

## 2016/17 Request for Proposals for Postsecondary Pathway Development Projects

Reference: ONCAT 16/17 RFP — Pathway Development

Submission deadline: January 9, 2017

Extended to: January 16, 2017

### Overview

ONCAT is seeking proposals for innovative pathway development projects that develop and implement strategies to enhance student mobility, expand opportunities for students to transfer, and increase postsecondary collaboration in order to contribute to the ongoing development of a more seamless postsecondary education system in Ontario.

Preference will be given to projects that:

- 1) Create new pathways in subject areas where there is a high volume of students but a low volume of pathways;
- 2) Expand existing pathways, especially to enhance opportunities for transfer within a particular region or to refine previous curriculum analyses so that students receive additional credit;
- 3) Develop new pathways by conducting and applying a learning outcomes analysis;
- 4) Create new pathways for Indigenous students, in particular among colleges, universities, and Aboriginal Institutes;
- 5) Create new pathways among French-language programs.

### About ONCAT

Established in 2011, the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) was created to enhance mobility by reducing 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, to reach their preferred educational destination faster, and to enter or re-enter the labour market sooner.

In the short time 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](#). We have also vastly increased the number of student pathways through supporting almost 150 pathway development projects. Together, these projects cover a broad 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. We have also funded concurrent research projects that have led to a greater understanding of both the student and the institutional experiences of transfer.

### **RFP Submission criteria**

Proposals should outline a clear plan for developing new credit transfer pathways and identify the specific programs involved. Pathways among unique programs and among institutions with special relationships are encouraged; however, all projects are expected to contribute to the broader analysis and application of credit transfer and to result in resources for developing a more seamless postsecondary education system in Ontario.

Preference will be given to projects that:

- 1) Create new pathways in subject areas where there is a high volume of students but a low volume of pathways;

While the majority of students have the opportunity to transfer into a related degree, there are still some high-volume subject areas (e.g., engineering, social work) where these factors are not balanced. ONCAT encourages proposals that seek to address these imbalances and generate pathways in areas of high student interest.

- 2) Expand existing pathways, especially to enhance opportunities for transfer within a particular region or refine previous curriculum analyses so that students receive additional credit;

Over the past five years, ONCAT has funded pathway development in a wide range of programs by project teams from across the province. ONCAT is interested in projects that capitalize on this work so that additional institutions can participate in pathways that have already been created, and in this way the pathways are brought to scale. Given that the research shows that students tend to transfer within local regions, we are particularly interested in proposals that build on existing pathways to provide more regional

opportunities. We are also interested in projects that seek to refine previously conducted curriculum analyses in order to award students more credit through existing pathways.

Expansion proposals should explicitly refer to the pathway being expanded. Please refer to the list of ONCAT pathway development projects at:

[www.oncat.ca/pathwaydevelopmentprojects](http://www.oncat.ca/pathwaydevelopmentprojects). Expansion proposal budgets should reflect the fact that project teams will be building on previous work.

3) Develop new pathways by conducting and applying a learning outcomes analysis;

By allowing for comparison of components of study at the course, year, and program levels, learning outcomes have the potential to transform the pathway development process. ONCAT is interested in projects that will use a learning outcomes approach to analyze curriculum across postsecondary institutions, leading to the creation of new pathways in any direction. We will also consider projects that apply a learning outcomes analysis to a previously developed pathway; however, the aim must be for this to result in more credit being awarded to students moving through the pathway.

4) Create new pathways for Indigenous students, in particular between colleges or universities and Aboriginal Institutes;

ONCAT strongly encourages the submission of pathway development proposals of any kind aimed at developing and enhancing postsecondary pathways for Indigenous students into diplomas, degrees, or both at Ontario's colleges and universities.

5) Create new pathways among French-language programs;

ONCAT strongly encourages the submission of proposals for pathway development in any direction that support the ability of francophone and/or bilingual students in continuing their studies in French.

All proposals should include:

- A rationale for the proposed pathway(s), including evidence of student demand (i.e., program enrolments, current transfer patterns, application trends) and, where possible, estimated numbers of students who would use the pathway(s);
- Reference to any existing pathways that relate to the proposed pathway, including an explanation of how the proposal will incorporate and build on that previous work;
- Indication of any potential on-line components or new programs that are intended to result from the project; and,
- A strategy and timeline for the implementation of the pathway, including final approvals from all participating institutions and posting the pathway on ONTransfer.ca.

NOTE: We appreciate that, due to their nature, pathway development proposals may sometimes involve or result in new program development, including programs that require Ministry approval. Please be aware that ONCAT project awards are not connected to any program approvals processes, and successful proposals should not be understood as having been endorsed by the Ministry. As such, we encourage proponents to discuss any potential new programs with the Ministry prior to submitting a project proposal.

## **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 detailing the complete development of the transfer pathway(s), including:
  - An executive summary;
  - A description of the pathway(s), including how much credit will be granted to students and how it will be applied;
  - A detailed curriculum/learning outcomes analysis, including an explanation of the development of any new curriculum, that can act as a resource for the system;
  - Details of expected implementation dates, including a list of completed and pending approvals, as applicable, and the date that the pathway will be posted on ONTransfer.ca;
  - A report on “promising practices” and “lessons learned” from this approach to the development of transfer agreements, in order that future proponents can build on the project experiences; and,
  - A detailed financial statement.

## Proposal submission process

Submission deadline: January 9, 2017

Extended to: January 16, 2017

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](mailto: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, which will outline the terms and conditions of funding, specifying 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 [lbالاتا@oncat.ca](mailto:lbالاتا@oncat.ca).