

Micro-credential Initiative

Applicant Guide



Ministry of
Advanced Education
and Skills Training

Applicant Guide

Purpose

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (“the Ministry”) is inviting applications from public post-secondary institutions (PSIs), or consortiums of institutions, in partnership with employers and industry sectors to develop and deliver micro-credentials (“the Initiative”).

This *Applicant Guide* provides the information to apply for funding under the Initiative, including the requirements for a proposal. The following appendices are included:

- Appendix 1 – Evaluation Criteria
- Appendix 2 – Application Form (including Project Budget Template)

For more information or any questions, please contact:

Strategic Policy and Initiatives Branch
Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training
AEST.MicroCredentials@gov.ca

Initiative Overview

Micro-credentials recognize stand-alone short duration learning experiences that are competency-based; align with employer, industry, community and/or Indigenous community needs; and can be assessed and recognized for employment or learning purposes. They complement current offerings and pathways in B.C.'s post-secondary system and enhance access to education for British Columbians.

Micro-credentials play an important role in supporting British Columbians to upskill and reskill in an ever-evolving economy. They provide another option for post-secondary institutions to prepare learners for high-opportunity occupations and address labour market demands.

It is essential that proponents clearly demonstrate how employers/industry/communities have been engaged in the identification of the need for the micro-credential - including their level of input into curriculum development and their role in assessment and recognition of the micro-credential once complete.

Tuition subsidies may be included in proposals, with appropriate consideration for:

- other potential sources of funding for learners/employers;
- alignment of tuition level with the intended target learners for the purposes of equity, diversity and inclusion; and the
- ongoing sustainability of the micro-credential.

In no case will more than 50% of the tuition be subsidized. Tuition subsidies should be primarily focused on micro-credentials that are targeted to unemployed persons or those employed in low skill occupations and/or equity seeking groups.

Credit-bearing micro-credentials will be subject to the [Tuition Limit Policy](#) (TLP). The tuition and mandatory fee amounts captured under the TLP will be based on the full tuition and fees of the micro-credential, not any reduced amount that may be covered by subsidy for initial offerings.

Initiative funding is intended to support a range of diverse micro-credential offerings. Proponents are encouraged to highlight collaboration with other PSIs to avoid the duplicative development and offering of similar micro-credentials. If several applications are received for similar micro-credentials, the submitting institutions may be contacted and advised of similar proposals and provided the opportunity to collaborate.

All micro-credential proposals should focus on high-demand sectors and align with government priorities.

Key Elements of Projects

Micro-credentials funded through the Initiative must be implemented as outlined in the funding letter, including meeting established reporting requirements. Reporting on these micro-credentials will need to be provided for three years, as it is expected that micro-credentials selected for funding will have multiple offerings. Generally, micro-credentials funded under the Initiative will:

- help British Columbians develop additional skills and competencies to upskill and reskill in order to access good jobs and meet the needs of a changing economy and evolving workforce and
- provide additional innovative pathways to access post-secondary education and promote lifelong learning.

Specifically, successful micro-credential proposals will:

- demonstrate alignment with the [Framework](#)'s guiding principles and components;
- have clear learner pathways, outcomes, and benefits. Learner pathways include:
 - credit-based micro-credentials,
 - non-credit micro-credentials with a clear path to credit credentials; or
 - micro-credentials recognized by employers/industry to access employment or improve employment prospects.
- align with high-demand sectors,¹ labour market needs, community needs and/or government priorities;
- include meaningful employer, industry and/or community engagement and collaboration;
- identify the competency or competencies a learner will acquire and describe how competencies will be assessed;
- provide a method to validate projected outcomes and learner benefits post-credential;
- demonstrate that tuition and fees correlate with learner benefits and outcomes;
- have clear micro-credential development and delivery timelines; and
- include details of how the micro-credential will be sustained over the long-term, in order to support additional offerings.

In addition, this Initiative may give preference to micro-credentials that:

- reduce barriers for learners, and increase equity, diversity and inclusion for diverse learners;
- include collaboration with
 - First Nations, Métis or other Indigenous partners;
 - Other PSIs; and/or
- leverage additional funding sources and/or matching funding from other partner or non-partner organizations as a component of the proposal.

¹ Please refer to the Labour Market Outlook or similar Labour Market reports and government priorities.

Funding received through this Initiative cannot be used for the following:

- activities, initiatives or other undertakings not related to the development, implementation and deliverables of the specific micro-credential proposed;
- direct subsidies, specific incentives or rewards to employers;
- tuition subsidies for learners except in cases that meet the following conditions:
 - targeted learners may require tuition support (e.g., unemployed, low skill);
 - ongoing sustainability of the micro-credential can be demonstrated without further tuition subsidies after the one-time funding; and
 - subsidies are less than 50% of the total tuition and fees.
- capital-related costs, equipment or digital infrastructure;
- costs not outlined and approved in the initial application;
- micro-credentials where the applicant is not developing the micro-credential - such as acting as a delivery agent for private sector micro-credentials (e.g., Microsoft Certification); or
- micro-credentials specifically targeted to trades occupations.

Eligible Applicants

- The lead applicant must be a public post-secondary institution based in British Columbia.
- Eligible applicants can also submit proposals in conjunction with employers, industry, community or Indigenous partners.
- Public post-secondary institutions are encouraged to partner in submitting a single application in cases where multiple PSIs have interest in developing a similar micro-credential.

Application Process

Public post-secondary institutions are invited to respond to this Open Call for Proposals by submitting a completed **Application Form** (see Appendix 2) of **no more than 6 pages** that includes:

- Contact information for the lead applicant, including name, title and e-mail.
- Summary of the micro-credential, including:
 - details of competency/competencies gained by learners through the micro-credential;
 - details of learner credit and learner pathways;
 - details of initial and ongoing tuition and other fees and costs for learners; and
 - details of the employer/industry/community partnership.
- Micro-credential project work plan, timelines and milestones.
- Details of how the micro-credential will be sustained over the long-term.
- Anticipated micro-credential outcomes, including learner outcomes and benefits, as well as method of evaluation.
- A completed Budget Template.

Institutions are not limited in the number of proposals they may submit; however, each micro-credential being proposed will require a separate **Application Form**. The Ministry will be striving to distribute funding equitably between types of institutions and geographic areas.

Proposals will be accepted until 3:00 PM PST on **Friday, February 3, 2023**, and should be submitted by e-mail to AEST.MicroCredentials@gov.bc.ca. Proposals will be reviewed as they are received, with decisions on funding allocations made at regular intervals.

Successful applicants will receive additional information detailing reporting requirements for the funding received under the Micro-credential Initiative.

Ministry staff are available to provide guidance and to respond to any questions that arise during the application process.

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Appendix 1 - Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria outlined below, with a strong emphasis on the applicant’s focus on key elements and outcomes of the micro-credential. Several key components are required for all micro-credentials; only proposed micro-credentials meeting these key requirements will be considered.

To ensure a balanced selection of micro-credentials, proposals may be categorized by sector/community, target learner, level of micro-credential (e.g., entry level, mid-career level, etc. regional distribution, differing learner pathways, etc.).

An evaluation committee will review all proposals to determine their alignment with the evaluation criteria and to provide funding recommendations.

Evaluation Criteria	Detailed Description	Criteria Weight
Necessary components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns with Framework <input type="checkbox"/> • Clearly outlines outcomes and learner benefit <input type="checkbox"/> • Demonstrates meaningful collaboration with employers/industry/community <input type="checkbox"/> • Demonstrates labour market or community need <input type="checkbox"/> • Demonstrates learning and employment pathways <input type="checkbox"/> 	Has necessary components <input type="checkbox"/> Does not have all necessary components <input type="checkbox"/>
1. Project Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates well-considered project • Clearly outlines Framework alignment • Ensures effective coordination to avoid duplication 	/5
2. Improving Access and Lowering Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains how the proposed micro-credential helps to improve access and/or lower barriers to post-secondary education or high-opportunity employment. • Appropriate intersectional analysis (e.g., Gender Based Analysis+)² of micro-credential impacts has been provided 	/10

² Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is an [analytical tool used to assess how diverse groups of people may be impacted by policies, programs and initiatives.](#)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) will be supported (e.g., Increasing opportunities for diverse learners, reducing barriers to EDI, ensure new EDI barriers are not introduced) 	
3. Employer/Industry/Community Collaboration and Evidence of Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer/Industry/Community Collaboration need is clear, and can be addressed with the micro-credential Micro-credential addresses high-demand sector/labour market/community need and/or government priority Meaningful collaboration with Employer/Industry/Community partners as appropriate throughout development and delivery of micro-credential 	/25
4. Competency and Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competency is clearly articulated Competency acquired through micro-credential is tied to evidence of need Assessment of competency will support employer/industry/community trust that learner has achieved competency 	/15
5. Learner Outcomes/Benefits & Validation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly describes pathways, outcomes, and benefits for learners Strength of relation between learner benefits and evidence of employer/industry/community need Clear and effective evaluation strategy, data, and indicators to evaluate project's success 	/20
6. Tuition and non-Tuition Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learner cost is reasonable given level of micro-credential, learner outcomes and benefits, and other considerations Learner cost is reasonable after initial micro-credential Any tuition subsidy request is justified 	/10
7. Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies, support or resources in place will ensure the sustainability of project results after Ministry funding is fully expended 	/20

8. Project Workplan, Timeline & Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplan clear and well-thought out • Attainable timelines and milestones • Aligns with rest of application 	/5
9. Risks and Mitigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasonable consideration of micro-credential risks, mitigations proposed that result in likely micro-credential success • Reasonable assessment of risks has been completed, and mitigations are sufficient to address risk likelihood and/or severity 	/5
10. Project Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Itemized and reasonably detailed description of project costs • Indication of funds requested from the Initiative, and contributions from in-kind or other sources 	/10
TOTAL		/125

Appendix 2 – Application Form

Select word document icon to open the B.C. Micro-Credential - Application Form template.



B.C. Micro-Credential
Initiative - Application

Note: Proposals will be evaluated based on the information included in the Application Form of no more than 6 pages.

*Institutions are not limited in the number of proposals they may submit; however, each micro-credential being proposed will require a separate **Application Form**.*