

CALIFORNIA PRIVATE POSTSECONDARY · BPPE

BPPE Compliance Checklist + Citation Response Playbook

A field-tested checklist for California beauty, barber, and cosmetology schools, built around the citations BPPE actually issues, plus a 30-day playbook for responding when one lands.

PREPARED BY

Bella AI · itsbella.ai

SCOPE

CA Private Postsecondary Education Act (CEC §94800 et seq.)

FOR

School owners, directors & compliance staff

California beauty and barber schools operate under **two regulators at once**: the Board of Barbering & Cosmetology (BBC) for program and clock-hour standards, and the **Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE)** for institutional approval and consumer protection. Most BPPE findings are not exotic. They cluster around a handful of recurring failures: a missing or late **Annual Report**, an incomplete **School Performance Fact Sheet (SPFS)**, **incomplete student records**, **enrollment-verification gaps**, and **STRF** assessment or disclosure errors. Work this checklist quarterly and most citations never happen.

Keep your institution and any branch or satellite locations in continuous good standing.



Current Approval to Operate is on file and unexpired; the certificate is posted on premises.

Approvals are time-limited. Track the expiration and renew well before lapse to avoid operating unapproved.



Renewal application filed at least 90 days before expiration with the correct renewal fee.

Late renewals can trigger penalties and a gap in approval status.



All branch and satellite locations are separately approved and listed.

Teaching at an unapproved address is a common, avoidable finding.



Substantive changes were reported (ownership change, location move, new program, name change) using the required notice or approval before they took effect.



Surety bond is current and at the correct amount for your annual tuition volume.



BBC program approval is aligned with BPPE-approved programs (program names, clock hours, and curricula match across both agencies).

The #1 and #2 sources of citations. Treat the Annual Report deadline as immovable.



BPPE Annual Report filed on time with the annual fee. [Top citation](#)

A missed or late Annual Report is the single most common BPPE finding for beauty schools. Calendar it the day the prior one is filed.



Reported student and financial data reconciles to your records (enrollment counts, charges collected, completion and placement numbers tie to source documents).



A current SPFS exists for every approved program and for the correct reporting cohort or period. [Top citation](#)



SPFS completion, placement, and license-exam pass rates are calculated correctly and match the methodology BPPE requires.

Wrong cohort definitions and miscounted "available for graduation" denominators are frequent errors.



Every enrolling student signs and dates the SPFS before signing the enrollment agreement, and the signed copy is retained in the file.



Salary, earnings, and "gainful employment" claims on the SPFS are supported by documentation, not estimated.

"Incomplete student records" is a catch-all finding. A file that is missing one signed and dated form counts.



Each file contains every required signed and dated document (enrollment agreement, SPFS, disclosures, attendance and clock-hour records).

[Top citation](#)



Proof of high-school graduation or equivalent (or ATB where applicable) is verified and documented.

Enrollment gap

Missing high-school-diploma verification is one of the most cited enrollment-eligibility failures.



Clock-hour and attendance ledger is complete and current for every active and completed student.



Financial ledger per student reconciles charges, payments, refunds, and balance owed.



Records are retained for the required period and stored securely (with a transcript-permanency policy for academic records).



Records are organized for fast audit pull so a reviewer can locate any required item in a file within minutes.

4

Enrollment Agreements & Disclosures

The enrollment agreement is a regulated contract. Every required element must be present and accurate.



Enrollment agreement lists program name, total clock hours, and total charges itemized (tuition, STRF, registration, kits, books, fees).



Cancellation and refund policy is stated, including the right to cancel and the pro-rata refund formula for clock-hour programs.



"Notice Concerning Transferability of Credits/Hours" is included.



Student Tuition Recovery Fund (STRF) disclosure statement is included and signed.



Current catalog is provided to and acknowledged by the student before enrollment.



No charges collected before the agreement and required disclosures are signed.

5

Student Tuition Recovery Fund (STRF)

STRF protects California resident students. Collection, remittance, and disclosure are all separately citable.



STRF assessment is collected from each eligible student at the current per-\$1,000 rate of institutional charges. **STRF**



Assessments are remitted to BPPE on the required schedule with the STRF report.



The mandated STRF disclosure language is given to every student and retained signed.



STRF is shown as a separate line item on the enrollment agreement and ledger, not folded into tuition.

Marketing claims are held to the same accuracy standard as your disclosures.



Ads identify the institution by its approved name and do not imply guarantees of employment or licensure.



Placement, salary, and pass-rate claims in marketing match the SPFS and are substantiated.



No misrepresentation of accreditation, approval, or program length (for example, advertising hours or credentials you are not approved to award).



Website, social media, and third-party lead pages are reviewed for the same accuracy standards as print.

Quarterly habit: pull 5 random student files and run Sections 3 through 5 against them. If any file is missing a signed or dated item, fix the gap *and* the process that created it. Most "incomplete records" citations are systemic, not one-offs.

The first 30 days after a BPPE citation

A citation is a deadline, not a verdict. The schools that fare best move fast, document everything, and fix the root cause, not just the instance. Use this timeline.

1**DAYS 0 TO 2 · ACKNOWLEDGE****Read it carefully and log every deadline**

Identify the exact code section or sections cited, the response due date, and any required corrective-action plan. Put every deadline on a shared calendar. Acknowledge receipt in writing if a response window is specified. Do not ignore it or assume an extension.

2**DAYS 2 TO 5 · ASSESS****Determine scope: one student or a system**

For each finding, ask whether it is an isolated file or a process gap affecting many students. Pull a representative sample to find out. Assign an owner per finding. This determines whether you fix one file or rebuild a workflow.

3**DAYS 5 TO 18 · CORRECT****Remediate every instance, then the root cause**

Cure the cited items (obtain missing signatures and dates, correct the SPFS, refile or late-file the Annual Report, reconcile STRF, issue any owed refunds). Then change the underlying process (checklists, intake steps, system controls) so the gap cannot recur.

4**DAYS 10 TO 22 · DOCUMENT****Build the evidence package**

Assemble before-and-after proof for each finding: corrected documents, dated records, screenshots, ledgers, and a short narrative of what changed. Reference the citation's code sections directly so the reviewer can map your response to each item.

5**DAYS 18 TO 28 · RESPOND****Submit a complete, on-time corrective-action response**

Send a written response that addresses each finding individually, attaches the evidence, and describes the preventive control now in place. Keep a copy of everything submitted and the proof of timely delivery.

6**DAY 30 AND BEYOND · PREVENT****Institutionalize the fix**

Add the corrected process to your standard checklist, train staff, and schedule a recurring internal self-audit (quarterly file pulls, an Annual Report countdown, an SPFS refresh). The goal: this finding never appears in the next review.

Bella automates everything in this checklist

Bella is the AI-first Student Information System for beauty and barber schools: Annual Report and SPFS data, complete student records, STRF tracking, and audit-ready files, monitored continuously. itsbella.ai

Powered by Bella ›

Educational resource, not legal advice. Requirements change. Verify current rules, fees, deadlines, and the exact SPFS and STRF methodology directly with the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education at bppe.ca.gov and the Board of Barbering & Cosmetology at barbercosmo.ca.gov before relying on this document.

© 2026 Bella AI · itsbella.ai · BPPE Compliance Checklist + Citation Response Playbook, 2026 Edition.