



# Early Researcher Award Round 18 Information Session

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# ERA Overview

- ERA helps promising, recently appointed researchers in Ontario build their research teams
- Program goal is to improve Ontario's ability to attract and retain the best and brightest research talent
- Funding: \$100,000 from Ontario and \$50,000 matched funds
  - Plus Ontario provides \$40,000 for indirect costs
- Open to all disciplines
- [Review all Program Guidelines](https://www.ontario.ca/page/early-researcher-awards-program-guidelines)

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# Eligibility

- The ERA program is open on a competitive basis to researchers who:
  - are full-time faculty or principal investigators who, at the application deadline, are based at an eligible institution
  - have started their academic career on or after **January 1, 2018**
  - have completed their first PhD or terminal degree on or after **January 1, 2013**
- Family, required continuing education training and medical leaves are usually considered eligible interruptions, but normally only **official leave** periods will extend eligibility.
- Extended eligibility is calculated at a 1:1 replacement (i.e. 10 months leave only extends eligibility by 10 months and is not rounded up to a full year)

# Eligibility - Continued

- Working in industry, postdoctoral fellowship or research associate positions are **not eligible** career interruptions.
- If nominees have held **any** positions outside of the allowed windows that may **in any way** be erroneously misconstrued as a first independent academic research position, a proactive justification should be provided in Section 9d clarifying why this is not the case. Otherwise, nominations risk being declared ineligible.
- A panel makes decision on eligibility. There is no appeals process for ERA decisions, including those regarding eligibility.

# Matching Funding

- Faculty must confirm matching funding and the source of those funds
- Eligible matching funds must cover eligible direct costs and can include:
  - **Cash** contributions from private sector
  - University scholarships for undergrads, grad students, and postdoc fellowships or other cash contribution
- **Ineligible** matching funds:
  - Teaching assistantships
  - Start up funds from York
  - Awards from federal granting agencies or Canada/Ontario Genomics
  - Other grants from the Ontario government, includes specific purpose grants, Ontario graduate scholarships and Ontario graduate fellowships as part of provincial program funding.
  - Indirect funds provided by the ERA

# Eligible costs

- All costs must only be for the research team (excluding PI)
  - Salaries and benefits (must be based in Ontario)
  - Travel costs for research activities and conferences
  - Other associated expenses for research team
    - Police record checks and job advertisements
    - Publication costs for team
    - Accommodations for off site research
    - Lab user fees
- \$1,000 may be used for required Youth Outreach Activities
- Up to \$7,500 may be used for discretionary expenses to carry out the project provided it fulfills the objective of the program of building research talent.
- See [guidelines](#) for details

# Application Components

- Application Form, includes budget and milestones
- Proposed Research – 6 pages
- CV
- 3 Letters of Reference
- Risk Checklist and Attestation forms

# Reference Letters

- Faculty research offices solicit 3 letters of reference
  - One letter – non-arm's length source
  - Two letters – arm's length source
- Letters should address all the ERA Evaluation Criteria
- Provide referees updated CV and draft proposal
- **Make sure referees do not just recycle an old letters!**
- Recommended that the **arm's length letters** be from researchers of **international stature**
- Instructions for letters are provided in the Call Guidelines



# Security Requirements



- Applications require submitting a separate Mitigating Economic and Geopolitical Risk Checklists.
- Applications will also require an Attestation form on Safeguarding Research (still in development).
- Consult Risk and Security documents listed in the ERA Round 18 Guidelines, including the Guidelines and Tools to Implement Research Security.
- Disclose recent and ongoing collaborations with all foreign institutions.
- iNOI will be reviewed by Innovation York.

# Intellectual Property



- A member of successful ERA teams will be required to complete a foundational IP course provide by UofT or the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI)
- Familiarize yourself with resources from Intellectual Property Ontario and the Province's Intellectual Property Action Plan

# Deadlines

| Date                         | Tasks   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Monday, June 17, 2024        | Faculties submit Internal Notice of Intent for ERA applicants to <a href="mailto:siri@yorku.ca">siri@yorku.ca</a> .   |
| Monday, July 8, 2024         | The reference letters must be received by SIRI ( <a href="mailto:siri@yorku.ca">siri@yorku.ca</a> ).<br><b>Nominees <u>must not</u> be cc'ed nor have access to letters.</b>  |
| Monday, July 15, 2024        | <b>Completed Applications due to SIRI (<a href="mailto:siri@yorku.ca">siri@yorku.ca</a>):</b><br>1) ERA application form (with attachments)<br>2) Completed Mitigating Risk Checklist and Attestation Form<br>3) Faculty memo confirming matched funds and source of funds<br>4) Signed ORS Checklist |
| Thursday, July 25, 2024 @5pm | <b>Deadline for ORS to submit applications to the Ministry</b>  |

# Evaluation Process

**Panel of Chairs determines eligibility**

**Peer Review Panel review**

- Arts & Humanities
- Environmental Sciences, Natural Sciences
- Energy, Engineering, Emerging Tech
- Health Systems research
- ICT, math and physics
- Life sciences, clinical
- Life sciences, non-clinical
- Social Sciences
- Materials and Adv Manufacturing

**Ontario Research Fund Advisory Board make recommendations**

**Minister makes final decision**

# Evaluation Criteria

- Excellence of the Researcher (40%)
- Quality of Research (30%)
- Development of Research Talent (20%)
- Strategic Value for Ontario (10%)

# Success Rates

## Overall Competition Success Rates

| Round | Eligible | Awarded | Rate  |
|-------|----------|---------|-------|
| 17    | 309      | 54      | 17.5% |
| 16    | 345      | 54      | 15.7% |
| 15    | 294      | 54      | 18.4% |
| 14    | 274      | 74      | 27%   |

← Government change

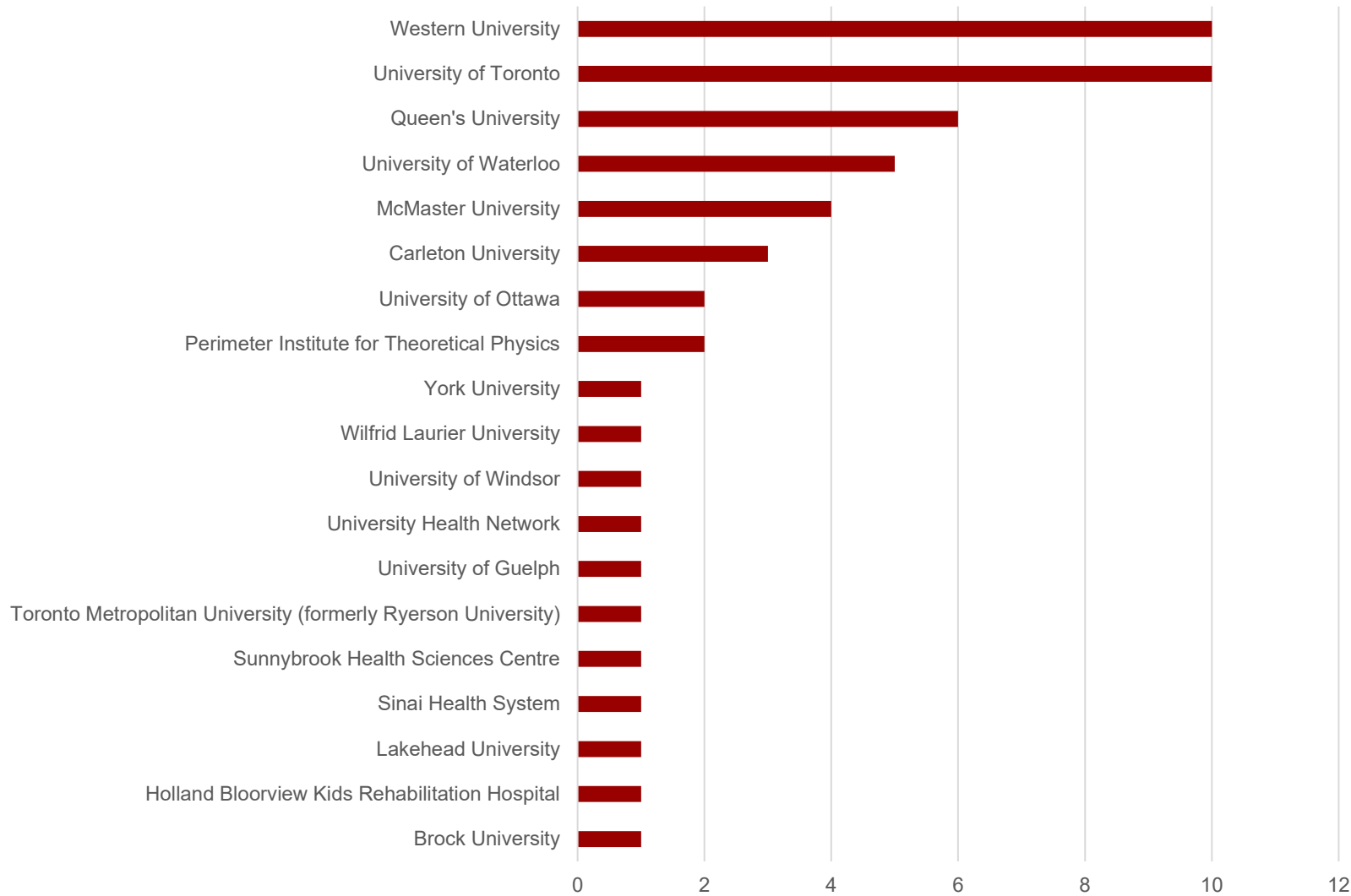
## York Success Rates

| Round | Submitted | Awarded | Rate  |
|-------|-----------|---------|-------|
| 17    | 19        | 1       | 5.3%  |
| 16    | 25        | 0       | 0%    |
| 15    | 18        | 2       | 11%   |
| 14    | 16        | 2       | 12.5% |

# SSHA-based Research Success Rates

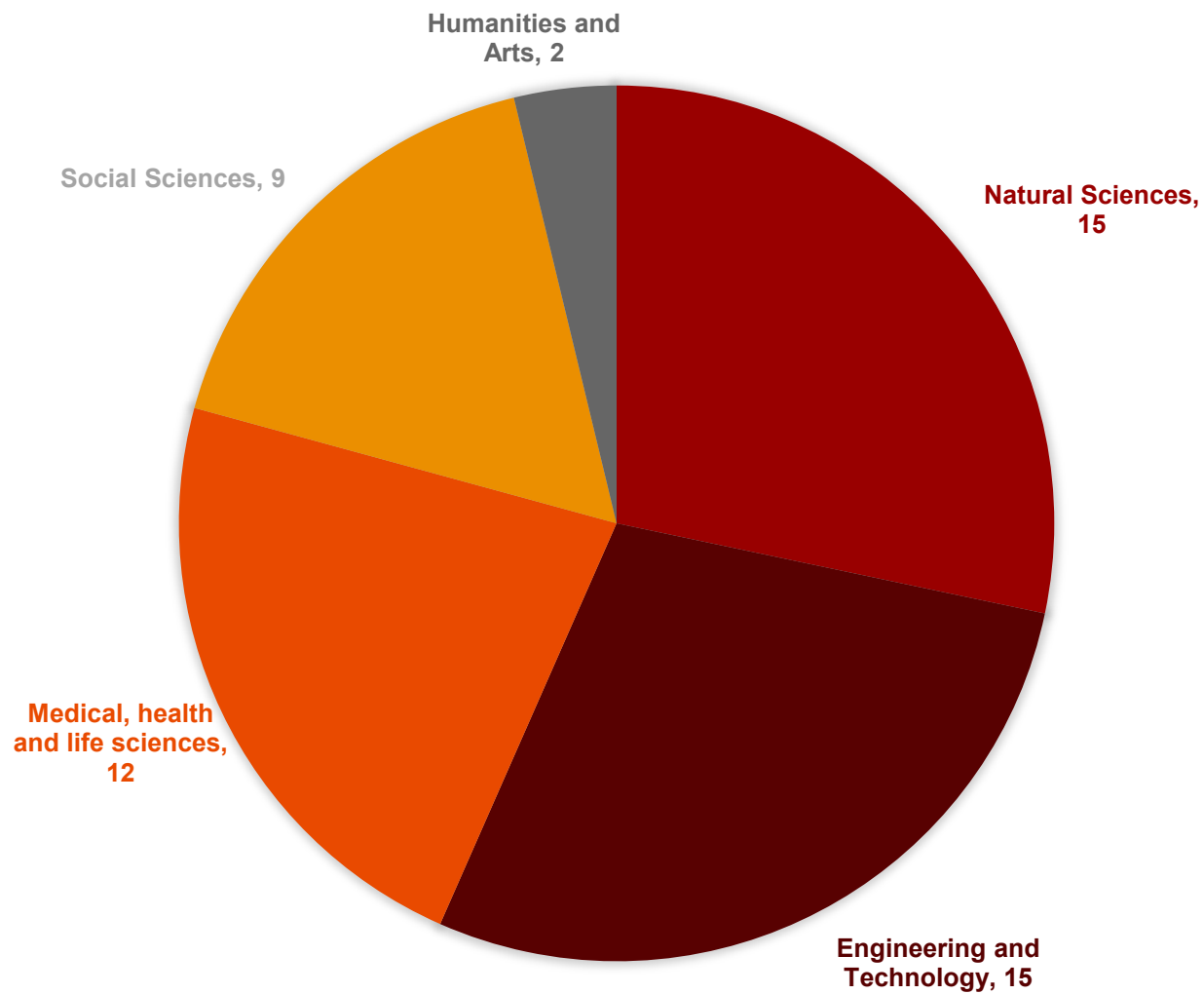
- Fewer SSHA-based awards
- Typically lower submission rates at York
- Advice:
  - Meaningful role for trainees and skills acquisition
  - Strategic value (policy, culture, etc.) and the gap you will fill in the Ontario research context
  - Emphasize relationships and engagement with the community, how knowledge of the community informs your work
  - Demonstrate how the research will inform local and regional communities

# ROUND 17 AWARDS BY INSTITUTION





# ROUND 17 AWARDS BY PRIMARY AREA OF RESEARCH



# ROUND 17 AWARDS BY SECONDARY FIELD

## Natural Sciences

| Secondary Field                          | Number |
|--|--------|
| Earth and related environmental sciences | 1      |
| Mathematics and statistics               | 1      |
| Artificial Intelligence                  | 2      |
| Chemical Sciences                        | 2      |
| Computer and Information Sciences        | 2      |
| Biological Sciences                      | 3      |
| Physical Sciences                        | 4      |

## Social Sciences

| Secondary Field                         | Number |
|---|--------|
| Culture, recreation, religion and media | 1      |
| sociology and related studies           | 1      |
| ★ Psychology and cognitive sciences     | 7      |

## ★ Medical, health and life sciences

| Secondary Field                  | Number |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| Clinical Sciences                | 1      |
| Social Sciences                  | 1      |
| Clinical Medicine                | 2      |
| Health Science                   | 3      |
| Basic Medicine and life sciences | 5      |

## Engineering and Technology

| Secondary Field  | Number |
|--|--------|
| Chemical Engineering   | 1      |
| Civil Engineering, maritime engineering, transport engineering, and mining engineering | 1      |
| Colloaid and surface chemistry   | 1      |
| ★ Industrial Biotechnology, n.e.c  | 1      |
| Mechanical Engineering   | 1      |
| ★ Neurosciences, medical and physiological and health aspects                          | 1      |
| Nonlinear optics   | 1      |
| Other engineering and technologies   | 1      |
| Electrical engineering, computer engineering, and information engineering              | 3      |
| ★ Medical and bioengineering   | 4      |

# Recurring Critiques in Unsuccessful Nominations

## Excellence of the Researcher (40%)

- **Stature:** Candidate does not stand out among the pool of applicants.
- **Experience:** The candidate has limited independent academic experience / chance to demonstrate potential in training / was recently appointed and is encouraged to reapply in the future.
- **Peer-reviewed funding:** The candidate does not hold competitive grant funds / or limited ongoing peer-reviewed grant support.
- **Publications:** Many publications are in low-impact journals; candidate's publication record is moderate; and/or candidate has not published independently.
- **Reference letters:** not sufficiently arm's length; only modestly describe the candidate's potential and research excellence; would be strengthened if it included letters of reference from internationally recognized experts in the field.

# Recurring Critiques in Unsuccessful Nominations - continued

## Quality of the Research (30%)

- Research project is diffuse, and lacks objective measures of success.
- The research is not well-situated within the relevant literature and/or connected to related work in the field.
- The research methodology is very conventional / or lacks originality and the candidate should consider a more innovative approach.
- Research has practical applications, but lacks originality.
- Research plan has little information about analysis of results.
- The plan of research is too broad and/or the objectives are undefined.
- Research plans are weak/have design weaknesses.
- The research plans are too modest and will not occupy five years of work.

# Recurring Critiques in Unsuccessful Nominations – continued 2

## Development of Research Talent (20%)

- The candidate has limited experience independently training students.
- Training proposed is not well described.
- Plans to supervise the trainees are not clear.
- The application would have been strengthened if the candidate had more experience publishing with students.
- The candidate should clarify their role in co-supervisions and distinguish between formal and informal supervisions.
- The planned training activities are not suitable for the level of trainees proposed

## Strategic Value to Ontario (10%)

- The proposal does not clearly demonstrate the benefit of the research to Ontario
- Strategic value section lacks concrete details.

# General tips

- Use clear, accessible language
- Demonstrate involvement with research with peer-reviewed funding
- Demonstrate your academic independence
- Provide evidence of publishing with students
- Link the proposal to your research milestones
- Describe the specific roles and responsibilities of the research team
- Be specific to the value of your research to Ontario
- Use the [TIPS EDI Best Practices Guide](#) (CRC guidelines)
- Follow the guidelines and instructions in the application (CV formatting, outline for the proposed research)

# York U support

- Faculty Research Office Support:
  - Reviewing application drafts and other support as required
  - Soliciting/liaising with authors of letters of reference
  - Signatures on ORS checklists and memos
- Strategic and Institutional Research Initiatives (SIRI) Unit Support:
  - Answer any questions or provide advice to Research Offices
  - Liaison with Ministry for any questions/clarifications
  - Tracking letters of reference
  - Identifying mentors from successful ERA applicants
  - Coordination of submission
  - Link to Innovation York for Risk Mitigation Plans