

Consortium on Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI): Questions and Clarifications

May an institution submit more than one proposal? **Yes.**

Inquiry relates to the start date of a proposed project. With the indication that projects should commence no later than February 1st, 2025, does this allow for projects to begin as early as September, 2024 where either we could receive money later to recoup costs, or alternatively we would cover initial costs on our end until a January 2025 (or earlier) start with funding? **HEQCO will fund work done after a contract has been signed. We will consider funding a phase of a larger project if it meets the goals outlined in the RFP.**

Can an international student be a part of the research team for this project? **Yes.**

Can you provide any guidance on the expected length or level of detail for each section of the proposal (e.g., background, methodology, etc.)? Do you have any exemplary proposals that were previously funded that you can share? **There is no word limit in any section of the proposal. Previous RFP guidelines included word limits, but these were found to be prohibitive and have since been removed. We are not able to share previous submissions as examples, but welcome applicants to provide as much detail as necessary to describe the proposed project.**

Are there any specific formatting requirements for CVs or other supporting documents that should be included? **CVs or other supporting documents may be submitted as Word documents or PDFs. These additional documents may also be submitted as an appendix.**

Can you clarify how the cost component is scored, especially if we submit proposals for multiple areas? Will the cost scoring be applied separately to each area or across the entire proposal? **The cost scoring will be applied across the entire proposal. Details on the cost scoring can be found on page 16 of the RFP.**

Are there any other specific submission requirements we should be aware of, such as page limits, required sections, or preferred file formats? **There are no submission requirements other than those noted in the RFP guide. There are no word or page limits per section. File formats for submission include Word document and PDF. The budget section is to be completed using the Excel template provided on HEQCO's website.**

Is it acceptable to include industry partners as collaborators on the proposed project? **Yes.**

Will it be acceptable to indicate within our proposal that we are open to collaborations with other institutions? **This would be acceptable. Any costs associated with collaborations or partnerships should be factored into the research budget.**

We wanted to check to see whether the funding is for a study of existing aspects of generative AI or whether the funds could be used to create a new AI tool along with an accompanying analysis of its use and effectiveness. **HEQCO is interested in supporting projects that explore or examine existing generative AI tools that are widely available.**

Can HEQCO share the criteria (rubric) used to vet the proposals or clearly indicate what they are looking for? What are the most common reasons proposals are rejected? **The criteria included in the rubric is**

identical to what is outlined in each section of the Proposal Response template. Proposals are evaluated using a 5-point scale based on the extent to which they address the criteria outlined in the template. The weight given to each section is also stated in the proposal response template. For example, the Background section of the proposal will be evaluated on how well the applicant(s): outline how the proposed project addresses HEQCO's research questions and topics of interest; provide a thorough introduction and background that clearly outlines the issue to be explored and why it is important in the Ontario context; and synthesize recent literature and provide a conceptual framework for the project. The score you receive on the Background section will account for 15% of your overall score.

Concerning a "unique partner," does that mean the partner can be another institution, an area within an institution, or a private sector partner? **Any of these are acceptable.**

Will priority be given to collaborative projects? **Collaborative projects are acceptable but will not necessarily be given priority.**

As you can imagine, AI software, in many cases, is cost prohibitive. Can the amount allotted be dedicated to AI software licensing? **Licensing is a viable option and if chosen, the costs must be shown in the budget section of your submission.**

What types of contributions qualify as in kind? **Examples of in-kind contributions include resources provided by the institution, such as equipment, personnel costs and office space.**

What relevant HEQCO guidelines must we follow when allocating funds across different budget components? **The Research Project Budget section of the RFP (see pages 14 and 15) includes information related to what HEQCO will fund. A breakdown of all anticipated costs should be outlined in the Research Budget Excel template provided on HEQCO's website.**

Is there a maximum limit on the number of members allowed in the research team? **There is no limit on the number of members allowed on the research team.**

Is there an opportunity for feedback on a draft proposal before the final submission? **We are unable to meet with applicants or discuss their draft proposals during the proposal submission stage, but once the RFP has closed and results have been decided, the selected projects will have an opportunity to meet with HEQCO to discuss and refine the project.**