

2016/17 Request for Proposals for Research on Student Mobility in Ontario

Reference: ONCAT 16/17 RFP — Research

Submission deadline: January 9, 2017

Extended to: January 16, 2017

Overview

ONCAT is seeking proposals for research projects that will advance knowledge and understanding of the current state of student mobility and credit transfer in the province of Ontario. Preference will be given to projects that: 1) provide insight into institutional processes required to support student mobility; 2) illustrate and analyze promising practices in facilitating transfer and/or supporting transfer student success; 3) generate and analyze new quantitative data on student mobility in the province; or 4) contribute to our understanding of the student experience of transfer.

About ONCAT

Established in 2011, the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) was created to enhance student pathways and reduce barriers for students looking to transfer among Ontario's 45 publicly assisted postsecondary institutions. As a member organization, ONCAT works with colleges and universities to develop transfer credit policies and practices to ease student mobility while also respecting institutional responsibility for academic integrity.

The provincial government of Ontario's vision for credit transfer is as follows:

Ontario will have a comprehensive, transparent and consistently applied credit transfer system that will improve student pathways and mobility, support student success and make Ontario a postsecondary education destination of choice. The credit transfer system will assist qualified students to move between postsecondary institutions or programs without repeating prior, relevant learning.

The government believes realizing this vision will make it easier for students to navigate the postsecondary education system, reach their preferred educational destination faster, and enter or re-enter the labour market sooner.

Since ONCAT's inception, we have achieved tangible results — from collecting the first set of [data on Ontario credit transfer students](#) to ensuring the [transparency of transfer policies](#). Through funding over 50 research projects on student mobility in Ontario, ONCAT and member institutions are working to broaden and deepen our understanding of both the student and the institutional experiences of transfer. We have also funded concurrent pathway development

projects that have led to an increased number of student pathways in a range of high-demand programs such as business, environmental studies, computer science, and community and social services, in all directions of transfer including diploma-to-degree, diploma-to-diploma, apprenticeship-to-diploma, degree-to-diploma, and degree-to-degree.

RFP Submission criteria

Proposals should articulate a clear research question and outline the methodology for answering the question. Although the question may be specific, and we are interested in gaining a better understanding of the current system, projects are expected to generate broader knowledge that will act as a resource for developing a more seamless postsecondary education system in Ontario.

Preference will be given to projects that:

- 1) Provide insight into institutional processes required to support student mobility

Institutions are facing increasing demands to create a seamless educational experience for students by supporting mobility. However, institutional administrative systems, such as admissions and student advising, have historically been focused on providing services to students entering postsecondary studies directly from high school. ONCAT is interested in gaining deeper insight into the institutional processes and supports institutions provide for transfer students, how these supports differ from those for direct entry students, and, in particular, any associated financial implications.

- 2) Illustrate and analyze promising practices in facilitating transfer and/or supporting transfer student success

A wide range of creative approaches are employed by institutions to facilitate transfer and support transfer student success. ONCAT is interested in learning more about these promising practices: how they were initiated, developed, and implemented; how their success is demonstrated and measured; the key characteristics that led to that success; and lessons learned that will assist other institutions implementing the practice.

- 3) Generate and/or analyze quantitative data on student mobility in the province

Data on student mobility in Ontario has improved considerably over the past years, but significant questions about system patterns of transfer remain. ONCAT is interested in addressing these gaps and generating additional knowledge about

student transfer in the province including number of students transferring, institutional or program transfer patterns, amount of credit awarded, transfer student success, special populations, etc. Proposals should include a clear indication of how the data will be collected or obtained.

4) Contribute to our understanding of the student experience of transfer

Related to generating and/or analyzing quantitative data on student mobility in the province is understanding the transfer experience from the student perspective. While we know that there is no singular transfer student experience, ONCAT is interested in working towards having a better understanding of student attitudes towards transfer, student expectations of transfer, what transfer students experience after they have transitioned, and what students report as barriers and/or supports to them transferring. Proposals should include a clear indication of how the data will be collected or obtained.

RFP Budgets and Timelines

Proposal budgets must adhere to the guidelines indicated on the ONCAT RFP Budget Form (see below). To allow for the widest possible range of proposals, except where otherwise indicated, no maximum funding limit is set; however, requested amounts may require additional rationale before approval. Activities and/or personnel that are currently funded through the Credit Transfer Institutional Grant (CTIG) are not eligible for ONCAT funding.

Where possible, projects should be scheduled for completion, including submission of a final report to ONCAT, by March 15, 2018. Projects that propose to extend beyond this timeline should provide a clear rationale for requiring additional time.

Deliverables

Proponents should be prepared to submit the following to ONCAT as part of their project deliverables:

- An interim report midway through the project
- A final report, with an executive summary and financial statement, on the complete investigation and subsequent results/conclusions, including, as applicable:
 - A literature review summarizing the current state of relevant knowledge;
 - An environmental scan providing an overview of related emerging trends and key issues, and identifying factors that may impact the further development or refinement of credit transfer initiatives in Ontario and/or other comparative jurisdictions; and
 - Analysis of a relevant and sufficiently robust data set.

Proposal submission process

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Submissions should include the following components:

- 1) [ONCAT RFP Submission form](#) (as an MSWord document)
- 2) [ONCAT RFP Budget form](#) (as an MSExcel document)
- 3) [ONCAT RFP Signature form](#) (as a pdf or scanned image)

Please submit the above documents by email to: policyandprograms@oncat.ca. Hard copies are not required. **NOTE:** CVs of project team members may be requested as part of the proposal evaluation process.

Proposal evaluation process

Your proposal will be peer-reviewed by an expert panel, including VPAs from ONCAT member institutions, past project leads, and key members of the postsecondary community. In general, proposals will be evaluated according to their:

- Clarity and comprehensiveness;
- Demonstrated alignment with the goals and criteria of the RFP;
- Achievability/applicability of milestones, timelines, and budgets in the context of previous projects; and
- Contributions to the development of Ontario's postsecondary education system.

After the initial review, we may follow-up with proponents to address panel questions. Your prompt response is appreciated to expedite the review process. Once any questions are addressed and a decision has been made, you will be notified via email. Please note that submissions may be approved in principle pending a final budget/administrative review. We aim to arrive at final decisions on most proposals by March 1, 2017.

Successful proponents

Successful proponents will be expected to enter into a formal agreement with ONCAT that will outline the terms and conditions of funding and specify the project goals, timelines, and expected outcomes.

Contact

If you have questions about this RFP or require additional details, please contact Lena Balata, Project Officer, ONCAT at 416-640-6951 ext. 303 or lbalata@oncat.ca.