



## York Research Chairs Program Guidelines for 2023-24 Competition

### 1. Context and Role of the Program

York University is committed to meeting the priorities articulated in the University Academic Plan, including strengthening academic quality, student success and community engagement. Building on these, the Strategic Research Plan helps advance these priorities, and identifies research intensification as a key goal that broadly enriches the Institution. As articulated in these documents, our research, scholarship, and creative activities enhance the quality of our academic programs and the student learning experience through curricular innovation and research opportunities for students. Beyond the classroom, the sharing of knowledge with community partners empowers a new generation of entrepreneurial, socially conscious Ontarians with the critical skills to guide our province to a world-leading sustainable future.

In order to achieve the objective of research intensification, it is essential that our faculty members be supported in their scholarly research and creative activities. Among other initiatives, broad-based assistance is offered for faculty members applying for grants as well as the administration of research projects; support and feedback is provided for multidisciplinary, large-scale projects; research partnerships are facilitated; and there is a recently expanded program for research-based teaching release.

Developing research chairs is another way the University is expanding its support of research and making York a competitive destination of choice for top quality faculty. In addition to endowed chairs and Canada Research Chairs (CRC), it has become common for universities to establish a term-based chair program intended primarily for internal candidates to complement and enhance other research programs.

This document sets out the terms and procedures for the York Research Chairs (YRC) program, an internal term-based research support program for established faculty research leaders and more junior emerging research leaders, which enables and enhances York's research success and international recognition for its research achievements.

The York Research Chairs program generally mirrors the federal Canada Research Chairs program, to broaden and deepen the impact of research chairs at York in building and intensifying world-renowned research across the institution. Thus, the level of support and recognition provided to York Research Chairs is expected to be aligned with the supports and recognition provided through the CRC program. York Research Chairs are awarded competitively based on the criteria of excellence in research and scholarship, contributions to research leadership, and the fostering of equity, diversity and inclusion within their research programs. The program broadly supports research in all areas and disciplines, with the role of Chairs expected to be addressed in Unit, Faculty, and Institutional research plans.

York views its investment in York Research Chairs as an essential component of its coordinated effort to promote the intensification of research. York Research Chairs may be either centrally supported or Faculty-based, but all must undergo a multi-disciplinary internal peer review that includes external arms-length peer review. Faculties are encouraged to nominate Faculty-based Chairs, subject to Provostial approval, under the general expectation that advancement funds will be used for this purpose. Faculties should consult with the Provost's Office when considering a Faculty-based Chair and note that Provostial sign off is required at the Notice of Intent stage.

While the primary intent for York Research Chairs is to recognize and enable internal research excellence, as an outward-looking institution seeking to grow its international reputation for research, external candidates<sup>1</sup> will not be excluded from consideration (i.e., a Faculty may choose to offer a Faculty-based YRC as an enhanced provision in the case of a planned tenure stream hire, with the approval of the Provost).

## 2. Chair Tiers

York Research Chairs are available at two levels analogous to CRCs:

- i. Tier 1 York Research Chairs are open to established research leaders at the rank of Full Professor.<sup>2</sup>
- ii. Tier 2 York Research Chairs are normally aimed at emerging research leaders within 15 years of their first academic appointment, excluding leaves.<sup>3</sup> However, due to interruptions from COVID-19, **this eligibility period is being extended by one year**. As a result, nominees within 16 years of their first academic appointment (i.e., 2007 or later for this year's competition, excluding leaves) will be eligible. Note that the 2023/24 competition is expected to be the last which incorporates a one-year eligibility extension. Beginning with the 2024/25 competition next year, the Tier 2 eligibility period will revert to 15 years post first academic appointment.
  - a. Further to this, and in recognition that promising early-career researchers are particularly challenging to assess in relation to other Tier 2 nominees, the program offers "**Early-Career**" **Tier 2 York Research Chairs** for researchers who are within five years of their first academic appointment. To account for interruptions due to COVID-19, **the eligibility period is being extended by one year** such that researchers appointed anytime in 2017 or later are eligible in the Early-Career category. As was the case for Tier 2 nominations, the 2023/24 competition is expected to be the last which<sup>2</sup> incorporates a one-year eligibility extension. Beginning with the 2024/25 competition

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<sup>1</sup> In this context, "external candidates" refers to new recruits hired in accordance with the University's procedures and practices for the hiring of faculty members.

<sup>2</sup> Candidates at the rank of Associate Professor at the time of nomination must successfully apply for promotion at the earliest opportunity following their nomination.

<sup>3</sup> First academic appointment is generally defined as a position where a researcher is capable of independently publishing, supervising, and applying for external research funding.

next year, the Early-Career Tier 2 eligibility period will revert to 5 years post first academic appointment.

Any Tier 2 nominees who have experienced career interruptions, including interruptions arising from COVID-19, are strongly encouraged to explain the nature and duration of these interruptions in the Tier 2 Eligibility section of the full nomination form. For those with medical or parental leaves (i.e., leaves excluding professional leaves related to training, sabbatical, or administrative-related), the eligibility window is extended to twice the time interruption.

Note that both Tier 1 and Tier 2 Chairs have five-year terms. As there is no renewal stream, Chairholders may only pursue a second term within the context of a central, open competition. However, centrally funded Chairholders are limited to two terms.

### **3. Expectations of York Research Chairs**

Tier 1 York Research Chairs are identified and recognized leaders of scholarship, research, and creative activities (SRCA). Tier 2 Chairs are identified as SRCA emerging leaders. As such, there is an expectation on the part of the University that York Research Chairs will exhibit leadership in promoting the overall development of SRCA at York that extends beyond their personal research programs.

Thus, Tier 1 Chairs are expected to be active SRCA mentors within their Units and disciplines, and to provide leadership in respect of major research initiatives, team-based research grants, and the development/operation of Organized Research Units.

Tier 2 Chairs are expected to contribute to, and participate in, similar activities in a manner that builds and develops their SRCA leadership skills over the period of their Chair.

Further to this, there is an expectation that both Tier 1 and Tier 2 Chairs participate on peer review committees (e.g., SPORT, MAAC) and engage with Research Commons.

All York Research 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 creative programs. As well, they are expected to foster a diverse, equitable and inclusive research environment.

Recognizing that York's external reputation and research standing depends to an important degree on our share of Tri-Council funding, York Research Chairs are expected to be active beneficiaries of Tri-Council funding, and to seek out other funding opportunities as may be appropriate to their discipline.

### **4. Nomination of York Research Chairs**

#### **4.1 Regular-Cycle Process**

York Research Chairs are awarded competitively based on the excellence and demonstrated leadership of the candidates. The Vice-President Research & Innovation (VPRI) and the Vice-President Academic & Provost (Provost) invite Faculties to nominate York faculty members in accordance with Faculty nomination processes governed by all applicable Faculty policies and practices, and according to a procedure established by the Faculty.

It is minimally expected that the Faculty will hold an open call, a Faculty-level committee will review nominations using an established adjudication rubric, and recommendations will be put forward to the Dean. The Dean will then submit a final slate to the VPRI. Considerations of equity, diversity and inclusion must factor into the nominee selection process (see Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Expectations section below).

Faculties should be cognizant of the number of York Research Chairs available in any given cycle when determining their nominations and must be realistic in their expectations in developing nominations for their scholars.<sup>4</sup>

#### **4.2 Off-Cycle Nominations**

All York Research Chair nominations (whether funded by a Faculty or through central supports) will be subject to the same level of adjudication rigor. This includes Decanal approval obtained after a clear and transparent Faculty-based selection process (utilizing best practices to avoid bias against traditionally marginalized groups), Faculty agreement of financial support, three external arms-length reviews, adjudication by the Strategic Project and Opportunity Review Team (SPORT), and final recommendations by the Research Chair Advisory Committee to the President. A regular, annual competition cycle ensures a consistent and fair process.

However, in very rare and exceptional circumstances, a flexible adjudication process that upholds current standards and is consistent with regular-cycle nominations can be undertaken off-cycle for Faculty-based YRCs. This will be initiated at the discretion of the Vice-President Research and Innovation on the recommendation of the Dean and approval by the Provost.

If an off-cycle nomination is being considered by a Faculty, it is strongly recommended to engage with the Strategic and Institutional Research Initiatives (SIRI) Unit in the Office of Research Services as soon as possible, to ensure timely execution of the process. Formal consideration of an off-cycle nomination will occur only if the Faculty provides the VPRI with the following:

- Letter from the Dean that includes a compelling justification that the regular-cycle deadlines cannot be met, and an overview of the excellence of the nominee.
- A supportive letter from the nominee's Departmental Chair.
- A copy of the nominee's CV.

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<sup>4</sup> While it is natural to expect that at least some of York's maturing Tier 2 Canada Research Chairs will meet the criteria for YRCs, it is stressed that Faculties should nominate their top candidates regardless of previous research chair benefits they may have received at York, and that maturing CRCs should neither be advantaged nor disadvantaged in the nomination process.

If the VPRI accepts the off-cycle nomination, the Faculty will submit a standard YRC nomination file (with content and structure consistent with regular-cycle nominations). The file will then undergo a review process including three external arms-length reviews as well as review by an interdisciplinary committee (which includes the VPRI and Provost). The committee will then put forward its recommendation to the President for approval.

Upon approval, the YRC term will begin on either of January 1, July 1, or September 1 as mutually agreeable, and will be publicly announced together with the next regular-cycle cohort (typically July of each year).

## **5. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Considerations**

An equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment is a key consideration of the York Research Chairs program, and strongly aligns with York's core values. As such, and as is the case with the CRC program, the York Research Chairs program seeks robust participation and representation 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.<sup>5</sup>

It is expected that due consideration of equity, diversity, and inclusion be reflected in each Faculty's nominee selection process. In this regard, the Faculty selection committee must itself include representation from the FDGs and 2SLGBTQ+ community, and its membership must receive training on the potential negative impact of unconscious bias on the career paths of individuals from equity deserving groups. Online equity training for adjudication committees is available to all faculty members through POLARIS (<https://www.yorku.ca/research/project/polaris/>) and Faculties are strongly encouraged to utilize this resource. Faculties may also wish to consult the CRC's [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion best-practice guide](#) for strategies to ensure a fair and transparent nomination process. To verify the diversity composition of the Faculty selection committee, the Faculty should request a Diversity Composition Report at the following link: <https://www.yorku.ca/research/project/polaris/welcome-to-york-universitys-diversity-composition-reporting-request-site/>.

A strong commitment to equity should also be reflected in the diversity of the nominees considered internally at the Faculty level. Faculties should undertake outreach that encourages faculty members from equity-deserving groups to pursue a nomination well before Faculty internal deadlines. The following best practices are recommended to ensure a diverse pool:

- Post or circulate the open call for nominations a minimum of 30 days prior to the stated internal deadline.
- Include a reference to circumstances that will extend eligibility in the call for nominations.

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<sup>5</sup> Please note that currently the FDGs do not include a category for 2SLGBTQ+. Please see details about the Employment Equity Act here <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service-commission/services/appointment-framework/employment-equity-diversity/employment-equity-groups.html>

- Include language that recognizes the legitimate impact that leaves can have on a nominee's record of achievement and that the leaves will be taken into consideration during the assessment process.
- Include a statement about the Faculty's and the YRC program's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Use inclusive, unbiased, and ungendered language.
- Share the call for nominations with association for underrepresented groups in the Faculty, where they exist.
- Faculties should not directly request self-identifying information from committee members or nominees.

Nominees will have the option to self-identify or explain their journey in a personal statement as a part of their EDI Action Plan to help adjudication committees contextualize their accomplishments.

By signing the Notice of Intent (NOI) form, nominees give permission for VPRI, the SPORT committee, and the Research Chair Advisory Committee to access their self-identification information. The information will be obtained through employment equity self-identification data gathered by the University and will be used by the committees during the adjudication process to advance equity. It will also be used by VPRI to monitor the EDI initiatives of the program. At the SPORT committee level, files will only be identified as self-identifying or non-self-identifying, whereas the Research Chair Advisory Committee and VPRI will have access to each nominee's detailed self-identification data. Nominees are encouraged to self-identify, as self-identification information is central to ensuring a diverse cohort of nominees for consideration.

Any individual who wishes to update their employment equity self-identification information may do so by completing the survey found at <https://hr1.apps01.yorku.ca/machform/view.php?id=1> (Note: you must first sign into York Passport to access the survey). Nominees should ensure that their information is updated prior to the VPRI's Notice of Intent deadline (September 29, 2023). If any questions arise, please contact the EDI Program Manager, Christal Chapman ([chapman7@yorku.ca](mailto:chapman7@yorku.ca)).

Faculties are asked to provide the following information along with their submitted Notices of Intent:

- The list of individuals considered for nomination by the Faculty. The nominee's individual self-identifying information should not be included in this report.
- A report addressing how equity, diversity and inclusion practices informed the Faculty's nominee selection process so as to meet the above requirements. The report must comment on the following points:
  - Confirmation that members of the Faculty selection committee received training on unconscious bias.
  - Confirmation of representation from equity-deserving groups on the Faculty selection committee.

- Outreach activities to potential nominees, and any attempts made to increase diversity of the nomination pool.
- The criteria used to select candidates to put forward to VPRI.

## **6. Adjudication Process**

Upon receipt by VPRI, nomination files will be sent for external peer review by domain experts. Those reviews will help inform adjudication by the Strategic Project and Opportunity Review Team (SPORT), a multi-disciplinary committee with representation across all ten disciplinary Faculties. The SPORT will determine which nominees meet the established expectations for a YRC and will rank those nominees accordingly.

Adjudication by SPORT will be divided between two sub-committees: one for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) nominations, and one for social sciences, humanities and arts (SSHA) nominations. Nominees will indicate under which discipline category they wish their nomination file to be adjudicated. Nominations within these disciplinary-based committees will be adjudicated by tier. Nominees are asked to ensure that their nomination materials include sufficient context in respect of their research program and related achievements so as to allow informed assessment by those who may not have direct expertise in the area. As well, the use of jargon, acronyms and technical terminology should be avoided.

Adjudication summaries from the SPORT will be presented to the University's Research Chair Advisory Committee (comprised of the Vice-President Academic & Provost, the Vice-President Research & Innovation, the Affirmative Action Officer, the AVPs Research, the AVP Graduate, a CRC Tier 1 representative, a CRC Tier 2 representative, and the Chair of APPRC), which will undertake a ranking of the nominations – with consideration of the diversity of the YRC program – and make recommendations for approval by the President. Following this process, feedback explaining the basis for recommendations, will be provided to all nominees and their Faculties.

## **7. French-Language Nominations**

If a French-language nomination will be submitted, Faculties are asked to indicate this on the Notice of Intent (NOI) form. In such a case, it is generally expected that all suggested external reviewers listed on the NOI will have the ability to undertake their review using the French-language file.

Nominees submitting French-language materials are encouraged to identify a translator with knowledge of their field of research. However, if they are unable to do so, VPRI will arrange to secure a translator.

The nomination file and the external reviews will be translated into English for use by SPORT, with all costs covered by VPRI. The nominee and their Faculty will be given an opportunity to review the translation of the nomination file before it is provided to SPORT, to ensure accuracy and completeness. However, they will not have access to translated external reviews prior to adjudication.

## **8. Guidelines for Additional York Research Chair Supports**

Faculties and Units are expected to provide York Research Chairs with enhanced physical and HR supports for the successful development of their research programs for the duration of their terms. As well, Faculties are responsible for securing and funding all space requirements for Chairholders.

York Research Chairs will normally be expected to receive teaching release equivalent to 50% of the normal teaching load in their home Faculty, as part of their Chair package. However, the sum total of teaching release for York Research Chairs may not exceed an amount that reduces their total teaching expectations below a course load of 1.0, or in the case of faculty members associated with Osgoode Hall Law School, a teaching load of less than six on-load teaching credit hours for the academic year. This minimum student contact requirement may be expected to be divided equally between undergraduate and graduate assignments. In all cases, responsibility for funding teaching release will lie with the home Faculty.

For the duration that recipients hold the position, Tier 1 York Research Chairs will be provided with a minor research grant of \$25,000 annually, to be employed in support of their research program and research leadership activities.

For Tier 2 Chairs (including Early-Career Tier 2), \$20,000 will be provided annually to the Chair as a minor research grant, to be employed in support of their research program and research leadership activities.

In the case of centrally supported Chairs, the VPRI will provide the funding for the minor research grant. In the case of Faculty-based Chairs, it is the responsibility of the Faculty to provide the funding for the grant. It is generally expected that Faculties will use advancement funds for this purpose. However, for nominations made in response to a compelling situation like retention, Faculties may submit a proposal to directly fund the related Chair.

Should any minor research grant funds remain at the end of the Chair term, the Chairholder will be provided with a six-month phase out period for payment of outstanding commitments. Any balance following the phase out period will be returned.

## **9. York Research Chair Selection Criteria**

The following criteria will be considered by the SPORT and the Research Chair Advisory Committee. External reviewers secured by VPRI will also be asked to evaluate nomination files against the following criteria:

### ***Tier 1 nominees should:***

- Be outstanding and innovative world-class researchers whose accomplishments have made a major impact in their fields.
- Be recognized internationally as leaders in their fields.
- Have superior records of attracting and supervising graduate students and postdoctoral fellows (taking into account 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.

***Tier 2 nominees should:***

- Be excellent emerging world-class researchers who have demonstrated particular research creativity.
- Have demonstrated the potential to achieve international recognition in their fields in the next five to ten years.
- 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.

**10. Leaves**

The Faculty must notify VPRI (email to [roseman@yorku.ca](mailto:roseman@yorku.ca)) of any impending leaves to be taken by York Research Chairs.

Maternity, parental, medical, or family medical leaves may be undertaken for a period of up to two years for a single leave. For these types of leaves, the term of the Chair may be extended, upon request, by the equivalent period of the leave, and funds may continue to be used. However, no additional funds will be awarded and the total amount of funding over the term of the Chair will remain unchanged.

In situations where a Chairholder undertakes extensive administrative responsibilities (e.g., Interim Vice-Dean, Associate Vice-President, etc.) the Faculty may request to delay the start date of the Chair, or temporarily suspend the Chair until the completion of the administrative post. In these cases, it is expected that funds will not be used during the suspension of the Chair.

In the case of unpaid leaves, which may last up to one year, a Chairholder's term will not be extended.

In general, funds will only be made available during the leave to support trainees as per the YRC research proposal; however, a budget outlining the use of such funds during the leave must be submitted and approved by VPRI prior to the start of the leave. Unused funds during the leave period may be carried over to the next fiscal year, but not beyond the end date of the Chair.

**11. Sabbaticals**

Sabbaticals are not considered eligible for a term extension, as they are designed to promote high levels of scholarly and professional activity. However, any residual funds during the sabbatical may be transferred to the next fiscal year, but not beyond the end date of the Chair.

**12. Linkage to Advancement Opportunities**

As focal points for the best in individual SRCA at York and its translation to the benefit of society, York Research Chairs present advancement opportunities to bring together community interests with

cutting-edge research. Thus, Faculties are encouraged to articulate their York Research Chair goals and to develop support structures and long-term plans for their York Research Chair holders through the development of naming opportunities, term support, scholarships and fellowships, among others.

### **13. Second Term and Career Planning**

Pursuit of a second term is subject to open competition and dependent on the continuing availability of resources. Note that there is a limit of two 5-year terms for centrally supported Chairs, and it is generally recommended that Faculty-based Chairs adopt a two-term limit as well.

Thus, Faculties and Units are expected to work closely with Chairholders to provide for appropriate expectations and to be proactive in planning for the transitioning of faculty to and from York Research Chair positions.