



Early Research Award Information Session


July 25, 2019
Bahen 1200

Trinity College, St. George Campus


Topics To Be Covered

- 1. Eligibility and Budget Tips** – *Amanda Pennings, Research Funding Officer, Research Services*
- 2. Application Evaluation, Tips, Common Weaknesses** – *Gabrielle Sugar & Lee Slinger, Editorial and Proposal Development Officers, Research Services*
- 3. Reference Letters and Deadlines** – *Amanda Pennings*

Eligibility Checklist




- Full-time faculty members who, at the application deadline, are based at an eligible institution




- Degree completed on or after January 1, 2009 (PhD, MD, DVM, Terminal degree)



- Start of independent academic research career on or after January 1, 2014



- Continued education, required training (e.g., medical training and medical fellowships, but not RAs and PDFs), and parental leave are considered eligible interruptions.



- Eligible interruptions must be clearly described in **section 8d**. Use all of the allotted space (and provide further detail in your CV).

Eligible Expenditures

- \$100,000 ERA + \$50,000 matching are eligible for undergraduates, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, research assistants, research associates, and technicians carrying out the research.
 - Salaries and benefits
 - Essential and reasonable travel and expenses related to conferences, workshops, or seminars
 - Essential and reasonable travel and expenses related directly to offsite research activities
- Youth research and innovation outreach activities may use up to 1% (or \$1,000) of the funding provided by the Ministry.

Ineligible Expenditures

Funds received cannot be spent on the following:

- Salary, benefits, or expenses of the researcher
- Purchase of supplies or equipment
- Operation of equipment and facilities
- Salaries or expenses of individuals performing contract research (where the contractor owns the intellectual property)
- Visiting fellows
- Salaries, benefits, or expenses of ineligible team members

Eligible Matching Funds

- Matching funds must adhere to the “eligible/ineligible expenditures” listed in the guidelines.
 - All matching funds must be student compensation or student travel expenses
- Contributions must be in cash.
- Eligible funds: university scholarships for undergraduate/ graduate students and fellowships (e.g., UTF) for post-docs on the research team, as well as private or public sector contributions, excluding Ontario-based support (e.g., OGS)

Ineligible Matching Funds

- Teaching assistantships
- Start-up funds from the institution intended to assist newly appointed faculty members launch their research careers
- Funding through federal granting councils (Tri-Council, etc.)
- Funding from Ontario government ministries and agencies, and funds leveraged by such research awards
- Ontario Graduate Scholarships and Ontario Graduate Fellowships, any other Ontario funds

Budget

- Youth Outreach activities should be a maximum of \$1,000
- Total expenditures should equal \$150,000
- Total ERA amount should equal \$100,000
- Total Matching Amount should equal \$50,000
- Total Indirect Costs should equal \$40,000

Team Member	Expenditure	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Total
Undergraduate Student	Salary						
Master's Student	Salary						
Doctoral Student	Salary						
Post-doctoral Fellow	Salary						
Research Assistant	Travel						
Research Associate	Benefits						
	Youth Outreach Activities						\$1,000
	Total						\$150,000
	ERA Amount						\$100,000
	Matching Amount						\$50,000
	Requested Reimbursement for Indirect Costs						\$40,000

Examples of Matching Funds

- Student awards paid by the department (graduate support, travel awards)
- University of Toronto fellowships
- University of Toronto awards (e.g., Connaught)
- Private sector funding
- Funding from US/international agencies



Patio, Andrews Building, UTSC

Application Evaluation

- This is a very competitive program.
- Applications are ranked relative to other applications.
- In the 2018 competition (Round 14), U of T submitted 42 applications, and 10 were successful. U of T's success rate was 24%, compared to the province-wide success rate of 25%.
- Be cautious about submitting an application if you were recently appointed.
- You must follow **all formatting guidelines**.

Application Evaluation

Evaluation criteria

- Excellence of the Researcher (40%)
- Quality of Research (30%)
- Development of Research Talent (20%)*
- Strategic Value for Ontario (10%)*

*** These sections are very important**

In each of the 4 evaluation criteria, your application will be evaluated as follows:

Application Evaluation

**Exceptional
Excellent**

**Very Strong
Strong
Moderate
Insufficient**

Application Evaluation

Who is my audience?

“ERA panels are multidisciplinary and the application will be reviewed by panel members that are within and outside of the applicant’s specific field of research. **The content and language of the proposal should be clear and understood by people outside of the applicant’s field.**”

- Avoid technical jargon/discipline-specific terminology.
 - Use clear, straightforward language.
- Explain any necessary technical terms/concepts.
- Give the big picture.
 - why is this research significant?

ERA Application by Section

1

Excellence of the Researcher

8. Description of Researcher
9. Researcher's Background
(Supervisors)

15. Funding Received by
Researcher
16. Government Awards
Received by Researcher
17. Reference Letters

Appendix C: Productivity
Appendix D: Reference Letters

2

Quality of Research

7. Research Summary

14. Milestones and
Deliverables

Appendix A: Budget
Appendix B: Proposed Research

3

Development of Research Talent

10. Researcher's Background in
Training
11. Training Plans for Research
Team
13. Youth Outreach Plan

Sections 1 – 6: Basic info about applicant and proposal
Many sections can speak to more than one objective.

4

Strategic Value for Ontario

12. Strategic Value to Ontario

ERA

7. Research Summary

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Appendices

- Write a **compelling** summary of your research that includes the following information:
 - **What** the issues are
 - **How** you will address them (methodology)
 - **Why you are addressing them** (including the value for Ontario)
- * Have as many people as possible (within and outside your field) read the summary and provide feedback.

**150 words
maximum**

**The summary
is the first
impression you
make on
reviewers**

ERA

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Section 8a: Description of Researcher

- Discuss your area(s) of expertise and your accomplishments within the field (publications, awards, grants, etc.).
- You will need to be selective: highlight your independence from your former supervisor(s).
- Discuss your current standing in your field and potential for excellence based on your research plans.

**150 words
maximum**

ERA

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Section 8d: Description of Researcher – Interruptions or Delays

150 words
maximum

This section allows you to provide the review panel with information about interruptions or delays in the past five/ten years.

- Provide the **necessary detail** here—you will not be able to provide further documentation.
- Include **months** in your date ranges.
- If there have been no delays or interruptions, please state “None.” Do not leave sections blank.

ERA

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**Section 10b: Researcher's Background in Training – HQP Training Details****150 words maximum**

- Describe the skills your trainees gained. Emphasize transferable skills.
- Describe **unique** opportunities and experiences for HQP.
- Highlight particular successes by past trainees.
- State how past experience is indicative of future success.
- Address three criteria: "Excellence of the Researcher," "Development of Research Talent," and "Strategic Value for Ontario" (HQP knowledge transfer).

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**Section 10c: Researcher's Background in Training – Co-supervised HQP**

- Describe your roles and responsibilities as a co-supervisor.
- Describe the skills that trainees gained or any unique opportunities you provided.

**150 words
maximum**

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- Link to your proposed research and training milestones.
- Address both “Development of Research Talent” and “Strategic Value for Ontario
- Present a clear training plan that addresses these four points:

**300 Words
maximum****Specific Roles &
Responsibilities****Knowledge and
Skills Gained****Unique Training****Employability**

ERA

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- Anticipated outcome and potential impact of research
- Focus on one or two key impacts and make a strong case for each:

**200 words
maximum**

**Economic and/or
Social Benefits**

Knowledge Transfer

**In-demand Skills
for HQP**

**Ontario's
International
Profile**

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- 1% maximum of ERA funding
- The primary target for outreach is high school, middle school, and elementary school students.
- Talk to department/faculty high school liaison about existing programs.
- Activities must take place in **each year** of the project.

**200 words
maximum**

Addresses "Strategic Value for Ontario"

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- List major milestones and deliverables in four areas:
 - Recruitment
 - Training
 - Research
 - Youth Outreach (must occur in each year)
- Ensure that milestones are realistic and achievable.
 - They will be used to monitor progress if your application is successful.
- Keep in mind that it may take up to a year to advertise and fill some positions.

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Appendix B: Proposed Research

- Make sure the proposal is **specific**, concentrating on one or a maximum of two projects.
- Address all the points covered in the instructions: purpose (i.e., **the “why”**), objectives, research activities, methodology.
- Link your research activities with your training plan described in section 11.
- Try to address **ALL FOUR** of the ERA's evaluation criteria, not only “Quality of Research.”

Five-page
attachment

References
not included
in five pages.
No length
limit for
separate
reference
section

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Appendix B: Proposed Research

- Follow the formatting requirements in the Program Guidelines.
- Failure to follow these requirements **will render your proposal ineligible.**

Make it easy on the reviewers

- Use a clear structure and explain the implications for the non-specialist.
- Use a logical heading system, bullets, bold text, etc.

Five-page attachment (excluding references)

Format

- single-spaced
- Arial
- 12-point font
- Black type
- 1-inch margins all around

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Appendix B: Proposed Research

Example Structure

Introduction/Rationale

Proposed Research

Conclusion and Impact

- Introduce the problem and the purpose of your research (the “why”).
- If applicable, provide statistics showing the potential benefits for Ontario (“**Strategic Value to Ontario**” criterion).
- Outline research objectives within the context of the current state of knowledge in the field and highlight your past research successes on this topic (“**Excellence of the Researcher**” and “**Quality of Research**” criteria).

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Appendix B: Proposed Research

Example Structure

Introduction/Rationale

Proposed Research →

Significance and Impact →

- Describe your proposed research activities, outlining your methodology.
- Highlight “Quality of Research” (e.g., excellence and originality).
- Highlight “Development of Research Talent” (e.g., how the HQP described in Section 11 will be involved in this research).

- Discuss the anticipated results and significance.
- Highlight the “Strategic Value to Ontario” criterion.

Build a Competitive ERA Application

Demonstrate your strong record of independent research and funding (avoid submitting too early)

Present a research plan that is clear, original, project-focused, and lays out significance

Training plan is well-aligned with research and will give HQP experience/skills not available elsewhere

Value to Ontario/knowledge transfer is clearly demonstrated

Enthusiastic reference letters from international leaders

Write for a multidisciplinary audience

Follow all the instructions!

Including formatting guidelines

Common Weaknesses

1

Excellence of the Researcher

- Candidate was just appointed and this application is premature.
 - Candidate has had limited experience training/supervising HQP.
 - Candidate has modest record of competitive grant funding.
 - Candidate's publication record is modest (not independent, low-impact journals).

2

Quality of Research

- Research project is too broad in scope and lacks specific objectives.
- Research plan is not clear and/or needs more methodological details.
- Research plan has little information about analysis of results.

3

Development of Research Talent

- Plan to supervise trainees is not clear and/or does not address opportunities for career development.
- Candidate has limited experience in terms of training (often because the candidate was recently appointed and application is immature).

4

Strategic Value for Ontario

- Proposal does not make the case that the research will create significant benefits for Ontario.
- Statement of strategic value is realistic but more detail was needed.

**Get it down.
Get it right.
Get it in.**

Tips for revising the application

- Consult the Research Service Office's [ERA Tip sheet](#).
- Space is tight: revise for **coherence, clarity, and concision**.
- Use the **internal U of T checklist**.
- Have peers (especially previously successful applicants) review the proposal for academic content. Ask peers outside your discipline to read it for clarity and persuasiveness to a multidisciplinary audience.
- **Triple check:** Have you followed all the ERA instructions, including those for attachments? Correct formatting is **essential**.

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17. Reference Letters **Appendix D**

Who are my referees?

- Two (2) arm's-length sources referees
 - No personal link, not a colleague
 - should be researchers of **international stature**
- One (1) non-arm's-length referee
 - former supervisor/mentor/collaborator/corporate sponsor

What should I tell my referees to address in their letters?

- The four evaluation criteria
 - Be sure to provide your referees with your research plan, full CV, and background material on the ERA program.

Contact your referees as early as possible (i.e., NOW!)

The letters are crucial for demonstrating your standing in the field

Common Weakness: Reference letters not arm's-length

ERA

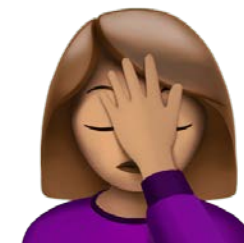
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Can I fax my reference letters?

- No. Your referees must email or mail their letters directly to Research Services (rso.vpr@utoronto.ca). MEDJCT no longer requires signed, sealed original letters.

What if my reference letters don't arrive in time?

- We recommend requesting an additional two reference letters to account for this situation. If your application to MEDJCT does not include the three reference letters by the deadline, your application will be deemed incomplete.



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Notice of Intent:

July 31 – Internal NOI must be received by RSO by this date

Reference Letters:

September 10 – Letters must be received by RSO by this date.

Internal Deadline:

September 26 – Submit a complete application package and U of T matching letter to RSO via USB drive and submit a complete application through MRA (My Research Application). Please provide enough time for your Chair and Vice-Dean Research to review your application.

ERA applications must be submitted through the Research Services Office via MRA

Application Package for RSO

Order of Documents

- Completed application form (pdf form)
- Appendix A (Budget Table within application form)
- Appendix B (Proposed Research, attach to form)
- Appendix C (Research Productivity and Recognition – Researcher's full CV, attach to form)
- Appendix D (Reference Letters, attach to form)
- U of T Internal Matching Letter (submitted to RSO only, not included with application)

Electronic Copy (Memory Stick)

- 1 copy of the complete ERA application, including all appendices in PDF document
- U of T Internal Matching Letter

Contact Information

Funding Opportunity Website:

- PowerPoint slides, deadline dates, tip sheet, forms, guidelines, useful links, etc.

<http://www.research.utoronto.ca/research-funding-opportunities/early-researcher-award-era-15/>

Main Contact:

- **Amanda Pennings**, Research Funding Officer
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