



Making BC a great
place for technology
entrepreneurs

BCIC Innovator Skills Initiative Program Guidelines

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Program Overview and Objectives

The **BCIC Innovator Skills Initiative (BCIC-ISI)** is designed to cultivate future technology entrepreneurs and innovators with the ultimate goal of creating quality, high-paying jobs for the BC economy. BCIC-ISI is focused on fulfilling regional industry needs while preparing students to start companies, in addition to filling jobs.

Student Benefit: BCIC-ISI provides post-secondary students from across BC with business, technical, innovation and entrepreneurial training, skills and experience to meet the needs of industry in BC. The program focuses on exposing students to regional industry needs and challenges, while providing students with the skills required to run a successful business.

Company Benefit: BCIC-ISI offers BC-based technology companies access to top talent and skilled workers, training of future employees, resources for a project that will move their company forward, and the opportunity to showcase industry problems to future solution providers.

Students are selected to work with companies based on their skills and the company's needs. The students are paid for their time working with the company, through a BCIC-ISI voucher valued from \$2,500-\$7,500 (average \$5,000), which must be matched in-kind and/or in-cash by a company contribution.

Application Process

1. Interested students and companies should contact their local program partner to apply. Please refer to page 3 to find a program partner in your region.
2. Program partners will work with approved companies, local post-secondary institutions, and other sources in their networks to find appropriate student matches for the company and their project.
3. The matched student and company must each sign a **'Student-Company Agreement'** (provided by the program partner), to confirm their commitment to the program objectives and requirements as outlined in these Program Guidelines.

Program Partners

The following is a list of the BCIC-ISI Program Partners by region. BCIC recommends that you contact your local Program Partner for further information.

Region	Program Partners	Website	Telephone
Central Interior BC	Kamloops Innovation	www.kamloopsinnovation.ca	(250) 434-0200
Central/Northern Island, Sunshine Coast & Gulf Islands	Innovation Island	www.innovationisland.ca	(250) 753-8324
Greater Victoria	Victoria Advanced Technology Council (VIATeC)	www.viatec.ca	(250) 483-3214
Lower Mainland & Fraser Valley	BC Technology Industry Association (BCTIA)	www.bctia.org	(604) 683-6159
	Foresight Cleantech Accelerator Centre	www.foresightcac.com	(604) 245-0042
	Launch Academy	www.launchacademy.ca	(604) 652-3230
	New Ventures BC	www.newventuresbc.com	(604) 602-5202
	Sumas Regional Consortium for High Tech (SRCTec)	www.srctec.org	1-877-523-5543
	VenturesLabs	www.venturelabs.ca	(604) 729-4747
	Health Tech Innovation Foundation	htifoundation.com	(604)-619-9633
	Wavefront AC	www.wavefrontac.com	(778) 331-7500
North Central BC	Bulkley Valley Economic Development Association (BVEDA)	www.bveda.ca	(250) 847-4355
	Innovation Central Society	www.innovationcentral.ca	(250) 562-9622 ext 108
Okanagan Valley	Accelerate Okanagan (Kelowna Innovation Centre)	www.accelerateokanagan.com	(250) 870-9028
West Kootenays	Kootenay Association for Science & Technology (KAST)	www.kast.com	(250) 362-5052 or Toll Free 1-844-224-KAST(5278)

Voucher Use

- Vouchers may only be used to pay for work undertaken in the province of BC. Any portion of a project undertaken outside of BC is not eligible under the program.
- Vouchers cannot be used to pay for student services already fully funded through other sources.
- Vouchers may only be used to pay for work as outlined in the **'Student-Company Agreement'**.
- All cash funding from the voucher and any company in-cash matching contributions must be student salary. CRA deductions are permitted and the responsibility of the employer.

Eligibility

Student:

- Must be a post-secondary student currently enrolled at a BC post-secondary institution.
- Is required to complete the **'Virtual Market Validation Training'** offered through New Ventures BC, and companies must ensure this is completed.
- Is eligible for two vouchers per year.
- Can be a co-op student if the co-op position is not funded by any other co-op subsidization program.
- Must be employed a reasonable number of hours per week (approximately 25 hours) at a fair market value for a highly skilled student; in accordance with regional and industry differences factoring in local wages, types and lengths of projects.

Company:

- Must be a BC-based technology company and participating in the program partner's services or programs.
- Is eligible to receive two vouchers per year.
- Must provide a 1:1 matching contribution to the voucher funds (in-kind and/or in-cash).
- Must provide adequate training (business, technical and innovation and entrepreneurial) to meet the program objectives.
- Must provide a project to the student. Company projects offered to students must be related to business, technical and innovation and entrepreneurial opportunities, and cannot be general administrative duties.

Changes and Termination

- Students and companies must notify their local program partner in writing within 30 days if the project is terminated or postponed by either the student or the company.
- Vouchers cannot be transferred to another company or student. In the event that a company and/or student becomes unavailable to complete an approved voucher, a revised application form with a new student and/or company must be completed through the local program partner. If there is insufficient time to replace the student and/or company, the funds must be returned to the program partner.
- Any substantial changes must be consistent with the overall intention of the approved project and program objectives. Students and companies must receive written approval from their local program partner for any significant changes to the program.

Key Dates

Participating students and companies must agree to participate in a survey and other program evaluations that may be undertaken, both during and after completion of the work term. The BCIC-ISI Summer and Fall Work Terms, tasks and dates are included for your reference.

BCIC-ISI Summer Work Term	
Student-Company Matches Secured	April 1-May 31
Summer Student Work Term	May 1-August 31
Student and Company submit Summer Final Report to program partner	September 15
BCIC-ISI Fall Work Term	
Student-Company Matches Secured	August 1-September 30
Fall Student Work Term	September 1 – April 30
Student and Company submit Final Fall Report to program partner	March 1

- Final Annual Reports must provide all student and company program results.
- Local program partners will provide the necessary **'Reporting Template'** to the participating students and companies.

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. What qualifies as an 'in-kind' contribution?** Examples of in-kind contributions may be (but are not limited to) training time, regular staff time, shares in company.
- 2. How do companies determine the in-kind value of staff training time?**
When determining the value of in-kind training hours, training time provided to the student by owners, founders, and staff should be calculated using salary or hourly rates that accurately reflect the real cost to the company. Consulting or external charge-out rates will not be accepted for owners, founders, or staff of the company.
- 3. Is it possible to hire a student from a private post-secondary?** Yes, as long as the post-secondary institution is accredited under the governing bodies of BC. If you are in doubt, please check with BCIC for confirmation through your local program partner.
- 4. What if the student is a recent graduate and not a current BC student, are they still eligible?** No, unfortunately the student must be currently enrolled in a BC post-secondary institution.
- 5. What if the student is not currently enrolled at a BC institution, but is intending to return to school in the coming months, are they eligible?** Yes, the student will be considered eligible if they intend to return to school in the coming months.
- 6. What if the student is from BC but attending a post-secondary institution outside of BC, are they eligible?** No, only students attending BC post-secondary institutions are eligible.
- 7. Can we make student and company matches in the middle of a term?**
Yes, the goal is for all work term matches to be completed by June 15 for summer term and by September 15 for the fall term. However, if you see an opportunity for a student and company match, please apply through your local program partner as there may be flexibility.
- 8. How does the 'Virtual Market Validation Training' work?** Once matched, companies are provided with information on how to register students for the mandatory **Virtual Market Validation Training**.
- 9. Do the students have to work the whole duration of each work term (summer and fall)?**
No, the work term start and end dates simply denote the period of time in which the summer and fall work terms occur, and the maximum period of time that a student could be employed for each work term. Students are employed during the work term for as long as their voucher amount, plus any matching cash contributions from the company, last.
- 10. Do students need to be working with the companies by the start of the term?** No, start dates are flexible. They are required to begin during either given term listed above and students need to complete the Market Validation Training within that same time frame.

- 11. Can the same students and companies receive vouchers in subsequent work terms and years?** Yes, as long as the limit of two vouchers per year for each company is not exceeded. BCIC would like to see vouchers used to support a diversity of students and companies, but we understand there are circumstances where a company, project, and student are of a quality that warrants repeated access to an opportunity. Program partners can make such decisions.
- 12. Can the student employee be a family member?** No, vouchers cannot be used to hire immediate family members of the senior management team, ie. brother, sister, daughter, son, mother or father.
- 13. If a student is hired on a contract, rather than as an employee, is the placement still eligible for a voucher?** Yes. Any employment that meets legal standards is accepted (e.g. BC Employment Standards Act).
- 14. If a student placement is being partially funded through another source, is the placement eligible for an ISI voucher?** Yes, a voucher is applicable to student placements that are partially funded, with the exception of co-op students. If the student is placed through a co-op program, the placement must not be funded by any other co-op subsidization program.
- 15. Can a company receive other wage offsets for the student employee and remain eligible for an ISI voucher (e.g SR&ED)?** Yes, a wage offset will not disqualify a company for an ISI voucher; however, a reminder that vouchers cannot be used for co-op placements if the company is already using a subsidy for employing that co-op student.
- 16. Would a publicly traded company be eligible to obtain a voucher to hire a student?** Yes, a company can be publicly traded and be eligible.
- 17. Does the company need to be part of the program partners services order to be eligible for an ISI voucher?** Yes, the guidelines state that the company must be participating in the program partner's services or programs. Participation criterion varies from partner to partner and is defined by each based on their voucher demand. I