

Keeping B.C. at the Forefront of Teacher Education



How do we ensure that BC's teacher candidates continue to meet the high standards our education system is known for? A new collaboratively developed framework that focuses on evidence-based outcomes is guiding the ongoing approval and review of BC's teacher education programs.

Ensuring the high quality of B.C.'s teacher education programs is fundamental to the quality of our education system and the success of students in our schools. Each year, more than 1,600 students graduate from the nine teacher education programs in the province, and most of these new educators will pursue their teaching careers in B.C.

The new Teacher Education Program Approval and Review Framework establishes a set of processes to review and approve the province's teacher education programs, providing confidence that teacher candidates have the knowledge and experience to meet the high standards for educators that B.C. is known for around the world.

The framework was developed by the BC Teachers' Council (BCTC) and the Association of BC Deans of Education (ABCDE) after several years of collaborative consultation, discussion and dialogue. The final document outlines the processes jointly developed by the two organizations that permit the BCTC to fulfil its statutory mandate under the *Teachers Act* while respecting the mandate of BC post-secondary institutions under the *University Act*.



“Under the Teachers Act, the BCTC is responsible for setting the standards and reviewing and approving post-secondary teacher education programs,” says Rebecca Blair, a member of the BCTC and chair of the organization during the framework development period. “We needed to create structured processes that would allow us to meet our responsibilities under the legislation and enable teacher education programs to share what they are doing and provide evidence that their programs and graduates meet the standards.”

The BCTC and ABCDE engaged in a process of consultation and discussion to develop a framework that describes the outcomes and evidence that teacher education programs need to demonstrate to be approved by the BCTC.

“The framework doesn’t impose a standardized model on programs,” explains Ralf St. Clair, former chair of ABCDE and a current member of the BCTC. “Instead, it says ‘here is a set of outcomes we want to see, and you tell us how your unique program is achieving them.’”





Review and approval processes

The framework outlines several different teacher education program approval and review processes that address specific issues or stages of teacher education program operation:

1. **Institution-initiated review:** Processes describe how to evaluate proposed new teacher education programs or proposed changes to an existing teacher education program.
2. **Cyclical review:** Processes describe how to assess whether an existing program is continuing to meet the Teacher Education Program Approval Standards and prepare its graduates to meet the Professional Standards for BC Educators. There are two separate processes – an Ongoing Structured Dialogue, held every two years, and a Maintenance Review, conducted every five to seven years.
3. **Exceptional concerns protocol:** This process outlines how to review an existing teacher education program in those situations where serious concerns have been raised within or outside the regulatory review cycle.

The processes clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all parties and describe the steps that BCTC members and teacher education program representatives must follow. These processes are grounded in conversation and dialogue, and they include a series of guiding questions for discussion and suggestions of the type of evidence programs might want to collect to show that they meet the standards.

“The framework is a terrific contribution to ensuring we have consistent, high-quality educators across the entire system, beginning with how they are prepared and following through into their work in schools,” says St. Clair. “It achieves this by encouraging teacher education programs to be reflective and to think deeply about the work they are doing. Universities are already required to do this as part of other certification processes, but this framework asks us to pose a different set of questions. We’re looking at it from a professional perspective and asking how we know that teacher candidates are genuinely ready to live up to the standards for B.C. educators.”

As noted above, every two years each teacher education program must participate in an Ongoing Structured Dialogue. “Both organizations are excited about this new approach,” says Jim Iker, current chair of the BCTC. “It’s seen as a respectful process of guided discussion and conversation where programs can talk about what’s happening and the BCTC can learn more about how programs are aligned with the professional standards.”



Maintaining trust in BC's education system

Whether you are an educator, teacher-mentor, parent or teacher candidate, the new Teacher Education Program Approval and Review Framework should inspire confidence that each of B.C.'s diverse teacher education programs is training the next generation of teachers to the highest standards.

Members of the BCTC and ABCDE are justifiably proud of the work they've achieved, which culminated in May 2019 when the province's nine faculty of education deans and the BCTC came together to sign the framework agreement. "I have to say that what we have achieved working with the BCTC and Ministry Teacher Regulation Branch is a process that will genuinely support and value the province's teacher education programs," says St. Clair.

"B.C. is known throughout the world for the excellence of its teachers," adds Blair. "Our teacher education programs have the highest standards and with this framework we can show the public that we're producing high-quality teachers and high-quality results."

Learn More

- › Read the [TEPAR Framework online](#).