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Global
Skills
Opportunity



Global Skills Opportunity:

Mobility Project 2022 Guidelines



Universities
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Canada

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	PROGRAM OVERVIEW	1
1.1	PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS.....	1
1.2	PROGRAM GOVERNANCE.....	2
1.3	KEY TERMS.....	3
2.0	PROGRAM CRITERIA.....	5
2.1	UNIVERSITY APPLICATION CRITERIA	5
2.2	PROJECT CRITERIA	6
2.3	PROGRAM FUNDING	7
3.0	REPORTING AND EVALUATION.....	9
4.0	APPLICATION PROCESS	9
5.0	SELECTION PROCESS.....	9
5.1	SELECTION CRITERIA	10
6.0	PRIVACY POLICY.....	11
7.0	CONTACT US.....	12
8.0	APPENDIX A – GLOBAL SKILLS OPPORTUNITY LOGIC MODEL	13

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. Mobility funding will allow for both virtual and physical mobility experiences, with physical mobility as a required component. This format will prioritize student safety, integrate opportunities that arose from the pandemic, and offer innovative opportunities for participants to gain in-demand intercultural skills.

These guidelines pertain to mobility funding only. For innovation funding, please refer to the innovation project 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 publish answers 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 first and second program objectives. 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.
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, sharing learnings and best practices amongst the post-secondary sector, increasing the evidence base on the impact of outbound mobility programming, 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, sharing learnings and best practices amongst the post-secondary sector, increasing the evidence base on the impact of outbound mobility programming, and co-convening advisory group meetings in partnership with Universities Canada.
- *Canadian post-secondary institutions* develop and manage projects, recruit, select and disburse funds to 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.

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.

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, different types of mobility modalities, 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.

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.

Global Skills Opportunity offers flexible programming including virtual and physical mobility experiences, which are defined as:

- **Virtual student mobility:** Virtual student mobility is a form of mobility that uses information and communication technologies to facilitate cross-border and/or inter-institutional academic, cultural, and experiential exchanges and collaboration. Virtual mobility may include: Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) with partner institutions, Online International Learning (OIL) experiences, faculty led programs, internships and practicums with international organizations and Work-Integrated Learning experiences.
- **Physical mobility:** Physical mobility refers to international in-country outbound mobility experiences where the student physically travels to the study/work abroad destination. Please note that in-Canada physical mobility is ineligible for funding.

Target student groups

The program seeks to increase the number of Canadian students that participate in international study/work abroad experiences. The federal policy for the program offers additional funding for students that identify as:

- **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.
 - 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.

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.

Value for money

The program seeks to fund projects that offer good value for money. Value for money is determined based on i) the number of students supported with emphasis given to physical mobility programming ii) the amount of funds requested per student, based on need, duration, and destination, and iii) quality programming that advances the overall program’s objectives and offers safe, enriching experiences to students.

2.0 PROGRAM CRITERIA

As part of this call for proposals, Canadian universities are invited to submit a project proposal of up to two years in duration that help achieve the program’s objectives. Projects are to include: i) outbound mobility opportunities for Canadian students, and ii) wraparound services and supports to ensure quality, safe programming for all student participants.

Specific program criteria are detailed below.

2.1 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 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. Consortia including Canadian colleges are welcome to be part of a consortia application, so long as the lead institution is a university. See section 5.0 for more details.

Funding: Individual institution applications may seek funding of up to \$300,000 CAD per project proposal for up to two years of activity. Consortia applications may seek funding of up to \$500,000 CAD per project proposal for up to two years of activity.

Project implementation period: It is anticipated that project activity could commence as early as February 2023, subject to the signing of a contribution agreement with Universities Canada and the successful Canadian institution. All project activity and final reports must be completed by March 30, 2025.

2.2 Project criteria

Eligible activities: Projects must comprise of study and/or work abroad activities with overseas partners. Projects may include virtual and physical mobility, or only focus on physical mobility programming. All projects must include physical mobility programming. Virtual mobility only projects are ineligible.

Universities must ensure that work experience complies with all relevant employment and immigration legislation in the partner country.

Student eligibility:

- Student participants must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents, registered at a provincially recognized, degree-granting Canadian university
- Students must be in good standing as defined and determined by the Canadian university to which they are registered
- The program is only open to undergraduate students
- Students may be enrolled at the Canadian university on a full-time or part-time basis
- Students must be 18 years of age or older; there is no upper age limit to participation.
- International students are ineligible for funding

Student selection: Canadian universities are required to assess student eligibility through both needs and character-based criteria, rather than a merit-based approach. Funding is to support students who demonstrate a high desire to learn and a need for financial assistance, rather than those with the highest GPA.

Duration: There is a minimum duration of one week (7 days) for outbound mobility activities, including both physical and virtual programming, excluding travel time. There is no maximum duration. Short-term durations are identified as 1-4 weeks, medium term as 5-16 weeks, and long term as 17+ weeks.

Academic recognition: All outbound mobility experiences must be academically recognized by the Canadian institution. This could include outbound mobility experiences that are for-credit, contribute towards an academic credit, or recognized in some manner on the students' academic transcript.

Eligible countries: All outbound mobility experiences must take place outside of Canada. While activity is encouraged to take place in non-traditional destinations, students may study or work in any

destination. All outbound mobility programming is required to follow the Government of Canada's travel advisories. Physical mobility will not be permitted in countries (or regions within countries) with travel advisories from the Government of Canada recommending the avoidance of all travel or non-essential travel. Please refer to <http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories> for more details. Institutions are expected to have plans in place to rapidly adjust activity to any changes in travel advisories and to support students while abroad in the event of changing geo-political circumstances, including repatriation, if necessary.

Partnerships: Universities may wish to use this opportunity to build on existing or develop new partnerships in Canada and/or abroad. Universities are required to have a minimum of one international partnership. 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. Supporting documentation demonstrating the strength of the partnership will be well received; however, the program recognizes that this may not be possible for all partners. New partners may be added in real-time throughout the life of the pilot program.

Wraparound services and supports: Universities are to provide tailored wraparound services to low-income students, students with disabilities and Indigenous students, as well as supports to all students. Canadian universities must provide pre-departure training and post-experience support to all participating students. These supports should include safety briefings and opportunities to reflect on the study/work abroad experience.

Program objectives and outcomes: Project activities must align with the program's objectives and outcomes as per the logic model in Annex A.

Knowledge sharing: Institutions must participate in knowledge sharing activities throughout the program implementation period to impart insights and learnings from the project with other Canadian post-secondary institutions.

2.3 Program funding

The following section provides the costing parameters for program funding by the following categories: 1) direct financial supports, 2) wraparound services and supports 3) project administration, 4) cost-sharing.

1) Direct financial supports

Direct financial supports are costs to support students' physical mobility and virtual mobility experiences. A minimum of 80% of the GSO contribution must be directed towards direct financial supports. Physical mobility and virtual mobility funding parameters and eligible costs are detailed below.

a) Virtual mobility

- **Funding parameters:** Individual student funding is to be determined on a needs-basis by the Canadian post-secondary institution. Institutions may receive up to \$1,000 CAD per student for low-income students, students with disabilities and Indigenous students, and up to \$500 CAD per student for other eligible students, up to a maximum of \$50,000 CAD over the two-year project period.
- **Eligible costs:** Funds may cover direct costs related to the implementation of virtual mobility programming including participation costs for students, operational costs, software expenses, systems maintenance, connection fees, equipment and hardware requirements, and inclusion and accessibility tools (i.e. closed captioning, translation, etc.). Other costs may be eligible on an as need basis with written approval from Universities Canada. Funds may be leveraged from additional sources including from the Canadian university and/or its partners. Projects that demonstrate strong value will be well received.

b) Physical mobility:

- **Funding parameters:** Individual student funding is to be determined by the Canadian post-secondary institution, based on financial needs and destination costs. Each participant within the low-income students, students with disabilities and Indigenous students is eligible to receive up to \$10,000 CAD per student and other eligible students may receive up to \$5,000 CAD per student.
- **Eligible costs:** Funding may cover students' tuition, living expenses, dependent care, health insurance, immunizations, transportation, and accommodation during their outbound mobility experience. Other costs may be eligible on an as-needed basis with written approval from Universities Canada. Funds may be leveraged from additional sources including from the Canadian university and/or its partners. Projects that demonstrate strong value for money and prioritize in-person experiences will be well received.

2) Wraparound services and supports

Canadian universities may receive up to 10% of the GSO contribution for tailored wraparound services for low-income students, students with disabilities and Indigenous students, and supports for all participating students such as pre-departure orientation sessions, safety sessions, travel for staff, faculty or Elders, and pre, during and post-experience supports that encourage students to reflect on what they learned while abroad.

3) University project administration

Canadian universities are eligible to receive up to 10% of the GSO contribution for costs related to project administration.

4) 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.

3.0 REPORTING AND EVALUATION

The program requires Canadian universities to submit the following reporting documents:

- Financial workplan as part of the project proposal
- Biannual financial reports, due April 30th and October 31st each year
- Annual narrative report, due March 31 each fiscal year

Templates for each report will be provided in advance.

Students will be required to submit a pre-departure form as well as a post-experience report through Universities Canada's online portal. Students will be required to participate in program evaluations which may include surveys, interviews, case studies, among other activities.

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**. 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 and projects’ designated priority of funding.

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 also 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 builds-on and leverages existing outbound mobility programming
- The soundness of the partnership approach for the project including strategies to build on existing partnerships and/or establish new partnerships.

B. Student support, safety and risk mitigation strategies (25%)

- The extent to which potential risks and mitigation strategies have been well identified, including a minimum of one risk related to COVID-19
- The soundness of the institution’s plan to support students before, during and after their study/work abroad experiences. This would include pre-departure training, safety briefings, and post-experience supports to all students, as well as tailored wrap-around supports to low-income students, students with disabilities and Indigenous students
- The soundness of the institution’s transition strategy to in-person mobility and their adaptation strategy to ongoing geo-political circumstances
- The soundness of the institution’s plan to ensure student safety during their study/work abroad experience, including safety plans or protocols related to COVID-19.

C. Likelihood of success and sustainability (20%)

- The soundness of the proposed project management approach and methodology

- The extent to which the recruitment and selection strategies support and encourage participation from low-income students, students with disabilities and Indigenous students
- The extent to which the project demonstrates an effective and specific plan to engage program alumni after their outbound mobility experience
- 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 outbound mobility experiences will be academically recognized by the Canadian university

D. Value for money (20%)

- 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.
- The level and feasibility of the proposed financial contribution from the university and others. A high proportional contribution will be viewed favorably by the selection committee

E. Innovation fund (10%)

- 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

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 Global Skills Opportunity 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 sent to gso-ecm@univcan.ca within two working days if received by **4 p.m. ET on November 25, 2022**. The responses to enquiries received between the launch and close of the call for proposals will be published on Universities Canada’s [Global Skills Opportunity FAQ page](#) on a weekly basis. The last update to the FAQ page will be on November 30, 2022.

For any questions about the program, please contact gso-ecm@univcan.ca

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 to 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