

# Canada Education Savings Program – Industry testing guide

December 12, 2025



## **Canada Education Savings Program – Industry testing guide**

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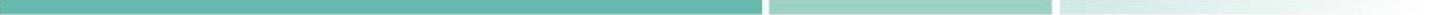
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# Table of Contents

<b>List of acronyms</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>List of tables</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Versions</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Document version history</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Key terms and definitions</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>9</b>
1.1 Purpose .....	9
1.2 Scope.....	9
1.3 Schedule.....	9
1.4 Confidentiality.....	9
<b>2. Industry testing process</b> .....	<b>9</b>
2.1 File creation.....	10
2.2 File submission.....	10
2.3 File processing.....	10
2.4 Transaction processing results .....	11
2.5 CESP system output files .....	11
<b>3. Industry testing success criteria</b> .....	<b>11</b>
3.1 Circumstances requiring industry testing .....	11
3.2 Volume criteria.....	12
3.3 Success rates .....	12
<b>4. Appendices</b> .....	<b>13</b>
4.1 Appendix A: Full test—Basic CESP, Additional CESP, and CLB .....	13
4.2 Appendix B: BCTESG test.....	18
4.3 Appendix C: 511-12 transaction test.....	22
4.4 Appendix D: Transfer and reversal test .....	23



## List of acronyms

### **AIP**

Accumulated income payment

### **BCTESG**

British Columbia Training and Education Savings Grant

### **BN**

Business number

### **CESG**

Canada Education Savings Grant

### **CESP**

Canada Education Savings Program

### **CLB**

Canada Learning Bond

### **CRA**

Canada Revenue Agency

### **EAP**

Educational assistance payment

### **ESDC**

Employment and Social Development Canada

### **ID**

Identification

### **ITG**

Industry testing guide

### **ITS**

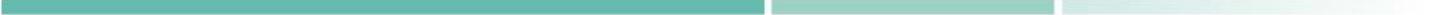
Interface transaction standards

### **MSFT**

Managed secure file transfer

### **PCG**





Primary caregiver

**POMM**

Payment and Organization Monitoring and Management

**PSE**

Post-secondary education

**RESP**

Registered Education Savings Plan

**RT**

Record type

**SIN**

Social insurance number

**SIR**

Social insurance registry

## List of tables

Table 1: File 1 test requirements—Contract information

Table 2: File 2 test requirements—Basic CESG, Additional CESG, and CLB requests

Table 3: File 3 test requirements—Financial transactions

Table 4: File 4 test requirements—Financial transaction reversals

Table 5: File 5 test requirements—Summary reporting transactions

Table 6: File 1—Baseline data

Table 7: File 2 test requirements—BCTESG requests

Table 8: File 3 test requirements—Financial transactions

Table 9: File 4 test requirements—Cancel BCTESG requests/financial transaction reversals

Table 10: File 1—Baseline data

Table 11: File 2 test requirements—CESG requests

Table 12: File 3 test requirements—511-12 transactions

Table 13: File 1—Baseline data

Table 14: File 2 test requirements—Transactions from the relinquishing promoter

Table 15: File 3 test requirements—Transactions from the receiving promoter



Table 16: File 4 test requirements—Reversal transactions

## Versions

**Version number:** 5.9

**Latest update:** November 2025

## Document version history

**Version:** 1.0

- **Date:** October 15, 1998
- **Description:** Initial version

**Version:** 2.0

- **Date:** March 3, 2000
- **Description:** Updates including testing forms, pass criteria, re-certification requirements, SIR testing

**Version:** 3.0.1

- **Date:** November 15, 2000
- **Description:** Updates for release 3.0.1

**Version:** 3.0.1.1

- **Date:** November 2001
- **Description:** Updates including removal of release 3.0.1 reference, live data

**Version:** 4.0

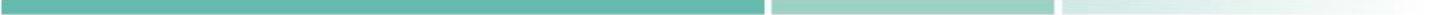
- **Date:** March 2005
- **Description:** Updates for release 4.0

**Version:** 4.1

- **Date:** December 2005
- **Description:** Updates related to the 511-12 transaction

**Version:** 4.2

- **Date:** July 2006
- **Description:** Updated section 3.3, 4.0 and 4.1 to remove confusion. Also added Annex B and Annex C



**Version:** 4.3

- **Date:** November 23, 2007
- **Description:** Updated industry testing email addresses and Annex A

**Version:** 4.4

- **Date:** March 2009
- **Description:** Updated sections 3.5, 4.1 and 4.2, updated address and changed the name of ViaSafe

**Version:** 4.5

- **Date:** March 2012
- **Description:** Added transaction origin testing scenarios, record type 700 summary reporting testing and testing requirement matrix

**Version:** 5.0

- **Date:** April 2013
- **Description:** Updated with Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings (SAGES) testing

**Version:** 5.5

- **Date:** November 2014
- **Description:** Updated with British Columbia Training and Education Savings Grant (BCTESG) testing

**Version:** 5.5

- **Date:** October 2015
- **Description:** Removed Alberta Centennial Education Savings (ACES) grant

**Version:** 5.9

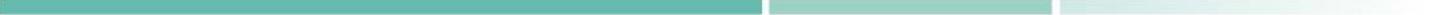
- **Date:** November 2025
- **Description:** Updated due to renewal of industry testing process, WEB compliance and cancellation of Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings (SAGES)

## Key terms and definitions

### Agent

An organization to which the responsibilities as outlined in a trustee's agreement have been conferred to. ESDC requires a letter from the trustee identifying who will function





as their agent, as well as a letter from the agent accepting responsibility for the duties as outlined in the letter from the trustee.

**Production run**

Term used to describe the processing of the industry transactions by the CESP system.

**Promoter**

The organization responsible for the administration of the RESP and, specifically, the organization that has secured approval for the RESP specimen plan from CRA.

**Protected**

Safeguard of particularly sensitive information with a high risk of injury to individuals, specific public, or private interests. This information is marked “protected” and is kept in secure areas.

**Sender**

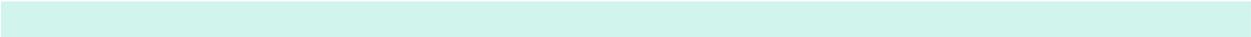
The organization sending information electronically to the CESP and receiving payments from the program. This organization must be the trustee of the RESP or an administrative agent for the RESP trustee. When the RESP trustee has appointed an agent to fulfill these duties, the agent may be the RESP promoter or can be another organization, provided there is only one agent per RESP specimen plan. However, the CESP does not consider a service provider who merely facilitates the electronic transmission to be the “sending organization” on behalf of the RESP trustee.

**Service provider**

The organization assigned by the sender to provide support services for RESPs.

**Trustee**

An organization that has a signed agreement with ESDC and is authorized to offer its services to the public as a trustee for a particular specimen plan.



## 1. Introduction

The CESP ITG outlines the guidelines and procedures required to successfully complete industry testing of the CESP system. It should be read in conjunction with the current version of the [CESP ITS](#).

### 1.1 Purpose

The goal of industry testing is to ensure that promoters can provide quality data in the files they are submitting to the CESP for processing by minimizing the number of errored and rejected transactions. In addition, the industry testing process helps financial institutions ensure that their system is ready to report transactions to, and receive transactions from, the CESP system.

### 1.2 Scope

This document is limited to the industry testing process and includes criteria for satisfying the related requirements.

### 1.3 Schedule

Senders can schedule a testing timeframe with the E-Services team at any time. Once a test file has been transferred to the CESP, an email should be sent to the industry testing mailbox at **EDSC.CN.PCEE.TESTDEINDUSTRIE-INDUSTRYTESTING.CESP.NC.ESDC@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca** as outlined in the [file submission section](#) of the industry testing process.

### 1.4 Confidentiality

Test files provided by senders may contain live data such as SIN information and/or financial information and is considered “protected”. The data volume information and client specific information is considered competitive information and it is treated with confidentiality, as are the test results. Specific information about a promoter, sender, or service provider will not be disclosed to any other promoter, sender, or service provider.

All test files must be transferred to the CESP using the secure method specified in the [file submission section](#) of the industry testing process. Test files submitted in violation of this security requirement will not be tested under any circumstances.

## 2. Industry testing process

Senders are required to create test data and send data files to the CESP for testing. The data is processed by the E-Services team and, upon completion, the test results are sent back to the sender for review.

## 2.1 File creation

The sender is responsible for creating and sending a file or set of files to the CESP for testing. Service providers must submit separate files for each sender they represent. Filenames should be prefixed with either a “T” or a “Z”.

Refer to the [appendices section](#) for information pertaining to the types and volumes of transactions required for each test.

Summary transaction data of record type 700 should be reported in a filename prefixed with a “Z”. Details of required transaction volumes for record type 700 can be found in the [test requirements section for summary reporting transactions](#).

**Note:** The method used for creating transactions and files in industry testing must be the same method used in production.

## 2.2 File submission

MSFT is the ESDC approved internet connectivity solution software for transmitting files electronically. Files can be sent for industry testing upon successful completion of connectivity testing.

Test files sent through MSFT are not automatically queued for industry testing. An email must be sent to the industry testing mailbox at **EDSC.CN.PCEE.TESTDEINDUSTRIE-INDUSTRYTESTING.CESP.NC.ESDC@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca** once the test files have successfully been transferred to the CESP. The email should contain the following information:

- name of sender, promoter, trustee, and service provider if applicable
- filename(s) submitted for testing
- name and contact information of individual(s) responsible for submitting data and retrieving results
- specify if live data is included in test files (specimen plan and business numbers provided by CRA must be used for industry testing)
- CESP release number or ITS version used for testing
- special processing instructions (for example, special test cases such as a simulation of multiple production runs)

## 2.3 File processing

Each industry testing file is processed against a non-populated database. The reason for this is to give the sender complete control over the data environment used for testing and to facilitate the interpretation of the results. The sender is responsible for preparing the test environment by submitting a file containing baseline data such as contracts, subscribers, and beneficiaries to the CESP.

Subsequent files should be submitted, and will be processed, in the order described in the [appendices section](#).

The SIR and CRA validation processes are simulated in the test environment and all validation rules are automatically passed.

A stand-alone validation script is used to verify the accuracy of the record type 700 transactions in the summary file.

## 2.4 Transaction processing results

Transaction volumes and success rates are reported back to the sender in the Production processing results report upon completion of processing the test file(s). Cumulative volumes and success rates will be provided in situations where multiple test files were sent and processed in the same cycle.

## 2.5 CESP system output files

At the completion of each simulated production run, the following output files will be automatically generated by the system (if applicable) and reported back to the sender:

- a severe error report (.ser)
- an error report (.err)
- a transaction processing report (.pro)
- a contract registration report (.reg)

**Note:** Refer to the current version of the [CESP ITS](#) for a description of the format of the output files.

Once received, the CESP output files should be loaded into the sender's system to update the processed transactions and record the CESP, the CLB and/or any provincial incentive amounts in their systems.

## 3. Industry testing success criteria

The Production processing results report generated by the CESP system provides the success rate of industry testing files submitted by senders. The report provides volume and quality success rates by transaction type. The minimum requirements needed to successfully complete industry testing are detailed in the [appendices section](#). Testing the 511-12 transaction is not mandatory unless the promoter plans to implement it.

Only CRA approved specimen plans (those used in the production data files) will be accepted during industry testing. Transactions that are processed against non-approved specimen plans will be rejected.

### 3.1 Circumstances requiring industry testing

Industry testing is required under the following business and system related circumstances:

- a new RESP promoter
- the implementation of an additional education savings incentive
- the addition of a sender
- a change of service provider
- a transfer by plan amendment
- a system update or conversion

Industry testing may also be required for certain business or system related circumstances other than those listed above. The promoter is responsible for contacting the CESP enrolment team at **NC-INSCRIPTION\_ENROLMENT-GD@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca** who in turn will coordinate with the CESP E-Services team. Once informed of the circumstances, the CESP E-Services team will inform promoters of which tests must be conducted.

Upon completion of industry testing, new promoters must satisfy the “150 contracts” test with live data. This will confirm that the promoter has met the CRA requirement of having collected all the information necessary to register at least 150 contracts (under one or more specimen plans).

A repeat of industry testing will be required when submitted transactions are repeatedly generating unacceptable error rates in the production environment (see section 3.3.3 of the [CESP reports](#) section in the RESP provider user guide). In situations where unacceptable error rates are on-going, the promoter and/or sender may be suspended from sending production files to the CESP until such a time as lower error rates are established in industry testing.

### 3.2 Volume criteria

Transaction volume requirements for the various types of industry tests are detailed in the [appendices section](#).

### 3.3 Success rates

Minimum success rate requirements for the various types of industry tests are defined in the [appendices section](#). Success rates are calculated based on the ratio of the number of successfully processed transactions (error is not generated) to the number of processed transactions by transaction type.

## 4. Appendices

This section outlines the transaction type and transaction volume requirements and the minimum success rate requirements for the various types of industry tests.

### 4.1 Appendix A: Full test—Basic CESP, Additional CESP, and CLB

Appendix A outlines the details of the CESP transactions required for a full industry testing cycle including the basic CESP, the additional CESP, and the CLB incentives. The requirements are broken up into 5 separate files and detailed in the following sections.

**Note:** Each file must be successfully tested before proceeding to the next until all the requirements in each file are met.

#### 4.1.1 File 1 test requirements—Contract information

All 100 contracts must receive a registerable status prior to moving to file 2.

**Table 1: File 1 test requirements—Contract information**

Record type	Transaction type	Description	Data format success rate	Overall success rate	Volume of transactions
100	1	Contract information	95%	90%	100
200	3	Beneficiary information	95%	90%	100
200	4	Subscriber information	95%	90%	100

#### 4.1.2 File 2 test requirements—Basic CESP, Additional CESP, and CLB requests

The following file 2 test requirements should be noted:

- omit the PCG/spouse information for contribution requests attracting basic CESP only
- additional CESP requests must be on an individual/sibling only contract to attract a grant payment
- CLB requests must be on an individual/sibling only contract to attract a bond payment

**Table 2: File 2 test requirements—Basic CESP, Additional CESP, and CLB requests**

Record type	Transaction type	Description	Data format success rate	Overall success rate	Volume of transactions
400	11	Contribution transaction (PCG/spouse information omitted)	95%	90%	15
400	11	Contribution transaction (PCG/spouse SIN information included)	95%	90%	15
400	11	Contribution transaction (PCG BN information included)	95%	90%	15
400	24	CLB request (PCG/spouse SIN information included)	95%	90%	15
400	24	CLB request (PCG BN information included)	95%	90%	15

**4.1.3 File 3 test requirements—Financial transactions**

For the transfer in and transfer out transactions (400-19, 400-23), your own specimen plans may be used in the “other\_spec\_plan\_ID” field. CLB amount fields should be populated where applicable.

**Table 3: File 3 test requirements—Financial transactions**

Record type	Transaction type	Description	Data format success rate	Overall success rate	Volume of transactions
400	13	EAP	95%	90%	15
400	14	PSE contribution withdrawal	95%	90%	15
400	19	Transfer in	95%	90%	15
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 01 contribution withdrawal	95%	90%	1

400	21	Grant repayment Reason 02 AIP	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 03 contract termination	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 04 ineligible transfer	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 05 ineligible beneficiary replacement	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 06 payment to educational institution	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 07 revocation	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 08 ceases to meet sibling only condition	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 09 deceased	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 10 overcontribution withdrawal	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 11 other	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment	95%	90%	1

		Reason 12 non-resident			
400	22	Termination adjustment	95%	90%	15
400	23	Transfer out	95%	90%	15

**4.1.4 File 4 test requirements—Financial transaction reversals and CLB stop requests**

Reversal transactions must always reference the original financial transaction being reversed. Referring to the promoter BN and transaction ID that appear on the original financial transaction does this. Upon matching the original and reversal transactions, the CESP “undoes” the effect of the original transaction. CLB amount fields should be populated where applicable.

**Table 4: File 4 test requirements—Financial transaction reversals and CLB stop requests**

Record type	Transaction type	Description	Data format success rate	Overall success rate	Volume of transactions
400	11	Contribution reversal (PCG/spouse information omitted)	95%	90%	15
400	11	Contribution reversal (PCG/spouse SIN information included)	95%	90%	15
400	11	Contribution reversal (PCG BN information included)	95%	90%	15
400	13	EAP reversal	95%	90%	15
400	14	PSE contribution withdrawal reversal	95%	90%	15
400	19	Transfer in reversal	95%	90%	15
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 01 contribution withdrawal	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment reversal	95%	90%	1

		Reason 02 AIP			
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 03 contract termination	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 04 ineligible transfer	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 05 ineligible beneficiary replacement	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 06 payment to educational institution	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 07 revocation	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 08 ceases to meet sibling only condition	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 09 deceased	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 10 overcontribution withdrawal	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 11 other	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 12 non-resident	95%	90%	1

400	22	Termination adjustment reversal	95%	90%	15
400	23	Transfer out reversal	95%	90%	15
400	24	CLB stop (PCG/spouse SIN information included)	95%	90%	15
400	24	CLB stop (PCG BN information included)	95%	90%	15

#### 4.1.5 File 5 test requirements—Summary reporting transactions

Send summary reporting transactions in a separate file containing only records of type 700 along with the header and trailer records. The file name should begin with the letter “Z”.

**Table 5: File 5 test requirements—Summary reporting transactions**

Record type	Transaction type	Description	Data format success rate	Overall success rate	Volume of transactions
700	Not applicable	Summary reporting transaction	100%	100%	15

## 4.2 Appendix B: BCTESG test

Appendix B outlines the requirements for the BCTESG incentive industry testing cycle. The requirements are broken up into 4 separate files and detailed in the following sections.

**Note:** Each file must be successfully tested before proceeding to the next until all the requirements in each file are met.

### 4.2.1 File 1—Baseline data

Promoters must first submit a file with baseline data. It is not necessary to submit File 1 with baseline data if this test is performed at the same time as the Full test.

**Table 6: File 1—Baseline data**

Record type	Transaction type	Description	Volume of transactions
-------------	------------------	-------------	------------------------

100	1	Contract information	50
200	3	Beneficiary information	50
200	4	Subscriber information	50

#### 4.2.2 File 2 test requirements—BCTESG requests

BCTESG requests must be on an individual/sibling only contract to attract a grant payment.

**Table 7: File 2 test requirements—BCTESG requests**

Record type	Transaction type	Description	Data format success rate	Overall success rate	Volume of transactions
411	40	BCTESG request	95%	90%	15

#### 4.2.3 File 3 test requirements—Financial transactions

For the transfer in and out transactions (400-19, 400-23), your own specimen plans may be used in the “other\_spec\_plan\_ID” field. BCTESG amount fields should be populated where applicable.

**Table 8: File 3 test requirements—Financial transactions**

Record type	Transaction type	Description	Data format success rate	Overall success rate	Volume of transactions
400	13	EAP	95%	90%	15
400	19	Transfer in	95%	90%	15
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 02 AIP	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 03 contract termination	95%	90%	1

400	21	Grant repayment Reason 04 ineligible transfer	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 05 ineligible beneficiary replacement	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 06 payment to educational institution	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 07 revocation	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 09 deceased	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 11 other	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment Reason 12 non-resident	95%	90%	1
400	22	Termination adjustment	95%	90%	15
400	23	Transfer out	95%	90%	15

**4.2.4 File 4 test requirements—Cancel BCTESG requests/financial transaction reversals**

Reversal transactions must always reference the original financial transaction being reversed. Referring to the promoter BN and transaction ID that appear on the original financial transaction does this. Upon matching the original and reversal transactions, the CESP “undoes” the effect of the original transaction. BCTESG amount fields should be populated where applicable.

**Table 9: File 4 test requirements—Cancel BCTESG requests/financial transaction reversals**

<b>Record type</b>	<b>Transaction type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Data format success rate</b>	<b>Overall success rate</b>	<b>Volume of transactions</b>
411	41	Cancel BCTESG request	95%	90%	15
400	13	EAP reversal	95%	90%	15
400	19	Transfer in reversal	95%	90%	15
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 02 AIP	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 03 contract termination	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 04 ineligible transfer	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 05 ineligible beneficiary replacement	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 06 payment to educational institution	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 07 revocation	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 09 deceased	95%	90%	1
400	21	Grant repayment reversal	95%	90%	1

		Reason 11 other			
400	21	Grant repayment reversal Reason 12 non-resident	95%	90%	1
400	22	Termination adjustment reversal	95%	90%	15
400	23	Transfer out reversal	95%	90%	15

### 4.3 Appendix C: 511-12 transaction test

Appendix C outlines the requirements for the 511-12 transaction industry testing cycle. The requirements are broken up into 3 separate files and detailed in the following sections.

**Note:** Each file must be successfully tested before proceeding to the next until all the requirements in each file are met.

#### 4.3.1 File 1—Baseline data

Promoters must first submit a file with baseline data. It is not necessary to submit File 1 with baseline data if this test is performed at the same time as the Full test.

**Table 10: File 1—Baseline data**

Record type	Transaction type	Description	Volume of transactions
100	1	Contract information	25
200	3	Beneficiary information	25
200	4	Subscriber information	25

#### 4.3.2 File 2 test requirements—CESG requests

Additional CESG requests must be on an individual/sibling only contract to attract a grant payment.

**Table 11: File 2 test requirements—CESG requests**

Record type	Transaction type	Description	Volume of transactions
400	11	Contribution without PCG/spouse information	15
400	11	Contribution with PCG/spouse information (SIN only, omit PCG/spouse given name and surname)	15

**4.3.3 File 3 test requirements—511-12 transactions**

The 511-12 transaction will point to the promoter transaction ID of the previously submitted contribution.

**Table 12: File 3 test requirements—511-12 transactions**

Record type	Transaction type	Description	Data format success rate	Overall success rate	Volume of transactions
511	12	Add PCG/spouse information	95%	90%	15
511	12	Correct previously reported PCG/spouse information	95%	90%	15

**4.4 Appendix D: Transfer and reversal test**

Transfer and reversal testing may be required under the following circumstances:

- a change of BN
- a change of contract numbers
- a transfer by plan amendment
- a merger or amalgamation

#### 4.4.1 File 1—Baseline data

Promoters must first submit a file with baseline data. The file will contain data from the relinquishing (originating) promoter including the old specimen plan ID.

**Table 13: File 1—Baseline data**

Record type	Transaction type	Description	Volume of transactions
100	1	Contract information (old specimen plan ID)	50
200	3	Beneficiary information (old specimen plan ID)	50
200	4	Subscriber information (old specimen plan ID)	50
400	11	Contribution (old specimen plan ID)	15
400	24	CLB request (old specimen plan ID)	15

#### 4.4.2 File 2 test requirements—Transactions from the relinquishing promoter

The second file will contain the transactions that are required to be submitted by the relinquishing (originating) promoter in a transfer scenario.

**Table 14: File 2 test requirements—Transactions from the relinquishing promoter**

Record type	Transaction type	Description	Date format success rate	Overall success rate	Volume of transactions
400	23	Transfer out (old specimen plan ID)	100%	100%	15
400	21	Grant repayment (old specimen plan ID) Reason 03 contract termination Amount fields = zero	100%	100%	15
400	24	CLB stop (old specimen plan ID)	100%	100%	15

#### 4.4.3 File 3 test requirements—Transactions from the receiving promoter

The third file will contain the transactions (with the new specimen plan ID) that are required to be submitted by the receiving (new) promoter in a transfer scenario.

**Table 15: File 3 test requirements—Transactions from the receiving promoter**

Record type	Transaction type	Description	Date format success rate	Overall success rate	Volume of transactions
100	1	Contract information (new specimen plan ID)	100%	100%	50
200	3	Beneficiary information (new specimen plan ID)	100%	100%	50
200	4	Subscriber information (new specimen plan ID)	100%	100%	50
400	19	Transfer in transaction (new specimen plan ID)	100%	100%	15
400	24	CLB request (new specimen plan ID)	100%	100%	15

**Important:** The standard format of the contract ID field must be consistent in system transfer situations. This means that if the format of the contract ID field is alphanumeric in the old system, then it must also be alphanumeric in the new system. Similarly, if the format of the contract ID field is numeric in the old system, then it must also be numeric in the new system. If this format consistency is not maintained, there is risk of data integrity and potential implications with CRA contract registration.

#### 4.4.4 File 4 test requirements—Reversal transactions

A reversal test should be conducted following the transfer test. The goal is to verify that the new system can correct data from the old system. The file will contain data from the receiving (new) promoter including the new specimen plan ID.

**Table 16: File 4 test requirements—Reversal transactions**

Record type	Transaction type	Description	Date format success rate	Overall success rate	Volume of transactions
400	11	Reversal of contribution previously sent by old promoter (new specimen plan ID)	100%	100%	15

