

TERMS OF REFERENCE

**EXPERT REVIEW PANEL FOR THE
ONTARIO RESEARCH FUND REVIEW**

1.0 Rationale for Committee

- 1.1. In September 2016, the Mandate Letter to the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science requested that a “review of the Ontario Research Fund to inform future research investments” be undertaken.
- 1.2. In order to fulfill these commitments and recommendations, the Expert Review Panel for the Ontario Research Fund (ORF) (the “Expert Review Panel”) will enable the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Science (“Ministry”) to gain expert advice on how the Province of Ontario can “maintain and strengthen Ontario’s science and research programs”, as per the 2016 Mandate Letter.

2.0 Mandate

- 2.1. The Expert Review Panel, a short term advisory body with a mandate of up to 36 months, shall lead the Ministry’s strategic review of its flagship science and research support programs, namely the ORF-Research Excellence (ORF-RE) program, the ORF-Research Infrastructure (ORF-RI) program and the Early Researcher Awards (ERA), collectively referred to as the ORF programs.
- 2.2. The Expert Review Panel will advise on the current design of existing programs, their breadth and effectiveness, as well as gaps and how to address them. Key questions that the Expert Review Panel will need to consider will include, but may not be limited to:
 - Is the program design doing what it intended?
 - Does it still have the right focus?
 - Is it having the desired impact?
 - Are there programmatic gaps?
- 2.3. The Expert Review Panel shall provide advice on how the ORF programs should adapt to new approaches and opportunities, with a focus on supports for early and mid-career Ontario researchers.
- 2.4. The Expert Review Panel will consider options that will not require additional funding.
- 2.5. The Expert Review Panel will prepare a written report at the conclusion of its review of ORF programs with its findings and advice in accordance with its mandate. This report will be presented to the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science.

3.0 Roles, Responsibilities and Remuneration

- 3.1 The Expert Review Panel will be comprised of up to ten (10) members, including two co-chairs, to be appointed by Minister's Letter.
- 3.2 The co-chairs of the Expert Review Panel will report to the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science.
- 3.3 Panel members will report to the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science, through the co-chairs.
- 3.4 Panel members will be appointed for a term of no more than 36 months by the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science and will provide no less than thirty days' notice if they are no longer able to participate on the Expert Review Panel.
- 3.5 Members shall receive no remuneration, but will have their travel, meals and accommodation expenses reimbursed as per the OPS Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive.

4.0 Process

- 4.1 The Science and Research Branch will support the Expert Review Panel in, including, but not limited to, attaining background information on ORF, providing analysis and reports, and other materials as required.
- 4.2 The co-chairs and the panel members will be required to participate in a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of six (6) meetings throughout the 36 month assignment.
- 4.3 The Expert Review Panel will provide advice to the Ministry throughout the review process by meeting with (either in person or by teleconference) Ministry staff, as required.
- 4.4 The Ministry will provide the facilities and materials necessary to conduct these meetings.
- 4.5 The Expert Review Panel will be in direct, regular contact with Ministry staff from the Science and Research Branch who will provide secretariat support.
- 4.6 The Expert Review Panel will consider fiscally neutral options.
- 4.7 All public inquiries and all media requests are required to go through the Communications Branch. All media requests will be directed to the designated offices of the Government of Ontario with input as required from the Panel.
- 4.8 There will be no public communications from the Expert Review Panel, unless desired and requested by the Government of Ontario.

5.0 Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest

- 5.1 All Panel members shall conduct themselves in the spirit of the [Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006](#) (PSOA).
- 5.2 Members of the Expert Review Panel shall be required to fulfill the duties of their appointment in a professional, ethical and competent manner and avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest.
- 5.3 In particular, and without limiting any of the foregoing obligations, Expert Review Panel members shall:
 1. Not use or attempt to use his or her appointment to benefit himself or herself or any person or entity;
 2. Not participate in or attempt to influence decision making as an appointee if he or she could benefit from the decision;
 3. Not accept a gift that could influence, or that could be seen to influence, the appointee in carrying out the duties of the appointment;
 4. Not use or disclose any confidential information, either during or after the appointment, obtained as a result of his or her appointment for any purpose unrelated to the duties of the appointment, except if required to do so by law or authorized to do so by the responsible Minister / Premier;
 5. Not use government premises, equipment or supplies for purposes unrelated to his or her appointment; and
 6. Comply with such additional requirements, if any, established by the short-term advisory body itself and/or the responsible Minister / Premier.
- 5.4 The role of the Ethics Executive under the PSOA will be conducted by the Assistant Deputy Minister, Research, Science and Strategy Division as the designate of the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science.

6.0 Confidentiality

- 6.1 Discussions and advice provided by the Expert Review Panel to the Ministry are considered confidential. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, any information provided by the government that is not known to the general public and may include business research, strategic objectives, unpublished financial information, advice and recommendations provided by the Expert Review Panel to the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science, the Ministry, or general staff.
- 6.2 The Expert Review Panel shall use the highest standards of ethics in handling all information disclosed to them.
- 6.3 It is possible that the Expert Review Panel will receive confidential information with respect to ORF recipients and their institutions or the Ministry in the course of their duties. Where this is personal information, it will be subject to applicable privacy laws. The Expert Review Panel may use this information for the purposes of the advisory process, but are prohibited from acting for personal or professional gain on confidential information obtained while involved with the Expert Review Panel.
- 6.4 The Expert Review Panel is required to keep all confidential information in confidence and to store information in a secure manner to prevent unauthorized

access. When the confidential information is no longer needed, it should be returned to the Ministry.