

Developing your application

Funding opportunities 2025-26

ONCAT introductions

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2026 ONCAT CONFERENCE

Helping Learners Find Their Way

February 3 & 4 | Toronto, Ontario

The education-to-employment journey is rarely a straight line. Navigating new career directions may require additional education and credentials.

How can Ontario's postsecondary institutions empower learners with the confidence, skills and tools they will need to find their way — no matter which personal and professional goals they choose to pursue in the future?

About ONCAT

ONCAT is an independent not-for-profit organization, governed according to the ONCAT General Bylaws.

ONCAT is funded by the Government of Ontario.

Oversight is provided by the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security, as well as the ONCAT Board, which includes representatives from publicly assisted colleges, universities, Indigenous Institutes and partner organizations.



ONCAT's core activities

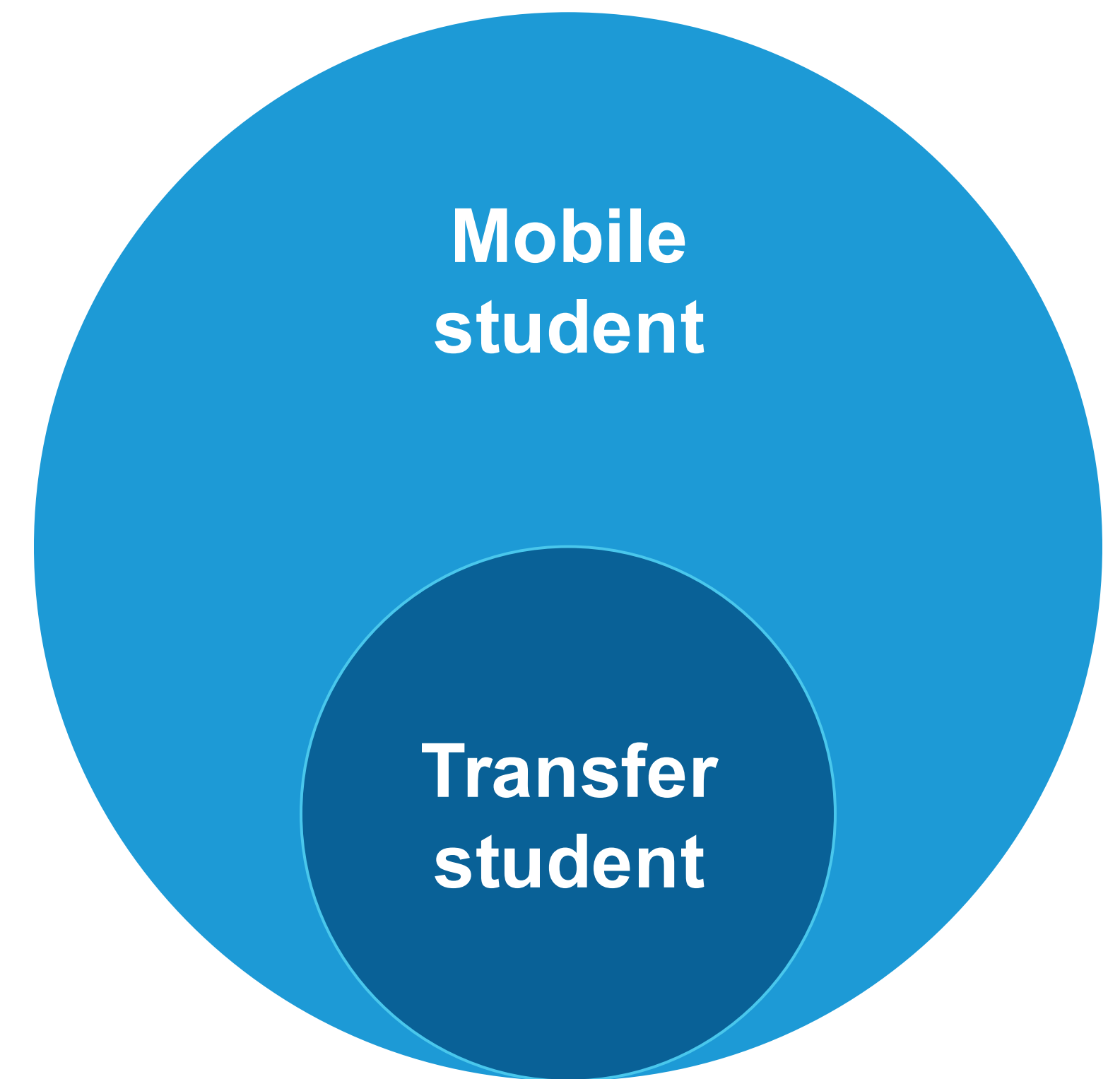
- **operating ONTransfer.ca**, an online guide that helps learners explore their transfer and pathway options
- **supporting projects** to develop innovative practices that can be replicated across institutions
- **engaging with learners** to raise awareness about learner mobility and improve their understanding of transfer opportunities
- **driving system efficiencies** through the identification, development and adoption of shared tools and evidence-based practices

Transfer and learner mobility

Transfer: A mechanism of learner mobility whereby a student begins/resumes postsecondary study and receives transfer credit from their receiving institution.

Learner mobility: The ability of learners to transition between postsecondary programs of study or to begin/resume postsecondary study after a pause in their formal or informal learning.

Transfer pathway: A defined route that postsecondary students follow from one program of study to another that specifies eligibility requirements or how transfer credits will be accepted and applied at the receiving institution.



What we know about mobile learners

Highlights from a 2024 survey of 40,000 individuals who applied to an Ontario postsecondary institution:

32% of domestic applicants had previous postsecondary experience. Of this group:

- **32%** had already earned a university degree
- **44%** had completed a college credential
- **23%** did not complete a program

Among all applicants, **54%** were over 20 years old and **33%** were older than 24.

- Mobile learners skewed older: **63%** were over 24 years old and **38%** were over 30.

Mobility motivations

“Why are you interested in transferring?”

- 63%** Want to obtain a higher-level credential
- 38%** Want to increase chances of getting a job
- 31%** Want to attend a better/different school
- 20%** Have moved/am considering moving
- 16%** Want to study online/remotely
- 15%** Lost interest in current/previous program
- 14%** Want to change career
- 13%** The school's location (e.g., to be close to family/friends, reduce commute time)



Funding opportunities

To accelerate the expansion and enhancement of opportunities for learner mobility, ONCAT supports Ontario's publicly assisted postsecondary sector through institutional grants for projects that bolster administrative capacity and foster productive collaboration.

Over the past two years, ONCAT has awarded almost \$5 million in funding to 65+ institutional projects that enhanced learner mobility across Ontario.

Review process

Funding opportunities
2025-26

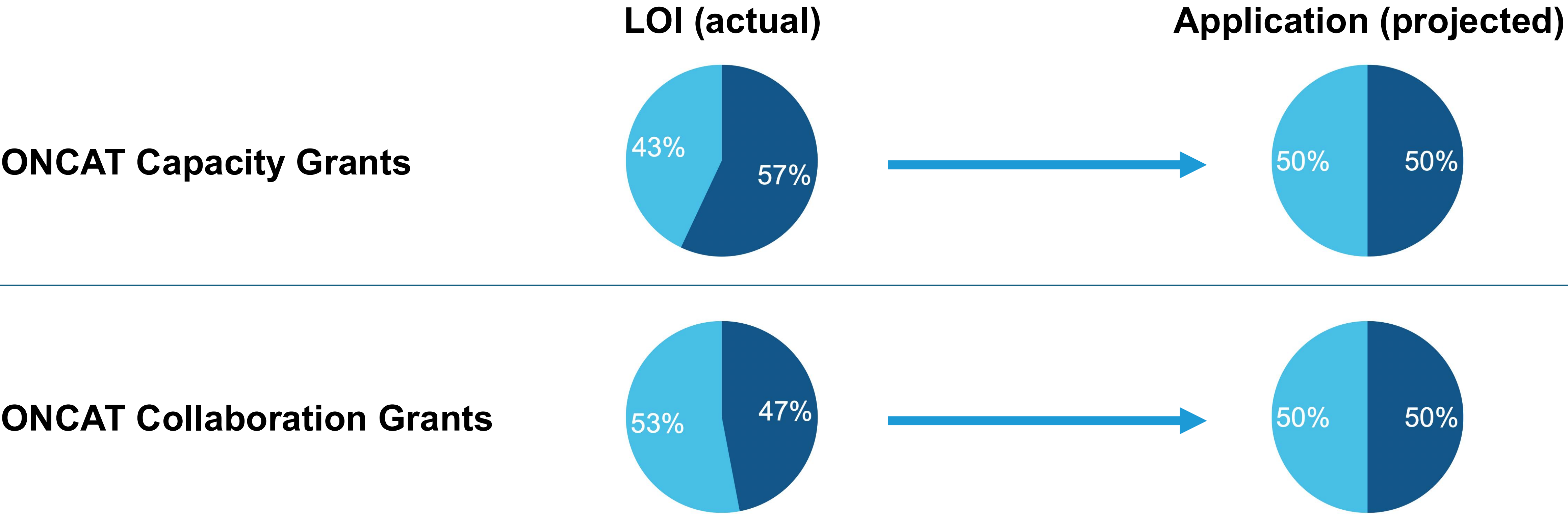


Success ratios — past

Funding opportunities for institutional projects:

Pre-2023	~100%
2023–24	88%
2024–25	54%

Success ratios — 2025–26



Dark blue = successful; light blue = unsuccessful

Elements of a project

Funding opportunities
2025-26

Purpose and scope

Reminder: ONCAT grants are not intended to cover operating budgets for administrative departments and/or ongoing costs for permanent programs.

Is your idea a project?

- Projects have clearly defined start and end dates.
- Projects have “project milestones” — progress markers that can be identified by the completion of tasks, rather than the passage of time.
- Projects produce deliverables that can be achieved through progress, rather than duration.

Guiding questions

Is your idea a new activity?

ONCAT grants are not intended to cover operating budgets for administrative departments and/or ongoing costs for permanent programs.

Does your idea improve postsecondary opportunities for transfer and learner mobility?

Focus your idea on transfer and learner mobility.

What are the deliverables?

Think about the physical or digital assets that will be produced throughout the course of the project.

Applications

Funding opportunities
2025-26

Frequently asked questions — LOI

All of the sections from the LOI are also included in the application.
Your responses to the LOI will automatically appear in your application.

Can you revise the responses in these sections of your application.
Yes! Note that the character limit may have increased for the application.

ONCAT expects that any application would align with the spirit of the LOI.

Contact information — Project Lead

The “Project Lead” is the person primarily responsible for the administrative management of the project. ONCAT will direct all project correspondence to the Project Lead.

- Project Lead Name
- Project Lead Title
- Project Lead Email
- Project Lead Phone

This question is for ONCAT’s administrative purposes.

Your responses will not be evaluated.

Project Title

Use plain language and avoid administrative jargon.

Do not use ampersands.

Do not include the names of any colleges, universities or Indigenous Institutes.

Do not include references to any previous ONCAT-funded projects.

- Project Title

This question is for ONCAT's administrative purposes.

Your responses will not be evaluated.

[Textbox with a limit of 85 characters — INCLUDING spaces]

Project Title — examples

- Expanding Pathways for Engineering Technology and Engineering Programs
- Updating Transfer Credit Databases, Processes and Resources
- Creating a Self-Assessment Tool for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
- Streamlining the Student Mobility Experience with Digital Credentials
- Expediting Transfer Assessments for Healthcare Programs
- Empowering Transfer Students: Strategies for Academic and Social Integration

Examples provided for context only — NOT as guidance about a prospective application's suitability for funding.

Project Summary

Use a two-sentence format: (1) provide a basic description of what the project will do, and (2) specify some details about the project activities OR identify some benefits for learners.

Use plain language and avoid administrative jargon.

Do not use ampersands.

Do not include the names of any colleges, universities or Indigenous Institutes.

Do not include references to any previous ONCAT-funded projects.

- Provide a brief description of your project.

This question is for ONCAT's administrative purposes.

Your responses will not be evaluated.

[Textbox with a limit of 300 characters — INCLUDING spaces]

Project Summary — examples

- This project develops new pathways between engineering technology and accredited engineering programs. By sharing capacity-building resources across the sector, the project will increase student access to in-demand labour market sectors across Ontario.
- This project expedites credit transfer assessment for students applying to direct entry healthcare programs. By developing a process to identify eligible transfer credits as part of the admission letters, the project will help students make informed decisions about education and career opportunities.

Examples provided for context only — NOT as guidance about a prospective application's suitability for funding. We encourage prospective applicants to [review the list](#) of ONCAT-funded institutional projects from 2024–25.

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Anticipated Start Date

*The “anticipated start date” refers to the commencement of the project activities outlined in this application.
Your anticipated start date must be scheduled between February 2, 2026, and February 27, 2026.*

This question is for ONCAT’s administrative purposes.

Your responses will not be evaluated.

[Dropdown calendar]

Anticipated End Date

The “anticipated end date” refers to the completion of all project activities outlined in this application.

Your anticipated end date must be scheduled no later than 18 months from your anticipated start date.

For administrative reasons, your anticipated end date cannot be scheduled for any date between March 1 to April 15 of each year.

This question is for ONCAT’s administrative purposes.

Your responses will not be evaluated.

[Dropdown calendar]

Project Milestones

“Project milestones” are progress markers that can be identified by the completion of tasks, rather than the passage of time.

- Processing 100 courses is a project milestone.*
- Processing courses for 4 months is not a project milestone.*

For each project milestone, include (1) a specific date, and (2) a description of 10 or fewer words. For most projects, the sixth (and final) project milestone should be listed as “Submission of all Deliverables and Reporting Requirements.”

[Dropdown calendar]

A description of 10 or fewer words

[Textbox with a limit of 100 characters]

ONCAT will evaluate the feasibility of producing the deliverables with the proposed timeline and budget.

Project Milestones — examples

1. Complete draft curriculum and outcome map aligned to industry training.
2. Produce PLAR crosswalk templates and assessor guide.
3. Design an intake and advising process map.
4. Publish new website about opportunities to access PLAR from industry
5. Release final PLAR resources and learner-facing materials.
6. Submission of all Deliverables and Reporting Requirements.

Examples provided for context only — NOT as guidance about a prospective application's suitability for funding.

Priority Activities

In alignment with the Government of Ontario's policy directions, ONCAT will prioritize the funding of projects that address one or more of the following activities:

- projects that facilitate pathway agreements and policy recommendations at the system level*
- projects that can be implemented at other institutions or scaled across the entire postsecondary sector*
- projects that support government priority areas (healthcare, marine transportation, advanced manufacturing, electric vehicles, critical minerals, mental health services/accessibility and housing)*
- projects that support programs that respond to labour market needs*
- projects that support programs and pathways with demonstrated student interest*
- projects that support collaborative programs that expand opportunities for students (especially in rural areas and/or for recently suspended programs) by facilitating the sharing of institutional resources to deliver programs more efficiently*

Priority Activities

- Indicate whether your project addresses one or more of the following activities:
 - facilitate pathway agreements and policy recommendations at the system level
 - can be implemented at other institutions or scaled across the entire postsecondary sector
 - projects that support government priority areas
 - programs that respond to labour market needs
 - programs and pathways with demonstrated student interest
 - collaborative programs that expand opportunities for students

ONCAT will evaluate the connection of the project to ONCAT's focus for funding opportunities and the Government of Ontario's policy directions.

[Checkboxes for the above options]

Deliverables

All ONCAT-funded institutional projects must produce “Deliverables” from at least one of the following two categories:

- *Materials for Institutional Use*
- *Materials for Public Distribution*

The application allows you to enter a maximum of 3 distinct Materials for Institutional Use and 3 distinct Materials for Public Distribution.

Applicants are not required to include 6 Deliverables.



Materials for Institutional Use

- Provide a brief description for a maximum of 3 distinct Materials for Institutional Use that will be produced throughout the course of your project.
- If your project does not involve the production of any Materials for Institutional Use, write “N/A.”

For each distinct deliverable, include (1) a title of 10 or fewer words, (2) a one-sentence description of the physical or digital asset, and (3) a one-sentence indication of its intended audience (e.g., prospective students, transfer advisors).

ONCAT will evaluate the deliverable’s potential impact and contributions to the sector, as well as the feasibility of producing the deliverable with the proposed timeline and budget.

Materials for Institutional Use

- A title of 10 or fewer words
[Textbox with a limit of 100 characters]
- A one-sentence description of the physical or digital asset
[Textbox with a limit of 200 characters]
- A one-sentence indication of its intended audience
[Textbox with a limit of 200 characters]

ONCAT will evaluate the deliverable's potential impact and contributions to the sector, as well as the feasibility of producing the deliverable with the proposed timeline and budget.

Materials for Institutional Use

- A title of 10 or fewer words

Analysis of transfer pathway opportunities

- A one-sentence description of the physical or digital asset

A 10-page report will analyze prospective transfer pathways and identify options with high student interest and growing labour market demand.

- A one-sentence indication of its intended audience

The report will be circulated with departments within the Faculty of Arts, as well as the VP Academic's office.

Examples provided for context only — NOT as guidance about a prospective application's suitability for funding.

Materials for Public Distribution

- Provide a brief description for a maximum of 3 distinct Materials for Public Distribution that will be produced throughout the course of your project.
- If your project does not involve the production of any Materials for Public Distribution, write “N/A.”

For each distinct deliverable, include (1) a title of 10 or fewer words, (2) a one-sentence description of the physical or digital asset, and (3) a one-sentence indication of its intended audience (e.g., prospective students, transfer advisors).

ONCAT will evaluate the deliverable’s potential impact and contributions to the sector, as well as the feasibility of producing the deliverable with the proposed timeline and budget.

Materials for Public Distribution

- A title of 10 or fewer words
[Textbox with a limit of 100 characters]
- A one-sentence description of the physical or digital asset
[Textbox with a limit of 200 characters]
- A one-sentence indication of its intended audience
[Textbox with a limit of 200 characters]

ONCAT will evaluate the deliverable's potential impact and contributions to the sector, as well as the feasibility of producing the deliverable with the proposed timeline and budget.

Materials for Public Distribution

- A title of 10 or fewer words

Development of PLAR outreach package

- A one-sentence description of the physical or digital asset

An outreach package — including a brochure, bookmark and notepad — will be produced to explain the PLAR process to prospective applicants.

- A one-sentence indication of its intended audience

The outreach package will be delivered to employers in the construction and skilled trades sectors, within a 100 km radius of our main campus.

Examples provided for context only — NOT as guidance about a prospective application's suitability for funding.

Notes about Deliverables

Deliverables must be physical or digital assets.

An accomplishment like “developing a transfer pathway” is an eligible use of ONCAT funding for institutional projects — but it is not a deliverable.

For a project that focuses on accomplishments like developing a transfer pathway, you need to identify the physical or digital assets. Example:

- An articulation agreement or memorandum of understanding between institutions
- A document that explains course equivalencies, program requirements
- Learner-facing materials that promote the transfer pathway

Reporting requirements

All ONCAT-funded institutional projects submit the following reporting requirements:

- **Preliminary Report** that describes progress toward the project's activities and deliverables — for ONCAT's internal review
- **Interim Report** that describes progress toward the project's activities and deliverables — for ONCAT's internal review
- **Evaluation Report** that provides feedback about administrative processes — for ONCAT's internal review
- **Achievement Report** that describes project activities — ONCAT may publicly share with external stakeholders
- **Financial Statement**

Do not list any of these reporting requirements as Deliverables.

Project Rationale

- Identify the situation you are trying to improve or the problem you are trying to solve.
- Describe how Ontario learners are impacted by the situation or problem.
- Provide evidence that highlights the significance of the situation or problem.

You might include data or anecdotes from your own institution and/or references to policy reports, research articles or media stories.

Responses from highly rated applications are typically longer than 2400 characters.

ONCAT will evaluate the coherence of your response and consider the significance of the situation or problem.

[Textbox with a limit of **3600** characters — INCLUDING spaces]

Project Rationale

“Project Rationale” plays a significant role in ONCAT’s evaluation process.

- **Explain how transfer and mobile students are impacted by the current situation or problem.** Your response can reference the “general” student population but make sure to focus on transfer and learner mobility.
- **Highlight ways that your project could enhance the experiences and opportunities for learners.** Do not not emphasize ways that your project will support enrolment strategies or achieve institutional priorities.
- **Provide evidence.** Explain the urgency for addressing the situation or problem.

Project Description

- Provide a detailed description of how your project will support Ontario learners by improving the situation or solving the problem referenced in your response for “Project Rationale.”
- Explain the specific activities you plan to undertake.

Responses from highly rated applications are typically longer than 2400 characters.

ONCAT will evaluate the coherence of your response and consider the effectiveness of your activities to address the situation or problem.

[Textbox with a limit of **3600** characters — INCLUDING spaces]

References

- If your response for “Project Rationale” included any references to policy reports, research articles or media stories, provide the citation information and/or hyperlinks.
- If your response for “Project Rationale” did not include any references, write “N/A.”

This question is for ONCAT’s administrative purposes.

Your responses will not be evaluated.

[Textbox with a limit of **1800** characters — INCLUDING spaces]

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Impact

- Describe the potential for your project to create transformative and measurable change for Ontario learners.
- If possible, provide preliminary quantitative goals (e.g., number of people who will participate in the project's activities, number of students who will apply to a program, enrol in a course or utilize a pathway).
- If possible, provide preliminary qualitative goals (e.g., improving learner-friendly practices for transfer credit assessment, enhancing strategies for recruiting prospective transfer students or reducing unnecessary, bureaucratic or inequitable barriers that impede a learner's ability to pursue their educational and professional goals).

[Textbox with a limit of 1800 characters — INCLUDING spaces]

ONCAT will evaluate the the potential for the project to create transformative and measurable change for Ontario learners.

Impact on Time and Money

- If possible, provide a preliminary assessment of any time and money that learners might save — in terms of earning postsecondary credentials — as a direct result of your project's activities.
- If possible, provide a preliminary assessment of any time and money that institutions might save — in terms of operational efficiency — as a direct result of your project's activities.
- If you cannot provide a preliminary assessment of any time and money that learners or institutions might save, provide a brief explanation.

ONCAT will evaluate the potential for the project to create transformative and measurable change for Ontario learners.

[Textbox with a limit of 1800 characters — INCLUDING spaces]

Evaluation

- Describe how you plan to evaluate the impact of your project.

ONCAT will evaluate the potential for the project to create transformative and measurable change for Ontario learners.

[Textbox with a limit of 1800 characters — INCLUDING spaces]

Contributions to the Sector

- If applicable, describe how your project's activities could continue at your institution in the future. You might explain how your institution could sustain, continue, maintain, repeat or expand your project's activities.
- If applicable, describe how your project's activities could be replicated at other postsecondary institutions.
- If applicable, describe how your project's activities could be scaled across the entire postsecondary sector.

ONCAT will evaluate the the potential for the project to identify key insights and/or share promising practices related to learner mobility, and/or to produce policies, practices and pathways that can be replicated at other postsecondary institutions or scaled across the entire postsecondary sector.

[Textbox with a limit of 3600 characters — INCLUDING spaces]

Funding Request

You can request a minimum of \$40,000 and a maximum of \$80,000 in funding for the project.

- List the total amount of funding requested for this project.

*(**For ONCAT Collaboration Grants, there are different thresholds)*

ONCAT will evaluate the appropriateness of the budget to support the proposed activities.

[Textbox with a limit of 20 characters]

Budget

Closely review the budget guidelines for information about eligible and ineligible expenses for ONCAT Capacity Grants.

Round each cost to the nearest increment of \$250.

Do not list in-kind contributions; this information complicates the evaluation process.

- Submit a detailed budget for your project, using the Budget Form provided by ONCAT.

[Upload your completed Budget Form]

ONCAT will evaluate the appropriateness of the budget to support the proposed activities.

Budget Notes

The Budget Form includes space to provide notes and descriptions for each cost.

- If your budget requires additional notes and descriptions that do not fit on the Budget Form, provide a brief description below.
- If your budget does not require additional notes and descriptions, write “N/A.”

ONCAT will evaluate the appropriateness of the budget to support the proposed activities.

[Textbox with a limit of 1800 characters]

ONTransfer.ca

ONTransfer.ca is a guide that helps learners explore their transfer and pathway options.

On a regular basis, most publicly assisted colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes in Ontario submit updated transfer and course information to ONCAT.

- Provide the contact information for the person(s) or department(s) at your institution that are responsible for submitting transfer and course information to ONCAT.
- If possible, identify the date that your institution most recently submitted transfer and course information to ONCAT.

This question is for ONCAT's administrative purposes.

Your responses will not be evaluated.

Conflict of Interest

- Do you confirm that the preparation of this application was not subject to any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest, nor do you foresee any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest related to the undertaking of any or all activities and budgets outlined in this application?

This question is for ONCAT's administrative purposes.

Your responses will not be evaluated.

[Choice: "I confirm"]

Duplication of Funding

ONCAT grants cannot be used to support projects that have received (or have applied for) any funding from the Credit Transfer Innovation Grant (CTIG), eCampusOntario and/or the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO).

- Do you confirm that any or all activities and budgets outlined in this application will not be used to support projects that have received (or have applied for) any funding from the Credit Transfer Innovation Grant (CTIG), eCampusOntario and/or the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO)?

This question is for ONCAT's administrative purposes.

Your responses will not be evaluated.

[Choice: "I confirm"]

Budgets

Funding opportunities
2025-26

Frequently asked questions — budgets

What expenses are eligible (and ineligible)?

Closely review the budget guidelines (posted on ONCAT's website) for information about eligible and ineligible expenses.

Should you list in-kind contributions?

ONCAT appreciates that many projects involve the institution-wide contribution of resources.

Do not list in-kind contributions. This information complicates the evaluation process.

Frequently asked questions — budgets

Does ONCAT provide full or partial funding to applicants?

ONCAT's evaluation process includes three outcomes:

- **Successful application — offer of full funding**
 - Offers for “full” funding will typically range from 90–110% of the total request.
- **Successful application — offer of partial funding**
 - Offers for “partial” funding will typically range from 65–80% of the total request.
 - ONCAT recognizes that offers for partial funding might limit the viability of the proposed project. Applicants may decline the offer and submit a revised application for future funding opportunities.
- **Unsuccessful application**

Frequently asked questions — budgets

How much funding should institutions apply for?

For Capacity Grants, ONCAT typically awards the following amounts:

- \$40,000
- \$60,000
- \$80,000

For Capacity Grants, submit a budget that (1) aligns with one of the above amounts, and (2) realistically reflects your project's scope.

ONCAT does not encourage “inflating” budgets as a tactic to buffer against offers of partial funding.

Personnel

Who will work on the project's activities?

In order to start new projects, institutions typically need to expand their administrative capacity. Many ONCAT-funded projects involve the participation of people who **spend significant time working on the project**:

- NEW* administrative and support staff — for time that will be directly allocated to the project's activities
- CURRENT (i.e., continuing) administrative and support staff — for time that will be directly reallocated to the project's activities
- External consultants — with judicious consideration of costs

Personnel

ONCAT funding can cover NEW administrative and support staff:

1. a NEW full-time position with 100% focus on the project
2. a NEW full-time position with 50–99% focus on the project
3. a NEW part-time position with 100% focus on the project
4. expanding the hours per week for a CURRENT continuing part-time position

For each position listed on the Budget Form, you will need to indicate the type of personnel cost with a number from 1–4 (using the above descriptions)

Personnel

ONCAT funding can cover CURRENT (i.e., continuing) staff:

- ONCAT funding to cover any costs for current staff MUST be used to hire NEW administrative and support staff to backfill current personnel's tasks.

Specifically, ONCAT funding used to cover any costs for current staff must match **within +/- 50%** of the NEW administrative and support staff to backfill current personnel's tasks.

Example: if your Budget Form lists \$50,000 to cover costs for current staff, then you must plan to use between \$25,000 and \$75,000 to hire NEW staff.

Questions

**Funding opportunities
2025-26**

Frequently asked questions — duration

Is there a maximum duration for institutional projects?

Your anticipated end date must be scheduled no later than 18 months from the anticipated start date.

If your project supports a longer-term initiative, your application should focus on activities and deliverables that can be completed within 18 months.

Frequently asked questions — applications

Can we submit additional materials?

ONCAT's online funding portal will not allow you to upload additional materials.

How strict are the limits for each question?

ONCAT's online funding portal does not accept responses that exceed the limits for each question.

- The limits are listed by the total number of characters, not words.
- The limits include spaces.

Frequently asked questions — evaluation

How does ONCAT evaluate applications for institutional projects?

- **Coherence:** the clear and detailed articulation of the project, especially for the deliverables, rationale and specific activities you plan to undertake.
- **Alignment:** the connection of the project to ONCAT's focus for funding opportunities and the Government of Ontario's policy directions.
- **Feasibility:** the appropriateness of the timeline and budget for the project.
- **Impact:** the potential for the project to create transformative and measurable change for Ontario learners.
- **Contributions to the sector:** the potential for the project to identify key insights and/or share promising practices related to learner mobility, and/or to produce policies, practices and pathways that can be replicated at other postsecondary institutions or scaled across the entire postsecondary sector.

Frequently asked questions — future

Can ONCAT confirm details about future funding opportunities?

- ONCAT expects to disperse its entire 2025–26 budget allocation for ONCAT Capacity Grants and ONCAT Collaboration Grants during the October 2025 application round.
- There will not be a January or February 2026 application round for ONCAT Capacity Grants and ONCAT Collaboration Grants.

ONCAT is funded by the Government of Ontario. All programs and details are subject to change without notice.

Frequently asked questions — help?

What if you have questions about developing a project or submitting an application?

If you have questions about the application process or ONCAT's online funding portal, send an email to Inna Yeranosyan.

If you have questions about eligibility, scope, budgets, etc., book a 1:1 session with Nick Hanson.

- Sessions will be offered between **November 17–21 and December 1–2**.
- ONCAT cannot provide a preliminary assessment of a project's suitability for funding.
- ONCAT cannot preview applications before their submission.