

---

## Program Development and Credentials

Policy No:	5401
Version:	4
Category:	Education
Approval Body:	Board of Governors (on the advice of Education Council)
Executive Sponsor:	Provost & Vice President Academic
Department Responsible:	Education Council
Approval Date:	2024 Apr 03

---

### Policy Statement

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

This policy governs the credentials offered by BCIT and its processes for program creation and renewal. It reflects the Institute's intent to balance responsiveness in program development and change initiatives, while meeting stakeholders' expectations for quality programming.

BCIT sets standards and criteria regarding how it awards credentials to ensure consistently high-quality programming, and that its credentials:

- meet the needs of its diverse stakeholders;
- are recognized and well-regarded;
- are developed with a focus on student success; and,
- are of appropriate rigour.

### Purpose of Policy

This policy supports 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 and its associated procedures are to:

- establish and communicate the criteria for BCIT credentials;
- establish and communicate educational standards;
- communicate the criteria for recognizing students' graduation from programs by conferring credentials;
- 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; and,
- guide the development of new programs and revisions of existing programs.

## Table of Contents

Policy Statement	1
Purpose of Policy	1
Application of this Policy	2
Related Documents and Legislation	2
Definitions	3
Guiding Principles	3
1. Naming of BCIT Programs and/or Degrees	3
2. Credentialing of BCIT Programs	4
3. Multiple Credentials	5
4. Posthumous Credentials	5
5. Honorary Credentials	5
6. Rescinding Earned Credentials	5
Duties and Responsibilities	5
Procedures Associated with This Policy	6
Forms Associated with This Policy	6
Amendment History	6
Scheduled Review Date	7

## Application of this Policy

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

## Related Documents and Legislation

### BCIT:

- Education Council bylaws
- BCIT program approval timelines
- BCIT Program Update Form database
- BCIT Academic Planning and Quality Assurance guidelines
- BCIT Learning and Teaching Centre guidelines
- Education Council-approved proposal templates
- Policy 5003, Admissions & Recognition of Prior Learning
- Policy 5012, Course Credits
- Policy 5103, Student Evaluation
- Policy 5104, Student Code of Academic Integrity
- Policy 5501, Honorary Awards

### Legislation:

- *College and Institute Act*

### Other:

- [Degree Quality Assessment Board \(DQAB\) Guidelines and Criteria](#)

## Definitions

The following definitions apply in this policy and associated procedures:

**Apprenticeship:** a form of learning consisting of on-the-job paid training and formal in-school instruction, leading to a trade credential (also referred to as a “ticket”) qualifying the apprentice to work in a skilled trade.

**Credential:** a formal qualification awarded by BCIT resulting from studies containing evaluative components. Examples include certificates, diplomas, and degrees.

**Credit:** a numeric value assigned to a course corresponding to the number of hours of instruction and coursework required for the course.

**Curriculum:** the learning activities and intended learning outcomes of educational courses. It refers to both the objectives of a planned set of learning experiences and to the learning experiences themselves.

**Program:** a group of courses comprising the requirements for a credential awarded by BCIT.

## Guiding Principles

Programs should align with the following principles. Programs are intended to:

- serve defined needs of the provincial economy;
- support the Institute’s mandate, mission, and strategic direction;
- be consistent with the Institute’s values and academic priorities;
- be educationally sound, viable, and sustainable; reflect current and emerging technologies and industry practices;
- adapt to address changing career opportunities;
- be developed through a structured, collaborative process;
- reflect innovative, quality program development that addresses changing industry trends;
- incorporate interdisciplinary programming and flexibility for students to pursue individual learning goals;
- foster a worldview and produce graduates excelling as practitioners, leaders, and citizens;
- provide students effective learning opportunities founded on our applied, experiential education model;
- be inclusive of and accessible to all learners, aligning with the Institute’s equity, diversity, and inclusion values; and,
- foster student agency and well-being.

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

BCIT will align with 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 and 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 attaining these credentials. Its use helps program developers achieve consistency in educational standards, communicates these standards within BCIT and to external stakeholders, and improves student mobility.

Changes to credential types offered, and changes to the learning criteria associated with credentials are approved by Education Council and Board of Governors (“Board”).

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 Provost and VP Academic. (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 for approval.

### 2.1 Credential Types

BCIT awards:

- Certificates;
- Diplomas; and,
- Degrees.

Refer to Procedure 5401-PR1 for criteria 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, Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning for academic residency requirements.

### 2.4 Time limit to complete a Credential

Refer to Policy 5103, Student Evaluation for details regarding time limits to complete credentials.

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

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

### **3. Multiple Credentials**

Refer to Procedure 5003-PR1, Admission Procedure 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 Procedure 5401-PR1 for details on the applicable criteria and approval process.

### **5. Honorary Credentials**

Honorary Degrees are awarded by the Board 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 so large as to diminish their significance.

Refer to Policy 5501 (and associated procedure) for the process for recommending, approving, and rescinding honorary credentials.

### **6. Rescinding Earned Credentials**

BCIT reserves the right to rescind earned credentials, including certificates, diplomas, or degrees acquired through the commission of one or more Academic Offences. (Refer to Policy 5104 and associated procedures for further details.)

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

See the accompanying procedures 5401-PR1 and 5401-PR2 for the sequence and description of the steps involved in developing new programs or revising existing programs. The primary roles and responsibilities for program development and change are listed below. Duties are described in greater detail in Procedure 5401-PR2.

#### **Board of Governors**

The Board is responsible for the final approval of all new BCIT programs (except Industry Partnership Certificates, which are approved by the Provost and Vice President,

Academic). Board approval is required before submission to the Ministry responsible for advanced education approval process (for degrees).

#### **Degree Quality Assessment Board**

In the case of master's and bachelor degree programs, the Office of the Provost and 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 "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 Provost and VP Academic). After Education Council approval, new programs are forwarded to the Board for final approval. All degrees and some degree changes must also be approved by the Ministry.

#### **Ministry responsible for advanced education**

The Ministry 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 Board for all non-degree programs.

#### **Office of the Provost and Vice President, Academic**

The Office of the Provost and VP Academic 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, as appropriate. The Office is the key liaison between the program area and the Ministry.

### **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 several policies and procedures created to replace it, as outlined below:

- |                        |               |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Created (version 1) | 2011 Nov 22   |
| 2. Revised (version 2) | 2016 June 01  |
| 3. Revised (version 3) | 2017 May 30   |
| 4. Revised (version 4) | 2024 April 03 |

**Scheduled Review Date**

2026 April 03