



**Information Systems  
and  
Technology  
Accreditation Council  
(ISTAC)**

**Evolution Report Process**

- **Applied Degree**
- **Diploma**
- **Certificate**

*As of October 2021*



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## **Abstract**

These guidelines are written to aid faculty and administrators, and reviewers, involved in the evolution report accreditation process of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) programs within public and private not-for-profit universities, colleges and institutes of technology. These guidelines are administered by the Information Systems and Technology Accreditation Council (*ISTAC*) and apply to programs leading to certificates, diplomas and applied degrees and are typically one to four years of duration.

The following sections specify the objectives of accreditation, the various steps in the process, and the essential and desirable qualities of accreditable programs. Questions and suggestions for improvements may be sent directly to the CIPS Accreditation Secretariat ([accreditation@cips.ca](mailto:accreditation@cips.ca)).

# 1. Introduction

The Information Systems and Technology Accreditation Council is an autonomous body established by the Canadian Information Processing Society.

CIPS Accreditation Program has as its objectives:

1. To formulate and maintain high educational standards for universities, colleges and institutes of technology offering information and communications technology (ICT) programs, and to assist those institutions in planning and carrying out educational programs.
2. To promote and advance all phases of ICT education with the aim of promoting public welfare through the development of better educated computer practitioners and professionals.
3. To foster a cooperative approach to ICT education among industry, government, and educators both nationally and globally to meet the changing needs of society.

The purpose of accreditation is to recognize programs whose graduates will have received an outstanding undergraduate education in ICT – an education informed by state-of-the-art professional practice, sound underpinnings of information and computer technologies, and the needs and applications of industry. Accreditation can also be an important component in an Institution's quality monitoring and improvement program.

ISTAC accredits programs primarily in Canada but welcomes institutions from outside Canada wishing to undergo accreditation based on ISTAC criteria and standards.

ISTAC accreditation criteria incorporates principles of *outcomes-based* accreditation. This contrasts with an emphasis on educational *inputs*, such as number of courses taught, and lists of topics in the curriculum. The emphasis of these criteria is instead towards *outcomes*, i.e., *identifying and setting sound educational objectives and measuring the extent to which these objectives have been met*. These objectives and outcomes can be expressed at course or program levels.

More specifically, outcomes-based accreditation requires the setting of clear program *objectives* (i.e. the intended purpose of the program) and program *outcomes* which describe what students should know and be capable of doing upon graduation from the program. Program outcomes can also be expressed as *graduate attributes*, defined as 'a set of individually-assessable outcomes that are indicative of a graduate's potential competency' [SA citation]. Institutions will typically set their own specific program objectives, outcomes and graduate attributes but ISTAC accredited programs are expected to substantially meet one of three ranges of graduate attributes as defined by the Seoul Accord which has established a set of internationally recognized

expectations for students graduating from various types of ICT programs.

ISTAC accreditation is designed primarily for applied degree, diploma and certificate programs as offered through universities, colleges, institutes of technology and other institutes of higher learning. Specific ISTAC criteria are provided corresponding to the three levels or ranges of graduate attributes as set by the Seoul Accord<sup>1\*</sup>. As such, ISTAC accreditation is intended to be applied to a wide range of program types and durations, providing institutions with the flexibility to design ICT program outcomes and graduate attributes to meet the needs of their institutional mandates, students and target industries.

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<sup>1</sup> “The eight signatories of the Seoul Accord have joined together for the primary purpose of contributing to the improvement of computing education worldwide through the mutual recognition of accredited academic computing programs that prepare graduates for professional practice. By establishing desired attributes for graduates of computing programs that prepare graduates for professional practice...”

URL: <http://www.seoulaccord.org/about.php>

## **2. Method of Evolution Evaluation**

Programs submitting for evolutionary accreditation will be evaluated based on data submitted by the institution in the form stated below. The evolution report should follow a structure as outlined in Sections 3 and 4, for the institution and reviewer respectively. During the process of creating the report, the institution should demonstrate to itself and to the Council that it continues to meet the accreditation criteria or, if not, it should demonstrate that it is aware of the shortcomings and has a concrete plan to rectify them.

### 3. Institutional Evolution Report Guidelines

- The institution is to submit an evolution report using the most recent (current) accreditation final report as the basis (template) of their evolution reporting, hence should insert the following table at the end of each report section (5 through 11):

Section ## - Name Overall Institutional Section Evolution Comments	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Insert any general evolutionary changes the program has undergone within this section.</i></li> </ul>	
Section ## - Name Concern(s)*	Evolution reporting
<i>If application or state 'None to Report'</i>	<i>If application or state 'None to Report'</i>

\* Taken from the most current accreditation report concern(s) as stated.

## **4. ISTAC Evolution Report Evaluators Guidelines**

- ISTAC will identify two council members to review the submitted institution evolution report.
- Report reviewers will review the institution evolution report section tables inserted by the institution and generate an evolution report memorandum highlighting evolutionary changes the program may have undergone and/or how identified concerns have been addressed. The memorandum format is as follows:

## Evolution Report ISTAC Memorandum

To: ISTAC

From: **Insert reviewers' names**

Date: **MMM-DD-YYYY**

Institution: **Insert institution name**

Program: **Insert program name(s)**

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**Introductory statement....**

### Evolutionary Summary

<b>Report Section</b>	<b>Changes / Concern/Comments (as reported by the College)</b>	<b>Evaluator's Comments</b>
Faculty	<i>Identify stated changes / concerns from evolution report or state 'None to report'.</i>	<i>State evolution comments reported based on identified concerns.</i>
Facilities and Resources	<i>Identify stated changes / concerns from evolution report or state 'None to report'.</i>	<i>State evolution comments reported based on identified concerns.</i>
Administration, Planning and Internal Processes	<i>Identify stated changes / concerns from evolution report or state 'None to report'.</i>	<i>State evolution comments reported based on identified concerns.</i>
Students and Graduates	<i>Identify stated changes / concerns from evolution report or state 'None to report'.</i>	<i>State evolution comments reported based on identified concerns.</i>
Industry Support	<i>Identify stated changes / concerns from</i>	<i>State evolution comments reported based on identified</i>

	<i>evolution report or state 'None to report'.</i>	<i>concerns.</i>
Curriculum	<i>Identify stated changes / concerns from evolution report or state 'None to report'.</i>	<i>State evolution comments reported based on identified concerns.</i>
Innovation and Research	<i>Identify stated changes / concerns from evolution report or state 'None to report'.</i>	<i>State evolution comments reported based on identified concerns.</i>

**Reviewers Recommendation**