

# Quality Money: Application Tips

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Each fall the Students' Union accepts applications to the Quality Money program (commonly known as QM) for new initiatives on campus aimed at improving the quality of student life, both in and outside the classroom. Applications are available on our website ([su.ucalgary.ca](http://su.ucalgary.ca)) in September and are due on the last Friday of November by 4:00 pm.

Every QM project is unique, and your application will be as well. We've listed a few general application tips from the Quality Money Committee themselves that will help make your submission as strong as possible.

## Plan ahead

The best applications are thoughtful and well-written – which takes time. The best piece of advice we can give you is to start early and build in time for the following steps:

- ❑ **Create a list** of everything you need to help you write your application and then make a timeline for completing your application. Include buffer room in case you get writer's block or information you require is delayed.
- ❑ Before you start writing, sketch out the answers to the five W's:
  - **What** is "it" (your project);
  - **Where** will it happen;
  - **Who** will make it happen;
  - **When** does it need to happen; and
  - **Why** is Quality Money the right fit for your project?

When addressing the "why" make sure to indicate why QM should fund it instead of another source, why UCalgary students need this project, and why you and/or staff members should spend time and energy working on it.

- ❑ **Consult with all staff members** who need to be involved well in advance. Listen to their suggestions and ensure everyone is on board with the project before moving forward. If you're making a HR or program change (i.e., hiring new staff to run your project or delegating responsibility to current staff), you will probably need the powers above to sign off on your idea. Sometimes red tape or other challenges you weren't expecting can arise.
- ❑ If you're including **supporting materials** (e.g., letters of support, testimonials, etc.) contact individuals early. Give them a deadline that ensures you'll get copies well in advance of the QM application deadline.
- ❑ Do you need **estimates for a renovation or supplies**? Any time you are making changes to a physical space, you will need to get permission from the Associate Vice President of Facilities Development at least 30 days before you submit your QM application. You are also required to submit a builder's estimate with your application, which they can help with. Contact [Facilities Development](#) directly:
  - Robin Bartsch ([rbartsch@ucalgary.ca](mailto:rbartsch@ucalgary.ca), 403-870-0979)
  - Hardy Huang ([shihchieh.huang@ucalgary.ca](mailto:shihchieh.huang@ucalgary.ca), 403-383-8873 or 403-220-4708)
  - Jane Ferrabee ([jpenderg@ucalgary.ca](mailto:jpenderg@ucalgary.ca), 403-819-3139 or 403-210-3814)
- ❑ When writing about the goals and deliverables of the project, **be realistic with the timing**. If approved, your project is bound to the timeline in your application and any changes require a written request to the QM committee. To prevent timeline related road bumps later, be generous with the length between each stage of your project.
- ❑ **Edit!** Make sure you've read and re-read your application. You're looking for clarity, grammar mistakes, typos and good flow (e.g. – Is the timeline in the right order? Have you used consistent language/tense?). **Ensure all the answers make sense to someone who knows nothing about your project**. Ask your second contact to read it over, as well as whoever oversees your department. If your project application is approved, they will ultimately be overseeing the project and need to be in the loop.

## Use your resources

[Campus Planning](#) is a great resource for Quality Money applications if you are proposing any type of renovation in a university space, including furniture installation or electrical updates. Every faculty or department has at least one designated individual who can submit a work request through the university's Archibus system to Campus Planning. Get in touch with your designated staff member early and work together to create a written request, making sure to mention it's for the Quality Money program.

Once Campus Planning is involved, they can connect you to any number of university resources based on the needs of the proposal, including the university's architecture, engineering, or other groups. From there, Project Management Office becomes involved and estimates are developed. The PMO often consults with Facilities Management, UCIT, Risk Management and others to ensure all bases are covered and helps you see any challenges or predict unforeseeable circumstances. They may also be able to recommend additional sources of funding (or co-funding) for your project.

As the Quality Money program has been around for more than a decade there are lots of successful applicants on campus who can also offer insight. If your project is focused on offering a new program or service, consider contacting a previous project holder to ask about their experience. As always, you can contact the SU with any questions.

## QM program timeline

When developing your application, it's important to understand the timeline of the QM program. The process for approval spans the course of almost an entire academic year and that's something to take into consideration when creating your project timeline. If approved, the earliest you might receive funds is June or July of the following year.

For example, if you apply in November 2018, and your project is set to begin in March 2019, we will not be able to support your project based solely on the timeline (we do not approve retroactive funding). Look at your start and end dates – you may want to adjust them to fit with the timeline of the QM program to increase your chances.



## Budgets

A well-explained budget is a key part of your application. Ensure that you fill out the simple budget sheet and explain each line and why specific items are required to make your project successful. In the budget itself, give totals for each item over the course of your project timeline (not by single year).

You have the option of including detailed budget information as an addendum. This is where you can provide us with a year by year breakdown with additional justification for line items if required.

If your project is very expensive, consider giving the committee different versions of your budget, including possible additional sources of funding. For example, write a *Budget A* that is an ideal scenario and includes all the bells and whistles. Then, create a *Budget B* that is a little more conservative and includes your “needs” but not necessarily all your “wants.” See if any other stakeholders, such as the university or your faculty, would like to contribute to the project. Depending on how much funding is available, this will help the QM committee see how they could still support your project, even if they can't fund all of it.

## Measures of success

Measures of success are the criteria that you use to show us the impact of your work, both during and after the project – these measures are also known as “outcomes.” Some things to think about when setting up your measures of success:

- a) Did we achieve the results we expected?
- b) Were there results we didn't want or expect?
- c) What kinds of things should be continued or changed?

The measures may be quantifiable or qualitative (hopefully both) and should be observed over short and longer periods of time. Ideally your measures are set up before your project even begins because that will help you design them in a way to reflect on the purpose and mission of your project, as well as the end goals you were hoping for.

## Illustrate support

Supporting documents are always helpful because they show the committee you've taken time to give them “evidence” that your project is a strong idea and will benefit students. Consider adding letters of support from staff and student testimonials. Drawings, designs, or other plans that explain physical space changes are also a great addition. Support from UCIT for technology-related projects (if secure access is required) is also imperative. Long-term staff support for ongoing projects should always be secured ahead of time.

## It's all in the details

Assume the QM committee knows nothing about your department or project idea. Start with a strong introduction by setting the context / background and explain the “problem” you're trying to solve if there is one.

Be as specific as you can throughout your application and try to avoid vague wording. For example, instead of saying “We will recruit some student volunteers to assist...,” tell us exactly what you mean: “We anticipate needing 10 volunteers during October and November and will recruit students by doing the following...”

We understand that you may not know all the details yet. However, the more you illustrate that you've thought about the potential steps if you received the funding, the more the committee can picture what impact your project will have on students. Remember to explain why Quality Money (and not another source of funding) is the right fit!

## Submission

The exact deadline for Quality Money applications is available on the application and on the [SU website](#). Please mark it in your calendars. **No late or incomplete applications will be accepted.** To be considered complete, all applicants must submit the following before the deadline:

- 1 electronic copy of the Quality Money application typed in MS Word format (no PDFs please) sent to: [marcus.plottel@ucalgary.ca](mailto:marcus.plottel@ucalgary.ca)
- 1 signed hard copy of the Quality Money application in a sealed envelope to the SU office, MSC 251 (via Campus Mail, or dropped at the main reception desk)

## Be available

Sometimes during the evaluation process the Quality Money committee will have questions. If this is the case, an SU staff member will contact you to respond with additional information. By including two contact names on your application and letting us know in advance if you will be unreachable for an extended period of time, we can work together to ensure the committee gets the answers they need to make their decisions within the prescribed timeline.

**Feel free to contact us at any time of the year to set up a meeting. We are available to discuss these points or other questions. Contact: Marcus Plottel, 403.220.5780 or [marcus.plottel@ucalgary.ca](mailto:marcus.plottel@ucalgary.ca)**