



8th Funding Competition — Winter 2026

Instruction Guide

Call for proposals

The Pôle régional en enseignement supérieur de l'Estrie (PRESE) is funded by the ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur du Québec. Its mandate is to foster collaboration between the six higher education institutions located in Estrie: Cégep de Sherbrooke, Champlain College Lennoxville, Cégep de Granby, Collégial du Séminaire, Université de Sherbrooke, and Bishop's University.

Important note: the 2026 edition of the competition is conditional on confirmation of MES funding for the *Programme des pôles régionaux en enseignement supérieur*.

Competition rules

Qualifying projects must address **at least one** of the following goals:

1. Promote access to higher education, particularly for underrepresented groups (e.g. Indigenous students, first-generation students, people with disabilities, people from rural areas, women in STEM, men in general, etc.)
2. Improve the seamlessness of educational pathways and ensure high-quality transitions to assure student retention in higher education
3. Respond to national and regional needs relating to career preparation in academic programming (particularly in the context of qualification or requalification) providing access to lifelong learning
4. Bring CEGEPs and universities closer to secondary education. Deploy collaborative promotion and recruitment strategies in higher education.

These goals have been set by the ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, in accordance with the [Plan d'action pour la réussite étudiante en enseignement supérieur \(PARES\) 2021-2026](#).

This competition is aimed at supporting both new and existing projects. The amounts awarded for the projects selected in the competition must be understood as one-time (and not recurring) funding.

The project must be carried out **collaboratively** and mobilize **at least two PRESE member institutions**, and ideally more than two. The PRESE coordination office may, upon request, guide and support an applicant in finding potential collaborating individuals in another institution.

The project may also call upon other partners (public, private or non-profit organizations) in Estrie to contribute to regional development. However, **responsibility for the project must be assumed by one or more individuals employed by PRESE member institutions**.

Clarification regarding research

This competition shall not substitute research granting agencies. Only research projects that meet the three following criteria will be deemed eligible for the competition:

- directly addressing at least one of the competition goals (see above)
- meeting a regional or strategic need for PRESE member institutions
- remaining ineligible for any other research funding competitions

Clarification regarding teaching releases

The PRESE grants do not guarantee any release from teaching duties. **All teaching releases required for the project must be formally validated and approved by the relevant authorities of the institutions concerned.**

Clarifications regarding academic development

This competition is not intended to fund bridging or similar agreements between programs (DEC-BACs, pathways, joint programs, etc.). However, some projects may be eligible, provided they offer significant academic and strategic development and have an innovative aspect.

Projects requiring teaching release for the creation of a new course are not eligible for this competition.

Terms

The project must be submitted and led by one or more employees of the PRESE member institutions, namely Cégep de Sherbrooke, Champlain College Lennoxville, Cégep de Granby, Collégial du Séminaire de Sherbrooke, Université de Sherbrooke or Bishop's University.

Grant applications must be submitted as follows:

1. For the project to be evaluated by the jury, **a duly completed letter of intent form must be submitted by email before December 17, 2025, at 6 p.m.**, to the PRESE coordinator, Sophie Vincent (Sophie.Vincent@USherbrooke.ca). Submitters must use the *PRESE-W2026-Intention-Form*. Although this step is not a selection step, it is mandatory in order to make the institutions' administrations aware of projects under preparation.
2. The application must be written in French or in English using the *PRESE-W2026-Competition-Form* document.
3. The form must be completed by the person(s) responsible for the project (faculty or staff at a PRESE member institution).
4. The form must include a detailed budget that justifies the amount requested to carry out the project. If the project could be funded by other already secured or potential funding, this should also be specified.
5. The deadline to submit the grant application is **February 23, 2026, at 6 p.m.** The duly completed grant application form must be submitted **by email** to the PRESE coordinator, at Sophie.Vincent@USherbrooke.ca.

Duration and amounts

The amounts that may be awarded for a project range from \$15,000 to a maximum of \$60,000. Projects must take place over a period of one year. Projects cannot start before May 1st, 2026. No expenses made before this date will be eligible.

In the case of collaborative projects requiring less than \$15,000, applications will be processed outside the competition. Please contact the PRESE directly for project submission terms (by writing to Sophie.Vincent@USherbrooke.ca).

Expenses

Eligible expenses

All expenses must be directly connected to the project's implementation and justified by the nature of the project. The following expenses are eligible when drawing up your budget:

- staff substitution and replacement costs in higher education, or the costs of release or absence from teaching duties (in compliance with collective agreements)
- expenses associated with compensating members of the higher education institution's professional staff or technical staff (if applicable)
- remuneration of students in the form of a salary, in accordance with the rules in force at the institutions concerned
- expenses associated with organizing an event or activity benefiting at least two PRESE member institutions
- translation fees
- consulting fees
- promotion, reproduction and publishing fees
- office rental, material purchase and supply expenses, up to a maximum of 10% of the total amount requested
- expenses associated with research activities (literature reviews, data collection, data analysis, etc.) are deemed eligible only if the research meets the eligibility criteria of this competition. In this case, faculty members, teaching staff or students may be called upon for research efforts related to the project's development. This competition shall not substitute for research granting agencies.
- other expenses deemed relevant to a project's implementation may be approved by the jury

Non-eligible expenses

The following expenses **are not** eligible for PRESE funding:

- expenses associated with any research activities other than those specified in the *Eligible expenses*
- entertainment or hospitality expenses, including meals and alcohol
- prizes in cash or in the form of gift cards or grants
- expenses connected to participation in conferences or colloquia
- purchase of capital assets or computing equipment
- purchase of books, volumes and journals, as well as subscriptions to periodicals or other publications, including electronic publications

- expenses made outside Quebec
- any other expense unrelated to the project

Project evaluation

Funding decisions

Each project submitted will be evaluated by the members of the PRESE's Executive Committee. The evaluating members will complete an evaluation grid, and the funding will be awarded according to the project's overall quality (relevance, benefits, and conditions for success) as well as the amounts available. The Executive Committee makes no commitment to fund all the projects submitted to it.

Communication of results

The PRESE coordinator will communicate the jury's decisions to the applicants, and confirm the amounts awarded for the chosen projects in this competition. The competition results will be released on the website [PRESE.ca](https://www.prese.ca).

Important dates

The key dates are as follows:

Launch of the Call for Projects	October 2025
Deadline to submit the letter of intent form	December 17, 2025 at 6 p.m.
Deadline to submit the project to the PRESE	February 23, 2026 at 6 p.m.
Communication of competition results	Beginning of April 2026

Evaluation criteria

Projects submitted to obtain funding must meet the criteria below. It is the applicant's responsibility to explain how the project meets these criteria. For details on the criteria used to evaluate the submitted projects, please consult the *PRESE-W2026-Evaluation-Grid* document.

Collaboration and relevance

The project must involve the collaboration of at least two PRESE member institutions, and ideally more. It must have scope and genuine relevance for each partnering institution.

Innovation

The jury will be especially attentive to the project's innovative dimension (i.e., introducing new elements pertaining to methods, practices or collaborative modes), distinction (i.e., addressing topical issues), or creation of value (i.e., offering sustainable effects that will benefit the student community).

Continuation

The jury will be particularly sensitive to the project's sustainability after receiving funding. For potentially lengthy or recurring projects, you must demonstrate the means and sources of funding you could utilize to continue or follow up on the project.

Benefits

The project must have realistic, measurable benefits for each partnering institution, and for the student community.

The benefits may vary in nature, for example:

- boosting student recruitment or retention in a program or area of study
- raising graduation rates in higher education
- updating or enhancing education in the socio-demographic context of the scarcity of workers in Estrie
- pooling services
- building partnerships with local or regional organizations
- etc.

Feasibility and timeframes

The project must be carried out in accordance with the presented timeframes, within a maximum span of one year.

Accountability

Project report

In April 2027, the person responsible for the project must provide the PRESE with a report attesting to the progress and achievement of the project's objectives. A form will be provided for drawing up the progress report.

Expense report

A report of expenses incurred must be submitted by the person responsible for the project in April 2027, in accordance with terms that will be communicated to him or her.

Reference

If you have any questions about the content of this guide, please contact Sophie Vincent, PRESE Coordinator, at Sophie.Vincent@USherbrooke.ca.