

# ACCESS PROGRAM

*A Career Development Initiative  
for Post-Secondary Students*





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# INTRODUCTION

The Access Program is a career development initiative designed by the Burnaby Board of Trade (BBOT) to bridge the skill gap for post-secondary students and enhance their professional readiness. By collaborating with post-secondary institutions and businesses, this program provides students with invaluable networking opportunities, practical training, and direct industry engagement, enabling a smoother transition into the workforce.

## ABOUT THE **BURNABY BOARD OF TRADE**

The Burnaby Board of Trade (BBOT) is one of the most influential business associations in British Columbia, fostering economic growth and community development. BBOT acts as a vital link between businesses, government, and the broader community, providing resources, advocacy, and programs that support businesses of all sizes. The organization is committed to building a thriving business environment and empowering future professionals through innovative initiatives like the Access Program.



# PROGRAM STRUCTURE

## Duration & Timeline

The Access program is designed to be a 4-month long program, starting in April 2025 and culminating in July 2025.

Participants in the program would be guaranteed a minimum of three engagements per month, ensuring continuous learning and networking.

## Eligibility & Cost

Students currently enrolled in post-secondary institutions across BC, in the last 2 years of their program, are welcome to apply to be a part of the Access program. Upon successful completion of the program, participants will receive a certificate of completion and a letter of reference from the Burnaby Board of Trade.

Student membership fee: \$100 for the entire program

*\*financial aid may be provided to eligible students in need*







# PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The Access Program offers a comprehensive set of initiatives designed to equip students with the skills, knowledge, and professional connections necessary for career success. Through mentorship, targeted training, networking opportunities, and real-world business challenges, participants will gain valuable experience and direct access to industry professionals. The following components outline the key elements of the program:

*The Access Program helped me build a network with students from different schools, a few of whom have now become friends. Participating in the committees and then taking the opportunity to chair the committee as a grad from the program taught me leadership skills, which were essential in my role as Operations Manager at Purdy's. To be able to put these skills into practice. It takes more than a strong academic standing to be a strong candidate."*

**ROHAN D'SOUZA** BCIT, ACCESS PROGRAM





# 01/ MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The Mentorship Program is a core pillar of the Access Program, designed to provide students with an invaluable opportunity to be matched with a business professional who will provide professional insights and support as students transition from post-secondary institutions into the workplace. This initiative fosters meaningful professional relationships, equipping students with industry insights, career strategies, and workplace readiness skills. By engaging with seasoned mentors, students gain valuable perspectives that enhance their employability and confidence as they transition from academia to the workforce.

## KEY FEATURES

### **Structured Mentorship Matching**

Students are paired with mentors based on their field of study, career interests, and professional goals.

### **One-on-One & Group Mentorship**

A combination of individual guidance and group discussions ensures diverse learning opportunities. The program will maintain a Mentor-to-student ratio of 1:5, thus ensuring meaningful engagement.

### **Monthly Check-ins & Progress Reviews**

Regular mentor-mentee meetings to track development and provide targeted advice.

### **Networking & Industry Exposure**

Mentor-led events and panel discussions with industry leaders.

### **Final Reflection**

Students summarize their learnings and present key takeaways from their mentorship experience.

## 02/ TRAINING & WEBINARS

Students enrolled in the Access program will have access to dedicated trainings & workshops to provide them with the opportunity to connect with experts on a broad range of topics related to professional skills, personal development, standing out in a job search, building a professional brand, and building a business network.

### Digital Skills & Software Training

This training module equips students with knowledge of essential software and digital tools commonly employed in modern workplaces. Participants will gain an understanding in productivity suites, project management platforms, and data analysis tools to enhance their technical competency and efficiency in professional settings.

### Soft Skills Development

Effective communication and interpersonal skills are crucial for career success. This training module focuses on enhancing students' public speaking, teamwork, and leadership abilities, helping them build confidence and adaptability in diverse professional environments.

### Professional Development Workshops

Specialized sessions covering topics like leadership, career planning, workplace ethics, and industry trends.

### HR Workshop Series

These sessions will aim to provide insights into effective job search strategies, including resume building and interview preparation. Students will have the opportunity to interact with HR professionals to understand hiring trends, employer expectations, and best practices for securing employment.

- A once-a-month workshop series to provide students with learning opportunities and direct interaction with HR professionals.
- Resume building and effective job applications.
- How to network effectively.
- Insights from HR professionals on hiring trends and expectations for the future.



## 03/ NETWORKING EVENTS

Students enrolled in the Access program will have the opportunity to attend exclusive networking events as well as a variety of over 50 Burnaby Board of Trade events throughout the year, offering them the opportunity to network with Burnaby business and community leaders.

### Speed-dating Style Roundtables

These structured networking sessions allow students to interact with multiple industry professionals in a short period of time. Each roundtable session is designed to facilitate meaningful conversations, helping students gain insights into different career paths and industry expectations.

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## 04/ CAREER & JOB FAIR

The Access program will culminate with a career fair style event, aimed at providing students with a platform to find jobs and secure interviews to help kick-start their careers after graduation.

### **Exclusive Recruitment Opportunities With Program Partners**

All participating businesses will offer students unique access to job openings, internships, and entry-level roles. This direct engagement increases students' chances of securing meaningful employment opportunities.

### **Fast-track Interview Process**

Companies involved in the job fair will commit to an expedited interview process for program participants. This ensures that students are not just directed to generic job postings but are given real hiring opportunities (avoiding generic 'apply online' responses).

### **Elevator Pitch Style Interview Sessions**

Students will participate in short, structured interview rounds with recruiters, providing an opportunity to showcase their skills and personalities directly to hiring professionals in a dynamic and engaging format.

*\*Pre-screening of all registered students will be done based on business needs as communicated by the participating companies.*



# EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The Access Program aims to provide students with tangible career advantages by equipping them with essential skills, industry knowledge, and professional connections. By fostering meaningful interactions between students and businesses, the program ensures that participants are well-prepared to enter the workforce with confidence and competence.

## Enhanced Career Readiness

Through a blend of mentorship, training, and real-world exposure, students will develop essential skills and confidence to navigate their career journeys. The program's structured approach ensures that participants are well-equipped to handle workplace challenges and adapt to evolving industry demands.

## Expanded Professional Network

By engaging with industry professionals, mentors, and peers, students will build valuable connections that can lead to future career opportunities. These interactions will help them gain industry insights, receive guidance, and foster relationships that extend beyond the program.

## Increased Hiring Potential

With direct access to employers actively looking for talent, students will have a higher chance of securing job placements. The program's fast-track interview process and networking events provide an edge over traditional job application methods.

## Stronger Employer-Student Relationships

By connecting businesses with skilled graduates, the program ensures that employers find candidates who meet their needs while students gain a clearer understanding of industry expectations. This alignment benefits both parties, fostering long-term professional relationships.

*The best part of the Access Program was meeting an incredible mentor whose passion for giving back to the community inspired me to be more and do more.*

**SANTA KIZIKOVA** SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY





## WHY JOIN?

Participating in the Access program will provide students with unparalleled access to influential individuals and businesses that are industry leaders in BC. With access to BBOT corporate members such as Electronic Arts, Fortis BC, LifeLabs, BC Hydro, BCAA and many more, students and institutions can forge long lasting professional relationships.

### KEY BENEFITS

#### **Enhanced Graduate Employability**

Strengthen institutional reputation by ensuring students are well-prepared to enter the workforce with a competitive edge.

#### **Brand Visibility**

Showcase the institution's commitment to career development by partnering with the Burnaby Board of Trade and industry leaders.

#### **Stronger Industry Partnerships**

Build long-term relationships with top employers, creating internship pipelines and recruitment opportunities for students.

For more information about the program, including institutional partnerships, student registrations and mentorship opportunities, please reach out to **Ayelet Cohen at [ayelet@bbot.ca](mailto:ayelet@bbot.ca)**.