

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](#) 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 Notice of Intent has been approved by the VP Academic.

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 will 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"> ▪ Anticipated need for graduates ▪ Expectations of graduates: Skills, knowledge, attitudes, and competencies ▪ Level of entry employment for graduates ▪ Resources / contacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Occupational analysis ▪ Online survey (possibly distributed through a professional or trade association) ▪ Focus groups ▪ Phone interviews ▪ Program / Industry Advisory Committee meeting ▪ Letters of support

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

Internal sources

Ensure you provide all internal BCIT groups early notice that you are 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. Check the program approval process outlined in [Policy/Procedures 5401](#) for your program type and the Education Council program approval timelines so that you can meet targeted submission dates.

BCIT Groups	Type of Input and Assistance
Learning and Teaching Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Program design and curriculum development ▪ Advice on program and proposal development ▪ Project management ▪ Editorial and graphic assistance
BCIT Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initial needs assessment research ▪ Acquisitions and subscriptions ▪ Resource material
Registrar's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Admission/transfer issues
Financial Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advice on student eligibility for financial aid for your proposed program
School of Computing and Academic Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applied communications, math, physics, chemistry, English as an Additional Language, and technical preparation courses
IT Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technical requirements and availability

BCIT Groups	Type of Input and Assistance
Marketing and Public Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program promotion, publicity, and advertising

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 (links valid as of November 2011)
Professional and trade standards	Notice of Intent and curriculum development	Specific professional and trade associations, accreditation, and certification bodies. This can include your own sources.
National occupation classifications and potential job opportunities for graduates		National occupation classifications
Skill and competency profiles		An occupational information network
Employability skills		Conference Board of Canada resources on employability skills
WorkBC Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Profiles Labour Market Information Labour Market Outlook Statistics 	http://www.workbc.ca
BC Ministry of Advanced Education	Needs assessment: Supply (who offers similar programs)	http://www.gov.bc.ca/aved
Post-secondary programs in Canada		Universities Canada Polytechnics Canada Colleges and Institutes Canada
Labour force and market demand and trends	Needs assessment: Demand	http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/statistics/employment-labour http://www.workbc.ca
Admissions and transfers	Program transfer guide	http://www.bctransferguide.ca/

Type of Information	Purpose	Secondary Data Sources <i>(links valid as of November 2011)</i>
Financial aid criteria	Program credential and student access	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 of trades programs	http://www.itabc.ca/