# NSERC CREATE – UBC Internal Competition 2024-2025

(rev. January 19th, 2024)

UBC is eligible to submit six (6) Letters of Intent to Apply (LOIs) to the NSERC CREATE competition. The LOI is no longer assessed by NSERC on a competitive basis, however, the six LOI quota necessitates an internal selection process. Teams wishing to participate must submit a brief proposal for consideration by an internal selection committee, made up of a multidisciplinary and diverse group of UBC faculty.

NSERC is presently revising the CREATE competition ([link](#)), and will publish details in early March. Subject to update, an outline of competition objectives and the NSERC application process can be found [here](#) and should be reviewed. It is recommended that applicants ensure they have support from their home department and faculty before applying; while financial and in-kind support from these groups is not a requirement, it is highly recommended for a competitive application.

**Note:** Applicants to the International Stream do not take part in the UBC internal competition for their first two attempts at funding as they are not included in the institutional quota. However, we ask that such applicants inform SPARC and ORS of their intent to apply.

## I. TIMELINE & DEADLINES

- **UBC internal competition deadline: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 — noon.**

- Complete proposals should be submitted to SPARC via [mark.phillipo@ubc.ca](mailto:mark.phillipo@ubc.ca)

- Proposals will be reviewed by all members of the internal selection committee. Applicants will be informed of the results of the internal competition by Wednesday, April 10, 2024. All teams will be provided with a summary of the committee's feedback, based on members' written comments.

- **NSERC's LOI deadline is anticipated to be Wednesday, May 1, 2024, 5 PM PST. The Full Application deadline is anticipated to be Monday, September 23, 2024, 5 PM PST.**

- The teams selected to submit an LOI and Full Application to NSERC are expected to take part in SPARC or UBCO ORS criteria and editorial review and to work with our offices to develop a UBC letter of support.

## II. POINTS OF CONSIDERATION

### Participation in Multiple CREATE Initiatives

NSERC limits the participation of an individual researcher to a maximum of two CREATE initiatives as either an applicant or co-applicant (active or applied for). Also, a researcher may only be the lead applicant on one CREATE initiative annually.

It is the lead applicant's responsibility to ensure that all team members are eligible based on these limits. ***Please ask all team members about their participation on any other CREATE initiatives***. Participation in up to two initiatives is allowed by NSERC but necessitates justification, as described in the instructions below.

If NSERC receives an LOI that includes team members who are ineligible based on these limits, it is our experience that they will inform the lead applicants of this issue and require that the team member be dropped from one team, without the option to add another in their place before review.

## III. COMPLETING AN INTERNAL COMPETITION PROPOSAL

General formatting for NSERC attachments must be followed: Times New Roman 12 pts, 3/4 inch margins (min), single spaced.

A complete application to the UBC internal competition includes the following components (instructions in following pages):

1 – UBC Internal Competition Cover Page

2 – Outline of Training Program (2 pages + appendix)

3 – Excellence of Proposed Team of Researchers (1 page)

## IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA

UBC's Internal Competition evaluation criteria will broadly reflect those of NSERC for the Full Application (excepting Program Management):

**1. Merit of the proposed training program** (67%)

Applicable to all applications:

- Extent to which the program will provide opportunities for the trainees to develop professional and technical skills.
- Extent to which the program will provide opportunities for the trainees to receive mentorship.
- How the mobility of students and fellows – a requirement for all trainees – between academic institutions and organizations either within Canada or abroad will augment the training experience.
- Description of the potential employers and a qualitative assessment of the job prospects for trainees; extent to which the research training program will facilitate the transition of the trainees to the Canadian workforce and promote interaction with non-academic sectors, such as private companies, industry associations, not-for-profit organizations, government departments, etc.
- Extent to which the program uses novel and interesting approaches to provide trainees with training and mentorship that go above and beyond the traditional graduate school experience [i.e., Added Value].
- Focus and clarity of the objectives of the research training program and how they relate to current developments, with reference to the literature.
- Planned approach to promoting participation from a diverse group of trainees, taking into account equity and inclusion in recruitment practices, mentorship approaches and initiatives aimed at ensuring an inclusive research and training environment.

As appropriate to specific applications:

- The degree to which the training program, while focused mainly in the NSE, also fosters research studies at the interface between NSE and health or social sciences and humanities.

**2. Excellence of the team of researchers** (33%)

See the Policy and Guidelines on the Assessment of Contributions to Research and Training.

- Quality and impact of team members' past contributions in their respective areas of research.

- Complementarity of the expertise of the members of the group to deliver on the collaborative research (including evidence of how they will work collaboratively) and training goals proposed
- Consideration of EDI in the rationale of the team composition and in the designated roles within the team.
- Quality and extent of past contributions to the training and mentoring of HQP, as well as considerations of equity and inclusion in trainee recruitment and the research and training environment.
- Evidence of the university's commitment to facilitate and further the plans and goals of the CREATE program, during and beyond the term of the grant.

# UBC LOI Instructions

(1) **UBC Internal Competition Cover Page**

**Co-applicants**: List a minimum of one and maximum of 10 co-applicants in addition to the lead. Provide names, institution/department, and time (in hours per month) each will devote to the proposed research/activity. For multi-institutional applications include at least one co-applicant from each participating university. At least 70% of the co-applicants must be from the natural sciences and engineering (NSE) fields.

Teams should strive for a diverse group of co-applicants, including balanced gender representation.

Note: Applicants and co-applicants must be the same in the LOI and the application. If changes are required between these stages, you must seek approval from NSERC.

**Collaborators**: A list of collaborators is not required at the LOI stage, but can be included if they are already known. If applicable, list each collaborator's name, organization/department, and time (in hours per month) to be devoted to the proposed training program.

The collaborator list should include key participants in your proposed CREATE and may include, as appropriate, other academics who are not listed as co-applicants but have a supportive role to play; research scientists from other research institutions who will actively participate in the training and/or representatives from other stakeholders including government or industry who are potential employers of the CREATE trained graduates.

Notes: 1. Collaborators do not have access to grant funds and are expected to contribute their own resources (cash or in-kind) to the CREATE training program. 2. Due to conflict of interest considerations, CREATE trainees cannot conduct internships at companies owned wholly or in part by the applicant or a co-applicant. It is permissible for a CREATE trainee to conduct an internship at a company owned wholly or in part by a collaborator.

(2) **Outline of Training Program**

Maximum of **2** pages text, plus 1 page appendix (see exceptions below).

Instructions:

- Teams are advised to address each of the following points in turn, keeping in mind the evaluation criteria specified in Section IV above.
- State the objectives of the proposed research training program, and summarize the approach, originality and novelty as well as the expected value (to trainees and to Canada) of the proposed program.
- Briefly indicate the type of research that the trainees will be involved in during the training program.
- Your proposal must describe how the proposed approach, including the role of mentoring and mobility, will better prepare students and/or postdoctoral fellows for their future careers in industry, government or, to a lesser extent, academia. Indicate how these stakeholders, as future employers, will be involved in guiding the training program.
- A description of the potential employers and a qualitative assessment of job prospects for the trainees should be included.

- A description of how equity and inclusion will be integrated into recruitment practices and mentorship approaches, thus ensuring participation by a diverse group of trainees, should be included.

Appendix (separate page)

- HQP Summary Table: Include information on the approximate number of students and postdoctoral fellows (whether expected to be funded through CREATE or not) whom you are planning to train and mentor on an annual basis in a table similar to the example below.

| | No. in Year 1 | No. in Year 2 | No. in Year 3 | No. in Year 4 | No. in Year 5 | No. in Year 6 | Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **NSE** | | | | | | | |
| Undergraduate | | | | | | | |
| Graduates | | | | | | | |
| Postdoctoral | | | | | | | |
| **Non-NSE** | | | | | | | |
| Undergraduates | | | | | | | |
| Graduates | | | | | | | |
| Postdoctoral | | | | | | | |
| **Total** | | | | | | | |

\* Provide an estimate of the total number of students who are expected to graduate, by category.

- Briefly indicate how the training and mentoring of each group will be handled. Provide an explanation if a particular category of students will not receive funding or be included in the program (e.g., if no MSc students will be supported, explain why).
- Images (optional): If applicants wish to include images/diagrams (e.g., program timeline, team organization), these should be placed in the appendix. Please refrain from adding text beyond the specified two-page limit.

Exceptions:

A maximum of one additional page is permitted to explain either of the two following situations:

1. Previous CREATE grantees and co-grantees must clearly describe how this application differs from those previously funded.

2. Researchers who are applying in a research area already supported by other active CREATE grants must clearly describe how this application differs from those already funded. See a complete list of funded CREATE programs here.

Failure to submit this information will result in rejection of the LOI by NSERC. This extra page should follow the *Outline of Training Program* section.

Notes:
- For applicants who have previously held a CREATE grant, the proposed initiative must differ from the previous one. Note that to be eligible to apply for the 2024/2025 competition this grant must have ended, with the final installment having been received in 2023 or earlier.
- Applications which do not focus on support at the graduate level will not be accepted. If the training proposal focuses primarily on one group of trainees, it must be justified.

## (3) Excellence of Proposed Team of Researchers

Maximum of **1** page text.

Instructions:
- Provide information on the core team involved.
- Explain the rationale for the team composition and how it has the necessary expertise for the successful execution of the training program.
- Indicate if members of the team will work together (i.e., collaborative research) and how they will do so.
- Explain the applicant's, co-applicants' and collaborators' roles and responsibilities within the training program.
- Equity, diversity and inclusion considerations should be reflected in the rationale of the team composition and, where applicable, in the designated roles within the team. For more information, refer to NSERC's Guide for Applicants: Considering equity, diversity and inclusion in your application (questions 1 to 4). Moreover, applicants should describe how they have and/or will implement policies and practices to support equity, diversity and inclusion within the team (e.g., recruitment of team members, management of the team, mentorship).
- Provide information on the team's past contributions to the training and mentoring of highly qualified personnel. Describe specific actions implemented to support equity and inclusion in recruitment practices, mentorship approaches and initiatives aimed at ensuring an inclusive research and training environment and trainee growth.
- Provide evidence of support (financial and/or in-kind) offered by faculty/departmental sources.