

Early Researcher Awards (ERA) Round 19 (2025) Internal Notice of Intent – Program Guidelines Deadline: May 12, 2025

We are expecting the Ontario Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security (MCURES) to launch Round 19 of the [Early Researcher Awards](#) in the next few weeks, with the deadline expected to be in summer 2025 (last year the deadline was July 25). The ERA program is highly competitive and targets applicants who are exceptional early-career researchers in Ontario, helping them to build their research teams.

To ensure adequate time to prepare quality applications, the Office of Research Services is launching the internal selection process in advance of the official sponsor announcement as we do not anticipate significant changes to the program architecture.

MCURES Early Researcher Awards Funding (Total value: \$190,000):

- \$100,000 from MCURES over 5 years to support salaries, benefits, and essential and reasonable travel for HQP carrying out the proposed research project. Funds cannot be used for supplies, equipment, or facility operation.
- \$50,000 institutional match over 5 years to support eligible research costs.
- \$40,000 from MCURES over 5 years for indirect costs of research (overhead).

Faculty Members interested in applying internally should review the information in this document and the [ERA full application guidelines](#) prior to applying.

Applicant Eligibility

The ERA program is open to researchers who:

- are **full-time** faculty members with tenured or tenure-track positions;
- have started their independent academic research career on or after **January 1, 2019***; and
- have completed their first Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree, Medical Doctor or terminal degree on or after **January 1, 2014***.
- have not already held an Early Researcher Award
- are not a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair

**This is the anticipated applicant eligibility cut off date based on previous rounds. Final eligibility of the selected candidates will be confirmed once the Ministry launches ERA Round 19 and posts updated guidelines.*

What Makes a Strong Candidate?

A strong candidate is someone who:

- **is actively conducting research**
- has an **“exceptional level” of grant funding**; current/previous research activities **supported by peer-reviewed funding** - many successful applicants already **hold research funds from a Tri-Council Agency** (or other nationally recognized source).
- **demonstrates academic independence** from previous supervisors – many awardees are **3-5 years from first academic appointment** – and can provide two strong arm’s length reference letters.
- is an **“emerging leader”** in the field, has a **strong record of publication and experience training HQP**, as well as evidence of publishing with students and student involvement in conference papers.

- can write a proposal in which the proposed research program is well-defined, with specific objectives, and must have significant benefits to Ontario.
- Can propose a training program that exposes the research team to exciting and challenging projects.

When is it Premature to Apply?

It is premature to apply for faculty:

- who have limited research experience and chance to demonstrate potential, publish, or train HQP
- who have only held internal start-up funding; funding has not been received from the federal granting councils
- whose current or recent research activities remain closely linked to former supervisor (Ph.D. or Post-Doc)
- who would have difficulty obtaining strong arm's length letters of reference from referees with international stature (two arm's length letters are required)

The review panel scores applicants on:

- Excellence of the researcher (40%)
- Quality of research (30%)
- Development of research talent (HQP) (20%)
- Strategic value for Ontario (10%)

Internal Selection Committee and Process

Similar to previous rounds, the Vice-President Research and Innovation (VPRI) is launching an internal process to identify applicants interested in submitting an ERA application to the Ministry. Eligible applicants are invited to submit an Internal Notice of Intent for consideration by the internal committee. **Based on the recommendations of the committee, and subject to the institutional budget for matching funds, the VPRI will select only the most competitive candidate(s) to put forward a full ERA application to the Ministry.** The decision of the VPRI is final with no process for appeal.

Internal applications will be reviewed by a committee, comprised of:

- Vice-President Research and Innovation, or designate;
- Ontario Tech Faculty Deans or designates;
- One or two members of the Office of Research Services (non-voting);

Assessment Criteria

The internal committee will assess the application's fit with the ERA program objectives and assessment criteria and make recommendations to the VPRI.

NOIs will be evaluated based on the following criteria that reflect the objectives of the ERA program:

1. Excellence of the Researcher (40%)

- academic and employment record
- research grants and awards received
- publication record
- other areas of research productivity
- researcher current and potential standing for excellence in the research field based on research plans
- independence from previous supervisor regarding publication record
- independent peer-reviewed funding

2. Quality of Research (30%):

- excellence of proposed research

- originality of proposed research
- clarity of research proposal
- relevance of methodology

3. Development of Research Talent (20%):

- development of research knowledge of members of research team
- skills development of team
- training is unique and leading edge
- past experience in HQP training
- clearly demonstrate commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) when developing the research teams

4. Strategic Value for Ontario (10%)

- Commercialization benefits
- Economic benefits
- Societal and/or cultural benefits

How to Apply:

A complete application for consideration by the Ontario Tech internal committee consists of:

1. Internal ERA Notice of Intent Form
2. Tri-Agency CV (Including “Research Contributions” attachment, if submitting NSERC Form 100 or SSHRC CV)

The NOI and CV must be submitted as a **single PDF** to ewa.stewart@ontariotechu.ca by **May 12, 2025** using the subject line: **2025 Ontario ERA NOI – (Applicant Name)**.

Please Note: The internal NOI represents a fraction of the work required for a full ERA application. For the Ministry ERA application, the successful candidate(s) will need to provide a comprehensive CV adhering to Ministry formatting requirements, letters of reference, a completed application form and a six-page proposal. Please read the full [ERA application requirements](#) before committing to applying.

Timeline:

Action	Deadline
Interested applicants will submit a NOI and CV to the Office of Research Services (ORS)	May 12
ORS will collate the NOIs submitted and provide copies to the VPRI and Deans for review	By May 14
VPRI or designate will meet with the Deans collectively to review and select the most competitive candidate(s) to be put forward	Week of May 26
ORS will notify applicants of internal results	~May 30
ORS will work closely with those chosen to move forward to ministry competition to develop competitive applications	June 2 – to ministry deadline in the summer *Please note* selected candidates will receive a more detailed application development timeline at the time of the notification of the NOI approval.
ORS submits complete application package(s) to Ministry	TBD summer 2025

Contact Information

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this funding opportunity before you submit your NOI to the internal competition, please contact [Ewa Stewart](#) in the Office of Research Services.