

Micro-credential Initiatives

Applicant Guide



Ministry of
Post-Secondary Education
and Future Skills

Applicant Guide

Purpose

The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skill (“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 under multiple initiatives:

- Stackable Micro-Credentials Initiative
- Micro-Credential Shared Curriculum Initiative
- Micro-Credential Redevelopment Initiative (pending)¹

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

- Appendix 1 – Stackable Micro-Credentials Evaluation Criteria and Application Form
- Appendix 2 – Micro-Credential Shared Curriculum Evaluation Criteria and Application Form

For more information or any questions, please contact:

Strategic Policy and Initiatives Branch
Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
PSFS.MicroCredentials@gov.bc.ca

¹ Anticipated launch date: November 2023. Applicant guide will be updated with associated application and evaluation criteria.

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.

The Province is currently funding proposals under two micro-credential initiatives:

Stackable Micro-Credentials Initiative

Initiative funding is intended to test the feasibility of creating alternative pathways to attain larger credentials, such as certificates and diplomas, through a set of stackable micro-credentials. The aim of this initiative is to provide opportunities for learners at any stage of their career journey or those who may have not been inclined to pursue post-secondary education, to acquire specific in-demand skills and knowledge incrementally at their own pace.

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.

Micro-Credential Shared Curriculum Initiative

Initiative funding is intended to support micro-credential development and implementation in collaboration between a public PSI, a regulator, licensing body, and/or industry associations that aims to address competency gaps in high demand occupations and sectors. This may include the development of a competency framework for a distinct occupation group. As well, curriculum developed through this initiative will be shareable with other public PSIs to reduce duplicative efforts while increasing access to in demand occupation training and education.

Tuition subsidies may be included in proposals for both initiatives, 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.

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 reporting requirements. 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,² 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.

Along with the elements above, successful proposals in each of the three initiative areas will include the following distinct elements:

Stackable Micro-Credentials Initiative

- Outline a modular design that creates alternate pathways to attain a larger credential through a set of standalone micro-credentials that each represent a specific skill or competency;
- Articulate the pathways through which learners can progress from one micro-credential to another, and how they will stack together leading to a larger credential.

² Please refer to the Labour Market Outlook or similar Labour Market reports and government priorities.

Micro-Credential Shared Curriculum Initiative

- Demonstrate collaboration with a regulator, licensing body, industry association, or Indigenous organization in the identification, development, and implementation of the micro-credential.
- Confirm willingness to share curriculum with other public PSIs in BC.

Funding received through these Initiatives 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).

Eligible Applicants

- The lead applicant must be a public post-secondary institution based in British Columbia.
- 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.

The following are eligibility requirements for the specific initiatives:

- **Stackable Micro-Credentials Initiative:** Eligible applicants must submit proposals in conjunction with employers, industry, community, or Indigenous partners. If collaboration is not pursued, rationale must be provided.
- **Micro-Credential Shared Curriculum Initiative:** Eligible applicants must submit proposals in conjunction with regulators, licensing bodies, and/or industry associations.

Application Process

Public post-secondary institutions are invited to respond to this Open Call for Proposals by submitting a completed **Application Form** for the specific Initiative they are interested in, including a completed Budget Template, of **no more than 6 pages**.

Step 1: Submission of Application Form

Proposals will be accepted until 3:00 PM PST on **January 15, 2024** and should be submitted by e-mail to **PSFS.MicroCredentials@gov.bc.ca**. If information is missing or there are clarifying questions required, the ministry will contact the institution.

Step 2: Ministry Review

Proposals will be reviewed as they are received. Institutions may be contacted by the ministry during this period for any clarifying questions.

Step 3: Funding decision

Final decisions will be communicated to applicants by March 31, 2024 via email. Successful applicants will receive a funding letter which outlines approved funding amounts and reporting requirements by March 31, 2024.

Note: Institutions are not limited in the number of proposals they may submit. The Ministry will be striving to distribute funding equitably between types of institutions and geographic areas.

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

For more information or any questions, please contact:

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Appendix 1 – Stackable Micro-Credentials Evaluation Criteria and Application Form

Double-click Word document icon to open template:



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**.*

Appendix 2 – Micro-Credential Shared Curriculum Evaluation Criteria and Application Form

Double-click Word document icon to open template:



Shared Curriculum
Application Template

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

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