

HUMAN CAPITAL LAW AND POLICY



Business Council of
British Columbia
Est. 1966

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 2, SEPT 2019

THE CHANGING WORK ENVIRONMENT DEMANDS AN EVOLVING POST-SECONDARY ECOSYSTEM

British Columbia's employers don't need to be told they're living in times of enormous complexity and constant disruption. Between artificial intelligence, the gig economy and constantly changing and advancing technologies, organizations of all kinds find the business terrain shifting incessantly under their feet.

Our broader society faces even bigger challenges: The intensifying climate crisis, political instability, forced migration, trade wars and economic uncertainty require leaders at all levels who can skillfully navigate conflicting demands, complex dependencies, demanding stakeholders (voters, customers, employees, etc.) and much else besides. And the crucial work of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples calls on us all to learn and grow.

Table 1 and Figure 1 provide some context for this discussion. The table summarizes the B.C. government's latest ten-year labour market outlook, pointing to more than 900,000 expected job openings -- most of which represent "replacement" positions that will be filled as existing workers leave their current jobs or retire. More than three-quarters of these job openings will require

TABLE 1: **LABOUR MARKET OUTLOOK HIGHLIGHTS, B.C., 2018-2028**

Total Job Openings	903,000	100%
Economic growth (Expansion)	288,000	32%
Replacement	615,000	68%
Supply Additions	903,000	100%
Young people starting work	454,000	50%
Immigrants	243,000	27%
Migrants from other provinces	76,000	8%
Additional supply requirement	130,000	15%

Note: values are rounded; percentages are shares of the total job openings; additional supply requirement is assumed to be met through a mix of higher labour force participation, lower unemployment and/or higher productivity/automation.

Source: British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2018 Edition.

people with some type of post-secondary credential – underscoring the critical role of universities, colleges and institutes in meeting the province's economic and labour force needs (Figure 1).

THE ROLE OF PSE INSTITUTIONS

In past years, employers and employees alike have looked to post-secondary education to prepare students for both current and future workplace demands. Today, though, many workplaces are in a state of ongoing, accelerating and possibly permanent revolution.

Many of today's jobs were beyond our imagination just a few years ago, requiring the hybrid talents of technical expertise along with specialized knowledge and soft skills such as collaboration and critical thinking.

Fostering those skills and talents requires post-secondary institutions to adapt more quickly and profoundly than we ever have before, transforming learning to prepare students to succeed in this emerging new world of work.

Employers are looking for a mix of skills and competencies in new hires. This includes basic skills, technical

skills, and "soft skills" (such as communications, the ability to work in teams, listening skills, etc.). The capacity to work with technology is increasingly important across many occupations.

As leaders of the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) and Royal Roads University, we believe that the work of transformation must focus on three especially urgent areas:

1. Developing curricula that meet the evolving needs of learners, communities and industry.
2. Creating constant opportunities for students to gain experience in real-world settings through internships, co-ops, work-integrated learning and mentorship.
3. Finding innovative ways to work with employers to provide lifelong learning for existing employees to update technical skills.

Each of us leads an institution grounded in curriculum and centered around real-world learning.

BCIT, for example, has been working with four large lumber companies that wanted their employees to develop and grow leadership skills. They not only paid the employees' tuition, but helped the Institute develop and then evolve a relevant teaching program. BCIT has just enrolled its sixth cohort with over 100 students, whose ranks now include international students, with a strong online component.

The program now includes accounting and related disciplines and an Associate Certificate:

Preparing for a disrupted labour market

50%
skills shift

"Half of Canadian jobs will require a major skills shift in the next 10 years as technological advancements change the way we work.

Source: RBC, *Humans Wanted - How Canadian youth can thrive in the age of disruption*, April 2018. Via: <https://www.univcan.ca/universities/facts-and-stats/back-to-school-2018-quick-facts/>.

Business of Sawmills. Thirteen forestry companies are now working with BCIT to develop programs for further skill sets.

Royal Roads University's Design Thinking Challenge invites teams of business students from across Canada to use principles from engineering and psychology to craft fresh solutions to real world

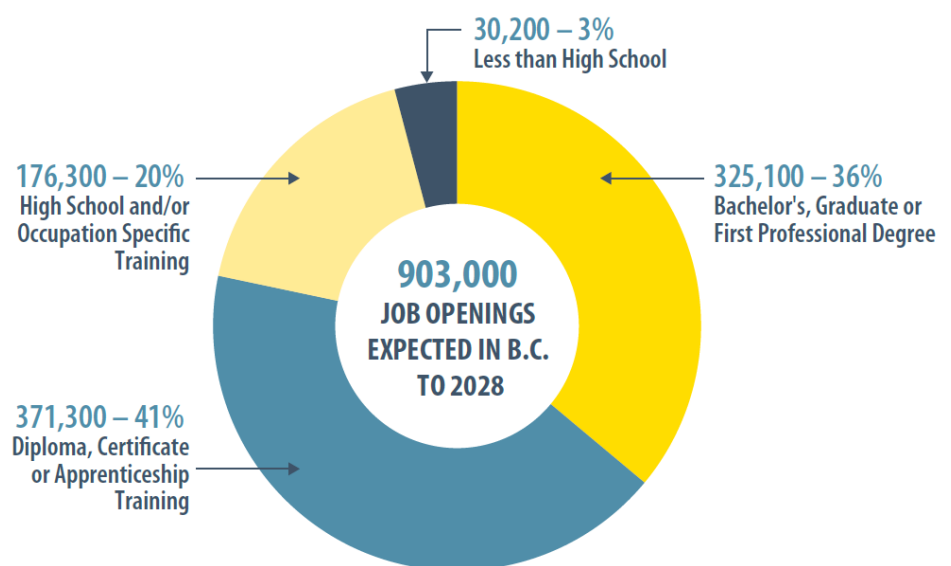
problems like encouraging Victoria residents to drive less and walk more or reducing wildfire hazards in neighbourhoods in the Capital Region.

This practical focus is reflected in learning throughout the university. Communications students work with corporations and non-profits to solve marketing problems; environmental science students test backyard soils for contaminants; commerce

students create online businesses whose profits help charities.

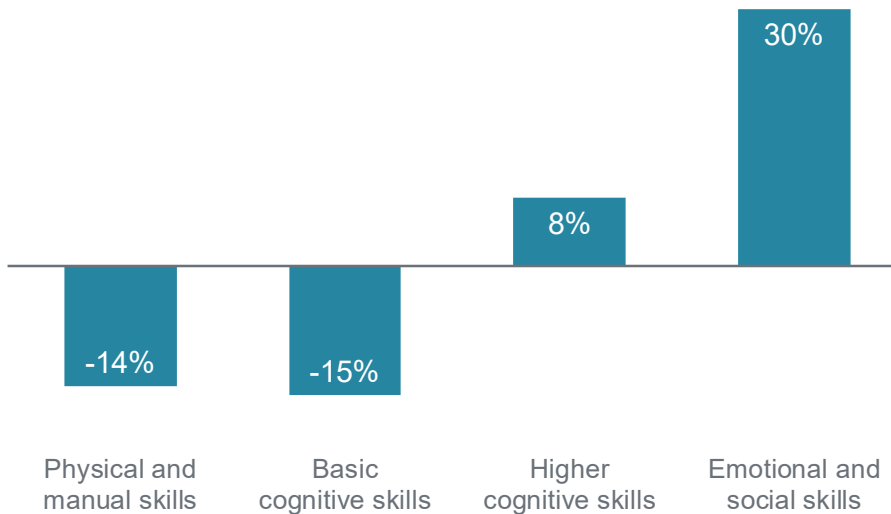
Developing skill sets that meet both current and future economic needs requires continuous feedback between post-secondary institutions and industry — and the responsiveness needed to quickly adapt or create new

FIGURE 1: **JOB OPENINGS BY EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS, B.C., 2018-2028**



Source: British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2018 Edition.

FIGURE 2: **CHANGE IN TOTAL HOURS WORKED IN THE U.S. AND EUROPE BY SKILL CATEGORY, 2016 VS 2030 ESTIMATE**



Source: McKinsey Global Institute Workforce Skills Model.

learning opportunities. Regardless of a workplace’s size or regulatory environment, employees must be able to jump in, pick up the skills they need, get back to work and contribute to the success of their employers.

Part of the answer is a fresh look at admissions. Royal Roads uses a student-centered approach, taking into account a student’s formal education, informal learning and real-world experience. BCIT uses “challenge testing” to determine which real-life skills and experience are equivalent to existing course credits, and immediately applies those credit equivalents to the learner. This makes upskilling more efficient and effective.

But post-secondary institutions not only need to work better with industry and employers. They also need to work better with each other, and with the students we serve.

For example, we can build more clearly defined educational pathways from one school to another, giving students more certainty around entrance requirements, continuity and credential recognition — and the flexibility to craft an education tailored to their own needs. And student supports can help ensure success and wellbeing: mental health programs, welcome programs for international students, and a focus on indigenization and culturally specific supports for Indigenous students all make a difference.

Post-secondary teaching and learning have always been about building diverse and resilient communities, made up of the skilled, collaborative leaders we educate. An education geared to our new reality helps to change their lives. They, in turn, become those who will change the world.

It is incumbent on us as leaders, in both post-secondary institutions and industry, to set the stage for future generations. Students and all learners have the right to expect nothing less than full cooperation and support throughout the post-secondary ecosystem for their — and everyone’s — future success.

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