

Research Excellence Chairs Program 2026

Description

Ontario Tech University established the Research Excellence Chairs Program to recognize and retain outstanding researchers at Ontario Tech University. The program has three streams and is designed to enable researchers to complete a major research program. Further, the program is meant to emphasize the importance of research at Ontario Tech in strategic areas, while highlighting and promoting the outstanding achievements of our scholars and the university's commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

Value of Award

Up to \$15,000 per year of the award.

The number of Chairs that the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (VPRI) will support is dependent on available funding.

Eligibility

The program is open to researchers from all disciplines. Current Research Excellence Chairholders are only eligible to apply in their final year. Applicants must select one stream only at the time of the application and clearly indicate it in the application.

Stream 1 (Transform): Open to previous Chairholders, including, Canada Research Chairs, Industrial Research Chairs and Ontario Tech University Research Excellence Chairs.

Stream 2 (Ignite): Open to all Tenured and Tenure-Track (TTT) faculty members at Ontario Tech University.

Stream 3 (Social Innovation): Open to all Tenured and Tenure-Track (TTT) faculty members at Ontario Tech University (including previous Chairholders) whose research contributes to social innovation, defined as the process of developing and deploying effective solutions to challenging and often systemic social and environmental issues in support of social progress.

Term of the Award:

Stream 1 (Transform): Three years, renewable one time only, based on performance and available funding

Stream 2 (Ignite): Two years, non-renewable

Stream 3 (Social Innovation): Two years, non-renewable

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Focus

We encourage participation from persons in the federally recognized Four Designated Groups (FDGs), which include women, Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities and racialized scholars, and members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Principles of EDI will guide the application and adjudication process.

Recognition

The Ontario Tech University Research Excellence Chairs Program recipients will be honored at an appreciation ceremony highlighting the scholarly accomplishments of the recipient.

Use of Funds

Funds may be used to support the following eligible expenditures:

- Salary support for trainees
- Travel and subsistence
- Equipment and research supplies
- Dissemination of research results
- Implementation of measures to create an equitable, diverse, and inclusive research environment

Note: Funds are to be used in accordance with the Ontario Tech University internal use of funds policy. Extensions will not be approved unless under exceptional circumstances.

Competition Timeline

Program Launch: February 2, 2026

Full Application: March 30, 2026

Decisions: June 2026

Start Date of Award: July 1, 2026

Application Requirements and Instructions

The application package consists of two components:

- (1) Application materials, and
- (2) Curriculum vitae.

Please review all instructions outlined below and prepare the following for submission to the Office of Research Services:

Part I. Application Materials

All application materials must adhere to formatting standards as outlined below.

1. Research Chair Title, Stream, and Research Program Summary (250 words)

- Provide a 250-word summary, written in lay language, describing the uniqueness and importance of the proposed research program. In addition, provide the context for your research, situating it within your field. The summary will be used for publicity purposes. In addition, clearly indicate the Stream you are applying for.

2. Research Funding Plan and Description of Applicant's Expected Contribution to Research Leadership (1 page)

- Outline the proposed research funding plan, describing how the Chair will be leveraged to secure new research funding (Tri-Agency and/or other) and over the term of the Chair.
- Describe how the applicant will exhibit leadership in promoting the overall development of scholarship, research, and creative activities at Ontario Tech University that extends beyond their personal research programs.

3. Description of the Proposed Research Program (5 pages, excluding references)

- In clear, plain, non-specialist language, the applicant must propose an original and innovative research program that will be undertaken over the term of the Chair. When addressing the sections below, applicants must keep in mind that the application will be reviewed by a multi-disciplinary selection committee.
- Suggested headings and content for the description of the proposed research program
 - **Objectives:** Briefly state the explicit objectives of the proposed research program.
 - **Context:** Explain what makes the research program original, innovative and of the highest quality. Situate the proposed research within the context of the relevant

scholarly literature. Explain the anticipated contribution of the research program to the existing body of knowledge in research. To do so, explicitly outline the anticipated outcomes and impact of your proposed research

- **Methodology:** Describe the proposed research strategies and key activities, including methodological approaches and procedures for data collection and analysis that will be used to achieve the stated objectives. Indicate how sex- and gender-based analyses (SGBA+) or EDI in research design considerations have informed the research design, or if not, provide a rationale as to why no aspect of the proposed research would benefit from such an analysis. **Note:** Applicants must include sufficient methodological details for the selection committee to be able to assess the feasibility and novelty of the proposed work.
- **Engagement with research users and communication of results:** Describe, if applicable, how research users will be engaged during the various stages of the research program. Describe how the research results will be disseminated.
- **List of References:** Attach a list of all references cited in the proposed research program.

4. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan (2 pages)

Suggested headings and content include the following:

- **A Personal EDI statement (optional).** The applicant may choose to provide a personal EDI statement to discuss their personal journey and circumstances that may help contextualize their application. This may include (but is not limited to) disclosing their status as a member of an underrepresented group, such as women, racialized scholars, persons with disabilities, Indigenous People, 2SLGBTQ+ community members, linguistic minorities, or as scholars who have experienced circumstances such as poverty, significant caring responsibilities, being a newcomer or a first-generation graduate, or other circumstances that create barriers and challenges to access, opportunities or resources.
- **An Analysis of the Context** to provide information about the team's (including trainees') specific circumstances related to EDI, including identification of biases/barriers at various levels (e.g., field of research; faculty; university) that could affect members of underrepresented groups. Highlight key needs/barriers that were elucidated from the analysis of context.
- **How the applicant supports and builds EDI within Ontario Tech University,** the Faculty and within their research program, while addressing the needs elucidated in the context analysis. Describe:
 - At least one EDI strategy the applicant will enact that will support the diversity of their team composition and recruitment processes
 - At least one EDI strategy the applicant will enact to support training and development of their team.
 - At least one EDI strategy that the applicant will enact to support an inclusive environment for the team.

Resources to Support the EDI Action Plan

- [Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research](#)
- [NSERC guide on integrating equity, diversity and inclusion considerations in research](#)
- [Gender-based Analysis Plus \(GBA Plus\)](#)
- [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion – CIHR Guide](#)

5. Budget and Justification (1 page)

Outline and justify all proposed expenditures (refer to Use of Fund section for a list of eligible costs).

6. Most Significant Research Contributions (2 pages)

Describe 3-5 of the applicant's most significant contributions to research and/or to practical applications over the last 6 years. Applicants with eligible leaves of absence may include

contributions from their most recent active research period prior to the last 6 years for a period equivalent to the duration of the leave. Note: Applicants are encouraged to think broadly when choosing contributions and impacts to highlight; include indicators of quality (e.g., distinctions-based, meaningful and culturally safe research) and impact (e.g., influence on policy and practice and societal outcomes), consistent with the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment](#) (DORA).

- **Note re: Research Contributions:** Some examples of research contributions include, but are not limited to: books, chapters of books, articles, monographs, memoirs, special papers, review articles, conference/symposia proceedings and abstracts, patents, copyrights, products, services, technology transfer, creative or artistic works (including individual or collective literary or artistic works such as novels, short stories, poetry, films, videos, visual art, booklets, records, sound creation, collections, exhibition catalogues, etc.), government publications, book reviews by the applicant or published reviews of his/her work, research reports, papers presented at scholarly meetings or conferences, standards, code, datasets, training and mentorship, clinical practice, policy development, community engagement, specialized training, strategic employment positions and other forms of written scholarly expression or participation in public discourse and debate that constitute a contribution to research. Please indicate when the contributions are peer reviewed.

7. Reference Letter (2 pages)

Include a letter from a referee who can speak to the significance and impact of the applicant's contributions to the field. The referee does not have to be at arm's length with respect to the applicant.

8. Renewal Statement – it only applies to Stream 1 renewals (1 page)

Discuss a) research program achievements from the first term as a Chair (0.5 page); and b) how you used the Chair as a platform to increase the reputation of Ontario Tech University (0.5 page).

Part II. Curriculum Vitae (no page limit)

Include a Curriculum Vitae in any 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).

- **Note re: Delays and Leaves.** Applicants can describe here any delays or career interruptions due to maternity/parental leave; extended sick leave (personal illness, chronic illness, mental illness); disability associated with reduced research activity; clinical training; leave taken for family-related illness; bereavement; extraordinary administrative duties; and delays related to COVID-19. To account for delays/leaves, applicants with eligible delays/leaves may extend the CV timeframe for a period equivalent to the duration of the leave.
- **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?);
 - 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.

Formatting Standards

Prepare your documents following the requirements below:

- Explain any acronyms and abbreviations fully;
- Pages must be 8 ½" x 11";
- Pages must be single-spaced, with no more than six lines of type per inch;
- All text must be in 12 pt. font;
- Margins must be set at a minimum of ¾";
- Pages must be numbered sequentially.

Submission Instructions

- Convert Part I of the application into a pdf, containing the seven/eight application requirements listed above, appearing in the order in which they are listed (i.e., ending with Most Significant Contributions and Reference Letter or, with the Renewal statement, where applicable);
- Convert Part II of the application (the CV) into a pdf;
- Send the two pdf attachments to lauren.wolman@ontariotechu.ca by the deadline, March 30, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. ET.

Evaluation Criteria

The selection committee will use the evaluation criteria listed below for each of the three streams. The selection committee will independently evaluate all applications based on the evaluation criteria, using a 5-point scale (with 5 being the highest score); and provide an overall score for each application as the sum of the scores for all criteria. Please refer to the [Peer Review Guide](#) for more details on the process.

Stream 1 Chairs should:

- Be outstanding and innovative world-class researchers whose accomplishments while a Chairholder have made a major impact(s) in their fields.
- Be recognized internationally as leaders in their fields.
- Have superior records of attracting and supervising graduate students and postdoctoral fellows (considering different practices in the relevant field or discipline) and as Chairholders, be expected to attract, develop and retain excellent trainees, students and future researchers.
- Demonstrate a commitment to creating an equitable, diverse and inclusive research environment.
- Be proposing an original, innovative research program of the highest quality.
- Have a strong plan to secure external funding and provide leadership.
- **(Renewals only)** Have a strong record of research achievements and increasing the University's reputation during the first term.

Stream 2 and 3 Chairs should:

- Be excellent world-class researchers who have demonstrated particular research creativity.
- Have demonstrated the potential to achieve international recognition in their research fields.
- As a Chairholder, attract, develop, and retain excellent trainees, students and future researchers.
- Demonstrate a commitment to creating an equitable, diverse and inclusive research environment.
- Be proposing an original, innovative research program of high quality.
- Have a strong plan to secure external funding and provide leadership.

Selection Committee

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, 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. 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 Chairs. **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 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.

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	Members 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:	Using the selection committee's ranking and review comments, the VPRI will make

Funding Decisions by VPRI	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.
----------------------------------	---

Funding Requirements

Selected Chairs will be required to:

- Give a public lecture during the tenure of the award; and,
- Provide a short annual report, to the VPRI, outlining the major accomplishments. Chairs will receive a report template to complete this requirement, and reports are due June 30 of each year.

Expectations of Chairs

There is an expectation on the part of the University that Research Excellence Chairs will exhibit leadership at Ontario Tech University that extends beyond their personal research programs. Thus, Stream 1 Chairs are expected to be active mentors within the University and disciplines, and to provide leadership in respect of major research initiatives, team-based research grants, and the development/operation of Organized Research Entities. Stream 2 and 3 Chairs are expected to contribute to, and participate in, similar activities in a manner that builds and develops their leadership skills over the period of their Chair.

All Research Excellence Chairs are expected to be highly active in the training of graduate and postdoctoral trainees, and to provide leadership in the development of graduate and postdoctoral training programs within their disciplines. Chairholders are also expected, as appropriate, to be sensitive to the importance of translating their scholarship, research findings and/or creative activities into tangible benefits to society, through the translation and mobilization of the knowledge developed through their scholarship, research, and service. As well, they are expected to foster a diverse, equitable and inclusive research environment. Recognizing that Ontario Tech University's external reputation and research standing depends, to an important degree, on our share of Tri-Agency funding, Research Excellence Chairs are expected to be active beneficiaries of Tri-Agency funding and to seek out other funding opportunities as may be appropriate to their discipline.

Questions

If you need support while preparing your application or have any questions about the program, please contact Lauren Wolman at lauren.wolman@ontariotechu.ca.