



UCalgary Research Excellence Chairs & Killam Memorial Chairs

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose of Award

The University of Calgary (UCalgary) Research Excellence program builds capacity and provides leadership for strategic and transdisciplinary research initiatives. The UCalgary Research Excellence Chairs (UCREC) are the most prestigious internal chairs program, designed to recognize our scholars with highly distinguished accomplishments and research leadership, and who display exceptional promise in their research and creative work. The purpose of this Chairs program is to build capacity and provide leadership for strategic and transdisciplinary research initiatives at UCalgary.

The Killam Trusts were established in memory of Izaak Walton Killam through the Will of his wife, Dorothy Johnston Killam, and through gifts made during her lifetime. Their primary purpose is to support advanced education and research at five Canadian Universities including the University of Calgary. In alignment with this vision, the Killam Memorial Emerging Leader Chair (KMELC) and Killam Memorial Chair (KMC) are the most prestigious research chairs available at UCalgary, offered to the most outstanding scholars.

These Chairs recognize scholars with highly distinguished accomplishments and those who display exceptional promise in their research and creative work. Depending on the career stage, accomplishments, reputation, and scholarly potential, UCalgary offers four (4) types of Chairs:

1. Tier 2 UCalgary Research Excellence Chair; will receive \$20,000 in annual research allowance during the 5-year term of the Chair AND a \$5,000 annual supplement in the form of a research prize. Chairs may opt to shift \$5,000 of research allowance to the prize, increasing it to \$10,000 annually.
2. Tier 1 UCalgary Research Excellence Chair; will receive \$30,000 in annual research allowance during the 5-year term of the Chair AND a \$5,000 annual supplement in the form of a research prize. Chairs may opt to shift \$5,000 of research allowance to the prize, increasing it to \$10,000 annually.
3. Killam Memorial Emerging Leader Chair will be awarded to the top-ranked Tier 2 application in the broader UCREC competition. The Killam Memorial Emerging Leader Chair will be held for the first two years of the UCREC term, followed by 3 years as a UCREC (for a total 5-year term as a Chair). During the 2-year term as KMELC, they will receive \$65,000 in annual research allowance AND a \$10,000 chairholder stipend (salary supplement) per annum. At the conclusion of the 2-year term as KMELC, they will receive the benefits of a Tier 2 UCREC as outlined in (1) above for a period of 3 years.
4. Killam Memorial Chair will be awarded to the top-ranked tier 1 application in the broader UCREC competition. The Killam Memorial Chair will be held for the first two years, followed by 3 years as a UCREC (for a total 5-year term as a Chair). During the 2-year term as KMC, the Killam Memorial Chair provides \$100,000 per annum to the chairholder's Faculty in support of the chairholder's salary. The nominating Faculty must agree to use these savings in the following ways: to make available to the chairholder at least \$50,000 per annum in research funding for the two-year term; to provide to the chairholder an annual chair stipend (salary supplement) for the two-year term of the chair, of a value determined by the Faculty, commensurate with the prestige of the chair and the chairholder's standing in their field of study; and to use any remaining funds to support academic activities complementary to those of the Killam Memorial Chairholder. At the conclusion of the 2-year term as KMC, they will receive the benefits of a Tier 1 UCREC as outlined in (2) above for a period of 3 years.

Chairs will have a substantial portion of their workload allocated to research-related activities. In most cases, nominees brought forward by Faculties will already have such time allocation. In

exceptional cases where reduced teaching is needed for workload adjustment, host Faculties may request support to offset the cost of sessional teaching replacement.

Eligibility

- a. Chairs are open to full-time continuing academic staff at the University of Calgary as of the date of nomination.
- b. The Chair is only tenable at the University of Calgary.
- c. UCREC shares many of the features of the federal Canada Research Chairs program. Faculty members who hold internal or external named awards, such as endowed chairs and professorships, Canada Research Chairs, or major salary awards from external agencies are eligible to be nominated, however cannot hold this Chair simultaneously with other Chairs. A faculty member who holds a UCalgary Research Excellence Chair must relinquish it if they receive such an award.
- d. Chairs will have a substantial portion of their workload allocated to research-related activities. In most cases, nominees brought forward by Faculties will already have such time allocation. In exceptional cases where reduced teaching is needed for workload adjustment, host Faculties may request support to offset the cost of sessional teaching replacement.
- e. Nominees for the Tier 2 UCREC will:
 1. have obtained their highest degree no more than 10 years before the start of their Chair, which will be July 1, 2026 (i.e., candidates must have been granted their PhD or equivalent professional degree no earlier than July 1, 2016), with allowance made for parental and medical leaves as outlined in the [Canada Research Chairs Program](#), and;
 2. have not previously received this Chair.
 3. The candidate's field of research or scholarship is open.
- f. The top-ranked candidate in the Tier 2 UCREC competition will be selected as the Killam Memorial Emerging Leader Chair. The KMELC will:
 1. Meet all eligibility of the Tier 2 UCERC, and
 2. be distinct from the Killam Emerging Research Leader Award. Recipients of the Killam Emerging Research Leader Award are eligible to apply for the chair if they still meet the other eligibility criteria.
- g. Nominees for the Tier 1 UCREC will:
 1. be academic staff members who are more than 10 years from conferral of their highest degree, and;
 2. have not previously received this Chair.
- h. The top-ranked candidate in the Tier 1 UCREC competition, who also meets the additional eligibility criteria below, will be selected as the Killam Memorial Chair:
 1. Meet all eligibility of the Tier 1 UCREC, and
 2. In accordance with the terms of the Killam Memorial Endowment, the Killam Memorial Chair's field of research must be in the sciences or engineering. Science includes health, natural, and social sciences. Scholars in the arts and humanities are not eligible.
 3. The KMC must hold the rank of Professor as of the date of nomination.
 4. Former holders of the Killam Memorial Chair are not eligible.

Criteria for Selection

Nominees will be assessed based on clear evidence of the following:

- a. Quality of the nominee and the proposed research program (60% of score)
As appropriate to their career stage and discipline the nominee:

1. is (or shows strong potential to become) an outstanding and innovative world-class researcher whose accomplishments have made (or will make) a major impact in their field(s);
 2. is (or shows strong potential to become) recognized internationally, nationally, or regionally as a leader in their field(s).
 3. has a superior record of attracting and supervising graduate students and postdoctoral fellows (considering different practices in the relevant field or discipline) and the potential to attract, develop and retain excellent trainees, students, and future researchers; and
 4. demonstrates a clear commitment to excellence in research and/or research training through advancement of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility.
 5. if conducting Indigenous Research, the nominee demonstrates a clear commitment to respectful relationships with all Indigenous peoples and communities. As applicable, Indigenous research is co-created and co-led with Indigenous Peoples, as leaders, investigators, trainees, partners and collaborators, using a distinction-based approach.
 6. is proposing an original, innovative research program of the highest quality.
- b. Research environment, supports, and alignment with strategic priorities (40% of score)
1. The quality of the institutional and Faculty-level environment, including opportunities for collaboration with other researchers working in complementary areas.
 2. The Faculty must demonstrate that it will provide chairholders with the support they require to ensure the success of their work.
 3. the alignment of the proposed chair with UCalgary institutional and Faculty strategies and the importance of the proposed chair to the attainment of institutional and Faculty strategic objectives.
 4. The proposed research program shows promise to build capacity and provide leadership for strategic and transdisciplinary research initiatives.

In making a recommendation to the Killam Trustees for the Killam Memorial Emerging Leader Chair, the committee will consider:

- a. how the candidate and their research or scholarship plans will advance the research priorities of both the University of Calgary and the nominating Faculty;
- b. the candidate's outstanding, nationally- or internationally-leading, record of contribution to knowledge and/or innovation, with demonstrable impact;
- c. the candidate's success promoting, disseminating, and/or managing research or scholarship activities; and
- d. the candidate's success training graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

In making a recommendation to the Killam Trustees for the Killam Memorial Chair, the committee will consider:

- a. the stature of the candidate as an internationally-recognized researcher;
- b. how the candidate and his or her research plans will advance the strategic research priorities of both the University of Calgary and the nominating Faculty;
- c. the candidate's ability to attract and train superior graduate students and postdoctoral fellows;
- d. the candidate's ability to secure research and infrastructure funding from peer-reviewed competitions; and
- e. the candidate's ability to lead interdisciplinary research initiatives at the University of Calgary.

Nominations

The nomination process is to be strategically led by Faculty Deans, in partnership with the Provost

and Vice-President Academic (VPA) and Vice-President Research (VPR). The nomination package must provide the supportive information necessary to allow for an evidence-based, decision-making adjudication process. Nomination packages not adhering to the criteria outlined below will not be considered.

Nomination Package Requirements

- a. **Nomination Letter from the Dean (maximum three (3) pages)** describing:
 1. The UCREC Tier (either 1 or 2) for which the nominee is eligible
 2. the Faculty's assessment of the nominee's research program and record of (and potential for) research leadership, and
 3. how the faculty member will be supported for successful engagement in transdisciplinary and other strategic initiatives. This must include description of the faculty member's workload and in particular, the teaching, service, and scholarship requirements during the Chair's term, and whether it needs to be adjusted for the term of the Chair so that there is substantial time dedicated to scholarship and creative activity.
- b. **Curriculum Vitae (no limit)** in any format
- c. **A short, non-technical description of the nominee's research contributions and impact (maximum two (2) pages)**
- d. **Research Proposal (maximum three (3) pages** inclusive of citations/references) outlining the priorities, objectives, approach, and expected outcomes for the research activities proposed for the tenure of the Research Excellence Chair. This will include clearly stating how the activities will build capacity in transdisciplinary scholarship and/or other strategic initiatives at the University of Calgary.
- e. **Statement on EDIA (maximum one (1) page)** written by from the nominee outlining their commitment to excellence in research and research training through advancement of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility.
- f. **Letter of appraisal** from an external expert providing a written evaluation of the quality, feasibility, and likely impact of the proposed research and of the capability of the nominee to achieve the stated goals of that research. The external expert shall have an arm's length perspective, per the conflict of interest guidelines of the Canada Research Chairs program.

Submission Procedure

Nominations should be compiled into a single PDF in the order outlined above. Nominations must be submitted by Faculty Deans at 12:00 pm MT (noon) on June 11, 2026 through the [submission portal](#). It is the responsibility of the nominator to ensure that the nomination package is complete. Incomplete nomination packages will not be considered by the Selection Committee.

Evaluation

Nominations will be assessed by a selection committee of representatives from the VPR Executive Team against the selection criteria outlined above. Subsequently the VPR and Provost will meet with the Program Lead and will make the final allocation decisions based on external appraisals and selection committee recommendations. The top-ranked candidates will be recommended to representatives of the Killam Trustees for approval of the KMELC and KMC.

Rating Criteria:			
1. Does Not Meet Requirements: No evidence provided in the nomination package related to this criterion.			
2. Minimally meets requirements: Little evidence provided in the nomination package related to this criterion, with many gaps evident.			
3. Meets Requirements: Clear evidence is provided in the nomination package related to this criterion, with very few gaps evident.			
4. Exceeds Requirements: Outstanding evidence provided from multiple sources of evidence in the nomination package related to this criterion.			
Criterion	Rating (1-4)	Comments	
Quality of the nominee and the proposed research program (60% of score) <i>As appropriate to their career stage and discipline the nominee</i>			
is (or shows strong potential to become) an outstanding and innovative world-class researcher whose accomplishments have made (or will make) a major impact in their field(s)			
is (or shows strong potential to become) recognized internationally, nationally, or regionally as a leader in their field(s).			
demonstrates a clear commitment to excellence in research and/or research training through advancement of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility.			
if conducting Indigenous Research, the nominee demonstrates a clear commitment to respectful relationships with all Indigenous peoples and communities. As applicable, Indigenous research is co-created and co-led with Indigenous Peoples, as leaders, investigators, trainees, partners and collaborators, using a distinction-based approach.	Pass/Fail – no points awarded		
is proposing an original, innovative research program of the highest quality.			
SUBTOTAL Quality of the Nominee & Proposed Research Program		X 0.6 =	weighted score
Research environment, supports, and alignment with strategic priorities (40% of score)			
The quality of the institutional and Faculty-level environment, including opportunities for collaboration with other researchers working in complementary areas.			
The Faculty must demonstrate that it will provide chairholders with the support they require to ensure the success of their work.			
the alignment of the proposed chair with UCalgary institutional and Faculty strategies and the importance of the proposed chair to the attainment of institutional and Faculty strategic objectives.			
The proposed research program shows promise to build capacity and provide leadership for strategic and transdisciplinary research initiatives.			
SUBTOTAL Quality of the Nominee & Proposed Research Program		X 0.4 =	weighted score
TOTAL SCORE			