

Introduction

BCcampus is an online service connecting students and educators to programs and resources across all public post secondary institutions in BC. BCcampus provides a single access point for students who want to take post-secondary courses and programs by distance. Through BCcampus students receive online support services including course and program information, advising, admission, registration, library and course delivery services. BCcampus supports educators in developing online learning resources and building a shared community of practice. Through BCcampus educators receive development funds, libraries of licensed reusable academic resources, training and dissemination of best practices, and support for communities of interest.

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. Toward that end a \$1.5 million dollar 2005 Online Program Development Fund 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.

Criteria for Funding

All proposals should:

- be supported and approved as strategically important by participating institutions
- produce deliverables provided to all BC students through the BCcampus portal;
- produce deliverables to be shared with all BC public post secondary institutions;
- exhibit the characteristics of quality teaching and learning;
- demonstrate sustainability and cost-effectiveness;
- include contributions in dollars and/or in-kind from other sources, either internal or external (such as private partnerships);
- demonstrate collaboration among two or more BC public post secondary institutions.

The 2005 Online Program Development Fund invites proposals in four categories:

1. Programs
2. Courses
3. Learning Objects
4. Best Practice Dissemination

1. Programs (expected allocation ~ 50% of the fund)

BCcampus is actively working to bring on additional institutional and inter-institutional programs on an ongoing basis. The ultimate goal is to represent and provide access to all online learning offerings across the public post secondary sector through BCcampus. The emphasis of this round of the Online Program Development Fund is on providing funding to increase the range and breadth of programs available.

- Proposals for complete online programs in an area of high student demand and/or provincial, regional, or local labour market need are preferred.
- Preference will be given to online program proposals that increase access to BC's public higher education. Proposals should identify baseline program enrollment numbers along with expected growth through program proposal deployment.
- Proposals that improve access to remote or rural learners, reduce the percentage of qualified student turnaways, and/or relieve waitlists are especially sought.
- Preference will be given to proposals involving partnerships between multiple public post secondary institutions.
- Preference will be given to proposals 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.
- Preference will be given to proposals for four year mainstream, high demand, science, technology, health, and business programs at the undergraduate level. Ideally the program will include certificate and diploma options.
- Preference will be given to credit based online programs
- Program proposals should leverage existing online courses and must show how existing online courses will be used. 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 <http://www.bccourses.com>
- 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 <http://www.bccat.bc.ca>. 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.
- 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
- Preference will be given to program proposals that make the resulting program available through the BCcampus student portal and market the program via a institutional/BCcampus partnership

2. Courses (expected allocation ~ 25% of fund)

- Proposals for online courses in an area of high student demand and/or provincial, regional, or local labour market need are preferred.
- 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
- Preference will be given to course proposals that establish building blocks for complete online programs leading to a credential.
- Preference will be given to credit based online courses
- Program proposals must show how existing online courses within the entire higher education sector will be used. 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 <http://www.bccourses.com>
- 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 <http://www.bccat.bc.ca>. 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.
- Preference will be given to proposals involving partnerships between multiple public post secondary institutions
- 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

3. Learning Objects (expected allocation ~ 15% of fund)

- BCcampus is developing a prototype Learning Object Repository for use by institutions and instructors in BC's public higher education system. Proposals for creation of small, stand-alone unit of instruction that can be tagged with descriptors and stored in repositories for reuse in various instructional contexts are welcome
- Learning objects should have the following characteristics:
 - 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
 - Can be grouped into larger content
 - Be tagged with meta-data providing descriptive information to enable searching
 - BCcampus seeks to promote interoperability of learning content across as many delivery environments as possible. Projects are encouraged to consider providing their final outputs either as IMS Content Packages, or as self-contained formats (e.g. Flash files or Java applets) that can either be used on their own or easily be imported into existing course management systems with a minimum number of end-user dependencies. Upon completion, resources will need to be contributed to the BCcampus learning object repository, and so proponents are encouraged to build in a small amount of time to accommodate the cataloguing of these new resources.
 - Examples of learning objects can be found at <http://www.merlot.org> and <http://cnx.rice.edu>
- Preference will be given to proposals involving multiple institutions producing many learning objects for use in multiple courses and teaching contexts

- Innovation around institutions partnering with BC e-learning companies for project deliverables is encouraged.

4. Best Practice Dissemination (expected allocation ~ 10% of fund)

- Proposals that aggregate and disseminate best online learning practices for students are invited. Proposals should disseminate best practice via the BCcampus Learner Online Community. You can preview this community at <http://community.bccampus.ca/learner>.
- Proposals to help aggregate and disseminate best online learning practices for educators across the BC public post secondary sector are invited. Proposals should include use of the BCcampus EdTech Online Community <http://community.bccampus.ca/bccampus>.
- Proposals to aggregate, share and disseminate BC public post secondary e-learning research projects and results are invited. Proposals should include use of the BCcampus EdTech Online Community <http://community.bccampus.ca/bccampus>. Links to national and international research initiatives are also welcome. Proposals should show how e-learning research results can be put into practice. Proposals should provide a forum for engaging practitioners and researchers in a dialogue around crafting a provincial e-learning research agenda.
- Proposals that bring together and showcase BC's public post secondary online learning accomplishments, talent, and offerings are invited. Proposals should include use of the BCcampus website, portal and BC Learning Marketplace and Expo online community <http://community.bccampus.ca/expo>. The marketplace and expo online community is a self-service, self-publish environment created to bring together and showcase BC's online learning accomplishments, talent, and capabilities across all sectors K-12, Post-Secondary and Corporate. The goal is to showcase and highlight online learning capabilities and offerings across BC's public post secondary system for a local, national and international audience.

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 guideline 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 with the proposal.

The deadline for submission of proposals is March 29, 2005.

Review and Selection Process

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