

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### ELECTRICAL PROGRAM STANDARDS PROJECT

#### PURPOSE

This document is intended to outline the parameters of a project to update the provincial standards for the electrician (Construction) apprenticeship program. It has been developed to communicate ITA's expectations and requirements, facilitate project planning, and serve as the basis for the development of a project / funding proposal by the BC Construction Association.

#### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

The ITA, under the terms of the Industry Training Authority Act is established as an occupational standards and certification body for a range of industrial occupations. In this regard Section 8 of the Act empowers the ITA to:

- a) *designate a training program, including a training program for a trade or an occupation, as a recognized program;*
- b) *recommend to the minister that a training program, including a training program for a trade or an occupation, be designated as an accredited program;*
- c) *develop programs of training and apprenticeship and program standards for the purposes of paragraphs (a) and (b);*
- i) *establish standards, procedures and fees for examinations, assessments and services;*
- j) *set requirements for trainers funded by the authority to deliver industry training programs and conduct examinations and assessments of training and apprenticeship;*

The ITA Board has placed a priority on the establishment of rigorous and well-defined industry training program standards in order to ensure the credibility and broad recognition of the qualifications and credentials it provides to trainees. In this respect ITA sees its role as approving and applying standards that have effectively been defined by industry bodies, including national inter-provincial standards mechanisms such as the Red Seal program. The basic premise of this approach is that industry is best qualified to define the skills and knowledge required for productive and gainful employment.

Feedback received by the BC Government and ITA indicates that industry strongly feels that it is best qualified to take a lead role in establishing maintaining standards for industry training in the Province. This important principle has been reflected in ITA policies and processes, including the decision to establish sector-based Industry Training Organizations that will assume the

lead role in establishing and maintaining standards for designated programs. The BC Construction Association has indicated a strong interest in taking a lead project management role in updating the standards for the construction electrician program, including the program outline, examinations and related documentation. It is anticipated that BCCA will work closely with the recently established Advisory Council on Construction Training (ACCT) to implement the project.

## **GENERAL PROJECT TERMS & REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Project Funding** – ITA will provide the necessary funding to BCCA to plan and implement the project beginning in February 2005. Funding will be provided to BCCA through a Contribution Agreement that will be based upon a project proposal that is submitted by BCCA. The proposal and subsequent Agreement will detail project processes, deliverables, timelines, costs and accountabilities.
2. **Project Management** – BCCA will establish a two-level project management structure comprising an overall Steering Committee and a Working Group. The Steering Committee is to establish overall project direction and will comprise senior representatives of the ICI construction sector and a representative of ITA. The Working Group is to coordinate and undertake the standards development work and will be comprised of industry practitioners and other technical experts as required. BCCA will appoint a Project Manager to develop and coordinate the implementation a project plan designed to meet agreed upon goals and objectives.
3. **Standards / Curriculum Updating**
  - a. **Program Outline – National Standards**– The existing Program Outline (2001) will be reviewed against the established National Occupation Analysis for Construction Electrician and updated as required to bring it fully into alignment;
  - b. **Program Outline – Provincial Standards**– The existing Program Outline (2001) will be reviewed to ensure the content and structure of the electrical training program meets B.C. industry needs and standards;
  - c. **Table of Specifications** – A Table of Specifications will be produced based upon the NOA and revised Program Outline that will enable the development of assessment tools;
  - d. **Examination Item Banks** – 3 X item banks based upon the Table of Specifications and comprising a minimum of 450 questions will be developed for each of four levels. The item banks are intended to

enable the generation of random, standardized examinations that will administered at the conclusion of each level of technical training and on a challenge basis by the ITC; and

- e. **Supporting Tools and Resources**– Support resources such as Training Guides and Log Books that are intended to support the work-based delivery component of the electrical apprenticeship program will be updated / re-designed if the project committee feels that they should be retained.

4. **Program Policy Review / Development** – In addition to updating standards mechanisms, the project is established to provide recommendations to ITA respecting the following key policy directions:

- a. **B.C. Certificate of Qualification** – If there is clear industry support, ITA is now prepared to issue a Certificate of Qualification to individuals who successfully complete a Level 4 examination and meet any other requirements established for the occupation. These individuals would then have the option of writing an Inter-Provincial examination, and if successful, receive a Red Seal endorsement. (Note: The IP examination currently serves as the final examination prior to Red Seal certification and is based upon the content in all levels). The project committee will review this matter to determine whether the industry wishes to proceed with the certification model. If the decision is to proceed, the project committee will prepare a proposal to the ITA for a modification to the standards for an existing program.
- b. **Electrical Entry Level Trades Training** – If there is clear industry support, ITA is prepared to establish provincial standards for electrical entry-level training. The electrical ELTT program is intended to prepare individuals for direct entry into the workforce and/or entry into a formal industry training program leading to a provincial / inter-provincial qualification. There are currently no provincial standards for this program and program delivery models (duration, content, technical training credit) vary among the public post-institutions delivering the program. The program model also utilizes a significant portion of the financial resources allocated by ITA to the public system to support training for the electrical trade. Additionally, a number of private training providers are now establishing ELTT programs and are seeking recognition for these programs towards provincial industry training qualifications. If defined, recommended, and supported by industry (through recruitment and hiring practices) provincial standards for ITA funded electrical Entry Level Trades Training have the potential to improve access and outcomes for trainees and employers. Specific issues that should be addressed in this project component include:

- i. Program rationale (i.e. Is there a need for a pre-apprenticeship program?)
    - ii. Program outcomes (i.e. What skill level should the program produce?)
    - iii. Regional variations (i.e. Should program standards vary by region?)
    - iv. Program laddering (i.e. How should ELTT integrate with the full electrical apprenticeship program?)
    - v. Industry Support / Utilization (i.e. To what extent is industry prepared to support the program by hiring graduates?)
  - c. **Secondary School Trades Training** - ITA has recently created the ACE-IT Program that provides secondary schools with financial support to deliver Level 1 apprentice technical training to high school student in collaboration with post-secondary providers. The program also provides support for placement of program graduates in relevant employment-based training opportunities. The program is available for 14 trades including electrical. If there is clear industry support, ITA is prepared to establish provincial standards for ACE-IT programming for the electrical trade, providing they fit within the general policy parameters already established for the program.
4. **Implementation** - The project will develop an overall plan for implementing the new program standard mechanisms and where appropriate new program policies pertaining to the BC Certificate of Qualification and electrical ELTT program standards. The plan will detail tasks, actions, responsibilities, timelines and estimated resource requirements.
5. **Project Timeline** - The planning phase of the project will commence in early February 2005 and conclude in mid to late March 2005, The development phase will commence in late March 2005 and conclude in September 2005.
6. **General Project Principles** - The project design and execution is to adhere to the following general principles:
- Transparency** - All project processes will be fully documented and made available to interested parties upon request
  - Accountability** - The financial administration of the project will be in accordance with established Treasury Board guidelines and requirements.
  - Inclusiveness** -The constitution of the Steering and Working committees will ensure that all relevant aspects of the industry are represented (e.g.. regional, smaller employers, open shop)
  - Efficiency** - Opportunities to utilize existing resources will be fully considered where appropriate (e.g. Alberta curriculum)
  - ITA Policy Compliance** - The project process and outcomes will be fully compliant with the ITA Program Policy Framework

and processes established by the ITA Board for making changes to existing industry training programs.

- **Scope** - The project will remain within the scope of work as defined in these Terms of Reference