

POLICY ON RESEARCH CHAIRS

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Research and Graduate Studies

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PREAMBLE

Concordia University recognizes and values the role played by Research Chairs (“Chairholders”) in creating and mobilizing knowledge with the aim of achieving research excellence. As leaders in their fields, Chairholders play a critical role in deepening our knowledge base and in strengthening our teaching, training of highly qualified personnel, and research capacity. As catalysts and builders, they contribute to the positioning of the University in given areas of scholarly pursuit and to the enhancement of the research training environment.

This Policy, which is overseen by Senate through the Senate Research Committee and administered by the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies, is intended to ensure that research areas and candidates for Research Chairs are selected in a coherent and visionary manner to support and advance the strategic priorities of our academic and research units.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy and its related [Procedures and Guidelines](#) is to set University-wide principles for the establishment, allocation and support of Research Chairs at the University, as well as to prescribe effective and transparent procedures for reporting and performance evaluation, renewals and discontinuation of existing Research Chairs.

SCOPE

This Policy outlines the internal principles that govern all types of Research Chairs at the University, independent of their title and source of funding. It complements external agencies’ and sponsors’ requirements for the governance and administration of Research Chairs including the terms and conditions of appointment, evaluation and renewal.

The [Procedures and Guidelines](#) reflect current institutional practices and cover such items as:

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- Composition and role of the University Research Committee and the Faculty Research Committees
- Internal allocation, nomination, and formal designation of Research Chairs
- Creation and Renewal of an Endowed Academic Chair or Special Professorship (ACSP)
- Budget guidelines for a Canada Research Chair nomination
- Post-award administration of the Concordia University Research Chair Program
- Reporting, evaluation and renewal of Research Chairs
- Discontinuation and termination of Research Chairs

Any amendments to the [*Procedures and Guidelines*](#) are subject to the approval of all Faculty Deans.

Centralized procedures for allocation, nomination and designation might not apply in cases of Endowed Chairs or certain externally supported Chairs and Distinguished Professorships targeting a very specific research area, academic unit, or candidate. In order to reflect the principles enshrined in this Policy, each Faculty will have an administrative framework governing these Research Chairs, a copy of which should be on file with the OVPRGS.

This Policy, which relates only to the terms and conditions of the Chairholders, does not affect or supersede any provisions contained in the Concordia University Faculty Association (CUFA) Collective Agreement.

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DEFINITIONS

With the support of external or internal resources, Research Chairs are prestigious academic designations held by outstanding researchers who are acknowledged by their peers as leaders in their fields and recognized as internationally renowned researchers.

For the purposes of this Policy, the term Research Chair or Chairholder encompasses all internally and externally supported Chairs, including:

Canada Research Chairs

The Canada Research Chairs (CRC) program, established in 1999, is an initiative funded by the Government of Canada. Each eligible institution receives an allocation of Research Chairs calculated on the amount of research funding received from the Tri-Council (NSERC, CIHR, and SSHRC).

Concordia University Research Chairs

The Concordia University Research Chair (CURC) program, created in 2000, is designed to build research capacity, leverage external funding, and provide direct support to graduate students. In exceptional circumstances, CURCs may be considered as a mechanism to retain faculty members. While the CURC program provides many categories of support that are similar to the CRC program – i.e. research funding, salary stipend, and teaching release—it cannot truly mirror the CRC program because internal resources cannot sustain the levels of support made possible by funding provided by the CRC Secretariat. The University annually assigns a budget to support the CURC program and the number of CURC chairs depends upon the availability of funds in any given year. Available CURC designations are Tier 1, Tier 2, and New Scholar.

Industrial Research Chairs

The Industrial Research Chairs (IRC) program is an initiative of NSERC (the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada) to assist universities in building the critical mass required for a major research endeavour of interest to industry. Funding varies depending upon the industrial sponsor, the area and the scale of the Research Chair.

Endowed Research Chairs

With the support of individual and/or corporate partners, Endowed Research Chairs are a resource that serves to attract or recognize renowned researchers in a variety of disciplines.

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Funds to create an endowment may come from several sources, generally a donation to the University.

Special Professorships

Special Professorships reflect naming opportunities for sponsors over a defined period of time. The duration is governed by the amount of funding available and the activities included in the professorship. A professorship with a research focus is administered under the same conditions as a Research Chair.

Additionally, for the purposes of this Policy:

Academic unit means, as outlined in the CUFA Collective Agreement, a Department, College, or Institute within a Faculty in which a CUFA member may hold an academic appointment.

Research unit means a non-departmental unit (e.g. centers, institutes, networks, etc.) with specific objectives to advance the research-related goals of the University. Additional information may be found in the *Policy on Research Units* (VPRGS-8).

The University Research Committee (URC) is a central committee which oversees procedures for the internal allocation, nominations and renewals of Research Chairs, ensuring an institutional perspective.

The Faculty Research Committee (FRC), or its equivalent, is a Faculty-based committee which makes recommendations to the URC in light of the Faculties' context, culture and strategic priorities.

The composition and role of the central and Faculty-based committees are outlined in the [*Procedures and Guidelines*](#).

POLICY

Establishment and Allocation of Research Chairs

1. Establishment of a Research Chair is a prerogative of the University and aims to advance research goals and reinforce graduate and highly qualified personnel training as envisioned by the University's Strategic Research Plan.

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2. A new Research Chair will be established when funding for the Research Chair is made available by external or internal sources such as when the University receives a new CRC from the Government of Canada. The establishment of CURC, IRC, Special Professorships or Endowed Research Chairs is dependent upon available opportunities.
3. When a Research Chair is available, the allocation process will be transparent and University-wide. Academic and research units will be invited to submit letters of intent (LOIs) demonstrating the strategic impact of allocating a Research Chair in a given area. Strategic prioritization will be carried out at the Faculty level so that the URC can subsequently make a well-informed final decision with a University-wide perspective, as outlined in the [*Procedures and Guidelines*](#).
4. In situations where an external sponsor targets a specific research area, discipline, profile or candidate for a Research Chair, the allocation process outlined above might not be relevant, in which cases the relevant Faculty framework shall apply.
5. To ensure alignment with institutional strategic priorities, feasibility and long-term sustainability, all initiatives to establish a Research Chair must be communicated to the VPRGS and the Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs at an early stage. The VPRGS and the Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs will jointly specify the area of the Research Chair, the source of funding, expected category of the position and any special conditions associated with the selection and appointment of a candidate, with a notice to CUFA.
6. A Research Chair is not permanently allocated to a specific research area or to an academic or research unit at the University unless such condition has been clearly stipulated by the external sponsor at the time of establishment of the Research Chair.
7. If an existing Research Chair becomes vacant due to resignation, retirement, non-renewal, or any other reason, the Research Chair position reverts to the University pool and the internal allocation process described in the [*Procedures and Guidelines*](#) will be followed. Similarly, a Research Chair position shall revert to the University pool should no candidate accept a given nomination.

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Nomination of Research Chairs

8. The University will use its allotment of CRCs to recruit new researchers while the CURCs will be used to recognize researchers who currently hold an appointment as faculty members at the University. Other types of Research Chairs may be designated for external or internal candidates depending upon the conditions of each Research Chair.
9. A Chairholder will normally hold a full-time tenured or tenure track appointment at the University while the Research Chair designation is in effect.
10. Nomination of an external candidate to a Research Chair will involve the recruitment of the candidate to the University with the nomination to the Research Chair to follow at the appropriate time. In the recruitment process, all interested candidates will be notified that the position is related to a Research Chair and all conditions related to the Research Chair designation will be clearly outlined.
11. The procedure for the recruitment and appointment of faculty members is defined and governed by the CUFA collective agreement including the formation of a Special Advisory Search Committee (SASC) to consider Research Chairs appointments, when applicable.
12. The authorization to fill an allocated Research Chair may be revoked and the Research Chair reallocated if:
 - the search process is not completed as per delays outlined in the *Procedures and Guidelines*
 - if the candidacy is not approved by the external sponsor

To reallocate the Research Chair, the internal allocation process will be followed.

Formal Designation of Research Chairholders

13. To obtain a CURC designation, the candidate identified in the retained LOI will submit a research plan to the relevant FRC as described in the [*Procedures and Guidelines*](#). The FRC will communicate its approval to the VPRGS. A letter of appointment for the Research

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Chair will be issued by the Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs upon recommendation from the VPRGS with a copy sent to CUFA.

14. To obtain an external Research Chair designation (e.g. CRC or IRC), the selected candidate must comply with the respective program requirements and agency guidelines. The agency grants the approval and the formal designation.
15. At the discretion of the respective Faculty Dean, the appointment to a faculty tenure or tenure-track position may be made conditional upon the approval of the candidacy by the external sponsor.
16. In the case of a Research Chair allocated to a research area that crosses departments or Faculties, the individual must receive a primary appointment in one academic unit.

Terms, Conditions and Support of Research Chairs

17. Externally sponsored Research Chairs are subject to the terms and conditions of their awards as defined by the external sponsor. In the case of CRCs and CURCs, the terms and conditions of institutional support are outlined in the [Procedures and Guidelines](#).

Reporting, Evaluation and Renewal of Research Chairs

18. Annual reporting and mid-term reviews are required of all Research Chairs as outlined in the [Procedures and Guidelines](#).
19. Additional requirements for annual reporting of externally sponsored Research Chairs are governed by the rules of the external sponsor.
20. Research Chairs that are renewable after a completed term must undergo an internal performance evaluation. Each Faculty Council will establish a committee to review the renewal and submit a recommendation to the URC for final decision. The Faculty Council Committee will coordinate the evaluation of renewable Research Chairs in the final year of the term.
21. Following a positive decision by the URC:

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- an externally sponsored Research Chair may proceed with the development of the renewal dossier. A successful renewal nomination by the external sponsor will result in the continuation of the Research Chair designation.
- a CURC or Endowed Research Chair will be considered renewed and will receive a letter of appointment stating the terms and conditions of the upcoming term.

Discontinuation and Termination of Research Chairs

22. Research Chairs may be discontinued by mutual agreement between the University and the sponsor. In such cases, the Research Chairholder will present a plan for the phasing out of the position with special consideration being given to the implications for students and the highly qualified personnel involved in the Research Chair's activities.
23. A Research Chairholder's designation may be terminated when:
 - the status of the faculty appointment is changed to a non-eligible status as defined by each Research Chair type
 - the outcome of the performance evaluation is unsuccessful or if he/she is terminated in accordance with the provisions of the CUFA collective agreement
 - the Research Chairholder is non-compliant with the rules of the external sponsor or the University

The procedure for the termination of a Research Chair designation is outlined in the [*Procedures and Guidelines*](#).

As adopted by Senate on April 16, 2010 and amended October 4, 2013