

Introduction

BCcampus (<http://www.bccampus.ca>) collaborates system-wide with post-secondary institutions and partners to provide innovative technologies and services that connect students, educators and institutions.

BCcampus services include:

- information about BC post-secondary online and distance education programs and services provided via the BCcampus Course Finder and Program Finder
- an online application service for admission to any BC postsecondary institution through PASBC
- an annual online program development fund supports educator development of open courseware resources
- a shareable online learning resource (SOL*R) repository that stores and distributes open educational resources to educators across all BC public post secondary institutions for free sharing and reuse
- professional services (*Learn Together*) that provide an educator network and communities of practice for promoting teaching and learning, professional development research, and sharing of best practices

The following values guide BCcampus in its work:

- Inter-institutional collaborative and effective working partnerships
- A learner-centric model for learning and student services
- Excellence, innovation and continuous improvement
- Recognition that the role of post-secondary education, skills training, research and development contributes to a successful BC economy
- Life-long learning opportunities for all British Columbians
- Increased choice for learning by utilizing technology

One of the goals of BCcampus is to increase the number of post-secondary online courses, programs, resources and services available to students and educators in British Columbia. A second is to support development of professional learning resources for public post secondary educators.

Toward both these goals a \$1 million dollar, 2008 Online Program Development Fund (OPDF) is being made available to BC's public post secondary institutions. Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), BCcampus invites BC public post secondary institutions to submit proposals. Due date for proposals is October 24, 2008.

Overall Criteria for Funding (and checklist suggestions)

<i>All proposals should:</i>	Proposal Check
<p>Be supported and approved as strategically important by participating institutions.</p> <p><i>Proposal checklist suggestions:</i> Describe strategic importance of initiative including demand and need being met. Include partnering organizations letters of support. Proposal approved by and submitted through head of academic affairs.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Involve collaboration and partnerships.</p> <p><i>Proposal checklist suggestions:</i> Involve partnerships between multiple public post secondary institutions. Partner institutions state how they each will contribute to the development and use the online resource. Form business relationships with BC e-learning companies, not-for-profits, and/or professional associations for development of program proposal deliverables.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Exhibit the characteristics of quality teaching and learning.</p> <p><i>Proposal checklist suggestions:</i> Describe pedagogical approach. Utilize effective quality online learning methods.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Use and develop shareable Open Educational Resources*.</p> <p><i>Proposal checklist suggestions:</i> Describe open license option being used and why. Describe strategy for participating in Open Educational Resource provincially and/or globally.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Create interoperable online learning resources that work across multiple Course Management Systems (CMS).</p> <p><i>Proposal checklist suggestions:</i> Describe steps taken to maximize and sustain OPDF online learning resource value by making sure it operates as a minimum in Moodle, Desire2Learn and Blackboard/WebCT</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Demonstrate cost effectiveness.</p> <p><i>Proposal checklist suggestions:</i> Development process activities are cost effective. Include contributions in dollars and/or in-kind from other sources, either internal or external (such as private partnerships).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

* The BCcampus Online Program Development Fund emphasizes open sharing of resources. This approach is congruent with other similar initiatives around the world including [OpenCourseWare](#), [Connexions](#), [WikiEducator](#) and others. The Online Program Development Fund has two license options one for BC Commons, which creates shareable resources among BC's public post secondary institutions, and one for Creative Commons, which provides a mechanism for participating in global Open Educational Resource initiatives. In 2008 Capilano College joined the global Open Educational Resource movement as the first Canadian institution to become a partner in the OpenCourseWare consortium.

Benefits associated with Open Educational Resources are:

1. Social benefits

Higher education sharing knowledge for the benefit of all is an altruistic public service. Sharing boosts human capital through better education and skills by providing access to resources that encourage participation in higher education. Open resources accessible to all bridge the gap between informal and formal learning, and promote lifelong learning. Open resources widen access and provide supply where there is shortage.

2. Economical benefits

By sharing and reusing, the costs for content development can be cut, thereby making better use of available resources. Leverage taxpayers' money by allowing free sharing and reuse of resources developed by publicly funded institutions. Eliminates the weeks and months of time it can take to seek permission to use existing digital materials. Educators can use the asset immediately without having to go through a permission seeking process. Leverages a unique aspect of digital assets - the marginal cost and effort in making copies and distributing online learning resources over a network.

3. Quality improvements

Quality improves over time, compared to a situation in which everyone always has to start anew. Creates a web-based, viewable, useable record of quality educational materials. Allowing others to reuse and modify original work provides a means for continuous improvement of online learning resources by a collective of professional peers. Shifts emphasis from content to teaching and learning process and services involved with using content.

4. Collaboration and Partnerships

Creates opportunity for faculty to see, collaborate on, and reuse each others work. Provides a reputation boost to faculty whose materials are widely used.

5. Academic Planning

Helps students make academic plans, be better prepared, and pursue learning of personal interest.

6. Public Relations and Advertising

Good for public relations and functions as a showcase to attract new students. Acts as advertisement for the institution, and as a way of lowering the threshold for new students, who may be more likely to enroll – and therefore pay for tutoring and accreditation – when they have had a taste of the learning on offer through open content. Increased contact with alumni.

These benefits are maximized through global Open Educational Resource initiatives that produce resources open to educators, students and the public.

2008 Online Program Development Fund RFP Categories

The 2008 Online Program Development Fund invites proposals in two categories:

1. Courses and Learning Objects (expected allocation ~ 85% of fund)
2. Professional Learning Resources (expected allocation ~ 15% of fund)

1.1 Courses (expected allocation ~ 60%)

BCcampus actively supports institutional and inter-institutional initiatives to develop and deliver online learning courses and programs that provide access and opportunity to all public post secondary students across the post secondary system.

The courses category of this 2008 Online Program Development Fund focuses on providing funding to increase the range and breadth of fully online courses available.

In addition to the overall criteria above a suggested checklist for Proposals in the Course category of this RFP includes:	Proposal Check
Proposals for fully online courses in an area of high student demand and/or provincial, regional, or local labour market need are preferred. Proposals should define the anticipated number of students served through this development.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preference will be given to online course proposals that increase access to BC's public higher education. Proposals that improve access to remote or rural learners, reduce the percentage of qualified student turnaways, and/or relieve waitlists are especially sought.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preference will be given to proposals involving partnerships between multiple public post secondary institutions. Partner institutions must each state how they will use the developed resource. Preference will be given to proposals that form business relationships with BC e-learning companies, not-for-profits, and/or professional associations for development of program proposal deliverables.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preference will be given to credit based online courses and proposals developing online learning courses that build out complete online programs leading to a credential. These can be new programs or programs already started but requiring additional courses to be completed. Proposals that creatively align with government priorities are particularly sought. http://www.gov.bc.ca/aved	<input type="checkbox"/>
Funding to create online programs and courses that already exist within the BC higher education system will not be provided. To see a listing of completely online and distance public post-secondary credit courses see https://portal.bccampus.ca/coursefinder	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposals are expected to enable student access and enrollment in courses from multiple institutions including clear transfer and articulation mechanisms. Transfer and articulation agreements of 100 and 200 level courses may already exist, see BCcampus expects that for courses that are not now articulated but are potentially transferable, a plan should be submitted explaining how transfer will be ensured for those courses among participating institutions. The plan should involve a mechanism for sign off by institutions involved in the proposal.	<input type="checkbox"/>
All courses developed through the 2008 OPDF become shareable resources through licensing agreements. The 2008 OPDF offers developers two options - Creative Commons, or BC Commons. Proposals must identify which open sharing approach will be used. Proposals must describe their strategy for participating in the development, sharing and	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>use of Open Educational Resource provincially or globally. Participation in OpenCourseWare, Connexions, WikiEducator and other global Open Education initiatives are encouraged. Preference will be given to proposals that incorporate existing Open Educational Resources into the development approach.</p>	
<p>As part of the funding grant Developers upload the resource they create to the Shareable Online Learning Resources (SOL*R) repository http://solr.bccampus.ca). Preference will be given to proposals that define how they will develop and upload interoperable resources to SOL*R that retain their integrity and value independent of Learning Management System. Proposals should include in their plans and budget effort for interoperable resource development and contributing the resource to SOL*R.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.2 Learning Objects (expected allocation ~ 25% of fund)

Proposals for small discrete online learning resources that meet a variety of teaching and learning needs are sought.

<p>In addition to the overall criteria above a suggested checklist for Proposals in the Learning Object category of this RFP includes:</p>	<p>Proposal Check</p>
<p>Proposals for creation of small, stand-alone units of online instruction that can be tagged with descriptors and stored in repositories for reuse in various instructional contexts</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Preference will be given to proposals involving multiple institutions producing many learning objects for use in multiple courses and teaching contexts. While the learning object should be fully online, use cases can involve classroom and blended learning scenarios.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Preference will be given to proposals that produce high quality media rich learning objects such as Flash, QuickTime and .avi and to learning objects that use social networking, mobile computing, or web 2.0 approaches.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Learning objects should have the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small unit of learning (2-15 min at topic level) - Self-contained in such a way that it can be taken independently - Be reusable in multiple contexts for multiple purposes - Be interoperable in multiple Course Management Systems (CMS) - Can be grouped into larger content - Be tagged with meta-data providing descriptive information to enable searching 	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Professional Learning Resources (expected allocation ~ 15% of fund)

Since its inception BCcampus has actively supported development of professional learning resources across BC’s public post secondary system. As the system partner for the Educational Technology Users Group (ETUG) BCcampus provides coordinating resources, online communities, funding and program planning support for ETUG’s spring and fall workshops and the annual Innovation Awards.

In 2007 BCcampus built out this support even further with the Learn Together initiative extending support beyond ETUG to include BC's University, College, & Institute Professional Developers (UCIPD) and the Northern Educational Developers Network (NEDNet).

The 2008 Online Program Development Fund invites proposals that continue building systemic public post secondary professional learning resources in support of the BC government's "Great Goal" to make BC "the best educated, most literate jurisdiction" in North America by 2015.

In addition to the overall criteria above a suggested checklist for Proposals in the Professional Learning Resources category of this RFP includes:	Proposal Check
Proposals provide a means for everyone at all institutions to participate. Projects aim to develop professional learning resources to which everyone can contribute and which everyone can use . Resources address teaching and learning professional development needs of faculty and staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposals are peer-based and managed by a group rather than centrally controlled. Proposal is collaboration based on shared leadership and responsibility with open reporting in and out mechanisms. Opportunities for participation include development of resources as well as advisory support. Proposal produces resources that reward participation and provide incentives for use and contribution.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposals enhance existing professional learning resources for system wide use or create new ones.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Proposals target creation of professional learning resources for one or more thematic areas of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication, Dissemination & Shared Resources - creates a shared event and resource environment that provides aggregated access to events and resources across all institutions. 2. Expertise Inventory - creates a searchable database of expertise across public post secondary. Recognizes, highlights, and provides access to pooled expertise. 3. Learning Paths - Creates a series of 'maps' or paths for accessing professional learning resources & services based on competency profiles for different roles across institutions. Matches services to individual professional development needs, & provides a means of recognizing and credentialing efforts put into professional development 4. Research (scholarship) - Creates and disseminates scholarly approaches to teaching and learning throughout BC. Enhances teaching and learning by applying research to practice and providing guidelines and methods. Creates partnerships for accessing research funding. 5. Leadership, Advocacy, & Celebration (showcase) - Develops mentoring and faculty development skills through partnership and collaboration and builds a strategic advocacy plan for faculty 	<input type="checkbox"/>

development initiatives. Uses awards and other forms of recognition provincially and across Canada to celebrate and showcase teaching and learning.	
<p>Proposals target areas of high need such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - instructional design for mixed mode courses - implementing active learning strategies - teaching and facilitating online courses - assessing and evaluating student work in the online environment - instructional design for online courses - introductions to new tools as they become available - using social software in teaching - using streaming media in teaching - the future of online learning - strategic planning for mixed mode and online learning - education technology sand box for hands on testing and trial use of technologies - a peer mentoring and exchange program 	<input type="checkbox"/>

Application Process

Proposals must be coordinated through, approved, and submitted via e-mail by the head of institutional academic affairs. The application form should be completed and e-mailed to: pstacey@bccampus.ca. While the application form provides the basic information required, those wishing to submit more detail can attach appendices as required. Successful evaluation is facilitated by proposals that are well written and specifically address RFP requirements.

Proposals with multiple institutional partners must designate a lead institution for the project and submit the proposal through the lead. Institutional partners should include a letter of support identifying names and roles of partner participants, along with how the developed resource will be used by each partner, as part of the proposal.

The deadline for submission of proposals is October 24, 2008.

Review and Selection Process

RFP evaluation, selection and award are done by independent professional peer review against a set of criteria based on the guidelines.

Communication and media announcements around OPDF grant awards will be coordinated with the Ministry of Advanced Education.