

# National Killam Program Information Session 2026 Program Cycle

February 26, 2025



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# Overview of Killam Mission, Vision and Values



**Vision:** Building Canada's future through advanced study

**Mission:** To provide scholarships, fellowships, prizes and other funding to scholars who contribute to building Canada's future and increasing the scientific attainment of Canadians through research excellence

**Values:** Research Excellence, Innovation, Humanity, and Multidisciplinary Research

## Fun Facts

- Established in 1965 by Dorothy J. Killam, the Killam Estate bequeathed a total of \$125 million for awards to recognize research excellence.
- Largest, philanthropic funder of higher education in Canada
- Provided more than \$1 billion in research funding
- 6 Killam Institutions
- In 2022, the NRC took over administration of the National Killam Program which awards the Killam Prizes and the Dorothy Killam Fellowships.

# Killam Prizes

## Overview

The Killam Prizes are awarded to active Canadian scholars who have distinguished themselves through sustained research excellence, making a significant impact in their respective fields in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, health sciences, and engineering. The Killam Prize is valued at \$100,000.



# Killam Prizes



## Program details

Normally, one (1) prize is awarded each year in each of five (5) disciplines.

## Nomination process

The nominator is responsible for providing all the information and required documents. All submissions are to be digital, and only accepted through the online portal. Documentation includes:

- Nomination letter
- Biography
- Three (3) letters of support
- Curriculum vitae
- Eligibility attestation
- Self-identification (voluntary)

# Killam Prizes

## Key eligibility criteria

- Individual nominations may include nomination for multiple categories, but an individual may only be awarded the Killam Prize in 1 category
- Killam Prizes are intended for active (not retired) Canadian scholars who have made a substantial and distinguished contribution, over a significant period, to scholarly research
- Only Canadian citizens or scholars working and living in Canada are eligible
- Candidates are nominated for the Killam Prize by experts in their field; self-nominations are not accepted
- Typically, Killam Prize winners are established, later career scholars with more than 20 years post PhD.

# Killam Prizes



## **Key features of a successful Killam Prize submission include:**

- Strong academic record with high-caliber outputs
- Strong demonstration of impact in the field and industry collaboration
- Evidence of mentorship and fostering the next generation
- Pioneer in their field
- Recipient of funding, top awards, and distinctions
- Lasting, international impact
- Demonstrates evidence of excelling across fields or influencing other fields of research
- An expert at knowledge translation, evidence of outreach and sharing collective work meant in the public sphere

# Dorothy Killam Fellowships

## Overview

A Dorothy Killam Fellow is a leading researcher whose superior, ground-breaking, best-in-class research stands to have significant impact on a national or global scale. Fellows are inclusive collaborators, barrier breakers, and research leaders. The Dorothy Killam Fellowships are valued at \$80,000 CAD per year for a total of up to \$160,000 for 2 years.





# Dorothy Killam Fellowships

## Program details

Between 5 and 8 fellowships will be awarded annually. The fellowships are awarded to individuals, but the funds are paid to and administered by the Canadian university or research institute where the individual is employed.



# Dorothy Killam Fellowships

## Application process

Applicants must complete the online application form, and provide the following documents:

- Preliminary Research Abstract - **NEW**
- Final Research abstract
- Research proposal
- Candidate statement
- Community research supplement (optional)
- Curriculum vitae
- Two (2) letters of support



# Dorothy Killam Fellowships

## NEW Preliminary Abstract requirement

**To facilitate expert review, a preliminary research abstract is now required and must be submitted through the portal by April 30, 2025.** Applicants will have the opportunity to provide an updated research abstract at the time of submission.

- Length: 150 words English, 200 words French
- The preliminary abstract is not used to evaluate your submission

Important note: As the preliminary research abstract is due on April 30, 2025, this means that submissions must be started in the portal by April 30, 2025.

# Dorothy Killam Fellowships

## Key eligibility criteria

- A Dorothy Killam Fellow is relieved of teaching and administrative duties for the period of the fellowship. The Dorothy Killam Fellowships support scholars who:
  - demonstrate commitment to building Canada's future and alignment with the Killam attributes
  - are mid-career researchers who usually completed their PhD no more than 15 years prior, though special circumstances may result in applicants being more or less than 15 years post-PhD
  - are employed at a Canadian research institution
- Applicants and their institutions must attest to terms and conditions of the program.

# Dorothy Killam Fellowships

## Key features of a successful Dorothy Killam Fellowship submission include:

- Submissions are done in plain-language and understood by the multi-disciplinary selection committee
- Strong record of research excellence and demonstrate that they are barrier breakers, inclusive collaborators and/or research leaders.
- Compelling case for why this opportunity will make the difference at this moment in your career.
- Clearly state how the proposed project builds upon or is different from existing projects.
- If the candidate falls outside of the 15 year post PhD guideline, they are encouraged to explain why they consider themselves at the mid-career phase in the candidate statement.
- Clear demonstration of how the candidate will share research knowledge beyond the academic community in their knowledge mobilization plan.
- As we follow DORA principles, applicants are encouraged to include non-traditional research outputs in their impact story, demonstrating the impact on the next generation.



# Killam NRC Paul Corkum Fellowships



## Overview

Killam NRC Paul Corkum Fellows are leading researchers whose superior, ground-breaking, best-in-class research stands to have significant impact on a national or global scale. Fellows are inclusive collaborators, barrier breakers, and research leaders. Fellowships are valued at \$100,000 CAD per year in the form of a grant that is paid to the institution of each Fellow to cover release time. An additional grant of up to \$50,000 CAD is available to accommodate travel and knowledge dissemination costs of the Fellow, based on budget estimates provided in the proposal.

# Killam NRC Paul Corkum Fellowships



## Program details

The Fellowships support advanced study and research excellence by creating opportunities for Canadian and international scholars to partner with NRC researchers, leverage NRC facilities and resources, and share knowledge through new collaborations. Up to 3 fellowships will be awarded annually and each fellowship project must align with an NRC challenge program.

# Killam NRC Paul Corkum Fellowships

## Application process

The Co-PIs must complete the forms available online and include the following:

- Joint research abstract
- Joint research proposal
- Candidate statements with CVs
- Community research supplement (optional)
- Two (2) letters of institutional support





# Killam NRC Paul Corkum Fellowships

## Key eligibility criteria

A Killam NRC Paul Corkum Fellow is relieved of teaching and administrative duties for the period of the fellowship. To be eligible Fellows must:

- be willing and able to travel to an NRC location or locations in Canada to collaborate with an NRC co-PI as required;
- obtain a reliability status personnel security clearance;
- demonstrate commitment to building Canada's future and alignment with Killam attributes;
- demonstrate commitment to knowledge exchange with their NRC co-PI;
- be a mid-to-late career researcher, although researchers at earlier career stages may be considered in some cases; and
- receive release time to conduct the proposed research, and will continue to be employed by the same institution for up to 12 months from the start of the Fellowship

# Killam NRC Paul Corkum Fellowships

## Key features of a successful Paul Corkum Fellowship submission include:

- Submissions are done in plain-language and understood by the multi-disciplinary selection committee
- Strong record of research excellence and demonstrate that they are barrier breakers, inclusive collaborators and/or research leaders.
- Clearly state how the proposed project builds upon or is different from existing projects.
- Submission prepared with evaluation criteria in mind
- Clear demonstration of how the candidate will share research knowledge beyond the academic community in their knowledge mobilization plan.
- Compelling case for *'why this project at this time'*



# Letters of Support

- Referees should be someone who can speak to:
  - The significance and impact of the research,
  - The impact of the candidate and, in the case of the Fellowships, how the applicant embodies the Killam attributes.
- Referees should each focus on a different aspect of the submission.
- Often, referees are experts in the field, a senior administrator, or a scientific/research lead at the candidate's institution.
- Referees may be non-academics depending on the specific case.
- Referees do not need to be arm's length and can be current collaborators with the candidate.
- All referees should clearly specify the nature of their relationship with the applicant or nominee.
- In instances where the nominee performs community research, we encourage you to include a letter of support from a leader or member of the community.
- These letter should articulate the importance of the proposed research to the particular community.

# Tips for Applicants



- Ensure that all materials employ **plain-language**, using clear and simple terms, and are written in a way that a non-specialized audience would understand.
- Prepare submission with **evaluation criteria** in mind – explicitly link submission to evaluation criteria (e.g., Killam values (Prize) or Killam attributes (Fellowships)).



- As we follow DORA principles, applicants are encouraged to also include **non-traditional research outputs** in their impact story, demonstrating the impact on the next generation.



- Clearly demonstrate how you have/will **share knowledge** beyond the academic community.



- For Fellowships:
  - Clearly state how the proposed project builds upon or is different from existing projects.
  - Compelling case for *'why this project at this time'*

NKSC Video:

# Key Program Dates



**Questions?**



**Thank you!**



# FAQs





# Question 1: How are equity, diversity, and inclusion factored in the adjudication criteria for the Killam Prize?

- The National Killam Program is a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment and has embedded DORA principles in its programming and processes.
- The National Killam Selection Committee (NKSC) is a standing committee responsible for recommending winners for the Killam Prizes, the Dorothy Killam Fellowships, and the Killam NRC Paul Corkum Fellowships.
- Members are recognized experts with national and/or international stature who support the National Killam Program's definition of research excellence, and are committed to upholding Killam values in their deliberations
- Chair, Dr. Maydianne Andrade is a professor of biological sciences at the University of Toronto where she has also served as adviser and vice dean on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion topics. Dr. Andrade is the Founder and co-Chair of the Toronto Initiative on Diversity and Excellence, and Co-founder and President of the Canadian Black Scientists Network.
- Vice Chair, Dr. Amélie Quesnel-Vallée holds the Canada Research Chair in Policies and Health Inequalities at McGill University, where she is Inaugural Chair and Professor in the Department of Equity, Ethics and Policy (Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences) and a Professor in the Department of Sociology (Faculty of Arts).
- National Killam Selection Committee members have completed Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion training, and several members have expertise in addressing bias in evaluation processes.
- The program uses voluntary self-identification data to understand the composition of its pool. In instances where an applicant pool shows evidence of under-representation (e.g., from a specific geographical region) the NKPO does targeted outreach. We also look at aggregate self-identification information to investigate whether our pools remain relative throughout assessment.

# Question 2: Could you provide examples of work that embodies each of the four Killam values?



**Research Excellence**



**Innovation**



**Humanity**



**Multidisciplinary Collaboration**

- Killam Prize submissions are evaluated under the relevance category on their research record and its alignment with the Killam values.
- The Killam values include research excellence, innovation, humanity, and multidisciplinary collaboration.
- The 2023 and 2024 Prize winners are excellent examples of work that is in line with the Killam values. For example,
  - Clément Gosselin, 2024 Prize winner in Engineering has revolutionized the field of robotic grippers, demonstrating innovation
  - Ajay Heble, 2023 Prize winner in Humanities, created an entirely new field of study through multidisciplinary collaboration.
  - Tania Li, 2024 Prize winner in Humanities, focuses her research on Indonesia and development practices in the country, demonstrating humanity

# Question 3: How is alignment with the Killam attributes adjudicated for the Dorothy Killam fellowships?

## **Inclusive collaborator**

Whose work exemplifies inclusion and understanding of people, cultures and needs with participation among all economic, social and cultural backgrounds

## **Barrier breaker**

Whose original, transformational, future-focused generation of knowledge and technology stands to change the way we live

## **Research leader**

Who activates thoughtful cooperation among scholars, disciplines and institutions to create a multiplier effect within the research ecosystem

- Successful Dorothy Killam Fellowship submissions have strong alignment with the Killam attributes.
- It is not necessary to have alignment with all three attributes.
- Applicants should articulate clearly how they align with the Killam attributes.
- Alignment with the Killam attributes is measured under the significance category of the evaluation criteria and contributes to 25% of the overall evaluation by peer reviewers.

## Question 4: If a letter is being provided by a community partner, do they need to follow the letter of support guidelines?



- Letter from communities can focus on the importance, impact, proposed approach, and potential benefits of the research from the perspective of their community.
- The second letter writer can focus on any aspect not covered in the community letter of support.
  - This might include the importance, the impact, and the quality of the proposed research or the quality and impact of the researcher themselves, and their alignment with the Killam Attributes, then the other letter of support address all of those items.

# Question 5: What is the difference between the evaluation categories for the Dorothy Killam Fellowships?

Dorothy Killam Fellows are evaluated under 4 areas: Significance, Advancement of knowledge, Methods, and Relevance. A brief summary of the key questions considered in each category is as follows:

- **Significance:** How significant is the research and its proposed impact? How well does the candidate align with the Killam attributes?
- **Advancement of knowledge:** How sound is the knowledge mobilization component of the research proposal? How will the research advance knowledge in the field?
- **Methods:** Is the proposed research detailed clearly, and are the research methods sound? Does the proposal demonstrate a commitment to ethical research and adherence to professional standards?
- **Relevance:** Why is the research important now? Are the proposed immediate and long-term outcomes clear? Is there a clear demonstration on how the research stands to have a positive impact on Canada?

# Question 6: What is expected in a knowledge mobilization plan?

- **Knowledge mobilization** is defined as the dynamic and iterative process that:
  - includes synthesis, dissemination, exchange and ethically sound application of knowledge to improve the lives of Canadians
  - takes place between researchers and knowledge users and varies in intensity, complexity and level of engagement depending on the nature of the research and the findings
- Recognizing that knowledge mobilization can be different for each research project, applicants are required to include in their research proposal plans for a proposed knowledge mobilization strategy to share and communicate their research beyond traditional modes of scholarly output.
- Strong Dorothy Killam Fellowship submissions contain knowledge mobilization plans that are clear and tangible.

# Question 7: How do you define career stages?

The NKP defines the following career stages as:

## Early career

Typically, the period from PhD/first academic post to approximately 12 years. NKP has no programming for this cohort.

## Mid-career

(Dorothy Killam Fellowships and Killam NRC Paul Corkum Fellowships)

- The NKP does not screen applicants out based on the number of years since completion of their PhD.
  - Typically applicants to the Fellowships have completed their PhD no more than 15 years prior, though personal circumstances including parental leave(s) may result in applicants being more than 15 years post-PhD.
- **There is no specific year cut-off for the fellowships.**
  - Applicants who are beyond the 15 year period due to leave(s) are welcome to note this in their submission.

## Late career (Killam Prizes)

Typically, the more than 15 years post PhD/first academic appointment, though personal circumstances including parental leave(s) may result in applicants being more than 15 years post-PhD.

# Question 8: When should I include a community-based research supplement in my submission?



**A community-based research supplement is recommended in instances where community research is being carried out but may not be applicable to all research projects. Strong community research supplements:**

- Demonstrate inclusion of population group in project
- Share how the project will impact the population group
- Describe co-development processes in the project
- Demonstrate how support has or will be achieved from the population group