



ONE CHILD EVERY CHILD EXCELLENCE AWARDS
NextGen Innovators (Graduate) Awards

Award Guidelines

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1. One Child Every Child

[One Child Every Child](#) (OCEC) is a Canada First Research Excellence Fund (CFREF)-funded, Canada-first research initiative designed to prioritize the health and wellness of all children. The vision of OCEC is for every child to thrive. OCEC aims to transform child health research in Canada with global impact, promote Indigenous-led knowledge creation and self-determination, and drive discovery and innovation. Our interdisciplinary teams tackle various factors influencing child health, ranging from biomedical to social, societal, economic, and structural determinants. We are pushing boundaries to train our future leaders in health research uniquely. OCEC focuses on three themes situated at the intersections of greatest need and opportunity for discovery and impact:

- **Better Beginnings** concentrates on enhancing maternal and perinatal health;
- **Precision Health and Wellness** aims to develop innovative diagnostic, therapeutic, and targeted interventions;
- **Vulnerable to Thriving** aims to improve the trajectories of vulnerable children through social and structural systems, policies and programs that allow children to thrive.

OCEC is committed to creating evidence that embraces the diversity of needs, social and medical circumstances, and systemic barriers facing children and families. This involves integrating Indigenous knowledge, prioritizing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), utilizing comprehensive data, offering transdisciplinary training, and leveraging technology solutions. We are focused on evaluating and mobilizing knowledge for the greatest Impact – with the support of the cross-cutting Accelerators to achieve key objectives and projected OCEC outcomes.

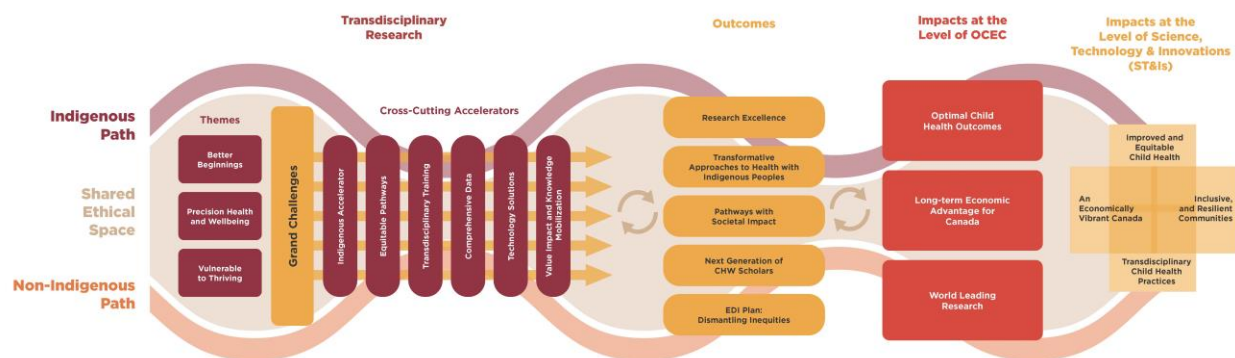


Figure 1: One Child Every Child Themes and Accelerators

2. One Child Every Child Excellence Awards

The One Child Every Child (OCEC) Excellence Awards are competitive stipend awards funded through the OCEC Transdisciplinary Training Accelerator. This Accelerator is designed to foster collaborations through which diverse perspectives, knowledge, skills, and methodologies from various disciplines and fields, including the four research pillars (Biomedical, Clinical, Health Services, and Social, Cultural, Environmental, and Population Health) of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), converge to create a more comprehensive understanding of child health.

The OCEC Excellence Awards are intended to support graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, postgraduate medical fellows/clinical fellows, henceforth referred to as “Scholars”, who are engaged in transdisciplinary research, focused on child health and wellness that aligns with goals and priorities of OCEC. **The primary criteria for funding** consideration are scientific merit and alignment with the vision, mission, and strategic goals of OCEC, outlined in the previous section. The applicant’s research proposal should have a transdisciplinary focus, which is defined as the integration of knowledge across and beyond traditional disciplines. This integration may occur in partnership with non-academic partners and communities to address societal challenges and facilitate collaboration, shared learning experiences, and the evolution of knowledge through diverse perspectives.

2.1 Objectives

The key objectives of the OCEC Excellence Awards are as follows:

- To support early career researchers in establishing innovative, transdisciplinary research programs that integrate outstanding graduate trainees and foster long-term academic and leadership success.
- To attract and retain the best and brightest talents both nationally and internationally.
- To develop their leadership potential and catalyze transformational, transdisciplinary research so that innovation can be scaled and spread to benefit children across Canada and beyond.
- To position scholars for success as research leaders of tomorrow.

2.2 Scope

- Graduate Future Leader Awards:
 - Master’s students - \$38,000 per year for up to 2 years
 - PhD students - \$40,000 per year for up to 2 years

3. Eligibility Criteria

The OCEC Excellence Awards are open to Canadian citizens, permanent residents of Canada, and foreign citizens/international scholars. Eligible candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Candidates are eligible if they are currently registered or will be registered by the start of winter term 2026, in a full-time thesis based Graduate Studies program (Master's or PhD) at University of Calgary or one of the OCEC institutional partners (University of Alberta, University of Lethbridge or Athabasca University). They must be enrolled in a full-time research program/position.
- Their research project must align with OCEC's research priorities, one of the themes, and at least one of the Accelerators.
- Their research proposal should have a transdisciplinary focus, as defined in the section above.
- They must have a strong supervisor or co-supervisor at UCalgary or one of the OCEC institutional partners (University of Alberta, University of Lethbridge or Athabasca University) that is an Early Career Researcher¹. Can not be an adjunct professor.
- They must agree to comply with the Terms and Conditions of the award, as outlined in Section 4.
- A minimum GPA of 3.3 on the 4.0 scale (or equivalent) is required.

OCEC and the Transdisciplinary Training Accelerator are committed to ensuring all scholars have equitable access to research funding and career support. Applicants from Indigenous and Equity-Deserving groups are highly encouraged to apply. Applicants from other jurisdictions, including out-of-province and international candidates, are strongly encouraged to apply.

4. Terms and Conditions

The following conditions apply to all recipients of the OCEC Excellence Awards:

- OCEC NextGen Innovators (Graduate) Excellence Award is governed by the graduate award regulation of the awardee's home institution. Please refer to the graduate policies of your host institution.
- OCEC NextGen Innovators (Graduate) Excellence Award will terminate either after 24 months or on the last day of the month the Master's or PhD thesis is submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (i.e., up to 30 days after the oral thesis defence)² – whichever occurs first. The award holder must notify the OCEC Transdisciplinary Training Accelerator of their defence date when it is confirmed.
- For scholars in MD-MSc or MD-PhD joint programs, the OCEC Excellence Award is applicable only during the research training component of the degree and will terminate once the MD component commences.

¹Must be an ECR as defined by CIHR: An early career researcher (ECR) is a researcher within five years of the date of their first independent research-related appointment. Eligible leaves (e.g. maternity, parental, medical, family medical, bereavement) will extend ECR status (i.e. will not be counted towards the maximum) and are credited as twice the amount of time taken. Full definition can be found [here](#).

² Policy may differ in each One Child Every Child partner institution. Please check regulations at your home institution.

- Acceptance of the OCEC NextGen Innovators (Graduate) Excellence Award is conditional on being an enrolled student at UCalgary or one of the OCEC partner institutions at the time of the award.
- The awards are initially granted for a minimum of 12 months, with the possibility of extension for an additional 12 months contingent on satisfactory progress, completion of a supervisor-approved progress report, participation in the OCEC training activities and events, and efforts to secure external scholarships. The maximum duration of the OCEC Excellence Award is 24 months for the graduate stream.
- The awards are non-transferable and cannot be used for purposes other than stipend support. Recipients must notify the Transdisciplinary Training Accelerator of any changes to their academic status, supervisor, program, or other circumstances affecting their training.
- Recipients are responsible for reporting any additional awards to the Transdisciplinary Training Accelerator. Tuition and other fees are the awardee's responsibility. Award disbursement is provided monthly, subject to pro-rating.
- Each recipient may only receive the award once in a lifetime within each scholar category.
- OCEC Excellence Awards may not be held simultaneously with other awards (internal or external).
- The award must start on or prior to February 1, 2026. Award start date cannot be deferred.
- Current holders of other internal and external awards (e.g., CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC scholarships and fellowships) may apply for an OCEC Excellence Award only if their current funding ends before February 1, 2026. However, early termination of agency-specific awards to apply and to receive an OCEC Excellence Award is not permitted.
- Recipients must complete their training under the primary supervisor who sponsored their application, however, change of supervisor will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The supervisor must have a record of a productive research program, sufficient resources to support the research, and provide direct supervision and mentorship.
- Multiple applicants from the same supervisor/lab may apply for an OCEC Excellence Award, but only one application per scholar category from a single supervisor will be awarded in a given competition, limited to new applicants. Renewing applicants are not counted toward the total number of awards offered to the same supervisor/lab.
- Applicants cannot hold or be on leave from a faculty position.

5. Travel Allowance

As an added benefit, all recipients of the OCEC Excellence Award will receive a one-time allowance of \$1,000 for research-related travel. This allowance can be utilized for purposes such as attending scientific meetings, courses relevant to their research or field of study, or travelling to partner laboratories to learn a new technique. This travel allowance is non-transferable to the awardee's supervisor or another scholar and must be used by the end date of the OCEC Excellence Award.

- Travel allowance is available whilst the award is paused, only for acceptance of an external award that does not provide a travel allowance.
- If the award is ended early, due to acceptance of an external award, awardees may use their travel allowance for approved travel for up to 6 months after the end date of the OCEC award. They must remain an active student in the same program with the same supervisor as they were originally awarded.
- Trainees are not eligible to apply for ACHRI Trainee Travel Awards until their travel allowance is spent in full.

6. Application Deadlines

The OCEC Scholar Funding webpage lists the deadlines for new and renewal applications. Late applications will not be accepted.

7. Application Instructions

7.1 New Applicants

To apply for OCEC Excellence Awards, candidates must submit the OCEC Excellence Award Application, available online. The form includes the following components:

- Applicant's demographic information, academic record, previous experience, awards
- University transcripts (unofficial copies are accepted)
- Research outputs (publications, presentations, other)
- Proposed research project
- Alignment and Impact (alignment with OCEC, statement on transdisciplinarity of proposed project; statement on impact, excellence and innovation)
- Personal Statement
- Proposed Training Environment and Expected Outcomes of Training, completed by the proposed supervisor.
- At least two letters of reference submitted by the referees via good grants. One of the letters must be from the proposed ECR supervisor. If the applicant has co-supervisors, one of the letters should be written by one of the supervisors or both (as a joint letter). The second letter may come from another referee.

It is the responsibility of the applicant and their supervisor to ensure all application documents are complete and submitted on time. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. If the application is deemed non-compliant (e.g., does not follow application instructions as stated; supporting documents exceed page limit, etc.), reviewers have the right to reject the application.

7.2 Renewing Applicants

To renew their OCEC Excellence NextGen Innovator Awards for a second year of support, applicants must submit:

- Progress Report, available on the OCEC website, completed by the applicant.
- One letter of reference submitted by the applicant's supervisor via email describing and confirming the progress of the scholar and approving the renewal application at training.ocec@ucalgary.ca.

8. Review Committee

All eligible applications are adjudicated by scientific reviewers from the 4 OCEC institutions which could include research professors, clinical researchers and postdoctoral fellows, using the Award evaluation rubric (please see Appendix A).

Please Note: Since applications are evaluated by a multidisciplinary group of reviewers who may not have in-depth knowledge of all research areas of submitted proposals, a to non-specialist reviewers.

9. Evaluation Criteria

Applications submitted for OCEC NextGen Innovators (Graduate) Awards will be adjudicated based on the following criteria:

- **Candidate (30%)**
 - i. Candidate's history of Excellence (20%)
 - Academic
 - Research
 - Leadership
 - ii. Candidate's Diversity or other Related Lived/Living with Experience (10%)
 - Personal statement including diversity and other related lived/living experiences.
 - Candidates contribution to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- **Proposed Transdisciplinary Project Plan (50%)**
 - i. Research Proposal (30%)
 - ii. Alignment with OCEC and Impact (10%)
 - iii. Knowledge Mobilization /Community Engagement (10%)
- **Training Environment (20%)**
 - i. Infrastructure (2.5%)
 - ii. Supervisor's Productivity (7.5%)
 - iii. Training and Mentorship Plan (10%)

For details on each criterion, please see Appendix A (OCEC Excellence Awards Criteria and Evaluation Form).

10. Adjudication Process

Submitted applications will undergo initial screening for eligibility, following which they will be reviewed by members of the OCEC Excellence Awards Review Committee (see section 8 above, for details). Final award decisions will be made by the Transdisciplinary Training team to ensure awardees represent the diverse research areas represented within the OCEC program.

11. Competition Results

All applicants to the OCEC Excellence Awards competitions will be notified of the outcome of their application via email. The names of successful applicants will be listed on the OCEC website and other communication channels. Feedback will be provided to all applicants to support their ongoing research

endeavors. Additionally, we invite feedback on the competition process and outcomes to ensure ongoing improvement and inclusivity within our program.

12.Obligations of OCEC Excellence Awards Holders

During the term of their OCEC Excellence Award, awarded scholars and their supervisors agree to certain obligations, including but not limited to:

- Acknowledging OCEC in all publications, presentations, communications, and marketing materials associated with the funded research project.
- Participating in training activities offered by OCEC, such as courses, workshops, and professional development opportunities aimed at fostering a deeper understanding of research with Indigenous peoples and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion principles in the context of child health research. As opportunities become available, award holders will be notified and encouraged to complete relevant training.
- Encouraged participation in and presentation at Child Health and Wellness research symposia and retreats, and relevant educational activities organized by OCEC.
- Submitting progress reports, final reports, and other documentation promptly, as required.
- Continuously seeking external funding support. OCEC award holders are encouraged to apply for other awards for which they are eligible, including those from provincial or national agencies. Scholars who receive another award must promptly inform the OCEC Transdisciplinary Training Accelerator and their home institution's Office or Program of the new award. Eligibility for ongoing funding through the OCEC Excellence Award programs will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis per the rules and regulations of the award holder's home institution.

13.Contact Information

With any questions, please contact the Transdisciplinary Training Accelerator team at: training.ocec@ucalgary.ca.

Appendix A: One Child Every Child Excellence Awards Evaluation Form

1. NextGen Innovators (Graduate) Awards

CRITERION	WEIGHT	SCORE
Candidate:	30%	
○ <u>Candidates' history of excellence:</u> evaluation of expertise and track record of the applicant. • <u>Academic excellence:</u> Past academic results (GPA), Academic awards, honors and distinctions. • <u>Research excellence:</u> Research experience, publications, conference publications, research awards. • <u>Leadership:</u> Leadership roles, community involvement, extracurricular activities and leadership qualities. Consideration of the capacity to meaningfully contribute to child health research based on relevant professional experience and transferable skills (e.g., leadership, communication, project management, problem-solving, work experience, teamwork, adaptability, resilience).	20%	
○ <u>Personal Statement, Diversity, or Lived Experience</u> • Personal Statement: Clarity, motivation, career goals, development plans and alignment with OCEC program objectives and if appropriate the diversity and lived experience. • Candidate's contributions to equity, diversity and inclusion. The candidate will be assessed on their commitment as demonstrated by research outputs or the potential impact of research training on their career trajectory, along with letters of reference.	10%	
Proposed Transdisciplinary Project Plan:	50%	
○ <u>Research Proposal:</u> Significance, Quality, and Feasibility of the proposed project. This also includes clarity, coherence, and quality of the plan, objectives, hypothesis, experimental approach, significance, methodology, timeline, milestones, anticipated outcomes, alignment with program objectives and public engagement. • Transdisciplinary Approach: Assessment of the integration of diverse perspectives, methodologies, and disciplines to address complex child health issues.	30%	

○ <u>Alignment with OCEC and Impact:</u> • Alignment with OCEC Mandates. Assessment of the proposed project's alignment with the mandates of OCEC and the Transdisciplinary Training Accelerator. • All proposals must align with at least one theme and one accelerator. • Promotion of EDIA, Diversity of Perspectives, and/or Indigenous Engagement. Consideration of efforts to promote equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, including engagement with Indigenous communities, where appropriate.	10%	
○ <u>Knowledge Mobilization/Community Engagement.</u> • Review of strategies for disseminating and translating research into practice, policy or community impact. • Innovation and Impact. Evaluation of the potential to advance knowledge, improve child health outcomes, and contribute to positive societal change.	10%	
Training Environment:	20%	
○ <u>Infrastructure.</u> Facilities, equipment, databases, and resources available, as well as the benefits of this environment to the applicant's development.	2.5%	
○ <u>Supervisor's Productivity.</u> Evaluation of the supervisor's research productivity, including publications, grant support, experience in scholar supervision, and excellence in mentorship.	7.5%	
○ <u>Training and Mentorship Plan.</u> Assessment of the quality and relevance of the proposed training to the applicant's outcomes, skills, career goals, development needs, including the supervisor's/co-supervisor's role, collaboration opportunities, and networking support.	10%	