

Concordia University Research Chairs Program

Administrative Guidelines

Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies

November 2020

Administrative Guidelines

This document is an administrative guide for the Concordia University Research Chairs (CURC) Program. It complements the [Policy on Research Chairs](#) and the related [Procedures and Guidelines for Research Chairs](#), which outline the principles that govern all types of Research Chairs at the University, independent of their title and source of funding.

While this document is meant specifically for the CURC Program, its guidelines are to be applied to other types of Research Chairs at Concordia University in the absence of specific requirements from sponsors or donors.

CURC established prior to 2021

A CURC established before 2021 is subject to the terms and conditions that were in place at the time of its establishment, and which may be different from what is described in the present document. For more information, please contact the Administrator, Strategic and Institutional Programs and Infrastructure at the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (OVPRGS).

Section 1 – CURC Program Objectives

The CURC Program is designed to develop and sustain research capacity, recognize excellence, leverage external funding, and provide direct support to graduate students by providing support to Chairholders in relation to a specific research program with strategic goals in line with Concordia's *Strategic Research Plan*. The CURC Program is not meant to honour candidates for previous achievements, but rather to enhance current research activities and the university's strategic goals.

Candidates nominated for a CURC must demonstrate their fit with Concordia's research environment and must address the expected impact of the Research Chair on the nominee's overall research program, and how the Research Chair would be leveraged to further research capacity at Concordia.

Section 2 - Roles and Responsibilities

The CURC Program and funding envelope are managed by the OVPRGS. The University Research Committee (URC) is responsible for the allocation of new CURCs, taking into account the ranked and justified recommendations by the Faculties. Below is a description of the roles and responsibilities of the principal units involved in the post-award administration of the CURC Program.

Chairholders

Chairholders are responsible for exercising financial control over the research funds allocated through the CURC program as per approved University policies and procedures. Chairholders are also responsible for submitting annual reports and mid-term review documents as outlined in the [Policy on Research Chairs](#) and the related [Procedures and Guidelines for Research Chairs](#). Chairholders must keep in mind that the CURC Program funding is not meant to be used as a substitute to applying for external funding or as a replacement for other existing internal and/or external funding.

Provost and Vice-President, Academic (PVPA)

The Provost and Vice-President, Academic approves the formal appointment of faculty members to Research Chair positions and issues the appropriate Letters of Appointment based on recommendations from the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (VPRGS). Upon the opening of the relevant account by Financial Services (Research Funds), the Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic also prepares the Notification of Change documents for the disbursement of the salary stipend component of the CURC.

Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (OVPRGS)

Administrative support for the program is centralized in the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies. The OVPRGS:

- maintains files for each Research Chair including documentation on nomination and appointment, research program, budget, reports, evaluations, and termination;
- compiles data, prepares reports, and provides information as required for reporting purposes on behalf of the VPRGS;
- sends a copy of each received CURC annual report to the relevant Faculty Dean;
- advises Faculties on upcoming mid-term reviews and term end dates;
- informs Financial Services (Research Funds) to request the opening of new accounts, closing of accounts, annual allocations for all Chairholders, and related changes;
- administers ethics and compliance reviews and approvals;

- advises the VPRGS on matters pertaining to the operation and performance of the CURC program, policies, and practices; and,
- provides assistance to researchers and other University staff on administrative processes and responds to queries regarding the program.

Financial Services, Research Funds

The financial administration of the CURC Program is under the responsibility of Financial Services; more specifically its Research Funds unit. Financial Services:

- opens two accounts at the beginning of each new CURC term: One account for the research allocation for the Chairholder and one account for the salary stipend that is administered by their Faculty (usually in the name of the Faculty Dean), and informs relevant stakeholders about the accounts;
- closes accounts of expired CURC appointments;
- reviews expenses for eligibility as per the CURC Program guidelines;
- transfers funds annually from the CURC Program mother account to the research allocation and salary stipend accounts;
- records expenditures and monitors for over-expenditure; and,
- prepares financial reports as required for institutional reporting purposes.

Faculty

The Faculty in which the CURC is allocated is responsible for exercising financial control over the salary portion of the funds available through the CURC Program. The Faculty Financial Controller (or equivalent position) authorizes expenditures from the Chairholder's accounts in accordance with program guidelines and appropriate University policies.

The Faculty is responsible for communicating to the OVPRGS information in terms of: changes in research activity, leaves, eligibility of Chairholders, or any other information of relevance to the Chairholder's appointment. The Faculty will also report annually to the OVPRGS on the reduced teaching load provided to its Chairholders.

The Faculty is also responsible for carrying out mid-term reviews of Chairholders as outlined in the [Policy on Research Chairs](#) and the related [Procedures and Guidelines for Research Chairs](#).

Section 3 – Allocation and Administration of a CURC

This section covers the basic parameters of the appointment of new Chairholders under the CURC Program and covers such topics as the Letter of Appointment, term duration, and Research Chair titles. Additional information on the CURC Program allocation process, LOI guidelines and eligibility criteria can be found in the [Procedures and Guidelines for Research Chairs](#).

3.1 – Letter of Appointment

Following a successful nomination process, as detailed in the [Procedures and Guidelines for Research Chairs](#), a Letter of Appointment is issued by the PVPA upon recommendation from the VPRGS.

The Letter of Appointment includes the following information:

- Title of the Research Chair and tier level: New Scholar, Tier 2 or Tier 1;
- Annual amounts: research funding allocation and salary stipend (amount inclusive of benefits);
- Start-date and end-date of the appointment; and
- Course remission details (cost to be covered by the appointee's Faculty).

The Letter of Appointment is sent from the Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic to the nominated Chairholder with copies to: the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies, the Faculty Dean, the Faculty Associate Dean, Research, the Chairholder's Departmental Chair, and the Concordia University Faculty Association. The candidate responds to the offer in writing to the Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic (with copies as listed above). Upon receiving the acceptance notice, the appointment process is formally completed.

3.2 – Duration of CURC Appointments and Changes in Status

A Concordia University Research Chair is tenable for five years. While a CURC cannot be renewed, it may be possible to re-apply to the CURC Program through another call for nominations, subject to the CURC Program eligibility criteria and the guidelines of the CURC call for nominations. Upon expiration of a CURC appointment, CURC Program funding is discontinued to that Research Chair.

If a change in employment status occurs due to retirement or partial retirement before the end of a Chairholder's CURC appointment, the Research Chair will be discontinued according to Section 4.8 – Retirement.

Should a Chairholder resign from the University, or become otherwise ineligible to hold a CURC because of a change in employment status, the Faculty must immediately notify the OVPRGS in writing. This notification should include the effective date of the change in the Chairholder's employment status as well as any other relevant information pertaining to the termination of the appointment and the Chairholder's research program. The CURC appointment will be considered terminated as of the date when the change of employment status comes into effect.

3.3 – Research Chair Titles

The title of a CURC will be formulated as follows:

- Concordia University Research Chair in [Area of Expertise] (Tier 1)
- Concordia University Research Chair in [Area of Expertise] (Tier 2)
- Concordia University Research Chair in [Area of Expertise] (New Scholar)

The area of expertise should provide a focused depiction of the Chairholder's expertise and goal(s) of the research program for the CURC term.

3.4 – Holding Other Research Chairs and Leveraging CURC Program Funding

A CURC may not concurrently hold other Research Chairs as defined in the [Policy on Research Chairs](#) and the related [Procedures and Guidelines for Research Chairs](#).

The funding for a CURC is expected to be used to leverage other internal or external funding opportunities. The OVPRGS should be notified in advance regarding requests to use the CURC Program funding for leveraging purposes. In such cases, the initial set-up and the administration of the funding will be handled on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the opportunity and will be coordinated by the OVPRGS.

3.5 – Honourary Titles

Retired Tier I Chairholders may continue to refer to their CURC title, if the appointment was held until the time of their retirement. Concordia faculty members who have held a CURC Tier I for at least two full consecutive terms may also continue to refer to their CURC title after the end of the CURC appointment.

In such situations, the CURC title is to be written as follows:

- Honourary Concordia University Research Chair in [Area of Expertise] (Tier I)

Section 4 – Terms and Conditions

This section covers a variety of terms and conditions of the CURC Program including; research support and salary stipends, teaching load, policies governing research compliance, leaves of absence, and retirement.

4.1 – Research Support and Salary Stipends by Tier Level

Tier 1

Tier 1 Chairholders are awarded a total of \$35,000 annually from the CURC Program. Of the \$35,000 annually awarded, \$20,000 will be allocated to support the Chairholder's research program as described in the Chairholder's CURC proposal and \$15,000 is allocated to the Chairholder as a salary stipend (amount inclusive of benefits).

Tier 2

Tier 2 Chairholders are awarded a total of \$32,000 annually from the CURC Program. Of the \$32,000 annually awarded, \$20,000 will be allocated to support the Chairholder's research program as described in the Chairholder's CURC proposal and \$12,000 is allocated to the Chairholder as a salary stipend (amount inclusive of benefits).

New Scholar

New Scholar Chairholders are awarded a total of \$29,000 annually from the CURC Program. Of the \$29,000 annually awarded, \$20,000 will be allocated to support the Chairholder's research program as described in the Chairholder's CURC proposal and \$9,000 is allocated to the Chairholder as a salary stipend (amount inclusive of benefits).

Should a Chairholder's rank change during the term of the chair (for example, from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor or from Associate Professor to Professor), the CURC tier and support stay the same until expiration of the term.

Salary stipends for CURCs are not to be used to defray a portion of the Chairholder's regular salary or other special stipends. It is provided to the Chairholder over and above the Chairholder's other compensation. The research support should be no less than the amounts stated above.

4.2 – Course Remission

Faculty members holding a CURC are entitled to a reduced teaching load by a minimum of one course per academic year (normally a three-credit course). The Faculty is

responsible for the cost of the reduced teaching loads (e.g. teaching replacement) and makes the final decision on course remissions for each individual Chair.

4.3 – Faculty Contributions

Faculties may contribute funds over and above the amounts provided under the CURC Program, for example, additional course remission, research space, etc. Such contributions are to be made at the discretion of the Faculty in question and are negotiated between the Faculty Dean and the Chairholder. Faculty contributions are to be managed and administered by the Faculty outside of the CURC Program, and are expected to take into account EDI principles.

4.4 – Start and End Dates and Annual Installments

The annual start date and end date for CURC appointments are June 1 (start date) and May 31 (end date). Annual funding installments are usually made available in early June.

4.5 – Annual Reports

Chairholders must report annually on their activities as a Concordia University Research Chair. The annual report allows the University to follow the progress of the Research Chair, its contributions, and the overall alignment with the objectives of the proposed research program and the CURC Program.

The annual report, due August 31, covers the activities of the Chairholder in the previous year (June 1 to May 31). The annual report is to be addressed to the VPRGS, with a copy to the appropriate Faculty Dean.

The following should be addressed in the Annual Report (3 pages):

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

Before the reporting deadline, Financial Services (Research Funds) will provide to the Chairholder a financial statement covering the Research Chair term up until the end of the report period, for the Chairholder to review/approve and add to the annual report.

No annual report will be required for the year in which the mid-term review of the CURC term takes place.

4.6 – Compliance with Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Research involving human participants or animal subjects, hazards, biohazards, radioactive materials possible environmental impact, or field work, all requires certification. The University will release research funds only after verifying that researchers have obtained all required certification in accordance with the current procedures at the University. Non-compliance with the University's procedures for research ethics, animal care, and health and safety regulations may result in the freezing of CURC Program funding until all required certification has been issued.

Chairholders must conform to University policies and procedures pertaining to research including but not limited to: health and safety of staff working in research laboratories, compliance certification for research, recovery of indirect costs on research grants and contracts, conflict of interest guidelines, and University approval to engage in formal partnerships with other universities, industry or other organizations.

4.7 – Leaves

Chairholders are eligible for a variety of leaves (e.g. sabbatical, maternity/paternity, parental, family) in accordance with the Collective Agreement between Concordia University and the Concordia University Faculty Association. The CURC Program is meant to allow some flexibility to accommodate certain types of leaves, where the Chairholder may choose to either continue research activities as planned in their approved CURC research program or defer these activities for the duration of the leave.

It is the responsibility of the Faculty to inform the OVPRGS of all leaves of absence taken by its Chairholders before the commencement of the leave period. A written notice should include information on:

- type of leave
- duration of the leave: expected start and end dates; and
- information about the Chairholder's plans to either postpone or continue the research activities in relation to the approved CURC research program while on leave.

Leave without interruption of research activity

If a Chairholder goes on sabbatical leave, it is expected that they will continue full research activities in relation to the approved CURC research program while on leave and the status of the CURC appointment will remain unchanged. The annual instalment

of funds (research support and salary stipend) for the CURC will continue for the period in question and the appointment will continue without interruption. The OVPRGS will inform Financial Services and the Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic accordingly.

Leave with interruption of research activity

For other types of leave (such as for a leave without pay, maternity/paternity leaves, parental leaves, etc.), it is expected that the leave will involve interruption of the research activities in relation to the approved CURC research program, and the OVPRGS will allow deferral of the funding (research support and salary stipend). Once the leave ends, and the Chairholder returns to the institution full-time, the CURC will resume and the end date of the Chairholder's appointment will be extended for a time period that is equal to the duration of the leave. A deferral extension due to a leave cannot be carried over from one appointment to a second appointment. In the case of a leave without pay, should the leave extend beyond one year, the CURC appointment will be automatically terminated.

When applicable, a Chairholder may request to change the intended cessation or continuation of research activities during the leave. In such cases, the Chairholder must immediately inform the OVPRGS and the Faculty of the rationale for the request. The OVPRGS, in consultation with the Faculty, will review the request and decide whether it can be approved. The OVPRGS will inform Financial Services, the Faculty and the Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic regarding temporary changes of a CURC term due to a leave.

The impact of a Chairholder's leave on the proposed research program should be explained in the annual Chairholder's report and will be taken into consideration in the mid-term review.

4.8 – Retirement

For CURC appointments starting in June 2021, the CURC shall be discontinued if the faculty member who holds it chooses to start a reduced time appointment, a plan leading to retirement, or to collect Concordia pension. The Faculty must notify the OVPRGS in writing prior to the change in the Chairholder's status. The CURC will be phased out over a period of up to one year from the date the reduced time appointment takes effect.

For CURC appointments made prior to June 2021, the Administrative Guidelines that were in effect at the time of the appointment will apply.

Section 5 - Administration and Funds Management

5.1 – General Guidelines for Managing CURC Program funding

Annual instalments to the CURC accounts are made by Financial Services (Research Funds) in the beginning of June each year for the CURC Program year, June 1 to May 31. Chairholders manage the research allocation account as per the following guidelines.

The funds from the CURC research allocation must be used by the Chairholder to support their approved CURC research program as per the submitted budget. The funds must be used effectively and economically, and the expenses must be directly related to the activities of the CURC for which the funds were awarded. Payment of expenditures from the award may only begin on or after the start date of June 1; no retroactive payments are allowed for activities that took place prior to the CURC start date.

Contributions to shared expenses must be directly attributable to the funded Chairholder's research program. CURC Program funds cannot be transferred to another institution or organization; they must only be used to cover expenses for which appropriate backup is provided. Chairholders may not use or transfer funds internally for purposes other than those described in their research program and as per the eligible expenses established for the CURC Program.

5.2 – Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

The following list provides examples of eligible and ineligible expenses under the research support portion of the CURC Program funding. Justifications for specific expenses and how they relate to the Chairholder's approved research program may be requested by Research Funds prior to approval. Questions regarding eligible and ineligible expenses should be directed to the Administrator, Strategic and Institutional Programs and Infrastructure at Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (OVRGS).

Eligible expenses

In general, all costs that are directly related to the Chairholder's approved CURC research program are eligible, for example:

- salaries and non-discretionary benefits of members of the Chairholder's research team (students, postdoctoral fellows, research associates, technicians, administrators);

- cost of travel, computing, expendables, publications, materials and supplies for the Chairholder or members of the research team;
- travel and accommodation expenses for speakers invited to research conferences and workshops;
- fees for memberships in scholarly associations related to the Chairholder's field of research;
- cost of professional and technical services;
- cost of outfitting research space (including specialized furniture) for the Chairholder and members of the research team;
- costs associated with the use, by the Chairholder or members of the research team, of computers, modems, software, and any other computer-related materials necessary to conduct the Chairholder's research program;
- costs associated with the use, rental or purchase of cellular telephones or smartphone devices, including service plans, long distance or local charges, but only if they are required for data collection and can be satisfactorily justified in relation to the Chairholder's approved CURC research program;
- cost of acquiring, operating, and maintaining research equipment and other resources required for research;
- cost of organizing workshops, seminars, meetings, related to the research program (including non-alcoholic refreshments and meal costs); and
- reasonable hospitality costs (non-alcoholic refreshments or meals) for networking purposes in the context of formal courtesy between the Chairholder and guest researchers and for research-related activities in the context of assemblies that will facilitate or contribute to the achievement of the research objectives (e.g., Chairholder meetings with partners and stakeholders).

Ineligible expenses

Ineligible expenses include the following:

- any costs that are not directly related to the Chairholder's approved CURC research program;
- costs of alcohol;
- costs of entertainment, hospitality and gifts, other than those specified above, including regular interactions with colleagues from the institution and staff meetings;
- monthly parking fees for vehicles, unless specifically required for field work;
- costs associated with the use, rental or purchase of cellular telephones or smartphone devices, including service plans, long distance or local charges, that cannot be satisfactorily justified in relation to the Chairholder's approved CURC research program;
- costs of clothing;

- costs related to curriculum development and/or pedagogical activities;
- accommodation and meals while the Chairholder is on sabbatical leave (or any other type of leave);
- the travel costs of a Chairholder's family member or research team member from the Chairholder's home institution to the sabbatical leave location (or any other type of leave);
- the salaries of students and research personnel who are not under the supervision (or co-supervision) of the Chairholder; and
- discretionary severance and separation packages.

The CURC Program funding for salary stipend is for the Chairholder only. Remuneration costs for any Concordia faculty member other than the Chairholder is not eligible.

5.3 – Residual Funds and Phase-out

Normally, any balance in a CURC research allocation account by the year end (May 31) will be carried over to the next year, until the last year of the Chairholder's term. Generally, the research allocation account should not carry any balance at year end but there may be occasions where a significant amount of research funding has not been expended as projected in the CURC budget (e.g., a student who leaves prematurely, delays in beginning a specific activity in the first year of the CURC term, etc.). The reasons for significant leftover funds must be explained in the Chairholder's annual report and also addressed at the mid-term review; a spending plan should also be presented for approval to the OVPRGS upon request. In consultation with the Chairholder's Faculty, the OVPRGS reserves the right to reject a spending plan (in whole or in part) and recuperate unspent research allocation funding.

Remaining research funds at the end of a Chairholder's term may be expended during a phase-out period of up to six months, subject to approval by the OVPRGS (expenses must be in relation to the approved CURC research program).

Unspent funds remaining at the end of the CURC term, or after the phase-out period, or due to early termination of the CURC appointment or because of the non-approval of a spending plan will be returned to the CURC Program mother account.

5.4 – Non-transferability of CURC Program Funding

CURC Program funds are for Chairholders affiliated with Concordia University. Should a Chairholder discontinue their affiliation with Concordia University, funding from the

CURC Program cannot be transferred, in whole or in part, externally to another university, institution, organization, department, unit, or other party.