

NSERC Collaborative Research and Training Experience (CREATE) Program – Letter of Intent (LOI)

Please send the internal LOI package to joanne.hui@ontariotechu.ca by **March 4, 2024**, if you intend on applying; this step is **mandatory** so that we can determine if an internal selection process is required.

Please see below for more information on this year's [NSERC Collaborative Research and Training Experience \(CREATE\) Program](#). NSERC has a quota system at the LOI stage of this program; Ontario Tech has a **quota of two (2) LOIs** that can be submitted to this year's competition. Similar to previous years, an internal competition will be held to determine the LOIs to be submitted to NSERC **if internal applications exceed our quota**. A multidisciplinary internal selection committee will be created by the VPRI based on recommendations of the Deans to determine which applications will move to the NSERC competition to fulfil our quota. The internal selection committee will also include a representative from the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS). For those selected to apply to NSERC, **A letter of support from the VPRI is required** confirming that the application has been endorsed by the university as part of our quota. The application is submitted by the applicant through the [NSERC online system](#), a letter from the VPRI must be included with the submission.

Objective:

To create a **value-added** training program **for graduate (master's and doctoral) students beyond that of normal graduate programming**. The CREATE program is designed to improve the mentoring and training environment for the Canadian researchers of tomorrow by improving training in areas associated with Canada's research priorities **through an innovative training program that provides training in professional skills, communication and collaboration, as well as providing experience relevant to both academic and non-academic research environments**. It should provide improved job readiness and **professional skills and soft skills training is a "core required element"** of any CREATE project. **Explicit training (courses, workshops) are required**. The committee expects to see innovative pedagogy or interestingly different methods of training (e.g. immersive experiences).

New: Student mobility experiences (nationally or internationally, between individual universities and between universities and other sectors) **are mandatory** for all master and doctoral trainees, **with a minimum duration of one month at the master level and two months at the doctoral level.**

These innovative programs must foster the acquisition and development of important professional skills among students and postdoctoral fellows that complement their qualifications and technical skills and should encourage the following as appropriate:

- Interdisciplinary research within the natural sciences and engineering (NSE), or at the interface between the NSE and health, or between the NSE and the social sciences and humanities—however, the main focus of the training must still lie within the NSE.
- Increased collaboration between industry and academia. Industrial participation in CREATE initiatives is encouraged.

See NSERC CREATE Tip Sheet for a list of common elements in successful CREATE grants and general notes and tips.

- **Value:**
 - \$1.65M over 6 years (\$100K-200K in the first year and \$250K-350K per year for up to five subsequent years). At least 70% of the CREATE grant must be used for trainees' stipends.
- **Duration:**
 - Up to six years.
- **Timeline:**
 - **Monday, March 4:** Mandatory Submission of internal LOI package and RGA to ORS
 - More information below in the “Application Procedures and Timeline” section
 - **Note:** If you do not submit your internal LOI package by March 4, there is no guarantee that your application will be considered by the internal selection committee
 - **Week of April 1:** Ontario Tech committee decision, if required
 - Feedback from the committee and ORS
 - **Wednesday, April 24:** Mandatory ORS LOI review (for selected applicants)
 - **Wednesday, May 1:** NSERC Deadline at 8:00 p.m. (ET). Please submit LOI to [NSERC Online Portal](#) by 9 a.m. to avoid delays.
 - September 23, 2024: NSERC Full Application deadline.
- **Webinar:**
 - The webinars were held by NSERC on:
 - English session: February 7, 2024, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. (ET)
 - French session: February 8, 2024, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. (ET)
 - Please email joanne.hui@ontariotechu.ca for the webinar slide deck and link to the recordings.

- **Apply:**
 - Refer to the “LOI Application Procedures and Timeline” section below and the attached internal LOI form.

Eligibility Conditions:

- The lead applicant (PI) must be from an NSERC-supported field at an NSERC-eligible university and must fulfill [NSERC’s eligibility criteria](#).
- A researcher may only be the lead applicant on one CREATE initiative annually.
- Researchers can participate in a maximum of two CREATE grants and/or LOIs at the same time as either an applicant or co-applicant (active or applied for)
- At least one co-applicant is required in the proposal from each involved university. All co-applicants must fulfill [NSERC’s eligibility criteria](#).
- **Note:** at least 70% of the team must be from [NSE fields](#), but co-applicants at the interdisciplinary frontier between NSE and the areas covered under the umbrella of SSHRC and CIHR may be incorporated into proposals.
- CREATE projects can involve Canadian/international academic/government/industry/NGO collaborators.

Additional Requirements:

- Researchers who currently hold or participate in an active CREATE grant must clearly describe their distinct contribution to and justification for their participation in the proposed training program.
- Researchers who are applying in a research area already supported by other active CREATE grants must clearly describe how this application differs from those already funded.
- Previous CREATE grantees and co-grantees must clearly describe how this application differs from those already funded.

LOI Application Procedures and Timeline:

1. **Mandatory:** Submit internal LOI package to ORS by March 4, 2024 which includes:
 - a. Internal CREATE LOI form (attached)
 - b. Outline of training program (2 pages maximum)
 - c. Excellence of proposed team of researchers (3 pages maximum)
 - d. Lead Applicant’s Form 100
 - e. Signed Research Grant Authorization form
2. Notification of internal selection, if required* (week of April 1, 2024); feedback provided by internal selection committee and ORS review.
3. Mandatory ORS LOI administrative review deadline April 24, 2024 (selected applications only)

4. ORS will prepare a letter of support from VPRI (selected applications only)
5. Submit LOI to NSERC by May 1, 2024. Please submit your LOI to the NSERC portal by 9 a.m.

Contact:

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