending a private career college, you should immediately inform the relevant official at the college.

Midway evaluation

If you enrol in a program that is 12 months or shorter or is delivered over an undefined period of time (for example, a commercial flight program), a private career college is required to provide you with the result of at least one evaluation of your progress **before** you complete half of the total length of the program.

If your program is longer than 12 months, for each 12 month period, the college is required to provide the result of at least one evaluation **before** you complete half of each period.

Qualified instructors

You are entitled to be taught by an instructor who has the required experience (academic, practical and/or teaching) outlined in the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005*. Some programs must also meet industry standards for instructors. Private career colleges must follow the act and program standard when they hire teaching staff.

On a temporary basis, a private career college is allowed to use a substitute instructor who does not meet all these requirements. However, the college is not allowed to use a substitute instructor to teach a total of **more than 10%** of a program.

Closure

Certain rules apply when a private career college closes. If your college closes before you finish your program, efforts will be made to give you an opportunity to complete your program at another private career college or institution.

[The Training Completion Assurance Fund \(TCAF\)](#) exists to help eligible students in this situation. Instead of participating in training completion, or if no training

completion is available, you may receive a refund of fees paid for the portion of the program that has not been delivered.

You can also contact the ministry by email:

- TCAF-PCC@ontario.ca

Contact

If you have questions about the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005* and regulations, contact:

Private Career Colleges Branch
Ministry of Colleges and Universities
77 Wellesley Street West, Box 977
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1N3

- [Tel: 416-314-0500](tel:416-314-0500)
- [Toll-free: 1-866-330-3395](tel:1-866-330-3395)
- pcc@ontario.ca
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