How to Develop Your New Program

Develop a Notice of Intent

The heart of a new program proposal is a notice of intent that answers the following questions:

- What is this program about?

- Why is this program needed?

- What will program participants be able to do upon graduation?

- Who are the intended students?

The notice of intent is a four to six page document that lays the groundwork for the new program proposal.

How Will the Notice of Intent Be Used?

The program notice of intent is a central document from which the needs assessment, the detailed program development, and the formal proposal flow. Here are several ways your notice of intent can be a valuable tool:

1. It communicates your School's intent to create a new program to stakeholders within BCIT (e.g., your program area, other Schools, service departments, Education Council (EdCo), and the like). Ensure that the program name clearly articulates the subject area for the new program.

2. It enables BCIT reviewers (i.e., EdCo and the VP Academic Office) to give approval to proceed with the needs assessment and full proposal development.

3. It focuses the needs assessment on the essentials of the new program.

4. It enables rethinking and revision, if needed, before further effort and time are spent on the details of the program and formal proposal.

5. It gives operational and stakeholder groups a "heads up" to the new program, allowing them to give you timely information.

6. It provides the platform for making your case as you write the proposal document and its appendices.

What Information Is in a Notice of Intent?

A notice of intent has three main sections:

- Purpose/Rationale
- Brief competitive scan
- Program description

The content of these sections is described below. This structure can be used to describe any type of program from associate certificate all the way to a degree. Keep in mind that the majority of individuals reading your notice of intent may have little or no understanding of your area of practice.

Purpose/Rationale

The Purpose/Rationale section asks for information in five subsections:

- Description of the profession/industry

- Primary reasons why the program is needed

- Alignment with provincial direction

- Alignment with BCIT's mandate and Strategic Plan

- Graduate certification/program accreditation opportunities

Addressing these five areas should give the reader a clear idea about the main purpose for the proposed program, and should indicate that the program is closely aligned with BCIT's direction, and that of the province.

Brief Competitive Scan

This section asks for information on the following:

- Competition for the program, including a discussion if any duplication will be created in the post-secondary system (and, if there is duplication, provide an even more compelling rationale as to why BCIT should create the program)

- Relationship to other programs, noting any laddering opportunities for students

- Risks that may be incurred either in offering the program or in not offering the program (e.g., losing an opportunity for BCIT to be a leader in an emerging field)

Program Description

The main purpose of this section is to provide information that is known about the proposed program at this time.

- Program aim. This describes the overall purpose of the program in terms of satisfying employment needs and meeting BCIT's mandate. Distinctive characteristics, target audience, linkages with other educational institutions, agencies, and accrediting bodies and associations may all be included in the program aim.

- Program goals. These are written at a high level so that employers as well as students can readily understand what graduates are able to demonstrate competence in (what they will be able to 'do') on program completion. Bear in mind that courses and learning outcomes will be designed to support actual student achievement of the broad goal statements. These statements describe the conceptual framework of your curriculum. In addition, program goals are key criteria used to assess not only student achievement, but also program performance.

- Rationale for the credential type selected. Review the [BCIT Credential Standards in Policy/Procedures 5401](#).

- Structure of the program, including an outline of the major content themes, overall program credits, experiential learning opportunities, any capstone projects that will be included, etc.

- Program length. This can include terms, levels, years, etc.

- Delivery methods and location. Even at the notice of intent stage, some thought should be given to how the program will be delivered. This should be based on the needs of potential students and employers as well as the content and program goals. Delivery methods include classroom, blended, and online options.

- Potential students. Be realistic about the likely appeal of your program and list prospective students from the primary target to lesser target groups. Also include information about proposed entry qualifications and anticipated annual student enrolment.

School Working Group

Ensure your working group includes the Associate Dean, a Program Champion, and an Instructional Development Consultant (IDC). The IDC will guide you through the entire program development process.

Expected Key Program Milestone Dates

Include dates that are reasonable and achievable, based on the annual Program Approval Timelines set by the Education Council. These give all stakeholders an idea of your plan at this stage.