

## ATBC AUTHENTICITY PROGRAM

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**1. What is the AtBC authenticity program?**

*It is a program that is designed to give those that qualify, a certification of authenticity that will provide a marketing advantage over those tourism businesses that do not offer authentic (both modern and traditional) Aboriginal cultural experiences and activities as a part of their tour package or business offering.*

**2. Why is authenticity important to AtBC?**

*Visitors have indicated to Tourism BC and AtBC that they want to visit Authentic Aboriginal businesses with Aboriginal people they can meet and speak with. AtBC wants to help its members meet visitor demands and to be more profitable.*

**3. Do I have to apply to the authenticity program?**

*The program is voluntary; however to qualify to apply to the Authenticity program, you must be an AtBC stakeholder in good standing, AND participate in an AtBC Marketing Program (see [www.aboriginalbc.com/corporate/corp\\_marketing](http://www.aboriginalbc.com/corporate/corp_marketing)), and you must qualify as an Aboriginal tourism business fully owned / controlled by Aboriginal people. The Marketing Program (which is largely supported by AtBC) provides thousands of dollars of national and international exposure at a small fraction of the cost to you.*

**4. Do I need to fill in every question to qualify for the authenticity program?**

*The application form contains questions that may not apply to your business, you cannot leave these responses blank. You must acknowledge that you have reviewed the question by applying a mark such as indicating "N/A" or by drawing a line through the question, or by indicating the reason why the question is N/A (not applicable). If there are questions you have missed, you will be contacted by an AtBC representative to assist you with completing these questions. You may also contact AtBC with your questions.*

**5. What is a Review Agent?**

*A Review Agent is a person hired by AtBC to review all authenticity program applications, verify the information provided and follow up with applicants who have submitted incomplete applications.*

**6. What are Mandatory Criteria?**

*Mandatory Criteria are parts of the authenticity application that must to be met by the applicant in order to qualify for the authenticity program. For example, one mandatory criterion is that only businesses that deemed to be Aboriginal businesses in accordance with the AtBC definition, qualify for the program. Other mandatory criteria are identified in the application. If you are not certain you have met the criteria, contact AtBC with your questions and / or submit your application by the required deadline. The Review Agent will go over your application and notify you of any missing or insufficient responses.*

**7. How do I know if my business is considered a tourism business?**

*If you derive a minimum of 60% of your revenue from tourists, your business is considered a tourism business.*

**8. Does AtBC have Market-ready Criteria?**

*AtBC has established market and export ready guidelines that must be met as part of the mandatory criteria for authenticity certification. They can be found at [www.aboriginalbc.com/corporate/corp\\_marketing](http://www.aboriginalbc.com/corporate/corp_marketing) on the Co-op Marketing program application form.*

**9. What is the review and approval process for the authenticity program?**

*The review process is: 1) application is received by AtBC with full payment by mail or courier; 2) Review Agent reviews the application, asks for additional information or determines that the application does not meet the Mandatory Criteria; 3) The Review Agent makes a recommendation to the Adjudication Committee to accept or reject an application; 4) The Adjudication Committee recommendations are submitted to the AtBC Board of Directors for acceptance; 5) Once the decision is made on the status of your application, AtBC will contact you. If the approval is granted, then a License Agreement will be issued; if it is rejected, the Applicant may choose to submit an appeal in writing.*

**10. What is an Adjudication Committee?**

*The Adjudication Committee is a group of Aboriginal and industry representatives from tourism who are responsible for appraising the Review Agent's assessment, and recommending to AtBC if the applicant is recommended for approval or rejection to the "Authentic Aboriginal Cultural Tourism" program.*

**11. How long does it take to get approved?**

*Applications are available on the AtBC website year round. The Adjudication committee first meets in early November, and presents their recommendations to an AtBC Board of Directors meeting. Appeals or modifications to applications will be accepted up to 1 week prior to the second/last Adjudication meeting for that period.*

**12. How often are new applications to the Authenticity program accepted?**

*New applications are only accepted from July 1 to September 1 each year. The Notice of Intent to Apply must be filed by August 15, with the full application submitted by September 1.*

**13. Do I have to complete a full application form each year?**

*No, after your full application has been approved, the following two years only require you complete a program renewal form. This form will be sent to you by AtBC or you may obtain the form at [www.aboriginalbc.com](http://www.aboriginalbc.com). Your application completion cycle is:*

- *First Year – full application must be completed*
- *Second and Third Year – complete the renewal form*
- *Fourth Year – full application must be completed*

**14. When do I submit my renewal form?**

*The renewal form must be sent prior to annual deadline.*

**15. When must I pay the application or renewal fee?**

*You must pay the full amount of the required fee at the time of submission to have your application or renewal processed.*

**16. What if my business is located in or operates on lands that are overlapping First Nations Traditional Territories?**

*The applicant is required to get approval from the First Nation authorities of lands your Aboriginal tourism business is operating in. The direction of who grants the authority to operate in traditional lands is determined by the First Nations' whose lands you are in.*

- *If there is no requirement that you gain authority from all the "overlapping" First Nations, then one must grant permission to operate.*
- *One First Nation requires, others do not – get permission from the one that does.*
- *More than one requires permission – must gain permission from those that do. If all that require permission do not grant approval, then to avoid having your application rejected indicate reasons or rationale as to why it could not be obtained so the Review Agent can assess the situation.*

**17. If there is no formal cultural approval system by the Aboriginal community, what do I do?**

*If there is no approval system, have the **Declaration for Cultural Approval** contained in this application completed by the Authorities of the culture, and include the completed Declaration with your application.*

**18. Who can be a Reference?**

*A reference should be a person that is intimately familiar with your business operations. It can be a customer or supplier to your business, or a person involved in the tourism industry including a tourism operator in your region. It cannot be a person who is directly related to the Applicant (i.e., relative or staff), who is an owner or member of the association that owns the business, or a person who is on the Board of Directors, or an AtBC staff member or Director, or a person involved in the Application Review and Approval Process. Each reference must sign the form or submit an email that includes the required statement (see the application for the required reference statement).*

**19. What if my application is not approved, can I appeal the decision?**

*You may appeal on the grounds of missing information, or if you have new information or qualifications. Your request can only be submitted in writing to the Review Agent who will guide you through the Appeals process – a telephone request is not considered a **Request for Appeal**. The Appeal is only reviewed by the Adjudication Committee (not the AtBC Board of Directors); therefore, we recommend you submit your written appeal immediately upon being notified of your rejected application.*

**20. Can an approved Aboriginal Tourism Business have its designation revoked?**

*If an approved Aboriginal tourism business does not comply with the use of the Brand, or does not maintain the mandatory elements of the program criteria (which includes quality service and safety), then AtBC can revoke the approved businesses' authenticity designation, remove the business from all program elements, and thus request the use of the Brand be halted immediately. If approval is revoked, there is no reimbursement of any application fees.*

**21. Who owns the AtBC Authenticity Brand?**

*The Brand is the property of the Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC (AtBC). As the Brand is an organization asset, AtBC is required to maintain the Brand's integrity and that is done by monitoring its use, and as required, taking legal action to protect its use and reputation. AtBC may choose to license the use of the Brand to others for a period of time or limited use / application, etc.; however, full ownership of the Brand still remains with AtBC. Approved operators are only permitted to utilize the mark once the License Agreement has been signed and only in accordance with the Authenticity Brand Usage Guidelines.*

**22. Can I use the Brand logo on my literature and website?**

*ONLY operators who have been approved and signed a license agreement are permitted to use the Authenticity mark / brand, and ONLY in accordance with the Brand Usage Guidelines. Any breach of the terms can result in the license being revoked and other disciplinary actions taken.*