

## Post secondary success for Aboriginal Learners (MOU)

Jurisdiction: British Columbia

Contact: Janice Nakamura

Level: Post-Secondary

Theme: Government or board policies

### Description of Practice:

On March, 11, 2005, the BC Ministry of Advanced Education (AVED) signed a landmark **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** with representatives of the province's post-secondary institutions, the federal government and key Aboriginal organizations. The MOU confirms the signatories' commitment to work together to improve levels of participation and success for Aboriginal learners in post-secondary education and training in British Columbia.

The Memorandum of Understanding on Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training reads:

*We, the undersigned, acknowledge that although there has been some progress in recent years, there is a need for improved levels of participation and success for Aboriginal learners in post-secondary education and training in British Columbia.*

*We state our intention to work collectively toward this goal within the mandates of our respective organizations and to bring in other partners as appropriate. This will be accomplished by building on our successes to date, collectively identifying needs, and implementing strategies to improve the success of Aboriginal post-secondary learners in British Columbia.*

Signatories to the MOU include:

1. Ministry of Advanced Education
2. First Nations Education Steering Committee
3. First Nations Summit
4. BC Assembly of First Nations
5. Métis Provincial Council
6. United Native Nations Society
7. B.C. University Presidents' Council
8. University College Presidents
9. B.C. College Presidents
10. Federal Government
11. Indigenous Adult Higher Learning Association

Additional Partner groups include:

Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation  
Ministry of Education  
Ministry of Economic Development

### Background:

It has been well documented that Aboriginal students at both the high school and post-secondary levels have not experienced school success at the same rate as non-Aboriginal students. Reducing the post-secondary education achievement gaps between Aboriginal people and other Canadians will require significant effort over the long-term.

In November 2004, the First Nations Summit (FNS) and the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNEC) proposed that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding Aboriginal post-secondary education be developed. The proposed MOU would confirm that the signatories to the agreement intend to work together within the mandates of their respective organizations to improve success for Aboriginal learners in British Columbia. Partners signed the MOU on March 11, 2005.

### Development:

Following the signing of the MOU, the partner groups are sharing information and developing strategies to ensure greater post-secondary education success for Aboriginal learners in BC. The MOU partners are also developing a joint action plan to work towards meeting this goal.

### Evidence:

Still in its infancy, the MOU provides a framework for its signatories to work together and find a balance in providing mainstream education and recognizing distinct cultural values so that post-secondary education is more accessible and more appealing to Aboriginal learners.

### Adaptability:

The intent of this MOU is to support and develop collaboration across various organizations to advance the needs of Aboriginal learners. It could readily be adopted elsewhere.

### Further information:

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