

Global Excellence Initiative

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



**Universities
Canada.**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Canadian researchers continue to push the boundaries of innovation, driving breakthroughs across a wide range of fields. From climate change and artificial intelligence to psychology and fine arts, Canadian researchers are not only improving the lives of Canadians but also shaping discoveries that will position Canada as a leader in the global economy.

The 2024 international and national research award winners highlight the strength of Canada's research community, and the significant impact Canadian researchers are having on the global stage. Their achievements underscore the vital role Canada plays in advancing global knowledge and innovation. Recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of researchers in Canada remains essential to fostering a culture of innovation, inspiring the next generation of talent and showcasing the global contributions Canada is making.

This past year, the Global Excellence Initiative (GEI) continued to address gaps in award nominations, enhance institutional capacity, foster knowledge-sharing and celebrate Canadian research talent.

This initiative plays a strategic role in ensuring that Canadian researchers receive the recognition they deserve.

The success of the initiative is made possible through the support of our partner organizations:

- the Rideau Hall Foundation (RHF);
- the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI);
- the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR);
- the National Research Council Canada (NRC);
- the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC); and
- the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)



Fondation
Rideau Hall
Foundation



National Research
Council Canada

Conseil national de
recherches Canada



Social Sciences and
Humanities Research
Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches
en sciences humaines
du Canada

Canada



THE GLOBAL EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE

Launched in 2012 by The Right Honourable. David Johnston, 28th Governor General of Canada, the Global Excellence Initiative has three main objectives, each of which plays a crucial role in enhancing Canada's global research standing:

1

Increase the number of national and international research prizes won by Canadian researchers and promote a culture of excellence.

2

Raise awareness of the contributions of leading Canadian researchers, inspiring young Canadians to pursue academic studies and careers in research, whether in industry, academia or government laboratories.

3

Enhance global recognition of Canadian research excellence, augmenting Canada's visibility as premier destination for academic study and cutting-edge research.





GEI plays a distinctive and strategic role in advancing these objectives by implementing a range of targeted activities designed to elevate Canadian research on the global stage:

Researcher advocacy:

GEI directly addresses the gap in Canadian international research recognition by advocating for Canadian researchers and ensuring they receive the recognition they deserve. By strategically positioning Canadian scholars for prestigious national and international awards, GEI amplifies the visibility of Canadian research and its impact on global challenges. Through its Canvassing Committee, GEI identifies high-potential candidates for awards and works closely with institutions to prepare strong, competitive nominations.

Strategic support for award nominations:

GEI has a structured approach to empower and support institutions and researchers in navigating international awards. The initiative provides tailored guidance, robust external reviews and strategic advice to researchers and institutions to help them submit competitive nominations for international awards. Though some institutions have this capacity internally, the scale and effectiveness can differ based on available resources. GEI can stand in the gap where university resources are limited, playing an important role in ensuring that institutions and researchers receive the support needed to succeed.

Knowledge mobilization and capacity building:

GEI serves as a knowledge mobilization hub, providing universities, research institutions and researchers with the tools, training and resources they need to submit successful nominations. This includes workshops, webinars, up-to-date inventory of awards and relevant sector updates via the quarterly newsletter. By strengthening institutional capacity, GEI ensures that Canadian universities and research institutes are equipped with the skills and knowledge to effectively compete for future awards.

Celebration and showcasing of Canadian talent:

GEI uses its platform to champion and celebrate the great work being done by Canadian researchers. By highlighting those who have received international recognition, GEI not only honours their achievements but also inspires the next generation of scholars and innovators.



YEAR IN REVIEW: 2024 AT A GLANCE

Continued growth and support

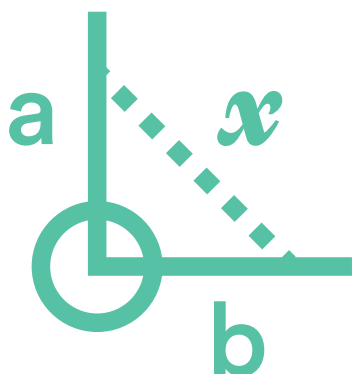
The Global Excellence Initiative experienced continued success and growth in 2024, driven by the dedication of its committees, team members and the ongoing support of its funders.

In April, GEI hosted the Canadian Excellence, Global Recognition 2024 event at Carleton University to celebrate Canada's outstanding researchers and inspire and equip the next generation for success. A panel of award-winning researchers shared their unique paths to success, followed by a fireside chat with Nobel Prize winner Donna Strickland, in which Strickland discussed her remarkable journey to receiving the Nobel Prize. The evening concluded with a networking reception, giving attendees the opportunity to connect and exchange ideas.

This year also saw a significant expansion in capacity-building and knowledge-sharing activities for institutions and researchers. Two impactful webinars were hosted for researchers applying to the Guggenheim Fellowship, Killam Prize and the Dorothy Killam Fellowships. In November, an additional webinar titled "Unlock your path to success with research awards and prizes," provided valuable insights into potential pathways for researchers, attracting over 70 participants.

A new promotional campaign for GEI and Canadian research excellence was in development in 2024, with plans for its official rollout in 2025. This campaign aims to further elevate Canadian research on the global stage and increase visibility for researchers in Canada across multiple platforms.

The Global Excellence Initiative continues to collaborate closely with embassies in Ottawa on international awards and the promotion of research excellence.





GEI BY THE NUMBERS

In 2024, our external review service demonstrated remarkable growth and increased inclusivity. We processed 130 review requests spanning national and international award nominations, representing a significant 22% expansion from the previous year. This surge reflects the growing recognition of our comprehensive review process across multiple research disciplines.

The diverse range of research fields represented in these nominations highlights the breadth and depth of innovative work being conducted by researchers under our review framework. Our service continues to play a crucial role in identifying and elevating outstanding scholarly contributions across various domains.

Year	2024	2023	2022	2021
Total # review requests	130	107	62	121
Dossier review success	94%	78%	88%	84%
Dossiers with 1 reviewer	41%	58%	40%	38%
Dossiers with 2+ reviewers	59%	42%	60%	62%
Reviews for international awards	48%	46%	45%	40%
Reviews for national awards	52%	54%	55%	60%



Institutions using GEI external review services

In 2024, 19 universities and one healthcare network used GEI's external review services.

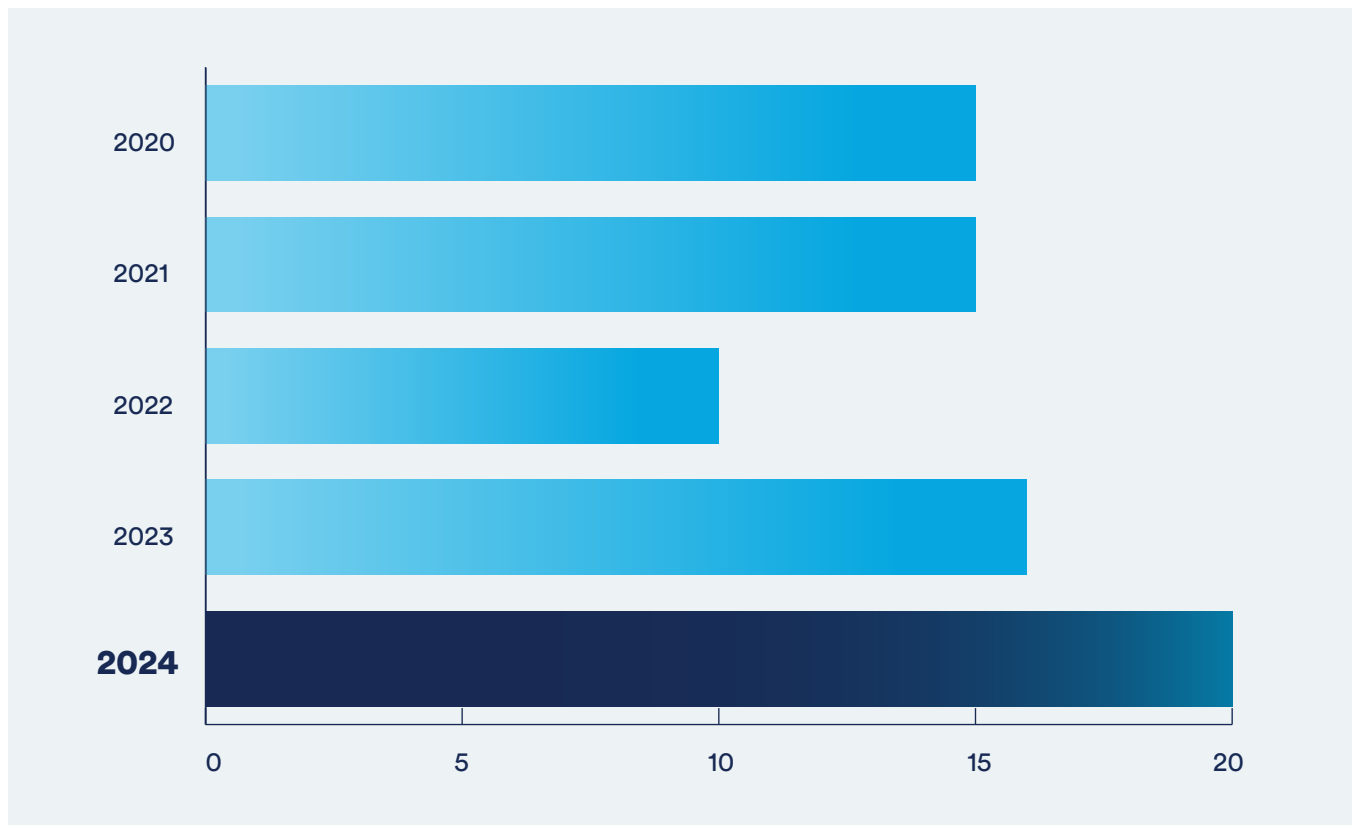
Two of these were new this year.



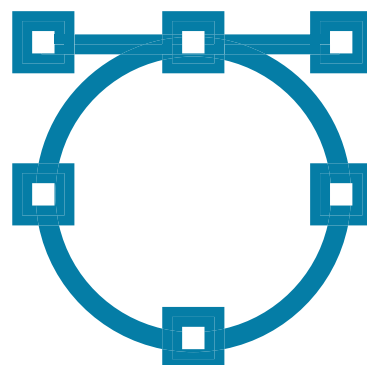
 new in 2024



INSTITUTIONS USING GEI EXTERNAL REVIEW SERVICE



Since 2022, the number of institutions using the external review service has continued to grow. Its growth in 2024 could be attributed to the work done with new institutions on the GEI cross-Canada tour in 2023. These sessions invited current and potential institutions to discuss the value of the Global Excellence Initiative.



Celebrating research excellence:

International awards and prizes

In 2024, twenty-one Canadian researchers and innovators received international recognition for their contributions and advancements across a wide range of fields. Full profiles of nineteen of these researchers are available on the GEI website.

Name of award/prize	Institution	Recipient
BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Award	University of Manitoba	Dorthe Dahl-Jensen
Benjamin Franklin Medal	University of Guelph	Paul Hebert
Benjamin Franklin Medal	The University of British Columbia	Janet Werker
Guggenheim Fellowship	McGill University	Henri Darmon
Guggenheim Fellowship	Dawson College	Antonietta Grassi
Guggenheim Fellowship	University of Toronto	Carl Knappett
Guggenheim Fellowship	Simon Fraser University	Laura U. Marks
Guggenheim Fellowship	N/A	Victor Quijada
Guggenheim Fellowship	McGill University	Jonathan Sterne
Kyoto Prize	University of Victoria	Paul Hoffman
L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science, North America	McGill University	Nada Jabado
Nobel Prize in Physics VinFuture Prize	University of Toronto	Geoffrey Hinton
Princess of Asturias Award for Technical and Scientific Research	University of Toronto	Daniel Drucker
Princess of Asturias Award for Social Sciences	Central European University	Michael Ignatieff
Sloan Research Fellowship	University of Toronto	Maya Fishbach
Sloan Research Fellowship	The University of British Columbia	Kaitlyn Gaynor
Sloan Research Fellowship	University of Toronto	Daniel Litt
Sloan Research Fellowship	McGill University	Courtney Y. Paquette
VinFuture Prize	Université de Montréal	Yoshua Bengio

Canadian awards and prizes:

In 2024, a total of 77 individuals were honoured with prestigious Canadian research prizes, recognizing their exceptional contributions and groundbreaking work across various fields of study.

Award	Institution	Recipient
Arthur B. McDonald Fellowship	Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières	Isabel Desgagné-Penix
Arthur B. McDonald Fellowship	McGill University	Natalya Gomez
Arthur B. McDonald Fellowship	McGill University	Daryl Haggard
Arthur B. McDonald Fellowship	The University of British Columbia	Kayla King
Arthur B. McDonald Fellowship	University of Toronto	Alison McGuigan
Arthur B. McDonald Fellowship	Dalhousie University	Rita Orji
Barer-Flood Prize for Health Services and Policy Research	University of Alberta	Lauren Beaupre
Canada Council for the Arts Molson Prize	Debajehmujig Theatre Company	Shirley Cheechoo
Canada Council for the Arts Molson Prize	York University	Christina Sharpe
Gerhard Herzberg Canada Gold Medal for Science and Engineering	Queen's University	Kerry Rowe
Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts	N/A	Shuvina Ashoona
Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts	OCAD University	Barbara Astman
Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts	N/A	Marjorie Beaucage
Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts	N/A	Dominique Blain
Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts	N/A	Michelle Jacques
Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts	N/A	Louise Lemieux Bérubé
Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts	N/A	Don Ritter
Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts	N/A	Greg Staats

Award	Institution	Recipient
Governor General's International Award in Canadian Studies	York University	Colin M. Coates
Killam Prize	Université Laval	Clément Gosselin
Killam Prize	University of Toronto	Tania Li
Killam Prize	York University	Janine Marchessault
Killam Prize	Université Laval	Sylvain Moineau
Killam Prize	McMaster University	Gerard Wright
Margolese National Brain Disorder Prize	University of Calgary	Michael Hill
Northern Science Award	Aklavik Hunters & Trappers Committee	Aklavik Hunters & Trappers Committee
NSERC Brockhouse Prize	University of Alberta	Russell Greiner
NSERC Brockhouse Prize	Univeristy of Alberta	David Wishart
NSERC Donna Strickland Prize for Societal Impact of Natural Sciences and Engineering Research	Queen's University	John Smol
NSERC John C. Polanyi Award	University of Toronto	Milica Radisic
Peter Gilgan Canada Gairdner Momentum Award	University of Manitoba	Meghan Azad
Peter Gilgan Canada Gairdner Momentum Award	Université Laval	Christian R. Landry
Royal Society Mirosław Romanowski Medal	Concordia University	Catherine Mulligan
Royal Society of Canada Flavelle Medal	Carleton University	Lenore Fahrig
Royal Society of Canada Innis-Gérin Medal	Université du Québec à Montréal	Robert Vallerand
Royal Society of Canada J.B. Tyrrell Historical Medal	Concordia University	Steven High
Royal Society of Canada John L. Synge Award	University of Toronto	Jacob Tsimmerman
Royal Society of Canada Lorne Pierce Medal	Toronto Metropolitan University	Ruth Panofsky
Royal Society of Canada McLaughlin Medal	McMaster University	Deborah Cook

Award	Institution	Recipient
Royal Society of Canada Rutherford Memorial Medal	University of Alberta	Rylan Lundgren
Royal Society of Canada Ursula Franklin Award in Gender Studies	Carleton University / Wilfred Laurier University	Rianne Mahon
Royal Society of Canada Yvan Allaire Medal	University of Victoria	Val Napoleon
Royal-Mach-Gaensslen Prize for Mental Health	Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre	Nir Lipsman
SSHRC Impact Award - Connection Award	Cape Breton University	Marcia Ostashewski
SSHRC Impact Awards - Gold Medal	Université Laval	Jean-Marc Narbonne
SSHRC Impact Awards - Insight Award	University of Toronto	Lynette Ong
SSHRC Impact Awards - Partnership Award	Université de Montréal	Pierre Noreau
SSHRC Impact Awards - Talent Award	University of Toronto	Louis Busch
Steacie Prize for Natural Science	University of Toronto	Jo Bovy
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	University of Ottawa	Erika Brummell
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	Wilfrid Laurier University	Amber Buston-White
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	Wilfrid Laurier University	Katerina Coveny
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	Wilfrid Laurier University	Simon DePasquale
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	Trent University	Nicolas Diaz Kloch
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	Wilfrid Laurier University	Christine Dunbar
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	Carleton University	Reyd Dupuis-Smith
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	York University	Rebecca Gasman
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	Université du Québec à Rimouski	Emmanuelle Gouin
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	Queen's University	Sofia Guest
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	University of Alberta	Julien Gullo
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	University of Victoria	Meghan Hamp

Award	Institution	Recipient
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	University of Victoria	Lawrence Ignace
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	Wilfrid Laurier University	Jordan Jason-Byerley
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	University of Waterloo	Amy Lacey
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	Wilfrid Laurier University	Nick Luymes
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	University of Waterloo	Brittany Main
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	University of Alberta	Fares Mandour
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	University of Victoria	Logan McLeod
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	Université de Montréal	Taylor Montgomery-Stinson
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	Wilfrid Laurier University	Brian Newton
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	Queen's University	Samuel Poirier
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	Wilfrid Laurier University	Alicia Pouw
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	McGill University	Matthew Quinn
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	McGill University	Jacob Seguin
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	University of Calgary	Erica Suitor
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	University of Waterloo	Hannah Thibault
Weston Family Award in Northern Research	Dalhousie University	Patrick White



CONCLUSION

The Global Excellence Initiative has seen significant growth over the past year, marked by several key successes, including a 22% increase in submissions for reviews and a 25% rise in institutions submitting requests. GEI has also strengthened the capacity of Canadian researchers and institutions through three well-attended webinars and an in-person event.

As we look ahead, GEI remains committed to advancing its core objectives: enhancing global recognition of Canadian research, promoting a culture of excellence and inspiring future generations to pursue careers in research. Through continued partnerships with key organizations and collaborating closely with Canadian universities, GEI will continue to advocate for Canadian researchers to amplify their contributions to global knowledge and innovation.

We are proud of the accomplishments of Canada's researchers and excited to build on the momentum of 2024 to further elevate Canada's standing in the global research community.



APPENDIX A: GEI BACKGROUND

Background

While Canada has a strong record of research achievements, relatively few Canadians had received high recognition internationally for their contributions. The Rt. Hon. David Johnston, 28th Governor General of Canada, recognized the need for a proactive strategy to identify candidates for international awards and prizes. In 2012, His Excellency launched the Global Excellence Initiative to promote the recognition of the contributions made by Canadian researchers, both nationally and internationally. His Excellency recruited leaders from civil society, academia and government to identify, support and promote Canadian researchers in all fields of study and across all disciplines.

Over the last ten years, the initiative has been supported by numerous partners, including the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI); the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR); Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED); the National Research Council Canada (NRC); the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC); the Rideau Hall Foundation; and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

Universities Canada assumed the stewardship of the initiative upon the end of Mr. Johnston's term on October 1, 2017. With this change, support to the committees, coordination of the external review process of nominations for international prizes and promotion of winners of these international awards have been centralized and streamlined.

Governance

The initiative is guided by the work of two committees:

THE CHAMPIONS GROUP acts as the initiative's steering and advisory committee. This group is chaired by Gabriel Miller, President and CEO of Universities Canada.

The current membership of the champions group:

Gabriel Miller
President and CEO,
Universities Canada

Sylvain Charbonneau
President, Canada Foundation
for Innovation

Janet Rossant
President and Scientific Director,
The Gairdner Foundation

**The Right Honourable
David Johnston**
Chair, Rideau Hall Foundation

Valérie La Traverse
Vice-President Corporate Affairs,
Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council

Alain Gagnon
President, Royal Society of Canada

Howard Alper
Distinguished University Professor,
University of Ottawa
Chair, GEI Canvassing Committee

Paul Hébert
President, Canadian Institutes
of Health Research

Bernard Miller
Managing Trustee, Killam Trusts

Alejandro Adem
President, Natural Sciences
and Engineering Research
Council of Canada

Teresa Marques
President and CEO,
Rideau Hall Foundation

Mitch Davies
President, National Research
Council Canada

Universities Canada wishes to thank **Roseann O'Reilly Runte**, former President, Canada Foundation for Innovation; **Rob Stewart**, Deputy Minister, International Trade, Global Affairs Canada; **Sara Wilshaw**, Chief Trade Commissioner and Assistant Deputy Minister, Global Affairs Canada; and **Tammy Clifford**, previous Acting President, Canadian Institutes of Health Research for their contributions to the group.



THE CANVASSING COMMITTEE is responsible for identifying potential candidates for prestigious international research awards and supporting the candidate and their institution throughout the nomination process. The committee is chaired by Howard Alper, past Chair, Science, Technology and Innovation Council (STIC) and Distinguished Professor, University of Ottawa.

The current membership of the canvassing committee:

Howard Alper

Distinguished Professor,
University of Ottawa

Lenore Fahrig

Chancellor's Professor and
Gray Merriam Chair in
Landscape Ecology
Co-Director, Geomatics and
Landscape Ecology Research
Laboratory (GLEL)
Carleton University

Aleeza Gerstein

Assistant Professor, Faculty of
Science, University of Manitoba

Jennifer Love

Professor and Head, Department of
Chemistry, University of Calgary

Gordon McCauley

President and CEO,
adMare BioInnovations

Robert Prichard

Chair, Torys LLP

Molly Shoichet

Professor and Canada Research
Chair in Tissue Engineering,
University of Toronto

Juan Luis Suárez

Professor, Faculty of Arts and
Humanities, Western University

Michael Woodside

Professor, Faculty of Science,
Physics, University of Alberta

Guy Rouleau,

Director, The Neuro (Montreal
Neurological Institute-Hospital),
Chair, Department of Neurology
and Neurosurgery, McGill University,
Director, Department of
Neuroscience, McGill University
Health Centre

Christian Landry

Canada Research Chair in Cellular
Systems and Synthetic Biology
Professor, Department of
Biochemistry, Microbiology and
Bioinformatics
Université Laval

Suzanne Fortier

Principal Emeritus, McGill University

Daniel Drucker

Professor and Senior Investigator,
Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research
Institute, University of Toronto

Joan Judge

Professor, Department of History,
York University

Tony Bi

Director, UBC Clean Energy
Research Centre (CERC), The
University of British Columbia

Max Blouw

President, Research Universities'
Council of British Columbia

Universities Canada and Dr. Howard Alper, Chair of the canvassing committee, wish to thank **Simon Kennedy** for his participation and contributions to the committee over the last few years.



APPENDIX B: GEI EXTERNAL REVIEW PROCESS

GEI's external review process represents a rigorous, strategic approach to elevating nomination packages for international prizes. By leveraging the collective expertise of distinguished researchers and previous laureates, we provide a robust mechanism for refining and strengthening scholarly nominations.

Review methodology

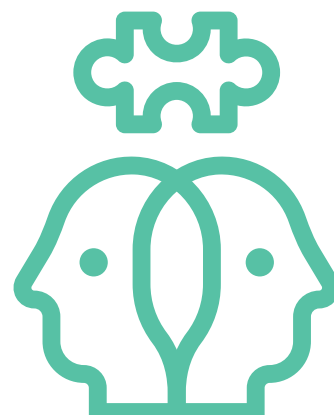
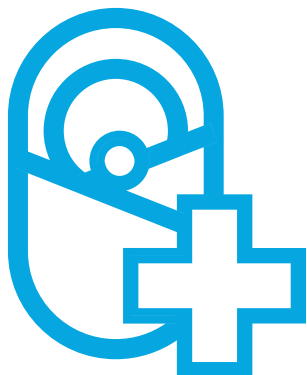
The external review process is built on the following key principles:

Expertise and confidentiality

- Reviewers are carefully selected from a prestigious pool of Canadian and international experts who have a proven track record of international award success.
- The review process ensures complete anonymity, with reviewers having the option to self-identify if they choose.

Collaborative enhancement

- The review aims to provide constructive, expert feedback that can significantly improve the quality and competitiveness of nomination packages.
- Universities Canada serves as a critical coordinating body, facilitating seamless communication between nominating institutions, potential reviewers and granting councils.





Structured review timeline

Our meticulously designed review process follows a precise timeline to maximize effectiveness:

TIMELINE	STAGE	KEY ACTIVITIES
6 weeks before award deadline	Preparation	Dossier development begins; potential reviewer list compiled
3 weeks before award deadline	Submission	Complete dossier submitted for external review
10 days before award deadline	Feedback	Reviewers provide detailed, confidential comments
Award Deadline	Finalization	Final nomination package submitted

Key benefits

- Provides independent, expert assessment
- Offers opportunity for dossier refinement
- Increases nomination competitiveness
- Maintains strict confidentiality

This collaborative approach ensures that each nomination receives comprehensive, expert-level scrutiny, ultimately enhancing the quality of submissions for international awards.



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