# Early Researcher Award Round 17 Information Session

Presented by: **Research Services Office**

September 28, 2022

We will begin shortly. We ask that you kindly mute your microphone throughout the session.

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DEFY GRAVITY

# Land Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

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# Agenda

1. **Eligibility and Budget Tips**
   Amanda Pennings, Research Funding Officer, Research Services

2. **Application Evaluation, Tips, Common Weaknesses**
   Andrea Day & Emma Doran, Editorial and Proposal Development Officers, Research Services

3. **Addressing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the Training Plan**
   Andrea Gill, Research Equity & Development Strategist, Research Services

4. **Tips from Successful ERA Awardee**
   Massieh Moayedi, Associate Professor, Faculty of Dentistry

5. **Reference Letters and Deadlines**
   Amanda Pennings, Research Funding Officer, Research Services

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# Housekeeping and Accessible Participation

- This session will be recorded, and slides will be shared following the session.

- MS Teams supports live captioning.

- Please leave your microphone on mute.

- Please use the chat window to ask any questions.

- If you have any accessibility needs or concerns, please email
  andrea.hung@utoronto.ca
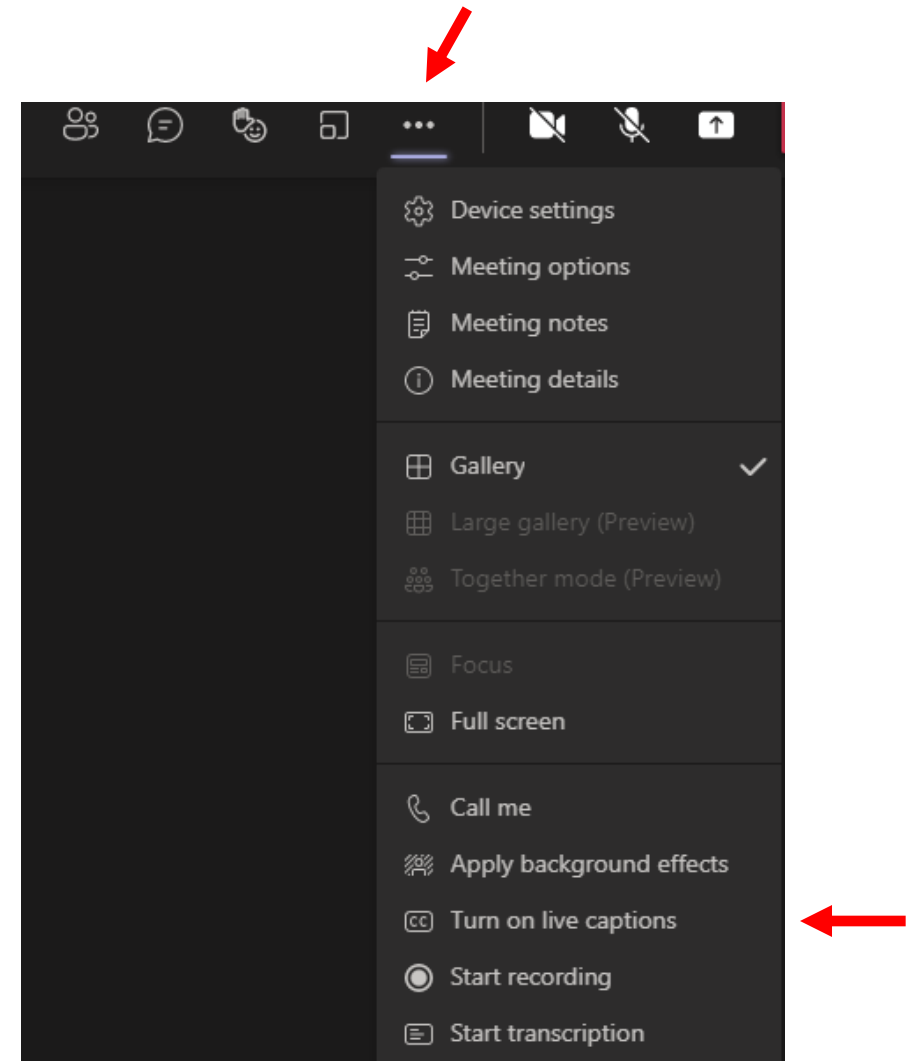
# Eligibility Checklist

- Full-time faculty members who, at the application deadline of December 1, 2022, are based at an eligible institution

- **Start of independent academic research career** on or after **January 1, 2016**

- **First PhD, MD, DVM or terminal degree** completed on or after **January 1, 2011**

- Eligible interruptions must be clearly described in **section 9d** of the application. Use all the allotted space. Specific dates are required.

- Continued education and required training (e.g., medical training and medical fellowships), maternity/parental leave, and medical leave are considered eligible interruptions.

# Eligible Expenditures

- **$100,000 ERA** plus **$50,000 matching** are eligible to support the Research Team of undergraduates, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, research assistants, research associates, and technicians carrying out the research.

  - Salaries and benefits

  - Essential and reasonable travel and expenses related to conferences, workshops, or seminars, and offsite research activities

  - Associated expenses related to the research team (record checks, job advertisements, publication costs, lab user fees)

  - Discretionary expenses of up to $7,500 to fulfill the objective of the program to build research talent

  - Youth outreach activities may use up to 1% ($1,000) of the funding provided by the Ministry.

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# Ineligible Expenditures

- Funds received <u>cannot</u> be spent on the following:
    - Salary, benefits, or expenses of the Principal Investigator
    - Purchase of supplies or equipment
    - Operation of equipment and facilities
    - Visiting fellows
    - Salaries or expenses of individuals performing contract research (where the contractor owns the intellectual property)
    - Salaries, benefits, or expenses of ineligible team members
    - Any items or services not directly related to the project

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# Eligible Institutional Matching Contributions

- Matching funds must adhere to the "eligible/ineligible expenditures" listed in the guidelines.

  - **All matching funds must be student compensation and/or student travel expenses**

- Eligible funds:

  - university scholarships for undergraduate/graduate students, such as departmental awards or the University of Toronto Fellowships

  - Internal awards, such as Connaught funding

  - charities or foundation funding

  - private or public sector contributions (private sector contributions must be in cash)

- Internal Matching Letter must be submitted along with the application package.

  - letter template is available on the ERA Funding Opportunity page

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# Ineligible Matching Funds

- Teaching assistantships

- Start-up funds from the institution intended to assist newly appointed faculty members launch their research careers

- Funding through federal granting councils (NSERC, CIHR, SSHRC, etc.)

- Funding from Ontario government ministries and agencies, and funds leveraged by such research awards

- Ontario Graduate Fellowships and Ontario Graduate Scholarships, any other Ontario funds

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1. • Total Expenditures totaling up to $150,000
2. • Total Youth Outreach Activities should be no higher than $1,000
3. • Total Direct Costs totaling $100,000  (ERA funds)
4. • Total Institute Matching Contribution totaling $50,000
5. • Total Operating Costs totaling up to $40,000
6. • Researcher (PI) can use up to $7,500 of the award amount for discretionary expenses to carry out the project, provided it fulfills the objective of the program of building research talent. The discretionary amount cannot be utilized to supplement the salary of the Principal Investigator.

| Team Member * | Expenditure * | Year 1 * | Year 2 * | Year 3 * | Year 4 * | Year 5 * | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Masters Student | Direct Costs – Salary | | | | | | |
| Post-doctoral Fellow | Direct Costs – Salary | | | | | | |
| (6) | Direct Costs – Discretionary Expenses | | | | | | **$7,500** maximum |
| (2) | Direct Costs – Youth Outreach | | | | | | **$1,000** maximum |
| Auto-calculation (1) | **Total** | | | | | | **$150,000** |
| (3) | Direct Costs | | | | | | **$100,000** |
| Auto-calculation (3) | **Total Direct Costs** | | | | | | **$100,000** |
| (4) | Institution's Matching Contributions | | | | | | **$50,000** |
| Auto-calculation (4) | **Total Matching Contributions** | | | | | | **$50,000** |
| (5) | Requested Reimbursement for Operating Costs | | | | | | **$40,000** |
| Auto-calculation (5) | **Total Operating Costs** | | | | | | **$40,000** |
| **Auto-calculation (ERA Funding Total)** (3) + (4) + (5) | **Total Expenditures** | | | | | | **$190,000** |

10

(3) **Direct Costs (ERA funds) = 2/3 (1) Total**

(4) **Institute Matching = 1/3 (1) Total**

(5) **Requested Reimbursement for Operating Costs (per year) = 40% of (3) Direct Costs (ERA funds per year)**

| Team Member * | Expenditure * | Year 1 * | Year 2 * | Year 3 * | Year 4 * | Year 5 * | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Masters Student | Direct Costs – Salary | $23,000 | $23,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | **$46,000** |
| Post-doctoral Fellow | Direct Costs – Salary | $12,800 | $12,800 | $25,800 | $25,800 | $25,800 | **$103,000** |
| (6) | Direct Costs – Discretionary Expenses | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | **$0** |
| (2) | Direct Costs – Youth Outreach | $200 | $200 | $200 | $200 | $200 | **$1,000** |
| Auto-calculation (1) | **Total** | **$36,000** | **$36,000** | **$26,000** | **$26,000** | **$26,000** | **$150,000** |
| (3) | Direct Costs | $24,000 | $24,000 | $17,334 | $17,333 | $17,333 | $100,000 |
| Auto-calculation (3) | **Total Direct Costs** | **$24,000** | **$24,000** | **$17,334** | **$17,333** | **$17,333** | **$100,000** |
| (4) | Institution's Matching Contributions | $12,000 | $12,000 | $8,667 | $8,667 | $8,666 | **$50,000** |
| Auto-calculation (4) | **Total Matching Contributions** | **$12,000** | **$12,000** | **$8,667** | **$8,667** | **$8,666** | **$50,000** |
| (5) | Requested Reimbursement for Operating Costs | $9,600 | $9,600 | $6,933 | $6,933 | $6,934 | **$40,000** |
| Auto-calculation (5) | **Total Operating Costs** | **$9,600** | **$9,600** | **$6,933** | **$6,933** | **$6,934** | **$40,000** |
| Auto-calculation (ERA Funding Total) (3) + (4) + (5) | **Total Expenditures** | **$45,600** | **$45,600** | **$32,934** | **$32,933** | **$32,933** | **$190,000** |

# Application Walkthrough

# Application Evaluation

- **This is a very competitive program.**

- **Applications are ranked relative to other applications.**

  - In the 2021 competition (Round 16), U of T submitted 55 applications, and 11 were successful. U of T's success rate was 20%, compared to the province-wide success rate of 15%.

- **Be cautious about applying if you were recently appointed.**

- **You must follow <u>all formatting guidelines</u>.**

# ERA Reviewers

## Who is my audience?

- Multidisciplinary peer-review panel
  - May or may not include experts in your field

- ORF Advisory Board
  - Final decision-making body
  - Includes academics and non-academics

## Write for your audience.

- Avoid technical jargon/ discipline-specific terminology
  - Use clear, straightforward language

- Explain any necessary technical terms/concepts

- Give the big picture
  - Why is this research significant?

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# Evaluation Criteria

- **Excellence of the Researcher (40%)**

- **Quality of Research (30%)**

- **Development of Research Talent (20%)***

- **Strategic Value for Ontario (10%)***

**\* These sections are especially important.**

# Application Rankings

**Evaluation Method**

- Each of the four evaluation criteria is ranked from "Exceptional" to "Insufficient."

**Potentially Fundable**

- Exceptional

- Excellent

**Not Fundable**

- Very Strong

- Strong

- Moderate

- Insufficient

# Application Overview – Criteria and Sections

**Excellence of the Researcher**

- Sections 9, 10, 16, 17, 18

- Appendices C and D

**Quality of Research**

- Sections 8 and 15

- Appendices A and B

**Development of Research Talent**

- Sections 11, 12, 14

- 11 and 12 are key sections for addressing EDI.

**Strategic Value for Ontario**

- Section 13

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# 8. Research Summary

- 200 words maximum

- The summary is the **first impression you make on reviewers**

- Write a **compelling** summary of your research that includes the following information:
  - o **What** the key issue or challenge is
  - o **How** you will address it or what your solution is (methodology)
  - o **Why** you are addressing this issue or challenge (including the value for Ontario)

- Have as many people as possible (within and outside your field) read the summary and provide feedback.

# 9a. Description of the Researcher (PI) – Summary

- 200 words maximum

- Discuss your area(s) of expertise and your accomplishments within the field (publications, awards, grants, etc.).

- You will need to be selective: highlight your independence from your former supervisor(s).

- Discuss your current standing in your field and potential for excellence based on your research plans.

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# 9d. Description of the Researcher (PI) – Interruptions or Delays

This section allows you to provide the review panel with information about interruptions or delays in the past five years (since becoming an independent researcher) and/or ten years (since completing your PhD)**.**

- 200 words maximum.

- Provide the **necessary detail** here—you will not be able to provide further documentation.

- Include **months** in your date ranges (yyyy/mm).

- If there have been no delays or interruptions, please state "None." Do not leave sections blank.

# 11b. Researcher's (PI) Background in Training – HQP Training Details

- 200 words maximum.

- Describe the skills your trainees gained. Emphasize transferable skills.

- Describe **unique** opportunities and experiences for HQP.

- Highlight particular successes by past trainees.

- State how past experience is indicative of future success.

- Try to address three criteria: "Excellence of the Researcher," "Development of Research Talent," and "Strategic Value for Ontario" (HQP knowledge transfer).

# 11c. Researcher's (PI) Background in Training – Co-supervised HQP

- 200 words maximum.

- Describe your roles and responsibilities as a co-supervisor.

- Describe the skills that trainees gained or any unique opportunities you provided.
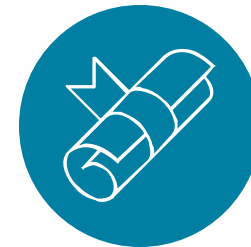
# 12. Training Plans for Research Team

- 200 words maximum.

- Link to your proposed research and training milestones.

- Address both "Development of Research Talent" and "Strategic Value for Ontario"

- Present a clear training plan that addresses these points:
  - Specific roles and responsibilities
  - Knowledge and skills gained
  - Unique training
  - Employability
  - Commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion

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# 13. Strategic Value to Ontario

- 200 words maximum.

- Anticipated outcomes and potential impact of research

- Focus on one or two key areas of impact and make a strong case for each:
    - Economic and/or social benefits
    - Knowledge transfer
    - In-demand skills for HQP
    - Ontario's international profile

# 14. Other Project Requirements

## Intellectual Property (IP)/Training

- 200 words maximum
- Describe how the ownership of IP generated from the project will be determined
- All research team members should be familiar with UofT's Inventions Policy
- IP training
  - UofT Entrepreneurship provides an online IP Education Program
  - Ontario's intellectual property resources
  - Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO)

## Youth Outreach

- 200 words maximum
- 1% maximum of ERA funding
- The primary target for outreach is high school, middle school, and elementary school students.
- Talk to your department/faculty about existing programs.
- Activities must take place in **each year** of the project
- Address "Strategic Value for Ontario"

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# 15. Milestones and Deliverables

- List major milestones and deliverables in four areas:
  - Recruitment
  - Training
  - Research
  - Youth Outreach (must occur in each year)

- Ensure that milestones are realistic and achievable.
  - They will be used to monitor progress if your application is successful.

- Keep in mind that it may take up to a year to advertise and fill some positions.

# Appendix B: Proposed Research

- Six-page attachment, excluding references (no page limit for separate references section)

- Make sure the proposal is **specific**, concentrating on one or a maximum of two projects.

- Address all the points covered in the guidelines: purpose (i.e., **the "why"**), objectives, research activities, methodology.

- Link your research activities with your training plan described in Section 12.

- Try to address **ALL FOUR** of the ERA's evaluation criteria, not only "Quality of Research."

- Follow the formatting requirements in the Program Guidelines:
    - Single-spaced
    - Arial, 12-point font, black
    - 1-inch margins

- Failure to follow these requirements **will render your proposal ineligible**.

# Appendix B: Proposed Research, cont.

## Sample Structure

**Introduction/Rationale**

- Introduce the problem ("what") and the purpose of your research ("why").

- If applicable, provide statistics showing the potential benefits for Ontario ("Strategic Value to Ontario").

- Outline research objectives within the context of the current state of knowledge in the field and highlight your past research successes on this topic ("Excellence of the Researcher" and "Quality of Research")

**Proposed Research**

- Describe your proposed research activities, outlining your methodology.

- Highlight "Quality of Research" (e.g., excellence and originality) and "Development of Research Talent" (e.g., how HQP will be involved in the research).

**Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

- Describe the integration of EDI into research design and practices

**Conclusion and Impact**

- Discuss the anticipated results and significance ("Strategic Value to Ontario")

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# EDI Considerations in the Application

- **Development of Research Talent Criterion**: "The applicant must clearly demonstrate their commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in their research teams."

- Equity = process of treating everyone fairly to remove barriers to participation

- Diversity = the demographic mix of the community; the representation of multiple identities and experiences

- Inclusion = an environment where everyone feels welcome and respected and can achieve their full potential

- A commitment to EDI goes beyond describing the diversity of current trainees

    - Do not disclose demographic/identifying information about trainees

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# Addressing EDI Considerations

- Space is very tight — avoid broad/general statements

- Describe **specific, concrete practices** to advance EDI in training

- Tailor these actions to the size/context of the team

- If possible, address equity, diversity, *and* inclusion

  - Describe plans to equitably **engage/recruit a diverse group** of trainees

  - Indicate how you will create **equitable training/mentoring opportunities**

  - Describe steps to **create an inclusive environment** and foster a sense of belonging among all trainees

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# Addressing EDI Considerations – 12. Training Plans for the Research Team

- Requirement: The PI must clearly demonstrate the commitment to EDI in their research teams

- Convey specific actions **concisely**

  - "To engage a diverse group of trainees, I will openly post all opportunities and encourage applications from under-represented groups"

  - "All those involved in selecting trainees will complete unconscious bias training and will fairly consider academic interruptions."

  - "I have regular one-on-one meetings with all trainees, and each trainee completes an individual development plan."

  - "I distribute a lab handbook to my trainees that includes EDI resources and a values statement around inclusion."

- Integrate EDI throughout the section — use signpost phrasing when describing key skills and activities

  - "To ensure equitable to access to opportunities, all PhD students will . . .  and all Master's students will . . ."

  - "To guard against potential inequities in mentorship, all trainees will . . ."

# Addressing EDI Considerations – Appendix B: Proposed Research

- The Ministry has increased the proposal length to accommodate discussions of EDI – use this space effectively

- Requirement: Describe the integration of EDI considerations in your research design and practice
  - Research design: how the research questions, methods, analysis, knowledge mobilization, etc., integrate sex/gender/diversity
  - Research practices: actions/policies to foster EDI within the team/trainees

- Requirement: Explain how you will increase equitable and inclusive participation in the team
  - Describe **specific** practices (expand on points raised in Section 12)
  - Connect these actions to barriers to participation in the field or discipline
  - Practices to engage a diverse group of trainees (e.g., advertise widely, engage in targeted outreach, implement fair and consistent selection process)
  - Practices to create equitable training/mentorship opportunities (e.g., equitable access to opportunities, use of mentoring plans and mentoring networks, one-on-one meetings or open-door policy)
  - Practices to foster an inclusive team environment (e.g., team code of conduct, flexibility and accommodation in scheduling, accessible and inclusive spaces and meetings, sharing UofT EDI and wellness resources)

- For more information, consult the resources page of the EDI in Research & Innovation website

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# Common Weaknesses

## Excellence of the Researcher

- Candidate was just appointed and this application is premature
  - Candidate has had limited experience training/supervising HQP.
  - Candidate has modest record of competitive grant funding.
  - Candidate has moderate record of publications.

## Quality of Research

- Research project is too broad in scope and lacks specific objectives.

- Research plan is not clear and/or needs more methodological details.

- Research plan has little information about analysis of results.

## Development of Research Talent

- Plan to supervise trainees is not clear and/or does not address opportunities for career development.

- Candidate has limited experience in terms of training (often because the candidate was recently appointed and the application is immature).

## Strategic Value for Ontario

- Proposal does not make the case that the research will create significant benefits for Ontario.

- Statement of strategic value is realistic, but more detail was needed.

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# Build a Competitive ERA Application

- Write for a multidisciplinary audience.

- Demonstrate your strong record of independent research and funding (avoid submitting too early).

- Present a research plan that is clear, original, project-focused, and with a defined significance.

- Develop a training plan aligned with your research objectives and that will give HQP unique experiences and skills.

- Include specific/concrete EDI considerations

- Clearly demonstrate the value to Ontario and knowledge transfer channels.

- Collect enthusiastic reference letters from international research leaders.

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# Tips for Revising the Application

- Consult the Research Service Office's [ERA Tip Sheet](#).

- Space is tight: revise for **coherence, clarity, and concision**.

- Use the **internal U of T checklist** (available on the funding opportunity page).

- Have peers (especially previously successful applicants) review the proposal for academic content. Ask peers outside your discipline to read it for clarity and persuasiveness to a multidisciplinary audience.

- **Triple check**: Have you followed all the ERA instructions, including those for attachments? Correct formatting is **essential**.

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# ERA Awardee Experience

# Reference Letters

**DUE to Research Services Office by Thursday, November 3, 2022**

Names of referees are listed in **section 18**, along with a short biography for each.

**Who are my referees (3)?**

- Two (2) arm's-length sources referees
  - No personal link, not a colleague
  - Should be researchers of **international stature**
- One (1) non-arm's-length referee
  - Former supervisor/mentor/collaborator/ corporate sponsor

**What should my referees address in their letters?**

- The four evaluation criteria
- Be sure to provide your referees with your research proposal, full CV, and background material on the ERA program
- Follow **specific formatting** instructions on pages 15-16 of guidelines

**Contact your referees as early as possible (i.e., NOW!)**

**Letters are crucial for demonstrating your standing in the field**

**Common Weakness: Reference letters not arm's-length**

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# Reference Letters: Submission

**Can I mail or fax my reference letters?**

No. Your referees must **directly email** their letters to Research Services ([andrea.hung@utoronto.ca](mailto:andrea.hung@utoronto.ca)).
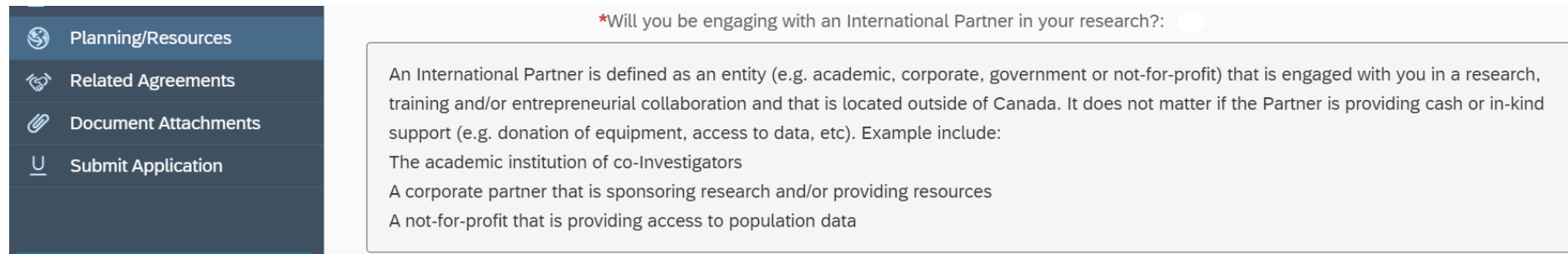
**What if my reference letters don't arrive in time?**

We recommend requesting an additional reference letter or two to account for this situation. If your application does not include the three reference letters by the deadline, your application will be deemed incomplete.

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# Mitigating Economic and Geopolitical Risk Checklist

- Be sure to check one box in each row

- ***New*** Potential Risk Identified & Risk Mitigation Plan
  - If respond "No" or "N/A", provide explanation here
  - If travel as part of project, indicate if purely conference travel or research travel
  - If respond "Yes" to all, then include "No risks identified"

- Submit to the Research Services Office as a separate PDF

- Answer MRA question: "Will you be engaging with an International Partner in your research?"



*Will you be engaging with an International Partner in your research?:

An International Partner is defined as an entity (e.g. academic, corporate, government or not-for-profit) that is engaged with you in a research, training and/or entrepreneurial collaboration and that is located outside of Canada. It does not matter if the Partner is providing cash or in-kind support (e.g. donation of equipment, access to data, etc). Example include:
The academic institution of co-Investigators
A corporate partner that is sponsoring research and/or providing resources
A not-for-profit that is providing access to population data

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# Deadlines

### Notice of Intent

**Friday, September 23.** All NOIs submitted to Research Services (RSO) via email to Andrea Hung ([andrea.hung@utoronto.ca](mailto:andrea.hung@utoronto.ca))

### Reference Letters

**Thursday, November 3.** All three letters must be received by RSO by this date. ***Letters sent directly to RSO ([andrea.hung@utoronto.ca](mailto:andrea.hung@utoronto.ca)) by referees, not the applicant.

### Internal Deadline

**Thursday, November 17.** Submit a complete application package and UofT matching letter to RSO via email **and** submit a complete application through MRA (My Research Application). Please provide enough time for your Chair and Vice-Dean Research to review your application.

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# Application Package due to RSO on Thursday, November 17

- **Document 1: Electronic Copy of Application Form**

  - Appendix A – Total Expenditure Budget

  - Appendix B – Proposed Research

  - Appendix C – CV (Research Productivity and Recognition)

  - Appendix D - Reference Letters*

- **Document 2: Flat PDF of Application Form**

- **Document 3: Mitigating Economic and Geopolitical Risk Checklist**

- **Document 4: U of T Internal Matching Letter** (submitted to RSO only, not included with application)

**Send the application package via email to Andrea Hung** (andrea.hung@utoronto.ca)

**Follow the updated guidelines (posted Sept 26), which indicates that text should be single-spaced.**

\* Will be added to your package by the Research Services Office

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# Contact Information

**Funding Opportunity Website**

ERA Program overview, deadlines, Program guidelines, application form, UofT matching letter, tips sheet, checklist: https://research.utoronto.ca/funding-opportunities/db/early-researcher-award-era-round-17

**Research Services Contact**

Amanda Pennings, Research Funding Officer (amanda.pennings@utoronto.ca)

# Ministry Information Sessions

Wednesday, September 28        1:00 – 2:00pm EST
Tuesday, October 4                  3:00 – 4:00pm EST


**Pre-registration is required on a first-come, first-served basis**. Event capacity is limited.

You can access the registration page by visiting the Ministry's [ERA webpage](ERA webpage).

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# Questions?