

Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation Fellowship

Guidelines for universities

INTRODUCTION

The Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation inaugurated a new Fellowship Program for the nomination of 2026 Fellows in September 2025. Canadian universities expressed to us clearly their preference for a Spring nomination process instead. Therefore, and starting in Spring 2026, the Foundation will move the nomination process for 2027 Fellows to Spring 2026 with a nomination deadline of May 15, 2026. The 2027 Fellows will start their mandate in January 2027.

The Fellowship is a central tool in the Foundation's 2025–2028 mission to support academic excellence, societal engagement, and increased intellectual outreach. The award is a public recognition of the Fellows' outstanding academic achievements and a promise of future transformative contributions. Beyond the active three-year phase, the Foundation's Fellowship remains an honorary lifetime appointment, encouraging ongoing ties between the Foundation and its alumni.

MAIN POINTS

The Foundation nominates up to four (4) Fellows per year, chosen among full professors at Canadian universities, for a mandate of three (3) years.

The Fellowship is of a total value of \$300,000 per Fellow:

- | \$70,000 as prize;
- | \$50,000 as research grant;
- | Up to \$100,000 as possible additional research grant;
- | Up to one (1) year of teaching buy-out, with \$80,000 in compensation paid to the university.

The use of the research grant is governed by guidelines established by the Foundation, while ensuring a flexible program that stimulates and supports intellectual innovation. The Fellow's home university has the option of retaining up to 10% for administrative costs on research grants, which will be paid directly to the Fellow's home university. Annual reports on expenditures will be required.

Candidates' research must be linked to one or several of the four Foundation themes (Human Rights and Dignity; Responsible Citizenship; Canada and the world; People



and their natural environment) and must integrate itself in the general field of humanities and social sciences.

Fellows will join other community members (Scholars, Fellows, and Mentors). Involvement in the Foundation's programming is strongly encouraged. The Foundation requires Fellows to participate in the Foundation's annual summer schools and a second event organized by the Foundation each year; participation in Foundation conferences is encouraged but not mandatory; before the end of their term, all Fellows give a presentation on their research (P. E. Trudeau Talks). During their term, Fellows will identify themselves as "Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation Fellow."

IMPACT

The Fellowship program is aiming to have an impact on several levels.

For Canadian society, the Fellowship must promote public dialogue informed by scientific research across various disciplines, generations, ideologies, and languages.

For the Foundation, the Fellowship will strengthen its intellectual role and visibility. Fellows are a pillar of the Foundation's intellectual reputation. The Foundation encourages diversity of ideas and perspectives in order to foster a vibrant intellectual community.

For Fellows, the Fellowship supports innovative, sometimes unconventional and transformative research in academia and beyond. It offers a stimulating interdisciplinary environment. Scholars and Mentors form a community that expands the Fellows' network. Fellows remain affiliated with their universities but receive independent support and serve as institutional bridges between the Foundation and their respective universities.

For universities, the Fellowship can increase the external recognition of their researchers and provide access to flexible research funding. Universities act as partners to the Foundation in the pre-selection of candidates.

EXCELLENCE

The Foundation understands excellence holistically. Excellence is not defined solely – or even primarily – by traditional metrics such as publication volume, journal prestige, or institutional reputation. While these remain relevant indicators of



scholarly achievement, they are insufficient on their own to capture the full scope of what this Fellowship seeks to recognize.

The Foundation considers excellence across several interrelated dimensions, including:

- the quality, originality, and intellectual ambition of the proposed research project;
- the social significance and relevance of that work, including its contribution to public understanding, policy, culture, or civic life;
- the candidate's record of mentorship and training, particularly their commitment to graduate students and postdoctoral scholars;
- their demonstrated capacity for engagement beyond the academy, including communication with non-academic audiences;
- and their willingness and ability to contribute actively to the Foundation's community as a collegial, engaged, and generous intellectual presence.

The Foundation does not only assess outstanding scholars; we are assessing scholarly leaders and public intellectuals whose work matters beyond their immediate fields.

CAREER IMPACT

The Fellowship is not a lifetime achievement award. While past accomplishments are essential to the assessment, they are not the sole or even the primary basis for selection.

The Foundation considers the trajectory and future potential of each candidate. In practical terms, this means asking:

- How might this Fellowship meaningfully shape the next phase of the candidate's career?
- In what ways could the Fellowship amplify their research, leadership, and public impact?
- Does the proposed project push intellectual boundaries, open new lines of inquiry, or intervene in pressing social questions in a substantive way?



Impact may take many forms: policy influence, legal or institutional reform, community-based research, public scholarship, creative practice, or sustained engagement with civil society.

The strongest candidates are those for whom the Fellowship is transformative rather than merely confirmatory, those who will use the opportunity to extend their influence, deepen their contributions, and enrich both scholarly and public discourse.

CANDIDATES

Candidates

- ✓ are senior academics in Canada who are leaders in their field. They are academics holding a full-time tenured appointment in a Canadian university at or near the rank of Full Professor with a national or international reputation;
- ✓ are in the middle of their academic career; the Foundation respects that professional careers may happen at different life stages and considers professional academic milestones as references; we respect career interruptions, leaves or changes which may have occurred;
- ✓ tackle important current issues in social sciences and humanities intersecting with one or more of the four themes of the Foundation; the research being pursued must have an impact and must contribute to important societal and research questions;
- ✓ propose a research project that is innovative and socially significant, pushing research and thinking in new directions; we are interested in how this Fellowship may meaningfully shape the next phase of the candidate's career and in which way the Fellowship would amplify their research, leadership, and public impact;
- ✓ have a demonstrated commitment to supporting graduate students;
- ✓ have a proven record of academic excellence, as established by their prior success in obtaining research grants;
- ✓ are effective communicators willing to engage with a range of actors in society.

Candidates must be nominated by their home universities. Direct applications are not accepted. Canadian universities with one or more doctoral programs in the humanities and social sciences are invited to submit **up to three nominations per year**; all other Canadian universities may submit **one nomination per year**.



NOMINATION PACKAGE

A nomination package for the Fellowship must include the following elements:

- 1) a presentation letter from the candidate, explaining their interest in the Foundation's Fellowship program;
- 2) a letter of nomination from the candidate's home university;
- 3) a three- to five-page presentation of the proposed Fellowship research project, including links to previous or ongoing research and the expected impact of the Fellowship research funding;
- 4) the candidate's academic curriculum vitae (max. 20 pages);
- 5) three recommendation letters.

The 2027 Fellowship nomination process opens on Monday, February 23, 2026, and closes on May 15, 2026. In future years, the call for nominations will be sent in mid-January to give universities even more time to prepare their nomination package. No nomination will be accepted after May 15, 2026, at 5 p.m. (ET). Incomplete or partial applications are not accepted. Candidates may be proposed a second time.

A complete package must be submitted by the home university to the Foundation by email: nominations@trudeaufoundation.ca

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an in-person interview in Montreal (QC) which will be held in early October 2026. Unsuccessful candidates will be informed at that point in time. Successful candidates who have been chosen as 2027 Fellows will be informed by the end November 2026.

Please address any questions to Mai-Gee Hum, Program Director (mghum@trudeaufoundation.ca).