



Canada Research Chairs

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Context

The **Canada Research Chairs Program (CRCP)** stands at the centre of a national strategy to make Canada one of the world's top countries in research and development. It invests approximately \$311 million per year to attract and retain a diverse cadre of world-class researchers to reinforce academic research and training excellence in Canadian postsecondary institutions.

Chairholders aim to achieve research excellence in engineering and the natural sciences, health sciences, humanities and social sciences. They improve our depth of knowledge and quality of life, strengthen Canada's international competitiveness and help train the next generation of highly skilled people through student supervision, teaching and the coordination of other researchers' work.

The CRCP is a tri-agency initiative of the [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council](#) (SSHRC), the [Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council](#) and the [Canadian Institutes of Health Research](#). It is administered by the Tri-agency Institutional Programs Secretariat (TIPS), which is housed within [SSHRC](#). The Canada Foundation for Innovation also provides research infrastructure support to chairholders.

The data collected for this report includes multiple lines of evidence, such as program documents and literature, informant interviews and surveys. It also assesses the productivity, scientific achievements, and impacts of the research conducted by chairholders.

The evaluation examined the following themes and questions:

Relevance

- Is there a continued need for a program to attract and retain a diverse cadre of world-class researchers?

Efficiency

- To what extent does the CRCP design support the effective and efficient management of the program by TIPS and the implementation of the program by institutions?
- What progress have institutions made in the implementation of the program's equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) requirements?

Effectiveness

- To what extent has the program fostered research excellence and developed research capacity?

COVID-19

- What impact has the COVID-19 pandemic had on the delivery and performance of the CRCP?

Comments from Management

For over 20 years, the Canada Research Chairs Program has attracted and retained some of the world's most accomplished and promising minds. It has positioned Canada as a global leader in research and innovation. These investments have supported diverse research teams, training and the development of the next generation of academic talent at Canadian institutions.

The evidence presented in the evaluation report aligns with previous evaluation reports and highlights some of the changes to the design and delivery of the program during the period of this evaluation. Some examples include:

- attracting more early-career researchers at the Tier 2 level
- implementing the 2019 addendum commitments
- providing institutions with \$50,000 in additional funding through the EDI stipend
- providing extensions to chairholder terms during the COVID-19 pandemic

This evaluation report was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, and management recognizes the impacts this pandemic has had on researchers, students, and administrators and program staff at TIPS and at SSHRC. Program management acknowledges that it will take a sustained effort to continue to address these impacts and further support the research community.

The recommendations in this report will continue to support consideration for additional design, delivery and policy actions that are needed to ensure the program acts as a catalyst for change within the Canadian research landscape. The recommendations will also provide guidance on how we can modernize the program to help attract and retain top talent at Canadian universities and support graduate research, and focus on improving EDI, promoting interdisciplinary research and reinforcing Canada's world-leading capabilities in all research disciplines.

Program management will examine the recommendations and fully consider the impact potential changes may have on institutions and researchers and their teams. During this time, it will review options to improve the program and ensure it continues to meet its objectives.

The overall conclusions of the report demonstrate that the CRCP continues to play an important role in fostering research excellence and meeting the objectives of the program.

The following provides a brief description of the recommendations in the evaluation report:

1. Investigate opportunities to increase the value of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 CRC awards with a specific emphasis on dedicating a minimum amount of funds for research.
2. Examine opportunities to strengthen the support packages offered by institutions, including setting a minimum expectation for the financial and non-financial resources offered to Canada Research Chairs (CRCs) across Canada.
3. Further clarify the definition and application of the concept of research excellence throughout the nomination and review processes in alignment with the CRCP's EDI requirements.

Program management wishes to thank those who participated in the interviews and surveys conducted by the evaluation team, and notes the feedback received will be used to determine how to address the recommendations from the evaluation.

We are pleased to present the management action plan, which provides specific information on the management response to the recommendations contained in the evaluation report.

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Management Action Plan—Recommendation 1

Recommendation 1		
Investigate opportunities to increase the value of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 CRC awards with a specific emphasis on dedicating a minimum amount of funds for research.		
Management response		
Management agrees with the recommendation.		
Proposed Action	Responsibility	Target Date
1. Engage with granting agencies, TIPS governance committees and Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) and Health Canada to explore and document options to increase the value for Tier 1 and Tier 2 CRC awards, and the possibility of extending a research stipend under various scenarios.	1. Associate Vice-President, TIPS Director, Institutional Programs, TIPS	1. Fall 2024

Management Action Plan—Recommendation 2

Recommendation 2		
Examine opportunities to strengthen the support packages offered by institutions, including considering setting a minimum expectation for the financial and non-financial resources offered to CRCs across Canada.		
Management response		
Management agrees with the recommendation.		
Proposed Action	Responsibility	Target Date
2.a Engage with institutions to gather feedback on establishing guidelines for institutional support packages. 2.b Develop options that will establish a minimum standard for institutional support packages offered to chairholders in consideration of any possible changes to award values per recommendation 1.	2.a Associate Vice-President, TIPS Director, Institutional Programs, TIPS 2.b Director, Institutional Programs, TIPS Director, Performance, Equity and Diversity, TIPS	2.a Spring 2024 2.b Spring 2024

Management Action Plan—Recommendation 3

Recommendation 3		
Further clarify the definition and application of the concept of research excellence throughout the nomination and review processes, in alignment with the CRCP's EDI requirements.		
Management response		
Management agrees with the recommendation.		
Proposed Action	Responsibility	Target Date
3.a Review and clarify nomination and peer review processes for the CRCP to ensure the definition of research excellence is inclusive; make modifications, where needed, to better reflect government and tri-agency directives and policy decisions; consult, with relevant committees/bodies such as the Advisory	3.a Director, Institutional Programs, TIPS Director, Performance, Equity and Diversity, TIPS 3.b Director, Institutional Programs, TIPS Director, Performance, Equity and Diversity, TIPS	3.a March 2025 3.b March 2025

Committee on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

3.b
Develop guidance on different research approaches and other measures of research excellence that should be considered during the nomination and review processes.

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