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Memo

To: Associate Deans Research

Cc: Deans, Faculty Research Offices

From: Amir Asif, Vice-President Research & Innovation

Date: May 30, 2024

Subject: York University Internal Process for NSERC Arthur B. McDonald Fellowship Nominations

Introduction

Please find below the revised information regarding the internal call for nominations for the 2025 [NSERC Arthur B. McDonald Fellowships](#) which are awarded annually to recognize and enhance the career development of outstanding and highly promising scientists and engineers who are faculty members of Canadian universities. Please note this a pre-call announcement for our internal process. We anticipate that NSERC will soon update its website for this year's competition and there may be changes that affect the requirements for the final submission to the funder.

The internal nomination, review and feedback process is designed to strengthen nominations and to result in the most competitive submissions from York University. Universities may only submit six nominations; if necessary, the internal nomination process will also inform the selection of the six nominations to go forward.

This information should be circulated to your respective Research Directors, Faculty Research Offices and faculty members, to ensure their familiarity with the internal nomination and review process.

NSERC Arthur B. McDonald Fellowships

NSERC's [Arthur B. McDonald Fellowships](#) are awarded to recognize early-stage academic researchers in the natural sciences and engineering and support them to enhance their research capacity, so that they can become leaders in their field and inspire others. For further context, potential applicants and/or nominators are encouraged to view [past winners](#).

Every year, NSERC awards up to six McDonald Fellowships that are held for a two-year period. Successful Fellows are relieved of teaching and administrative duties, so that they can devote all their time and energy to research. Each Fellow receives a research grant of \$250,000 over two years, which is subject to the [Tri-Agency Financial Administration Guide](#).

The Fellowship normally also includes \$90,000 per year paid to the university as a contribution toward the Fellow's salary. As part of the Fellowship agreement, the university

is expected to fund a replacement for the Fellow's teaching and administrative responsibilities. Should the recipient of the Fellowship already hold another federal award that has a salary component, such as a Canada Research Chair, NSERC will reduce the contribution to the university accordingly.

Eligibility

Nominees should be an early career researcher, defined as holding an independent academic position for 10 year or less as of December 14 of the year of the competition (i.e., as of December 14, 2014 or later for this year's competition) and currently hold a grant from NSERC.

An independent academic position is defined as a position that:

- Is a university faculty appointment (adjunct, non-tenured or tenured).
- Requires that the researcher engage 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.

The eligibility window is adjusted to take into account eligible delays in research, such as parental leave, bereavement or illness. These delays must be identified in the Personal Data Form (Form 100) and the impacts of the research delay should be fully described. NSERC will credit eligible delays as double their total duration.

The research of the nominee must be primarily based in the fields of the natural sciences and/or engineering. NSERC reserves the right to rule on the eligibility of nominees.

The term of the Arthur B. McDonald Fellowship is anticipated to be from April 1, 2025 through March 31, 2027, with the award normally paid in two installments of \$125,000 per year.

Selection Criteria

Submissions to NSERC will be reviewed by a selection committee of distinguished academic, government and industry representatives from a variety of disciplines, according to the following criteria:

- **Research achievements and impact (40%):**
 - The originality, quality and impact of the nominee's contributions to date.
 - Whether these contributions have led to ground-breaking advances in the research area(s) and/or a technology or policy that addresses socioeconomic or environmental needs.
- **Outreach, mentorship and leadership (30%):**

Past achievement and the potential for future achievement in:

 - Communication of research to non-specialist audiences and/or involvement in public outreach activities.
 - Mentorship of the next generation.
 - Leadership in activities related to the above and/or their research area and/or the broader natural sciences and engineering context.
- **Future directions (30%):**

Whether the nominee's research vision, proposed research, and description of HQP training:

- Represents an original or innovative concept or line of inquiry.
- Will significantly advance the research area and/or have policy- and/or technology-related impact.
- Are likely to succeed given the proposed work and the research environment.
- Define a highly appropriate approach to training and mentoring HQP.
- Consider equity, diversity and inclusion in the research and training environment.
- If applicable, integrates consideration of sex, gender, and diversity in the research design; if not applicable, the appropriateness of the rationale provided.

Note that the selection committee is multidisciplinary, and as such the nomination material should be written for non-specialists.

Emphasis on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Faculties are expected to give due consideration to equity, diversity and inclusion with regards to soliciting and supporting nominations. This is to be detailed in the Faculty's memo included in the internal nomination package (see details below).

If more than six nominations are received by VPRI, and in the case of substantially equal nominees who meet the criteria of the award, equity considerations may inform the determination of those nominations selected to proceed. VPRI will access self-identification information on file with Human Resources with the nominee's permission.

As such, nominees are:

1. Encouraged to self-identify (or update their self-identification information) by completing the survey found at <https://hr1.apps01.yorku.ca/machform/view.php?id=1>. Note that you must first sign into Passport York to access the survey. For questions, please contact Christal Chapman, EDI Program Manager (chapman7@yorku.ca).
2. Provide a signed letter in the internal nomination package that acknowledges the nominee understands that their self-identification information may be used in the adjudication process, and that they grant VPRI access to this information. (See template below.)

Note that self-identification information will be kept confidential by VPRI; only whether or not a nominee has self-identified (and not how they have self-identified) will be discussed.

Internal Nomination Process

- Faculties are asked to submit nominations for review by the Major Awards Advisory Committee (MAAC). There is no limit as to the number of nominations that Faculties may bring forward.
- The MAAC will review nominations and provide feedback to nominees and advice to inform institutional decision-making on which nominations are likely to succeed.
- Abby Vogus, SIRI Specialist, Office of Research Services, will work with nominees to prepare final documentation for submission.

York Internal Nomination Package (due by noon on Wednesday October 16, 2024 via email to avogus@yorku.ca)

A complete internal nomination package includes:

- A Faculty memo that includes the following:
 - Endorsement of the nomination.
 - A contextual explanation of the scope and impact of the research.
 - Description of how the Faculty identified nominees for this opportunity, including information about how it took equity, diversity and inclusion into consideration in selecting nominees.
 - A statement that, should a Fellowship be awarded, the Faculty approves complete release from teaching and administrative duties, and describes how the Faculty will fully relieve the nominee of these responsibilities.
- A completed NSERC Personal Data Form ([Form 100](#)) – contributions do not need to be limited to those in the last 6 years and there is no page limit.
- A draft letter explaining a) why you (the nominee) deserve consideration for the McDonald Fellowship, taking into account research achievements and impacts, and outreach mentorship and leadership (max 3 pages); and b) description of your future research directions, including your research vision, proposed research and approach to training highly qualified personnel (max 3 pages).
- A signed letter from the nominee stating that you (the nominee) understand that your self-identification information may be used in the adjudication process in cases where candidates are considered to be substantially equal, and that you agree to allow VPRI to access your self-identification information for this purpose. A template is provided as the last page of this memo.

Completed Nomination Package (due November 28, 2024 by email to avogus@yorku.ca)

A. The nominee provides:

- The final nomination letter with two major sections:
 - ***The description of nomination*** (max 3 pages): Why you (the nominee) deserve consideration for the McDonald Fellowship, taking into account research achievements and impacts, and outreach mentorship and leadership; and
 - ***Future Research Directions*** (max 3 pages): Description of your future research directions including your research vision, proposed research and approach to training highly qualified personnel.
- A completed NSERC Personal Data Form ([Form 100](#)) – contributions do not need to be limited to those in the last 6 years and there is no page limit.
- Page one of an Application for a Grant ([Form 101](#)). Note that only the top part, including the Certification/Requirements box, needs to be completed. No signatures are required on this form.
- A completed [Impact Assessment Form \(Appendix A\)](#), if required.
- A completed [external reviewer suggestion form](#). Nominees must not contact suggested external reviewers in advance.
- A signed [Terms and Conditions of Form for Nominees](#).

- A signed [ORS Checklist](#).
- In January, nominees will receive a system-generated email from NSERC to complete a required self-identification questionnaire. This survey is required, and nominees may select “I prefer not to answer”. No self-identifying data is provided to the NSERC peer reviewers.

B. The SIRI team, on behalf of the executive head of the University, provides the completed and signed McDonald Institution Certification of Nominee Form. The form should:

- Indicate how the University will fully relieve the nominee of these responsibilities during the tenure of the award.
- Outline the University’s process in selecting its nominees.

Nominations will be submitted to NSERC by VPRI.

Relevant Deadlines

Date	Milestone
Noon, October 16, 2024	Faculties submit internal nominations to VPRI
Late October	MAAC Review
Early November	VPRI decisions and feedback provided to nominees
November 28, 2024	Final submission to ORS
December 6, 2024	Anticipated NSERC deadline (please note this deadline may change when the call is launched by NSERC)

Contact

For more information please contact Abby Vogus, Office of Research Services, avogus@yorku.ca.

LETTER TEMPLATE

(please use Faculty or Department letterhead available to you)

[Date]

Dear Ms. Vogus,

This letter confirms that I have read the information provided in the memo to Faculties regarding the NSERC Arthur B. McDonald Fellowship in relationship to equity, diversity and inclusion. I further understand that if it is necessary for the Major Awards Advisory Committee to adjudicate nominations, my self-identification information may be used to determine which nominations to put forward to NSERC. I grant permission for this data to be shared with the Office of Research Services to facilitate this process.

Sincerely,

[Nominee signature]