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2022 Canada Excellence Research Chairs Competition

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| Registration deadline | September 15, 2022, 9:00 p.m. (eastern) updated |
| Application deadline | October 13, 2022, 9:00 p.m. (eastern) updated |
| Value | Two maximum award values: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$1 million per year; or \$500,000 per year Including up to 25% of the total award value for the indirect costs of research. |
| Duration | 8 years |
| Competition budget | Approximately \$155 million over 8 years |
| Results announced | Spring 2023 |
| How to apply | Online portal and instructions |
| For more information | Email information@cerc.gc.ca |

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Changes to the program

The 2022 Canada Excellence Research Chairs (CERC) competition introduces several refinements to the program, to ensure it continues to recruit the best global talent in the Government of Canada's science, technology and innovation (STI) priorities for the CERC and Canada's First Nations, Inuit and Métis (FNIM) research priorities, while attracting a diverse cadre of chairholders across disciplines and perspectives. The changes have resulted from valuable feedback received from institutions and stakeholders through engagement sessions, meetings and reports, including the 10th-year evaluation of the CERC program.

The program's future is as much about recruiting the best global talent to Canada as it is about supporting the next generation of leaders, making them integral parts of these ambitious core research teams, so they can chart their own paths forward. The social and economic benefits of the program will, in addition, impact Canadians and others around the world, through the commercialization, knowledge translation and mobilization the research generates.

This CERC competition introduces the following changes to the application process and program:

- streamlining the application process into a one-phase approach, in which the research program and nominee are presented together, to help institutions with their recruitment process;
- establishing two award values, to allow participation from a greater range of research disciplines and continue to support core teams that include students, highly qualified personnel, and early- and mid-career researchers;
- strengthening equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) requirements by ensuring EDI is incorporated in the research design, research teams and reporting processes; and
- removing the one-to-one funding-matching requirement, instead focusing on the quality of research environments, emphasizing sustainability plans, and focusing on the institution's ability to leverage funds.

Program objectives

The CERC program is funded by the three federal research funding agencies: the [Canadian Institutes of Health Research \(CIHR\)](#), [Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council \(NSERC\)](#) and [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council \(SSHRC\)](#). The program offers eligible Canadian, degree-granting institutions an opportunity to establish highly funded research chairs in the [Government of Canada's STI priorities for the CERC and CFREF programs](#).

The objectives of the program remain to:

- strengthen Canada's ability to attract the world's top researchers, in order to be at the leading edge of breakthroughs in STI priority areas expected to generate social and economic benefits for Canadians;
- help Canada build a critical mass of expertise in STI priority areas identified by the Government of Canada;
- create a competitive environment to help Canadian institutions, in their pursuit of excellence in research, attract a cadre of world-leading researchers; and
- contribute to branding Canada as a location of choice for world-leading research, science and technology development, alongside other federal programs with similar objectives.

Additional considerations

This competition includes additional objectives aligning the program with new or updated priorities of the Government of Canada and/or the three federal research funding agencies (CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC), including the following:

Equity, diversity and inclusion excellence

The three federal research funding agencies are committed to excellence in research and research training, and therefore to achieving an equitable, diverse and inclusive Canadian research enterprise. EDI is essential to creating the excellent, innovative, impactful research needed to seize opportunities and respond to global challenges. To be successful, applications must demonstrate and implement the highest EDI standards.

Equity, diversity and inclusion in research design

CERC-funded research is expected to demonstrate leadership in considering EDI, including for identity factors, such as race, ethnicity, sex, gender, religion, age, and mental or physical disability, through gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) or sex- and gender-based analysis (SGBA+), at all stages of the research process:

- development of the research questions;
- design of the studies;
- methodologies and data collection;
- analysis and interpretation; and
- dissemination of results.

This approach ensures that research results are more relevant to society as a whole, ethically sound, rigorous, reproducible, and useful. Where it is considered that no aspect of the proposed research requires EDI consideration in the research approach, this reasoning must be explained in the proposal.

For more information, see:

- [Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research](#);
- [EDI considerations at each stage of the research process](#);
- [Status of Women Canada's Information on GBA+](#); and
- [the SGBA+ section of the CIHR website](#).

Equity, diversity and inclusion, and early career researchers in research teams

As the CERC program is based on excellence, EDI is embedded as a foundational principle in its objectives, expected outcomes and application and reporting requirements. To achieve its research excellence-based objectives and outcomes, the program requires the participation and contributions of students, trainees and researchers from underrepresented groups. These groups include, but are not limited to, racialized minorities, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, women, and individuals from LGBTQ2+ communities.

Supporting early career researchers is a tri-agency priority, as it enhances Canada's position as a world leader in building talent and strengthening the research ecosystem. Chairs and CERC-funded institutions are expected to implement measures that specifically support early career researchers.

Indigenous research

If applicable, the proposed research program should include Indigenous research components and Indigenous ways of knowing to extend research knowledge in the field that is significant to First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and communities. This research must be co-created and co-led with Indigenous Peoples, as leaders, investigators, trainees, partners and collaborators, using a distinction-based approach. It is expected that institutions will support nominees in integrating Indigenous research into their program. A rationale must be provided in cases where the application considers that no aspect of the research may benefit from the inclusion of Indigenous research components.

Refer to the following for additional information: SSHRC's [Indigenous Research Statement of Principles and Guidelines for the Ment Review of Indigenous Research](#) should be used as a reference by institutions when preparing applications that include Indigenous research components.

Knowledge mobilization and translation

The Government of Canada values knowledge translation and mobilization to help foster a culture of social and commercial innovation.

Chairs and CERC-funded institutions are expected to promote co-creation with partners from all sectors (academic, public, private, not-for-profit), in order to increase research results uptake for the benefit of all Canadians. There should be an effort to promote and facilitate knowledge translation and mobilization of the Chair's research results into various forms, to support economic growth and social innovation.

Each research program should pursue significant partnerships and collaborations with Canadian and international entities (academic, public, private, not-for-profit), as well as by and with Indigenous Peoples and communities, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, if applicable, to ensure that the research design is co-created and that the benefits and advantages of the knowledge obtained through research supported by the CERC program are applied broadly to support social and economic growth.

Leveraged funds and sustainability

The CERC program will expect institutions and Chairs to leverage other sources of funding to support various activities and partnerships. The program no longer requires institutions to secure matching funds from external partners; however there is an expectation that institutions leverage funds to ensure that the Chair can fully meet their objectives and that the investment by the CERC program will be sustained in the future.

It is expected that institutions will provide additional support, leverage additional resources, and promote knowledge mobilization and translation through partnerships with:

- the private sector;
- international research institutions; and/or
- public sector, academic, not-for-profit and philanthropic organizations, both in Canada and abroad.

Partnerships are expected to facilitate the potential for research results to foster innovations (e.g., to create or build upon commercial endeavours, advance public policy, or otherwise mobilize research discoveries) and support the momentum of the research program into the future.

Institutions and chairholders will be required to develop a rigorous sustainability plan that will use leveraged and supporting funds to retain the chairholder and/or develop a leadership pipeline for faculty on the core team; support the advancement and future opportunities of students, trainees and highly qualified personnel (HQPs); and ensure that the momentum of the research program is furthered by other institutional initiatives into the future.

Research security

It is the shared responsibility of institutions and their respective teams to ensure that all possible steps are taken to address the risks involved with research innovation, including theft, interference, or unauthorized transfer of knowledge and results in ways that individuals and teams do not intend. The Government of Canada reserves the right to exclude a partner or refuse to issue an award agreement on the basis of identified security concerns. The Government of Canada also reserves the right to implement additional security-related requirements, as appropriate, over the life of these awards. Applicants should refer to the guidance provided on the government's [safeguarding research](#) website for further information on the identification and mitigation of security risks.

Science, technology and innovation priorities for the CERC and CFREF programs

updated

Chairs are awarded in the priority areas established by the Government of Canada.

This competition will use a challenge-driven approach to address priority areas. This approach reinforces the expectations of Chairs to pursue significant partnerships and collaborations with Canadian and international entities (academic, public, private, not-for-profit, philanthropic) as well as by and with Indigenous Peoples and communities, where appropriate, and to promote and facilitate translation and mobilization of their research results into various forms.

Applications are invited from a broad range of disciplines in the social sciences and humanities; natural sciences and engineering; and health and related sciences. These applications must explain how the proposed research program will advance one or more of the following challenge areas:

- Healthy Canadians:** Enhancing the health and wellness of Canadians across all life stages.
- Innovative and Resilient Communities:** Building thriving communities that are inclusive, livable, smart and safe.
- Sustainable Food Systems:** Maximizing Canada's agri-food potential to support economic growth and secure, equitable access to food.
- Clean and Resource-Rich Canada:** Fighting climate change and protecting Canada's environment while harnessing the potential of our natural resources to support a resilient, sustainable economy, and high quality of life.
- Technologically Advanced Canada:** Advancing transformative and enabling technologies that will support a technologically advanced economy and society.

Areas of focus have been identified under each challenge area. Proposals that could achieve the goals of a challenge area, but do not directly align with the areas of focus listed, would still be considered. The challenge areas, areas of focus and expected outcomes are provided in more detail in the following table: [STI priorities for the CERC and CFREF programs](#).

Value and duration

The program awards non-renewable chairs of two award values, with no established distribution between the two award values in terms of the number of awards that will be funded:

- \$8 million over eight years (\$1 million per year); or
- \$4 million over eight years (\$500,000 per year).

The two award values recognize the varying costs of research within different research disciplines and aims to be inclusive of all areas of research. The funding supports expenses related to compensation, as well as research activities for the chairholder, the core team of the chairholder, and up to 25% of the indirect costs of the research.

Eligibility

Eligibility of institutions

Canadian degree-granting institutions are eligible to apply to the CERC program only if they have received, annually, an average of \$100,000 or more from the three federal research funding agencies (CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC).

To be considered degree-granting, an institution must both:

- be authorized by a provincial or territorial government to grant its own university degrees. A postsecondary educational institution affiliated or federated with another degree-granting institution will be accorded its own independent eligibility if it receives its operating budget directly from the provincial or territorial government (ministry of education or higher education or equivalent) and has its own board of directors; and
- have conferred degrees during the two calendar years prior to submitting applications to the CERC program, or have students enrolled who will receive degrees during the calendar year of application or within the three succeeding years. The institution must provide evidence of its authority to confer degrees and evidence that degrees were, or are expected to be, granted within the required time period.

Eligibility of nominees

Nominees must be full professors or associate professors expected to be promoted to full professor within one or two years of the nomination. Alternatively, if they come from outside the academic sector, nominees must possess the qualifications necessary to be appointed at these levels.

The nominee must hold a full-time academic appointment at the nominating institution as of the start date of the Chair award. Awardees will have up to 12 months to take up the award after the notice of award and acceptance has been signed by all parties.

The program imposes no restrictions on nominees with regard to nationality or country of residence. [Employment and Social Development Canada](#), [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#) have established procedures to allow non-Canadian chairholders to work in Canada. Members of the Chair's team may also be eligible for an expedited work permit. Refer to areas of the [Global Skills Strategy process](#) and [dedicated service channel](#), where the Tri-agency Institutional Programs Secretariat (TIPS), which manages the CERC program, is identified as a referral partner.

For their information on the process, institutions should contact their local [Temporair, Foreign Worker Unit](#). The government of Quebec has established a [referral process](#) for foreign researchers taking up a Chair in this province.

Researchers who hold a full-time academic appointment at a Canadian institution are eligible to be nominated; however, they may not be nominated by the institution at which they currently hold their appointment. If an institution nominates a researcher who is currently at a Canadian institution, the institution must demonstrate the net benefit to the country in moving the researcher from one Canadian institution to another.

Institution application limits

Eligible institutions may submit a limited number of applications.

Employer-employee relationship

Individuals who are awarded a research chair through the program are subject to their host institution's employer policies. Chairholders are not employees of the program or the Government of Canada. During the term of the Chair, matters that fall under the employer (institution) and employee (chairholder) relationships fall outside of the program's mandate. Institutions and nominees are expected to discuss and negotiate employer-employee considerations before the start of the Chair, and as needed during the term of the award.

Application process

This competition has a one-stage application process, in which the institution identifies the proposed area of research and the nominee's name at the same time.

CERC nominations must include the following:

- Application details
- Nomination details
 - Research/academic merit of the nominee
 - Quality of the nominee
 - CV details
 - CV documents
 - Quality of the institutional support
 - Institutional environment
 - Activities planned to support the Chair
 - Sustainability
 - Recruitment process
 - Expected contribution of the Chair
 - High-level research plan
 - Potential contribution
 - Advancing Canada's reputation as a global centre of excellence
 - Social and economic advantages for Canada
 - Contribution and fit to the global research ecosystem in Canada
- Letters of support from partners contributing financially or in kind to the Chair
- Letters of reference
- Nominee self-identification form

Online portal

All applications and required forms must be submitted electronically through the program's online portal by the deadlines outlined below, or the application will be deemed ineligible. Registrations and full applications received after the deadline or that are incomplete will be withdrawn from the competition. No extensions to full applications will be provided. Details on how to access the online portal will be provided to eligible institutions by email.

Webinars

Applicants are encouraged to attend webinars to learn more about the 2022 CERC competition and the application process. Further details will follow.

Infrastructure support request

Institutions may submit, at the same time as their application, a request for infrastructure support from the [Canada Foundation for Innovation \(CFI\)](#). The CFI is an independent corporation established by the Government of Canada to strengthen national research capability through investments in research infrastructure in Canadian universities, colleges, hospitals and eligible not-for-profit organizations.

This request is a distinct funding request separate from the budget for the Chair. Through its [John P. Evans Leaders Fund](#), the CFI will contribute 40% of the total cost of the infrastructure project, while the institution and its partners are responsible for securing the remaining funding.

Institutions must submit the application for these infrastructure support requests directly to the CFI. Institutions must also inform their CFI liaison when they submit an application containing a CFI request. The CFI will send the applicants to the CERC program, so that it can submit them for external review. The program will then send the external reviews of the applications to the CFI for assessment.

The CFI's board of directors is responsible for the funding decisions related to the requests for infrastructure support for successful Chair applications. Following its review process, the CFI will communicate the decisions directly to the institutions.

Competition timeline

Registration deadline

To be eligible to submit a full application, institutions must first submit a registration form to the online portal by **9 p.m. (eastern), September 15, 2022**, providing key information on each of the applications they intend to submit. The registration form will be shared with all eligible institutions through the program's online portal.

Full application deadline

The full application must be uploaded to the online portal by **9 p.m. (eastern), October 13, 2022**. The instructions will be shared at a later date with all eligible institutions whose completed registration forms have been received through the program's online portal.

Review process

The program will use a rigorous and objective single-phase peer review process for awarding the CERC awards. All applications submitted to the competition, regardless of award value and/or the career stage of the nominee, will be evaluated against each other using the program's evaluation criteria.

External reviewers

All applications will be peer reviewed by external experts in the nominee's field of research. These external experts will be asked to provide a written assessment of the application, based on the program's selection criteria. The multidisciplinary selection board will take these assessments into consideration in making their funding recommendations.

Multidisciplinary selection board

A diverse multidisciplinary selection board composed of world-leading national and international experts will assess all applications using the selection criteria, taking into consideration the expert reviewers' written assessments and the application materials.

From an overall ranking, based on a full consideration of the selection criteria, the multidisciplinary selection board will make funding recommendations for consideration and approval to the program's steering committee, along with a ranked reversion list in the event that any awards are declined.

Tri-agency Institutional Programs Secretariat (TIPS)

The Steering Committee is composed of the presidents of CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC and the CFI (as an observer), and the deputy ministers of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, and Health Canada. The committee will identify the multidisciplinary selection board's funding recommendations, ensuring that the selection process was rigorous, objective and transparent, in keeping with the standards of peer review excellence expected by the three federal research funding agencies and consistent with the program's objectives.

Selection criteria

Applications will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Research/academic merit and leadership skills of the nominee**
 - Nominee is a top-tier researcher whose accomplishments have made a major societal impact (as appropriate based on career stage) and who is recognized internationally as a leader. In cases where the nominee is a Canadian Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit or Métis) researcher based in Canada, the impact can be at the international level and/or at the community, regional or national level. Quality and impact of the nominee's research track record, including their record of service to the research community (e.g., service on peer review committees, faculty recruitment committees, advisory committees).
 - Nominee's record of attracting and mentoring a diverse group of students, trainees and research personnel, and establishing an equitable and inclusive research environment.
 - Plan for establishing and maintaining a diverse core team (at the student, trainee, personnel and early-career researcher levels), and an environment that is safe and inclusive and allows all team members to reach their full research potential (e.g., through the recruitment and outreach strategy, equitable training opportunities, professional development and mentoring).
- Quality of the institutional support**
 - Quality of the institutional environment (existing or planned) that will support the chairholder and the CERC core team throughout the tenure of the award to ensure the success of the research program. This assessment will include the activities planned to support the Chair, such as establishing governance committees and advisory bodies, stewardship plans, etc., and the core team throughout the award.
 - Ability to sustain the research advantage created by the proposed Chair after the term of the Chair ends, including:
 - Institution's research strengths in the proposed field, assessed against global standards of excellence.
 - Strength of the institution's overall commitment to EDI in research and academia, and the level of support it will provide to the chairholder in helping to establish and sustain an equitable, diverse and inclusive research team and environment that also contributes towards a more equitable, diverse and inclusive research ecosystem.
 - Quality of the institutional support in terms of its ability to leverage additional resources to promote knowledge mobilization and translation through partnerships with the private sector, public sector, international research institutions, academic and/or philanthropic organizations.
 - Level of additional support that will be provided to ensure the success of the research program, including training, additional funds, office space, administrative support, and hiring of other faculty members.
 - Quality of the outreach and selection processes used by the institution to recruit the nominee, in terms of the institution's demonstrated commitment to open, transparent, fair and equitable processes and to identifying and addressing systemic barriers (e.g., strategy used to identify a diverse pool of applicants, advertising venues, accommodations). For more information, refer to the recruitment requirements in the application instructions.
- Quality of the research program**
 - Extent to which the proposed research program aligns with one or more of the [Government of Canada's STI priorities for the CERC and CFREF programs](#).
 - Promise of the proposed field of research for the Chair, measured in the context of leading global research in the field.
 - Extent to which the proposed research program enhances knowledge mobilization and translation so that all sectors of society (industry, government, academia, not-for-profit, etc.) benefit from the research and data generated.
 - Extent to which the Chair fills a gap within existing expertise at the institution or in Canada.
 - Quality of the proposed research program in terms of how it is co-created and co-led by and with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, as investigators, trainees, partners and collaborators, and its recognition of Indigenous ways of knowing (as applicable).
- Potential contribution to the excellence of the Canadian and international research ecosystem**
 - Likelihood that the work associated with the proposed research program will be recognized as globally relevant and will advance the frontiers of research in the field on a global scale.
 - Opportunities for collaboration with other researchers working in the same or related areas at the nominating institution, in the same region, within Canada and abroad.
 - Likelihood that the work of the proposed Chair will advance Canada's reputation as a global centre for science, research and innovation excellence.
 - Plan of the Chair and core team members to communicate the research results and their impacts to the world and a variety of audiences.
 - Potential to apply the research results from the Chair to advance public policy and/or the potential to commercialize research discoveries from the Chair in order to create social and economic advantages for Canada.

Each selection criterion will be assessed based on a rating scale.

Reporting requirements

Continued funding during the term of the award will be subject to the submission of a comprehensive EDI action plan within one year of the start date. Institutions are encouraged to hire EDI experts to develop their plans in order to ensure they are evidence-based and impactful. Action plans will be assessed by TIPS to ensure they meet requirements, which will be communicated after funding decisions are released to institutions.

At the midpoint of the eight-year funding period, the progress of each funded initiative will be assessed against the milestones identified in the institution's application, including the performance measurement and EDI action plans. Recipient institutions must submit a midterm report. The midterm review involves an in-depth assessment by a panel of experts assembled by TIPS. The results of the in-depth assessment will in turn recommend a course of action to the program's steering committee. The midterm review may result in continued funding or phasing out of funding to the initiative. The Steering Committee may terminate the award and provide no further funding if the results of the midterm review are not satisfactory.

CERC awardees will be required to meet additional annual reporting and public accountability and transparency requirements. Failure to meet reporting requirements will result in the suspension of payments until the requirements are met.

Responsible stewardship, public accountability, fairness and transparency

CERC awardees are required to manage all program funds using robust financial management practices and open and transparent processes. The principles of responsible stewardship of public funds, public accountability, and fairness must be respected within all stages of the initiative.

Contact information

For more information, contact: information@cerc.gc.ca

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