Global Skills Opportunity

Expérience Compétences Mondiales

Global Skills Opportunity:

Innovation Project 2022 Guidelines

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Canada

Global Skills Opportunity is the Government of Canada's Outbound Student Mobility Pilot Program.

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1.0 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

As part of Canada's [International Education Strategy](#), Universities Canada is administering the Government of Canada's outbound student mobility pilot program: Global Skills Opportunity. To date, this investment by the federal government has provided thousands of post-secondary students the opportunity to study and work overseas, strengthening their global competency and enriching Canada's economic prosperity.

Universities Canada is launching a third call for proposals for program activity from 2023-2025 to provide additional opportunities for Canadian students to study/work abroad and support innovative approaches to reduce barriers to mobility. Canadian universities are invited to submit multi-year project-based proposals that contribute to the achievement of the program objectives and outcomes, and respect the criteria outlined in these guidelines.

Please note: institutions who did not receive GSO funding with prior RFPs will be prioritized in the selection of this call for proposals. Colleges are also invited to be part of consortia applications, so long as a Canadian university is the lead institution.

In this request for proposals, Canadian universities will have the chance to apply for mobility funding, innovation funding or both. **These guidelines pertain to innovation funding only.** For mobility funding, please refer to the mobility guidelines on our website.

Please note that the application deadline is December 2, 2022 at 3 p.m. ET. A list of frequently asked questions is available on our website and a webinar will be held on October 4, 2022 at 1 p.m. ET. Universities Canada will respond to additional questions sent to gso-ecm@univcan.ca if received by November 25, 2022 at 4 p.m. ET.

1.1 Program objectives and targets

Global Skills Opportunity 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 overarching objective of the program is to increase the number of Canadian students studying and working internationally. Specific program objectives 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.](#)

Specific 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.

Specific Objectives	Program targets
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.

  Selection committee is an arms-length committee of Canadian and international experts that assess all complete, eligible program proposals to be funded by Universities Canada based on the selection criteria identified in the program guidelines. The committee is composed of former Canadian university administrators, international country representatives, Canadian national scholarship/internship program administrators and community scholarship/internship managers.

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1.3 Key Terms

Please find below key terms related to this call for proposals.

Project

The program follows a project-based design whereby Canadian universities submit project proposals of up to two years in duration to Universities Canada for funding. The term 'project' is used at the broadest level to refer to the submission by the institution for funding.

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The program welcomes a breadth of projects that support a diversity of activities. It is expected that activity within each project will be linked in some capacity (i.e. via international partnerships, type of mobility activity, themes, student groups, academic disciplines, etc.). Activity is also expected to be aligned with the program objectives of widening access and equity to participation in outbound student mobility programming and increasing student engagement in non-traditional countries.

Projects may be broad and inclusive in scope to support a wide range of activities (i.e. students across many disciplines, a diverse range of countries etc.). Projects may also be narrow in scope, focusing on specific activities that help achieve the program's objectives (i.e. a specific group of students, key international partnerships, specific academic programs, etc.). The composition of project activity is at the discretion of the institution

Innovation

The program seeks to encourage innovative approaches to reduce barriers to mobility and increase the number of Canadians that participate in outbound mobility experiences. Innovation is defined as 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

Outbound student mobility is defined as 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 a minimum of one week in duration. These experiences must be organized and academically recognized by the Canadian post-secondary institution.

Target student groups

The program seeks to increase the number of Canadian students that participate in international study/work abroad experiences. Below are the target student groups for the pilot based on the program policy.

- **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.
    - o Note that students who report to be in receipt of student loans are also admissible under the low-income student group.

- **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 services and supports

Services and supports offered before, during and/or after a virtual or physical international education experience that are specific to individual needs and socio-economic/cultural context. This includes tailored supports for low-income students, students with disabilities and Indigenous students (i.e. culturally-relevant programming for Indigenous students and mentorships, etc.), as well as supports for all students (i.e. pre-departure orientation sessions, safety sessions, pre, during and post experience supports that encourage students to reflect on what they learned while abroad).

Non-traditional countries

The program seeks to diversify study/work abroad destination countries. 'Non-traditional countries' refers to all countries other than the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Australia.

Value for money

The program seeks to fund projects that offer good value for money. Value for money is determined based on quality programming that advances the overall program's objectives, the innovation fund objectives, while offering safe and enriching experiences to students.

2.0   PROGRAM CRITERIA

Innovation is a key component of the Global Skills Opportunity program. The innovation fund directly addresses the third program objective of testing innovative approaches to reduce barriers to study/work abroad. Through this RFP, Canadian universities are invited to submit a proposal to Universities Canada for mobility-focused innovation projects that will test different tools, supports and services to build inclusive study/work abroad opportunities. All tools and resources created through innovation funding will be shared with Canadian post-secondary institutions to increase the impact of the work.

2.1   Objectives and outcomes

Projects must respond to one of more of the objectives of the innovation fund.

- 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   University application 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 one application as a lead institution. There is no limit to how many consortia applications an institution can be a part of, so long as they are only the lead applicant on one proposal. A consortia application must include a minimum of two Canadian post-secondary institutions. Canadian colleges are welcome to be part of a consortia application, so long as the lead institution is a university. See section 4.0 for more details.

- **Funding:** Individual institution applications may seek grants of up to $50,000. Consortia applications may seek grants up to $75,000.

- **Project implementation period:** It is anticipated that project activity could commence as early as February 2023, 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 30, 2025.

2.3   Project Criteria

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 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.

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.

Cost-sharing

Applications that contribute to project costs will be well received. Contributions may include in-kind contributions such as administrative costs, cash contributions, tuition waivers or discounts, other discounts or waivers to academic, living or travel costs, carbon offsets and financial contributions from other sources including Canadian or international partners, private companies, other funding agencies, or students.

This program aims for a significant contribution from universities and its partners. While there is no minimum required contribution, submissions that show better value for money including through cost-sharing will be viewed favourably by the selection committee.

Program objectives and outcomes

All projects must address at least one of the innovation fund's objectives 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:

The program requires Canadian universities to submit a mid-point report in April 2024 and a final report at the end of the contract. Templates for each report will be provided in advance. Universities Canada reserves the right to use the reports in the production of knowledge sharing products, as well as the overall monitoring and evaluation of the program.

Universities Canada will send successful applicants a contribution agreement outlining roles and responsibilities, the reporting requirements, and the payment schedule.

4.0   APPLICATION PROCESS

Project proposals must be submitted online in English or French via the [Universities Canada Portal](#) by **December 2, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. 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.

Please note it may take up to 48 hours to register an account. We encourage you start this process early in the application period.

Universities Canada will acknowledge receipt of all complete applications. Applications that are incomplete or do not meet the project criteria will not be forwarded to the selection committee.

5.0   SELECTION PROCESS

All complete and eligible proposals received by the deadline will be reviewed for funding, with priority going to institutions who have not yet received GSO funding. The selection committee will assess and rank all applications based on the selection criteria identified in section 5.1 and recommend projects to be funded based on the selection committee's assessment.

The selection process will give particular consideration to geographic balance and size of institutions to ensure equal opportunities across all Canadian universities. The selection process will ensure that program targets are achieved at the national level.

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

Results are expected to be emailed to applicants by the end of February 2023. Successful Canadian universities will enter into a contribution agreement with Universities Canada.

5.1   Selection criteria

The selection committee will use the criteria outlined below to assess project proposals. Each criterion is weighted.

A.   *Project feasibility and alignment with program objectives (25%)*
- The extent to which the project contributes to the objectives of the program
- The extent to which the project objectives, results and activities for the project are clear, realistic achievable
- The extent to which the proposed activities build-on and leverage existing outbound mobility programming

B.   *Innovation (30%)*
- The extent to which the project responds to the objectives of the innovation fund
- The extent to which the project demonstrates a coherent vision and an innovative and strategic approach to reduce barriers to outbound mobility in Canada
- The extent to which innovative elements are incorporated into the project design and implementation
- The extent to which it builds on past current, future mobility programming

C.   *Likelihood of success and sustainability (20%)*
- The soundness of the proposed project management approach and methodology
- The extent to which the project will impact low-income students, students with disabilities and Indigenous students
- Confirmation that the university will participate in knowledge sharing activities throughout the program implementation period to impart insights and learnings within the Canadian post-secondary sector
- Confirmation that all tools and resources developed will be shared with Universities Canada

D.   *Budget (25%)*
- Confirmation that the expenses fall within the list of eligible costs listed in the guidelines.
- The extent to which the budget is feasible within the program timeline.
- The extent to which the project provides good value for money. The cost-effectiveness of the budget is justified given the proposed scope of activities and expected results proposed.

6.0   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.

7.0   CONTACT US

Universities Canada will respond to email enquiries to gso-ecm@univcan.ca within two working days if received by **4 p.m. ET, November 25, 2022.** The responses to 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 November 30, 2022.

8.0 APPENDIX A: GLOBAL SKILLS OPPORTUNITY LOGIC MODEL

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