



HEALTH SCIENCE PROFESSIONALS  
HSPBA Professional Development Fund

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. **The Ministry of Health has allocated monies as a professional development fund for the HSPBA to administer. As a member of HSA covered by the HSPBA/HEABC Provincial Agreement, i.e. the health sector contract covering health science professionals, when will I be able to apply for funding to support my education/training?**

You may apply now. Applications will be accepted up until September 1, 2019.

2. **Will the fund cover expenses related to education/training underway before September 1, 2018?**

No. The fund is designed to cover education/training that starts between September 1, 2018 and December 31, 2019, including individual courses within a program which started prior to September 1, 2018.

3. **With this second call for applications, I see that the funding guidelines have been broadened beyond the initial guidelines. Will my initial application(s) be automatically reconsidered using the expanded guidelines, or do I need to request a reconsideration?**

Within the same funding caps, the funding guidelines have been broadened to now also include eligibility for education that starts after August 31, 2019 (up until education that starts December 31, 2019); exam fees and travel related to exam fees; travel for education within Canada; with acceptable rationale, education costs and travel for education within USA; with acceptable rationale, education costs (but not travel) for education internationally.

The onus will be on an applicant to request a reconsideration (via [PDFund@hsabc.org](mailto:PDFund@hsabc.org)) of a previously submitted application to take advantage of the broadened guidelines; an emailed request will suffice, unless you are seeking approval for certain costs not previously submitted, in which case you will need to submit a revised application.

4. **Is it possible to be approved for funding before I register for courses?**

Yes. However, you would have to submit an application and have received an approval letter prior to your course registration deadline. Due to the very large volume of applications, we are unable to provide any estimated timeline in relation to application assessment or approvals.

5. **How are applications prioritized? Is it first-come, first-served?**

The \$3M fund is to be allocated proportionally across three professional development categories:

- a. retraining HSPBA members for professions which are in short supply;
- b. ongoing required professional development for HSPBA members; and
- c. professional development for HSPBA members working specifically in rural and remote settings.

Applications will be processed in the order they are received, and any application that is approved will have satisfied the eligibility criteria and funding guidelines. A successful applicant must submit satisfactory expense receipts in accordance with instructions found in an application approval letter. Only then will reimbursement of approved expenses be issued.

**6. Certain Ministry priority service areas are listed in the application form. Should I submit an application even if I can't say for certain that a particular priority service area would be advanced with my application?**

Yes. Do your best to answer how you think your application will serve the particular priority.

**7. What types of education/training are considered as professional development?**

Professional development includes a range of events/instruction, such as workshops, seminars, conferences, courses, or programs. It might require in-person attendance, distance learning, or clinical placement. It might be of relatively short duration or a more lengthy pursuit of credentials such as a diploma, advanced certification, or degree. This does not include professional association membership fees.

**8. What type of actual costs are considered for reimbursement?**

Tuition fees, registration fees, exam fees, the cost of required books/materials, and other reasonable education/training-related expenses are considered, to a maximum of \$5000.00, for education in Canada or, with acceptable rationale, the USA and other international countries. Online courses offered by organizations/providers located in the U.S.A. or other international countries are eligible for funding support.

Costs that are not eligible include: meals, child care, student fees, and memberships to professional organizations.

**9. The type of professional development I want to pursue requires me to travel or temporarily relocate within Canada or the USA. Are reasonable costs of travel or accommodation eligible for funding support?**

Yes. There is an additional maximum of \$5000.00 considered as support for members who must travel or arrange for accommodation **within Canada or, with acceptable rationale, the USA** to access education/training or a related clinical placement that is not offered locally. Travel costs that are not eligible include: meals, fuel, baggage fees (for fewer than four nights' stay), and taxis. Mileage may be reimbursed, where appropriate, at a rate of \$0.58 per km. Mileage includes travel to and from your home and course location only.

**10. How much detail do I need to provide about my course/program?**

In order to assess eligibility per the funding guidelines, the following details are required:

- The start date for each course or courses
- the tuition amount and/or registration fee for each course
- the location of the course or courses
- If the web link doesn't fit in the application field, please include it in your email message

**11. What is the definition of "rural and remote"?**

Rural and remote sites/locations are covered by the following criteria:

- All communities in the Northern Health Authority
- All communities listed in the HSPBA Collective Agreement article 37.02 – Isolation Allowance
- all communities on the current list of "eligible underserved communities" used to determine eligibility for BC student loan forgiveness:  
[https://studentaidbc.ca/repay/repayment-help/bcloan-forgiveness-program#Am\\_I\\_eligible](https://studentaidbc.ca/repay/repayment-help/bcloan-forgiveness-program#Am_I_eligible)
- All communities defined as rural, small rural or remote at page 46 of the Ministry of Health's 2015 policy paper "Rural Health Services in BC: A Policy Framework to Provide a System of Quality Care."

If you are unsure of whether your community is considered rural or remote, **please see the separate Rural and Remote document**, found here:

<https://hsabc.org/system/files/Rural%20and%20Remote%20site%20table.pdf>

It includes the complete list of eligible communities, or send a query to [PDFund@hsabc.org](mailto:PDFund@hsabc.org).

**12. Is there an appeal process to access if my application is not approved in part or whole?**

No. Every effort will be made to process applications fairly and in accordance with the eligibility and funding guidelines.

**13. Can members apply to have wages paid from the fund?**

No. In order to support professional development for as many members as possible, the fund will not pay for wages associated with an application.

**14. Are my professional dues or association memberships fees eligible for this funding?**

No. This funding is intended for tuition and course-related expenses such as books, travel, etc.

**15. Is this fund a substitute for any collective agreement provisions?**

No. The professional development fund is over and above the collective agreement. All provisions of the HSPBA/HEABC Provincial Agreement continue to apply, including Education Leave as per Article 17 and Unpaid leave as per Article 22.

**16. If my application is approved, how and when will I be reimbursed?**

After you receive your approval letter, you will submit your paid receipts and banking information to the PD Fund email address. Your reimbursement information will be reviewed and forwarded for processing and payment via direct deposit. You do not have to complete your education before submitting receipts for payment. Expenses can be reimbursed in installments during your education period, within reason, but we will expect receipts to be batched as much as possible.

**17. How do I get any other question about this Professional Development Fund answered?**

To most efficiently handle enquiries, please direct your question to: [PDFund@hsabc.org](mailto:PDFund@hsabc.org)