

Frequently asked questions – QES 2025

Key dates and figures

What is the deadline for the request for proposals?

The submission deadline is June 7, 2024, at 5:00 pm eastern.

What is the duration of the program?

Members of Universities Canada or Colleges and Institutes Canada are invited to submit multi-year project proposals seeking funding of up to \$300,000 CAD.

Project activities will commence as early as January 1, 2025, subject to the signing of a Contribution Agreement between Rideau Hall Foundation and the successful Canadian postsecondary institution.

All project activities must be completed by December 31, 2028, and final reports must be submitted by February 28, 2029.

What is the proposed start date for student activities?

Project activities will commence as early as January 1, 2025, subject to the signing of a Contribution Agreement between Rideau Hall Foundation and the successful Canadian postsecondary institution.

What is the total value of this call for proposals?

A total funding envelope of approximately \$6,000,000 CAD is available.

Projects must be completed by Dec 31, 2028. Does this include final reports?

No. Final reports are due February 28, 2029.

In March 2029, Universities Canada will review final reports, issue final payments, and collate the results of the program.

If institutions submit a joint proposal, does the maximum amount available remain \$300,000?

The maximum amount for any project proposal is \$300,000 CAD. If an institution chooses to submit a joint proposal, the maximum amount remains \$300,000 CAD.

The guidelines state that the maximum funding available is \$300,000 CAD per project proposal. Is this the total amount, including the postsecondary funding contribution? Or is \$300,000 CAD the amount an institution can request for a project, with the ability to complement it with institutional funding? (which would make the total amount for the project exceed \$300,000).

\$300,000 CAD is the maximum contribution that can be requested per project. To be considered for funding, applicants must demonstrate that the Canadian postsecondary institution 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 contribution required for each submission, a higher proportional contribution will be viewed more favorably by the selection committee. Please note that overhead costs are not considered an eligible contribution.

Can you clarify the expected start date of the program? When will we find out if we were successful?

We anticipate sending results to institutions in mid-September 2024. Subject to the signing of the Contribution Agreement, it is at the discretion of the Canadian institution when to implement program activities, though it could not be any sooner than January 1, 2025.

When you refer to ‘year’, is this the calendar year, the academic year or other? When will financial reports be due?

The QES program operates on a fiscal year that runs from **April 1 to March 31**. 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

Who can apply for QES 2025 funding?

Canadian postsecondary institutions that are members of Universities Canada or Colleges and Institutes Canada.

Can you confirm that institutions who previously received QES funding are eligible for this competition?

Yes.

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.

QES 2025 will support projects that focus on the adaptation, response, and resilience to a changing climate. This includes (but is not limited to) projects focused on biodiversity; agriculture; energy; climate and public health; economic impacts of climate change; air quality; community resilience; education; ecosystems and water quality.

What is the eligibility for international graduate students?

Graduate students refer to those enrolled in a master’s, PhD, or other post-graduate program. Post-graduate programs require a post-secondary diploma or bachelor’s degree as a prerequisite.

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 a local community.
- Participating in community events, such as roundtables and panel discussions.
- Peer mentoring, knowledge sharing.
- Applying global experiences/knowledge to enhance a local community.

Are students who have previously received a QES award eligible?

No. Students who have previously received QES funding are not eligible.

With regards incoming international students, how will the issue of “credit” be managed? Do they have to obtain a Canadian credential, or can the study/research conducted in Canada be transferred back to their home institution?

Incoming international students may complete an entire graduate program at a Canadian institution or 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 graduate program in which they are registered in their home country.

What is the definition of an internship?

Internships are an opportunity for Canadian students to gain practical or professional skills. These

experiences are often referred to as experiential learning or work-integrated learning. Internships may be paid or voluntary positions.

Canadian postsecondary institutions may permit students to work in 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 proposal and the QES program. Institutions must ensure that interns comply with all relevant employment and immigration legislation in the host country.

Please define “project” in the QES program.

Canadian postsecondary institutions are to apply for funding for one or more of the following:

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

This ‘bundle’ of activities is what is referred to as a project. How these activities are linked together is at the discretion of the Canadian institution. An institution may choose to limit their proposals to outbound Canadians or to inbound international students, or both.

Priority will be given to project proposals that focus on diversity and inclusion and result in a strengthened impact to local and global communities by young leaders.

Are there any limits for overseas partners? We are in contact with an international partner about a potential partnership for the program, but they have already been approached by another institution. Is this a problem?

It is possible for an international partner to collaborate with multiple Canadian institutions.

QES 2025 will ensure that 100% of funding will be issued to Canadian postsecondary institutions and that at overall, at least 75% of Queen Elizabeth Scholars are Canadian students. What does this mean? Does each proposal need to ensure that 75% of the budget is allocated 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. Canadian institutions do not need to meet these targets in their individual proposals.

For inbound international graduate students, are Canadian institutions expected to recruit students from partners? Or recruit students from a pool of exchange students who have already arranged for an exchange program?

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

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

Inbound international students must come from a partner institution/organization.

Do all internships have to be with postsecondary partner, or can a student identify a placement and receive funding?

All QES awards for outbound Canadians, including internships, must be with an institution/organization that is partnered with the postsecondary institution.

We would like to have students already enrolled at one of our partner postsecondary institutions come to Canada and do a full-time term at our institution as a visiting student. The students would register with our institution, but they would remain enrolled students at their home institution and would not get their credential from our institution. 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 credential at a Canadian institution. They may enroll in short-term study, research, or full graduate 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 projects 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 funding through this call for proposal is approximately \$6,000,000.

QES 2025 will aim to award 50% of the total available funding to university-led projects and 50% of the total available funding to college, CEGEP, polytechnic, and institute of technology-led projects.

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 include an 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 be possible that only certain components or elements of a proposal are approved for funding. Proposals will be recommended to the Rideau Hall Foundation for approval.

There will be a separate selection committee for university-led proposals and college, CEGEP, polytechnic and institute of technology-led proposals.

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

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

The selection process will ensure that the overall program criteria are met. Canadian institutions do not need to meet these targets in their individual proposals. Selection will be based on the quality of the proposed activities. Therefore, a proposal that has a very strong approach with only one type of mobility (inbound/outbound) may be received more favourably than a proposal with weak approaches to both inbound and outbound scholars.

What is eligible as ‘academic credit/recognition’?

All scholars 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 postsecondary institution. Possibilities include specific course credit, directed reading, co-curricular, co-op credit etc. In the case of inbound international students doing short term study or research, QES funded activities must be directly linked to the graduate 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?

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 Canadian postsecondary institutions need to apply for both types of activities (outbound Canadians and inbound international students)?

No. Institutions may submit projects that comprise of one or both of the program components. 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 Universities Canada's page? Universities Canada will respond to all email inquiries to ges2025@univcan.ca within two working days if received by **June 3, 2024**. The response to all inquiries received between the launch and submission deadline will be published on the FAQ page on a weekly basis. The last update to the FAQ page will be on June 5, 2024.

One of the requirements are letter(s) of support from each partner. Does this mean that we need letters of support from both the partner organization and from our Canadian postsecondary institution? For the letters of support, is it okay to have the letter(s) from the person that would collaborate with us on this project?

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

Is there a restriction on the word count for the letter(s) of support? 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. Yes, it is possible to submit some letters in French and others in English.

Is it possible to submit a bilingual proposal (with a combination of the two languages)?

Yes, it is possible to submit a bilingual proposal with some parts in English and others in French.

Is it necessary to include letters of support that confirm matching funds (e.g. from the Canadian postsecondary institution or other sources), or is it sufficient to simply add the amount of external funding we have secured in the budget under the "postsecondary 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 institution 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 Canadian postsecondary 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. If the student is required to pay tuition while on the QES funded activity, the amount of tuition paid by the student can be counted as a contribution.

What expenses are covered by the scholarship for inbound 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 an institutional contribution?

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

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

There are no limits on 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?

Institutions are required to keep a copy of the transaction that provided the student the funding, as well as copies of air tickets and boarding passes for each student. The students are not required to submit any other financial documents.

Is the activity fund of \$2,000 above and beyond what we would be asking for in the proposal? Or is this a separate request? For example, if we request \$300,000 CAD for 50 internships, would we request an additional \$100,000.00 (\$2,000.00 x 50) 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 students, (orientation, support and ensure local organizations are ready to host them). We pay the resource person a small stipend for this service. Is this cost allowable within the budget expenses? If yes, can this come from the allotment that is allocated to outbound Canadians?

Funds for such activities should come from the \$2,000 activity fund (per student) paid to the postsecondary institution for leadership development, community engagement activities, and other project administration requirements. This should not come from the allotment allocated to students.

Reporting requirements

What are the reporting requirements for Canadian postsecondary institutions?

Universities Canada will require successful Canadian postsecondary institutions to submit an initial workplan (narrative and financial); annual narrative reports; semi annual financial reports; and an end of project report (narrative and financial). Report templates will be provided by Universities Canada. Institutions 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, students are required to complete a pre-departure form which must be approved by their Canadian postsecondary institution. Students are also required to submit a scholar narrative report which is due two weeks prior to the end of their award.

Postsecondary institutions 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 collect data from alumni regarding the impact that QES has had on their studies and career.