Early Researcher Award Information Session Round 16

April 20, 2021

We will begin shortly. We ask that you kindly mute your microphone throughout the session.

Trinity College, St. George Campus

Land Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

Topics To Be Covered

1. **Eligibility and Budget Tips**
   Samantha Young, Research Funding Officer, Research Services

2. **Application Evaluation, Tips, Common Weaknesses**
   Gabrielle Sugar & Lee Slinger, Editorial and Proposal Development Officers, Research Services

3. **Addressing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the Training Plan**
   Andrea Gill, Research Equity & Diversity Strategist, Research Services

4. **Reference Letters and Deadlines**
   Samantha Young, Research Funding Officer, Research Services

Accessible Participation

- This session will be recorded, and slides will be shared following the session.

- MS Teams supports live captioning.

- Please leave your microphone on mute.

- Please use the chat window to ask any questions.

- If you have any accessibility needs or concerns, please email andrea.hung@utoronto.ca
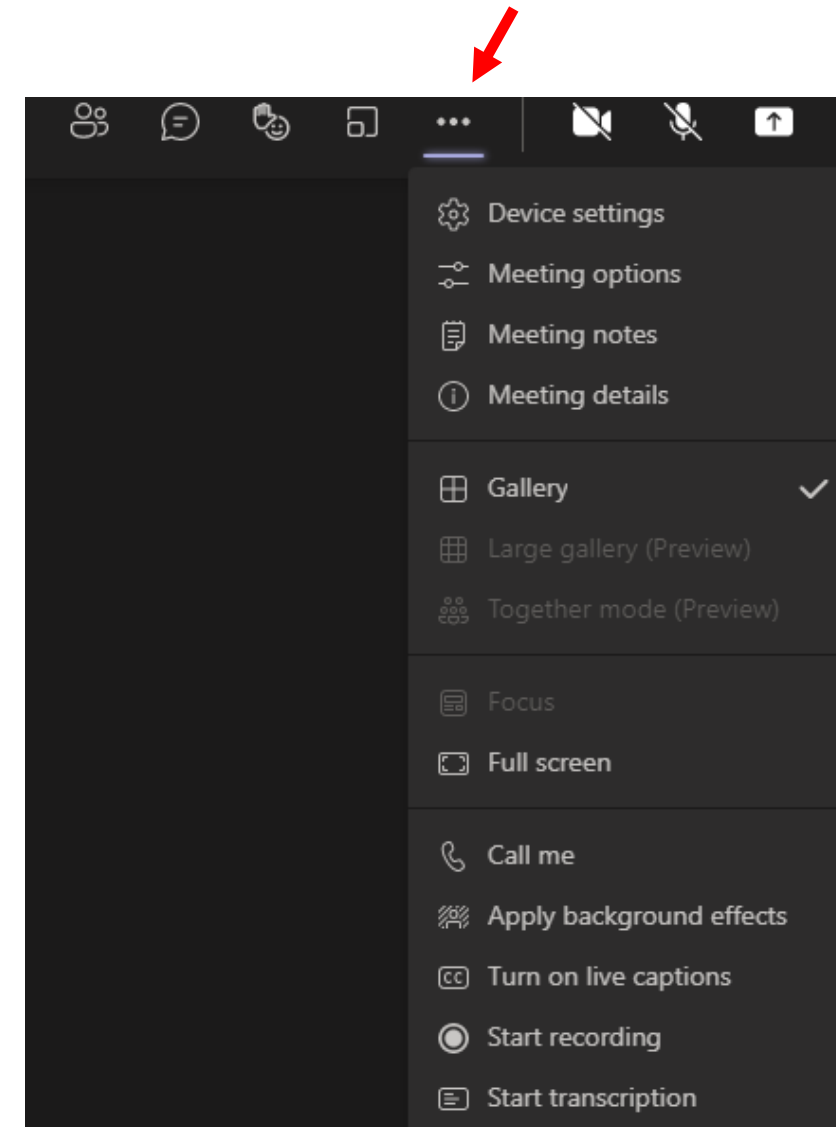
Eligibility Checklist

- Full-time faculty members who, at the application deadline of June 11, 2021, are based at an eligible institution

- First PhD, MD, DVM or terminal degree completed on or after January 1, 2010

- Start of independent academic research career on or after January 1, 2015

- Continued education, parental leave and required training (e.g., medical training and medical fellowships) are considered eligible interruptions.

- Eligible interruptions must be clearly described in **section 9d** of the application. Use all of the allotted space (and provide further detail in your CV). Specific dates are required.

Eligible Expenditures

- $100,000 ERA + $50,000 matching are eligible to support the Research Team of 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, and offsite research activities

  → Associated expenses related to the research team (record checks, job adverts, publication costs, lab user fees)

- Youth research and innovation outreach activities may use up to 1% ($1,000) of the funding provided by the Ministry.

Ineligible Expenditures

Funds received <u>cannot</u> be spent on the following:

- Salary, benefits, or expenses of the Principal Investigator

- Purchase of supplies or equipment

- Operation of equipment and facilities

- Visiting fellows

- Salaries or expenses of individuals performing contract research (where the contractor owns the intellectual property)

- Salaries, benefits, or expenses of ineligible team members

- Any items or services not directly related to the project

Eligible Institutional Matching Contributions

- Matching funds must adhere to the "eligible/ineligible expenditures" listed in the guidelines.

  → **All matching funds must be student compensation and/or student travel expenses**

- Private Sector 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,

- Ontario-based support (e.g., OGS) and awards administered by the federal granting councils are not eligible.

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

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)

- Funding from international agencies

- Private sector funding

Budget

- Youth Outreach activities to a maximum of $1,000

- Total expenditures should equal $150,000

- Total ERA amount is $100,000

- Total Matching amount is $50,000

- Total Indirect Costs is $40,000

Team Member	Expenditure	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	Total
Undergraduate Student	Salary						
Masters Student	Benefits						
Doctoral Student	Travel						
Post-doctoral Fellow	Expenses						
Research Associate							
Research Assistant							
Research Technicians							
	Youth Outreach Activities						$1,000
	Totals						$150,000
	Direct Costs						$100,000
	Institution's Matching Contribution						$50,000
	Requested Reimbursement for Operating Costs						$40,000

APPLICATION WALK THROUGH

Patio, Andrews Building, UTSC

Application Evaluation

- This is a very competitive program.

- Applications are ranked relative to other applications.

- In the 2019 competition (Round 15), U of T submitted 40 applications, and 14 were successful. U of T's success rate was 35%, compared to the province-wide success rate of 20%.

- Be cautious about submitting an application if you were recently appointed.

- You must follow **all formatting guidelines**.

Who is my audience?

Application Evaluation

- A multidisciplinary peer-review panel
  → May or may not include experts in your field.

- The final decision-making body (ORF Advisory Board)
  → Includes academics and non-academics

- 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?

The content and importance of your research program should be persuasive to experts <u>and</u> people outside your field.

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

Round 15

Excellent

_____

Very Strong

Strong

Moderate

Insufficient
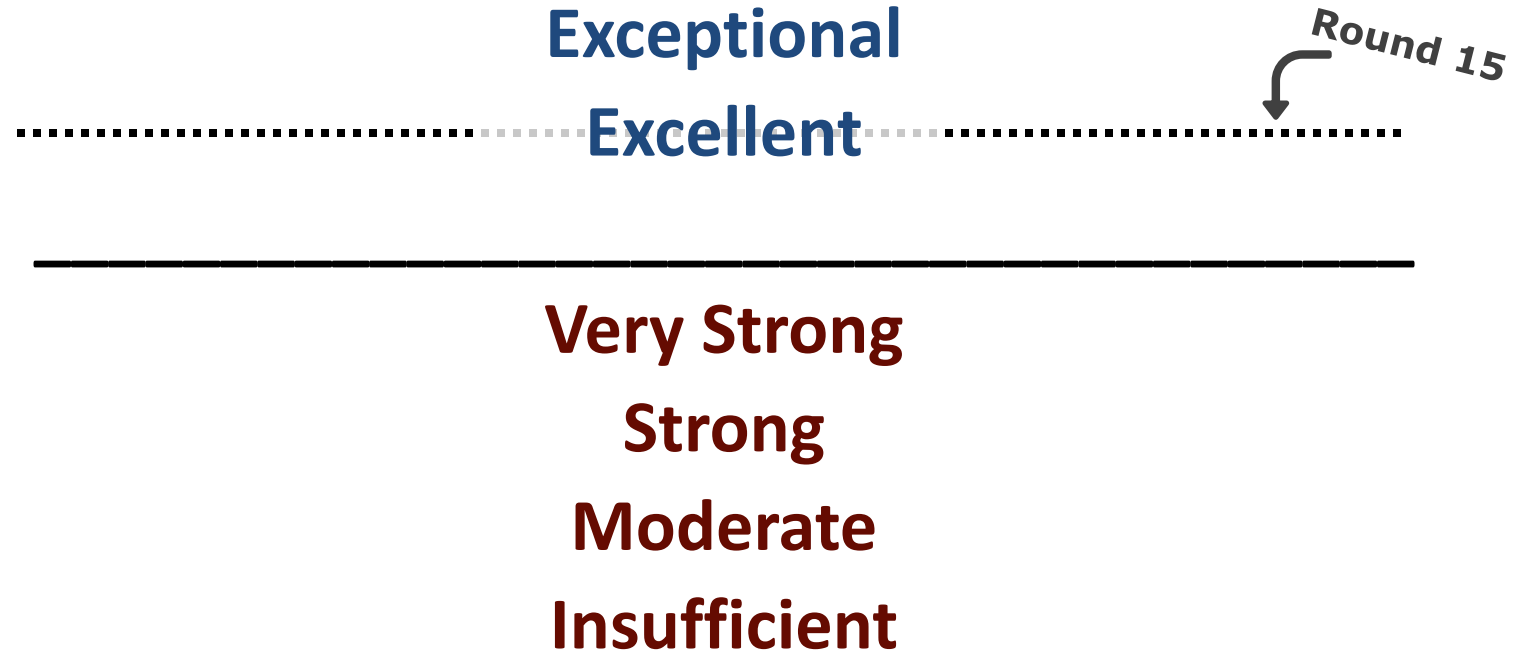
Overview of the application by criterion and section

1 — Excellence of the Researcher

9. Description of Researcher (PI)
10. Researcher's (PI) Background — Research Supervisors

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

Appendix C: Productivity
Appendix D: Reference Letters

2 — Quality of Research

8. Research Summary

15. Milestones and Deliverables

Appendix A: Budget
Appendix B: Proposed Research

3 — Development of Research Talent

11. Researcher's Background in Training ★
12. Training Plans for Research Team ★

14. Youth Outreach Plan

4 — Strategic Value for Ontario

13. Strategic Value to Ontario

> Sections 1 – 7: Basic info about applicant and proposal. Many sections can speak to more than one objective.
> ★ Key sections for addressing commitment to EDI.

ERA

- Write a **compelling** summary of your research that includes the following information:

  - **What** the key issue or challenge is

  - **How** you will address it or what your solution is (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

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ERA

9a: Description of Researcher (PI) — Summary

150 words maximum

- 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.

ERA

9d: Description of Researcher (PI) — 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 (yyyy/mm).

- If there have been no delays or interruptions, please state "None." Do not leave sections blank.

ERA

11b: Researcher's (PI) 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.
- Try to address three criteria: "Excellence of the Researcher," "Development of Research Talent," and "Strategic Value for Ontario" (HQP knowledge transfer).

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ERA

11c: Researcher's (PI) Background in Training — Co-supervised HQP

150 words maximum

- Describe your roles and responsibilities as a co-supervisor.

- Describe the skills that trainees gained or any unique opportunities you provided.

ERA

8. Research Summary
9. Description of Researcher
10. Researcher's (PI) Background [Supervisors]
11. Researcher's (PI) Background in Training
12. **Training Plans for Research Team**
13. Strategic Value to Ontario
14. Youth Outreach Plan
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Appendices (A to E)

- 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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Addressing EDI in the Training Plan for Research Team

- "The applicant must clearly demonstrate their commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in their research teams."

- Space is very tight — avoid broad/general statements

- Beyond describing the diversity of current trainees
  - Do not disclose demographic/identifying information about trainees

- Describe **specific, concrete practices** to advance EDI

ERA

Addressing EDI in the Training Plan for Research Team

- If possible, address equity, diversity, *and* inclusion

- Plans to equitably engage/recruit a diverse group of trainees

- Plans to create equitable training/mentoring opportunities

- Steps to create an inclusive environment and foster a sense of belonging among all trainees

- Describe specific actions **concisely**

- For more information, consult the resources page of the EDI in Research & Innovation website

ERA

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Appendices (A to E)

200 words maximum

- Anticipated outcomes and potential impact of research

- Focus on one or two key areas of impact and make a strong case for each:

Economic and/or Social Benefits

Knowledge Transfer

In-demand Skills for HQP

Ontario's International Profile

ERA

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200 words maximum

- 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.

Addresses "Strategic Value for Ontario"

ERA

- 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.

ERA

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Appendices (A to E)

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 guidelines: purpose (i.e., **the "why"**), objectives, research activities, methodology.

- Link your research activities with your training plan described in section 12.

- 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

ERA

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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**.

Five-page attachment (excluding references)

Format

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

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.

ERA

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Appendices (A to E)

Appendix B: Proposed Research

Example Structure

Introduction/Rationale

Proposed Research

Conclusion and Impact

- Introduce the problem **("what")** and the purpose of your research (**"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).

ERA

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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 12 will be involved in this research).

- Discuss the anticipated results and significance.

- Highlight the "Strategic Value to Ontario" criterion.

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** (available on the funding opportunity page).

- 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**.

ERA

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DUE to Research Services by Monday, May 24, 2021

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

Can I mail or fax my reference letters?

- No. Your referees must email their letters directly to Research Services (samanthak.young@utoronto.ca).

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

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

ERA

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Notice of Intent: Kindly email Samantha (samanthak.young@utoronto.ca) and Andrea Hung (andrea.hung@utoronto.ca) once you have decided that you intend to apply for Round 16

Letters of Reference:

Monday, May 24 – All three letters must be received by RSO by this date.

Internal Deadline:

Friday, May 28 – Submit a complete application package and U of T matching letter to RSO via email **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

Application Package for RSO

Order of Documents
- PDF of Completed Application Form   - Appendix A – Total Expenditure Budget   - Appendix B – Proposed Research   - Appendix C – CV (Research Productivity and Recognition)   - Appendix D - Reference Letters*   - Appendix E – Mitigation Economic and Geopolitical Risk Checklist   - U of T Internal Matching Letter (submitted to RSO only, not included with application)

Emailed Copies	1 copy of the complete ERA application, including all appendices in PDF document - University of Toronto Internal Matching Letter

* Will be added in to your package by the Research Services Office

Contact Information

Funding Opportunity Website:

- Overview, Deadlines, Program Guidelines, Application Form, UofT Matching Letter, Tips Sheet, Checklist: https://research.utoronto.ca/funding-opportunities/db/early-researcher-award-era-round-16

Research Services Contact:

- **Samantha Young,** Research Funding Officer

  samanthak.young@utoronto.ca

Convocation Hall, St. George Campus