

CONNAUGHT MID-CAREER RESEARCHER AWARD GUIDELINES

"The primary purpose of the Fund is the promotion of research and the application of the professional expertise and resources of the University to matters of public interest in all research fields. ...Connaught funds shall be used to support outstanding research by individuals or groups of scholars in the University. Grants are intended to encourage research of exceptional calibre or the development of new areas of research by scholars of outstanding achievement. Awards will be made in accordance with the most exacting standards of peer review."

Excerpt from the Connaught Fund Terms of Reference

Application Deadline: March 17, 2025

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Mid-Career Researcher Award (MCR) program is to foster excellence in research and innovation by providing support for University of Toronto faculty members who are at the mid-career stage. These awards are intended to *either* strengthen and expand the research program of *or* address challenges faced by a mid-career researcher, thereby increasing the researcher's competitiveness for external funding, particularly from the Tri-Agencies. Up to \$1,000,000 has been earmarked for this year's competition. Support for 4 awards of up to \$250,000 each will be provided to the highest ranked proposals.

Inasmuch as one of the goals of this program is to assist mid-career scholars in increasing their competitiveness for external research support, nomination packages must provide information on the strategy for using this Connaught MCR support and/or the anticipated research outcomes resulting from this support to attract additional external research sponsorship, especially from the 3 federal granting agencies—CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC—that contribute toward the University's allocation of Canada Research Chairs.

ELIGIBILITY

Full-time tenure-stream faculty members whose primary employer is the U of T who are at the Associate Professor level AND, as of the date of application, are within no less than 5 years and no more than 15 years of their first tenure-stream professorial appointment (at U of T or elsewhere). The window of eligibility may be extended if a nominee has experienced significant interruptions in their academic career. Eligibility-related questions should be addressed to the [Connaught Secretariat](#) in advance of the submission deadline. Final determination of eligibility will be made upon receipt of an application.

Individuals who have received a previous Connaught Mid-Career Researcher Award are not eligible to re-apply.

NOMINATION PROCESS

Nominations must be submitted through one of two streams:

1) **Accelerator** stream: for those investigators aiming to lead larger or significantly different research programs than they have previously, while developing research leadership skills and training the next generation of scientists/scholars. Goals may include but are not limited to establishing national/international networks, changes in research direction, or incorporating new disciplines.

2) **Resurgence** stream: for those investigators experiencing mid-career challenges, including but not limited to expanding team sizes, increased committee/administrative duties, or a lack of success in securing external funding in an increasingly competitive climate.

Divisions will work within an annual allocation of nomination opportunities.

Nomination packages will be submitted, by the nominating division only, via email to the Connaught Secretariat (connaught.secretariat@utoronto.ca). Packages will include:

- A **research program information form**, to be completed by the nominee, outlining:
 - the selected nomination stream (*Accelerator or Resurgence*)
 - excellence and impact of their research achievements to date
 - future research plans, identifying both short-term and long-term objectives, and including:
 - enhanced training opportunities for HQP
 - incorporation of EDI principles in the research design and methods (as appropriate to the research project) and in the research team and environment
 - future external funding opportunity(s) (emphasis on Tri-Agency programs) to which they will apply and how the MCR award will help to increase competitiveness
 - demonstrated need for the funding
 - proposed budget
- A **nomination letter** (2 pages max) from the Vice/Associate Dean/Principal Research. If the applicant is in a departmentalized division, the letter can be signed jointly by both the Department Chair and the divisional Vice/Associate Dean/Principal Research. The letter should outline:
 - why the nominee should be considered for this award, with emphasis on demonstrated excellence in the field and positive impact on society, industry, culture, or technology
 - the nominee's publication record relative to norms within the discipline
 - how the MCR award will help the nominee advance their research program and, as relevant, challenges encountered by the nominee in moving their research program forward
 - divisional supports that will be provided to the nominee, including designated mentors (required)
- An academic or standard Canadian Common **CV**

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The University of Toronto embraces Diversity and is building a culture of belonging that increases our capacity to effectively address and serve the interests of our global community. We strongly encourage nominations for Indigenous Peoples, Black and racialized persons, women, persons with disabilities, and people of diverse sexual and gender identities.

The University also acknowledges that scholars have varying career paths and that career interruptions due to personal circumstances can be part of an excellent academic record. Review panel members have been instructed to give careful consideration to—and to be sensitive to the impact of—career interruptions in their assessments.

In order to be considered for this funding opportunity, all nominees are required to answer the [University of Toronto's Employment Equity Survey](#), available through Employee-Self Service, by no later than the nomination deadline. Nominees may voluntarily self-identify in any of the groups or log a response indicating that they decline the survey. Self-identification data is important to the University's ability to accurately identify barriers to participation and to develop strategies to eliminate these barriers. Aggregated results as of the closing of this posting will be sent to the Research Equity and Development Strategist and may be accessed by only a small number of designated senior administrators within the Division of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (VPRI). Any information directly related to you is confidential and cannot be accessed by the reviewers or by VPRI staff. The data is used by VPRI as part of our ongoing efforts to embed principles of equity, diversity and inclusion in the administration of internal funding programs. Please note that an updated Employment Equity Survey was launched in early 2023. If you have already completed this updated version survey, thank you; your responses will be included in the aggregated results. If you have not yet accessed the updated version, please do so prior to the competition deadline.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Expenses are to be consistent with the [Tri-agency Guide on Financial Administration](#).

Proposals should clearly describe what role all research personnel will play in the research project.

While this is not primarily an equipment program, equipment purchase/upgrade/repair is eligible with appropriate justification.

Publication costs are eligible but cannot exceed \$5,000/year.

All budget items must be justified in relation to the specific requirements of the project, as opposed to general research. Questions on eligible expenses should be directed to the [Connaught Secretariat](#).

Sample budget below:

Expense Item	Description	Year 1	Year 2
Graduate Students	2 MSc students	\$40,000	\$40,000
Postdoctoral Fellow		\$65,000	\$65,000
Materials and Supplies	Lab consumables	\$10,000	\$8,000
Services	Research Sample Analysis x 20 samples	\$5,000	\$4,000
Travel	Conference/workshop attendance	\$4,000	\$7,000
Dissemination of Research Results	Publication costs and open access fees		\$2,000
Annual totals		\$124,000	\$126,000
TOTAL		\$250,000	

ADJUDICATION

Submissions will be directed for adjudication to a multidisciplinary Connaught MCR Review Panel. Nominations will be judged solely on the basis of the information supplied in the submission; no supplemental information is permitted. Nomination packages will be assessed on the below review criteria and weightings, depending on nomination stream (*Accelerator or Resurgence*):

- Scholarly excellence and impact of both current and potential research achievements
 - 50% - Accelerator stream
 - 25% - Resurgence stream

- Demonstrated need for funds
 - 25% - Accelerator stream
 - 50% - Resurgence stream
- Plans for training HQP
 - 12.5% - Both streams
- Integration of EDI principles in research team and, as applicable, research design and methods
 - 12.5% - Both streams

Award recommendations are formulated by the MCR Review Panel and forwarded to the Connaught Committee. The Connaught Committee makes final decisions on all Connaught awards. Award results will be released in spring 2025.

DURATION OF AWARD

The normal duration of a Connaught Mid-Career Researcher Award is 2 years, with possibility for extension under exceptional circumstances. A written request must be submitted to Connaught Secretariat at least 1 month prior to the original fund end date.

QUESTIONS

Inquiries regarding this program should be addressed to connaught.secretariat@utoronto.ca