



## Guide: Applying the BCIT IDEAS Lens

*The British Columbia Institute of Technology acknowledges that our main campuses are located on the unceded territory of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səlilwətaʔ (Tseil-Waututh), and xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) First Nations.*

### Contents

What is the IDEAS Lens? .....	1
IDEAS Definitions .....	1
How to apply this IDEAS Lens? .....	3
Guiding Questions.....	3
Involving the right people:.....	3
Identifying the desired outcomes:.....	4
Planning: .....	4
Implementing the initiative: .....	4
Communicating:.....	4
Monitoring: .....	5
Resources.....	5
Have questions? .....	5

### What is the IDEAS Lens?

The BCIT IDEAS [Lens](#) is a way of approaching our work at BCIT. IDEAS refers to the concepts of Indigenous, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access, Sustainability, and Student Wellbeing. The IDEAS Lens seeks to bring together a set of guiding documents, i.e. interconnected visions, strategies, and plans from across BCIT and provide a holistic lens through which to embed them into all work across the Institute. These documents include [BCIT's Strategic Plan](#), [Anti-Racism Framework](#), [Indigenous Vision](#), [Student Wellbeing Action Plan](#), [Accessibility Plan](#), and [Sustainability Vision](#).

### IDEAS Definitions

**Indigenous:** As used in BCIT's Indigenous Vision, the term 'Indigenous' includes First Nation (Status and Non-status), Métis, and Inuit peoples in Canada. It is used in place of the term 'Aboriginal'. In the context of the BCIT IDEAS Lens, 'Indigenous' covers

Indigenization, Decolonization, and Reconciliation. As outlined in *Pulling Together: A Guide for Curriculum Developers*:

- **Indigenization** is the process of naturalizing Indigenous knowledge systems and making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts. In the context of post-secondary education, this involves bringing Indigenous knowledge and approaches together with Western knowledge systems. It is a deliberate coming together of these two ways of being.
- **Decolonization** is the process of deconstructing colonial ideologies of the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches. Decolonization involves valuing and revitalizing Indigenous knowledge and approaches and rethinking Western biases or assumptions that have impacted Indigenous ways of being.
- **Reconciliation** is addressing past wrongs done to Indigenous Peoples, making amends, and improving relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to create a better future for all.

All three components have a place in our work at BCIT and this work is done not just through actions but through a sincere and authentic process that involves relationship-building, meaningful and sustainable partnerships, and respectful engagement. This is the work of all people. This work honours and recognizes Indigenous knowledge systems and knowledge holders who transform education, services, spaces, and places at BCIT.

**Inclusion:** Inclusion means creating an environment in which all BCIT employees, students, and community members feel welcomed, respected, valued, and supported to participate in all opportunities. An inclusive environment creates a sense of belonging and dignity while allowing all individuals to be their true, authentic selves.

**Diversity:** Diversity refers to all the ways in which people differ. It encompasses all the characteristics, identities, personal experiences, values, and worldviews that make one individual or group different from another. Diversity can be both visible and invisible and includes, but is not limited to, differences in age, race, class, religion, ability, gender, and sexual orientation.

**Equity:** Equity refers to ensuring fair treatment, access, and opportunity for all students and employees. This requires preventing, identifying, and eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of systemically oppressed groups. Equity does not necessarily mean treating everyone the same but rather recognizing that students and employees may require different treatment to enable fair and equal access to opportunities.

**Access:** Access means ensuring that all individuals can actively participate in every facet of society, including education, employment, and social connection, on an equal basis with others. Achieving this involves identifying and removing barriers—whether physical, social, attitudinal, economic, digital, among others—that hinder full inclusion and participation.

**Sustainability:** As defined in the Sustainability Vision, sustainability is leading socially just lives within ecological limits. This aligns with the internationally accepted definition of the ability of current generations to meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

At BCIT, sustainability encompasses enabling learners and industry partners to transform the state of practice toward supportive systems that help people lead socially just lives within ecological limits. It extends to our operations and community engagements and impacts, locally and around the world.

**Student Wellbeing:** Fostering student wellbeing involves establishing an environment where students have the agency and resources to shape their quality of life across cultural, emotional, mental, physical, social, and spiritual dimensions, based on their own experiences, priorities, and perspectives. Wellbeing is the outcome of the policies, institutions, economies, and ecosystems of the environment people inhabit. Achieving it requires collaborative action across all levels, partners, and sectors.

## How to apply this IDEAS Lens?

This guide, specifically the questions below are a tool created to assist in furthering IDEAS concepts and goals in the work that we do, including in the development of programs, teaching and learning, physical spaces, services, policies, events, and other initiatives. By asking the right questions, at the right times, we can learn to embed IDEAS in all the work we do.

Below are examples of questions that can be asked when applying the Lens to your existing work or when developing new initiatives. Not every question will be appropriate for every situation or every context; consider the following questions a starting point and then adapt them for your purposes.

## Guiding Questions

### Involving the right people:

- Is there diversity (visible and [invisible](#)) within the group making the decisions?
- Have the people involved educated themselves on IDEAS concepts? (e.g. relevant BCIT training modules, familiarity with strategies, visions, and frameworks). *Learning resources are listed below and [on the IDEAS webpage](#).*

- If decisions being made are about a specific group/population, are there individuals with that lived experience and/or identities involved in a meaningful way?
- Who is excluded? Why?

### Identifying the desired outcomes:

- How has it been determined what the best results or desired outcomes are?
- Who is most affected? And how will they be affected similarly or differently?
- What assumptions are being made about the people impacted? What social factors, norms, or stereotypes are informing these assumptions?
- Will directly impacted people/groups be consulted?
- What considerations have been given to indirectly impacted groups? (e.g. future generations)
- Could there be inadvertent harm because of the outcomes?

### Planning:

- Who has been excluded, harmed, or underserved from these types of decisions in the past? How can we avoid repeating the same pattern?
- Who might be excluded or harmed by the decisions?
- What steps are being taken to identify barriers to full participation?
- Is a [universal design](#) approach being used? Is information being shared in different ways?
- Are there multiple means of participation?

### Implementing the initiative:

- Are there various options for engagement for people who have diverse needs?
- How are needed products, materials, or resources being sourced? And from whom?
- Will the timing impact folks differently? (e.g., religious observances, childcare arrangements, workload, etc.). If so, what can be done to mitigate the impact?
- Will there be demands for various energy and material inputs and how can these be ethically and sustainably sourced? What impacts will using these resources have on the receiving environment and/or population and how will negative impacts such as pollution be mitigated?

### Communicating:

- How can we ensure we are reaching the people most impacted and keeping those informed who are affected?
- Are we communicating in various methods?
- Are we using the plainest language with the least amount of jargon possible?
- Are the communications (medium and language) accessible to those who need to access them?

- Is language and content used respectful and inclusive?

### Monitoring:

- How will success be measured?
- Who will be included in determining success?
- What can be done to ensure that voices of those who are regularly been ignored or underserved will be included in measuring success?
- Is there consideration for different types of knowledge and data to be collected to help determine success?
- How will ecological impacts be identified and measured?

### Resources

The BCIT departments coordinating the IDEAS Lens work at BCIT have a series of resources available through their respective offices:

- [Indigenous Initiatives and Partnerships](#)
- [Respect, Diversity, and Inclusion](#)
- [Institute Sustainability](#)
- [Student Success](#)

BCIT offers several self-guided, online training modules that you can take to build up your capacity to apply an IDEAS Lens. BCIT employees can access them in the [BCIT Employee Learning Centre](#) and students and the general public can access them as [free online courses](#):

- Anti-Racism
- Climate Change 101
- Human Rights 101
- Indigenous Awareness
- Intercultural Communication Competence and Diversity Awareness
- Relearning Gender
- Respectful Workplace
- Understanding Unconscious Bias

### Have questions?

Contact us at [IDEAS@bcit.ca](mailto:IDEAS@bcit.ca)