

MEDIA RELEASE

December 19, 2016
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MR16-071

Funding Available for NIC Upgrading Courses

Funding is available to help students prepare for post-secondary education, training and employment.

"The available funding helps support students as they work toward their goals," said NIC's Acting Vice-President, Learning & Students Tony Bellavia. "Upgrading courses provide a pathway into university transfer, business, tourism and hospitality, fine arts, health, community care and trades programs, giving students the training and skills they need to launch or change their careers."

When tuition was implemented across BC in 2014, the province initiated the Adult Upgrading Grant which covers the cost of tuition, textbooks, supplies, student fees, transportation and unsubsidized childcare for eligible students.

Funding is also available from the North Island College Foundation which offers one scholarship and several bursaries earmarked for upgrading students. Bellavia encourages any students thinking about upgrading to apply for funding.

"Our students come from a variety of backgrounds," said Bellavia. "Some have not graduated from high school while others want to refresh their skills after being out of school for a few years or they are missing an admission prerequisite because their goals have changed."

NIC's upgrading courses allow students to choose from fundamental to provincial levels of English and math (equivalent to grade 12) as well as college preparatory biology, chemistry and physics depending on their individual goals. Students can complete their Grade 12 equivalency or take just one course to meet admission requirements for post-secondary.

Increasingly, post-secondary credentials are needed to qualify for employment in BC. To meet this demand many students start with upgrading.

When Deanna Robertson returned to school to pursue her dream of becoming a teacher, she began with upgrading courses at NIC's Campbell River campus. She took as many courses as she could toward her Bachelor of Arts before transferring to VIU to complete her Bachelor of Education.

"I had a young family and attended part time," she said. "It was tough to become a student again but I appreciated NIC's small classroom sizes. My instructors knew my name and my story and they encouraged me along the way."

Alanna Mitchell, a member of K'ómoks First Nation, upgraded her math while taking university studies courses at NIC.

"I am grateful for the continued support of NIC'S community," she said. "The elders in residence have been cheerleaders as I continue my education."

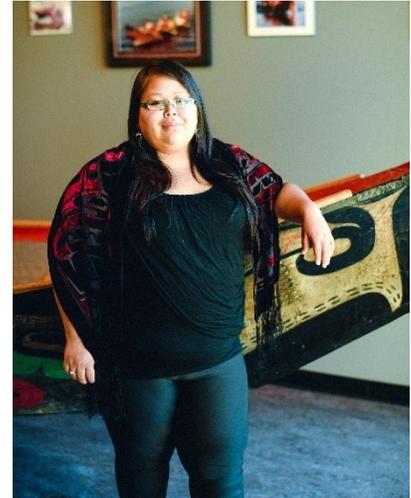
While she was at NIC, she made the most of her experience by connecting with elders in residence, working as an intercultural ambassador and as an Aboriginal representative for the North Island Students Union. She transferred to the University of Regina's Bachelor of Arts degree in fall 2016.

"Upgrading courses are designed to be flexible and manageable," said Bellavia. "Courses are offered online, face-to-face, during the day and in the evening to work around our students' diverse schedules and learning styles."

Educational advisors are available for help choosing programs and classes, filling out application forms and applying for funding. Call 1-800-715-0914 or visit www.nic.bc.ca/upgrading to learn more.

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To prepare for university, Alanna Mitchell took upgrading courses alongside university-level courses at NIC.