

Early Career Researchers

Tri-Agency Definitions*

**Definitions are copied from agency websites as of July 2024.*

SSHRC

An emerging scholar is someone who has not yet had the opportunity to establish an extensive record of research achievement, but is in the process of building one.

Applicants identifying themselves as an emerging scholar must demonstrate that they have not applied successfully, as principal investigator or project director, for a grant offered through SSHRC, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, or the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Emerging scholars may, however, have previously held or currently hold knowledge mobilization grants and/or SSHRC Partnership Engage Grants.

In addition, they must meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. have completed their highest degree no more than six years before the competition deadline (SSHRC considers only the date of completion of the first doctorate); or
2. have held a tenured or tenure-track postsecondary appointment for less than six years; or
3. have held a postsecondary appointment, but never a tenure-track position (in the case of institutions that offer tenure-track positions); or
4. have had their careers significantly interrupted or delayed for health or family reasons within the past six years.

CIHR

An early career researcher (ECR) is a researcher within five years of the date of their first independent research-related appointment.

Given that career progress for an ECR is particularly vulnerable to normal life circumstances, CIHR will adjust the eligibility window, as follows:

- eligible leaves (e.g. maternity, parental, medical, family medical, bereavement) will extend ECR status (i.e. will not be counted towards the maximum) and are credited as twice the amount of time taken;
- no adjustments are provided for professional leaves (e.g., training, sabbatical, administrative). No adjustments are provided for time spent on non-research related duties or for the pursuit of non-research related career activities.

NSERC

Early career researchers (ECR) are applicants who have held their first independent academic position within the last five years. For example, to be classified as an ECR, a researcher submitting an NOI in August 2024 would have been hired on or after July 1, 2019. The five-year window for being considered

an ECR is adjusted to take into account instances where a researcher has had an eligible delay in research.

All eligible leaves (for example, maternity and parental leave, personal illness, chronic illness, or disability associated with reduced research activity, leave taken by applicants for family-related illness, bereavement), as well as delays related to COVID-19, are credited as twice the amount of time taken. For example, a researcher submitting an NOI in August 2024 and who took a seven-month parental leave within the past five years must have been hired on or after May 2018 to be considered an ECR. Professional leaves (for example, training, sabbatical, administrative) are not credited.