

## Ontario Tech – CFI John R. Evans Leaders Fund (JELF) Internal Call for Proposals

### Timeline

Deadline for Internal Applications	February 26, 2024 submitted to <a href="mailto:research@ontariotechu.ca">research@ontariotechu.ca</a>
Selection Committee Meeting	March 2024
Notification of Internal Competition Results	March 2024
CFI JELF Application Deadline	June 15, 2024
ORF-RI Application Deadline	TBD*

\*Following the CFI-JELF submission, the Office of Research Services will contact applicants to provide program information and internal deadlines associated with the required ORF-RI application.

### About the CFI JELF Program

The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) [John R. Evans Leaders Fund](#) (JELF) offers institutions the opportunity to acquire foundational infrastructure to support cutting-edge research. JELF is an allocation-based fund whereby CFI predetermines the maximum amount of funding for which each eligible university may apply.

The CFI JELF is a matching program:

- 40% requested from the CFI JELF
- 40% requested from the Ontario Research Fund – Research Infrastructure (ORF-RI) Program
- 20% matching funds - vendor deep discounts beyond normal academic pricing (in-kind), cash (Note: Tri-Agency funds are not eligible match) or a combination of cash and in-kind.

JELF applicants will also submit a separate proposal to the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities to request matching funds for the CFI award. The [Ontario Research Fund – Research Infrastructure \(ORF-RI\) program](#) provides up to 40% of total project costs as a match to the project.

The infrastructure funded by the CFI includes state-of-the-art facilities, laboratories, equipment, computer hardware, software, and databases necessary to conduct leading-edge research. Construction costs to renovate existing space, (including fitting out existing space), which is essential to house and use the infrastructure effectively, is also an eligible cost. The CFI does not cover the cost of students, research personnel or other research operating costs (supplies, consumables, travel, etc).

### CFI Allocation for this Round

Ontario Tech’s CFI allocation for this round is up to \$525,000 (CFI portion only). **For this call, each CFI JELF proposal will be limited to a maximum CFI request of \$400,000, or a maximum of 40% of the total project cost (i.e., whichever amount is lower). Proposals are encouraged to request a minimum of**

**\$75,000 from the CFI, but smaller infrastructure needs that align with the assessment criteria will be considered.**

Applicants for this round will have the option to apply for Ontario Power Generation (OPG) supplemental funds to support their total project costs. To be eligible for the supplement, applicants must demonstrate a clear benefit of the research to OPG and align with one or more of the following thematic areas:

- support [OPG's Climate Change Plan](#);
- Digital and Data Innovation (artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, augmented and virtual reality);
- Refurbishment Technologies, Aging Management, Decommissioning Technologies,
- Reactor Safety;
- Power Plant Simulator Training;
- Next Generation Technologies including SMRs, and Renewable/Sustainable Energy Technologies.

OPG supplemental funds are subject to availability and may only be awarded, at the discretion of the VPRI, to eligible applications selected to move forward with an application to the CFI. Supplemental OPG funding must be used as matching funds for the CFI application.

### **Applicant Eligibility**

Ontario Tech **full time faculty members with tenured or tenure-track positions in all disciplines** are invited to submit an application. Applicants must secure the required minimum 20% matching funds in order to apply.

The JELF is intended to serve the infrastructure needs of individual faculty, or groups of faculty members where there is a need to share infrastructure. **A maximum of three applicants can be listed on the JELF application.** When more than one candidate is listed, the justification of the need for the infrastructure must be articulated for each candidate.

The applicants listed on the proposal must be:

- current faculty members with a full-time tenured or tenure-track position;
- recognized as innovative leaders in their field of research or have demonstrated the potential for excellence in the proposed research field;
- engaged in, or embarking upon research or technology development that is innovative, high quality and meets international standards; and
- have active peer-reviewed Tri-Agency funding.

**Exclusions:** Individuals may not apply to this round if:

- a) they have been awarded CFI funds in the past two years (2022-2023); or
- b) they are part of a CFI JELF application currently under review (as project leader or co-applicant).

An Ontario Tech researcher may only participate in one JELF application as a Project Leader but may participate in multiple applications as a co-applicant. If a researcher participates in multiple proposals, there can be no overlap in funds or infrastructure requested among the applications.

### **CFI Funding Formula and Matching Funds**

CFI JELF applications must include confirmation of the required matching funds. If the matching funds are to be provided by the private sector or other external agency, a letter of support outlining their commitment must accompany the application.

If the 20% matching fund is provided in the form of a "discount beyond best educational price" by a vendor/supplier, a copy of the quotation must be included showing:

1. List Price
2. Best Educational Price
3. Discount Beyond Best Educational Price
4. Net Price

Applicants should refer to the **Vendor Quote Guidelines for CFI** to ensure quotations meet CFI eligibility requirements. Ensure that vendor pricing includes extended warranties, shipping, installation, and all other associated costs. When approaching vendors, note that the quotes are for budget development purposes only, not a commitment to purchase. If the grant is approved, all procurement will follow the appropriate Ontario Tech procurement policy and procedures.

Applicants should be aware that once the relevant taxes, shipping and associated costs are applied to the total cost of the requested infrastructure in the application budget, the contribution by a vendor may actually work out to slightly less than the required 20%. **Additional matching funds by the applicants may be required to make up the resulting short-fall.**

### **Space and Renovations**

All Ontario Tech infrastructure requests must be accommodated within **existing Faculty space** and receive **Dean's approval**. Renovation costs must be covered by the Faculty and/or factored into the total budget costs. Those selected to apply to the CFI will be required to obtain an estimate of the renovation cost needed to accommodate the infrastructure from the Office of Campus Infrastructure and Sustainability (OCIS) and confirm the proposed space is suitable for the equipment (if required). Applicants should be aware that renovation costs can also include such expenses as changes to a space in order to accommodate a piece of equipment that has special power requirements, ventilation needs or environmental cooling (for example).

### **Internal Selection Process and Priorities for Funding**

Internal applications will be reviewed by a multi-disciplinary committee appointed by the VPRI, comprised of:

- Three-to-five Ontario Tech faculty members who are not in conflict of interest with any proposal;
- Members of the Office of Research Services (non-voting); and

- One or two members of Ontario Tech Administrative Units (non-voting), if required (e.g. IT Services, OCIS).

The committee will review the applications using the selection criteria defined below and make recommendations to the VPRI on which project(s) will be put forward to the external CFI JELF June 2024 competition. Final decisions will be made by the VPRI in consultation with the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging and the Office of Campus Infrastructure and Sustainability. The decision of the VPRI is final and cannot be appealed.

**Preference to applicants will be given in the following order:**

- Early Career Researchers\* (ECR) – applicants who have obtained their first independent academic position within the last five years. ECRs must satisfy all other eligibility requirements as stated above, including holding active peer reviewed Tri-Agency funding.
- Applications for shared research infrastructure. Applicants are strongly encouraged to include early career researchers in their project teams.

\*The five-year window for being considered an ECR will be adjusted to take into account instances where a researcher has taken an eligible leave (for example, parental, personal illness, bereavement, caregiving leave). All eligible leaves will be credited as twice the amount of time taken.

**Assessment Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following five criteria that reflect the objectives of the competition:

- 1. Research or technology development:** The research or technology development activities are innovative, feasible and meet international standards.
- 2. Researchers:** The researchers demonstrate excellence and leadership at a level appropriate for the stage of their career. The researchers have the expertise or relevant collaborations to conduct the research or technology development activities.
- 3. Infrastructure:** The infrastructure is necessary and appropriate to conduct the research or technology development activities.
- 4. Sustainability:** The infrastructure will be optimally used and sustainable over its useful life.
- 5. Benefits:** The research results will be transferred through appropriate pathways to potential end users and are likely to generate social, health, environmental and/or economic benefits to Canada and Ontario, including better training and improved skills for highly qualified personnel. In this proposal, the applicant must describe how the proposed infrastructure will advance provincial outcomes and innovation.

**Process for applicants applying to both the NSERC RTI and CFI JELF**

Both the NSERC RTI and CFI JELF programs provide funding for the purchase of research equipment. For those researchers who have submitted a NSERC RTI application in 2023 and wish to apply to the internal CFI JELF competition to **purchase the same equipment item(s), or components thereof**, the following process will apply:

- When submitting their CFI application, researchers must note in the email that they have also requested the same equipment, or components thereof, in a NSERC RTI application.
- To reduce bias, the internal committee will not be told which applicants have also applied to NSERC RTI.
- If an applicant who has a NSERC RTI application pending, is selected by the internal committee to move forward with a JELF application to the national competition, we will defer proceeding with a CFI submission until the results of the NSERC RTI competition are announced.
- If the NSERC RTI application is unsuccessful, the CFI JELF application will be submitted to the October 2024 competition.
- If the NSERC RTI application is awarded, the CFI JELF proposal will be withdrawn (as there can be no overlap in funds between CFI and NSERC RTI) and the CFI funds reallocated to another proposal ranked by the evaluation committee.

### **Process for applicants applying to both the CFI JELF and CFI Innovation Fund**

Applicants interested in applying to both CFI JELF and the upcoming CFI Innovation Fund should ensure there is no overlap in requested infrastructure between the two proposals. If components of a CFI JELF application overlap with the requested infrastructure in a 2025 CFI Innovation Fund application the following process will apply:

- When submitting their CFI JELF researchers must declare they have also requested the same equipment, or components thereof, in a CFI IF application.
- If the JELF application is selected to be submitted to the CFI in June 2024, the overlapping equipment items must be removed from the Innovation Fund proposal.

### **Contact Information**

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this funding opportunity before you submit your application to the internal competition, please contact your Grants Officer in the Office of Research Services. We will be happy to work with you as you develop your proposal.

#### **Faculty Grants Officers**

FBIT, FSSH, FED – [Ewa Stewart](#)

FEAS – [Joanne Hui](#)

FHSci, FSci – [Raluca Dubrowski](#)