

Memorial University
2026 Canada Excellence Research Chairs
Call for Proposals
May 14, 2025

Overview of CERC's Call

Registration deadline	January 21, 2026, 9:00 p.m. (eastern)
Application deadline	March 18, 2026, 9:00 p.m. (eastern)
Value	Two award values: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$1 million per year; or• \$500,000 per year Includes indirect costs up to 25% of the total direct costs of research (not including compensation and relocation costs of the Chairholder)
Duration	8 years
Competition budget	Approximately \$157 million over 8 years
Results announced	Expected January 2027
CERC Call	https://www.cerc.gc.ca/program-programme/competitions-concours/2026/index-eng.aspx

Introduction

The Canada Excellence Research Chairs program is funded by the three federal research funding agencies: the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). It offers eligible Canadian, degree-granting institutions an opportunity to recruit the top tier of world-class researchers in the [Government of Canada's Science, Technology and Innovation \(ST&I\) priorities for the CERC program](#). The objectives of the CERC program are to:

- strengthen Canada's ability to attract the world's top researchers, in order to be at the leading edge of breakthroughs in ST&I priority areas expected to generate social and economic benefits for Canadians;
- help Canada build a critical mass of expertise in ST&I priority areas identified by the Government of Canada;
- create a competitive environment to help Canadian institutions, in their pursuit of excellence in their research, attract a cadre of world-leading researchers; and
- contribute to branding Canada as a location of choice for world-leading research, science and technology development, alongside other federal programs with similar objectives.

Memorial is currently seeking proposals for areas of research from its academic units as a first step towards initiating external CERC nominee searches for the 2026 CERC competition.

CERC institutional allocation

For the 2026 CERC competition, Memorial's maximum dollar value available is \$1 million per year for a total of \$8 million over 8 years. Based on this allocation, Memorial will be eligible to submit either:

- ONE proposal at \$1 million per year (i.e., a total of \$8 million over 8 years), or
- TWO proposals at \$500,000 per year (i.e., each at a total of \$4 million for a total of \$8 million over 8 years).

CERC's ST&I priorities

Academic units are invited to submit CERC proposals from a broad range of disciplines in the social sciences and humanities; natural sciences and engineering; and health and related sciences, and must explain how the proposed CERC research program will advance one or more of the following challenge areas:

- Healthy People and Populations: Enhancing the health and wellness of Canadians across all life stages.
- Innovative and Resilient Communities: Creating vibrant communities that are affordable, inclusive, healthy, clean and secure.
- Sustainable Food Systems: Maximizing Canada's agri-food potential to support economic growth and secure, equitable access to food.
- Clean, Sustainable and Prosperous Canada: Fighting climate change, promoting a resilient ecosystem and protecting Canada's environment while harnessing the potential of our natural resources to advance net-zero and adaptation goals to support a resilient, sustainable economy, and high quality of life.
- Technologically Advanced Canada: Advancing transformative and enabling technologies that will support a technologically advanced economy and society.

Memorial's Research Priorities

In support of the CERC's ST&I priorities, Memorial has identified the following six institutional research priorities for the 2026 CERC competition based on our existing strengths and in keeping with our *Research Strategy 2023-28*:

- AI, quantum
- Critical Minerals
- Cybersecurity
- Democracy
- Health
- Ocean Security/Defense.

Submissions for this internal Call must propose a CERC research program that aligns with one or more of the six identified institutional research priorities. Please note that in keeping with the goals of Memorial's *Research Strategy 2023-28*, joint proposals from Faculties / Schools will be considered.

Proposal Format

All CERC proposals are to be a maximum of 4 pages in length, with margins of 1 inch around each page, and 12-point font with single line spacing. Proposals must conform to the following format:

1. An introduction including confirmation of the requested CERC award value, and an overview of the planned focus of the proposed CERC within the CERC [challenge area](#) to be addressed.
2. A brief description of how the CERC will align with Memorial's [Research Strategy 2023-28](#), the institutional strategic plan [Transforming Our Horizons](#), and the strategic research plan (or equivalent) of the applicable Faculty/School/Campus;
3. A description of the academic unit's vision and plans for a successful CERC, including:
 - a. the proposed research area, including the implementation of the highest EDI standards;
 - b. fit with Faculty/School's academic plan (or equivalent) and academic staffing strategy;
 - c. existing research excellence to complement and support a CERC in the proposed research area,
 - d. planned support (i.e., financial and non-financial) for the Chair;
 - e. the opportunity to build significant research capacity in the proposed area;
 - f. potential for collaborations at Memorial and elsewhere;
 - g. potential for training of Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP);
 - h. faculty/school and institutional expectations for research leadership;
 - i. potential/perceived impact of the proposed CERC on Memorial's capacity for and international reputation in research;
 - j. research security considerations;
 - k. sustainability of the CERC after it ends.
4. A completed Approval Form is also required, and is included at the end of the Call.

Please note that any additional information provided beyond that requested above will not be considered during the internal assessment process.

Review Process

All proposals received will be assessed by an internal Selection Committee whose members will be drawn from Memorial's campuses, and chaired by the Vice-President (Research). For those proposals selected, units will work with Memorial's Research Initiatives & Services (RIS) to search for an external CERC nominee.

Recruitment

If selected to proceed with the external recruitment of a CERC nominee, all unit searches must abide by the [CERC's requirements](#). Once the nominee has been identified, the unit and the CERC nominee will work with RIS to complete the application that will be submitted to the CERC's March 18, 2026 deadline. Please note that nominees only become Chairholders once their application has been successfully awarded by the CERC Program.

Deadline

All proposals are to be submitted via email to RIS (ris@mun.ca), and must be received by **4:30 pm on June 25, 2025**. Results of this competition will be announced not later than July 9, 2025.

Contact

If you have any questions about this current CERC competition, please do not hesitate to contact RIS (ris@mun.ca).

**2026 Canada Excellence Research Chairs (CERC)
Proposal Approval Form**

Program: 2026 CERC Competition

Academic Unit(s):

Project Title:

We have prepared the attached 2026 CERC Proposal, and understand that if chosen by the Selection Committee, we will work with Memorial's Research Initiatives & Services (RIS) to search for an external CERC nominee. Once identified, the nominee's name will be registered with the CERC Program for their January 21, 2026, deadline, with the full CERC application submission due March 18, 2026.

Signature of Department Head or designate

Date

Signature of Dean or designate

Date

Signature of Department Head or designate

Date

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Date

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Signature of Dean or designate

Date