

Frequently asked questions – QES 2024

Key dates and figures

What is the deadline for the request for proposals?

The submission deadline is July 21, 2023, at 4:00pm EST.

What is the duration of the program?

Universities are invited to submit one multi-year project proposal. It is anticipated that project activity will commence as early as January 1, 2024, subject to the signing of a Contribution Agreement between Rideau Hall Foundation and the successful Canadian universities. All project activities must be completed by December 31, 2027, and final reporting must be submitted by February 29, 2028;

What is the proposed start date for student activities?

It is anticipated that project activity will commence as early as January 1, 2024, subject to the signing of a Contribution Agreement between Rideau Hall Foundation and the successful Canadian universities.

What is the total value of this call for proposal?

A total funding envelope of up to \$1,600,000 CAD is available.

Projects must be completed by Dec 31, 2027. Does this include final reporting or can that be completed in early 2028?

University Final reports will be due February 29, 2028. In March 2028, Universities Canada will review final reports, issue final payments and compile the results of the program.

With regards to the potential for 1 or more Canadian universities to submit a joint proposal, would the maximum amount of the proposal still be \$300,000, split between the partnering Canadian universities? Or could the proposal amount exceed \$300,000 and then be shared between the joint institutions?

The maximum amount per project proposal is \$300,000. If the Canadian university chooses to submit a joint proposal the maximum amount would still be \$300,000.

The guidelines states that the funding is maximized at \$300,000 per project proposal. Is the \$300,000 the total amount for the proposal including the Canadian university funding contribution, or is that the amount we can request from the project, and compliment it with the Canadian university funding? (So, in essence the total amount of the project would exceed the \$300,000).

The \$300,000 is the maximum contribution that can be requested from the Canadian Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarships per project. To be considered for funding, applicants must demonstrate that Canadian universities will contribute to project costs. 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, and financial contributions from other sources including foundations, placement partners and other funding agencies.

While there is no minimum required contribution for each submission, a higher proportional contribution will be viewed more favorably by the selection committee. Please see **section 5.0** of the program guidelines for more information on the selection process and **Annex C of the program guidelines** for eligible expenses for incoming international students.

Note: overhead costs are not considered an eligible contribution.

Could you clarify the expected start date of the program? It seems like we will only find out in January if we are successful, but should we plan our program around a spring 2024 or fall 2024 start date?

We anticipate sending results to universities in mid-September 2023. Subject to the signing of the contribution agreement, it is at the discretion of the Canadian university when to implement program activities, but it would be no sooner than January 1, 2024.

When you refer to 'year', is this the calendar year, the university year or other? When will quarterly financial reports be due?

The QES program operates on a fiscal year that runs from **April 1st to March 31st**. Financial reports must be submitted **no later than**:

- **October 31** for the period April 1 to September 30 and,
- **April 30** for the period October 1 to March 31.

Eligibility requirements

Can you confirm if previously-funded/current projects would be considered eligible for the current competition?

Yes, all previously funded projects are eligible to apply.

What will the program fund?

This call for proposals will support international study, research or internships for Canadian students and/or scholarships for incoming international graduate students to study or do research. All QES funded activities must be for academic credit/recognition.

What are examples of community engagement activities?

Community engagement activities are mandatory for each participant and may include, but are not limited to:

- Volunteering within the local community;
- Participating in community events, such as roundtables, fora and panel discussions;
- Peer mentoring, knowledge sharing;
- Strengthening character and professional skills through public speaking, problem-solving, and leadership activities; and
- Applying global experiences or knowledge to enhance the local community.

Are students who have previously received a QES award eligible?

Students who have previously received QES are not eligible.

With regards to the incoming international student coming to the Canadian university, how will the whole issue of `credit` be managed. Do they have to be obtaining a Canadian degree or can the study/research done while in Canada be transferred back to their home institution graduate degree?

The incoming international student may complete an entire degree at a Canadian institution or can be funded to undertake short term course work or research, as long as they meet the program criteria. In the case of incoming scholars undertaking short term study or research, QES funded activities must be directly linked to the master's or PhD program in which they are registered in their home country.

Are all students (outbound Canadians and inbound international students) basically considered like exchange students to count in current bilateral exchange partnerships? In this regard do we have to have an existing agreement with the partnering country, or plan to pursue a bilateral partnership with them?

Projects may build on existing partnerships between Canadian universities and international partners, but funding may also be used to establish new relationships.

What is the definition of an internship?

As defined in the guidelines, internships are an opportunity for the Canadian student to gain practical or professional skills, also often referred to as experiential learning or work integrated learning. Internships may be paid or voluntary positions. Universities may permit the student to work with the private/commercial sector (***but limited to small and medium-sized enterprises***) if the internship is well justified and contributes to the objectives of the university proposal and the QES program. Universities must ensure that interns comply with all relevant employment and immigration legislation in the host country.

Please define “Project” as per QES program. We are uncertain what we can classify as a project. Universities are to apply for funding for one or more of the following:

- Study, research or internship support for outbound Canadians.
- Study or research for inbound international graduate students from an eligible country

This application or ‘bundle’ of activities is what is referred to as a project. How these activities are linked together is at the discretion of the Canadian university. A university may choose to limit their proposals to outbound Canadians or to inbound international students or do both, all of which are acceptable options. Priority will be given to project proposals that focus on diversity and inclusion and result in an increased contribution to local and global communities by young leaders.

Is there any limit for overseas partners in terms of how many partnerships they can strike up for this program? We are in contact with an overseas partner about a potential partnership for this program and as they have already been approached by other Canadian institutions, they were concerned about whether or not this is a problem.

It is possible for an overseas partner to collaborate with multiple Canadian institutions on this program.

“QES 2024 will ensure that 100% of funding will be issued to Canadian universities and that at overall, at least 75% of Queen Elizabeth Scholars are Canadian students”. What does this mean? Does it mean that each proposal should ensure that 75% of the budget is aligned towards outbound Canadians and only 25% towards inbound international students?

The overall program will ensure that at least 75% of Queen Elizabeth Scholars are outbound Canadian students (not that 75% of the program funds are awarded to Canadian students). The selection process will ensure that the overall program criteria are met; universities do not need to address these criteria in their proposal.

For inbound international graduate students are we expected to recruit students from our partner universities in eligible countries or recruit students from a pool of exchange students who have already arranged for an exchange program?

It is at the discretion of the Canadian university how to recruit international students from eligible countries.

Do inbound international students have to come from partner organizations in one of the eligible countries or can they come from any eligible country (without having a partner in place)?

Inbound international students do not have to come from a partner institution; they can come from any eligible country.

Do all internships have to be with university partners or can a student identify a placement and receive QES funding.

All QES awards for outbound Canadians, including internships must be with a university partner institution/organization.

We would like to have students already enrolled at one of our partner universities come to Canada and do a full-time term at our university as a visiting graduate student. The students would register with our university, but they would remain as enrolled students at their home university and would not get their degree from our university. They would take courses/programs/workshops and do community engagement while here. Would these students be eligible for the scholarship?

Inbound international graduate students are not required to pursue their entire degree at the Canadian institution. They may enroll in short term study, research, or full graduate degree programs. They are still required to meet all program requirements as described in the guidelines.

Selection process

How many proposals will be selected for the Canadian Queen Elizabeth II Scholarships program?

There is no predetermined number of universities that will be selected for this program. The selection process will award the best candidates based on the applications received through the call for proposals. The maximum available through this call for proposal is approximately \$1,600,000.

What does the selection process involve?

A two-stage selection process will include the review of all complete and eligible proposals received by the deadline and will include a arms-length selection committee of Canadian and other country representatives from the academic, private, public and not-for-profit sectors. Proposals may be accepted, rejected or provided conditional approval. It may also be possible that only certain components or elements of a proposal are approved for funding.

The selection process will ensure that gender balance and geographic balance is considered.

Proposals will be recommended to the Rideau Hall Foundation for approval.

In the guidelines, it states that “at least 75% of QE Scholars are outbound Canadian students.” Does this mean that applications with an emphasis on inbound international students will not be reviewed favourably?

The selection process will ensure that the overall program criteria are met. Selection will be based on the quality of the proposed activities the university is undertaking. Therefore, a proposal that has a very strong approach with only one activity may be received more favourably than a proposal with weak approaches over the two activities and vice versa.

What is eligible as ‘academic credit/recognition’?

All students must receive academic credit/recognition for the successful completion of their QES funded activities. How the credit/recognition is attributed is to be determined by the Canadian university, possibilities include specific course credit, directed reading, co-curricular, co-op credit etc. In the case of inbound international students undertaking short term study or research, QES funded activities must be directly linked to the master’s or PhD program in which they are registered in their home country.

Will submissions made in French be reviewed by the submissions committee on equal footing with submissions made in English? In other words, could the selection committee give preference to proposals submitted in English over those submitted in French?

All submissions will receive equal consideration by the selection committee and French proposals will be evaluated by French speaking members of the selection committee.

Submitting an application

Do universities need to apply for both types of activities (outbound Canadians and inbound international students)?

No, universities may submit projects that comprise of one or both of the program activities. Proposals can be entirely focused on outbound Canadian students, inbound international students or a combination of both.

How frequently will Universities Canada update its FAQs page? Are we going to receive responses to our requests individually or should we be referring to the Universities Canada's page?

Universities Canada will respond to all email enquiries to QES2024@univcan.ca within two working days if received by **July 14th, 4 pm, EST**. The responses to all enquiries received between the launch for the call for proposal and July 14th will be published on the FAQ page on a weekly basis.

The last update to the FAQ page will be on July 17, 2023.

It is mentioned that one of the requirements are letter(s) of support from each partner. Does this mean that we need letters of support from both the collaborator from the partner organization and from our university? For the letters of support, is it OK to have the letter(s) from the person that would collaborate with us on this project, and from ourselves, or do these letters of support need to be from a representative of the partner/ our university?

The letter of support would be from the partner organization (not the Canadian university). The letter may be from whoever is most appropriate from the partner organization; this is at the discretion of the Canadian university.

Is there a restriction on the word count for the letter of support from each partner? Could you clarify your expectations regarding the content of this letter? Can some of the letters be written in French and others in English?

There is no restriction on the length of the letters of support, in which partners must indicate their support for the project. Yes, it is possible to submit some letters written in French and others written in English.

Is it possible to submit a bilingual proposal (with a combination of the 2 languages)? In other words, can parts of the submission be written in English and others in French? Or does the submission form have to be completed in only one language (English or French)?

It is also possible to submit a bilingual proposal with some parts in English and others in French.

Is it necessary to include with our application letters of support confirming matching funds (e.g. from the university or other sources), or is it sufficient to simply add the amount of external funding we have secured in the budget under the "university contribution" column?

Letters of support to confirm matching funds are not required; however, we expect strong applicants to provide a detailed explanation of where the funds are coming from in the Cost Effectiveness and Budget section of the application form. The Canadian university will be responsible for maintaining all documents concerning financial contributions, including those pertaining to the partner institution's financial contribution.

Eligible costs

Are any funds available for university program administration activities?

An activity fund of \$2,000 per scholar may be included in the project budget to support leadership development, community engagement activities and other project administration requirements. No justification or explanation is needed for these funds.

What is the expected student contribution to the program?

There is no mandatory or expected student contribution. Keep in mind that if the student is required to pay tuition while on the QES funded activity; the tuition paid by the student can be counted as a contribution.

What expenses are covered by the scholarships for inbound coming international students (i.e. tuition, airfare, visas, accommodations, etc.?)

Please refer to the Guidelines, Annex C for a list of eligible expenses for incoming international students based on length of stay.

If the overseas host organization pays a stipend over and above the allowance paid by the project or provides their housing free of charge, does that count as institutional contribution?

Yes, that would count as university/partner contribution. Please remember that in case of an audit, the Canadian university will be required to provide proof of all contributions, cash or in-kind.

You say that the university contribution can include “financial contributions from other sources, including foundations, community and/or industry partners, and other funding agencies”. Are there any limitations as to the source of external financial contributions?

From the QES’ point of view there is no limit to the source of external financial contributions.

Is there a breakdown of what the QES contribution provided to each outbound Canadian student can be spent on? What documents do we need to keep?

Universities are to keep a copy of the transaction of giving the funds to the student as well as copies of air tickets and boarding passes for each student. The students are not required to submit any other financial documents.

We are working on our proposal, and I had a question about the activity fund of \$2,000 per student. Is this above and beyond what we would be asking for in the proposal? And/or a separate request? For example, if we request \$300,000 for 50 internships, would we be requesting an additional \$100,000.00 (\$2,000.00 x 50) on top of that for project administration and community engagement activities? Or should we be building that \$100,000.00 into the overall \$300,000.00 request?

Each project proposal may seek funding of up to \$300,000 CAD. The activity fund of \$2,000 per student per year is included in this amount.

In the past, we have hired a resource person in the host country to receive our students, (orientation, support and ensure local organizations are ready for hosting them). We pay the resource person a small stipend for this service, would this cost be allowable within the budget expenses. If yes, would it be allowable to come from the allotment that is allocated to outbound Canadians?

Funds for such activities would come from the \$2,000 per student per year paid to the university for leadership development, community engagement activities and other project administration requirements and **not** from the allowance allocated to students.

Reporting requirements

What are the reporting requirements for universities?

Universities Canada will require successful Canadian universities to submit an initial workplan (narrative and financial), annual narrative reports, semi annual financial reports as well as an end of project report (narrative and financial) (templates to be provided). Universities will be encouraged to participate in program evaluation processes which may involve surveys, interviews and both summative and formative evaluations.

What are the reporting requirements for students?

Before receiving any QES funds, all students will be required to complete a pre-departure form which must be approved by the university. Students are also required to submit a scholar narrative report which will be due 2 weeks prior to the end of their award. Universities and scholars will be encouraged to participate in program evaluation processes which may involve surveys, interviews and both summative and formative evaluations. The program will also collect data from alumni regarding the impact their participation in this program has had on their career and study paths.