

British Columbia Underground Miner Skills Development Recommendations

In light of anticipated increases in underground mining activities in the province of British Columbia, and the analysis and skills development research completed in the British Columbia Underground Miner Occupational Analysis and Skills Development (MiHR, 2013) report, the BC Mining HR Taskforce has developed the following recommendations for provincial underground mine training and skills development.

Recommendation 1: Endorsing the National Occupational Standard and certification for UGM

The Taskforce recommends the adoption of the National Occupational Standard (NOS) for Underground Miner (UGM) as the basis for achievement in training program development and the certification of employees under the Canadian Mining Certification Program (CMCP) by mining sector employers in British Columbia.

Rationale:

The adoption and use of the NOS and CMCP by employers in British Columbia will help to ensure consistency in training programs (both in-house and third party) within the province. This will support getting BC workers trained with the right skills to become employed in emerging underground miner jobs in the province. Where necessary, the NOS could also provide a framework to assess the skills and competencies of workers coming from outside of the province or from outside of Canada, ensuring that they meet Canadian and BC mining industry standards and requirements.

Recommendation 2: Centre of Training Excellence in Mining (CTEM)

The Taskforce recommends the formation of an UGM training advisory committee within the Centre of Training Excellence in Mining. The Taskforce further recommends that the CTEM provide support and coordination for regular mining industry – educator forums to expand upon the dialogue created by the meeting of employers and educators facilitated by the Taskforce in Kamloops in 2010.

Rationale:

The recent announcement of a Centre of Training Excellence in Mining suggests that the provincial government is willing to invest a significant amount of resources to coordinate training for the mining industry. The Taskforce supports the establishment of a Centre of Training Excellence and will appoint a representative to ensure the needs of industry are communicated in relation to the current and future needs for training, including underground miners.

Recommendation 3: Model of Successful Employer-led educational partnerships

The Taskforce recommends that future investment in training program development take into account the stated skills requirements and job creation related to specific mining projects in the province. Where special funding is available, it is important to ensure that employers be directly involved in screening applicants to the training program to ensure the employability of program graduates.

Rationale:

The case studies in the UGM research suggested that a key success factor is that training is responding to a confirmed need for workers with a particular skills set. Direct and immediate employment opportunities for graduates are essential. The most successful programs have been associated with a particular mine project that had well-defined timelines and clear HR requirements. The case studies also highlighted some challenges in placing program graduates with local employers, especially if programs are developed in response to other incentives, such as available funding, rather than on industry's stated requirements and immediate hiring needs.

Recommendation 4: Virtual training technology

The Taskforce recommends that investment in and use of simulators and virtual training for the mining industry should be coordinated through a coalition of industry and educational stakeholders.

Rationale:

The UGM research highlighted a significant amount of investment, from both private and public sources, into simulator and virtual training environments. It is not clear how much of this investment is being driven by the needs of industry or the extent to which industry is being engaged in the assessment of the appropriateness of the training.

Recommendation 5: International Partnerships for Industry-Required Training

The Taskforce recommends that a relevant list of international training sources be developed and maintained. International training partnerships should be developed and fostered as required to meet industry's changing requirements in terms of specific new mining technologies and/or skills. This will contribute to making the best possible training programs available for BC workers.

Rationale:

The UGM research highlighted areas for which BC and/or other Canadian provinces do not currently have nationally standardized training for specific skills sets or mining methodologies, but also pointed out that there are a number of other countries that are

currently training for these requirements (e.g. long wall mining – USA, China, Australia etc.)

Recommendation 6: Contribute to the provincial job creation and skills development strategy

The Taskforce recommends the development of mining industry statement on training and skills development needs to support matching people with jobs in mining. This statement will be presented/submitted to the Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training. This statement should also be discussed with Advanced Education, Ministry of Mines, Energy and Natural Gas and other relevant provincial ministries.

Rationale:

The UGM study has highlighted a large number of diverse initiatives aimed at enhancing training and building skills for the mining sector. The study also called attention to a lack of coordination of these efforts. These disjointed initiatives are funded under a number of different ministries and, in some cases involve significant private sector investment. Some have objectives which overlap or even compete with each other. As the discussions progress between the federal and provincial governments around labour market development in the provinces, the creation of the Canada Job Grant program and other key skills development initiatives, it will be important for the mining sector in British Columbia to have a unified and significant voice at the table.

These recommendations are respectfully submitted by the BC Mining HR task Force in conjunction with ***The British Columbia Underground Miner Occupational Analysis and Skills development Report*** (June 28th 2013) prepared by The Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MIHR)