

## 2025 NSERC CREATE Competition Applicant Guide

### Overview

The Collaborative Research and Training Experience (CREATE) program provides up to \$1.65M over 6 years to fund the development of innovative training and mentorship initiatives targeting teams of highly qualified research students from Canada and abroad. Successful applicants, including UAlberta awardees (we have led nine CREATE programs since 2012), can be found [here](#).

This document contains:

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**If you have any questions, please reach out to:**

**Kelly Maher**

Sr. Research Partner

College of Natural and Applied Sciences

[kelly.maher@ualberta.ca](mailto:kelly.maher@ualberta.ca)

## Key Deadlines

Letter of Intent (LOI)		
Date	Action	Instructions
ASAP	Internal notification – interest in applying	Email Kelly Maher at <a href="mailto:kelly.maher@ualberta.ca">kelly.maher@ualberta.ca</a> to indicate your interest in applying
Mar 31, 2024	Internal adjudication materials due (see “Internal Adjudication Process” for details)	Please submit to <a href="mailto:kelly.maher@ualberta.ca">kelly.maher@ualberta.ca</a> with “NSERC CREATE” in the subject heading by <b>11:59pm MST</b>
Apr 8-12, 2024	Internal Adjudication & Selection	Adjudication will consist of a presentation by the lead applicant (or team) and a Q&A with the selection committee
Apr 15, 2024	Notification of Results	All candidates will be notified about the results of the internal adjudication
Apr 24, 2024	RAS Internal Review Deadline	Submit LOI to RAS via the Researcher Home Page by 4:30 pm MST
May 1, 2024	Final Version Submission Deadline and NSERC Deadline	Submit final LOI to NSERC via their online system by <b>6:00 pm MST</b>
Full Application		
Date	Action	Instructions
<b>Sept 15, 2024</b>	RAS Internal Review Deadline	Submit full application to RAS via the Researcher Home Page by 4:30 pm MST
<b>Sept 23, 2024</b>	Final Version Submission Deadline and NSERC Deadline	Submit final application to NSERC via their online system by <b>6:00 pm MST</b>

## Internal Adjudication Process

The University of Alberta can submit up to six Letters of Intent (LOIs) on or before May 1 2024. All submitted LOIs will move to the full application stage - the LOI is no longer a competitive process. As such, the information required by NSERC at the LOI stage has been substantially reduced and is insufficient to evaluate LOIs and select those within our quota.

UAlberta LOIs submitted to NSERC will be selected by an internal adjudication committee, which, depending on the applicant pool, will include representatives and/or delegates from faculty/college Associate Dean Research Offices, the Vice President Research and Innovation Portfolio (VPRI), and potentially the Faculty of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies. When finalizing the committee, diversity and expertise will be considered.

**The internal adjudication will consist of a presentation (maximum of 15 minutes) by the lead applicant (co-applicants/collaborators are also encouraged to participate), followed by a Q&A period with the committee (30-40 minutes).**

Applicants will be asked to submit presentation materials by March 31, 2024 as outlined in the “Key Deadlines” table above. There is no set format for the presentation, but the following powerpoint template has been provided for you to use, if you choose. Presentations will be scheduled the week of April 8, 2024.

[NSERC CREATE Internal Adjudication Presentation Template \(.ppt\)](#)

## Internal Adjudication Materials

- Your slides/presentation that clearly address the CREATE criteria, detailed in subsequent sections, including, but not limited to:
  - Justification for the program and evidence showing a clear need/demand for
  - Proposed training program (incl. the number of trainees) and it’s novelty and uniqueness
  - The excellence of the team and the expertise each team member will bring
  - How equity, diversity, and inclusion is built into the training program and team composition
  - Long-term sustainability of the program
  - Fit to UAlberta’s institutional strategic plan [SHAPE](#) and the Strategic plan for Research and Innovation [SPRI](#)
- CCV/Form 100 for the lead applicant

**NOTE: NSERC has implemented changes to the 2025 program, notably:**

- The Industrial Stream has been eliminated. Industrial participation in CREATE initiatives is encouraged, but the extent and nature of industrial participation is determined by the applicants and their industrial partners.
- LOIs are no longer competitive, but UAlberta still has a quota of six
- Mobility experiences are now a mandatory part of the program

### **LOI Submission**

Candidates will be notified in the week of April 15, 2024 whether or not their LOI was selected as one of the UAlberta submissions.

NSERC has not yet updated their website, but they have indicated that the following will be required for the LOI: a 300 word summary of the program, letter of support from the institution, list of suggested reviewers, and the lead applicant's Form 100. These details are expected to be posted by NSERC in March, 2023.

### **Scope, Priorities and Evaluation Criteria**

**Scope:** The Collaborative Research and Training Experience (CREATE) program funds the development of innovative training and mentorship initiatives targeting teams of highly qualified research students from Canada and abroad.

**Priorities:** The overarching priority for these training and mentorships initiatives is to provide a value-added experience to research students, fostering the acquisition of professional skills that complement and integrate with academic qualifications and technical skills. In this context, applications should clearly articulate **why** the training initiatives are needed and **how** they will improve job readiness of research students for careers in industry, government, non-governmental organizations and/or academia.

Specific program priorities are:

- Initiatives that focus on **graduate (master's and doctoral) students**. Undergraduate students and postdoctoral fellows can also be supported, but proposals that focused solely on supporting these categories will not be considered;
- The **mobility**, nationally or internationally, of research students between individual universities and between universities. This is **mandatory**;

- The **novelty and uniqueness** of the methods of training and mentorship. These should be designed to raise the standard for best practices in research training, mentoring and development of professional skills of new researcher;
- Initiatives whose main training focus lies within the **natural sciences and engineering**. (NSE), or at the interface between the NSE and health or between the NSE and the social sciences and humanities. However, the main focus of the training must lie within the NSE;
- The incorporation of clear commitments to increasing **equity, diversity, and inclusion**.

**Evaluation criteria:** The proposed training and mentorships initiatives will be evaluated on the basis of three individual criteria.

**Merit of the proposed training program (50%).** In this section of the application, the proponent teams should clearly articulate why the program is needed, who needs it, what it entails, and how it will be delivered. Key elements are:

- The potential employers, the skills needed, and the extent to which the program will promote the transition of the research trainees into the workforce;
- The objectives of the training program and the specific skills;
- How will the skills be provided through the training;
- The novelty of the training approach in relation to current developments;
- The degree to which the program promotes training at the interface between NSE and other areas of research

**Excellence of the team of researchers (25%).** This section of the application should contain information to convince the reviewers that the proposing team has the necessary complementarity in experience and skills needed to deliver the objectives of the program. Key elements are:

- Contribution to their areas of research and to past training activities
- Roles and responsibilities during the training and mentorship program
- How their individual expertise and skills are complementary and necessary to deliver the objectives of the program
- How EDI approaches were used to create the team

**Program management and long-term sustainability (25%).** This section of the application is dedicated to addressing how the training initiative will be managed during the lifespan of the grant, and what plans are in place to continue beyond the term. Key elements are:

- Management structure and operating plan. This should include a clear description of all roles and responsibilities of the management committee.
- Research students recruitment practices, mentorship approaches, supervisory models, etc. These components should clearly describe how the principles of EDI will be addressed in the program.
- Facilities and equipment that will be used for the training, including plans to ensure access and availability throughout the grant lifecycle.
- Plans to ensure the viability of the training initiative beyond the term of the grant.

## References

Program description:

NSERC - [CREATE Program Description](#)

NSERC - [CREATE Evaluation Criteria](#)

## Contact

- Questions about CREATE at UAlberta?  
Contact: Kelly Maher [kelly.maher@ualberta.ca](mailto:kelly.maher@ualberta.ca)
- Questions to NSERC about CREATE grants?  
Contact: [CREATE@nserc-crsng.gc.ca](mailto:CREATE@nserc-crsng.gc.ca)

## Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in CREATE Grants

**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** NSERC expects that CREATE initiatives increase the inclusion and advancement of underrepresented groups in the NSE as one way to enhance excellence in research and training. For this reason, considerations of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) throughout the lifecycle of the research process should be addressed in the proposal. Given the emphasis of the CREATE program on training research students, EDI considerations in the context of roles, responsibilities, work environment, and composition of the teams are especially important. At the Letter of Intent (LOI) phase, applicants should include EDI considerations in the “Excellence of proposed team of researchers” section.

These are some examples of relevant EDI approaches and prompts specifically for NSERC CREATE:

- Address the expertise of the core research team with an EDI lens and explain how their different skills and roles within the team complement each other for the training program.
- If applicable, explain how different identities, backgrounds, level of expertise and disciplines will support the training program.
- Outline how the work environment will provide opportunities and support for all members.
- Include specific EDI-oriented practices the team will adopt in relation to the recruitment, hiring, mentorship, management, and access to resources for trainees.
- Explain the team's previous contributions to the training and mentoring of Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) with an EDI perspective.

These are examples of best EDI practices in team composition:

- Unconscious bias training for hiring committee members.
- Post job ads through forums/organizations that represent historically underrepresented groups in your discipline.
- Ensure all trainees have an equitable access to resources for conferences, publications and professional development.
- Have procedures in place to create an equal and equitable division of duties. Consider intersectionality, career trajectory, parental obligations, and other social and personal factors.

## References and Resources

- NSERC – [Equity, diversity and inclusion considerations for research teams](#)
- NSERC – [LOI instructions for Create grant](#)
- NSERC [Guidelines - Assessment of contributions to research, training & mentoring](#)
- UAlberta – [EDI in Research: An Action Plan](#)
- UAlberta – [“EDI in Research” video series](#)

## Contact

- Questions about EDI in research at UAlberta?  
Contact: Dr. Hector Rendon at [hrendon@ualberta.ca](mailto:hrendon@ualberta.ca)
- Questions to NSERC about EDI in CREATE grants?  
Contact: [CREATE@nserc-crsng.gc.ca](mailto:CREATE@nserc-crsng.gc.ca)

**Additional Resources**

[NSERC CREATE Information Webinar Slides - ENG \(Feb 7, 2024\)](#)

[NSERC CREATE Information Webinar Slides - FRA \(Feb 8, 2024\)](#)