

# How to Develop Your New Program

## Conduct a Needs Assessment

Each new program being developed at BCIT requires some form of needs assessment as part of the program proposal. In many cases, this will involve developing a full Needs Assessment Report (see the "Getting Started" document for details). The information below will help you plan and conduct a needs assessment. The Needs Assessment Template available on the [LTC website](#) provides detailed guidance for compiling the report.

Locate information and assess the need for the program you want to develop *before* investing a lot of time on designing the program and preparing the proposal. Compiling a full needs assessment report can take several months, so begin this process as soon as possible once your Concept Paper has been approved by the VP Education, Research, & International and/or Education Council.

The needs assessment requires a comprehensive data set and analysis of factors that affect the design of the program and the potential for success of its future graduates. You'll have to investigate thoroughly. Reviewers of your proposal must be satisfied that your evidence for and assessment of the need for the program demonstrates due diligence.

Consulting with others is essential not only for gathering ideas and information, but also for ensuring support for your fledgling program. In-depth consultation can help you put together a solid program and proposal. Potential data sources are categorized below as primary or secondary sources. Both are important.

### *Primary data sources*

#### External sources

Input from external sources is invaluable, but remember that all external consultants in this development process are volunteers. Please use their time wisely. Make your request clear: are you asking for feedback on an idea, or more formal assistance as a document reviewer? Are you asking them to complete a survey, participate in a focus group, or write a letter of support? Each of these is one possible component of a needs assessment. In general, it is best to decide on your information gathering strategies before asking for input.

Typical External Sources	General Type of Input	Effective Methods
Employers (a key group): try for broadest representation of the cluster of occupations for which your proposed graduates may seek employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Anticipated need for graduates</li> <li>▪ Expectations of graduates: skills, knowledge, attitudes, competency</li> <li>▪ Level of employment entry for graduates</li> <li>▪ Resources / contacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Occupational analysis</li> <li>▪ Online survey (possibly distributed through a professional or trade association)</li> <li>▪ Focus groups</li> <li>▪ Phone interviews</li> <li>▪ Program / Industry Advisory</li> </ul>

Typical External Sources	General Type of Input	Effective Methods
		Committee meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Letters of support</li> </ul>
Government ministries (when <i>not</i> primary employers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Legislative requirements</li> <li>▪ Funding availability</li> <li>▪ Public resource materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Telephone</li> <li>▪ Email</li> <li>▪ Focus group</li> </ul>
Other post-secondary institutions <b>Note:</b> some may also be included in a public peer review of your proposal during the approval process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Similarities and differences between programs</li> <li>▪ Articulation and transfer issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Articulation committees</li> <li>▪ Email</li> <li>▪ Telephone</li> </ul>
Accrediting bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Certification of graduates and/or program accreditation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Telephone</li> <li>▪ Email</li> <li>▪ Interviews</li> <li>▪ Meetings</li> </ul>

### Internal sources

Ensure you provide all internal BCIT groups early notice that you're proposing a new program, and consult them as needed. Consultations can be done individually or in groups. Each of your internal sources can offer valuable insight and practical advice. Plan ahead; check the program approval process outlined in [Policy/Procedure 5401](#) for your program type, for timing of required meetings with internal stakeholder groups.

BCIT Groups	Type of Input and Assistance
Learning and Teaching Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program design and curriculum development</li> <li>▪ Advice on program consultation and proposal development</li> <li>▪ Project management</li> <li>▪ Editorial and graphic assistance</li> <li>▪ Word processing</li> </ul>
BCIT Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initial needs assessment research</li> <li>▪ Acquisitions and subscriptions</li> <li>▪ Resource material</li> </ul>
Registrar's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Admission/transfer issues</li> </ul>
Financial Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advice on student eligibility for financial aid for your proposed program</li> </ul>

BCIT Groups	Type of Input and Assistance
School of Computing and Academic Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applied communication, math, physics, chemistry, ESL and technical preparation courses</li> </ul>
IT Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical requirements and availability</li> </ul>
Marketing and Public Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program promotion, publicity and advertising</li> </ul>

### Secondary data sources

Use secondary data sources to find information on factors such as employability skills, labour trends, and comparable programs at other institutions. Quantitative data are preferred, when possible, for this type of information. Remember, the BCIT Library staff are available to assist you with your proposal research needs. Please contact a reference librarian for help tracking down data.

Type of Information	Purpose	Secondary Data Sources <i>(links valid as of November 2011)</i>
Professional and trade standards	Concept paper and curriculum development	Specific professional and trade associations, accreditation and certification bodies (your own sources)
National occupation classifications and potential job opportunities for graduates		National occupation classifications: <a href="http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2006/Welcome.aspx">http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2006/Welcome.aspx</a>
Skill and competency profiles		<a href="http://online.onetcenter.org">http://online.onetcenter.org</a> is an occupational information network
Employability skills		Conference Board of Canada resources on employability skills: <a href="http://www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.aspx">http://www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.aspx</a>
BC Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development	Needs assessment: supply (who offers similar programs)	<a href="http://www.gov.bc.ca/aved">http://www.gov.bc.ca/aved</a>
Post-secondary programs in Canada		Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada <a href="http://www.aucc.ca/can_uni/search/index_e.html">http://www.aucc.ca/can_uni/search/index_e.html</a>
Labour force and market demand and trends	Needs assessment: demand	<a href="http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/lss/lmi_gate.asp">http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/lss/lmi_gate.asp</a>

Type of Information	Purpose	Secondary Data Sources <i>(links valid as of November 2011)</i>
		<a href="http://www.guidetobceconomy.org/">http://www.guidetobceconomy.org/</a>
Admissions and transfers	Program transfer guide	<a href="http://www.bctransferguide.ca/">http://www.bctransferguide.ca/</a>
Financial aid criteria	Program credential and student access	<a href="http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/schoolofficials/welcome.htm">http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/schoolofficials/welcome.htm</a>  Ask BCIT Student and Financial Aid to help you understand the impact of student aid on your program.
Apprenticeship (industry training)	Program development and implementation	<a href="http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/industrytraining/">http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/industrytraining/</a>