RESOURCES AND BEST PRACTICES
FOR RESEARCH HONOUR AND AWARD NOMINATIONS
March 2022

The recognition and promotion of faculty excellence in research and innovation is important for our faculty members, for our academic units and for the University as a whole. This document outlines the role of academic units in fostering a strong culture of recognition and supporting the nomination of faculty members for research honours and awards (H&A). It presents best practices for identifying excellence and opportunities within units and working with faculty and University resources to support H&A nomination development and celebration.

Significance of Research Honours and Awards

For faculty members, honours and awards provide important recognition and visibility of their research achievements and leadership and can lead to success in other valuable opportunities, including securing research funding and collaborations. Supporting nominations and celebrating our researchers' successes demonstrates that the University values them.

For academic units and for the University, H&A received by our faculty are a critical measure of the quality of our scholarship as well as a key factor in shaping our reputation and rankings. H&A recognition and rankings in turn create a culture of excellence that attracts top academics and students and further increases our impact and visibility on the world stage.

Structure of Honours and Awards Support at U of T

Honours and awards are centrally supported from the **Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (OVPRI)**, which sets strategic goals for honours and awards nominations; manages nominations endorsed by the University, including internal competitions to select University candidates; provides resources and supports for nominations by the University community; and oversees institutional celebratory practices, data and performance tracking.

OVPRI works closely with **H&A coordinators and directors** in each academic division, who oversee strategic goals and nomination processes at the divisional level and are the primary contacts for units seeking to discuss H&A nominations.

Academic units play a vital role in identifying appropriate candidates for award nominations and helping to build researchers' trajectories or award "scaffolds" from disciplinary to national and international awards. Units have the closest knowledge of their faculty members' research achievements and relative excellence and are best positioned to ensure that eligible faculty are considered for opportunities strategically and equitably. The best practices included here offer suggestions for building a systematic approach to H&A nominations and celebration.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research Honours & Awards

The values of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are an institutional priority for the University of Toronto, and we recognize that diversity is essential to research excellence and the creation of an inclusive intellectual community that allows our researchers to maximize their creativity, contributions and impact.

As such, we want to ensure that the ways in which we support our faculty value diversity and take steps to ensure that faculty are equitably considered for recognition opportunities.

EDI best practices are important in the context of H&A for several reasons, for example:

- The subjective nature of nomination processes can allow biases against underrepresented groups to become a barrier in recognition of their value and accomplishments.

- The optional nature of H&A nominations means that, as one priority among many, they can easily become an afterthought or addressed through ad-hoc processes as nominations are requested.

- Ad-hoc processes tend to prioritize nominations for self-advocating researchers; not all faculty may feel encouraged to advocate for themselves equally for various reasons.

- Processes to identify prospective awards and nominees necessarily apply standards of achievement and excellence that should be carefully considered, as they can shape award strategies and affect which faculty receive support.

- Units' recommendations of candidates significantly inform divisional and university nominations for national and international awards; therefore, units' commitment to strong EDI practices for H&A collectively help to ensure robust, consistent and fair nomination practices for the university as a whole.

Units can take steps to ensure that they are considering EDI in their H&A practices, such as:

- Implementing a systematic approach to ensure that all meritorious faculty are considered regularly for H&A opportunities; the next section provides examples of practices that may help to manage this efficiently.

- Encouraging all faculty to self-advocate when they identify opportunities of interest.

- Including information about H&A processes and support in new faculty orientations.

- Examining processes for identifying priority awards and candidates to ensure they:

    o Consider opportunities that recognize achievement at all career stages and different types of research and innovation contributions and impacts.

    o Include regular unconscious bias education for leadership and decision-makers involved in selecting candidates, such as the modules provided here.

    o Follow best practices for peer review and evaluation of candidate excellence, as outlined in the VPRI guide Best Practices for Peer Review Committees. VPRI also offers further resources on the EDI in Research and Innovation website.

Centrally, OVPRI ensures that internal reviews for institutional H&A nominations follow EDI best practices and collects self-identification data confidentially using the Employment Equity Survey to confirm that internal nomination pools reflect the diversity of the University's faculty.

OVPRI also liaises with awarding organizations to confirm that the University's processes meet their EDI requirements and to advocate for stronger EDI practices, such as extended eligibility windows to accommodate career interruptions.

Approaching H&A Nominations Systematically

The following practices may help units to implement manageable annual systems to consider the breadth of their faculty for H&A.

- *Leadership*
  Consider appointing a leader or champion within the unit, such as an Associate Chair, Research, who can oversee the unit's H&A strategy and communicate with the divisional H&A coordinator regarding opportunities, resources and planned nominations.

- *Strategy*
  Units may find it helpful to focus strategic efforts on a short list of *3-5* highest priority H&A for which faculty are likely to be eligible from year to year, while continuing to address one-off opportunities on an ad-hoc basis. The unit's guidance is especially important for early and mid-career H&A that can build faculty members' CVs and position them for further opportunities. Priority awards could include:
    - Discipline-specific early or mid-career awards from scholarly associations
    - Relevant early-career national or international awards, such as Sloan Fellowships, NSERC Fellowships, or Royal Society of Canada College Membership
    - National awards or fellowships for mid-career and senior scholars, such as Royal Society of Canada Fellowship, medals and awards
    - Divisional or University awards for research and research impact

  Information about finding opportunities is included later in this package.

- *Systematic identification of candidates*
  Units are encouraged to develop a mechanism to identify candidates for priority H&A on an annual or other regular basis well in advance of award deadlines. Appropriate mechanisms may vary depending on divisional strategy. Options include:
    - Participation in a divisional H&A committee or strategy, depending on division
    - Assembly of an H&A committee within the unit which can review relevant opportunities a few times per year; tri-campus committees should aim to ensure candidates' home units are informed of possible nominations
    - Integration of H&A into the annual PTR process, an ideal opportunity to consider outstanding faculty against a list of priority H&A to determine eligible and competitive candidates

- *Nomination support*
  In conversation with divisional coordinators, consider whether divisional support is offered for nominations and what support may feasibly be offered by the unit, such as coordinating peer nominators, providing cover letters, and contacting referees. Units should expect to advise on and support some nominations, especially for discipline-specific awards.
    - Faculty can be encouraged to proactively assemble awards dossiers (Appendix 1) to streamline nomination processes for nominators and coordinators.

Cultivating a Nomination and Celebration Culture

H&A nominations are strongest when led and supported by peers. Units can cultivate an active nomination culture by including faculty members in the processes above, and by:

- Seeking faculty expertise on award competitions and encouraging participation in review committees for external awards

- Encouraging faculty members to nominate peers within their research group, unit, and wider research community for appropriate opportunities

- Developing a mentorship model in which established faculty advise earlier-career faculty on award opportunities, strategic timing and referee selection

- Recognizing the work of faculty who take the time to mentor or nominate others

Faculty may also take a greater interest in awards when they see successes celebrated. Highlight received awards by issuing congratulatory messages in faculty meetings and/or on social media, publishing them in newsletters and on unit webpages, and notifying divisional communications staff and award coordinators of awards. Reported awards may be:

- Featured in divisional communications and on the U of T Celebrates webpage

- Recognized with congratulatory letters; OVPRI arranges congratulatory letters from the President and VPRISI for all reported awards meeting specific criteria (Appendix 3)

- Recognized at the annual U of T Salutes! celebration event (criteria as above)

Resources for Identifying Award Opportunities

Award opportunities can be explored through several avenues, depending on award types.

- *Disciplinary awards* important to specific fields may be advised on by senior faculty, explored via the award programs of relevant scholarly associations, and searched using the Pivot Funding Opportunities Database

- *National and international awards and academies* can be explored in the UTORid-protected VPRI Honours & Awards Opportunities database, which includes all University of Toronto H&A performance indicators (see Appendix 3), outlines institutional processes and provides lists of University of Toronto winners

- *Divisional Honours & Awards Coordinators* can be consulted for guidance on award selection, strategy and timing.

APPENDIX 1:
RECOMMENDED COMPONENTS OF A FACULTY AWARDS DOSSIER

The majority of research award competitions require some combination of the following components. To streamline the process of assembling nominations, consider proactively developing the items below, which can be adapted for various award opportunities.

- 1-sentence (~15 to 20-word) proposed citation
  - Structure: *"For [discovery/contribution] that has [impact]."*
  - Key words:
    - For *discovering; defining; developing; introducing*
    - That has *led to; enabled; defined; transformed*

- 250-word summary of achievement and impact
  - Be direct and describe achievements first; include metrics such as major publications or awards toward the end of the summary.

- 3-page detailed narrative of research achievements
  - Develop a compelling overview of your work and the main contributions for which you could be nominated; seek peer and/or professional input.
  - Start with a 1-to 2-paragraph introduction of the central questions or problems your work has addressed; structure the rest of the overview with headings to allow room for technical discussion.
  - Keep metrics and other indicators of recognition toward the end.

- Annotated list of top 15 publications or comparable scholarly outputs
  - Many nominations will request a list of top 5, 10, or 15 publications. Selecting these proactively saves time.
  - When permitted, annotations can complement your summary and detailed narrative by offering more detail on specific papers and their influence or impact.

- Well-formatted CV
  - Review your entire CV for formatting inconsistencies.
  - Consider which sections you would remove to tailor your CV for specific opportunities (e.g., a research vs. a teaching award). Are the sections grouped logically?
  - Consider including your 250-word summary or a short bio near the beginning of your CV.

APPENDIX 2: Year-at-a-Glance: Notable Award Deadlines 2022

🟦 Internal   🟥 National Academies   🟦 Provincial and National Honours   ⬛ Multi-Disciplinary
🟪 Social Sciences, Humanities, Arts   🟩 Natural Sciences and Engineering   🟧 Health Sciences

January		
February	**SSHRC Talent Award** (internal; Feb 4)	
March	**Canadian Academy of Health Sciences Fellowship** (Mar 14)	**U of T University Professors** (Mar 22)
		U of T McLean Award (Mar 31)
	Royal Society of Canada Medals, Awards (Mar 31)	**Order of Ontario** (Mar 31)
April	**NSERC Prizes** (Apr 1): Gerhard Herzberg Canada Gold Medal; Brockhouse Canada Prize; John C. Polanyi Award; Donna Strickland Prize for Societal Impact	**NSERC Synergy Awards for Innovation** (Apr 19)
May	**NSERC Arthur B. McDonald Fellowships** (internal; May 1)	
June	**SSHRC Impact Awards** (internal; early June): Gold Medal; Insight Award; Connection Award; Partnership Award	**Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts** (June 1)
		Canadian Medical Hall of Fame (June 13)
	Killam Prize (June 30)	**Steacie Prize for Natural Sciences** (June 30)
July - August		
September	**Sloan Research Fellowships** (Sept 15)	**Guggenheim Fellowships** (mid-Sept)
October	**Molson Prize** (Oct 1)	**Governor General's Innovation Awards** (internal; mid-October)
	Canadian Academy of Engineering Fellowship (Oct 31)	
November	**U of T President's Impact Awards** (early Nov)	**CIHR-IPPH Trailblazer Awards** (late Nov)
		Bank of Canada Awards (Nov 30)
December	**Royal Society of Canada Fellowship** (Dec 1)	**John Charles Polanyi Prize** (internal; early Dec)
	Royal Society of Canada College Membership (Dec 1)	
Rolling	**Order of Canada**	

Deadlines unavailable as of spring 2022: CIHR Gold Leaf Prizes; Killam Research Fellowships

APPENDIX 3:
RESEARCH HONOURS AND AWARDS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The University of Toronto uses several measures to assess and celebrate our national and global performance in research recognition through H&A. These include the following types of indicators *(links to UTORid-protected VPRI Honours & Awards Opportunities Database)*:

- **University of Toronto H&A Performance Indicators**, comprised of significant national and international academy fellowships and awards that are open to faculty from a range of disciplines and in which annual performance is a meaningful metric. A chart of the University's national share of these H&A indicators is published annually in the VPRI Annual Report.

- **Major international awards** identified by Universities Canada's Global Excellence Initiative as important for global recognition of Canadian research talent. This list informs the University's overall quantitative targets for H&A nominations.

- Other international and major national H&A specified in our **criteria for institutional recognition** through our annual U of T Salutes! event and congratulatory letters from the President and VPRISI, which are as follows:
    - All international honours and awards for research achievement or creative professional activity, excepting article/paper awards, lecture awards, and honorary degrees.
    - Selected national honours and awards for research achievement or creative professional activity, as specified below:
        - Fellowships and awards from Canada's national academies (CAE, CAHS, RSC); the Tri-Councils (CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC); the Medical and Science and Engineering Halls of Fame; the Bank of Canada, Canada Council for the Arts, and E.W.R. Steacie Foundation.
        - Honours granted by the Governor General or federal or provincial governments, including Orders of Canada and Ontario.
        - Lifetime achievement awards from Canadian scholarly associations.
        - Peer-nominated and/or elected fellowships in Canadian scholarly associations.
        - Awards from Canadian scholarly associations that represent the preeminent national recognition in a particular discipline, which are identified and proposed for inclusion by academic divisions.

We encourage divisions and academic units to identify any additional H&A that may be useful indicators of international or national research recognition in particular disciplinary areas; and to record and report received H&A to support institutional assessment and celebration processes.