

University of Toronto and Tsinghua University Call for Proposals 2020/2021

Description

Background

To strengthen research collaborations and deepen the relationship, the University of Toronto (U of T) and Tsinghua University (THU) established a Joint Research Fund (JRF) in 2018.

The JRF will be used to support high impact R&D collaborations in areas of mutual interest and complementary strengths for both universities.

Through JRF both universities will launch three annual joint calls for proposals. U of T has agreed to provide up to CAD 100,000 per year and THU has agreed to provide up to RMB 500,000 per year for up to two years for projects funded under each U of T-THU annual call for proposals.

The awards will cover/facilitate a wide range of activities including joint workshops, seminars, reciprocal visits by faculty/staff/students/PDFs, development of education programs, joint publications, knowledge mobilization and applications for external grants.

The 2nd call for proposals, launched in November 2020, will support joint research proposals aligned with the theme of the [3rd U of T-Tsinghua Forum \(Public Health: From Science to Practice in a COVID/post-COVID world\)](#).

Grant

Each successful application/proposal will receive funding for up to two years

- 10,000 CAD/year for two years from U of T for each participating U of T faculty member
- 50,000 RMB/year for two years from THU for each participating THU faculty member

Each successful cluster application/proposal involving 3 or more faculty members across both institutions (e.g. 2 from U of T and 1 from THU) is eligible for additional funding.

A cluster application/proposal that engages

- 2 or more U of T faculty members will receive up to 5,000 CAD in additional funding from U of T
- 2 or more THU faculty members will receive up to 25,000 RMB in additional funding from THU

For example, an application/proposal with 2 U of T faculty members will receive up to 45,000 CAD from U of T (10,000 CAD * 2 years * 2 faculty members + 5,000 CAD).

Eligible Expenses

Each institution will cover expenses incurred by its students, PDFs and faculty members.

- Travel costs to the collaborator institution/research site
- The following costs for up to 50% of the grant funds
 - Minor research costs (consumables etc.) associated with the project.
 - Stipend/salaries for PDFs and students working on the collaborative project
- Virtual collaboration expenses
- Joint publication fees

Duration

The grants will be effective for project associated costs incurred between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2022. Any extension will require written approval from U of T (OVPI) for U of T awardees & THU for THU awardees.

Application and Assessment Process

1. **Eligibility:** Participation in the [2020 U of T-Tsinghua Forum](#) (plenary session or any of the workshops) by at least 1 U of T faculty applicant and 1 THU faculty applicant engaged in the proposal or their PDF/PhD student is required.

U of T lead investigator must be eligible to hold research funds at U of T. The U of T lead investigator must also have a continuing appointment and have SGS Graduate Faculty Membership at U of T.

Faculty from all disciplines/fields are welcome to apply.

2. **Selection of Applications:** Applications will be first assessed by each institution in accordance with its internal policies and then by a joint Steering Committee consisting of U of T and THU faculty leadership. The Steering Committee will determine which projects will be jointly funded and the amount of funding that will be allocated to each project.
3. **Preference and selection criteria:** Will be given to cluster applications and those that collaborate industry/foundations/intergovernmental organizations.

The number of faculty members in a cluster application across both universities should preferably not exceed 8 faculty members in total (e.g. 3 from U of T and 5 from THU).

Applications that collaborate with industry, foundations, intergovernmental organizations or governments on projects are strongly preferred. This collaboration will need to be demonstrated with a support letter from the external partner outlining the value proposition of the collaboration and any funding the external partner is bringing to the collaboration.

Selection criteria will be based on:

- a. Academic rationale, complementary strengths/synergy, expected outcomes and impact, including societal, of the proposed research program
- b. Alignment of proposal with the 2020 forum theme
- c. Quality of training opportunities provided to students and PDFs
- d. Project's potential to further enhance the relationship between U of T and THU
- e. Project's alignment with the priorities of the participating departments and interdisciplinary nature of the collaboration
- f. Demonstrable commitment to sustain and grow the collaboration beyond the duration of the proposed project

4. Submission: The lead investigators (primary applicants) from U of T and THU need to work together to prepare a joint proposal using the [application templates](#) (for English & Chinese).

The joint proposal (in English & Chinese) needs to be submitted to both U of T and THU to be eligible for consideration.

The submission process for cluster proposals is the same i.e. one proposal in English and Chinese using the same templates should enclose the details of the cluster.

Applications will only be accepted via email in Word/pdf format.

The joint application (in English & Chinese) should be emailed to Yongbin Jiang at THU (ybjjiang@mail.tsinghua.edu.cn) cc'ing Skandha Sunderasen at U of T (s.sunderasen@utoronto.ca). In the subject title of the email please include "U of T-THU Call for Proposals".

Please submit the application by [January 29, 2021 \(China Standard Time\)](#).

Successful proposals will be announced in March/April, 2021 by email.

Reporting

Each awardee shall comply with any internal annual review/reporting requirements at their home institution, and present the project progress at the annual review meeting held by both institutions. Second year funding will be contingent on the first annual review and success of the project in year 1.

At the end of year 2 or year 3 (if an extension has been provided), each funded project should aim to achieve the following goals:

1. One or more of the following



- a. Jointly publish at least two articles in international academic journals (Lancet etc.) Proper acknowledgement of this joint fund should be included in publications.
 - b. Joint commercialization of technologies and/or knowledge mobilization of research.
2. Researchers, students and PDFs from both institutions should spend at least 2 months in total at the partner institution engaging in research (e.g. U of T students, PDF and researcher spend 2 months at THU and their THU counterparts spend 1.5 months at U of T). For cluster applications, this would be at least 3 months.
 3. Research project secures external grants to sustain/grow the collaboration equivalent to the value of the total funding it has received under this call.

