

A woman with dark hair and bangs, wearing a grey dress, stands at the front of a meeting room, smiling. She is positioned to the left of a large blue text box. The room contains several people seated at long white tables, facing her. Some are looking at laptops or tablets. A projector is mounted on a stand in the middle of the room. The background features a whiteboard and a window. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

Accreditation Panel Member Guide  
For the Review of Applications for  
Recognition/Accreditation of Business  
Technology Management (BTM)  
Programs

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose

The Business Technology Management Accreditation Council (BTMAC) grants recognition and accreditation status to programs that meet criteria established by the BTMAC.

Accrediting BTM programs is intended to have confidence that programs have met industry accepted standards. The accreditation process provides quality assurance and ensures accredited programs are committed to continuous improvement.

Your role as a panel member is to conduct a comprehensive review of the program requesting the review in order to ensure they meet the BTM criteria. The panel does not make recommendations that go beyond the criteria. The panel will consider various sources of evidence to determine whether programs satisfy the criteria.

This guide outlines the accreditation process, and the role and responsibilities and obligations of panel members.

### 1.2 The Business Technology Management Accreditation Council

The accreditation of BTM educational programs is managed by the *Business Technology Management Accreditation Council (BTMAC)*.

BTMAC is an autonomous body. The accreditation criteria are at the heart of the BTMAC purpose for quality assurance in education and they provide guidance to the educational programs and to those who accredit them on the standards associated with programs of quality. The development of BTMAC criteria and policies are the responsibility and the prerogative of the BTMAC.

The BTMAC is responsible for managing the accreditation evaluations of educational programs and rendering decisions on these programs that are based on approved policies and the BTM Accreditation Criteria.

The BTMAC objectives are to:

1. Formulate and maintain high educational standards for Canadian educational institutions offering BTM related programs.
2. Help institutions plan and conduct BTM programs.
3. Promote and advance BTM education with the aim of improving public welfare through the development of better educated business technology professionals.
4. Foster a cooperative approach to BTM education among students, employers, government, and educators, and meet the changing needs of these and other stakeholders.

### 1.3 Overview of Recognition Process

The Business Technology Management Accreditation Council (BTMAC) will offer an informal review to programs that have not yet produced graduates and do not qualify for an accreditation visit. The sole purpose of the informal evaluation is to provide comment and advice to the institution with respect to the program. The review will solely focus on the alignment of the curriculum to the BTM Learning Outcomes. To be successful, a program needs to demonstrate that it produces learning outcomes that are largely aligned with the BTM Learning Outcomes and Competency Standards. Programs that are successful in the review will be allowed to use the term BTM Recognized on communications for a maximum of four (4) years. No undertaking is given by the BTMAC as to the eventual accreditation of the program

The recognition process includes the following steps:

Step 1: Provider submits the self assessment application (questionnaire)

- The provider of a BTM program prepares a self appraisal report to demonstrate how the program submitted for review satisfies the accreditation requirements
- The BTMAC Secretariat supports the provider to understand the criteria and process to ensure that the provider prepares and application that comprises the self assessment report and supporting documentation.
- The provider submits the application to the BTMAC Secretariat

Step 2: The BTMAC Secretariat establishes the recognition panel

- The Secretariat selects a chair and panel member
- New panel members participate in an orientation and an online training session on the accreditation process. Training of new accreditors starts with the online course provided by the Association of Accrediting Agencies of Canada. The Secretariat will provide the access code to this online course to all new accreditors. It takes a few hours to take the course and the PIN remains active for three months. The course is available to new and trained accreditors.

Step 3: Panel conducts recognition review

- Panel receives a copy of the recognition application.
- All panel members review the application to compile evidence of compliance with the requirements. If information is missing or incomplete, the panel chair will work with the Secretariat to obtain the information. The additional information is then submitted to the panel upon receipt and assessed.

Step 4: Panel drafts its report and forwards to the provider

- The panel completes a draft report for the BTMAC comprising factual findings, concerns, deficiencies, and recommendations and charts the program's satisfaction of the recognition requirements.
- The recognition panel chair submits the draft report to the Secretariat which conducts a quality review and finalizes the report with the panel chair.

- The Secretariat submits the draft report to the educational institution.
- Within 20 business days the educational provider reviews the draft report for any factual errors and/or omissions. The provider submits a report to the Secretariat that proposes corrections or clarifies factual matters that are relevant to the accreditation. The new information can only pertain the current review as it is a “point in time” assessment. It cannot include future information or address how the provider is planning to address any recommendations.
- The panel considers the provider’s comments and may revise the draft report as appropriate. Depending on the scope of the revisions, the panel may consider the comments via a teleconference meeting or by email. A record of the discussion should be provided to the Secretariat and will be kept with the application.

Step 5: Finalized report considered by the BTMAC

- The Secretariat submit the panel’s final draft report and the provider’s response to the report to the BTMAC and sends the provider a copy of the report noting an explanation of the revisions between the first and second draft. The Secretariat will also inform the provider when the BTMAC meeting is scheduled to review the report.
- The panel chair presents the panel’s report to the BTMAC and answers any questions about the report or the review process.

Step 6: BTMAC issues a decision and publication of status

- The BTMAC considers the panel’s report and he comments of the provider and makes a decision on the recognition of the program.
- The final report including the BTMAC’s decision is sent to the provider.
- If the decision is a recognition, then the program’s status will be published on the BTMAC website. The BTMAC does not provide any details to the public regarding what providers have applied. It only provides the status of a provider that was successful in the recognition effort.

## 1.4 Overview of the Accreditation Process

Accreditation is an ongoing, cyclical process that requires program providers to demonstrate commitment to quality assurance and continuous improvement in their programs of professional education. The accreditation process includes the following steps:

Step 1: Provider submits the self assessment application (questionnaire)

- The provider of a BTM program prepares a self appraisal report to demonstrate how the program submitted for review satisfies the accreditation requirements
- The BTMAC Secretariat supports the provider to understand the criteria and process to ensure that the provider prepares and application that comprises the self assessment report and supporting documentation.
- The provider submits the application to the BTMAC Secretariat

Step 2: The BTMAC Secretariat establishes the accreditation panel

- The Secretariat selects a chair and panel members

- New panel members participate in an orientation and an online training session on the accreditation process. Training of new accreditors starts with the online course provided by the Association of Accrediting Agencies of Canada. The Secretariat will provide the access code to this online course to all new accreditors. It takes a few hours to take the course and the PIN remains active for three months. The course is available to new and trained accreditors.
- The Secretariat provides the names of the accreditation team members to the educational provider. The educational provider has an opportunity to contest the proposed panel member if they believe a conflict of interest situation exist. The communication about this process is conducted through the Secretariat in consultation with the BTMAC Chair and Vice Chair.

#### Step 3: Panel conducts accreditation review

- Panel receives a copy of the accreditation application.
- All panel members participate in a teleconference meeting to discuss the accreditation application and process, including their responsibility in to gather and verify evidence during the visit.
- All panel members review the application to compile evidence of compliance with the requirements. If information is missing or incomplete, the panel chair will work with the Secretariat to obtain the information. The additional information is then submitted to the panel upon receipt and assessed. Based on the information a go/no-go decision is made by the team.
- The panel then conducts the site visits that includes:
  - Interviewing faculty and other personnel involved in the program
  - Reviewing program resources and other artifacts
  - Reviewing course outlines in detail with the course assessments tools
  - Meeting with students, graduates and advisory board members or organizations that have hired students from the program.

#### Step 4: Panel drafts its report and forwards to the provider

The accreditation panel completes a draft report for the BTMAC comprising factual findings, concerns, deficiencies, and recommendations and charts the program’s satisfaction of the accreditation requirements.

- The accreditation panel chair submits the draft report to the Secretariat which conducts a quality review and finalizes the report with the panel chair.
- The Secretariat submits the draft report to the draft report to the educational institution.
- Within 20 business days the educational provider reviews the draft report for any factual errors and/or omissions. The providers submits a report to the Secretariat that proposes corrections or clarifies factual matters that are relevant to the accreditation. The new information can only pertain the current review as it is a “point in time” assessment. It cannot include future information or address how the provider is planning to address any recommendations.
- The accreditation panel considers the provider’s comments and may revise the draft report as appropriate. Depending on the scope of the revisions, the panel may consider the comments via a teleconference meeting or by email. A record of the discussion should be provided to the Secretariat and will be kept with the application.

#### Step 5: Finalized report considered by the BTMAC



- The Secretariat submit the panel’s final draft report and the provider’s response to the report to the BTMAC and sends the provider a copy of the report noting an explanation of the revisions between the first and second draft. The Secretariat will also inform the provider when the BTMAC meeting is scheduled to review the report.
- The panel chair presents the panel’s report to the BTMAC and answers any questions about the report or the review process.

Step 6: BTMAC issues a decision and publication of status

- The BTMAC considers the panel’s report and he comments of the provider and makes a decision on the accreditation of the program.
- The final report including the BTMAC’s decision is sent to the provider.
- The provider of a program may appeal a decision of the BTMAC within 60 days of receiving a copy of it.
- If the decision is a full accreditation then the program’s status will be published on the BTMAC website. The BTMAC does not provide any details to the public regarding what providers have applied. It only provides the status of a provider that was successful in the accreditation effort.

## 2.0 Accreditation Panel

### 2.1 Composition of the Accreditation Panel

An accreditation panel consist of a panel chair and two panel members. Ideally, one of the two panel members is a representative from industry.

If a program under review includes an area of study that deals with an inter-disciplinary area (i.e. BTM Digital Health, BTM Cyber Security) at least one of the members of the panel must have expertise in the specialized area.

At least two panel members must be fluent in the language of instructions of the program of review (English or French).

### 2.2 Role of the Accreditation Panel

The duties of the accreditation panel are to:

- Review the program(s) under review.
- Write report advising the BTMAC of its findings and make a recommendations regarding the accreditation of the program reviewed.
- The BTMAC may consider the evidence presented to them an issue a decision that differs from the recommendation made by the panel. The BTMAC has the advantage of having reviewed a number of programs and may take a different view of the significance and evidence and findings of the panel.

### 2.3 Duties and Obligations of the Accreditation Panel

Accreditation panel members are required to participate and contribute to the entire process in a meaningful and professional way. As a panel member, you must:

- Participate in any orientation and training sessions



- Fully review the provider’s application and submit findings and evidence within the timelines established by the panel chair
- Participate in all panel meetings
- Examine materials in the provider’s artifacts room
- Gather and consider the evidence demonstrating that a program meets the requirements, including developing interview questions to clarify or supplement evidence
- Participate in drafting the report outlining the panel findings, recommendations and evidence within agreed upon timelines
- Consider any clarifying information the provider furnishes
- Participate in any post-site visit meetings to finalize the report
- Return or destroy materials after the 60 days appeal process time has expired

Accreditation panel must maintain the highest level of professional and ethical conducts.

Panel members must:

- Conduct themselves professionally, with truth, accuracy and fairness
- Declare and take appropriate action concerning conflict of interest prior to beginning the process
- Refuse fees or other considerations from applicants in exchange for information or influencing the accreditation process or decisions
- Not represent conflicting or competing interests in the accreditation process
- Maintain confidentiality in respects of the accreditation process and decisions
- Not intentionally communicate false or misleading information that might compromise the integrity of the accreditation process or decision
- Safeguard personal notes of the review

## 2.4 Conflict of Interest Guidelines

An accreditation panel member shall not carry out the function if that person:

- Has a contract, is in partnership or is a private company engaged in business with the educational institution whose program is under review.
- Has acted as a teacher or faculty for the educational institution whose program is under review during the previous two years
- Has family members who are employed by, or are students enrolled at, the permitted institution whose program is under review
- Has been paid as a consultant during the previous two years or has received an honorary degree from the educational institution under review
- Has any other relationship with the institution whose program is under review, as a result of which the participation of the person in the functions of the panel may directly or indirectly confer a benefit on the person or any person with whom the program does not deal at arm’s length.

In addition, an employee or person under contract by the institution cannot serve as panel member.

You should also avoid any and all appearance of a conflict of interest. You are discouraged from socializing with faculty, staff or advisory committee members of the educational institution outside the context of the site visit schedule.

## 2.5 Confidentiality

The BTMAC takes its commitment to confidentiality very seriously.

Panel members need preserve secrecy about their panel work.

Information other than public knowledge that you receive during the review is proprietary information and must not be disclosed, discussed or used outside the panel's work. Public knowledge is information accessible to anyone, for example, from websites or calendars. You should not discuss the panel's work or recommendations with the provider of the program.

Within the confines of the panel, experienced panel members may share insights gathered from previous reviews to assist current members with their panel work. However, they should not refer to programs by name, nor disclose any proprietary information or information that identifies the program in question.

## 2.6 Duties of the Accreditation Panel Chair

The Chair of the Accreditation Panel is responsible for the effective and efficient work of the panel. The panel chair facilitates a productive working environment during the accreditation review. The chair, supported by the BTMAC Secretariat, ensures the panel understands the accreditation process and meets agreed upon deadlines. The chair leads group discussions and supports deliberations to work towards achieving consensus for the recommendations in the panel report. The duties of the panel chair include specific tasks:

### 2.6.1 Panel Preparation

The panel chair:

- With the BTMAC Secretariat, assist the panel to maintain operating norms for all panel work
- With the BTMAC Secretariat, ensures correct composition of the panel and ensures training occurs as needed and required forms are signed

### 2.6.2 Pre-site Visit Meeting

- With the BTMAC Secretariat, set the agenda for panel meetings prior to the visit
- With BTMAC Secretariat, resolves any pre-site visit issues
- Chairs the panel meetings
- In consultation with the panel, assign tasks to panel member and set timelines for completion

### 2.6.3 Site Visit

- Chairs on site panel meetings
- Guides the site visit interview process
- Resolves any issues that arise during review

### 2.6.4 Draft Panel Report

- Sets the dates and guidelines for preparation time of the draft report

- Panel members provide the chair with their respective sections of the report. The Chair then prepares the first draft ensuring consistency throughout report and working with panel members to clarify comments and observations.
- Work with the BTMAC Secretariat to finalize the draft report (check of grammar/style and consistency in application of standard).
- Ensures that panel members approve the draft report on time
- The BTMAC Secretariat sends the draft report to the educational institution for a check of factual errors and omissions.

#### 2.6.5 Final Panel Report

- The BTMAC Secretariat informs panel members of the educational institution's response and, as required, sets a meeting with the team to consider the response.
- Chairs the final meeting, working towards achieving consensus in revisions to finalize the final report
- Presents the final panel report to the BTMAC
- The BTMAC communicates the final decision to the educational institution and the panel members.

### 2.7 Office Support to the Accreditation Panel Members

The BTMAC Secretariat supports the work of the BTMAC and the accreditation panel, particularly the panel chair. It provides logistical and administrative support so that the accreditation panel may concentrate on conducting the review and writing the accreditation report. The Secretariat organizes the site visit with input from the panel and the educational institution's staff throughout the accreditation review process.

The Secretariat cannot be members of the panel. Although they have an important role, they do not participate actively in panel deliberations. The Secretariat will, with the assistance of the BTMAC Chair, oversee the consistent application of the accreditation criteria and the quality review of the report.

### 2.8 Expense Coverage

The BTMAC reimburses panel members for reasonable expenses related to travel, meals and accommodation incurred while conducting the accreditation review.

Travel arrangements are made by the panel members, but can also be made by the Secretariat if preferred. Hotel and dinner meals arrangements are made by the Secretariat. Hotel (and travel if booked through the Secretariat) will be directed charged to the BTMAC Secretariat.

Details on allowable expenditures, submitting expense claims and samples of forms are provided in Appendix 3.3

The BTMAC does not pay a per-diem. Panel member participation are volunteer contributions.

## 3 Serving on an Accreditation Panel

Participating in an accreditation review is a meaningful and intense experience. Panel members read and analyze large documents for detail and meaning, identify and sort evidence, check for compliance to criteria issues, work in partnership and collaborate with other panel members, find common ground, reach consensus, interview, listen, write and maintain a sense of perspective.

### 3.1 Accreditation Panel Training and Norms and Skills Required of Panel Members

#### 3.1.1 Orientation and General Training

Training introduces panel members to the accreditation process, provides them with the skills required to effectively accomplish the process and helps them develop greater familiarity with the requirements.

When a panel is formally established, the BTMAC Secretariat provides training to panel members serving the first time and other members who request refresher training.

BTMAC accreditor training includes:

- Understanding the BTMAC criteria
- Online training provided by the Association of Accrediting Agencies of Canada (AAAC). This training is paid for by the BTMAC and takes a few hours to complete. It provides a good overview of what accreditation is and the role of the various stakeholders.
- Review of previous accreditation reports to gain a sense what the expectations are concerning taking notes, documenting evidence, and writing the report.

#### 3.1.2 Operating Norms

Panel members respects BTMAC norms for the panel work.

Norms usually include the following elements:

Maintain objectivity

- Arrive and remain unbiased
- Withhold judgement until all evidence has been gathered

Promoting respects and collaboration

- Recognize the interdependence of individual and collective opinions
- Treat everyone with respect
- Be honest and candid; avoid monopolizing the conversation
- Demonstrate respect for others' views
- Collaborate
- Focus on consensus building

Enhancing Listening

- Limit comments to brief statements

Observe and record

- Be an active listener
- Avoid side conversations

### 3.1.3 Consensus Building

Reaching consensus, is an essential part of the accreditation process. The accreditation panel collaborates to write an accurate report with findings and recommendations to which all members agree.

To help reach consensus:

- Spend time getting to know each other and identifying areas of common interest
- Commit to the task and to other members of the panel

### 3.1.4 Listening and Note Taking Skills

Panel members must use active listening and effective note-taking skills. Interviews will not be recorded.

As the designated questioner you should:

- Ask open-ended questions to elicit information
- Maintain eye contact with the speaker
- Listen to all the interviewee has to say before responding
- Paraphrase with you hear from the speaker and clarify your understanding
- Invite the interviewee to comment on any other areas relevant to the quality of the program.
- Listen actively and capture details and perceptions in your notes
- Record the name of the session, speaker, time and date
- Listen for evidence that confirms or does not confirm satisfaction of the requirements

### 3.1.5 Documenting Evidence and Developing Questions

To prepare for participation, all panel members must fully read the accreditation application and familiarize themselves with the relevant criteria. Panel members begin by reviewing the provider's self appraisal report which explains how the provider perceives the program to satisfy the accreditation requirements. You should not rely only on claims in the self-appraisal as evidence. You must verify and validate the information from other sources including program documentation, interviews and artifacts.

While panel members are responsible for all requirements, you may be assigned to focus on a particular requirement that forms part of the criteria. Frequently, panel members work with a partner to gather evidence for these requirements.

As you complete your preliminary review, note information that needs clarification or is missing. Consider where additional artifacts may be required to verify self-appraisal claims. This will help you with the development of questions for the site visit.

The panel's findings and recommendations are based on evidence compiled during the accreditation review from:

- The accreditation application
- Interviews with faculty and other stakeholders during the visit
- Documents requested or received during or after the interviews
- Review of artifacts online or in the artifacts room
- Tour of the facilities during the visit

The presence or lack of evidence forms the basis for findings about each accreditation requirement. Based on these findings, the panel will recommend whether each requirements is fully satisfied, substantially satisfied, or not satisfied.

The principles of gathering evidence include:

- Triangulation using multiple sources of evidence
- Representativeness and depth
- Negative instances
- Absences

Any findings made through the accreditation process must be evidence-based. Evidence needs to be widespread and representative before a finding can be made. You should seek the evidence through a number of source such as the accreditation application, document and artifact review, interviews and observations.

Triangulation is the process of compiling evidence from several places. Multiple sources of evidence lead to stronger findings.

Negative instances, that is, information that contradicts what is claimed, and absences of information may lead a panel to recommend that a requirement is not fully satisfied.

The BTMAC relies upon the panel report to write the decision and the report therefore should include sufficient information to permit the BTMAC to understand the factual basis for the findings.

### 3.1.6 Interviewing Skills

You will prepare questions for the purpose of gathering information to include in the panel report.

In conducting interviews, the panel respects the following protocol:

- Open the interview by thanking the participants for attending
- Keep the tone fairly formal
- Be collegial and try to make participants feel comfortable
- Keep the interview to the time limit
- Keep a list of all names and title of people who were interviewed
- When closing the interview thank participants for their participation and explain next steps I the process.

### 3.2 Orientation Meeting

A meeting is held with the panel shortly after it has been appointed. The purpose of this meeting is to introduce panel members to one another, give an overview of the application, review logistical needs and divide responsibilities in preparation for the site review.

The panel chair will consider the accreditation timelines and set a date by which your preliminary review should be completed and your evidence sent to the panel chair.

### 3.3 Pre-site Visit Meeting

The panel will arrive on site the evening before the visit. Panel members are encouraged to arrive before the dinner hour. A pre-site visit meeting is scheduled the evening before the visit which provides panel members an opportunity to discuss any final issues, share evidence panel members have gathered, identify gaps or potential areas of concern.



## 4.0 Site Visit

### 4.1 Purpose

The purpose of the visit is to allow panel member to supplement and verify the information found in the accreditation application. The panel members work together at the site visit to reach consensus on a report to determine whether a program should be recommended for accreditation.

The site visit provides an opportunity for you to:

- Interview senior administration, teaching and administrative staff and other personnel associated with the program
- Tour the facilities
- Review artifacts online or in the artifacts room

### 4.2 Artifacts

During the on-site visit, you will review program artifacts. They assist the panel to determine that the program satisfies regulatory requirements. They are also multiple sources of evidence that support triangulation to strengthen findings.

Panel members will schedule time in the artifacts room throughout the visit to view the materials.

Artifacts will include:

Sample assignments
Sample midterms, tests or quizzes
Sample final examination
Course textbook
Course notes given to students

## 5.0 Findings and Recommendations

The findings are drawn from the evidence collected and reviewed by the panel. Although every accreditation is a “point-in-time” review, in a renewal of accreditation, the panel also considers information how the school has addressed the recommendations in the last report.

It is especially important to address inconsistencies in the evidence, areas that lack evidence, or suggest non-compliance with the criteria.

The report consists of the following areas:

**Observations** General observations about the area under review.

**Strengths** are those positive elements of the program that go beyond the normal expectations of the criteria, are valuable and should be continued. Strengths may influence a decision to accredit but does not guarantee it.

Teams should not interpret strengths as "strengths over and above other similar programs" as this interpretation has some deficiencies: 1. It is impossible to measure 2. It conflicts with the definition in the published criteria 3. It is in conflict with the stated view of accreditation as comprising a "holistic" review 4. It leads to inconsistencies -- something can be both a strength and also a deficiency; thus a strength can lead to accreditation denial.

In determining if something is a strength, panels should strictly use the definition in the criteria and not the "similar programs" interpretation. Accreditation should not be based ad hoc, incomplete comparisons. It should be based to the greatest extent possible on peer review and judgements using absolute criteria. Comparisons might be helpful as one contributing factor in investigating (but never in defining) an area of strength -- or indeed a concern.

*Example:* Suppose a program has 1 computer per 10 students while most programs have, according to national surveys, an average of 1 per 30 students. This particular fact might suggest a strength, but only in the sense that it identifies a situation for further investigation. The program might have too many cheap, limited capability machines, or may have oversupplied the students with workstations at the expense of other needed facilities. In which case, we have a weakness and not strength. Thus the apparent comparative difference should lead to investigation; it should not be a conclusion in its own right.

Furthermore, in a case where a program appears to demonstrate a substantial comparative advantage, the comparative difference is not the strength itself but would usually be the result of underlying strength(s). Such strengths might, for example, involve strong faculty, exceptional leadership, wise and prudent financial practices, excellent student services. The team should investigate these matters and report them as additional strengths as appropriate.

**Concerns** are related to issues that had been determined to fall below the normal expectations, but still meet the minimum requirements of the criteria. A concern indicates that something does not have the strength of compliance that assures that the quality of the program will not be compromised prior to the next general review. The potential thus exists for the situation to change such that the criteria may not be satisfied. Positive action is desirable.

**Deficiencies** indicate that a criterion is not satisfied. Specific action is required to bring the program into compliance with the criteria, policies or procedures prior to the next visit. Deficiencies may lead to an accreditation with conditions. Where an accreditation with conditions is not granted, deficiencies may lead to a mutual suspension of the accreditation process until such time as the deficiency is corrected. It should be noted that the draft report, prepared by the site visit team and presented to the Institution for initial comment, refers only to Deficiencies and does not specify which, if any, are considered Major. The decision as to which deficiencies, if any, are deemed Major, and the consequent decision on accreditation, is taken by Council once the final report has been prepared. Positive action is required to strengthen compliance with the criteria.

**Major Deficiencies** are issues that lead to a Not-To-Accredit decision. It should be noted that the draft report, prepared by the site visit team and presented to the Institution for initial comment, refers only to Deficiencies and does not specify which, if any, are considered Major. The decision as to which deficiencies, if any, are deemed Major, and the consequent decision on accreditation, is taken by Council once the final report has been prepared.

**Recommendations** are linked to concerns and deficiencies and outline suggested actions that might be undertaken to strengthen the program. Recommendations are not intended to be prescriptive, and programs may choose from alternative actions to correct the deficiencies in question. Recommendations are expected to be addressed before the next accreditation review.

Recommendations should address some of the following guiding principles:

- Quality Enhancement
- Transparency
- Fairness and Reasonableness
- Quality Assurance

## 6.0 Report Writing

### 6.1 Principles of Report Writing

Upon completion of the review of a program, the panel will prepare a draft report that includes the findings and recommendations and the facts and reasons on which the finding and recommendations are based.

The report describes the extent to which the program satisfied the requirements listed in the criteria. It is based on facts, not unsubstantiated opinions or judgements. Statements must be supported by specific examples gathered in the review.

All tables provided in the educational questionnaire need to be copied into the report.

The report should demonstrate exemplary writing. You must ensure your report has no spelling or grammatical errors and should follow a professional writing style. A copy of sample report is available and will be provided to all new accreditors.

### 6.2 Draft Report

The draft report is prepared by the panel chair in cooperation with the panel who each submit their respective sections to the panel chair.

Once completed, the panel chair submits the report to the BTMAC Secretariat which does a final check of grammar/writing style and errors or omissions. The Secretariat will also ensure a consistent professional look and feel of the report. The BTM Secretariat will then forward the draft report to the educational institution with a request for a review of any factual errors and/or omissions.

### 6.3 Final Report

Within 20 business days the provider reviews the report and submits a letter of response to the BTMAC Secretariat. It then forwards this communication to the panel.

The panel will:

- Consider the provider's comments and may revise the report as appropriate; this can be done via teleconference or by email depending on the scope of the revisions

The Secretariat will:

- Submit the final report and the educational provider's comments, if any, to the BTMAC and arranges a meeting to have the report reviewed and considered for a decision.
- Submit a copy of the final report to the educational institution with an explanation of the revisions made to the original draft report.

### 6.4 Destruction of Records

The application and any documentation received during the review will remain confidential and once submitted becomes the property of the BTMAC. Once the BTMAC has rendered its decision and the appeal process has expired, you must either destroy the materials or return them to the BTMAC Secretariat. You will provide the BTMAC with a signed confirmation of the document and file disposal form, to be provided by your accreditation coordinator.

## 7.0 Accreditation Decision

### 7.1 The Decision

The BTMAC will deliberate and render a decision based on the findings and recommendations in the panel's final report.

Accreditation is granted for a period of time. For programs accredited under the BTM 1.0 (or 2.0), and Master's criteria, the accreditation period will be up to and not normally exceeding 6 (six) years. For programs accredited under the Certificate criteria, the accreditation period will up to and not normally exceeding 4 (four) years.

If the BTMAC judges, that there are areas of concern, accreditation may be granted for a shorter term: 3 (three) years for BTM 1.0. (2.0) and Master's; 2 (two) years for a Certificate program. The areas of concern and method by which the BTMAC will assess if all concerns have been addressed will be explicitly stated. The assessment methods will include either the review of a report submitted by the institution or a visit by an accreditation team. It is expected that the institution will take action to bring the program into full compliance with the criteria.

The BTMAC can deny accreditation to programs that omit instruction in a significant portion of a subject in which BTM professionals may reasonably be expected to have competence.

#### *Shorter Accreditation Period*

If an evaluation indicates that the future of a program appears precarious or that there is/are definite weakness(es) or deficiencies exist, a shorter accreditation period may be granted followed by an "interim review". The accreditation decision will be specific in terms of what criteria need to be satisfied before full accreditation is granted. The interim review of the shorter accreditation can take on two forms:

- *Interim Report*: The nature of the weakness is such that an on-site visit will not be required to evaluate the remedial actions taken by the institution. A report focusing on the remedial actions taken by the institution will be required.
- *Interim Visit*: The nature of the weakness is such that an on-site visit will be required to evaluate the remedial actions taken by the institution.

The Interim Report and the Interim Visit may result in an extension of the accreditation period.

### 7.2 The Appeal Process

Appeals, requests for reconsideration, and requests for a revisit may be done only in response to a Not-To-Accredit decision. Also, appeals or requests for reconsideration can be based only upon the grounds that the Not-To-Accredit decision of the Council was inappropriate because of errors of fact or failure to conform to the Council's published criteria.

In lieu of an immediate appeal, an institution may first request reconsideration. If such a

request is denied, the institution may appeal the original Not-To-Accredit decision. Requests for reconsideration must be made in writing to the Chair of the Council within 30 days of receiving notification of the decision.

Appeals must also be made in writing to the Chair of the Council within 60 days of receiving notification of the decision or the notification of the denial of a request for reconsideration.

A notice of appeal must be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Council within 60 days of receiving a notification of not-to-accredit. The submission must include the reasons why the decision is inappropriate because either errors of fact or failure of the Council to conform to the published criteria.

The Chair of the Council will select three or more members or past members of the Council to serve as an appeal committee. The Chair will designate one of the committee members as Head of the committee.

The appeal committee will be provided with copies of all documentation that has been made available to the institution during the various phases of the accreditation cycle. The appeal committee will consider only the written materials submitted by the institution in determining its recommendation. Representatives from the institution may not attend the meetings with the appeal committee. Improvements made to a program subsequent to the completion of the initial team visit will not be considered by the appeal committee.

The appeal committee's decision will be reported to the Council in writing by the appeal committee Head. The decision rendered by the appeal committee is advice it will give to the Council. The Council will review the appeal committee's decision and then make the final decision on the appeal.

The institutions will be notified in writing of the decision, and the basis for the decision, within 15 days of the final decision.

### 7.3 Publication of Decision

Only successful accreditation or recognition decisions will become part of the public record. The outcome of the decision will be posted on the BTMAC site. Panel may not reveal the accreditation decision to the educational institution's faculty.

## Appendices

### 1.0 Guiding Principles for Accreditation Committee Decisions

Accrediting BTM programs maintains the public confidence in the program’s adherence to nationally accepted standards. It provides quality assurance and reflects that the program has a culture of continuous quality enhancement.

The accreditation pane will examine the following areas during the program review:

1. Conceptual framework for the program, including any mission statement of the provider and the history of the program.
2. The course descriptions of the program
3. The course content of the program
4. The program’s format and structure to determine if it is appropriate for the course content.
5. The student resources (i.e. library, technical) to determine if they are appropriate and accessible
6. The methods for assessing student achievement in the program and the standards for successful completion of the program
7. The learning materials for the program
8. The qualification and experience of the educators teaching the program
9. The provider’s institutional policies and procedures that apply to the program.

### 2.0 Accreditation Decision Timeline Planning

This table requires completion by the team after the Initial Meeting of the Panel and will act as guide to ensure deadlines are being met.

Step	Date	Days in total
Provider submits application		
Secretariat reviews application and identified completeness and contacts provider if information is missing or unclear		
Secretariat selects an accreditation panel and chair		
The panel receives the application from the Secretariat		Allow for 6 weeks prior to the visit
Initial meeting of the panel. If all documentation is in order go/no go is decided.		One week after receipt of documentation by the panel
Hotel and travel reservations are made		One week following “go” decision
Pre-site visit meeting of the panel		Evening before the visit
On site visit		2 days (visits usually end around 4)
Post site-visit meeting of the panel (if needed)		
Draft sections of the report submitted to the panel chair		Allow for 2-3 weeks
Panel chair finishes draft report and provides panel copy for review		Allow for 1 to 1.5 weeks
Draft report reviewed by panel and finalized		
Draft report submitted by panel chair to Secretariat for a review of style, grammar etc.		
Secretariat submits report to educational provider for a check of factual errors and/or omissions.		Allow for 20 business days
Educational provider submits response to draft report.		
Panel revises or confirms the draft report based on provider’s response by teleconference or email.		1 or (max) 2 weeks after receipt of the response
Panel submits final report and comments to Secretariat. It forwards		1 (max) week after completion of



the report to the BTMAC		response review
The BTMAC considers the report		Depending on availability of BTMAC members, allow for 2-3 weeks.
The Secretariat communicates decision and provides final report to the provider.		Within one week of decision
The provider may appeal the decision		Within 60 days of receipt of the report.
Successful decision is posted on the BTMAC site. Educational institution is provided with a commemorative plaque and marketing materials to promote the successful accreditation.		Within 1 week of decision

### 3.0 Roles and Responsibilities and Administration and Logistics

The following documents will be distributed to panel members prior to a visit – Information Sheet for Panel Members, Confidentiality Agreement, Expense Claim Form, Fund Transfer Authorization Form. These need to be returned to the Secretariat as some point before or after the visit.

#### 3.1 Information Sheet for Panel Members

While serving as a panel member, the Secretariat would like to ask you a few questions to allow us to make your participation in the visit an enjoyable experience. To help us do this, please provide the following information. Your dietary requirements will be communicated to the educational institution to ensure that they are met during the visit.

**You are required to make your own travel reservations.**

- What is your flight number?
- What time is your flight arriving?
- What number can we reach you at during transit?

**The Secretariat will make your hotel reservations. Our standard reservation instructions include a non smoking room with a King Bed.**

- Do you have any special requests? Yes No

If yes, what are they?

**Are you able to bring a laptop with MS Word and Wifi connection ability?**

Yes No

**Dietary Requirements**

- I have a food allergy

Yes No

- If yes, please list any food allergies:
- Other special food requirements (i.e. kosher, vegetarian)?

**Emergency Contact**

- In the unlikely event that any emergencies arise, please provide the following information:

Contact Information:

Telephone Numbers:

Business

Home

Cell

**Special Requests**

Other (please provide details):

### 3.2 Confidentiality Agreement Form

In the course of your accreditation work, you may acquire information or access to documents of a confidential nature. Such information may be internal to the BTMAC or relate to third parties such as the educational institution under review. It is critical that you respect the confidentiality of all matters that come to your attention in the course of the review.

This includes the information gathered through documentation or the site visit, the panel's deliberations when coming to a decision, and the contents of the panel report itself.

The panel's accreditation report is not a public document; it is written to advise the BTMAC; the BTMAC decision if successful will be released to the public.

Any and all physical and electronic documents must be disposed of accordingly.

As an accreditation panel member you must:

Respect the confidentiality of all information and documents to which you gain access in the course of your accreditation work.

Preserve secrecy and not disclose to others any information that may be considered confidential without the express consent of the BTMAC Secretariat.

Not divulge information relating to a third party without the written consent of the third party; and

Dispose of and/or return to the BTMAC Secretariat any print or electronic confidential materials related to the review process.

I have read the preceding and agree to abide by the Rules of Confidentiality in the conduct of my work as an accreditation panel member.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

### 3.3 Guidelines for Expenses and Claim Form

The BTMAC will reimburse for reasonable expenses incurred on authorized business travel.

#### **Travel**

Economy Class is the standard for air travel. For airline bookings, attach your booking receipt. Other receipts for transportation, rail, taxis and parking can also be attached. Ground transportation using your own car is reimbursed at \$0.54 per kilometer.

#### **Accommodation**

The BTMAC Secretariat will make your hotel reservations.

Kindly note that we do not cover the cost of mini bars, movies or any other hotel service of a personal nature.

#### **Meals**

Meals including taxes and gratuities are to be claimed for actual costs incurred, and only for meals not provided by the educational institution as part of the meeting agenda.

The following amounts, exclusive of taxes and gratuities, are the guidelines for expenses.

Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Total	

Panel members must submit itemized receipts as well as the general receipt which includes the gratuity.

A copy of the expense claim form will be send to the panel members prior to the visit or can be obtained by contacting the BTMAC Secretariat.

Note: Submit your expenses within one week of your trip to the attention of the BTM Secretariat.

### 3.4 Fund Transfer Authorization

#### Electronic Fund Transfer Authorization for Expense Claims

To streamline operations and expedite payments or claims, we prefer to pay by direct deposit to your bank account.

Please read and complete the authorization form below once and submit it to the BTMAC Secretariat with a VOID copy of a cheque. This can be mailed or e-mailed.

#### Personal Information

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

I have attached a VOID cheque

I hereby authorize the BTMAC to provide reimbursement to me in the form of a direct deposit to my bank account as detailed on the attached VOID cheque

Signature

Date

BTMAC

## 4.0 Preparation for Serving on an Accreditation Panel

### 4.1 Sample agenda for Panel Pre-Site Visit Teleconference

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Overview of Accreditation Application
3. Quick Review of Accreditation Process
4. Panel's responsibilities in the accreditation review (division of responsibilities)
5. Confirm Accreditation Process Timelines

## 5.0 On Site Visit

### 5.1 Sample Schedule for Site Visit

<b>Day One</b>	<b>Suggested Time</b>
Meeting with Program Head (or equivalent)	9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
Tour of Campus (including computer centre and laboratories)	9:30 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.
Meeting with Program Educators  *The timing of this meeting will depend on the number of faculty. * Faculty meetings should be set up in groups of two, three or four * Department with large faculties should set up groups of five or six * Approx. 20 minutes should be allocated per group of faculty.	10:15 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.
Team Review of Teaching Materials	11:15 a.m. - 12:00 noon
Students - Lunch Interview * Prior to the visit the team should be provided with a list of students from each year. The team will then make the selection and provide the school with the names of the individuals they wish to meet with.	12:00 - 1:15 p.m.
Meeting with Support Faculty (i.e. markers, T.A. etc.)	1:15 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.
Team Review of Curriculum	1:45 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.
Meetings with senior administrators (approx. 15 to 20 minutes max. per person) Examples: Dean (or equivalent) Associate Dean (or equivalent) Undergraduate Chair (or equivalent) Curriculum Chair (or equivalent) Anyone else the school deems appropriate	2:15 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
First Day debriefing with Program Head to check for factual findings	4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
End of Visit Day One	4:30 p.m.

<b>Day Two</b>	<b>Suggested Time</b>
Meeting with Program Head	9:00 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.
Meeting with Registration/Admissions/Student Support	9:15 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
Team Meeting with Graduates (this can either be arranged as a face-to-face meeting or via a conference call. Prior to the visit the team is provided with a list of graduates. The team then chooses whom they wish to meet with and the school contacts these individuals)	10:00 a.m. - 11:00 noon
Team meeting with administrative and technical support staff	11:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Team Break (or meetings with individuals not available during other times)	11:30 p.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Lunch and Meeting with Advisory Committee members (this can either be arranged as a face-to-face meeting or via a conference call. The team needs to meet with a minimum of 3 (or more) members of the program's Advisory Committee)	12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Tour of Library and meeting with Librarians	1:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Team Review and Drafting of Initial Findings	2:00 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.
Final Debriefing with Program Head	3:45 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.
End of Accreditation Visit	4:15/30 p.m.



## 5.2 Tip sheets for Documenting Evidence

Sample tip sheet.

Type of question will depend on the what type of educational institution is being reviewed.

Criteria Item and Question	Yes/No/ Partial	Comments
Environment		
Does the program fit into the overall educational institution's environment?		
Faculty		
Is ratio teacher/student is acceptable?		
Is sessional vs. full faculty ratio acceptable?		
Does the educational staff embody the technical skills and business knowledge that are common in the business community in general?		
Do educational staff all have a formal academic background and credentials, pedagogical credentials and experience?		
Does the educational institution adequately support educational staff technical skills upgrading?		
Facilities and Resources		
Is there a documented commitment by the educational institution to maintain and modernize the physical and support aspects of the instructional environment?		
Are computer facilities readily available to students?		
Is software provided and used representative of commonly encountered business software?		

Is there a provision for a maintenance plan and technical support staff to assist student and staff with problems?		
Is access to technical information and documentation readily available?		
Are alternative types of delivery available to enrich program delivery?		
Does the program have adequate administrative support and services?		
Students		
Are academic standards for continuation in program acceptable?		
Is there evidence of academic and personal counseling services?		
Do sound student retention policies exist?		
Are graduate placement services available?		
Is there evidence of an alumni association?		
Does the program follow up with graduates, relating to employment and to program improvements?		
Curriculum		
Does the curriculum foster development of graduates with diverse set of skills?		
Does the curriculum develop students' ability in the areas of critical thinking, problem solving, and independent learning?		
Does the curriculum effectively prepare students for the context in which the IT skills are likely to be applied?		

Does the technical curriculum facilitate the development of the skills and knowledge needed by BTM professionals in a wide variety of business and technology environments?		
Does the technical curriculum design facilitate the development of cumulative skills and knowledge?		
Does the curriculum facilitate the development of cumulative skills and knowledge in each of the basic areas from the introduction of new topics in the early semesters up to eventual development of competency levels normally associated with BTM professionals.		
Does the curriculum address advanced technical issues (i.e. in the forms of specializations, advanced theory courses, and comprehensive coverage).		
Is there are formal systematic (and required) component in the program that provides hands-on and applied experience to the student.?		
Is the communications program designed to allow students to build proficiencies in communications to all of their studies?		
Does the curriculum foster collaborative working practices?		
Does the curricula planning for the program feed into the educational institution's infrastructure planning?		
Administration, Control and Planning		
Does the educational institution have documented mechanism in place to assure ongoing:		

<p>Review of program objectives</p> <p>Evaluation of the appropriateness of course content</p> <p>Evaluation of the appropriateness of grading procedures</p> <p>Monitoring of the quality of educational staff teaching</p>		
<p>Does the educational institution allocate sufficient resources to provide high quality educational staff and it is maintaining these allocations for continuation of high quality program delivery?</p>		
<p>Is there a documented process to assure program quality, continuity and sustainability?</p>		
<p>Is there a capable administration that understands the special needs of a BTM program?</p>		
<p>Is planning taking place at all levels?</p>		
<p>Are policies and procedures formally documented?</p>		
<p>Does curriculum renewal include gathering of data from a variety of sources - including graduates?</p>		
<p>Industry Support</p>		
<p>Does the program use Advisory Committees?</p>		
<p>Does the Advisory Committee consist of individuals:</p> <p>are a cross section of local businesses;</p> <p>are able to provide advice on current industry requirements?</p>		

Is there evidence of other industry support related mechanisms (i.e. guest lecturers, co-op or work-term projects)		
Is there evidence of activities involving educational staff in interaction with industry practitioners or BTM related research?		

### 5.3 Artifacts Room Guidelines and Suggested Documents

During the visit the panel will review program artifacts contained in a virtual and/or on-site artifacts room. These artifacts assist the panel in verifying that the program is offered as described in the application. They also contribute to the triangulation of evidence confirming that the program satisfies the requirements.

Artifacts in the room may include:

- Course outlines for all courses
- Teacher assessment materials such as assignment and rubrics to evaluate assignments
- Samples of work at various achievement levels
- Course calendar
- Minutes from advisory committee meetings
- Information that demonstrates quality assurance and a culture of continuous improvement, for example budgets or other financial information to support appropriate program resources, long range plans, and program review reports
- Results of surveys conducted about the program
- Samples of anonymized student transcripts from all years

The provider is responsible for ensuring all personal identifiers are removed from artifacts and that the confidentiality or any required release forms are signed as necessary.

## 6.0 Report Writing

### 6.1 Report Template

The report template to be used is available from the BTMAC Secretariat.

## 7.0 Contact Information

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