

Outbound student mobility pilot program: Innovation fund application guidelines



Canada



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*The project is funded by the government of Canada's
Outbound Student Mobility Pilot Program.*

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1.0 Program overview

As part of Canada's new [International Education Strategy](#), Universities Canada has been selected by the Government of Canada to design and administer a new outbound student mobility pilot program. This investment by the federal government will provide thousands of post-secondary students with the opportunity to study and work overseas, strengthening their global competencies and enriching Canada's economic prosperity.

Universities Canada welcomes this transformative investment in Canada's future, which recognizes the important contribution that international education brings to the Canadian economy. Canadians need to be globally fluent and connected, especially in emerging economies, to succeed in a rapidly changing and increasingly international labour market. This outbound student mobility pilot program is an important step forward to help more Canadians develop internationally valued skills, enrich employment opportunities, and help Canada's economy thrive.

Initially planned for April 2020, due to COVID-19, the full program launch has been postponed to the spring of 2021, or as soon as conditions permit. During this delayed period, Universities Canada is launching a call for proposals to Canadian universities for innovative outbound student mobility projects. This upfront investment is intended to test new tools and approaches, help institutions adapt mobility programming to a COVID-19 environment, start achieving results towards the program objectives, and build the foundation for the launch of the full program.

1.1 Program objectives and targets

Over the pilot period, the program seeks to provide Canadian post-secondary students with international study/work experiences to obtain the skills and training needed to participate in a changing labour market. The objectives of the pilot program and their respective targets are outlined below. Available funding for this call for proposals relates specifically to the third program objective (testing innovative approaches to reduce barriers to study/work abroad). [Please see section 2.0 for details.](#)

Objectives	Program targets
1. Widen access and equity to participation in outbound student mobility programming	50% of student funding is to provide study/work abroad opportunities to target student groups (low-income students, students with disabilities and Indigenous students). The program aims to address inequality and representation in outbound student mobility through inclusive policy and practices.
2. Diversify the destination countries where students choose to study/work abroad	40% of funding is to prioritize activity in non-traditional countries (i.e. countries other than the US, UK, France, and Australia)
3. Test innovative approaches to reduce barriers to study/work abroad	10% of funding is to be used to support innovative approaches to reduce barriers to outbound student mobility in Canada.

1.2 Program governance

The program is administered through a unique partnership with the Government of Canada, Universities Canada, Colleges and Institutes Canada, and Canadian post-secondary institutions. The program follows a decentralized project-based design where funds flow from the Government of Canada to Universities Canada and Colleges and Institutes Canada who will distribute the funds to successful Canadian institutions to support students. The roles and responsibilities of each are as follows:

- *Government of Canada* funds the outbound student mobility pilot program through Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). ESDC oversees program design, implementation, management, and disburses funds to Universities Canada and Colleges and Institutes Canada for implementation through Canadian post-secondary institutions.
- *Universities Canada* is the technical lead for the university sector. Universities Canada is responsible for dispersing funds to Canadian universities through call(s) for proposal(s), monitoring and evaluating progress toward results, leading strategic communications activities, and co-convening advisory group meetings in partnership with Colleges and Institutes Canada.
- *Colleges and Institutes Canada* is the technical lead for the college sector. Colleges and Institutes Canada is responsible for dispersing funds to Canadian colleges through call(s) for proposal(s), monitoring and evaluating progress toward results, leading strategic communications activities, and co-convening advisory group meetings in partnership with Universities Canada.
- *Canadian post-secondary institutions* develop and manage projects, recruit and select students, implement measures to ensure student safety, deliver pre, during and post supports to students including wrap-around services for low-income students, students with disabilities, and Indigenous students, as well as report on activities to Universities Canada or Colleges and Institutes Canada.
- *Advisory group* is a committee of Canadian leaders and experts in education, civil society and business that offer high-level strategic advice and guidance to Universities Canada and Colleges and Institutes Canada on the design and implementation of the outbound student mobility pilot program.
- *Program management committee* is composed of representatives from ESDC, Universities Canada and Colleges and Institutes Canada. The program management committee meets on a regular basis to discuss key issues related to the program design and implementation and consider areas of collaboration to enhance program delivery at the national level.

2.0 Innovation fund

The global pandemic has created new challenges and opportunities. In anticipation of a return to international travel, the Government of Canada has approved over \$3 million dollars in program funding to be administered by Universities Canada and Colleges and Institutes Canada to Canadian post-secondary institutions. Canadian universities are invited to submit proposals to Universities Canada for mobility-focused innovation projects that will test different tools, supports and services to build inclusive study/work abroad opportunities, adjust programming to a COVID-19 environment, and serve as a stepping-stone for the full implementation of the program.

2.1 Objectives and outcomes

The objectives of the innovation fund are to:

- Implement and test approaches to better prepare students to transition to a physical mobility experience
- Create new partnerships to close gaps in funding and resources for study or work abroad opportunities for students
- Facilitate and oversee experimentation, data collection and applied research to create a stronger evidence base
- Identify potential pathways for program development, enhancement, and roll-out, with the aim to implement successful models across post-secondary institutions
- Share information about best practices and strengthen evidence-based approaches used by Canadian post-secondary institutions.
- Leverage new sources of funding and resources to support study or work abroad opportunities

Possible innovation projects could include, but are not limited to, activities that lead to:

- Increased opportunities for students to participate in international education experiences including piloting virtual mobility and internationalization at home activities (i.e. developing new buddy or peer to peer learning programs, new mobility opportunities for low-income students, students with disabilities and Indigenous students, etc.)
- Improved processes for participants to acquire workplace skills and global competencies (i.e. developing new approaches for low-income students, students with disabilities and Indigenous students to develop intercultural competencies, etc.)
- Strengthened understanding of systemic barriers to participation and strategies identified to address issues of representation (i.e. creating new programming to identify and enhance access to participation; building equity-focused policy frameworks for practical implementation, etc.)
- Increased cross-cultural collaboration opportunities with non-traditional countries (i.e. exploring new partnerships with international colleagues on alternative approaches to program delivery, etc.)
- Strengthened recruitment and outreach strategies (i.e. piloting promotional material with low-income students, students with disabilities and Indigenous, etc.)

- Increased collaboration and knowledge sharing across the post-secondary sector (i.e. experimenting with new ways to share insights and learnings across the sector, etc.)
- Enriched wraparound supports and services to prioritize student safety before, during and after study/work abroad experiences (i.e. testing new services to better support students, etc.)
- Improved institutional risk management practices and procedures (i.e. developing different policies and practices, etc.)
- Strengthened communications materials on the value and importance of studying/working abroad (i.e. experimenting with new communications tools and messaging to better engage low-income students, students with disabilities and Indigenous students, etc.)
- Strengthened relationships with partners at home or abroad including Indigenous offices, accessibility offices, equity diversity and inclusion offices, as well as with industry and private sector companies (i.e. piloting new partnerships, investigating new areas of funding, etc.)

Please see [Appendix A](#) for the logic model for the full program.

2.2 Key terms

For the purposes of the program, please find below key terms related to the innovation fund.

- *Innovation*: a response to a social or environmental problem which, once adopted, results in better outcomes than existing approaches. Projects are intended to have a transformative impact, delivering improvements across organizations, communities, regions, or systems.
- *Outbound student mobility*: international education opportunities offered to Canadian students registered at a Canadian post-secondary institution to study or work abroad that are recognized as contributing towards academic or work-integrated learning components of the student's program of study. This international experience may include participation in out-of-country programs/experiences such as term-based exchanges, study abroad, summer exchanges/study abroad, internships, co-op placements, research placements, or faculty-led group study programs and may be of any duration. These experiences must be organized and academically recognized by the Canadian post-secondary institution.
- *Target student groups*: as identified in the federal policy for the program, target student groups for the pilot program includes:
 - *Low-income students*: students who report to be in receipt of Canada Student Grants, or similar non-repayable student financial assistance offered by provinces and territories, or, in the absence of receiving non-repayable student financial assistance, can provide information to demonstrate that they require financial support in order to study or work abroad.
 - *Indigenous students*: students who report being an Indigenous person, that is, First Nations, Metis or Inuk (Inuit).
 - *Students with disabilities*: students who report to have a difficulty or impairment due to a long-term condition or health problem and/or experiences a limitation in their daily activities.

- *Wraparound supports:* services and supports offered before, during and/or after an international education experience that are tailored to individual needs and specific socio-economic/cultural context (i.e. pre-departure training, culturally relevant programming for Indigenous students, mentorship programs, etc.).

2.3 Project criteria

- *Eligible applicant:* The applicant must be a Canadian university that has recognized provincial degree granting powers, or their affiliates.
- *Application types:* Canadian universities are welcome to submit a maximum of two applications as an individual institution and/or as part of a consortium. A consortia application must include a minimum of two Canadian post-secondary institutions. Each institution will be asked to designate projects by priority of funding. See [section 4.0](#) for more details.
- *Funding:* Individual institution applications may seek grants of up to \$25,000. Consortia applications may seek grants up to \$40,000.
- *Timeline:* It is anticipated that project activity could commence as early as November 6, 2020, subject to the signing of an agreement with Universities Canada and the successful Canadian institution. All project activities and final reporting must be completed by March 31, 2021.
- *Eligible expenses:* Eligible project expenses include:
 - a) Salaries of staff working directly on project implementation and related costs
 - b) Materials, equipment and supplies directly related to project implementation
 - c) Support for hosting virtual and/or in-person events (excluding travel and accommodations)
 - d) Costs associated with software and hardware infrastructure, web development and maintenance, information technology support and maintenance, telecommunications, and web hosting
 - e) Professional fees directly related to the project (e.g., consultants, contractors, translation, evaluation, accounting, etc.)
 - f) Communication and outreach costs, including promotional materials directly related to the project
 - g) Any other costs that, at the discretion of Colleges and Institutes Canada and Universities Canada, are considered to be direct and necessary for the successful completion of the project and which have been approved in writing prior to being incurred.
- *Ineligible activity:* Costs related to travel (domestic and international) are ineligible for funding.

- *Partnerships:* Universities may wish to use this opportunity to build on existing or develop new partnerships in Canada or abroad. Partnerships could include, but are not limited to: post-secondary institutions, non-governmental organizations, policy institutes and agencies, national and local governments, and private sector companies. Please note, it is not mandatory to have a partner as part of this project.
- *Student impact:* Projects are expected to impact students with the intention of reducing barriers to outbound student mobility for the implementation of the broader program. This could include direct engagement with students in the innovation project during the funding period, or an indirect impact on students through the implementation of the broader program.
- *Program objectives and outcomes:* All projects must address at least one of the innovation fund’s objective in [section 2.1](#) and contribute towards at least one program outcome, as specified in the logic model in [Appendix A](#).
- *Knowledge sharing:* Institutions must participate in knowledge sharing activities to impart insights and learnings from the project with other Canadian post-secondary institutions.

3.0 Reporting requirements and key dates

The program requires Canadian universities to submit a final report at the end of the contract (templates will be provided). Universities Canada and Colleges and Institutes Canada reserve the right to use the reports in the production of knowledge sharing products, as well as the overall monitoring and evaluation of the program.

Please find below a schedule of key dates.

Dates	Activity
October 5, 2020	Launch of innovation fund request for proposals to Canadian universities
October 30, 2020 at 3:00 pm ET	Deadline for submission of applications
Early November 2020	Results shared with universities and grant agreements signed. Funds will be disbursed upon signing of the agreement.
Early November 2020	Universities start implementing innovation projects
March 31, 2021	Universities submit final report due to Universities Canada

4.0 Application and selection process

4.1 Application portal

Project proposals must be submitted online in English or French via the [Universities Canada Portal](#) by **October 30, 2020 at 3:00 pm ET**. Universities Canada will develop grant agreements with successful institutions as quickly as possible upon confirmation of results.

Users will be required to register an account and complete their profile before being able to access the application form.

Universities Canada will acknowledge receipt of all complete applications.

4.2 Selection process

All complete and eligible proposals received by the deadline will be reviewed for funding.

Universities Canada will employ a two-pronged approach to ensure an efficient assessment process and balanced distribution of projects across the country. In this approach, universities will be asked to designate their submissions by priority of funding (primary or secondary).

Proposals designated as primary applications will be reviewed based on the assessment criteria identified in [section 4.3](#). Projects that are deemed to fulfill all the criterion will enter into a grant agreement with Universities Canada. Should there be additional funds available, proposals designated as secondary applications will be ranked based on the assessment criterion identified in [section 4.3](#).

Proposals may be accepted, rejected or provided conditional approval. It may be possible that only certain elements of a proposal are approved for funding.

4.3 Assessment criteria

Projects will be assessed based on the following criteria:

1. Applicant is a Canadian university that has recognized provincial degree granting powers, or their affiliates.
2. Project addresses at least one of the innovation fund's objective as specified in [section 2.1](#) in the Guidelines.
3. Project is innovative and is aligned with the definition of innovation as per [section 2.2](#).
4. Project is projected to impact students directly and/or indirectly throughout the life of the broader program.
5. Project activities contributes towards at least one program outcomes, as specified in the logic model in [Appendix A](#).
6. Applicant agrees to participate in knowledge sharing activities.
7. Project is seeking no more than maximum grant amount and estimated costs are aligned with eligible expenses as per [section 2.3](#).
8. Project has been approved by the signing authority at the institution.
9. Project activity and expenses will be completed by March 31, 2021.

4.4 Notification of results

Results will be shared by email with universities by early November 2020 for projects designated as primary applications and by late November 2020 for secondary applications. Successful institutions will enter into a grant agreement with Universities Canada.

4.5 Privacy policy

Information collected through this call for proposals will be securely stored in accordance with Universities Canada's Privacy Policy and used solely for the purposes of administering the call and subsequent funding.

Information collected will be shared with Outbound Student Mobility Innovation program staff, selection committee members and contracted system administrators, as well as with Employment and Social Development Canada and their contracted third-party service providers, for the purposes of program administration and evaluation.

Universities Canada will retain the information provided in the application in one of three ways:

1. Unsubmitted applications will be deleted from the system after two years of inactivity.
2. Personal information on unsuccessful applications will have personal identifiers pseudonymized after two years of inactivity.
3. Personal information on successful applications where the recipient has received grant payments will be pseudonymized after seven years of inactivity.

Universities Canada will retain a permanent repository of pseudonymized data for the individuals indicated in #2 and #3 above for any given year for statistical purposes.

An individual will be able to address a challenge concerning compliance by Universities Canada with this Policy to the Privacy Officer. Universities Canada will investigate all complaints within 30 days of receipt. If a complaint is found to be justified, Universities Canada will take appropriate measures, including amending its policies and procedures if necessary.

Individuals can obtain more information on Universities Canada's privacy practices, or make a complaint, by contacting privacy@univcan.ca.

5.0 Contact us

Universities Canada will respond to all email enquiries to studentmobility@univcan.ca within one working day if received by **3 pm ET, October 26, 2020**. The responses to all enquiries received during the call for proposal will be published on the [FAQ page](#) on a weekly basis. The last update to the FAQ page will be on October 28, 2020.

Please contact Lindsay Carlton, Outbound mobility lead at lcarlton@univcan.ca for all questions about the program.

Appendix A: Logic Model for the outbound student mobility pilot program

Ultimate Outcome	1000 Enhanced educational opportunities and employment outcomes for Canadian post-secondary students			
Intermediate Outcomes	1100 Improved skills, intercultural competencies and expanded international employment networks of participants in the outbound mobility program		1200 Strengthened culture of outbound mobility on Canadian PSI campuses and strengthened capacity to deliver outbound mobility programs	
Immediate Outcomes	1110 Increased access and equity of participation of Canadian PSE students (particularly target student groups) in international study/work opportunities as part of their academic program, especially in non-traditional countries	1120 Increased knowledge of intercultural competencies and professional networking skills	1210 Strengthened capacity of Canadian PSIs to test innovative and accessible opportunities and support for students to participate in study/work abroad opportunities	1220 Improved collaboration, information sharing and reporting on outbound mobility experiences across Canadian PSIs to improve the delivery of outbound mobility programming
Outputs	1111 Participants receive grants to study/work abroad, including in non-traditional countries	1121 Participants receive pre/post departure briefings and supports, including international networking skills training, safety briefings and tailored wrap-around supports for students in target group	1211 Canadian PSIs receive grants to implement, invest, and test new or innovative ideas that enhance mobility programming in Canada	1221 Key results, impacts, implementing strategies, best practices and lessons learned documented and shared across the Canadian PSE sector
Activities PSIs	1. Apply for grants from CICan/Universities Canada to develop work and/or study abroad programming, with a focus on students in target groups, including in non-traditional countries 2. Administer grants to students to go on work	1. Tailored wrap-around materials developed and training offered to students from target groups 2. Develop materials for pre/post departure support and training, including professional networking	1. Apply for grants from CICan/ Universities Canada to test innovative projects/approaches 2. Implement and test projects to reduce barriers to outbound mobility	1. Policies/solutions at the PSIs level: - identify barriers that students face (particularly from target group) - develop, implement, and share strategies to address barriers 2. Undertake all administrative work required to deliver and

Ultimate Outcome	1000 Enhanced educational opportunities and employment outcomes for Canadian post-secondary students			
	<p>and/or study experience abroad, with priority given to students in target groups</p> <p>3. Sign agreements with partners in non-traditional countries</p> <p>4. Employ a character and needs-based approach to recruiting and selecting participants</p>	<p>skills, self-reflection, and cross-cultural awareness</p> <p>3. Provide pre- and post-experience services, including safety briefings, and wrap-around supports for students in target groups</p>		<p>report on performance management, including a detailed database of participants</p> <p>3. Canadian PSIs provide annual performance reports and semi-annual financial reports to CICan/Universities Canada</p>
<p>Activities CICan & Universities Canada</p>	<p>1. Establish a transparent, fair and efficient selection process to review funding proposals from PSIs and make recommendations related to funding allocations based on pre-established criteria</p> <p>2. Sign contribution agreements with Canadian PSIs</p> <p>3. Disburse funds to Canadian PSIs</p>	<p>1. Administer pre-and post-participation surveys to participating students to assess impact on skills development and expanded networks.</p>	<p>1. Establish a transparent, fair and efficient selection process to review request to fund innovative ideas to support students to participate in study/work abroad opportunities</p> <p>2. Sign contribution agreements with Canadian PSIs to implement the selected innovative ideas</p> <p>3. Disburse funds to Canadian PSIs to implement selected innovative ideas</p>	<p>1. Develop a data collection framework, and monitoring and evaluation strategy</p> <p>2. Develop data collection and report template for PSIs</p> <p>3. Monitor and collect data from PSIs to support program evaluation</p> <p>4. Maintain a database of participants including PSI, program, type of experience (study/work-integrated learning), country, duration and target group)</p> <p>5. Work closely with officials from ESDC to design and implement the program; including data collection</p> <p>6. Report semi-annually to ESDC</p> <p>7. Collect and share best practices through ongoing engagement with PSIs and develop shared online resources</p>