

# Call for Proposals

## Micro-credentials in Ontario: Exploring Stackability and Transferability

### Background

Last year the provincial government in Ontario launched their micro-credentials strategy, aimed at funding opportunities to develop new pathways for Ontario learners to train and upgrade their skills for in-demand jobs. Part of this initiative involved the development of the provincial portal, which houses up to 1200 different micro-credentials available across Ontario's colleges and universities. This strategy includes the launch of the Micro-Credential Challenge Fund, which made \$15 million available to institutions to expand offerings and develop partnerships with training providers and employers. As this is new and evolving terrain in Ontario, much can be learned about what relationship these new micro-credential offerings will have with credit transfer.

**An important question to ask is:** Are micro-credentials being designed to consider their 'stackability' and 'transferability' across the post-secondary system? How will other post-secondary institutions recognize these shortened courses in the credit transfer process?

### About the RFP

To help tackle this broad question, ONCAT is supporting research that will help understand Ontario's Micro-Credential Framework and potential overlap with issues prevalent in credit transfer and recognition.

We are accepting proposals that will explore and survey existing processes, such as the micro-credential portal, and partnerships between institutions and regional industry partners/employers.

We wish to understand how these initiatives support micro-credential stacking, laddering and transferability and how they might intersect with quality assurance and PLAR (prior learning assessment and recognition).

ONCAT is requesting applications from researchers wishing to explore and systematically map existing arrangements for the formal recognition of industry-based training or micro-credentials currently being offered by Ontario publicly assisted post-secondary institutions. This review could consist of (but not limited to):

1. Environmental scans or content analysis of current offerings in the micro-credential portal and their potential for stackability and transferability.
2. In-depth interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders across the sector, including transfer credit advisors and registrar staff across public colleges, universities and Indigenous institutes, and representatives from groups offering industry-based training in Ontario.
3. Case studies of current partnerships between institutions and industry partners that have used government funds to develop new micro-credentials to get a sense of how this

skills ecosystem operates, its aims, and how these experiences and training can be transferable in the future.

## **Funding**

Funding can range from \$10,000 for a comprehensive environmental scan on micro-credential offerings in Ontario to \$75 000 for an in-depth research project.

Research projects that include an environmental scan and in-depth interviews and/or focus groups, with key decision-makers involved in approving micro-credential courses and credentials, and/or to inform case studies could be eligible for \$50 000-\$75 000. For example, a study incorporating 20+ interviews and other methods may be eligible for up to \$75,000.

## **Qualifications**

Applicants must demonstrate policy research experience, with expertise in post-secondary education research, qualitative and mixed-methods approaches (eg. large scale content analysis).

## **Application**

To apply for funding, submit your proposal through [ONCAT's Research Projects Stream](#).

## **Deadline**

\*\*\* The deadline to apply is February 23, 2022 \*\*\*

## **Contact**

If you would like to discuss your project before applying, please reach out to Rod Missaghian, Senior Researcher, at [rmissaghian@oncat.ca](mailto:rmissaghian@oncat.ca)