



PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH CHAIRS

As per *Policy on Research Chairs* ([VPRGS-7](#))

Last Updated – November 2020

These Procedures and Guidelines are related to the *Policy on Research Chairs* ([VPRGS-7](#)) and reflect current practices concerning:

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For the purposes of these Procedures and Guidelines, all terms that are capitalized shall have the same meaning as those terms defined in the *Policy on Research Chairs* ([VPRGS-7](#)) (the “Policy”).

Composition and role of the University Research Committee and the Faculty Research Committee

The University Research Committee (URC): Chaired by the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (VPRGS), the URC is comprised of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs (or delegate) and six (6) faculty members holding a Research Chair or Distinguished Professorship with the following distribution: two (2) from the Faculty of Arts and Science, two (2) from the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science, one (1) from the Faculty of Fine Arts, and one (1) from the John Molson School of Business.

The members of the URC are appointed by the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies in consultation with the Faculty Deans for a three-year term. The URC usually meets three (3) times a year.

The Faculty Research Committee (FRC): Each Faculty Dean will form a Faculty Research Committee (FRC), or its equivalent, to make strategic recommendations to the URC regarding the internal allotment of available Research Chairs, selection of candidates, and evaluation of Chairholders. The FRC is usually chaired by the Associate Dean, Research and the committee members are appointed for a given term by the Faculty Council. Its composition may vary in terms of seniority and disciplines but the FRC should be comprised of a minimum of four (4) faculty members. Multidisciplinary representation is recommended.

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Internal Allocation, Nomination, and Formal Designation of Research Chairs

This following describes the procedure for the internal allocation of new, vacant, or vacated Research Chairs to an academic/research unit and the designation of a candidate.

Call for letters of intent (LOIs): When a Research Chair is available, the VPRGS will announce to the Faculties the type, level, and any special conditions related to the Research Chair. The Office of the Dean (usually the Associate Dean, Research) in each Faculty will invite all the academic/research units to submit LOIs. Due to the thorough process involved in allocating CURCs, the VPRGS will determine the appropriate cycle under which a call will be announced.

The LOI is expected to identify a strategic area for establishing a Research Chair and the profile of a potential Chairholder by addressing:

- Rationale for the Research Chair Allocation
 - University research strengths in the proposed field and role of the Research Chair in developing those strengths
 - Ability to leverage additional external resources and build a research program that extends beyond the Chairholder and enriches the research community at Concordia, appropriate to the Tier level
 - Demonstrated ability for leadership and making enhanced scholarly contributions to the university in key areas such as: attracting and training new talent, outreach activities, new initiatives and interdisciplinary collaboration
 - Potential of attracting a high-caliber candidate
- Description of the Research Environment
 - Existing critical mass of research or, if an emerging area, the potential for building a critical mass
 - Research environment within the academic/research unit
- Importance of the Research Chair Allocation for the University
 - Expected impact on the research profile of the academic/research unit

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- Demonstration of the fit with the University's Strategic Research Plan
- Alignment with principles and measures of the [Concordia EDI Action Plan](#)
- Positioning of the University with respect to the Research Chair in the Quebec/Canada context(s)

Specific requirements for consideration at the LOI stage:

CRC:

- A candidate is not expected to be identified and presented at the LOI stage. Given that the appointment to a CRC will target only external recruits, the recruitment process of new faculty members must be conducted in accordance with the [CUFA Collective Agreement](#). A candidate for the CRC will be selected following the stipulated search process.
- The LOI should also address equity with the four designated groups: women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, and members of visible minorities as per the expectations of the CRC Secretariat.

CURC:

- Given that the CURC is intended for Concordia faculty members only, the LOIs will be built around the selected candidates.
- Only current full-time tenured or tenure-track Concordia faculty members are eligible to be nominated to a CURC.
- Retired faculty members, faculty members on a plan leading to retirement (e.g. gradual retirement plan), faculty members on a reduced-time appointment, or a person who has not yet started their appointment at Concordia are not eligible to be nominated to a CURC. When a faculty member starts a plan leading to retirement (e.g. gradual retirement plan), enters a reduced-time appointment or retires while holding a CURC, their CURC will be phased out in accordance with the [CURC Program Administrative Guidelines](#). The phase out period starts at the time their employment status changes.
- Current holders of a CURC appointment are not eligible to be nominated to a CURC, unless they are in the last year of their CURC appointment.

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- A maximum of two (2) terms at Tier 2 and two (2) terms at Tier 1 may be held, mirroring the Tier level limits of the CRC program; New Scholars may only be held for a single term.
- Faculty members already holding another Research Chair, such as a Canada Research Chair (CRC), an Industrial Research Chair, an Endowed Research Chair or a Special Professorship, are not eligible to be nominated for a CURC until the external Chair is expiring.
- Candidates who have previously held a CURC should demonstrate how they have leveraged the resources that were provided (research allocation and course release), notably in terms of attracting external funding, developing internal and external collaborations and team research initiatives, mobilization of knowledge, mentoring students and other highly qualified personnel, etc.
- Candidates who have experienced career interruptions and/or extenuating circumstances should address them in their applications.

Evaluation of LOIs: The FRC will evaluate the LOIs and will submit to the URC a letter of recommendation outlining the membership of the FRC, the evaluation criteria, the ranked list of recommended LOIs along with the justifications of the recommendations, endorsed by the Dean. The FRC is expected to deal with and disclose any potential conflicts of interest. Inter-faculty LOIs require a consolidated recommendation by all involved FRCs.

Deliberation and decision: Taking into consideration the FRC ranking and justifications for the recommended LOIs, the URC will select the strategic areas (CRC) or candidates (CURC). In its decisions, the URC will take into consideration the information provided in the LOI, the Strategic Research Plan, gender balance, equity issues, tier balance, sector representation, feasibility and sustainability.

Research Chair nomination: When a Research Chair is allocated to an academic/research unit, a candidate will be identified and nominated to the Research Chair. The process for nomination depends upon whether the candidate is a new recruit or has a faculty appointment at the University, the type of chair and how a nomination is evaluated. For Canada Research Chairs, the chair allocation will only be allocated to an academic/research unit for a pre-determined number of CRC nomination cycles (usually three). At the end of these nomination cycles, if a nomination

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dossier has not yet been submitted to the CRC Secretariat, the chair allocation will automatically revert to the university pool for a new allocation process to take place. Any extension requests for use of a Canada Research Chair allocation must be submitted in writing to the VPRGS in a timely fashion.

Special allocation of CURC (outside of a general call for LOIs):

In exceptional circumstances, a CURC appointment may be used as a tool for the emergency retention of a faculty member who is not holding a Research Chair or a Special Professorship, and who is considering leaving the University to take up a prestigious appointment with another institution, such as a Research Chair. In order for the VPRGS to consider such an exceptional nomination of a faculty member for a CURC all of the following conditions must be met:

- Sufficient funding is available in the CURC envelope to support the offer
- The Faculty Dean provides a strong, detailed recommendation to the VPRGS that addresses each of the following points:
 - The faculty member has an outstanding record of research or research creation accomplishments and Highly Qualified Personnel training, and
 - The faculty member has a firm offer, or has been shortlisted for a full-time faculty position at another institution, and
 - The departure of the faculty member would dramatically affect a strategic research area where the University has developed, or is clearly in the process of developing significant institutional expertise, leadership and capacity, and
- The Faculty Dean indicates whether the faculty member has been nominated for a CURC position within the last two (2) years and, if so, the ranking given to the candidate by the FRC must be provided.
- The Faculty Dean submits the recommendation to the VPRGS together with the candidate's complete research dossier.

The decision on such exceptional nominations shall be made as per the following procedure:

- The URC evaluates the complete research dossier of the candidate, taking into account additional variables such as the need to establish and maintain gender balance, tier balance, sector representation, feasibility and sustainability in the CURC program

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- The URC may request that the VPRGS seek additional information from the Faculty Dean
- The URC makes a recommendation to the VPRGS
- The VPRGS shall make the final decision as to whether or not to approve the nomination and informs the Faculty Dean of such decision.

To obtain a CURC designation, the successful nominee shall submit a research plan to the relevant FRC for its approval. Once approved, the FRC will communicate with the VPRGS. A letter of appointment for the Research Chair will be issued by the Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs upon recommendation from the VPRGS. A copy of this letter will be sent to CUFA. All emergency retention CURC appointments follow the same post-award procedure as regular CURC appointments.

Research Chair Designation:

The formal designation of the Research Chair is conditional upon the approval of the nomination. The CURC and the CRC designation processes are:

CURC designation: The candidate identified in the retained LOI will submit a research plan to the FRC including:

- Research program (5 pages): a description of the research program including overall objectives, key projects, collaborations, dissemination, and expected impacts on the research and training environment. Must describe how the CURC will be leveraged beyond the Chairholder to enrich the research community at Concordia
- Budget for the research program
- Curriculum Vitae in a free format (standard format as used by major granting agencies is recommended)

When approved by the FRC, the Faculty will submit the detailed proposal along with a letter of recommendation to the VPRGS outlining any special conditions over and above the central support attached to the Research Chair. Upon receiving the complete proposal and the letter of recommendation from the Faculty, the VPRGS will initiate the appointment as described in the section below on *Administrative Guidelines for the CURC Program*.

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External designation (i.e. CRC and IRC): The Faculty and the academic/research unit(s) initiate the search process for an external candidate. The recruitment and appointment of faculty members are defined and governed by the [CUFA Collective Agreement](#). When a candidate is identified, a nomination application will be developed and submitted to the external sponsor following the respective program requirements and sponsor guidelines. Upon approval by the sponsor, the nominee will receive his/her formal title. The terms and conditions of the Research Chair are governed by the external sponsor and the University.

Budget Guidelines for a Canada Research Chair Nomination

The University uses its allotment of CRCs to recruit new researchers. In accordance with this strategic decision, no one who is currently a faculty member at the University may be nominated for a vacant CRC and every successful candidate will therefore be a new appointment to the University. While the CRC program serves mainly to attract new faculty members with strong research profiles, it also enhances the University's competitiveness to retain top researchers through renewals of their CRC designation. Chairholders, being top ranked scholars, must be offered competitive conditions not only towards their salaries and research support but also in infrastructure and administrative support. These budget guidelines are flexible in order to accommodate a large range of specific situations across the University's four (4) Faculties.

The purpose of these budget guidelines is twofold; first, to facilitate the preparation of the CRC budget when a nomination package is under development; and second, to ensure that our CRC candidates are offered similar opportunities across the University.

Guiding principles:

- In consultation with the Office of Research, the Faculty where the Chairholder will be hired is responsible for preparing the CRC budget and negotiating with the candidate on the final budget
- The Faculty may choose to make the hiring conditional upon the successful granting of the CRC designation or it may hire the candidate as a faculty member even if the CRC nomination is unsuccessful

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- Salary negotiations with the candidate will take place as per the current practice for any new faculty member hire at the University
- All benefits and access to funding that would normally be offered to a faculty member would also be offered to the CRC candidate (i.e. start-up funds, office and lab space, access to internal funding).

Funding provided by the Canada Research Chairs (CRC) program: The funding provided to the University from the CRC program for each Research Chair will be distributed, on an annual basis, as follows:

Type of expense	Tier 1	Tier 2	Note:
Administrative cost	\$10,000	\$5,000	<i>The overhead will be shared equally between the University and the Faculty</i>
Salary for the candidate; Compensation to the Faculty for release time	\$100,000	\$50,000	<i>Funds will be transferred to the Faculty</i>
Research stipend	\$90,000	\$45,000	<i>A research account will be set up for the candidate</i>
Total	\$200,000	\$100,000	

- Administrative cost: The University will keep five percent (5%) of the total amount provided from the CRC program to cover administrative costs related to the program. These funds will be shared between the Faculty and the University: \$10,000 per year for a Tier 1 and \$5,000 per year for a Tier 2.
- Faculty compensation for salary and release time: Fifty percent (50%) of the total amount provided from the CRC program is allocated directly to the Faculty (\$100,000 for a Tier 1 and \$50,000 for a Tier 2) to support costs related to salary and/or teaching replacement(s) of at least one course per year.

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The base salary is expected to be competitive and include regular benefits and must include the regular increase over the term of the Research Chair. In addition to the base salary, the Faculty will offer a salary stipend to the CRC candidate. The Faculty portion of the CRC funds may be used to compensate for course remission(s), such as cost of teaching replacement(s). The difference between the actual salary including the stipend and the amount taken from the CRC program will be provided by the Faculty where the candidate is hired.

New candidates will be offered support for moving costs as per regular standards in the hiring of faculty members.

- c) Research support funding: The candidate will receive a substantial amount (\$90,000 for a Tier 1 and \$45,000 for a Tier 2) from the CRC funds for expenditures related to the research program, such as salaries for students, Post-Doctoral Fellows, technicians, administrative staff, equipment, maintenance and repair, supplies and other research related expenses that are eligible under the CRC program guidelines.

The detailed budget will be developed by the Faculty and the candidate in consultation with the Office of Research to ensure that the budgeted amounts for the various expenditures fit the proposed research program.

Institutional and Faculty contributions: In addition to the CRC funds, the CRC candidate will have access to research funding that is provided to all faculty members, such as graduate student and post-doctoral support, and a professional development allowance. These amounts can be included in the CRC nomination budget as cash contributions from the University.

Internal research funds that are available on a competitive basis, such as the Seed Funding, and the Faculty Optimization programs, should not be included in the budget as cash contributions but nonetheless listed as existing opportunities.

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Infrastructure funds:

- a) New candidates: The University has a predetermined envelope for infrastructure applications to [Canadian Foundation for Innovation](#) (CFI) linked to the [CRC](#) program. Subject to availability of funds, strategic priorities and need for infrastructure to support the proposed program, each candidate for a new CRC nomination may have an amount available to request infrastructure that will support the CRC research program. Institutional funds, such as start-up funds, may be included in the infrastructure request to CFI as matching funds. Space for the research lab will be identified by the Faculty and assigned to the proposed Research Chair. If necessary, a portion of the CFI budget will cover the renovation of existing space to ensure optimized installation and operation of the equipment.

- b) Renewal candidates: Contingent upon the availability of funds and demonstration of need, the VPRGS may provide up to thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) as one-time support for upgrading existing infrastructure and renew equipment in the research lab. The same amount may be offered to Tier 1 and to Tier 2 Research Chairs.

Administrative Guidelines for the CURC program

The [CURC Program Administrative Guidelines](#) establish University-wide standards for the CURC program (i.e. terms and conditions, sabbatical and personal leaves, financial aspects). These Guidelines are primarily intended for administrators at the Departmental, Faculty and University level and cover such areas as:

- Administering a Chair
- Terms and Conditions
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Financial Administration and Funds Management

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Reporting, Evaluation and Renewal of Research Chairs

The following outlines the annual reporting requirements for Chairholders, mid-term review and performance evaluation that will be used to determine the renewal of a Chairholder's designation.

Annual/Progress reports:

Annual and progress reports are tools to follow the progress of the Research Chair, his/her contribution, and their overall alignment with the objectives of CURC Program. The reporting requirements depend upon the type of Research Chair:

CURC Chairholders will submit an annual report to the VPRGS by August 31st covering the activities in the previous year (June 1-May 31), with copies to the appropriate Faculty and Academic/Research unit. The following should be addressed (2-3 pages):

- Summary of research activities
- Training of graduate students and other highly qualified personnel
- Impact of the research and accomplishments
- Financial statement

The annual report is not required in the year of the mid-term review.

CRC Chairholders: Annual reports must be completed in accordance with CRC guidelines. Once the report is completed, the Chairholder must notify the CRC coordinator in the Office of Research. The University verifies all reports prior to their submission to ensure that the information provided by the Chairholder is accurate and appropriate. Any concerns will be discussed with the Chairholder to make certain a consensus is reached. In order to allow sufficient time for the University to review the annual reports, the Chairholder must complete his/her annual report no later than June 15th.

IRC Chairholders, the University, and the industrial partner(s) must submit progress reports after eighteen (18) and thirty-six (36) months of the first term and any subsequent renewal term of the Research Chair. If the Research Chair is in his/her final year, the final report is due within three (3) months of the end date of the Research Chair. For those Research Chairs intending to renew, an up-to-date progress report must be submitted as part of the renewal application during the final

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year of their term. Continued [National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada](#) (NSERC) support for the duration of the term is dependent upon favorable reviews of the progress of the Research Chair's research program, and the continued contribution of the industrial supporting partner(s), which must be confirmed annually.

Endowed Research Chairs reporting requirements are determined by the sponsor. If none is stipulated, the reporting requirements for CURC will apply.

Mid-term review:

Chairholders of all types are subject to a mid-term review, with the exception of IRCs who must comply with a prescribed reporting schedule. The purpose of this review is to provide an opportunity for the Chairholder, the head of the Academic/Research unit, and the members of the FRC to meet and discuss the progress of the Chairholder's research as it relates to the original objectives for the Research Chair. If deemed necessary, the FRC may propose revisions to the planned activities for the second part of the term. The mid-term review is organized by the FRC in the Faculty where the Research Chair is established. For Research Chairs with a five-year term, the mid-term review meeting should be held in the third year, while for seven-year terms, it should be in the fourth year. The chair of the FRC will invite the Research Chairholder to submit a review dossier and to give a presentation to the FRC.

The review dossier should include the following:

- annual reports produced since the first year of the term
- a financial statement
- the Research Chair's curriculum vitae

The review dossier will be sent to the FRC members prior to its presentation. At the presentation, the members of the FRC may raise comments, suggestions or advice for discussion with the Chairholder. After the presentation, any comments, suggestions or advice raised should be documented and sent to the Chairholder with a copy to the VPRGS.

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Performance evaluation for renewal:

Some Research Chairs are limited to one (1) term while others may be renewed once or several times. The table below summarizes the renewability of Research Chairs:

Chair	Level	Term	Renewability*
CRC	Tier 1	7 years	Once
	Tier 2	5 years	Once
CURC	Tier 1	5 years	No renewal; may re-apply; limit of 2 terms
	Tier 2	5 years	No renewal; may re-apply; limit of 2 terms
	New Scholar	5 years	No renewal
Endowed	N/A	Varies	Varies

**All renewals are conditional on meeting the criteria for renewal as defined by each program.*

Renewal of the designation is preceded by an internal performance evaluation in the last year of each term and must be approved by the URC. The FRC will conduct the renewal evaluation of Chairholders. The Chairholder will be invited to prepare an evaluation package and to give a presentation to the FRC of the activities and accomplishments over the past term and present a proposed plan for research activities in the coming term. CRCs and IRCs are advised to follow the guidelines provided by the sponsor for the renewal dossier. Endowed Research Chairs should include the following information in the dossier:

- performance report (3 pages + references):
 - summary of research activities, training of graduate students and other highly qualified personnel, impact of the research and accomplishments
- description of the proposed research program in the coming term (5 pages):
 - key objectives, methodology, collaborations, dissemination and expected impact on the field and expected training and supervision of students
- annual reports produced since the first year of the term
- a financial statement
- curriculum vitae of the Chairholder
- names of three (3) external referees.

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In addition to the dossier and the presentation, the FRC may request complementary information related to the Research Chair such as letters of reference by external peers in the field, or a site visit to meet with graduate students and collaborating researchers for a better assessment of the Chairholder and the dossier.

In its deliberation, the FRC will evaluate the overall performance of the Chairholder against the original objectives under which the Research Chair was established. The FRC will prepare a letter of recommendation to the URC for either renewal or termination of the Chairholder.

The URC will review the dossier and the recommendation by the FRC. The decision by the URC will be communicated to the Chairholder, the Academic/Research unit and the Faculty.

In the case of externally sponsored Research Chairs, the terms and conditions of the renewal are governed by the external sponsor. A renewal nomination must be prepared and submitted according to the sponsor's guidelines. Upon approval by the sponsor, the nominee will receive his/her formal renewal designation.

Discontinuation and Termination of Research Chairs

This following describes the procedure for the discontinuation of Research Chairs as well as the termination of a Chairholder's designation.

Discontinuation of a Research Chair: A Research Chair may be discontinued by mutual agreement between the University and a sponsor. The discontinuation may be due to the withdrawal or lack of sufficient funds by the sponsor or other reasons.

The University may consider limited support during the phase-out period in order to ensure that any existing student commitments are met. As a result, the Chairholder must present a plan for the phasing-out of the position, with special consideration being given to the implications for the students involved in the Research Chair's activities. The Chairholder retains his/her full-time academic appointment at their existing rank and salary level, excluding the stipend from the Research Chair.

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Termination of a Chairholder's designation: A Chairholder may, at any time, voluntarily relinquish his/her Research Chair designation. In this case, a written notice shall be sent by the Chairholder to the Faculty Dean who shall ensure that the VPRGS is informed.

A Chairholder's designation may be terminated by the University if any of the following situations apply:

- a) The status of the faculty appointment is changed to a non-eligible status as defined by each chair type. Eligibility criteria for Chairholders are governed by the University and the sponsor. In general, a Chairholder holds a full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty appointment at the University. If the faculty appointment changes (i.e. from full-time to part-time or adjunct), the Chairholder might not be eligible to continue holding the Research Chair designation and the designation will be terminated as of the date of the status change. The same applies if a Chairholder leaves the University.
- b) The outcome of the Chairholder's performance evaluation is unsuccessful or if the Research Chair is terminated in accordance with the [CUFA Collective Agreement](#). Based upon the outcome of the performance evaluation for renewal, the URC, in consultation with the Faculty Evaluation Committee, may decide not to renew the Chairholder for another term. In cases of non-renewal, the Chairholder will relinquish the Research Chair at the end of the term. The Chairholder retains his/her full-time academic appointment at his/her existing rank and salary level, excluding the stipend from the Research Chair. In addition, if the Chairholder is terminated from the University in accordance with the [CUFA Collective Agreement](#), his/her term as Research Chair shall terminate simultaneously.
- c) The Chairholder is non-compliant with the regulations set by the University or by the Sponsor. There are two (2) aspects of compliance that impact a Research Chair:
 - (i) compliance related to academic performance, and
 - (ii) compliance with the regulations outlined by the University and the sponsor.

Issues of compliance related to academic performance are usually assessed in the mid-term review by the Faculty Evaluation Committee. Any issues raised by the Faculty Evaluation Committee will be monitored in the following annual report and, if deemed necessary, the Faculty Evaluation

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Committee may call for a second review in the following year. Two consecutive unsatisfactory evaluations may be grounds for ending the designation. If the Faculty Evaluation Committee considers terminating the designation of a Research Chair during a term, a written justification shall be submitted to the VPRGS. In the spirit of conciliation, the VPRGS may convene all parties involved and seek advice from the URC to propose a plan for either the realignment of the Research Chair, or the phasing out of the Research Chair activities.

Non-compliance with the regulations outlined by the University or the sponsor or the [CUFA Collective Agreement](#) may result in the freezing of funds for the Research Chair. Fraudulent use of funds or other forms of academic or research misconduct are sufficient grounds for the University to terminate the Research Chair designation without notice. In addition, the University will promptly report any fraudulent use of funds to the appropriate authorities.

The grievance provisions of the [CUFA Collective Agreement](#) shall apply to the termination of a Chairholder's designation by the University.

When a Chairholder designation is terminated, the University will contact the sponsor to inform them of the termination. If the Research Chair is still available to the University, it will become vacant and the internal procedure for a new nomination will be initiated in accordance with the allocation process.

The termination of a [CRC](#) is governed by the CRC program Secretariat's administrative guidelines acknowledging that University regulations supersede all other factors concerning the faculty appointment of Chairholders.

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