



Guidelines for the Recruitment and Nomination of External Canada Research Chairs

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Introduction

This document was prepared by the Sunnybrook Research Institute (SRI) strategic research programs office with the aim of providing a brief overview of the Canada Research Chairs Program (CRCP) requirements for the recruitment, selection and nomination of external Canada Research Chairs (CRCs).

This brief guide is designed to assist search committees in recruiting, interviewing and selecting external CRC candidates, according to the CRCP's [best practices for recruitment, hiring and retention of Chairs](#).

A separate guide is available for the recruitment and nomination of internal CRCs, subject to an internal selection process.

Full information and details of the CRCP can be found at www.chairs-chaieres.gc.ca.

Background

The CRCP in 2017 released its [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan](#) (EDIAP), which requires institutions to meet certain milestones to ensure continued eligibility and funding.

All CRC recruitment and nomination processes must be transparent, open, equitable and fair, thereby ensuring that all individuals have access to and benefit from the program. Notably, the CRCP aims to eliminate barriers and to increase access to the program for the [federally designated groups](#) (FDGs): women; Aboriginal peoples; persons with disabilities; and members of visible minorities.

Sunnybrook Research Institute is working with the [University of Toronto](#) and its affiliated hospitals to meet the CRCP [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Public Accountability and Transparency Requirements](#), and is adapting its institutional practices to align with the new guidelines for recruitment and nomination of CRCs.

Some of the new requirements demand specific actions by the institution and by individuals involved in staff recruitment, and these are highlighted below.

Internal Allocation of CRCs

The formal CRC allocation is made to the University of Toronto rather than to hospitals, and the university makes a sub-allocation to each affiliated hospital using an established formula, based largely on tri-council funding received. The recruitment and allocation of CRCs by affiliated hospitals is determined by each hospital's strategic research priorities and requirements. Hospital nominations are reviewed by a university committee to ensure eligibility and broad scientific merit and alignment with EDIAP requirements.

At SRI, the Research Executive Committee (REC) conducts an annual review of CRC allocations among Research Platforms to ensure alignment with strategic research priorities. That review includes specific consideration of CRC awards expected to end within the next two years. An unanticipated CRC vacancy or "retention" opportunity would be addressed at the next REC meeting.

An approved recruitment is undertaken by the recipient Research Platform, with the intention of subsequently nominating the candidate for a CRC award. The recruitment process must proceed in compliance with CRCP's EDIAP requirements, and Research Platforms are expected to encourage candidates actively from the FDGs who meet the requirements for a CRC.

Preparing External CRC Job Postings

The CRCP expects job advertisements to reference explicitly the CRC opportunity and the institution's intention to nominate the successful candidate for a CRC award. The CRCP now requires that a copy of the job advertisement be included with the CRC nomination package.

Job postings must use inclusive, unbiased, ungendered language and must be reviewed by an equity officer (or equivalent) prior being advertised. The posting must contain the following elements:

- reference to the CRC opportunity and SRI's intention to nominate the successful candidate for a CRC award
- in the case of Tier 2 opportunities, the posting must describe the CRC eligibility requirements
- reference to career interruptions and encouragement to applicants to explain any personal circumstances, to allow for a fair assessment of their application
- an equity statement encouraging applications from members from the FDGs
- applicants must be requested to fill a voluntary [self-declaration form](#) and a link to the form must be included in the job posting.

Sample job postings for external Tier 1 or Tier 2 CRC recruitment are available in Appendix A.

Advertising External CRC Job Postings

Job postings must be publicly advertised for a minimum of 30 days.

In addition to posting the position in traditional scientific, professional and specialist journals and websites, the CRCP also expects that specific efforts will be made to encourage a diverse pool of potential applicants and that institutions will actively solicit applications from individuals in the FDGs. Examples of where job postings should additionally be advertised include, but are not limited to:

- [Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women](#)
- [Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering, Science, Trades and Technology](#)
- [Pride at Work Canada](#)
- [Aboriginal Professional Association of Canada](#)

Search Committee

The term "search committee" includes all of the people involved in the selection process. The process includes: establishing candidate search criteria; the review of applications and CVs; any review of "chalk-and-talk" presentations; formal candidate interview and/or review; and hiring decision-making.

The CRCP recognizes the power and consequences of unconscious bias, and that selection processes can result in the hiring of people who resemble the people who do the hiring, that is, people who "fit." As a counterbalance and to ensure an equitable process, a diverse search committee membership is required. Unconscious bias may also influence the CV review and shortlisting processes, and the CRCP is particularly concerned to address unintended or unconscious bias that may have an effect at any point in the CRC recruitment, selection and nomination practices and decisions at the institution. For example, research has shown that the evaluation of academic CVs and even the wording of letters of recommendation differ by gender.

The CRCP has thus implemented a number of requirements to improve the transparency of the process and to improve participants' awareness of their contributions.

Institutions must ensure that the search committee:

- includes representation from at least one of the FDGs: women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with a disability and members of visible minorities
- includes an equity officer, equity advisor (or equivalent) who is involved and/or consulted at all stages of the recruitment process
- takes, at minimum, the **mandatory** [CRCP unconscious bias training module](#) and ensures that members are sensitized to issues of equity and unconscious biases
- is aware of any representation gap(s) among the institution's current Chairholders
- has established the application requirements, the selection criteria and shortlisting process prior to the initial screening of applications and CVs
- is sensitive to an applicant's legitimate career interruptions.

Applications should be sent to the chair of the search committee. Applicant data forms should be sent to an individual independent of the search committee, to ensure privacy. Aggregate data only would be provided to the chair.

Search committee members must identify if they have a conflict of interest regarding their participation, or if any information has been shared with them about a candidate that may influence their decision.

Interview

The CRCP expects institutions to be committed to a fair and equitable selection and interview process that objectively and consistently follows clear selection criteria established **prior** to the initial screening of applications and CVs. Interviews must do the following:

- Be as objective as possible. **The use of an evaluation matrix is recommended.** A sample candidate evaluation matrix is included in Appendix B and may be adapted to suit the circumstances of the particular post.
- Ask the same questions of each candidate.
- Make allowance for differences in communication and presentation styles.
- Be explicit that career breaks for family or medical needs or community responsibility will not negatively impact the hiring decision.

Collection of Equity Data

The CRCP expects institutions to encourage individuals to self-identify and to collect equity data to monitor progress toward meeting the university's [established targets for the FDGs](#).

Sunnybrook Research Institute has developed a [self-identification form](#).

- The self-identification form must be included as part of all internal selection and external recruitment processes.

- External and internal candidates and existing Chairholders must be encouraged to self-identify.
- Self-identification forms must be collected and safeguarded by a designated officer who is otherwise not part of the recruitment process.
- Collected data must be kept confidential and cannot be accessed by search committees.
- Aggregated data relating to a specific recruitment would be provided to the search committee chair.
- Aggregated data will be used for the purpose of institutional planning as part of the CRCP EDIAP, and for reporting to the university and the CRCP.

Committee Recommendation and Hiring Decision

The CRCP is committed to excellence and equity in research. Search committees should be mindful that the best-qualified candidates may not have the most years of experience, the highest number of publications or the largest number of academic accomplishments. Nontraditional research outputs, professional services, outreach mentoring, training of highly qualified personnel and other nontraditional contributions should receive proper consideration when evaluating CVs. Committees should avoid using a candidate's apparent "fit" as hiring criterion. In the context of the institution's equity targets, strategic hiring should be considered when there are two equally qualified candidates and where one is from one (or more) of the FDGs.

At the end of the process, the chair of the search committee should provide a written, signed report to the vice-president, research on the hiring process.

The report/recommendation must include:

- certification by the committee chair that the recruitment and nomination process was transparent, open and equitable; and the report/recommendation should be signed by the vice-president, research
- rationale for selection of the chosen candidate
- explanation if the selected candidate is not a member of one of the FDGs; and **the rationale for not selecting a candidate from a target group should be approved by the equity officer or equivalent with equity expertise**
- brief description of the process for CV review and selection for interview
- rationale for selection of search committee members, including declaration and resolution of any conflicts of interest
- copy of guidance provided to people reviewing CVs
- copy of guidance provided to the search committee.

A checklist for the external recruitment process is available in Appendix C.

Examples of Supplementary Documentation That May Be Requested by the CRCP

Within 24 months following a recruitment and nomination, institutions may be asked to provide proof that the process was open and fair. The following documentation that may be requested by the CRCP is as follows:

- membership of committees, with indication that it includes representation from at least one of the FDGs
- description of equity training provided
- description of the role of the equity officer or equivalent
- archived copy of advertisement or announcement of the CRC opportunity
- description of strategy to identify and actively recruit members of the FDGs
- criteria and assessment grids
- internal policies and guidelines
- copy of the blank self-identification form.

Supporting Materials and Equity Training Resources

[CRC unconscious bias training module](#)

[U of T's Enhancing Diversity](#)

[Searching for Excellence and Diversity Workshop](#)

[CRC Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Practices](#)

[CRC Guidelines for Ensuring a Fair and Transparent Recruitment and Nomination Process](#)

[CRC Best Practices for Recruitment, Hiring and Retention](#)

[Hiring Practices for Equity in Employment: Interviewing Guide](#)

[U of T's Better Practices in Recruitment](#)

[Canada Research Chairs at the University of Toronto](#)

[Self-identification form](#)

For more information about the CRCP at SRI, contact Kevin Hamilton, director, strategic research programs, SRI: kevin.hamilton@sri.utoronto.ca.

Appendix A

Sample Job Postings for Canada Research Chairs - External

a) Tier 1 External

Position Title (e.g, Research Scientist)

We currently have an opportunity for a [e.g., Research Scientist] with Sunnybrook Research Institute.

Background: [Add short background about the Research Platform the position is being advertised for.]

Position: [Describe details of the position available. Avoid a broad description of the position, and define the set of skills/expertise/experience required.]

The successful candidate will be appointed as a member of the [add Platform]. We also intend to nominate the successful candidate for a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair (CRC). Nominations for CRCs are subject to review by the CRC Secretariat, and appointment as a CRC is conditional on their approval. For further information on these federally endowed chairs that are open to all nationalities, including eligibility criteria, please consult the [Canada Research Chairs website](#). Sunnybrook Research Institute is committed to providing the candidate with the support required to secure the CRC.

Career Interruptions: Sunnybrook Research Institute recognizes that scientists have varying career paths and understands the impact that career interruptions can have on a candidate's record of research achievement. Candidates are encouraged to explain any personal circumstances in order to allow for a fair assessment of their application. Search committee members have been instructed to give careful consideration to, and be sensitive to the impact of, career interruptions in their assessments.

How to apply: The closing date for applications is [add date, 30 days minimum]. Applicants should submit [add details of what applicants should submit] addressed to Dr. [add name], chair of the search committee and sent to [add name/email/ address, etc.].

[Add more contact details if appropriate]

Diversity Statement: Sunnybrook Research Institute is committed to providing accessible employment practices that are in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). If you require accommodation for disability during any stage of the recruitment process, then please indicate this in your cover letter.

Sunnybrook Research Institute is strongly committed to inclusion and diversity within its community and welcomes all applicants including, but not limited to: women, visible minorities, Aboriginal People, people of all religions and ethnicities, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ persons and all others who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, [Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority](#).

Collection of Equity Data: As part of your application, you will be asked to complete a brief self-identification form, [found here](#). This form is voluntary and any information directly related to you is confidential and cannot be accessed by the search committee. Results will be aggregated for institutional planning purposes as part of [SRI's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#) initiative.

a) Tier 2 External

Position Title (e.g., Research Scientist)

We currently have an opportunity for a [e.g., Research Scientist] with Sunnybrook Research Institute.

Background: [Add short background about the Research Platform the position is being advertised for.]

Position: [Describe details of the position available. Avoid a broad description of the position, and define the set of skills/expertise/experience required.]

The successful candidate will be appointed as a member of the [add Platform]. We also intend to nominate the successful candidate for a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair (CRC). Nominees should be within 10 years of receiving their PhD. Applicants who are more than 10 years from having earned their highest degree (and where career breaks exist, such as maternity, parental or extended sick leave, clinical training, etc.) may have their eligibility for a Tier 2 chair assessed through the program's Tier 2 justification process. Nominations for CRCs are subject to review by the CRC Secretariat, and appointment as a CRC is conditional on their approval. For further information on these federally endowed chairs, open to all nationalities, including eligibility criteria, please consult the [Canada Research Chairs website](#). Sunnybrook Research Institute is committed to providing the candidate with the support required to secure the CRC.

Career Interruptions: Sunnybrook Research Institute recognizes that scientists have varying career paths and understands the impact that career interruptions can have on a candidate's record of research achievement. Candidates are encouraged to explain any personal circumstances in order to allow for a fair assessment of their application. Search committee members have been instructed to give careful consideration to, and be sensitive to the impact of, career interruptions in their assessments.

How to apply: The closing date for applications is [add date, 30 days minimum]. Applicants should submit [add details of what applicants should submit] addressed to Dr. [add name], chair of the search committee and sent to [add name/email/ address, etc.].

[Add more contact details if appropriate.]

Diversity Statement: Sunnybrook Research Institute is committed to providing accessible employment practices that are in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). If you require accommodation for disability during any stage of the recruitment process, then please indicate this in your cover letter.

Sunnybrook Research Institute is strongly committed to inclusion and diversity within its community and welcomes all applicants including, but not limited to: women, visible minorities, Aboriginal People, people of all religions and ethnicities, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ persons and all others who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, [Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority](#).

Collection of Equity Data: As part of your application, you will be asked to complete a brief self-identification form, [found here](#). This form is voluntary and any information directly related to you is confidential and cannot be accessed by the search committee. Results will be aggregated for institutional planning purposes as part of [SRI's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#) initiative.

Appendix B

Sample Candidate Evaluation Matrix

SAMPLE TEMPLATE TO BE ADAPTED TO THE PARTICULAR POST BEING RECRUITED

Candidate's Name:

Please indicate which of the following are true for you (check all that apply):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read candidate's CV | <input type="checkbox"/> Met with candidate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read candidate's scholarship | <input type="checkbox"/> Attended lunch or dinner with candidate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read candidate's letters of recommendation | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attended candidate's job talk | |

Please comment on the candidate's scholarship as reflected in the job talk:

Please comment on the candidate's teaching ability as reflected in the job talk:

Please rate the candidate on each of the following:

	excellent	good	neutral	fair	poor	unable to judge
Potential for (Evidence of) scholarly impact						
Potential for (Evidence of) research productivity						
Potential for (Evidence of) research funding						
Potential for (Evidence of) collaboration						
Potential for (Evidence of) outreach efforts to diverse groups						
Potential for (Evidence of) professional services						
Fit with institutional priorities						
Ability to make positive contribution to departmental research culture						
Potential (Demonstrated ability) to attract and supervise graduate students						
Potential (Demonstrated ability) to teach and supervise undergraduates						
Potential (Demonstrated ability) to be a conscientious member of SRI community						
Potential (Demonstrated ability) to training HQP						

Other comments?

Appendix C

Canada Research Chairs External Recruitment Process and Checklist

General Process Sequence:

- The Research Platform Director identifies the nature of the Canada Research Chair (CRC) vacancy to be filled and appoints the search committee chair (SCC).
- The SCC drafts the specific job requirements and job posting. Identify the recipients of the applications and of the data sheets. Identify any additional requirements of the recruitment process (e.g., “chalk-and-talk,” etc.).
- The SCC posts the job advertisement for 30 days.
- The SCC draws up the criteria for CV review and selection of interview candidates.
- The SCC recruits the search committee members, and nominates specific roles as required (e.g., CV review).
- Committee members undertake mandatory equity training.
- After 30 days of posting, applications and equity, diversity and inclusion materials are provided to the search committee (e.g., SRI guidelines, equity training materials, templates, etc.)
- Once the successful candidate is selected, the SCC compiles a report of process for sign-off by the vice-president, research.

Checklist

1) Job posting must include:

- specific reference to the qualifications, achievements, expertise and qualities expected of a successful candidate, in particular ensuring these are commensurate with the intended CRC Tier
- reference to the CRC opportunity and Sunnybrook Research Institute’s (SRI’s) intention to nominate the successful candidate for a CRC award
- for a Tier 2 CRC, the posting must describe the CRC eligibility requirements
- use of inclusive, unbiased, ungendered language
- reference to career interruptions
- name of the chair of the search committee
- SRI’s statement of commitment to equity and an encouragement to the federally designated groups (FDGs) to apply: women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with a disability and members of visible minorities
- posting for a minimum of 30 days
- request to candidates to complete and submit a voluntary self-declaration form
- review by an equity officer or equivalent prior being advertised
- promotion to special focus groups to reach out to a diverse pool of applicants.

2) Search Committee must:

- have established the application requirements, the selection criteria and shortlisting process **prior** to screening CVs/applications
- include representation from at least one of the FDGs
- ensure members take, at minimum, the **mandatory** [CRC unconscious bias training module](#)
- ensure members are aware of representation gap(s) among the institution's current CRCs
- consult with an equity officer, equity advisor (or equivalent) at all stages of the process.

3) The Interview must:

- be as objective as possible
- account for differences in communication and presentation styles
- be explicit that career breaks for family or medical needs or community responsibility will not negatively impact the hiring decision
- ask the same questions of each candidate
- the use of a candidate evaluation matrix is recommended.

4) Committee Recommendation and Hiring decision. Report/recommendation must include:

- certification by the committee chair that the recruitment and nomination process was transparent, open and equitable; report/recommendation to be countersigned by the vice-president, research
- description of decision-making process
- rationale for selection of chosen candidate
- explanation if selected candidate is not a member of one of the FDGs; **the rationale for not selecting a candidate from a target group should be approved by the equity officer or equivalent with equity expertise**
- copy of guidance provided to people reviewing CVs
- copy of process to select candidates to be invited for interview / presentation
- rationale for selection of search committee members, including declaration and resolution of any conflicts of interest
- copy of guidance provided to search committee;