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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2021AEST0012-000225  
Feb. 8, 2021

Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training

### **Micro credentials fast track to high-demand jobs**

VICTORIA – Micro credentials are a key part of a new initiative that will fast-track British Columbians to gain the education and skills they need for high-demand jobs.

“Micro credentials are an exciting new initiative for B.C. post-secondary education that will enable learners to get the education and skills they need to access high-demand jobs,” said Anne Kang, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training. “My ministry worked with the post-secondary sector, which was quick to accept the challenge to develop and implement micro-credential offerings that would suit learners from a wide range of employment or education backgrounds. I’m confident that the first wave of 24 micro credentials will help people get the skills they need to get back to work and get ahead.”

A total investment of \$4 million (\$2 million from the Province and \$2 million through the Canada-BC Workforce Development Agreement) has enabled 15 public post-secondary institutions to provide short-duration micro credentials for more than 2,000 British Columbians who need to reskill or upskill, so they can take advantage of opportunities in high-demand sectors. These will be especially helpful for those individuals whose employment has been impacted by COVID-19.

“Today’s micro-credentials announcement is an important part of the Province’s economic recovery plan, where \$47.5 million is being invested to help thousands of people upskill or reskill to find their place in the post COVID-19 economy,” said Janet Routledge, MLA for Burnaby North. “I’m so proud that Burnaby and communities across the province will benefit from these micro credentials, as people find opportunities to quickly put their new skills to work for themselves, their families and their communities.”

Micro credentials represent an opportunity for learners to access post-secondary education or to enhance their recognized education and skills. Many micro credentials will be credited or recognized as a launching pad toward completion of longer programs. Over time, micro credentials could become “stackable.” This means learners may have the opportunity to combine individual micro credentials to earn full credentials, such as certificates and diplomas.

Because the training that leads to micro credentials is short in duration, learners who have family or work obligations can access training when it suits them, without the time and cost commitment of typical post-secondary education.

The ministry sought proposals from B.C.’s public post-secondary institutions to develop and implement high-demand micro credentials. Twenty-four micro credentials were selected for development and initial offering prior to the end of March 2021. Micro credentials offered include courses related to essential workplace skills, CleanBC and climate action, technology

and emerging economies, health and human services, and construction maintenance.

This investment in micro credentials is part of StrongerBC: BC's Economic Recovery Plan, helping thousands of people upskill or reskill and find their place in the post-COVID-19 economy. The plan outlines the steps government is taking to help people, businesses and communities recover and come out of COVID-19 stronger and better prepared to meet the challenges ahead. StrongerBC is part of B.C.'s \$10-billion COVID-19 response, which protects people's health and livelihoods, while supporting businesses and communities.

#### **Quotes:**

##### **Kathy Kinloch, president, British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) –**

“BCIT's micro credentials give learners a unique opportunity to efficiently upskill or reskill in high-demand industries, allowing them to leverage our unique education model and work towards a certificate, diploma or degree at their own pace. The new BCIT mass timber micro credential fulfils two important economic objectives. First, it reflects the Province's sustainability goals and, second, provides training in the green technology and material that will be used to build BCIT's new student housing development on our Burnaby campus. Alongside our micro credentials in digital transformation and natural resource and environmental protection, these educational pathways are an impressive and innovative contribution to B.C.'s economic recovery.”

##### **Darren Sauer, student, BCIT –**

“As a BCIT alumnus in the architectural and building technology diploma and construction management degree, I'm proud that the BCIT School of Construction and the Environment continues to develop new curriculum like the mass timber micro credential, in collaboration with industry partners, to support professional development for the construction industry. The targeted content and intuitive online learning platform allow me to complete the course at my own pace around my busy schedule, while bringing the course content into my day-to-day role in leading projects for our clients. Mass timber continues to grow in importance as a building technology. This program will serve as a strong resource for our team as we continue to deliver value and project excellence for our clients.”

#### **Quick Facts:**

- Over the next decade, approximately 80% of job openings in B.C. will require some form of post-secondary education.
- The impact of COVID-19 means many people will need to transition toward more in-demand jobs to support economic recovery.
- People who complete a micro credential may seek more post-secondary education or training, further improving their qualifications and expanding their career opportunities.
- The Canada-BC Workforce Development Agreement is a bilateral agreement providing federal funding to the Province for labour-market programming. It supports British Columbians through a range of skills training and employment supports.

#### **Learn More:**

Fast-track skills training opportunities in StrongerBC: BC's Economic Recovery Plan:

<https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/jobs-and-opportunities>

BC Council on Admissions and Transfer: <https://bccat.ca/>

A backgrounder follows.

**Contact:**

Sean Leslie  
Communications Director  
Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills  
Training  
250 893-4403

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## BACKGROUND

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### **Micro-credential programs available to boost workers' skills**

Twenty-four micro credentials were developed and are being offered between November 2020 and spring 2021 at 15 public post-secondary institutions.

The programs align with high-demand and/or high-opportunity occupations in communities throughout British Columbia. They are broken down into five areas of focus:

#### **Essential workplace skills:**

Royal Roads University

- Workplace communications skills – skills in writing, supervision, decision-making and digital and social media communication.

University of the Fraser Valley

- Digital marketing skills – skills in web writing, InDesign, Photoshop, WordPress, MS Teams, marketing and digital collaboration.

Emily Carr University of Art and Design

- Web and digital design skills for transitioning online – entry-level employment skills for website design/development, computer programmer and media developer.

College of New Caledonia

- Core skills for a digital world – digital literacy skills, communication, collaboration and content creation.

University of British Columbia, Okanagan campus

- Critical skills for communications in the technical sector – communication skills (e.g., technical writing, editing, presentations, team communications) for new and mid-career learners in science and engineering sectors.

College of New Caledonia

- Core skills for data literacy – fundamental skills in locating, generating, interpreting, evaluating, explaining and presenting data for decision-making as a core specialty skill across a range of industries.

Royal Roads University

- Leading projects in a digital environment – fundamental skills, concepts, tools and techniques to successfully manage and lead digital transformation projects and teams through changing conditions in a digital environment.

British Columbia Institute of Technology

- Skills for the digital world – for learners changing careers, seeking to reskill and recent high-school graduates to experiment with the facets of digitalization such as coding, hardware, electronics or design.

University of Victoria

- Essential skills for data literacy – introducing learners to the basic skill level in data literacy and the fundamental skills required to work effectively with data and business intelligence.

### **CleanBC/climate action:**

British Columbia Institute of Technology

- Essentials in natural resources and environmental protection – introduction to an overview and the essential skills and techniques commonly used in natural resources.

Camosun College

- Advanced skills for clean energy and efficient buildings – designed to provide short, relevant credentials in clean energy, efficient building design and high-performance building construction.

University of British Columbia

- Skills for assessing climate change and adaptation- – skills to assess climate change vulnerability, identify adaptation options and select actions that are important for land management and other sectors.

### **Technology and emerging economies:**

British Columbia Institute of Technology

- Introductory studies in mass timber construction – introduction to mass timber products and building systems course, plus several preparatory modules focused on training gaps as identified by the industry.

University of British Columbia

- Skills in blockchain foundations and applications – preparing learners for blockchain-related positions, such as blockchain business analysts, blockchain data security and privacy professionals.

University of British Columbia, Okanagan campus

- Skills in industrial automation: programmable logic controller – training for engineering and technology students and professionals looking to upskill or transfer to a career in

emerging industrial automation sectors.

North Island College

- Skills for film and television – pilot project involves the development, testing and piloting of film and television crew skills training within a micro-credential framework.

**Health and human services:**

University of Victoria

- Skills to support independent living – upskilling and incorporating skills for home-care aides to prevent falls among frail older adults and persons with disabilities who live in their own homes and receive home support services.

College of the Rockies

- Skills for home support – a range of skills training for individuals providing home support care both within Indigenous communities and for private home-care employers within the East Kootenay.

North Island College

- Medical terminology skills for office administration – skills and knowledge of medical terminology as used in the health-care sector to help provide opportunity for employment in administrative assistant and clerical positions.

Coast Mountain College

- Exploring health careers – introduction for learners to explore careers in the health sector (e.g., nursing, medical lab assistant).

**Construction maintenance:**

Vancouver Island University

- Skills development for building support workers (BSW) – standardized BSW blended program, including a stand-alone COVID-19 module for enhanced specialized cleaning techniques and best practices during COVID-19 and other pandemics.

Thompson Rivers University

- Renewable energy fundamentals for electricians – for ticketed or apprenticing electricians to be familiar with the theory and practices required for safe, efficient designs and installations with emerging technologies.

Selkirk College

- Core skills for facilities maintenance – entry-level skills and experience to prepare learners for entry-level positions in the building/facilities maintenance industry.

Selkirk College

- Core skills for refrigeration occupations – training for workers and learners throughout

the province with skills and competencies to enter and advance in this sector.

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