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## Program Development and Credentials

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Department Responsible:	Education Council
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### Policy Statement

BCIT offers a wide variety of programs and recognizes a student's graduation from a program by awarding certificates, diplomas, and degrees as authorized by the *College and Institute Act*.

This policy reflects the Institute's intent to balance the need to be responsive to those involved in program development and change, while meeting stakeholders' expectations for quality programming.

BCIT sets standards and criteria regarding how it awards credentials, in order to:

- Ensure high quality programming
- Ensure BCIT's credentials meet the needs of its diverse stakeholders
- Ensure BCIT's credentials are recognized and well regarded
- Ensure BCIT's credentials are consistent and of appropriate rigour

### Purpose of Policy

This policy acts in support of the Institute's Strategic Plan, enabling BCIT to achieve its goals and objectives—sustaining quality of education and the ultimate success of its students.

The purposes of this policy are to:

- Communicate the criteria for recognizing a student's graduation from a program by conferring credentials
- Communicate the criteria for BCIT credentials
- Establish and communicate educational standards
- Improve student mobility and laddering through recognized and well-regarded credentials
- Establish the duties and responsibilities of the various BCIT employees involved in program development and change
- Guide the development of new programs and the revisions (major and minor) of existing programs.

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## Application of this Policy

This policy applies to BCIT employees involved in the development and approval of BCIT programs and credentials.

## Related Documents and Legislation

### BCIT:

- Education Council bylaws
- BCIT program approval timelines
- BCIT Program Change Form database
- BCIT Learning and Teaching Centre guidelines
- Education Council-approved proposal templates

### Legislation:

- *College and Institute Act*

### Other

- Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB) Guidelines and Criteria

## Definitions

Definitions that apply to Education Council policies are contained in Policy 5100, Glossary of Educational Policy Terms.

## Guiding Principles

- Programs serve a defined need within the provincial economy
- Programs are viable and sustainable

- Programs reflect current and emerging technologies and industry practice
- Programs are developed and adapted to address changing career opportunities
- Programs are developed through a supportive, collaborative process
- Programs reflect innovative, quality program development that addresses changing environmental trends, incorporates interdisciplinary programming, fosters a world view, and produces graduates who excel in their roles as practitioners, leaders, and citizens.

## 1. Naming of BCIT Programs and/or Degrees

BCIT will follow the protocols described by the DQAB in “Guidelines on Naming of Degrees” for all credential types.

Refer to 5401-PR1 for Procedures on Naming of Programs and/or Degrees.

## 2. Credentialing of BCIT Programs

BCIT credentials represent learning outcomes (standards) as described in this policy and accompanying procedure. Procedure 5401-PR1 contains a complete list of BCIT credential types, and provides guidance on the criteria for these credentials. Its use helps program developers to achieve consistency in educational standards, and improves student mobility.

Changes to credential types offered, and changes to learning criteria associated with the credentials are approved by Education Council.

For BCIT-delivered programs that do not receive BCIT credentials, decisions regarding which programs to offer are made by the relevant dean in consultation with the Office of the VP Academic (VPA). (Examples include industry credentials, custom training, sectoral partnership training, non-credit programs, programs offered under service contract, etc.)

New programs eligible to be recognized by the issuance of a credential will be reviewed and recommended by Education Council to the Board of Governors for approval.

### 2.1 Credential Types

BCIT awards:

- Certificates;
- Diplomas, and;
- Degrees.

Refer to Procedure 5401-PR1 for criteria details for each credential type.

### 2.2 Credential Standards

By the completion of a BCIT Diploma, Bachelor’s Degree, or Master’s Degree program, graduates are expected to achieve specific competencies and skills (standards) within the following six areas:

1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge
2. Knowledge of Methodologies and Research
3. Application of Knowledge

4. Communication Skills
5. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge
6. Professional Capacity / Autonomy

Refer to Procedure 5401-PR1 for details of these standards for each credential level.

### **2.3 Academic Residency Requirements**

Refer to Policy 5003 3.1 for Academic Residency Requirements

### **2.4 Time limit to complete a Credential**

Refer to Policy 5103 5.0 for details regarding time limit to complete a credential.

### **2.5 Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA)**

Refer to Procedure 5103-PR1 2.1 for details on minimum grade point average (GPA).

## **3. Multiple Credentials**

Refer to Procedure 5003 3.3 for details concerning multiple credentials.

## **4. Posthumous Credentials**

A credential may be awarded to a student who died after successfully completing a significant portion of a program but before completing the program and for whom successful completion was expected. Credentials may also be awarded posthumously at the discretion of the program dean in consultation with the Registrar.

Refer to 5401-PR1 for details on the applicable criteria and approval process.

## **5. Honorary Credentials**

Honorary Degrees are awarded by the Board of Governors of BCIT on the recommendation of the Tributes Committee to recognize persons who are distinguished by their significant contributions and accomplishments and whose excellence will reflect positively on the institute.

Honorary degrees are not awarded as earned degrees but are conferred *honoris causa*, "for the sake of honour."

The number of Honorary Degrees awarded shall not be permitted to become so large as to diminish their significance.

Refer to Policy 5501 for further details.

## **6. Rescinding Earned Credentials**

BCIT reserves the right to rescind earned credentials, including certificates, diplomas or degrees that were acquired through the commission of a serious breach of one or more Academic Offences.

Refer to Procedure 5401-PR1 for further details.

## Duties and Responsibilities

See the accompanying procedures 5401-PR1 and 5401-PR2 for the sequence and detailed description of the steps involved in developing new programs or amending existing programs. The primary groups responsible for program development and change are listed below, along with their roles. Their duties are described in greater detail in Procedure 5401-PR2.

### Board of Governors

The Board of Governors (BOG) is responsible for the final approval of all new programs (except Industry Partnership Certificates, which are approved by the Vice President, Academic). BOG approval is required before submission to the Ministry of Advanced Education (“Ministry”) approval process. The BOG also approves the Notices of Intent for all new degree programs.

### Degree Quality Assessment Board

In the case of master’s and bachelor’s degree programs, the Office of the VP Academic submits the full proposal to the Ministry for review and decision. For master’s degrees, the Ministry review involves the Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB) process. For bachelor’s degrees, given that BCIT has achieved ‘exempt status’ for this credential level, proposals are submitted directly to the Minister, who may involve DQAB review at the Minister’s discretion.

The DQAB will review all submissions against specific criteria. Beyond its own review, the DQAB may also choose to establish an expert panel.

### Education Council

Education Council approves major changes to existing programs, and all new program proposals (except Industry Partnership Certificates, which are approved by the VP Academic). After Education Council approval, new programs are forwarded to the Board of Governors for final approval. All degrees must also be approved by the Ministry.

### Ministry of Advanced Education

The Ministry of Advanced Education has overall responsibility for post-secondary education in the province of British Columbia, and is guided by the *University Act*, *College and Institute Act*, and *Degree Authorization Act*, among others. With respect to program approval, the Ministry has delegated responsibility to the Institute’s BOG for all non-degree programs.

### Office of the Vice President, Academic

The Office of the VP Academic (VPA) facilitates and supports the development and approval of all new program proposals and program changes through the various review bodies at BCIT and the Ministry of Advanced Education as appropriate. The Office is the key liaison between the program area and the Ministry of Advanced Education.

**Procedures Associated With This Policy**

- 5401-PR1, Credentialing of Programs
- 5401-PR2, Program Development and Change Processes
- 5401-PR3, Requesting Exemption from Education Policies

**Forms Associated With This Policy**

See the associated Procedures 5401-PR1, 5401-PR2, and 5401-PR3.

**Amendment History**

Policy 5004 was retired in 2011; this Policy 5401 is one of a series of policies and procedures created to replace it.

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| 1. Created | 2011 Nov 22  |
| 2. Revised | 2016 June 01 |
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**Scheduled Review Date**

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