



## Connaught Major Research Challenge for Black Researchers 2025-26 COMPETITION

**Program Objectives:** *Major Research impact, New interdisciplinary collaboration, Knowledge mobilization, Training excellence*

<b>Overview</b>	
Sponsor	Connaught Fund
Competition budget:	Up to \$250,000 (applicants may request up to \$50K, \$100K or \$250K depending on the scale of the initiative)
Grant Duration	2 years
Theme Areas	Open to all areas of scholarship
Application Deadlines	<b>NOI: February 9, 2026</b> <b>Full Application: April 15, 2026</b>
Application Procedure	Notice of Intent (NOI) to be submitted by deadline to <a href="mailto:connaught.secretariat@utoronto.ca">connaught.secretariat@utoronto.ca</a> Full applications are to be submitted by deadline via <a href="#">MRA</a>
How to Apply	See application instructions

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the [Connaught Major Research Challenge for Black Researchers](#) program is to provide support to Black researchers addressing and developing solutions to major research challenges. Black-led major research challenge teams will initiate new collaborations involving U of T researchers and students from multiple disciplines, along with collaborators, innovators and thought leaders from other sectors, and international jurisdictions as appropriate.

The program objective is to seed *new* research and research collaborations that will both address major research challenges and advance the research initiative, making it competitive for subsequent external (e.g. Tri-agency) funding opportunities.

### **Eligibility:**

**Project team:** The project must be led by a Black researcher at the University of Toronto, with a primary appointment at one of U of T's three campuses, with a team consisting of faculty representing a minimum of two SGS divisions, including junior and senior level faculty members.



Proposals must demonstrate meaningful engagement of graduate students as trainee development opportunities. Appropriate partner organizations from the public or private sector should be involved in the planning of the proposal to ensure their engagement in knowledge exchange activities.

**Project Expenses:** The fund can be used flexibly providing support to develop new research collaborations and to conduct preliminary research activities that will strengthen the case for subsequent external funding. Eligible expenses should be consistent with [Tri-Agency guidelines](#) and include symposia, workshops, visiting scholars, student salaries and any other appropriate research expense that will advance the objectives of the project. The program is not intended to support the purchase of equipment.

### **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:**

The University of Toronto recognizes that diversity is essential to the creation of a vibrant intellectual community that allows our researchers to maximize their creativity and their contributions. The Connaught Committee is therefore strongly committed to diversity in research and especially welcomes applications that engage racialized persons/persons of colour, women, Indigenous/Aboriginal Peoples of North America, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ2S+ persons, and others who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas.

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.

All applicants to this funding opportunity are required to answer the University of Toronto's [Employment Equity Survey](#) by no later than the application deadline. In completing this survey, applicants may voluntarily self-identify in all applicable groups, or they may 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 Diversity Strategist in the Division of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (VPRI) and may be accessed by only a small number of designated senior administrators within the division. Any information directly related to you is confidential and cannot be accessed by the reviewers or by VPRI staff. If you have already completed the survey, thank you; your responses will be included in the aggregated results.

Applicants are also asked to describe how equity, diversity and inclusion have been considered and addressed in the development of the project team and how considerations of sex, gender and/or diversity have been integrated into the research design and methods, as applicable to the project.



### Adjudication:

Applications to this program will be assessed by a review panel co-chaired by the Associate Vice President Research, the Director of the Black Research Network (BRN), and leading Black researchers from appropriate academic disciplines. Funding recommendations will be made to the Connaught Committee for final decision.

### Evaluation Criteria:

Equal weighting will be given to these 5 criteria:

- Excellence in research and innovation
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion
- New cross-divisional institutional capacity
- Enhancement of U of T's research impact
- Measurable outcomes and impacts

### Application Content:

Please complete the application as per the instructions provided and submit via MRA by deadline. Proposals should be completed in language suitable for a non-specialist audience.

Competitive proposals will:

- Relate to a timely area of academic inquiry
- Meaningfully involve graduate students (and undergraduate students as appropriate)
- Demonstrate consideration of equity, diversity, and inclusion in the development of the project team and (where applicable) in the objectives of the proposed project
- Engage external partners (community, government, private sector, and/or other academic institutions)
- Present achievable goals
- Where possible, leverage additional internal or external resources in support of the initiative
- Have the potential to attract further major research investment to the University or other concrete outcomes (e.g. new research based academic program) in the future

### Reporting

Successful recipient(s) will be required to submit progress reports on the use and impact of the funding, as well as the external funding opportunities applied for as a result of the award. These reports will be shared with the BRN.