

Alberta Transfer System Capacity Grant Criteria (2026-2029)

Advanced Education

The Alberta Transfer System Capacity Grant (**the Grant**) has been established to support Government of Alberta goals to improve the transfer system and foster flexible career and education pathways. The grant will enhance learner mobility by strengthening institutional and system-level capacity to assess transfer requests and establish new transfer and mobility pathways for diverse learners. This grant specifically supports Alberta Transfer System priorities, including assessment and development of learner pathways and data for [introductory-level programming](#)¹ and [alternative offerings](#).

Eligibility

- Eligible Alberta publicly funded post-secondary institutions. [See Appendix 1 for a full list of eligible institutions](#) can submit a proposal to Advanced Education.
- Proposals from eligible applicants must involve collaboration with at least one other Alberta Transfer System publicly funded post-secondary member institution from the eligibility list (Appendix 1) and at least one non-transfer system member learning provider that offers alternative offerings. Proposals may also include collaboration with other [Alberta Transfer System member institutions](#).

Funding and Duration

One lead institution will submit a proposal to Advanced Education for a three-year project. Each successful proposal will be funded for \$152,000 in the first year and \$116,000 annually for the subsequent two years (\$384,000 total per proposal). Projects must be completed by December 31, 2029. Only lead institutions (who have submitted the proposal on behalf of a partnership) will receive the funding, through a three-year grant agreement.

Advanced Education's overall commitment to this initiative is to fund up to five projects.

Requirements

The lead institution applying for the grant must submit letters of support from collaborating member institutions and non-member learning providers (e.g., separate letters or a shared letter with multiple signatories) with their proposals.

Proposals must demonstrate how the project will:

- Increase member institution and [non-member learning provider](#) collaboration for the creation of new transfer pathways and data access for alternative offerings (e.g., [micro-credentials](#), [online offerings](#), [military education and training](#), etc.) in the transfer system.

¹ Defined terms are hyperlinked and described in **Appendix 3: Definitions**. These definitions should be applied when interpreting program requirements and assessment criteria.

- Expand learners' online access to member institutions transfer credit decisions data and pathways for introductory-level programming (through publication of transfer decisions).
- Contribute to Learner Pathways System (LPS) and Transfer Alberta Search Tool technical and data updates and learner access to transfer and pathways information in the Alberta Transfer System.

Lead institutions, who are successful in obtaining a transfer system capacity grant, must also participate in and contribute to the outcomes of the transfer mandate initiative working group that will be established by Advanced Education.

- The ACAT Secretariat/Learner Pathways team in Advanced Education will act as secretariat for the working group.
- The working group will meet regularly according to a Terms of Reference and schedule that is mutually agreed upon with other institutions in the working group. AE will facilitate drafting the Terms of Reference in consultation with the working group members, who will define and approve its content.
- Working group activities can include collaboration with other transfer mandate grant holders; provide input for data standardization, tools, policy, and processes for the Alberta Transfer System for introductory-level programming and alternative offerings; contribute to assessment and development of transfer pathways and decisions submitted through the Learner Pathways System Transfer Credit Evaluation System portal; and other possible targeted analysis as feasible, such as measuring time and cost savings for students and institutions.

Application processes and deadlines

- Lead institutions are to submit a completed Alberta Transfer System Capacity Grant Proposal Template to ACAT@gov.ab.ca.
- We will begin accepting applications on August 6, 2026.
- Applications are due by 11:59 p.m MT on August 26, 2026.
- Results from the evaluation of applications will be shared with applicants by early fall 2026.
- Grants are estimated to be executed with successful recipients by September 30, 2026.

Reporting Metrics & Accountability

Recipients will be required to provide interim reports to Advanced Education that demonstrate progress on projects by providing evidence of:

- The number of new pathways or transfer decisions at various stages of development during the project (identifying how many decisions are for alternative offerings and/or introductory-level programming).
- Impacts and contributions to institutions, the sector(s), and system.
- Reaching project milestones.
- Participation in evaluation, development, and knowledge-sharing activities, where applicable.

Assessment

Submitted proposals must demonstrate how the project aligns with the intended transfer system priorities. Advanced Education will evaluate the proposals on the following criteria and weightings.

Evaluation Criteria	Description
Collaboration (18%)	Project demonstrates collaboration and leverages support and partnerships across multiple learning providers, including member institutions and non-member institutions/organizations. Project includes letter(s) of support. Project also demonstrates a commitment to participating on the working group, and support for cross-sector/system dialogue.
Alternative Offerings (22%)	Project includes alternative offerings with member and non-member learning providers from business/industry, professional associations/regulatory bodies, government/agencies, Indigenous and other community organizations, and/or post-secondary institutions and continuing education outside formal post-secondary credential programs. Applicants must demonstrate ability to assess emerging transfer decisions requests for alternative offerings that are anticipated to be submitted via the new Learner Pathways System (LPS) Transfer Credit Evaluation System (TCES) portal.
Introductory-level Programming (22%)	Proposal includes initiatives that focus on career and education pathways and data related to introductory-level programming, including course, program, and credential pathways for admissions, transfer, and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR).
Project Description & Feasibility (14%)	Proposal provides a compelling rationale and a clear description of the project activities and timelines, including for partner collaboration; project scope and approach; and the learner pathways being developed, implemented and data being added to the LPS. Budget and milestones clearly show how and when funds will be used to support the project and aligned with the Budget Guidelines. The proposal also demonstrates a process for how project outcomes, reporting, and spending may be further refined as needed based on results, lessons learned, and collaboration during the three-years. Budget Guidelines are included in Appendix 2.
Impact (14%)	Proposal demonstrates sustainability of project outcomes and the potential to replicate or scale project activities at other institutions and/or across sectors and the post-secondary education system. Proposal illustrates its potential to drive outcomes for learners, learner mobility, and credit recognition in the Alberta Transfer System (e.g. informing transfer and PLAR credit processes; contributions to LPS and Transfer Alberta Search Tool technical and data updates

Evaluation Criteria	Description
	and standards; and learner access to career and education pathways and data across sectors and the system).
Reporting Metrics (10%)	Identifies how reporting metrics (e.g., # of transfer decisions for introductory-level programming and alternative offerings) will be defined, gathered, and reported.

Contact ACAT

If you have questions about the application processes, please contact **ACAT@gov.ab.ca**.

Appendix 1

ELIGIBLE ALBERTA PUBLICLY FUNDED POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Alberta University of the Arts	NorQuest College
Ambrose University	Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
Athabasca University	Northern Lakes College
Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity	Northwestern Polytechnic
Bow Valley College	Olds College of Agriculture and Technology
Burman University	Portage College
Concordia University of Edmonton	Red Deer Polytechnic
Keyano College	Southern Alberta Institute of Technology
Lakeland College	St. Mary's University
Lethbridge Polytechnic	The King's University
MacEwan University	University of Alberta
MaKami College	University of Calgary
Medicine Hat College	University of Lethbridge
Mount Royal University	

Appendix 2

BUDGET GUIDELINES

Activities

Funded activities are intended to support operational needs (i.e. staffing costs) to support the overall proposal:

- Collaborating with identified institutional partners to build transfer and mobility pathways and data access for learners in the Alberta Transfer System.
- Participating in the transfer mandate initiative provincial working group, including dialogue with the broader advisory committee and collaboration with other PSIs.
- Developing and publishing new learner mobility pathways and transfer decisions data, including interim posting/marketing and publication of new pathways data on the Transfer Alberta website and in the Learner Pathways System once the ACAT Secretariat/Advanced Education has completed new technology updates.
- Assessing and responding to new transfer and pathway assessment requests from non-member learning providers as a part of grant responsibilities and collaboration in the working group.
- Meeting with the ACAT Secretariat/Advanced Education to provide input regarding technical updates to the Learner Pathway System and transfer system tools and share transfer decisions information and data to support learner pathways.

Eligible Expenses

Personnel

- Support staff: Salaries and benefits for support staff, including technology and data staff, for time that is directly allocated to the project activities.
- Teaching release: Expenses for teaching release for academic staff (excluding the instructional delivery of any for-credit courses).
- Consultant fees: Expenses related to external contractors where specific expertise is required.
- Honoraria: Honoraria for external advisors (e.g. Indigenous elders, cultural consultants, etc.).

Facility and Equipment

- Equipment purchases: Purchases of equipment for the purposes of supporting the pathways project. This expense cannot exceed \$10,000 for the entire project. Examples include computers and electronic equipment.
- Software, services, and other technology expenses: Purchase or licensing of software and services (e.g. cloud storage, etc.) directly related to completing assessment or pathways work.

Travel and Accommodation

Advanced Education recognizes that in-person meetings or consultations may be necessary to support proposal deliverables. To reduce travel costs, Advanced Education encourages virtual meetings whenever possible.

The following travel expenses are eligible:

- Flight tickets, ground transportation, car rental or kilometric allowance, accommodation and/or meals.
- All travel expenses should adhere to either 1) your institution's travel policy, or 2) the [Government of Alberta's Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expense Directive](#).

Hosting

Expenses related to hosting working sessions or meetings when virtual meetings are not feasible.

Promotional Materials

Expenses related to physical and digital materials that:

- Promote events, activities or services related to transfer and learner pathways created by the project to prospective or current transfer students and the system.
- Promote academic and/or employment pathways and opportunities for prospective or current transfer students and the system.
- Communicate effective practices of admissions, transfer, and PLAR assessment and data within and among post-secondary member institutions and non-member organizations involved in projects and across the system.

Administrative Overhead

The budget may include a line item, not exceeding 10% of total funding awarded, that covers overhead and administration costs such as copying and printing, telephones and internet, office supplies, and general support provided by the post-secondary institution (e.g., legal advice, financial services support, information and data sharing arrangements, technology support/tickets, internet costs, etc.).

Ineligible Expenses

- Capital expenditures: Expenses related to the purchase of land, buildings, or motor vehicles and renovations to facilities.
- Excessive equipment costs: Equipment costs over \$10,000 total.
- Onboarding, membership or licencing fees paid to an external service provider.
- Student awards, bursaries or scholarships.
- Some salaries and benefits:
 - Salaries and benefits for senior administrative staff (e.g. senior manager, director, registrar, vice-president)
 - Salaries and benefits for senior academic staff (e.g., chair, dean, director, vice president)

- Salaries, benefits, honoraria or fees for the instructional delivery of any for-credit courses (unless specifically approved by Advanced Education)
- Retirement, termination and severance costs.

Appendix 3

DEFINITIONS

Alberta Transfer System member institutions are comprised of publicly funded, Indigenous, private not-for-profit, and/or out-of-province post-secondary institutions that agree to and have met the criteria for admission to the Alberta Transfer System. For more information, please see the [Alberta Transfer & Pathways webpage](#).

Alternative offerings are organized, structured education, training or credentials generally offered for non-credit by adult learning providers from business/industry, professional associations/regulatory bodies, government/agencies, Indigenous and other community organizations, and/or post-secondary institutions and continuing education outside formal post-secondary credential programs (e.g., micro-credentials, online offerings, military education and training) (Draft, [LPS Data Dictionary](#), 2026).

Apprenticeship education programs are post-secondary programs in which apprentices complete approximately 80% of their training on the job with an employer sponsor and 20% through classroom instruction delivered by a post-secondary institution or other recognized training provider (Advanced Education Apprenticeship and Industry Training, 2026).

Approved programs in Alberta are post-secondary programs approved by the Minister of Advanced Education (or their delegated authority).

- In Alberta, the [Post-Secondary Learning Act](#) is the primary statute that sets out the legal framework for the governance of the post-secondary education system and publicly funded institutions, including the approval of programs. Under this Act, the [Programs of Study Regulation](#) provides the detailed rules for approving programs.
- Programs of study must meet at least one of these criteria:
 - provide at least 12 credits
 - provide at least 240 instructional hours
 - be an apprenticeship program established under the [Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education Act](#).
- There are two types of programs approved by the ministry: credentialed programs ([Alberta Credential Framework \(ACF\)](#)) and non-credentialed programs.
- The ministry also works closely with regulatory bodies during the review process for proposed programs that are regulated (Alberta Advanced Education, 2026).

Introductory-level programming is foundational or entry-level education, training, or credentials that establish fundamental skills and competencies and support post-secondary education credential program and career pathways progression (e.g., first and second-year courses, entry-level credentials and professional pathways, credential laddering and stacking, university transfer and block transfer, dual credit and high school transitions, program area pathways (e.g., subject areas/specializations, career pathways, advanced placement, etc.), [approved programs](#) by the ministry, including apprenticeship education pathways and regulated programs, work integrated learning and labour market/workforce needs, unique system-wide pathways, etc.).

Micro-credentials are awarded to recognize competencies, skills, or knowledge gained through learning experiences that are designed to meet a specific function within an industry or community and may lead to further education. Micro-credentials may be supplementary, alternate, or supportive to a component of traditional learning credentials. Micro-credentials hold the purpose of aiding in specific, uniquely identifiable training for the purpose of advancing

gainful employment, providing community skills, or laddering into other education (Alberta Post-secondary Education Micro-credential Framework, 2024) (E.g.: Alberta examples of micro-credentials include Tools and Skills in Impact Assessment, PLC Advanced Programming, Marketing for Recreation and Tourism Enterprises, Electric Vehicle Technology and Service).

Military education and training in Canada are organized, structured learning for identified occupations offered by the Canadian Armed Forces through a career-long, comprehensive, integrated and sequential development process of education, training, self-development, and experience. It provides a continuous learning environment to develop and enhance the capabilities and leadership of Canadian Armed Forces members (Canadian Armed Forces Professional Development Framework, Canadian Forces Professional Development System, 2018).

Non-member learning providers do not currently have Alberta Transfer System membership or do not meet Alberta Transfer System criteria for membership (e.g., private for-profit and out-of-country post-secondary institutions, business/industry, professional associations, community organizations, etc.). For more information, please see the [Alberta Transfer & Pathways webpage](#).

Online offerings are education, training, or credentials (e.g., micro-credentials, courses, programs, certification) that are offered online or hybrid by adult learning providers from business/industry, professional associations/regulatory bodies, private career colleges, government, or other organizations (e.g., Hinton Training Centre Wildfire Orientation, Cando Technician Aboriginal Economic Developer, Google Data Analytics Professional Certificate, Microsoft Certified: AI Business Professional)

- Note: Online offerings are **not** defined by learning modality alone and do not refer to all post-secondary education programming that happens to be offered virtually.

Regulated programs in Alberta refer to a profession or service that is subject to specific regulations established by provincial authority. This includes:

- Regulated professions, which are defined by legislation, such as the Health Professions Act, which outlines the recognition of qualifications and the requirements for practice.
- Regulatory bodies, which oversee these professions, ensuring that practitioners meet ethical and competency standards (Alberta Advanced Education, 2026).