ALCC

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Employee Handbook

Your Guide to Policies, Benefits, and Workplace Expectations



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About The Employee Handbook

Purpose of the Handbook

The Apex Language and Career College Employee Handbook is a comprehensive resource designed to help employees understand the policies, procedures, and expectations of our organization. It serves as a guide for maintaining a professional, safe, and inclusive work environment while fostering mutual respect and effective communication.

While this handbook does not constitute a binding employment contract, it is an important tool to support mutual understanding and a harmonious work environment. By familiarizing yourself with its contents, you contribute to the shared success of our organization.

What You'll Find in This Handbook

- **Workplace Policies** Guidelines on attendance, dress, and professional conduct within the team.
- **Code of Conduct** Expectations for maintaining a respectful and inclusive work environment.
- **Safety and Security** Procedures to ensure your health and safety at work.

Why This Handbook Matters

- **Clarity** Ensures you are informed of your rights and responsibilities within the company.
- **Consistency** Provides a unified understanding of the company's policies and procedures.
- **Support** Help you navigate any questions or concerns during your employment.

This handbook is a living document and may be updated periodically to reflect changes in company policies, labor laws, or industry practices. Please ensure you are familiar with its contents, as it plays a key role in our shared success.

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01 Welcome

1.1 Who We Are

Apex Language and Career College (ALCC) has helped students from over 40 countries around the world achieve their language goals since 2000. ALCC is committed to providing all students with the tools to achieve top educational standards while instilling healthy social skills. By developing each student's full potential, ALCC graduates will succeed in a global community. ALCC offers quality education, experienced teachers, knowledgeable staff and an inclusive environment.

1.2 Our Mission, Vision and Core Values

Our objective is to help students improve their English language skills and prepare for post-secondary education, workforce readiness and real-life situations in Canada.

Mission

Apex Language and Career College is committed to providing all students with the tools to meet our educational standards while instilling healthy social skills. To develop the full potential of each individual to succeed in a global community.

Vision

To provide for our students' future by achieving excellence in education through leadership, character and community partnership.

Core Values

Student-Centered Learning
Prioritizing the needs, growth and success of every student, while ensuring they have the tools and support to excel.

Global Perspective
Encouraging students to understand and engage with the global community, preparing them for success in diverse environments.

Social Responsibility
Instilling healthy social skills to develop responsible, thoughtful individuals who can positively contribute to their communities, both locally and globally.

1.3 License and Accreditation

Apex Language and Career College is licensed by the Province of Nova Scotia to provide language training classes. As such, it is bound by the rules and regulations established by the province of Nova Scotia which govern all institutions in Nova Scotia.

Apex Language and Career College is a fully accredited member of Languages Canada, a learning institute designated by Immigration Refugees Citizenship Canada (IRCC) - our DLI code is O19330669492 - and an authorized user of the Imagine Education in Canada brand by EduCanada.

02 Workplace Commitment

2.1 Equal Opportunity Employment

Apex Language and Career College is an equal-opportunity employer. We are committed to providing a work environment free from discrimination and harassment of any kind. Employment decisions are based on qualifications, merit, and business needs, regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, or any other legally protected status.

We believe diversity strengthens our team and fosters innovation, creativity, and better problem-solving. By embracing inclusivity, we ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to contribute and thrive within our company.

2.2 Non-Harassment / Non-Discrimination

Apex Language and Career College has zero tolerance for harassment, discrimination, or bullying in the workplace. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal or physical conduct that creates a hostile work environment.
- Discrimination based on any legally protected characteristic.
- Unwanted sexual advances or inappropriate behavior.

Employees who experience or witness such behavior are encouraged to report it immediately to their supervisor or the Human Resources department. All complaints will be taken seriously and handled confidentially.

2.3 Drug-Free / Alcohol-Free Workplace

The use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol on company premises is strictly prohibited. Employees are expected to report to work free from the influence of substances that may impair their performance or judgment. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

2.4 Open Door Policy

Apex Language and Career College values open and honest communication. We encourage employees to share ideas, concerns, or suggestions with their supervisors, managers, or the Human Resources department. Our Open Door Policy ensures that every team member has the opportunity to voice their opinions and resolve workplace issues in a constructive manner. By fostering open communication, we create an environment of mutual respect and continuous improvement.

03 Company Policy and Procedures

3.1 Company Property

All company property, including computers, vehicles, tools, and other resources, is provided for work-related purposes. Employees are expected to:

- Handle company property with care.
- Report any damage, theft, or loss immediately.
- Refrain from using company resources for personal or unauthorized activities.
- Maintain professionalism in all communications using company resources.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action or financial responsibility for damages.

3.2 Privacy

Apex Language and Career College respects the privacy of its employees.
Please note that:

- Personal information collected by the company will be handled in accordance with data protection laws and will not be shared without consent except as required by law.

3.3 General Attendance

Punctuality and consistent attendance are critical to maintaining a productive work environment. Employees are expected to:

- Arrive on time and be prepared to work during scheduled hours.
- Notify their supervisor as soon as possible in the event of an absence or delay.
- Provide appropriate documentation, such as a doctor's note, for extended absences.

Chronic tardiness or absenteeism may result in disciplinary action.

3.4 Tardiness

Employees are considered tardy if they arrive more than 10 minutes after their scheduled start time without prior notice.

Excessive tardiness will be addressed by supervisors and may lead to corrective action if it disrupts operations.

3.5 Dress Code

Apex Language and Career College promotes a professional image by maintaining a dress code appropriate for the workplace.

- Business casual attire is required by all levels of staff.
- Clothing should be respectful and suitable for the workplace.

Supervisors will address any concerns regarding attire on a case-by-case basis.

3.6 Personnel Files

Personnel files are maintained by the Human Resources department and include records such as:

- Employment contracts and agreements
- Performance reviews and disciplinary actions
- Certifications or training records
- Government ID and criminal record checks

Employees have the right to access their personnel files by submitting a formal request to Human Resources. These files are confidential and will only be shared with authorized personnel when necessary.

3.7 Code of Professional Conduct

At Apex Language and Career College, we expect all employees to adhere to the highest standards of professional behavior. This includes:

- Treating colleagues, clients, and stakeholders with respect and courtesy.
- Upholding honesty and integrity in all interactions.
- Avoiding any activities that could harm the company's reputation or conflict with its interests.

04 Employment Classification

4.1 At-Will Employment

Apex Language and Career College operates under an At-Will Employment policy. This means that the employment relationship between the institution and its employees is not bound by a fixed term and can be ended by either party at any time, with or without cause or notice.

That said, Apex Language and Career College is committed to:

1. Adhering to all applicable labor laws and regulations.
2. Ensuring that all employment decisions are made fairly, equitably, and in compliance with our anti-discrimination and equal opportunity policies.

We value the trust and collaboration of our employees and aim to build strong, long-lasting relationships within our team.

4.2 Employment Classification

Apex Language and Career College (ALCC) classifies its personnel according to both functional branch and contractual relationship.

Functional Branches

- **Administrative Staff** — Individuals whose primary responsibilities support the management, coordination, and operation of the College. This category includes, but is not limited to, roles in admissions, finance, student services, and marketing.
- **Academic Staff** — Individuals whose primary responsibilities relate to the delivery, oversight, and development of instructional programs. This category includes, but is not limited to, instructors, program coordinators, and test supervisors.

Contractual Relationship

Within each functional branch, personnel may be engaged under one of the following classifications:

- **Employees** — Individuals employed directly by ALCC and included on the College's payroll. Employees are subject to the policies, procedures, and conditions of employment established by ALCC, and may be eligible for applicable benefits.
- **Subcontractors** — Independent professionals retained by ALCC to provide specific services under a contractual agreement. Subcontractors are not employees of ALCC, are not included on payroll, and are responsible for their own taxation, benefits, and business obligations.

4.3 Workload Classification

Apex Language and Career College further classifies personnel as full-time, part-time, or seasonal, depending on the nature and extent of their engagement. These classifications apply differently to Administrative Staff and Academic Staff, reflecting the distinct requirements of each branch.

Administrative Staff

- **Full-Time** — Employees or subcontractors who are regularly scheduled to work a standard workweek of 35 hours or more on a continuous basis.
- **Part-Time** — Employees or subcontractors who are regularly scheduled to work fewer than 20 hours per week on a continuous basis.
- **Seasonal** — Employees or subcontractors engaged to work during a defined period of peak activity (e.g., enrollment periods, summer programs), with employment or contract ending at the conclusion of that period.

Academic Staff

- **Full-Time** — Instructors or academic personnel assigned a full instructional and/or academic workload as defined by program requirements. This may be measured in teaching hours, course load, or equivalent responsibilities.
- **Part-Time** — Instructors or academic personnel assigned a reduced instructional or academic workload, typically fewer courses or contact hours than the full-time equivalent.
- **Seasonal** — Instructors or academic personnel engaged for specific terms, sessions, or courses, with no expectation of continuous employment beyond the designated academic period.

05 Compensation & Payment Policies

5.1 Compensation Policy

Apex Language and Career College staff are not considered permanent and do not receive an annual salary. All levels of staff are compensated based on an hourly rate that is mutually agreed upon by the institution and employee.

5.2 Payment Policy

Apex Language and Career College processes payroll on a biweekly basis. Paydays occur every other Wednesday, and employees will receive payment via direct deposit unless otherwise arranged. Employees are encouraged to promptly review their pay stubs and report any discrepancies to the Finance Department within five business days of receiving payment.

5.3 Employee Payment

Employees are entitled to an annual performance review, during which compensation may be increased based on merit, contribution, and the financial position of the college. In addition to hourly wages, employees are eligible for other paid entitlements and benefit from statutory payroll deductions outlined later in this handbook.

5.4 Subcontractor Payment

Subcontractors are paid bi-weekly upon submission of proper invoices to the Hiring Manager. Subcontractors are not considered employees of the institution and therefore do not receive employee benefits, paid leave, or annual performance-based increases. Payments to subcontractors are not subject to statutory deductions, and it is the sole responsibility of the subcontractor to report income, remit taxes, and comply with all government requirements. Apex Language and Career College is not responsible for providing tax slips or records beyond issued invoices and payments.

06 Leave Policies

6.1 Leave of Absence

A leave of absence may be granted for personal or professional reasons at the discretion of the company.

- **Eligibility** — Full-time employees who have completed at least 3 months of service.
- **Duration** — Leaves of absence are unpaid and may not exceed 3 consecutive days.

Requests must be submitted in writing and approved by both the employee's supervisor and Human Resources.

6.2 Family and Medical Leave

Employees can take requested unpaid leave for:

- The birth or adoption of a child.
- Serious health conditions affecting the employee or their immediate family.
- Other qualifying emergencies related to military service.

Employees must provide at least 30 days' notice for planned leave or as much notice as possible for unforeseen circumstances.

6.3 Sick Leave

A leave of absence may be granted for personal or professional reasons at the discretion of the company.

- **Eligibility** — Full-time employees are eligible for sick leave after completing a 3-month probation period.
- **Usage** — Sick leave may be used for personal illness, medical appointments, or to care for an immediate family member.
- **Documentation** — For absences exceeding 3 consecutive days, employees are required to provide a medical certificate.

Unused sick days do not carry over into the next year.

07 Benefits

7.1 Full Payroll Deductions

All employees will receive full payroll deductions in accordance with federal and provincial legislation. This includes income tax, Canada Pension Plan (CPP), and Employment Insurance (EI) contributions, ensuring compliance with all applicable regulations.

7.2 Paid Statutory Deductions

Full-time employees are entitled to paid statutory holidays as recognized by the province of Nova Scotia. Employees will receive their regular wages for these designated holidays, provided they meet the eligibility requirements outlined in employment standards legislation.

Apex Language and Career College observes the following paid holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Nova Scotia Heritage Day
- Good Friday
- Canada Day
- Labour Day
- Christmas Day

If a holiday falls on a weekend, it will typically be observed on the following Monday.

7.3 Paid Sick Days

Full-time employees are entitled to up to **3 paid sick days per year**. These days may be used when an employee is unable to attend work due to illness or medical appointments. Sick days are not carried over to the following year and are provided to support the health and well-being of staff.

7.4 Paid Snow Days

Full-time employees are entitled to up to **3 paid snow days per year** when severe weather conditions make it unsafe to travel to work. The decision to close the school due to weather conditions will be made by management only. Teachers and staff are not responsible for determining snow day closures. Unused snow days do not carry over to the following year.

08 Employee Health & Safety

8.1 Workplace Safety

Apex Language and Career College is committed to providing a safe and secure working environment for all employees. To ensure workplace safety, employees are expected to:

1. Follow all safety protocols and procedures.
2. Report unsafe conditions or hazards immediately to their supervisor.
3. Participate in mandatory safety training sessions.

Supervisors are responsible for monitoring compliance with safety policies and addressing potential risks promptly.

8.2 Workplace Security

The security of our employees, property, and data is a top priority. Apex Language and Career College implements the following measures to ensure a secure environment:

- **Confidential Information** — Employees are expected to safeguard company data and avoid sharing sensitive information with unauthorized individuals.
- **Emergency Contacts** — All employees must provide updated emergency contact information to Human Resources.

Suspicious activities or security breaches must be reported immediately to the security team or supervisor.

8.3 Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency, Apex Language and Career College has established protocols to protect employees and minimize risks.

- **Evacuation** — Familiarize yourself with the emergency exits and evacuation routes. Follow instructions from emergency coordinators during drills or actual emergencies.
- **Fire Safety** — Fire extinguishers are strategically located throughout the premises. Only trained personnel should operate them during emergencies.

Regular safety drills will be conducted to ensure employees are prepared to respond effectively to emergencies.

09 Work Performance

9.1 Expectations

Apex Language and Career College is committed to maintaining a high standard of excellence and professionalism in the workplace. Employees are expected to:

- Complete assigned tasks accurately and within deadlines.
- Demonstrate problem-solving skills and take initiative in addressing challenges.
- Communicate effectively with colleagues, supervisors, and clients.
- Uphold the company's values and contribute to a positive work environment.

Supervisors will provide guidance and support to ensure employees meet these expectations.

9.2 Insubordination

Apex Language and Career College defines insubordination as the refusal to follow lawful and reasonable instructions from a supervisor or manager. Examples include:

- Deliberate defiance of direct orders.
- Disrespectful behavior toward supervisors or colleagues.
- Failure to complete assigned duties without valid justification.

Insubordination disrupts workplace harmony and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

9.3 Performance Reviews

Regular performance reviews are conducted to evaluate employee contributions, provide feedback, and identify opportunities for growth.

Frequency	Reviews are conducted annually and may include a mid-year check-in.
Criteria	Reviews assess job performance, goal achievement, and adherence to company values.
Development Plans	Based on the review, employees may receive recommendations for professional development or additional training.

Employees are encouraged to actively participate in the review process and provide feedback to their supervisors.

10 Discipline Policy

10.1 Grounds for Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action may be taken for behaviors including, but not limited to:

- Chronic tardiness or absenteeism
- Violation of company policies or procedures
- Harassment, discrimination, or bullying
- Theft or misuse of company property
- Breach of confidentiality or data security

All employees are expected to uphold the company's standards of conduct to maintain a respectful and productive workplace.

10.2 Procedures

Disciplinary actions are handled in a fair and consistent manner. Steps include:

Verbal Warning	For minor infractions or first offenses.
Written Warning	Documented notice for repeated violations or serious misconduct.
Suspension	Temporary leave without pay, depending on the severity of the infraction.
Termination	Dismissal from employment for grave or repeated offenses.

Each case is reviewed individually, and employees have the right to respond or appeal disciplinary decisions.

10.3 Termination

Termination of employment may occur under the following circumstances:

Voluntary Resignation	When an employee chooses to leave the company.
Involuntary Termination	Due to performance issues, misconduct, or redundancy.

Employees are required to return all company property and complete an exit interview before their final day of work.

11 Termination Policies

11.1 Voluntary Termination

When an employee decides to resign from Apex Language and Career College, we request:

- A written notice is provided at least two weeks in advance.
- Completion of all pending assignments or projects, as agreed with the supervisor.

An exit interview will be conducted to gather feedback and facilitate a smooth transition.

11.2 Final Paycheck

Employees will receive their final paycheck on the next scheduled payday following their last day of work. The final paycheck will include:

- All earned wages up to the last day of work.

Deductions for unreturned company property or outstanding obligations may apply, in accordance with company policy and legal regulations.

11.3 Exit Interview

Exit interviews are an important part of the offboarding process at Apex Language and Career College. They provide an opportunity to:

- Understand the employee's reasons for leaving.
- Gather constructive feedback about the company's policies, culture, and management.
- Address any outstanding concerns or issues.

All feedback provided during the exit interview will remain confidential and will be used to improve the work environment and employee experience.

12 Acknowledgments of Receipt

12.1 Employee Copy

Employees are required to read and understand the contents of this Employee Handbook. By signing the acknowledgment form, employees confirm:

- They have received a copy of the handbook.
- They understand the company's policies and expectations.
- They agree to comply with the policies outlined within the handbook.

12.2 Employer Copy

A signed copy of the acknowledgment form will be retained in the employee's personnel file for record-keeping purposes.

Acknowledgment Form Example:

Acknowledgment of Receipt

I, [Employee Name], acknowledge that I have received, read, and understood the Apex Language and Career College Employee Handbook. I agree to abide by the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook.

Employee Signature:

Date:

Employer Representative:

Thank You

At Apex Language and Career College, we value your contributions and are committed to fostering a workplace that supports your professional and personal growth. This Employee Handbook serves as a foundational resource to help you navigate your journey with us.

We encourage you to revisit this document whenever you have questions about company policies, expectations, or your rights as an employee. If you need further clarification, do not hesitate to reach out to your supervisor or the Human Resources department.

Together, we can build a productive, inclusive, and thriving work environment that benefits everyone. Thank you for being a part of the Apex Language and Career College family.

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