

RFP: Online Student Application Platform

Vendor Questions & Official Responses

1. Eligibility and Partnerships

Q1. *Are international firms eligible to submit proposals for this project?*

A1. No. Only firms based in Canada will be considered for this project.

Q2. *Will Rupertsland Institute consider joint venture (JV) or partnership submissions from multiple agencies?*

A2. No. Joint venture or partnership submissions will not be considered for this engagement.

2. Project Scope and Objectives

Q3. *Please confirm that Rupertsland Institute is seeking a bespoke (custom-built) software solution rather than an off-the-shelf product.*

A3. Yes. Rupertsland Institute is seeking a bespoke solution tailored to its operational and functional requirements.

Q4. *What are the primary challenges or limitations with the current system that this project aims to address?*

A4. Rupertsland Institute seeks to develop a new system that offers an improved user experience for both students and staff, comparable in usability and accessibility to the Alberta Student Aid platform.

Q5. *Does Rupertsland Institute anticipate future expansion of the platform (e.g., modules for training or employment programs)?*

A5. The initial objective is to deliver a minimum viable product. Opportunities for expansion may be explored in future phases.

Q6. *Is there flexibility in the August 1, 2026 completion date?*

A6. A minimum viable product must be completed by August 1, 2026. Additional enhancements may be implemented in subsequent phases.

3. Budget and Pricing Structure

Q7. *What is the total budget or budget range allocated for this project?*

A7. Proponents are expected to include a proposed budget in their submission.

Q8. Will Rupert's Land Institute accept a time-and-materials pricing model?

A8. No. A time-and-materials pricing model will not be accepted. A fixed-cost structure is required.

Q9. *Would Rupert's Land Institute consider a phased pricing approach (e.g., a fixed cost for Phase 1: Discovery, followed by a defined range for Phase 2: Design & Build)?*

A9. Yes. A phased pricing approach will be considered.

4. Anticipated Volume and Usage

Q10. *How many funding applications are expected to be processed annually?*

A10. Rupert's Land Institute anticipates processing at least 4,000 applications per year.

Q11. *Can you clarify what constitutes "high load" for the application system?*

A11. The system experiences peak usage from spring through fall, with exceptionally high traffic immediately following the application opening date.

Q12. *What is the anticipated scale of user activity overall?*

A12. See above. Usage aligns with peak application periods, with the expected annual volume of approximately 4,000 applications.

5. Vendor Qualifications

Q13. *Will experience working with government or Indigenous organizations outside of Canada be considered relevant?*

A13. Preference will be given to experience with Canadian government and Indigenous organizations.

6. Integration with KETO and Other Systems

Q14. *Will the new platform integrate with Rupert's Land Institute's KETO case-file management system?*

A14. Yes. KETO includes an API that can be extended to support additional data. The databases will remain separate, as KETO is not internet-facing while the Online Application System (OAS) is.

Q15. *What data elements are expected to be synchronized between the new platform and KETO, and how will this synchronization occur?*

A15. “Tombstone” data and other relevant fields will be synchronized. Additional fields will be identified during development. The current process is manual—OAS staff push clients to KETO—but automation options will be explored.

Q16. *Is KETO currently integrated with the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Registry database?*

A16. No. The MNA does not currently permit direct system integration of this type.

Q17. *Will integration with KETO be one-way or bi-directional?*

A17. Bi-directional integration is anticipated.

Q18. *Will technical support be available for deeper KETO integrations, such as the creation of new API endpoints?*

A18. Yes. KETO is an in-house system, and Rupert's Land Institute can create or modify API endpoints as needed.

Q19. *Are there any other internal systems with which the new platform must integrate?*

A19. Yes. The system will integrate with the OMSA system to verify applicant registration status.

Q20. *Is API documentation for KETO available?*

A20. Yes. Documentation will be provided. The KETO API will be expanded to meet the project's requirements.

7. Authentication, Authorization, and User Roles

Q21. *Can you provide documentation for Rupert's Land Institute's OpenID Connect (OIDC) Identity Server?*

A21. Yes. The Identity Server is based on Identity Server 4, and Rupertsland Institute will provide necessary documentation and assistance.

Q22. *How many user roles are expected to be defined within the system?*

A22. Four roles are anticipated: Super Administrator, Administrator, Advisor, and Student.

8. Hosting Environment and Infrastructure

Q23. *What is the target hosting environment for deployment?*

A23. The hosting environment will be Windows Server 2019 with IIS 10, accessible via VPN or RDP.

Q24. *Will Rupertsland Institute manage infrastructure tasks such as server provisioning, SSL certificate setup, and database creation?*

A24. Yes. RLI Systems Analysts will manage deployments, including database creation, permission configuration, and infrastructure setup.

Q25. *Will vendor developers be granted remote access for deployment and maintenance activities?*

A25. Deployments will be coordinated with RLI Systems Analysts. Remote access may be provided as required under their supervision.

Q26. *Should the new system utilize an existing SQL Server instance or a dedicated database?*

A26. The system will likely use an existing SQL Server instance within RLI's infrastructure.

Q27. *Are there specific backup or disaster recovery policies that vendors must adhere to?*

A27. RLI Systems Analysts will manage backup and disaster recovery processes as part of the overall infrastructure.

9. Notifications, Reporting, and Analytics

Q28. *How should notifications (e.g., application status updates) be delivered—by email, SMS, or in-system alerts?*

A28. The preferred notification methods will be determined collaboratively during the development phase.

Q29. *What reporting and dashboard capabilities are expected?*

A29. Reporting and analytical dashboards will be required. Specific formats (e.g., downloadable Excel exports, in-system analytics) will be defined during development.

10. Technical Framework and Maintenance

Q30. *Does Rupert's Land Institute have a preferred development framework or technology stack?*

A30. Rupert's Land Institute's existing web applications are primarily developed using .NET / ASP.NET Core. A robust and scalable framework will be required for this project.

Q31. *Who will be responsible for system maintenance after deployment?*

A31. During development, RLI Systems Analysts will provide consultation on integration and deployment. Post-launch, RLI's in-house team will manage the application's source code and maintenance as required.

11. Data Migration and Retention

Q32. *What is the expected scope of data migration from existing systems?*

A32. Statistical and reference data—such as schools and programs—may need to be migrated to the new system.

Q33. *What are the data retention requirements for application records and documents?*

A33. All records and documents are retained within KETO in accordance with RLI's established policies.

12. User Engagement and Automation

Q34. *Will user engagement or testing sessions with students be incorporated into the design process?*

A34. Yes. Rupert's Land Institute may involve representative student groups from the existing user base for engagement and usability testing.

Q35. *Is there an expectation for artificial intelligence (AI) or large language model (LLM)-based automation (e.g., document verification or eligibility scoring)?*

A35. LLM-based automation can be considered for future enhancements. At present, all administrative reviews are conducted manually.

13. Payment Processing and E-Signature Functionality

Q36. *Will the new platform include payment processing or e-signature capabilities?*

A36. Implementation of an e-signature feature is planned and will be further defined during the development phase.