

2026 Research Excellence Award

The **Research Excellence Awards (REA)** are prestigious awards granted annually to recognize up to three tenured and/or tenure track faculty members for their outstanding contributions and achievements in research while at Ontario Tech University.

1. Eligibility Criteria and Award Categories

All current tenured and tenure-track faculty members who have been at Ontario Tech for at least one year are eligible to be nominated. Nominations may be submitted individually or collectively by current tenured or tenure-track faculty members, including Faculty Deans. Permission should be sought from the potential nominee before submission. Self-nominations are welcome. In addition, each nomination must be endorsed by two current Ontario Tech faculty members. Endorsements can be obtained from any Ontario Tech tenured or tenure-track faculty member. Faculty members may not endorse more than one nomination in each category. Faculty members may only receive each category of award once.

- **Emerging Researchers:** Individuals **within the first six (6) years** of their first independent academic appointment. This award recognizes both early excellence in research and future promise.
- **Mid-career Researchers:** Individuals who are **between the seventh and twelfth (7-12) years** of their first independent academic appointment. This award recognizes recently established research programs that are opening up new fields or insights of inquiry.
- **Established Researchers:** Individuals who are **beyond the twelfth (12) year** of their first independent academic appointment (i.e. 13th year and beyond). These awards recognize recent national and/or international leadership in research in the last 6 years. These awards are not intended to be career research awards.

The following apply to all three categories:

- The time since first academic appointment for each category will be considered as of July 1 of the competition year
- Only CV contributions **over the last 6 years** will be considered (i.e. six years prior to July 1 of the competition year). Nominations will need to highlight achievements of the Nominee over this timeframe as well. **Note:** Career interruptions will extend the 6-year eligible contributions window (see below).
- Career interruptions (e.g., maternity or parental leave, extended sick leave, clinical training and family care) that occurred after a nominee's first independent academic appointment will be considered. For all leaves except professional leaves (such as training-related, sabbatical, and administrative-related leaves)
 - Eligibility window for calculation of status:

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- the eligibility window is extended by twice the length of the leave (e.g. 5 months of leaves are counted as 10 months)
- Eligibility window for contributions:
 - include contributions from their most recent active research period prior to the last six years **for a period equivalent to the duration of the leave**
- An independent academic position is a position that:
 - is a university faculty appointment (tenured or tenure-track);
 - requires that the researcher engages in research that is not under the direction of another individual;
 - authorizes the researcher to supervise or co-supervise the research of students registered in an undergraduate or graduate degree program, or postdoctoral fellows.

2. Evaluation Criteria

The REA Selection Committee will evaluate the candidates' nominations using the criteria listed below, taking into account the discipline, stage of career for each category and research context of each nominee. The candidate will also be provided with an opportunity to disclose special circumstances/considerations that have impacted their research.

Members of the selection committee will independently evaluate the applications based on the four evaluation criteria listed below, using a 5-point scale for each criterion (with 5 being the highest score); provide an overall score for each evaluated application as the weighted sum of the scores for all four criteria (maximum possible score is 20); and rank applications based on the total score. If the selection committee determines that a suitable nominee cannot be found, they are not obliged to recommend any of the nominees.

I. Scholarly accomplishments and research contributions (50%)

- Research monographs, peer-reviewed articles in quality journals appropriate for the field of research, grants for scholarship, patents, creative works, presentations, research contributions that are acknowledged to be major advances, influences or transformations;

II. HQP training record (20%)

- Contributions to the training of undergraduate students, graduate students and post-doctoral fellows;

III. Impact of research (20%)

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- Impact of research on the discipline and on society and recognition for research accomplishments by professional societies or others that have benefited;

IV. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (10%)

- Contributions to the promotion of equity, diversity and inclusion in the research enterprise.
- Contributions to supporting equity and inclusion in recruitment practices, curriculum, supporting diverse students, mentorship approaches, and initiatives aimed at ensuring an inclusive research and training environment and trainee growth.
- **Important:** trainee demographic data is not requested, nor required to assess impacts related to equity, diversity and inclusion in the research and training environment.

3. Public Recognition and Value of the Award

Up to three awards (one in each category) will be presented annually. The budget for each competition year is \$3,000, which will be distributed amongst the awards. If there are 3 awards, each awardee will receive \$1,000. If there are fewer than 3 awards, the \$3,000 will be split proportionately between the awardees. The award will be contributed to the recipient's internal research account, and will include a recognition plaque. Each award winner will give a public presentation to the University and the broader community.

4. REA Selection Committee and Nomination Review Process

Applications will be adjudicated by a multidisciplinary selection committee composed of six active or past Chairs (e.g., Canada Research Chairs; Research Excellence Chairs; etc.), and, if needed, the committee membership will be extended to full professors. Committee members will be selected by the VPRI, ensuring that there are no conflicts of interest. The VPRI will identify a Chair, from its members, to lead and facilitate the adjudication process. The REA selection committee will make recommendations to the VPRI who will make the final selection of the REA recipients. Please refer to the Peer Review Guide for more details on the process.

Ensuring an equitable adjudication process. Several concrete measures will be implemented to contribute to an equitable adjudication process: **1)** An EDI advisor will be available to provide advice to the committee during the deliberation process to ensure that EDI principles are fully integrated in the selection of the REA recipients. **2)** Committee members will receive training on the potential negative impact of unconscious bias on the career paths of individuals from underrepresented groups. **3)** Committee members will consider in their assessment the context of each applicant, as informed by the leaves of absence/delays; stage of career for each category; conventions in the discipline; and personal EDI statement. **4)** Evaluation of the applications and the adjudication process will be informed by the San Francisco Declaration on

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Research Assessment (DORA), which recognizes the need to improve the ways in which the outputs of research are evaluated. As such, committee members will be instructed to assess productivity broadly by taking into consideration a range of contributions (not just publications) and impacts (e.g., influence on policy and practice, health outcomes, societal outcomes, and distinctions-based, meaningful and culturally safe research). Committee members will be instructed not to use journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality and impact of individual research publications.

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The adjudication process is conducted in four stages:

Stage 1: Orientation Session	The orientation session will be held after the committee is formed and all committee members had signed the membership agreement and conflict of interest declaration form. The purpose of the orientation session is to prepare the selection committee for the adjudication process by reviewing the evaluation criteria and their interpretation; making decisions re: the adjudication process (e.g., use of a cut-off score; discussing all applications); reviewing the training required; clarifying roles, discussing conflict of interest; answering questions from the committee, etc.
Stage 2: Evaluation of Applications	Each member of the selection committee, with the exception of the Chair, will independently evaluate all applications based on the evaluation criteria for the specific internal program, using the scoring sheet provided by ORS. Reviewers will also provide constructive feedback to applicants to improve the quality of the proposed research. Reviewers will send the complete scoring sheet to ORS by the specified deadline. ORS staff will compile all scores prior to the adjudication meeting.
Stage 3: Adjudication Meeting	The committee will discuss applications based on the process established by the committee during the orientation session. This discussion will be led by the Chair who will encourage the involvement of the entire committee in evaluating/discussing each application based on the evaluation criteria for each competition. At the end of the meeting, the selection committee will make funding recommendations to the VPRI.
Stage 4: Funding Decisions by VPRI	Using the selection committee's ranking and review comments, the VPRI will make the final decision about which applications to fund and the amount of funding awarded to each, given the available funding and in consideration of EDI principles. The VPRI may consult with the EDI advisor and the Committee Chair. Notification of results will be sent to all applicants once decisions have been finalized. All decisions are final.

5. Appeals

All decisions regarding the selection of award recipients are final. The VPRI will not consider any appeals to the process.

6. Submission Requirements

The nomination package includes:

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a. Nomination Form: Complete nomination form (including endorsements, list of three external referees, and Dean's signature). **Note:** Each nominee is required to provide a list of three suggested external referees that may be contacted by the VPRI, should the committee request this information to aid in the adjudication process. External referees must be scholars outside of Ontario Tech (i.e. external to Ontario Tech) and within in the candidate's research area. If required, once the selection committee has shortlisted the nominees, the Vice-President Research may solicit support letters. The referees are not required to be arm's length, so there are no restrictions around recent collaboration (e.g. co-authorship, co-supervision, etc.).

b. Supplemental Information Form: Attachment that provides additional context to the Research Committee. Provides information regarding [discipline specific conventions*](#) and an optional special circumstances statement/background section.

c. Nomination Letter (up to 4 pages including references): A detailed letter (up to 4 pages) from the nominator(s) summarizing the candidate's research achievements and outlining the national or international significance of the candidate's scholarly work. Self-nominations are welcome. The letter must clearly identify how the nominee meets the award evaluation criteria and should be written in plain language. Please refer to the nomination letter instructions. **Note:** the letter will need to highlight achievements of the Nominee over the last 6 years. If a Nominee has eligible career interruptions, the 6-year eligible contributions window will be extended for a period equivalent to the duration of the leave.

d. Candidate's CV: Curriculum Vitae in a Tri-Agency accepted format. The CV is limited to the past 6 years only (i.e. six years prior to July 1 of the competition year). Eligible career interruptions will extend the 6-year eligible contributions window for a period equivalent to the duration of the leave. **Note:** A version of the CCV labeled 'DRAFT' will be accepted.

***Note re: Conventions in The Discipline.** Forms of research publications/contributions and methods can vary greatly among disciplines. Given that the nomination will be reviewed by a multidisciplinary selection committee that includes researchers who may not have direct expertise in the applicant's field, applicants are encouraged to clearly explain the conventions their discipline, to allow informed assessment of the applicant's research contributions by a variety of experienced researchers. Describe the following:

- the publication conventions in the applicant's discipline(s) (i.e., what is the primary method for sharing research (journals, books, conferences), what is the typical rate of publication?);

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- the choice of venues for the dissemination of the applicant's research results (applicant may wish to indicate a publication strategy, such as focus on open access, top journals, regional journals, specialized journals, etc.);
- the citation conventions for the discipline(s) (e.g., senior author first in multi-authored publications; typical to publish jointly or as a sole author);
- the publication conventions in the discipline(s) as they relate to students and trainees (i.e., do students typically publish with supervisor and if so, where in the author order would the student go compared to supervisor, etc.);
- the particularities and/or challenges involved in the publication of interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary research results, if applicable; and
- the particularities and/or challenges involved in the publication or gathering of data for community-based or Indigenous research, if applicable.

7. Nomination Deadline

Complete nomination packages must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. EST on **March 30, 2026**.

Submit one complete electronic copy (one pdf file), with the required package components appearing in the order in which they are listed in [Section 6. Submission Requirements](#), to: [Lauren Wolman](#)

8. Questions?

If you need support while preparing your application or have any questions about the program, please contact [Lauren Wolman](#), Grants Officer.

9. Timeline

- Program Launch: February 2, 2026
- Complete nomination packages due: March 30, 2026
- Decisions: June 2026
- Start Date of Award: July 1, 2026