

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) GUIDANCE COUNSELLING - OUTCAN

Children's Education Management (CEM) is a Military Family Services Program (MFSP) under the umbrella of Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS). Here, you will find information prepared by the CEM Guidance Counselling team pertaining to the services offered to our Canadian military families as related to the education of dependent children when posted outside of Canada (OUTCAN).

By navigating the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Guidance Counselling section of our website, you may find the information therein helpful in the preparation and planning for the education of your dependent children related to an upcoming posting.

The following links are especially relevant to understanding and accessing information related to the education of your dependent child/children when posted OUTCAN:

[CEM Contact List](#)

[Foreign Service Directives \(FSD 34\) Education Allowances](#) (OUTCAN)

[List of Compatible Schools](#) (OUTCAN)

FAQs

1. [What types of support are available from Children's Education Management \(CEM\)?](#)
2. [What should I consider when choosing the best educational system for my child OUTCAN?](#)
3. [How can the CEM guidance counsellor assist us with transitioning our child into their new school?](#)
4. [I have questions about educational allowances/financial reimbursements related to my dependent child's education; where should they be directed?](#)
5. [Who calculates the equivalent credits my child has earned in their previous high school when transitioning to a new high school?](#)
6. [Who evaluates credits my child has earned OUTCAN in view of post-secondary applications?](#)
7. [We will be returning to Canada part way through my dependent child's secondary schooling. What can we do to be best prepared for re-entry into a Canadian school?](#)
8. [My dependent child will graduate from secondary school while we are posted outside of Canada. What can we do to be best prepared to apply to colleges/universities back in Canada?](#)
9. [My dependent child has special needs. Are there any educational allowances to support his/her education?](#)
10. [Under which circumstances would the CEM guidance counsellor approve distance learning courses for my child?](#)
11. [If I would like to contact my assigned CEM guidance counsellor for assistance, how may I reach them?](#)

FAQs

1. What types of support are available from Children's Education Management (CEM)?

CEM supports Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) families by managing and supervising:

- Educational compensation/benefits programs for the Department of National Defence for CAF Families posted inside and outside of Canada;
- Canadian Armed Forces Overseas Schools (SHAPE in Casteau, Belgium and AFNorth in Brunssum, Netherlands);
- Centralized guidance counselling services, including educational screenings for all OUTCAN postings; and
- Outreach to the education sector to increase awareness of the military child profile.

2. What should I consider when selecting an educational system for my child OUTCAN?

The first place to start when you are looking for a school at post is the [List of compatible schools](#) section of the CEM website. There, you will find the approved schooling options at each post.

Consideration should be given to the curriculum offered, the age and grade level of your child, the length of your posting rotation as well as the location:

United Kingdom's educational system has been deemed compatible up to grade 8 only. Depending on birth date, entry and grade placement may differ from Canada;

United States and DoDEA school (Department of Defence Education Activity) abroad have been deemed compatible with Canadian school systems. Most require fewer credits for high school graduation than Canadian schools. Distance learning may be provided by CEM on a case by case basis, if required for graduation. (This is not required for students graduating at post.) Kindergarten age-entry requirements may differ from Canada and may vary by state;

International Baccalaureate (IB) programs: The International Baccalaureate or "I.B." program encompasses a challenging course of studies. It does not lend itself to every learning profile; an important stressor to consider when posted outside of Canada. For more information on the International Baccalaureate program, you may wish to visit their website at: <http://www.ibo.org>;

Advanced Placement (AP) courses: A program which offers university-level curricula and examinations to high school students. Students who qualify may take AP courses according to offerings and regulations within the school where they are offered; <https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/apcourse>

French Lycées are deemed compatible for francophone students due to the language of instruction but may require an entrance exam for new students. They typically follow a more rigid style of course delivery, assessment and evaluation than is customary in Canada;

Belgian Lycées are deemed compatible for francophone students due to the language of instruction but may require an entrance exam for new students. They typically follow a more rigid style of course delivery, assessment and evaluation than is customary in Canada; and

Australia and other Southern Hemisphere locations generally do not have a compatible school calendar to schools inside of Canada, (January vs. September start to the school year) which may make the transition from one system to the other challenging, especially at the high school level.

For more information regarding school systems at post, you can contact your Children's Education Management Guidance Counsellor.

The CEM counsellor assigned to members with surnames beginning with the letters 'A' to 'K' is Andrea Smith. She can be reached at: andrea.smith2@forces.gc.ca.

The CEM counsellor assigned to members with surnames beginning with the letters 'L' to 'Z' is Carolle Coulombe. She can be reached at: carolle.coulombe@forces.gc.ca.

3. How can the CEM guidance counsellor assist us with transitioning our child into their new school?

The CEM Guidance Counselling Services' mandate is to contribute to overall CAF family resiliency by providing support to members and their dependent children by assisting them to navigate educational transitions. The goal in doing so is to provide information and educational tools in order to mitigate potential negative impacts on schooling due to geographical moves.

Educational guidance counselling available to members include:

- Educational Screenings of CAF dependent children for all OUTCAN postings;
- Telephone and email counselling with assigned CEM guidance counsellor; and
- If required, CEM guidance counsellor may act as liaison with guidance counsellor at post.

The educational counselling provided will be relevant to the following factors:

- Age and grade of student;
- Anticipated length of posting;
- Student's past, current and projected school curricula;
- Credit assessment and/or report cards; and
- Related documents such as individual education plans and psycho-educational assessments.

4. I have questions about educational allowances/financial reimbursements related to my dependent child's education; where should they be directed?

CEM is authorized under CBI 12 and FSD 34 to reimburse Canadian military families for the entitlements outlined therein. You will find FAQs related to education allowances on the CEM home page. The CEM guidance counsellor does not offer advice regarding financial aspects of education, reimbursements or entitlements.

If you are uncertain about whether your situation applies or if you wish to know more procedural information about education benefits/allowances, you are encouraged to contact the receiving URS/Education Clerk associated with your geographic area. See CEM contact list [here](#).

If you still require further clarification, please email your query to: CEMGEE@forces.gc.ca

5. Who calculates the equivalent credits my child has earned in their previous high school when transitioning to a new high school?

While the CEM guidance counsellor can help with interpretation of one curriculum versus another and assist with understanding the divide between various credit systems, it is **always** the new/receiving school which completes the previous credit accumulation equivalency evaluation.

In order to mitigate any surprises and to maximize educational planning time, we recommend connecting with the new school's guidance counsellor by forwarding your dependent child's/children's transcripts and most recent report cards as soon as a posting message is received or at least at the time of the House Hunting Trip (HHT). Click [here](#) for ideas on how to build a School Transition Portfolio for your child.

6. Who evaluates credits my child has earned OUTCAN in view of post-secondary applications?

The following links will provide you with the names of 6 organizations authorized to provide official credit assessments which may be required by some post-secondary institutions:

- Canada wide: www.icascanada.ca
- Canada wide: www.learn.utoronto.ca
- Canada wide and U.S.A.: www.wes.org/ca/
- British Columbia: www.bcit.ca/ices
- Alberta: www.alberta.ca/iqas
- Québec: www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

This may be a reimbursable expense if your child graduates at post and if the post-secondary institution in Canada requires it for admission purpose.

7. We will be returning to Canada part way through my dependent child's secondary schooling. What can we do to be best prepared for re-entry into a Canadian school?

Transitioning from one curriculum to another part way through high school has its challenges. The best way to mitigate any negative impact is to, as best as possible, plan for it *from the start of the outside of Canada posting*.

The CEM counsellor can assist with this process. Some guiding questions to help plan for the return to Canada, educationally, include:

- Which curriculum will my dependent child be following abroad?
- How many credits will they have accumulated prior to returning to Canada?
- If they had stayed in Canada would they have accumulated the same/fewer/more number of credits?
- Realizing there is no absolute certainty, is it plausible we will be returning to the same province/territory we left, or will we likely be returning to a different one or, to a cross-posting?

Based on the answers to these questions, the CEM counsellor can work with you to plan for as seamless a return, educationally, as possible.

Once the new (back to Canada/or cross) posting is confirmed, we recommend connecting with the new school's guidance counsellor by forwarding your dependent child's/children's transcripts and most recent report cards as soon as a posting message is received or at least at the time of the HHT in order to mitigate any surprises and to maximize educational planning time.

Click [here](#) for ideas on how to build a School Transition Portfolio for your child.

8. My dependent child will graduate from secondary school while we are posted outside of Canada. What can we do to be best prepared to apply to colleges/universities back in Canada?

Much the same as for students graduating from secondary school anywhere, advance planning and research is key. This would have started prior the graduating year through earlier guidance assistance, careers courses and personal planning to ensure that your dependent child is enrolled in the required courses in grades 11 and 12 to gain entry into desired post-secondary programs.

Some key points to consider, with graduation in mind:

- Connect as early on as possible with the guidance counsellor at the school at post;
- Have your dependent child communicate to him or her their hopes and intents regarding programs and post-secondary institutions to which they intend to apply;
- Become familiar with the websites of those post-secondary colleges/universities;
- Encourage your dependent child to keep a calendar of deadlines for applications to post-secondary schools, scholarships and bursaries and ask them to review it with their school guidance counsellor; and
- Remind your dependent child that often their secondary school will need some lead time to send required transcripts, letters of recommendation and/ or other pertinent documentation - especially if sending back to Canada from overseas (though many institutions now have electronic portals). For credit/credential assessment if required.

Canada wide:

- www.icascanada.ca
- www.learn.utoronto.ca
- www.wes.org/ca/

Province specific:

- British Columbia: www.bcit.ca/ices
- Alberta: www.alberta.ca/iqas
- Québec: www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

This may be a reimbursable expense if your child graduates at post and if the post-secondary institution in Canada requires it for admission purpose.

- It has been suggested that if your dependent child is enrolled in a foreign curriculum such as an American curriculum, SAT or ACT scores can be useful in helping the admissions process even when applying to Canadian universities, as they are standardized and easily interpreted. Encourage your child to see their school guidance counsellor as early as possible about sitting these test(s). More information can be found at:
 - www.collegeboard.org
 - www.act.org
- Encourage your dependent child to research post-secondary information early on. Here are some sites to get him/her started:
 - www.canadian-universities.net (Information on Canadian universities and colleges)
 - www.univcan.ca (General university and some scholarship information)
- When applying to Canadian post-secondary institutions as a Canadian student from outside of Canada- **do not have your dependent child apply as an international student**. Using your 'Station Forces' military mailing address most often solves the issue of being flagged as an International student and triggering the need to write English/French language proficiency tests as well as having to pay expensive international tuition fees.
- Click [here](#) for information on scholarships.
- Click [here](#) for ideas on how to build a School Transition Portfolio for your child.
- If your dependent child is considering taking a year off between high school graduation and their post-secondary studies otherwise known as a '**GAP Year**', before or during an OUTCAN posting, click [here](#) for more information.
- If your dependent child is considering pursuing post-secondary studies in your country of post, the school counsellor there is likely well versed in the necessary application timelines and requirements.

Please note that [FSD 34](#) doesn't apply unless your dependent child is attending full-time post-secondary studies INCAN as per [FSD 34.6 \(a\)](#).

9. My dependent child has special needs. Are there any educational allowances to support his/her education?

Navigating educational transitions related to a posting can be challenging for most families. For families with children who have special needs, the process can be even more complex to navigate.

We recommend connecting with the new school's guidance counsellor/special education teacher by forwarding your child's/children's transcripts / most recent report cards and most recent Individual Education Plan as soon as a posting message is received or at least at the time of the HHT. It is possible that the school will ask for a *recent* psycho-educational assessment in order to provide relevant programming.

Please note that special education programming is limited at our CAF overseas schools. (SHAPE and AFNorth)

For special education pertaining to OUTCAN postings, please refer to the protocols of the [Educational Screening Process](#).

10. Can CEM approve eLearning/distance learning courses for my child?

CEM Guidance Counsellor approved (prior to enrollment) in an eLearning/distance learning courses may be reimbursable upon completion on a case by case basis. Please contact your assigned guidance counsellor to discuss your child's situation. See #11 for contact information.

It is important to note that not all secondary school aged children involved in family postings outside of Canada will require or will be suitable candidates for this style of curriculum delivery.

The following link provides a check list which can be used to help determine suitability for eLearning course delivery:

[Distance Learner Profile](#)

11. How may I contact my assigned CEM counsellor for assistance?

The CEM counsellor assigned to members with surnames beginning with the letters 'A' to 'K' is Andrea Smith. She can be reached at: andrea.smith2@forces.gc.ca.

The CEM counsellor assigned to members with surnames beginning with the letters 'L' to 'Z' is Carolle Coulombe. She can be reached at: carolle.coulombe@forces.gc.ca.