

HSS Research Catalyst Awards (HSS-RCA): 2022-2023 Pilot

Terms & Conditions

Summary

The Faculty of HSS Research Catalyst Award (RCA) is designed to help support research intensification within HSS by offering a means for researchers to begin or enhance a robust research profile, placing them in a better position to compete for more complex research funding to support research activities within their fields. The HSS Research Catalyst Award (RCA) speaks directly to the importance of HSS research activities in realizing the Mission, Vision, and Values of our [HSS Strategic Plan 2022-2027](#). In an effort to “support and pursue dynamic research” and “hone our research infrastructure to support diverse world-class research and creative endeavours” (Goal 4), the RCA is designed to allow faculty to kick-start a research project by providing time and resources to get it off the ground, build collaborations, and also to apply for further funding.

RCA holders are expected to outline a research program that expands beyond the 3-year RCA term; during the RCA tenure, the Award-Holder will work to establish/enhance their research program, which may include research in their own discipline, trans-/inter-disciplinarity, relationship building, community collaboration, and/or research creation (for artist-researchers). HSS will offer a single 3-year RCA annually over the next three years to early career and established researcher Academic Staff Members (ASMs) in HSS, alternating between awarding an Early Career Researcher (ECR) and an Established Researcher (ER). The RCAs will provide Award-Holders with dedicated and guaranteed per course releases, graduate research assistants, and cash funds to facilitate research-building and research activities. Following year-3 of the RCA program, there will normally be three RCAs active within HSS annually, funds permitting. These Terms and Conditions may be reviewed annually and are subject to change.

Research Catalyst Award (RCA)

- An RCA can be held for a maximum of three academic years (with the term commencing either Sept. 1, or Jan. 1) and is non-renewable. An RCA can only be extended in exceptional circumstances with written permission of the Dean of HSS and the home department.
- The RCA competition will alternate annually between appointing an Early Career Researcher (ECR) and an Established Researcher (ER).
- Each award comes with two course releases per year for the RCA Award-Holder (hereafter “Holder”) in the form of two course releases per year for their home unit, for a total of six course releases per RCA term. The semester(s) in which the Holder will use the course release(s) is to be decided in consultation with the home department during the annual teaching plan process, however, the Holder cannot avail of more than 3 course releases per year (which would mean that in one of the years of the award, the Holder would have only 1 course release, for ex.). Up to 2 course releases can be deferred to a period beyond the RCA end date if they are used as leverage for an external grant application (see [Regulations Governing the RCA PCI \(course-release\) Support](#), below), which means that during the RCA term, the Holder would have only 4 course releases. See further guidelines for the course releases, below.

- Each RCA comes with an annual \$2,500 cash research grant for a total of \$7,500 per RCA appointment. \$2,500 is the max given per year. The funds can be rolled over within the RCA 3-year term but cannot extend past the RCA end date unless the term is extended (with permission, as above) or the funds are being used as leverage on a grant application. Any remaining funds will return to the Dean's Office to be used for future RCA appointments. See further guidelines for the cash support, below.
- The Holder will have the equivalent of one Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA) position allocated per year for a total of 3 GRAs per RCA appointment. One GRA unit is equivalent to approximately 60 hours. The semester in which the GRA will be employed will be decided in consultation with the Holder's home department. The hours can be allocated to the GRA at the discretion of the RCA Holder. The RCA will not fund more than one GRA unit per year, but the GRA hours may be split between multiple students at the RCA holder's discretion. See further guidelines for the GRA position, below.
- RCA research programs are encouraged to include collaborations with communities or organizations outside of Memorial, but this is not a mandatory requirement of the award.

RCA Responsibilities

- Upon award notification, the RCA Holder is expected to have an orientation meeting with the Associate Dean (Research) and/or the Grants Facilitation Officers with the primary purpose of coordinating the supports that HSS Research Support services can offer the Award Holder and align those supports with the Holder's anticipated program and timeline.
- Each Holder must deliver a minimum of one public academic lecture or host a public scholarly event per year of their RCA term. These events should be convened at a location or venue associated with Memorial University, such as Nexus or Signal Hill campus, Grenfell Campus, the School of Arctic and Subarctic Studies, an HSS research group or meeting, or another Memorial-hosted conference/lecture..
- ECR Holders are expected to apply for at least one major, external grant (e.g. Tri-Agency or equivalent) over the course of the RCA term. ER Holders are expected to apply for at least two grants: 1 major, external grant (e.g. Tri-Agency or equivalent) and 1 other of their choice over the course of the RCA term. It is anticipated, however, that both ECR and ER Holders will apply to other grant proposals either internal to Memorial and/or external competitions; one of the main purposes of offering the Research Catalyst Awards is to allow the Holders the time to apply for additional funds in order to intensify their research activities in years to come. It is expected that the Holder will reference the HSS-RCA as a source of support in publications, lectures, and other scholarly events related to the research performed during their award or because of that research post-award.
- It is expected that equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism (EDI-AR) best practices and principles will be considerations in the Holder's [research design and practice](#), if applicable to the Holder's program.
- It is expected that the Holder will follow the Tri-Agency's policy on [open access](#) for all journal publications that are connected to the research conducted while holding the RCA or as a result of those activities post-award.
- It is expected that the Holder will follow the Tri-Agency's policy on [Research Data Management](#), if applicable, for research data that is connected to the research conducted while holding the RCA or as a result of those activities post-award.

- Adherence to requirements for research clearances and [Memorial's Research Impacting Indigenous Groups Policy](#) (including the requirement for Agreement in Principle, if applicable) is expected.
- Upon notification of an RCA, holders must submit a short itemized budget for the 3-year \$7,500 research grant in the Memorial Researcher portal. Budget expenses for the grant-portion of the award must be in accordance with the [Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration](#), [Memorial policies](#) and must use [Memorial University rates](#) for travel, personnel, etc., as applicable.
- The Holder will submit a one-page annual report to the HSS Dean's Office outlining activities and/or achievements undertaken over that past year. Reports are due 1 month after the yearly start date of the Holder. A final summary report will be submitted at the end of year 3. These reviews should report against the performance benchmarks established by the RAC holder in the proposal.
- It is expected that the Holder will inform the HSS Dean's Office of all publications resulting from research activities conducted during the RCA term or as a result of those activities post-award. All activities and publications resulting from the RCA may be posted on an RCA-dedicated website.

Eligibility

- Candidates must be tenured/tenure track ASMs within HSS. ASMs on sabbatical leave are eligible to apply. Post-doctoral Fellows, Contractual ASMs, honorary research professors, professors emeriti, adjunct professors, and persons on leave without pay from the university for academic reasons are not eligible.
- ASMs who already hold course remissions due to service roles or course releases for other reasons will be considered only after all other candidates without remissions have been considered.
- Candidates for the Early Career Researcher (ECR) RCA must normally be within 6 academic years of commencing their first tenure-track academic appointment at Memorial (or another post-secondary institution).
 - Career Interruptions that occurred in the 6 years prior to RCA application submission can be used to extend the window of ECR eligibility for the ECR-RCA. **Career interruptions** occur when researchers are taken away from their research work for an extended period of time for health, administrative, family, or other reasons such as those related to the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a section in the application to provide an explanation.
- Candidates who have had more than 6 years since their first tenure-track academic appointment at Memorial or another institution are eligible to apply for the Established Researcher RCA competition.
- Candidates who hold joint appointments with non-HSS units are eligible; however, the course releases and GRAships associated with a RCA can only be allocated to HSS programs and units.
- Current holders of University Research Professorships, Canada Research Chairs, and other agency-funded Chairs and endowed chairs such as the Stephen Jarislowsky Chair, are ineligible to hold a RCA during the tenure of their current Chair. Former Chairs are eligible to apply to RCA competitions after at least 1 full year has passed since the end date of their Chair position.

Application Process

Deadline: January 30, 2023

Award Notification: Before end of February 2023

To apply, the Candidate must email the required documents in pdf format to the Dean's Office: HSS@mun.ca, along with a signed application form.

The application form includes submission processes, eligibility criteria, identification of the applicant, a checklist of documents, and applicant & Department Head signatures.

A complete RCA application includes the following documents (see Application Process document for full descriptions of each section):

1. **Completed and Signed Application Form**
2. **(4 page max) Research Program Proposal**
3. **(1 page max) Impact Statement**
4. **(1 page / optional) Career Context Statement**
5. **(Any format, no max length) CV**

Selection Process

Adjudication and selection will be through the HSS Dean's Planning and Research Committee who will make a recommendation to the Dean for awarding of an RCA. The Committee will be provided with Scoring Criteria related to the challenge, feasibility and capability of the proposed program and the applicant. The Scoring Criteria will be weighed differently for the ECR-RCA the ER-RCA competitions. See Appendix A.

Regulations Governing the Course Releases

1. Each RCA is allocated a maximum of 6 PCI supports for the duration of their term; a maximum of 3 are permitted to be used in a given academic year.
2. Departmental use of PCIs must be proposed and outlined as part of the department's annual teaching plan review and complement at the discretion of the unit Head.
3. RCA PCI support cannot be used in conjunction with 3.26 course releases nor will a Holder with RCA course release be considered for a 3.26 release. If the Holder intends to request additional course releases related to banked time, use of RCA releases and banked time will be at the discretion of the Unit Head in making the teaching plan.
4. Using allocated Course Releases as leverage:
 - a. The RCA course releases can be used by a Holder as in-kind contribution leverage for major, external funding applications applied to during the Holder's term. Up to two of the course releases can be deferred to up to 2 years beyond the RCA end date if they are used as leverage. In such a scenario, the following parameters will apply:
 - i. If the funding in which an allocated PCI is leveraged is unsuccessful, the allocation is either returned to be used within the RCA term up to a maximum of 2 per year or is forfeit if the RCA term has ended and the PCI was deferred as leverage for a year beyond the end of the RCA.

5. Requests for additional course releases in support of research grant applications will not be entertained for semesters during which a RCA is held. However, PCI supports outside the RCA term that are used as leverage *can* be combined with additional course release requests to maximize contributions for research grant applications, within the conditions of such course releases.

Regulations Governing the Use of Research Funds and GRA units.

1. Budget expenses for the grant-portion of the award must be in accordance with the [Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration](#), [Memorial policies](#) and must use [Memorial University rates](#) for travel, personnel, etc., as applicable.
2. In addition, the funds may be used to support expenses for facilitating academic dissemination activities, in particular support of expenses for hosting and facilitating participation of local researchers (i.e. similar to the Conference fund). They cannot be used for travel other than by the Holder.
3. All expenses and use of GRAs must occur within the Holder's dates of appointment unless they have been used to leverage a major, external grant application and can be used up to 2 years past the Holder's end date. In this instance, if the grant is unsuccessful, the funds and GRA units will be returned to the Dean's Office for use in future RCA awards.
4. Funds may carry over from year to year; however, at the conclusion of the term of the RCA, residual research funds will revert to the HSS Dean's Office unless they have been used as leverage against a grant application and can be used up to 2 years past the Holder's end date.
5. If awarded, the Holder will be required to submit their application and a detailed budget for the \$2,500 Y1 cash portion of the award to [Memorial's Researcher Portal](#) for account opening. Thereafter, each year the Holder will need to submit a budget for Y2 and Y3 cash funds (in addition to confirming that clearances are in place) before the funds are deposited in their research account.
6. Changes to budget expenses are allowed as long as the changes are in keeping with the spirit of the original RCA application. Any major changes (especially between budget categories) should be approved by the Dean's Office in advance of spending those funds.

Leave and Other Circumstances

1. In the event a Holder is on a non-sabbatical leave for an excess of 6 months, their RCA is placed in dormancy but not forfeited.
2. A Holder may take sabbatical during their RCA term, however must forfeit one course release for each semester they are on sabbatical up to a maximum of 2 courses per RCA.
3. At the discretion of the Dean of HSS, upon return from leave the Holder of the dormant RCA may be entitled to complete the term of their original RCA, with extension of the duration of leave taken added to the end of the term;
4. In the event of an administrative appointment of a Holder:
 - a. as regular Head or into another administrative role, the RCA will conclude. This does not include Graduate Officers or Undergraduate Program Directors. Other administrative roles is at the discretion of the HSS Dean's Office.
 - b. as interim and acting roles will follow the parameters outlined above for a leave scenario: the RCA is placed in dormancy and revived upon return of the Holder.

- c. as a funded visiting fellow or professorship outside of Memorial for a period no longer than a year, the parameters outlined above for a leave scenario: the RCA is placed in dormancy and revived upon return of the Holder.
 - d. a University Research Professor, CRC, or any other sponsored or endowed chair, the RCA will conclude.
- 5. In the event of departure, retirement, or resignation of a Holder, the RCA will be terminated and all award resources will revert back to the HSS Dean's Office. If this termination occurs within the first year of the award, the Dean of HSS has the discretion to conduct a new search at the regular submission date for a 2-year replacement award holder.

Note: these T&C have not yet been reviewed by MUNFA or Faculty Relations or another outside Memorial unit.

Appendix A

Early Career Researcher-RCA Scoring Criteria

- 1. Challenge—Merit of the Proposal and the aim and importance of the program (70%):**
 - originality, significance and expected contribution to knowledge and extent to which the proposal suggests and explores novel or potentially transformative concepts and lines of inquiry;
 - Clarity and appropriateness of the theoretical approach or framework and of the methods/activities;
 - Clarity and scope of objectives (research program with long-term goals rather than a single short-term project or collection of projects);
 - Consideration of sex, gender and diversity (EDI-AR) in research design and practices, where applicable to the field of research and program;
 - quality of training and mentoring to be provided to students and opportunities for them to contribute;
 - potential for the program to have influence and impact within and/or beyond the research community;
 - Feasibility of the proposed program timeline and proposed use of resources;
 - quality and appropriateness of knowledge mobilization plans, including effective dissemination, exchange and engagement with stakeholders within and/or beyond the research community, where applicable.
- 2. Capability—The expertise to succeed (30%):**
 - Knowledge, expertise and relevant experience to proposed program
 - quality, quantity and significance of past experience and published and/or creative outputs of the applicant
 - evidence of past knowledge mobilization activities and of impacts on professional practice, social services and policies, etc.
 - quality and quantity of past contributions to the development, training and mentoring of students, postdoctoral researchers and other highly qualified personnel.

Established Researcher-RCA Scoring Criteria

- 1. Challenge—Merit of the Proposal and the aim and importance of the program (60%):**
 - originality, significance and expected contribution to knowledge and extent to which the proposal suggests and explores novel or potentially transformative concepts and lines of inquiry;
 - Clarity and appropriateness of the theoretical approach or framework and of the methods/activities;
 - Clarity and scope of objectives (research program with long-term goals rather than a single short-term project or collection of projects);
 - Consideration of sex, gender and diversity (EDI-AR) in research design and practices, where applicable to the field of research and program;
 - quality of training and mentoring to be provided to students and opportunities for them to contribute;
 - potential for the program to have influence and impact within and/or beyond the research community;

- Feasibility of the proposed program timeline and proposed use of resources;
 - quality and appropriateness of knowledge mobilization plans, including effective dissemination, exchange and engagement with stakeholders within and/or beyond the research community, where applicable.
2. **Capability—The expertise to succeed (40%):**
- Knowledge, expertise and relevant experience to proposed program
 - quality, quantity and significance of past experience and published and/or creative outputs of the applicant
 - evidence of past knowledge mobilization activities and of impacts on professional practice, social services and policies, etc.
 - quality and quantity of past contributions to the development, training and mentoring of students, postdoctoral researchers and other highly qualified personnel.

Research Creation Programs:

- The above criteria are to be used as the scoring criteria for these applications as well.