
Tri-agency special response fund for Ukrainian research trainees

A statement from the presidents of Canada's federal research granting agencies to support Ukrainian research trainees.

As the presidents of Canada's three federal research funding agencies—the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)—we wish to express our deep solidarity with the Ukrainian people in the context of Vladimir Putin's unjustifiable invasion of Ukraine.

We welcome the recent statement by the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, and the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Health, calling for measures to support Ukrainian research personnel in their time of need.

To this end, our agencies are pleased to announce a new Special Response Fund for Trainees (Ukraine). This temporary fund will allow all active and eligible grant-holders across the three agencies to apply for a supplement that will provide one-year relief and assistance to trainees (i.e., individuals eligible for master's, doctoral or postdoctoral support) whose research in Ukraine has been interrupted by the invasion. Additionally, it enables grant-holders to retain research trainees who were expected to return to Ukraine in 2022 but cannot because of the current situation.

This special Fund will be in effect until the end of 2022, subject to review based on the evolving situation. The design of the Fund leverages past pilot projects to support refugees stationed at Canadian research institutions, such as training awards launched by CIHR in partnership with the International Development Research Centre, in 2016. Further details of the Fund will be released in the coming weeks, with information made available on our respective agency websites.

Going forward, our agencies commit to refraining from entering into agreements with Russian research institutions. Recognizing the value of open science, and the historic role many scientists, academics and researchers have played in defending freedom from tyranny, there will be no broad-based ban on collaborations with individual Russian researchers. However, we will work with Canada's research institutions to ensure that no new collaborations with individual Russian researchers are established in areas that advance the interests of Vladimir Putin's regime. NSERC will also ask grant-holders to suspend current, and prohibit future, federally funded research collaborations involving Russian industry, effective immediately.

Sincerely,

Alejandro Adem, FRSC

President, NSERC

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