



Canadian Statistical Sciences Institute
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CANSSI COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH TEAMS PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND REVIEW CRITERIA 2025

The Collaborative Research Teams (CRT) program is CANSSI's premier flagship activity. The mandate of the CRT program is to foster research and training interactions that span disciplines and institutions to tackle complex problems of broad importance for science, engineering, health, and society. The CRT program emphasizes the co-creation of knowledge, the leveraging of Canada's expertise in the statistical sciences (actuarial science, biostatistics, data science, statistics), and the synergy achieved by embedding partnership into projects at their inception.

Program Overview

A CRT project tackles research of sufficiently broad scope as to require a team of faculty, postdocs, and students spanning a range of specialties during a three-year research and training agenda. The research activities of a CRT project are NSERC-fundable in the sense of developing new fundamental statistical sciences methodology and models and/or applying statistical science methodology and models in an innovative way to a research problem in an NSERC-funded discipline.

However, it is important to note that the CRT program does not fund research directly; rather, it funds the activities and interactions that enable sustained collaboration. The scope of the proposed research and collaboration of a CRT project must be substantially beyond what can be successfully pursued with individual researcher resources. CRT projects have significant interdisciplinary interactions and the potential for meaningful impact in disciplines outside statistical sciences and on society.

Team Composition

CRTs are made up of faculty, students, and postdoctoral fellows and are directed by at least three team leads (at least half of whom must come from the statistical sciences) who have responsibility for directing research, collaboration, and training activities,

overseeing budget expenditures, and ensuring that the project satisfies CANSSI requirements. The participating faculty members act as collaborators who conduct research and co-supervise students and postdoctoral fellows. Team composition must span geography, institutions, and disciplines.

Commitments

CRT projects commit to fulfilling CANSSI requirements regarding the completion of annual reports during and after the project, satisfying CANSSI EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) requirements, and communicating and disseminating research results within statistical sciences as well as other disciplines and society.

Financial Support

The budget for a CRT project starting in the next round is forecast to be \$210,000 over three years. CRT funding goes primarily to support graduate students and postdoctoral fellows directly involved in the project research and to support sustained collaboration. Expenditures must align with an approved budget. Expenditures are reimbursed through invoices submitted to Simon Fraser University and must conform to NSERC and Simon Fraser University policies.

Evaluation of CRT Applications

It is important that an application address all the evaluation criteria listed below.

Proposed research

The novelty and quality of the proposed research in statistical sciences, the likelihood of success of the project, the anticipated outcomes and their potential impact are evaluated. It is important that an application describe the relation of the proposed project to existing and emerging research.

Collaboration

The degree to which the proposed research requires a team-based approach and the synergy of the collaboration, i.e., the degree to which the collaboration is more than the sum of the efforts of the individual partners, is evaluated. The scope of the proposed research and collaboration must be substantially beyond what can be successfully pursued with individual researcher resources, and the team composition must span geography, institutions, and disciplines.

Interdisciplinary research and partners

The strength of the interdisciplinary aspects of the project, the potential for impact in other disciplines and/or in society, and the suitability of the interdisciplinary

partners relative to the proposed research are evaluated. The role of the partners in the training of the graduate students and postdoctoral fellows and the plans to support interdisciplinary interactions are important considerations.

Investigators

The degree to which the proposed team is qualified to conduct the proposed research, the record of the project leads and collaborators in terms of research and training of students and postdoctoral fellows, and the preparedness of the project leads to manage a team-based research project are evaluated. Applications from teams whose leads are new researchers (e.g., assistant professors) may designate up to two experienced faculty to serve as mentors for the project. The role of mentors is to offer advice on interdisciplinary aspects of the project, advising trainees, and project management. If provided, the record of mentors for the project is evaluated for suitability to their role.

Role of trainees

The plans for including postdoctoral fellows and students in the proposed project are evaluated, including the suitability of the proposed research for the involvement of trainees. This includes evaluation of the role of trainees in the cohesion of the team (e.g., in joint supervision arrangements) and pursuit of the proposed research.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

The commitment to follow CANSSI EDI requirements is evaluated.

Communication and dissemination

The plans for communication and dissemination of research results are evaluated in terms of effectiveness and impact. The effectiveness of the plans to communicate the outcomes and impact of the project outside statistical sciences is an important consideration.

Budget

The relation of the proposed budget to the planned activities and the efficacy of the budget are evaluated. Planned use of support must be directly related to project activities.

Composition of proposal

The extent to which the application describes a project with clear objectives, approaches, and roles of personnel is evaluated.

Adjudication of Applications

Please refer to the [CRT Application Instructions](#) for complete details.

Applications are evaluated by the CANSSI Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). The SAC reviews applications with respect to the following criteria: proposed research; collaboration; interdisciplinary research and partners; investigators; role of trainees; and composition of proposal. The evaluation of the SAC is supported by external reviews of these criteria. External reviewers are selected on the basis of suggestions from the applicants, the SAC, and the CANSSI Director and Deputy Director. The Director and Deputy Director review applications with respect to the following criteria: equity, diversity, and inclusion; communication and dissemination; and budget. The Director and Deputy Director make the final decisions for support based on the recommendations of the SAC.

The rough timetable for application stages is presented below. Please check the CANSSI website for specific dates.

March to mid-May	Submission of applications
Mid-May	Preliminary assessment for eligibility by the CANSSI Director and Deputy Director
Mid-May to mid-June	Identification of external reviewers
Mid-June to mid-August	Review of applications
Mid-August to end of September	Preliminary assessment of applications by the Scientific Advisory Committee
	Preliminary assessment of equity, diversity, and inclusion, communication and dissemination, and budget application components by the CANSSI Director and Deputy Director
First half of October	Upon invitation of the Scientific Advisory Committee, short-listed teams prepare a response to reviews and assessments
Second half of October	Final assessment of applications by the Scientific Advisory Committee and decisions for support

Suggested Reviewers

Applicants must suggest three reviewers with a rationale for the choices.

Restriction on Applications

Applicants can be listed as a lead on only one proposal. Please refer to CANSSI's full policy regarding receiving support from CANSSI for more than one project.