

Eligibility requirements for individuals to apply for or hold NSERC grant funds - August 1, 2025

Following consultation with stakeholders (e.g. eligible institutions), NSERC has revised the eligibility requirements for grant holders to simplify, clarify and harmonize with CIHR and SSHRC (where relevant).

Please note that the new version of the Eligibility Requirements for Grant Holders will be effective August 1st, 2025. The changes will not be applied retroactively.

The highlights of the revised requirements include:

1. Replacing reference to the term “faculty” with “individual” to broaden the accessibility to NSERC funding for individuals who are not researchers by western standards and/or those that hold traditional knowledge instead.
2. Removing the reference to “academic” appointment, to avoid any potential barriers with respect to other types of appointments (e.g. Indigenous scholars). Specific requirements regarding independent research and student or postdoctoral fellow supervision remain.
3. Separating the requirement to conduct research in the Natural Sciences and Engineering (NSE) from the eligibility requirement to conduct independent research to remove barriers for interdisciplinary research (i.e. Discovery Horizons grant) participants. Conducting research to advance knowledge in NSE remains a requirement verified by Program staff and aligns with CIHR and SSHRC processes.
4. Clarifying the role of collaborator by removing the requirement that collaborator should undertake research independently to harmonize the definition more closely with SSHRC. Instead, the requirement states that the collaborator is expected to contribute to the intellectual direction of the research project, program of research or training.

These revisions do not change the requirement themselves but rather propose broader wording and clearer definitions. The following two revisions (#5 and #6) change the rules of eligibility from status quo to more closely harmonize with CIHR and SSHRC.

5. Removing the rule on the “contract duration of no less than three continuous years”

The three-year requirement was removed to harmonize with CIHR and SSHRC. NSERC is the only agency with a specific rule around the duration of the term or contract, and which applies at the time of application. The rule caused extra work around the administration of contract extension at institutions and increased ongoing monitoring by NSERC because of the burden of verification. The requirements state that a term or contract can be renewed during the grant term if the eligible appointment is not

established for the full grant term. Institutions only need to contact NSERC if the eligibility status changes (i.e. the applicant is no longer eligible).

6. Clarifying the eligibility of Adjuncts from outside of Canada

Adjunct will be explicitly defined as a part-time position. The eligibility of Adjuncts will be restricted to those whose primary affiliation is in Canada for the duration of the grant.

Should you have any questions, please contact: sectr@NSERC-CRSNG.gc.ca