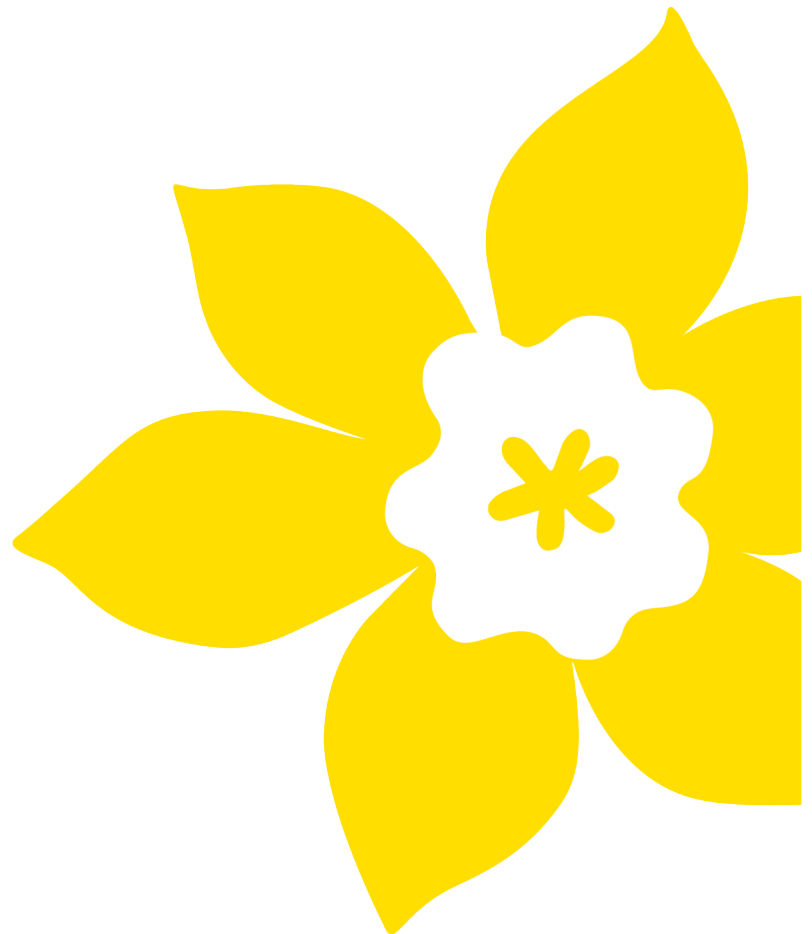




Canadian
Cancer
Society

**Canadian Cancer Society
Awards for Excellence in Cancer Research
(AFE-25)
*Nomination Guide***

September 2025





Canadian
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1. About the Canadian Cancer Society

The Canadian Cancer Society is the only national charity that supports Canadians with all cancers in communities across the country.

Our vision is to create a world where no Canadian fears cancer. We fund ground-breaking research, provide trusted information about cancer, offer programs and services to help people with cancer and their families cope, and advocate to governments for important social change to make healthy living easier.

CCS has been funding cancer research since 1947 and is today the largest national charitable funder of cancer research in Canada. In 2024, we invested \$50.8 million in innovative and impactful research projects from coast to coast. Through our funded research, we aim to reduce the burden of cancer by more effectively preventing, detecting, and treating the disease in a more equitable way, so that fewer people will get cancer and more people with cancer can live longer, fuller lives.

We are a collective of people united by the same goals. Our collective includes people with cancer, their families, friends and healthcare teams, donors, scientists, advocates, CCS staff, and volunteers. We couldn't do what we do, including funding game-changing cancer research, without all these committed individuals and partner organizations. Together, we are a force for life in the face of cancer.

For more information on CCS and the support system we offer, visit cancer.ca/en/.

For more information on research funding opportunities, visit cancer.ca/en/research/for-researchers.



2. Descriptions of the Awards

The Canadian Cancer Society Awards for Excellence in cancer research recognize individuals who have made, and are making, valuable contributions to the cancer research ecosystem in Canada. Recipients are leaders in their fields who exemplify excellence in science and outstanding service to the scientific community. Posthumous nominations are not eligible.

Winners will be recognized and will receive a personalized glass plaque commemorating their award. Each award also comes with a \$20,000 contribution to the recipient's research program.

Canadian Cancer Society Lifetime Contribution Prize

The Lifetime Contribution Prize will be given to an esteemed investigator whose contributions to cancer research in Canada extend beyond traditional research accomplishments and outputs.

The recipient of this award will be an individual permanently residing in Canada who has enhanced the Canadian cancer research landscape through their vision and leadership in the development of networks, collaborations, resources, and/or infrastructure that have/has significantly benefitted people in Canada affected by cancer. In addition, the recipient of this award has demonstrated a deep commitment to training the next generation of cancer researchers.

Canadian Cancer Society Inclusive Excellence Prize

The Inclusive Excellence Prize¹ will be given to an individual who has demonstrated commitment, leadership and (potential for) impact in the advancement of Canada's cancer research ecosystem² from an equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility lens, both among those conducting the research and those benefiting from its outcomes.

Research ecosystems that reflect the population are known to ask more diverse research questions, have more innovative approaches, ideas, and solutions and are thus more likely to produce outcomes that have impact at a population—as well as an individual—level. Likewise, adopting a health equity approach to research ensures that progress is made toward research and care that is increasingly accessible and beneficial to all segments of the population, particularly the underserved. By prioritizing health equity through research, we can address disparities in cancer outcomes and improve the quality of care for everyone, fostering a more inclusive and effective healthcare system.

The recipient of this award will be an individual permanently residing in Canada whose research efforts reflect a genuine and sustained commitment to fostering inclusive excellence and whose work has led (or has the demonstrable potential to lead) to significant, measurable impacts that may include greater diversity and inclusion in Canada's cancer research landscape and/or enhanced equity in the delivery of cancer care for underserved populations.

Given the specific criteria for this award, it is recognized that a limited number of nominations may be received. Consequently, this award may not be presented annually.



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Canadian Cancer Society Robert L. Noble Prize

The Robert L. Noble Prize is given for outstanding achievements in basic biomedical cancer research. It is named in honour of Dr Noble, an esteemed Canadian investigator whose research in the 1950s led to the discovery of vinblastine, a widely used anticancer drug. At the time, vinblastine was one of the most effective treatments available for Hodgkin lymphoma.

The recipient of this award will be an investigator permanently residing in Canada whose contributions have led to significant accomplishments in a body of work in basic biomedical cancer research and who is, normally, still engaged in the conduct of cancer research.

Canadian Cancer Society O. Harold Warwick Prize

The O. Harold Warwick Prize is given for outstanding achievements in cancer control research. It is named in honour of Dr Warwick, a pioneering researcher in cancer control and treatment, and the first executive director of the former National Cancer Institute of Canada and the Canadian Cancer Society.

The recipient of this award will be an investigator permanently residing in Canada whose contributions have led to significant advances in cancer control and who is, normally, still engaged in the conduct of cancer research.

For the purposes of this award, cancer control is meant to include clinical (including clinical trials), health services, epidemiological, behavioural, psychosocial, population-based, or similarly applied research aimed at reducing the burden of cancer. Cancer control does not include research in the basic biomedical sciences.

Canadian Cancer Society Bernard and Francine Dorval Prize

The Bernard and Francine Dorval Prize is given to an early career investigator whose outstanding contributions to basic biomedical research have the potential to lead or have already led to improved understanding of cancer treatments and/or cures. It is named in honour of Bernard and Francine Dorval, whose longstanding support of CCS has helped to raise more than two million dollars in support of CCS-funded research, policy work, and programs.

The recipient of this award will be an early career investigator permanently residing in Canada who began their independent research career within the previous 10 years. All those who began their independent research career after December 31, 2014, will be eligible for nomination. Taking into consideration any leaves, the start of the independent career will be defined as the date that the candidate was first appointed as an independent scientist or faculty member.

Canadian Cancer Society William E. Rawls Prize

The William E. Rawls Prize is given to an early career investigator whose outstanding contributions have the potential to lead to or have already led to important advances in cancer control. It is named in honour of Dr Rawls, past president of the former National Cancer Institute of Canada. His research focused on viruses, particularly those involved in chronic diseases and cervical cancer.



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The recipient of this award will be an early career investigator permanently residing in Canada who began their independent research career within the previous 10 years. All those who began their independent research career after December 31, 2014, will be eligible for nomination. Taking into consideration any leaves, the start of the independent career will be defined as the date that the candidate was first appointed as an independent scientist or faculty member.

For the purposes of this award, cancer control is meant to include clinical (including clinical trials), health services, epidemiological, behavioural, psychosocial, population-based, or similarly applied research aimed at reducing the burden of cancer. Cancer control does not include research in the basic biomedical sciences.

¹ See [CCS Research Inclusive Excellence Action Plan](#) for additional context.

² Cancer research ecosystem is defined as the network of cancer researchers, postdoctoral fellows, students, technical staff, knowledge users, health care providers and community stakeholders, including patients, survivors and caregivers, who are synergistically contributing to the generation, synthesis, dissemination, exchange and application of cancer research in Canada.



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3. Nomination Guide

Four easy steps:

1. [Create your nomination profile](#)
2. [Add your nominator](#)
3. [Complete your nomination](#)
4. [Validate and submit your nomination](#)

Additional resources:

- [Appendix A: Guidance on preparing the nomination dossier](#)
- [Appendix B: Best practices for writing letters – nominator/referees](#)
- [Appendix C: Instructions on submitting the nomination dossier](#)

Deadline:

- Nominations due: December 10, 2025, 5:00 pm EDT/EST.

For questions:

- Contact CCS Research staff at research@cancer.ca.



STEP 1: Create your nomination profile

Nominees must first create their own nomination(s) in EGrAMS in advance of the deadline date.

Once you have provided your nominator(s) contact information, they will be able to access your submission and upload the supporting nomination dossier. Nominees are then responsible for uploading their CVs, completing other relevant information, and submitting their own nomination(s) in EGrAMS by the award deadline date.

Please note that you will not be able to view the nomination dossier(s) submitted by your nominator(s). Check the Application Workbench to monitor the status of your supporting documents.

1. Log in to [EGrAMS](#) to access the home screen/**Application workbench**.
2. Click the **Awards for Excellence – 2025** program under the *Funding opportunities* section on the left.
3. Enter **AfE-25** in the Project ID field (the **Program** code). If you are being nominated for more than 1 award, enter **AfE-25** in the **Project ID** field of the second nomination submission.
4. Enter the name of the award you are being nominated for into the **Title** field – see the list of awards below. For multiple nominations, you must enter the name of each award separately.
 - Lifetime Contribution Prize
 - Inclusive Excellence Prize
 - Robert L. Noble Prize
 - O. Harold Warwick Prize
 - Bernard and Francine Dorval Prize
 - William E. Rawls Prize

Empty Host Institution field

The **Host Institution** field is auto-populated from information provided in your user profile. If this field is blank, you will need to go back to your profile and add your Host Institution there.

The screenshot shows the 'Application workbench' interface. At the top, it displays 'Program: AfE-21 Awards for Excellence - 2021' and 'Deadline: 09/08/2021 05:00:00 PM Eastern Time (US & Canada)'. Below this, the user 'Mr A. Flood' is logged in. A table titled 'Applications' contains one entry:

Sel.	Project ID	Title	Institution	Save	Status	Delete	Errors	App.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AfE-21	Warwick Award	Baycrest Centre		APP - W			

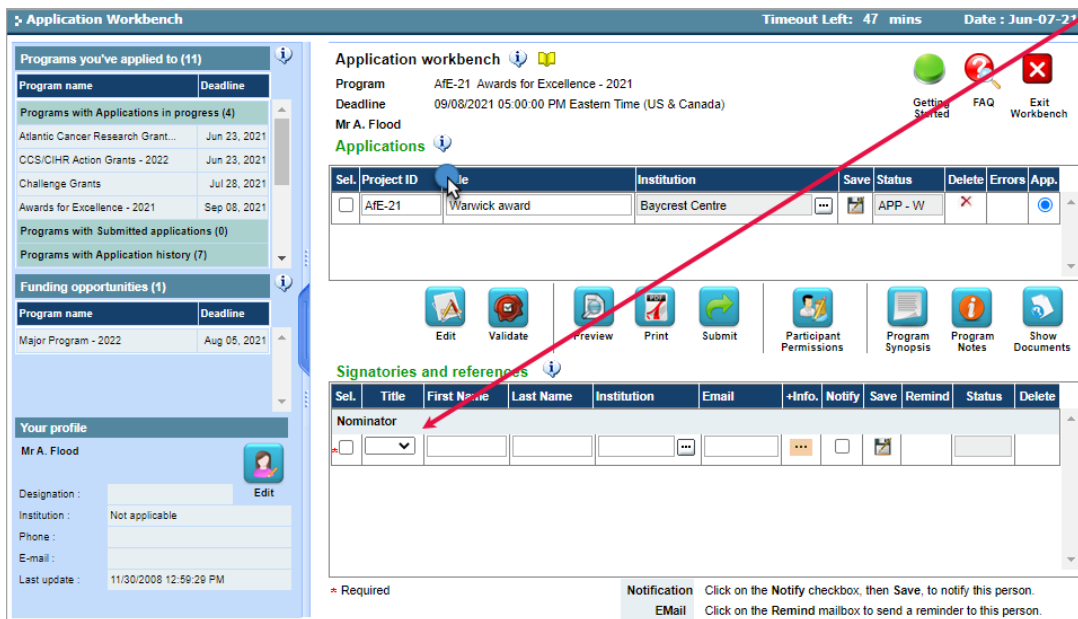
Below the table is a toolbar with icons for Edit, Validate, Preview, Print, Submit, Participant Permissions, Program Synopsis, Program Notes, and Show Documents. Red arrows in the original image point from the 'Save' icon in the table to the 'Save' icon in the toolbar.

5. Click the disk icon to save your application.

STEP 2: Add your nominator

Your nominator must upload the nomination dossier, comprised of a letter of nomination and two letters of reference, combined into one PDF document. Guidance on preparing the nomination dossier is provided in [Appendix B](#). In order to grant access to your nomination form, you must designate your nominator as a reference and provide their contact information.

1. From the **Application workbench**, complete the **Signatories and references** section by providing your nominator's title, name, institution, and email address.



Application Workbench Timeout Left: 47 mins Date: Jun-07-21

Program: A/E-21 Awards for Excellence - 2021
Deadline: 09/08/2021 05:00:00 PM Eastern Time (US & Canada)

Mr A. Flood

Applications

Sel.	Project ID	Title	Institution	Save	Status	Delete	Errors	App.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A/E-21	Warwick award	Baycrest Centre	...	APP - W	X		

Signatories and references

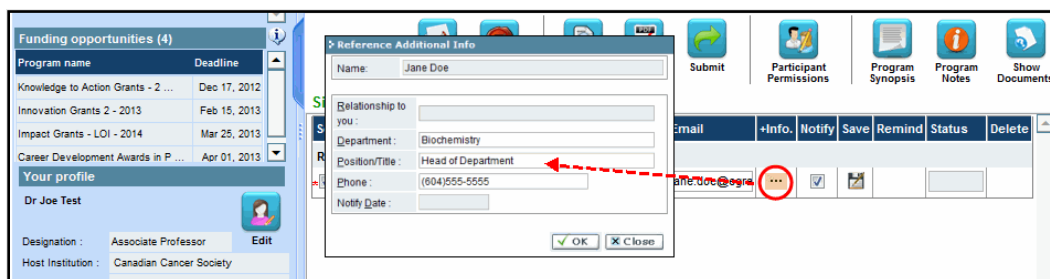
Sel.	Title	First Name	Last Name	Institution	Email	+Info	Notify	Save	Remind	Status	Delete
<input type="checkbox"/>	▼					...	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Nominator

* Required

Notification Click on the Notify checkbox, then Save, to notify this person.
Email Click on the Remind mailbox to send a reminder to this person.

2. Click the dot icon **...** under the **+Info** heading and complete the **Reference Additional Info** window for **Department, Position/Title and Phone**.



Reference Additional Info

Name: Jane Doe

Relationship to you:

Department: Biochemistry

Position/Title: Head of Department

Phone: (604)555-5555

Notify Date:

OK Close



3. **IMPORTANT:** When (and only when) you want your nominator to be notified, ensure that the **Notify** checkbox is checked.

Sel.	Title	First Name	Last Name	Institution	Email	+Info.	Notify	Save	Remind	Status	Delete
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dr	Ann	Smith	Dalhousie Ur	test@test.ca	...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				

- When the **Notify** checkbox is selected, EGrAMS will send an automated email message to your nominator as soon as you click the save icon.
 - The email will contain a unique URL that will grant access to section 7a. and 7b. [nomination dossier](#).
 - **If you are not yet ready to grant access to your nomination form, do not select the Notify checkbox.**
4. Alternatively, if you prefer to notify your nominator at a later time, you can still enter their information and check off **Notify** when applicable.

Monitoring status / sending reminders

Check to see if your nominator has uploaded the nomination dossier by following these steps:

1. Return to the **Application workbench** screen.
2. Check the **Status** column. (It will display either “Pending”, “Work in Progress” or “Complete”.)

First Name	Last Name	Institution	Email	Notify	Status	Remind	+Info.
Jane	Doe		jane.doe@hotmail.com	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pending		...

Check the Status

1.

Send a reminder email

If you are concerned that any of your contacts have not yet completed his or her portion of your application, you can re-send the email notification by clicking on the mailbox button).

First Name	Last Name	Institution	Email	Notify	Status	Remind	+Info.
Jane	Doe		jane.doe@h.com	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pending		...

Click to re-send e-mail notification

2.



5. Click the disk icon to save your entry.

- An email containing a unique URL for access to the Nominator section of your form will be sent out to the nominator immediately. If the status shows “Pending” or “Work in Progress”, you can click on the mailbox icon to send a reminder.

Sel.	Title	First Name	Last Name	Institution	Email	+Info.	Notify	Save	Remind	Status	Delete
Nominator											
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dr	Ann	Smith	Dalhousie Ur	test@test.ca	...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Pending	

STEP 3: Complete your nomination

I. Access the nomination form

1. Ensure that Awards for Excellence – 2025 is selected in the workbench.
 - If it is not, click the program name on the left under *Programs with Applications in Progress*.
2. Click the edit button to access the nomination form:

The screenshot shows the 'Application Workbench' interface. On the left, there are several panels: 'Programs you've applied to (2)', 'Programs with Applications in progress (2)', 'Programs with Submitted applications (0)', 'Programs with Application history (0)', 'Funding opportunities (3)', and 'Your profile'. The main area displays details for 'Program TRV13-1 Travel Awards 1 - 2013' with a deadline of '01/15/2013 05:00:00 PM Eastern Time (US & Canada)'. Below this, there is an 'Applications' table with one entry: 'TRV13-1'. At the bottom, there is a 'Signatories and references' section with a table for 'Research Supervisor / Mentor' containing one entry for 'Dr Jane Doe' from 'University of ...' with email 'jane.doe@egri'. A red circle highlights the 'Edit' button in the bottom toolbar, and a red arrow points from the 'Remind' icon in the top screenshot to this 'Edit' button.

3. Click on the background tab to begin.



II. Enter details of your nomination

Format for document attachments:

Document attachments (e.g. CVs, letters, etc.) **must be submitted in PDF format and must not exceed 5 MB** in size. The system will reject documents that do not meet these standards.

Access instructions within the nomination form:

Abbreviated instructions for completion of each page of the nomination form are provided within the nomination form itself. Click 'Show Instructions' to access them.

These are not meant to be comprehensive – please consult this Nomination Guide, along with the awards description on our [website](#) to complete your nomination:

The screenshot shows a web-based nomination form interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Index', 'Background', 'Applicant info', 'Certificates', 'Public summary', 'Abstract', 'Proposal', and 'Budget'. Below the tabs are buttons for 'Save', 'Save <', 'Validate', and 'Errors', along with a 'PDF' icon and a 'Show Tree' button. The main content area is titled '1. Applicant information' and contains a list of fields: a. Applicant Name, b. Institution, c. Department, d. *Address 1, e. Address 2, f. Address 3, g. Address 4, h. *Country, i. *City, j. *Phone, k. *E-Mail Address, and l. *Designation. A 'Show Instructions' button is located to the right of the 'Applicant Name' field, circled in red. A red arrow points from this button to a callout box that contains the text 'Click to show abbreviated instructions.' The 'Applicant Name' field is currently displaying the text 'Instructions'.



BACKGROUND

1. Nominee information

The contents of this page will be pre-populated from your user profile.

2. Nomination information

- a. Select which award you are being nominated for. The following are the different combinations of awards for which someone can be nominated:
- Any single award (including Inclusive Excellence).
 - The Inclusive Excellence Prize and any single additional award.

If you are being nominated for more than 1 award, you will need to create a separate nomination submission for each award you are being nominated for.

- b. Indicate if this submission is a renomination.

The screenshot shows a form titled "2. Nomination Information". It contains two main sections:

- a.** *Please select the type of award you are being nominated for. Candidates may be nominated for one award, plus the CCS Inclusive Excellence Prize. Candidates can also be nominated for the CCS Inclusive Excellence Prize alone.
 - Inclusive Excellence Prize
 - Lifetime Contribution Prize
 - Robert L. Noble Prize
 - O. Harold Warwick Prize
 - Bernard and Francine Dorval Prize
 - William E. Rawls Prize
- b.** *Is this a renomination? Yes No

NOMINEE INFO

3. Nominee CV

Attach an up-to-date CV following the template "Awards for Excellence Biographical Sketch Template" provided on our [website](#). It is important for consistency of the review process that the template be followed.

Naming convention: Note that the file name will auto populate the Attachment Title. Please use the following format: [lastname_firstname-CV].

4. Justification for career interruptions

Describe any career interruptions or delays that may have impacted your academic career and research productivity including, but not limited to, parental leaves, extended sick leaves, medical leaves, family care, and justified disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please include the start and end dates of each period described (yyyy/mm). The period described will be taken into consideration when calculating career stage of nominees.



If not applicable, please indicate this in the form.

Your justification **should not exceed 1250 characters** (including spaces), or roughly one full page, single spaced. Note that the character count may be different when copying text from Word due to formatting.

REVIEW COMMITTEE

5. Review Committee

Select the review committee according to the award you are being nominated for.

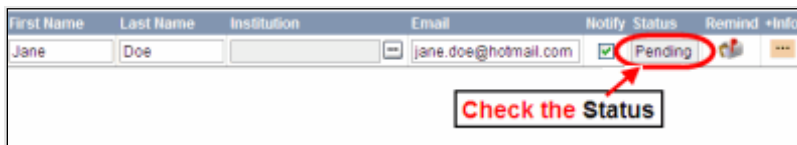
RELEASE FORM

6. Release form

For successful nominations, the nominee must declare their understanding that CCS will post award results on our website and potentially include a summary of the nominee’s research accomplishments and impact in our reports to donors/the public, press releases, social media, or other communications.

NOMINATION DOSSIER

Important! You will not have access to these sections (7a. and 7b.) in EGrAMS. To send reminders or to check if your nominator has uploaded your nomination dossier, return to the Application Workbench and check the Status column. It will display either “Pending,” “Work in Progress,” or “Complete”.



7a. Nominator information

Your nominator will be required to enter their contact information (name, department, and institution).

7b. Nomination dossier

The nomination and support letters must be uploaded by your nominator in one PDF document no larger than 5MB. Please consult [Appendix B](#) for information required in the nomination letter and letters of reference.

Read only access for applicants: This section can only be completed by the Nominator designated in [Step 1: Add Nominator](#).

Refer to [Step 2](#) to track the status of your nomination dossier.

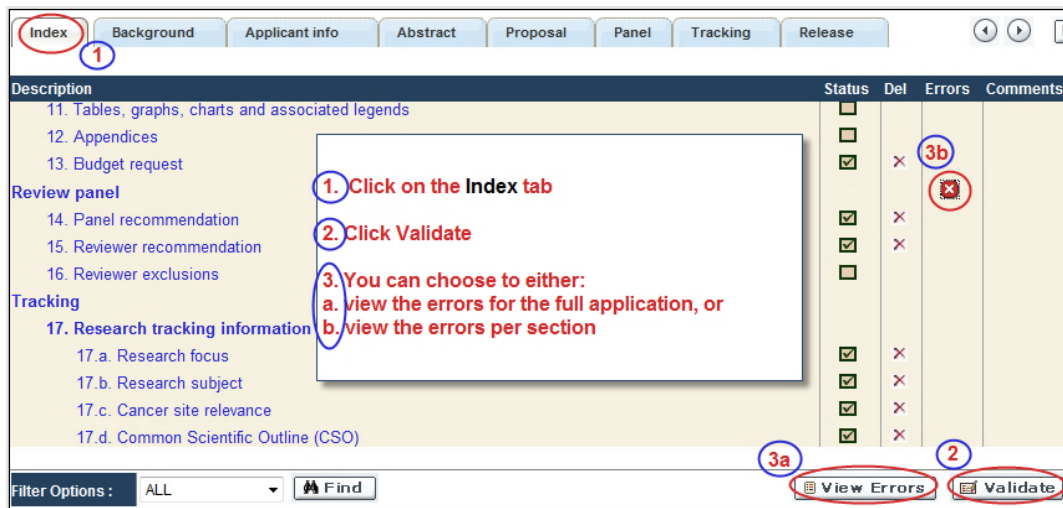


STEP 4: Validate and submit your nomination

I. Validation

Before you can submit your nomination, you must complete a validation process to identify any items left incomplete or filled out incorrectly. You can choose to either a) validate the full nomination submission, or b) validate one section at a time.

a) Validate the full nomination submission



b) Validate one section at a time

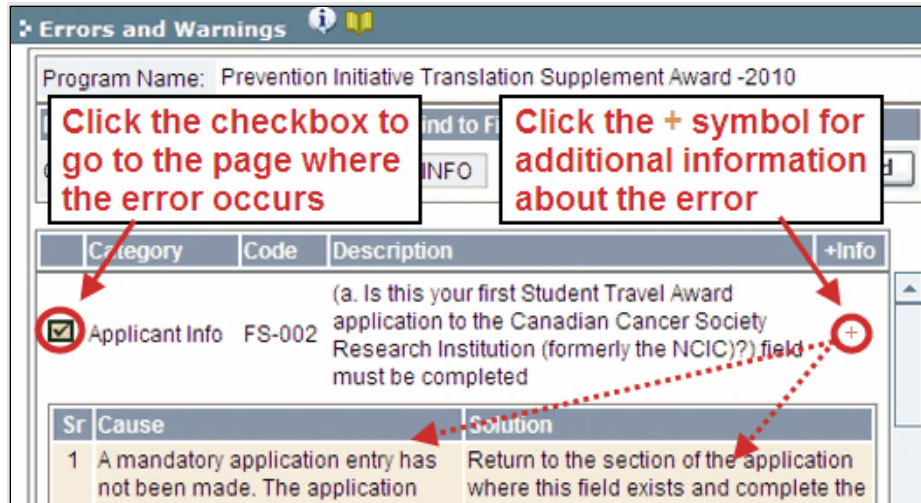
Must be conducted once for every section (e.g. Background, Nominee Info, etc.) of the nomination. Sections are identified as tabs in the banner across the top of the nomination.

Upon completion of all pages within a tab/section of the application, click the Save button. Next click the **Validate** button:



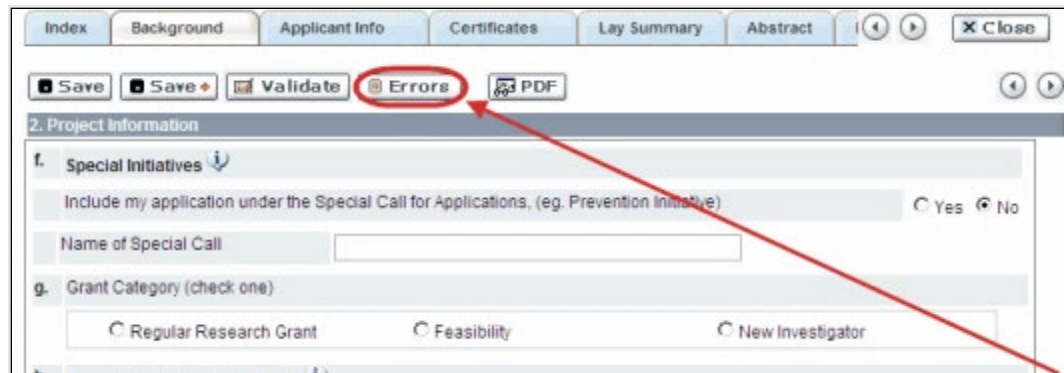
For both type a) and b) validation, follow the below instructions:

1. If errors are found, a dialogue box will open with details.
 - Click the + symbol under the **+Info** heading for information about the cause and solution of the error.
 - Click the checkbox to the left of the error listing to be taken to the page where the error has occurred.



2. To view the dialogue box with the list of errors again, click the Errors button.

Note: The list of errors will not be updated to reflect any corrections you've made until you click **Save** and then **Validate** again.




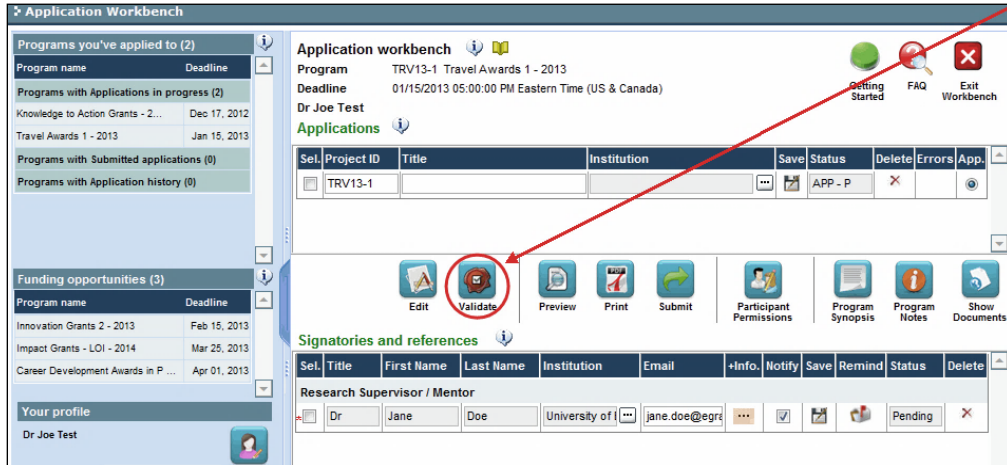
3. When all errors are resolved for every section, click the Close button to exit the nomination form.




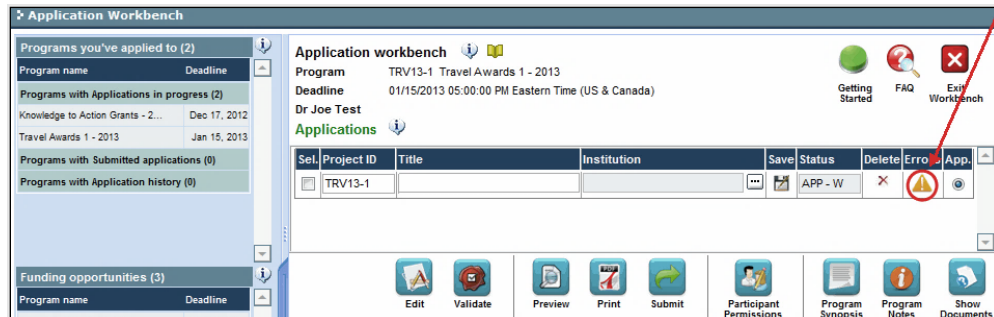






II. Preview and submission

1. From the **Application workbench**, click the  button to do a final validation of your nomination.



2. If Errors are found, click the  button for information about the errors.



3. Errors can be corrected through the  menu.
4. To generate a PDF of your nomination (excluding your nomination and reference letters), click the  button:
5. To preview your nomination in EGrAMS, click the  button:
 - Use the left side menu links to navigate to specific pages or use the forward/backward arrows to view page by page.
 - Click the **Close** button to exit the preview screen.
6. Once you've validated all errors, click the  button.

III. Confirmation

Once your nomination is submitted, a confirmation email will be sent to you by EGrAMS.



APPENDIX A: Guidance on preparing the nomination dossier

1. Lifetime Contribution, Robert L. Noble, O. Harold Warwick, Bernard and Francine Dorval, and William E. Rawls Prizes

Each nomination package must be uploaded in EGrAMS by the nominator as one PDF file not to exceed 5 Mb, including the following:

- **A nomination letter** from an appropriate authority from the nominee's host institution (*nominator*)
- **A reference letter from an individual** from *outside* of the host institution who can attest to the impact of the nominee's research/contributions (*referee*)
 - **For the Lifetime Contribution prize** - this letter may include testimonials from researchers who have benefitted from the nominee's contributions in order to support statements made by the referee. Testimonials must be cohesively presented (i.e. avoid snippets/blurbs) and will help present a complete picture of the nominees and the impact of their accomplishments.
- **A reference letter** from a qualified expert in the nominee's field who can attest to the international significance and impact of the nominee's research program/contributions (*referee*)
 - **For senior-level prizes (Noble and Warwick) and Lifetime Contribution award** - at least one of the reference letters must be from a recognized international authority in the candidate's field who does not reside in Canada.

The nomination letter (maximum 4 pages) and reference letters (maximum 2 pages each) must be submitted in PDF format, presented on official letterhead, dated and signed. Nominators and referees are to include a brief description of their position as well as their professional relationship with the applicant to put their recommendations into context.

The three (3) letters should collectively contain the following information:

- A detailed description of the candidate's contributions to cancer/cancer research in Canada and internationally where relevant.
- If the candidate's research/contributions have had a direct impact on the treatment or management of cancer, indicate the actual or potential benefits to the Canadian public, and internationally where applicable.
- The candidate's research productivity in terms of scholarly contributions, research funding track record and forged collaborations in Canada and internationally where applicable. Highlight any publications in the individual's CV which you believe are particularly noteworthy.
- Service to the research community and/or the Canadian Cancer Society and/or evidence of outreach efforts to the general public.
- Regarding consideration of circumstances which may have impacted the nominee's career progression (see our website for [evaluation criteria](#)) - where possible, any barriers should be explained.
- For early career investigators:
 - The nominator's letter should include the start date of the candidate's first independent academic career (contact [CCS research staff](#) for questions regarding eligibility).
- For the Lifetime Contribution award:
 - The nominator's letter should include a description of the candidate's demonstrated commitment to training and mentorship. An exhaustive list of trainees is not necessary, but it would be insightful to get a sense of the career paths pursued by the trainees (e.g.,



academia, industry, and others) and how the mentorship and guidance provided by the candidate was instrumental to their success.

- The nominator's letter must clearly articulate what the nominee's legacy is/will be to the Canadian cancer research community.

2. Inclusive Excellence Prize

Each nomination package must be uploaded in EGrAMS by the nominator and must include:

1. **One nomination** letter from an individual who has firsthand knowledge of the nominee's efforts in the advancement of equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility in the cancer research ecosystem in Canada (*nominator*).
2. **Two reference letters** from individuals who have directly observed or benefitted from the nominee's leadership in fostering inclusive excellence (*referees*).

Note: one or more of the letters may include testimonials from individuals whose career trajectories, research programs, etc. have been impacted directly by the efforts of the individual in order to support the statements made by the referee. Testimonials must be cohesively presented (i.e. avoid snippets/blurbs) and will help present a complete picture of the nominee and what they have accomplished.

The nomination letter (maximum 4 pages) and reference letters (maximum 2 pages each) must be submitted in PDF format, presented on official letterhead (as applicable), dated and signed. Nominators and referees are to include a brief description of their position as well as their professional relationship with the applicant to put their recommendations into context.

The three (3) letters should collectively contain the following information:

- A detailed description of the candidate's efforts/actions towards fostering inclusive excellence in Canada's cancer research ecosystem.
- A detailed account of the specific impact(s) on Canada's cancer research ecosystem.
- Evidence (if applicable) that the candidate is viewed as an equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility leader in Canada.
- Note that the nominee does not have to be specifically a cancer (or equity, diversity, and inclusion) researcher, but if their program of research focuses on equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility this should be highlighted.

Note that personal identifiers of individuals impacted by the candidate's efforts and contributions towards equitable capacity building should not be disclosed. CCS is looking for the strategies and approaches nominees have employed in their efforts to advance and foster inclusive excellence in Canada's research ecosystem.

3. Renominations

We encourage renominations where eligible. For renominations, nominees must complete a new nomination form in EGrAMS, indicate that the submission is a renomination, and provide an updated CV. Nomination dossiers may be updated as desired to reflect new contributions, but CCS will also accept letters provided within the past 3 years. Nominators must re-upload the nomination dossier in EGrAMS.

Please ensure that renominations for nominees to the early career investigator awards remain eligible within the 10-year award window.



APPENDIX B: Best Practices for Writing Letters – Nominator/Referee

Multiple studies have revealed notable differences in the language used by referees in letters of recommendation depending on the subject's gender. For example, several research groups that compared letters written for male and female applicants found that those written for females were shorter and included 'communal' and 'grindstone' terminologies describing character (e.g. selfless, helpful, warm) and effort (e.g. tireless, diligent, committed), respectively. Conversely, letters written for males were generally longer, emphasized achievements and included 'standout' and 'agentic' descriptors associated with leadership and power (e.g. outstanding, excellent, independent, daring, intelligent).¹⁻⁵ Similarly, albeit less studied, several groups have reported that the subject's race can influence the choice of words and tone used by referees when drafting letters, with fewer agentic terminologies used when describing individuals belonging to minority groups, despite similar credentials with non-minority applicants.^{1,6,7} Collectively, these studies attributed the differences observed to implicit biases that can positively and negatively affect an individual's perceptions, behaviours and decisions in an unconscious manner.

Implicit bias is the unconscious association of attributes and stereotypes to people based on characteristics such as race, age, education, ability/disability, religion, socioeconomic status, and appearance. These biases are developed over time through exposure to social norms and expectations. As previously reported,⁸ the effects of unconscious bias can negatively impact an applicant's overall success in obtaining research funding and reinforce further inequities in academia. It is, therefore, imperative to recognize when opportunities for bias occur and be vigilant in minimizing them.

Below, we offer best practices and resources from various sources^{1-7,9} for nominators and referees to carefully consider when drafting their letters:

- Focus comments on the candidate's research skills and academic (and other award-related) achievements rather than their interpersonal attributes. Address the points requested and exclude personal information not relevant to the nomination.
- Carefully consider the choice of words, tone and length of the letter and whether they would differ depending on the subject's demographics. Consider whether the same descriptors would be used for another candidate with equivalent credentials, but of a different demographic background.
- Refer to the candidate's formal title and surname rather than their first name.
- Avoid using language that could unintentionally raise doubt (e.g. hedges, ambiguous comments, faint praises, potentially negative language, and irrelevancies). Provide concrete examples, when applicable.



Additional resources:

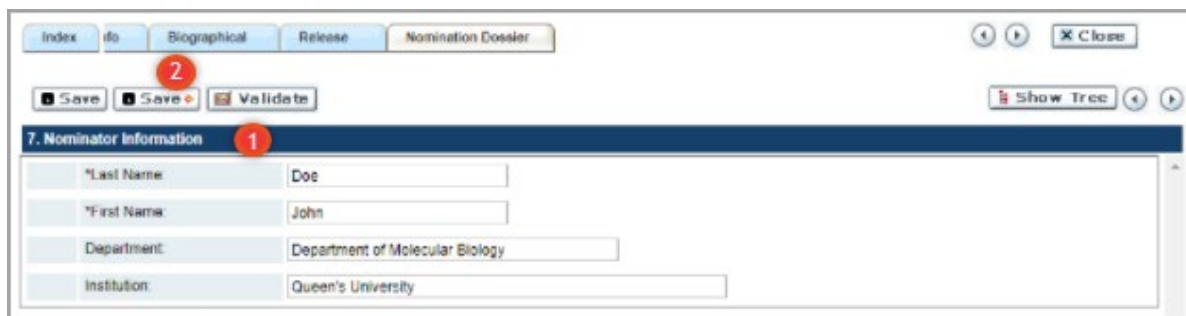
- CIHR Unconscious Bias Training: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/lms/e/bias/>
- Harvard Implicit Association Test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- Gender bias calculator: <http://slowe.github.io/genderbias/>
- The University of Arizona Commission on the Status of Women: Avoiding gender bias in reference writing: https://csw.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/avoiding_gender_bias_in_letter_of_reference_writing.pdf
- Earth Science Women's Network: Guide to avoid racial bias in reference letter writing: <https://eswnonline.org/guide-to-avoid-racial-bias-in-reference-letter-writing/>

References:

1. Akos, P. & Kretchmar, J. Gender and Ethnic bias in Letters of Recommendation: Considerations for School Counselors. *Professional School Counseling*. (2016).
2. Dutt, K., et al. Gender differences in recommendation letters for postdoctoral fellowships in geoscience. *Nature Geoscience*. (2016).
3. Filippou, P., et al. The Presence of Gender Bias in Letters of Recommendations Written for Urology Applicants. *Urology*. (2019).
4. Madera, J. et al. Gender and letters of recommendation for academia: agentic and communal differences. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. (2009).
5. Trix, F. & Psenka, C. Exploring the color of glass: Letters of recommendation for female and male medical faculty. *Discourse & Society*. (2003).
6. Grimm, L., et al. Gender and Racial Bias in Radiology Residency Letters of Recommendation. *Journal of the American College of Radiology*. (2020).
7. Houser, G. & Lemmons, K. Implicit bias in letters of recommendation for an undergraduate research internship. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*. (2018).
8. Witteman, H. et al. Are gender gaps due to evaluations of the applicant or the science? A natural experiment at a national funding agency. *The Lancet*. (2019).
9. Schmader, T. et al. A Linguistic Comparison of Letters of Recommendation for Male and Female Chemistry and Biochemistry Job Applicants. *Sex Roles*. (2007).

APPENDIX C: Instructions on submitting the nomination dossier

Access the website link included in your email notification. This page will be displayed:



1. Enter your name, department, and institution (if applicable).
2. Press the **Save and proceed** button.
3. Click **Choose File** to upload your letter.
4. In the **Attachment Title** field, provide a title for the letter you are uploading. Use the following naming convention: applicant-name_your- name_reference e.g. *joe-smith_jane-doe_reference*
5. Press the **Save** button to save your attachment.



Best practice tip: Check that your letter has been uploaded.

To confirm that your letter has been successfully uploaded, click the paperclip:



Troubleshooting tip: URL does not work.

If the website address included in your email does not take you to the page shown in the illustration above, this may be due to the URL being broken into two lines in your email display. Ensure that you are copying the complete website link into your browser.

If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact research@cancer.ca.