

CCS Research Training Awards – Master’s – 2025 | Rating Scales

Overall Scoring:

Criteria	Master’s
Scientific Merit	40%
Applicant Merit	60%

There are two rating scales reviewers will use to score applications. A Scientific Merit (“SM”) rating and an Applicant Merit (“AM”) should be provided separately, resulting in two scores. Ratings should be given on a scale of 0-5, to 1 decimal point. Only applications with final scores of **>3.5 for both ratings** (SM and AM) will be eligible for funding.

Once these scores are submitted into EGrAMS (CCS’s grants management system), an overall score will be automatically calculated, with weighting based on the percentages in the table above.

Preliminary overall scores (pre-panel meeting) will be used to rank order applications to allow for sorting applications to be discussed at the panel or triaged (not discussed). For more details, please refer to the reviewer handbook.

The final overall score for a given application (post-panel meeting) will be used in the rank ordering of applications within each panel.

Notes:

- *The goal of varying types of reviewers is to bring multiple perspectives and balance to the review process, so this is why there are a few criteria you will see on one scale and not the other.*
- *Initial scores given during the review process may not be the final scores, as some reviewers may need more information to evaluate the Scientific Merit (i.e., whether the proposed study has a sound design and can answer the research questions). Reviewers are free to assess based on their own personal/intersectional expertise/experience.*

Score Descriptions:

Descriptor	Score range	Definition	Outcome
Outstanding	4.5 - 5.0	All <u>scoring criteria</u> have been met and some exceeded. Each item has been appropriately and thoroughly addressed. Very <u>minor improvements</u> are recommended.	Priority for funding
Excellent	4.0 - 4.5	The majority (>80%) of scoring criteria have been met and some exceeded. The majority of items have been appropriately addressed. Some <u>minor changes</u> are recommended.	
Good	3.5 - 4.0	Many (60-80%) scoring criteria have been met. Most items have been appropriately addressed. There are <u>several minor or one moderate</u> areas for improvement, but no major weaknesses.	Fundable
Fair	3.0 - 3.5	Some (40-60%) scoring criteria have been met. Some items have been addressed but there are notable gaps. There is at least one major weakness <u>or</u> many moderate weaknesses.	Not fundable
Poor	2.0 - 3.0	Not enough (20-40%) scoring criteria have been met. Some items have been addressed but there are notable gaps. There is at least one major weakness <u>and</u> many moderate weaknesses.	
Incomplete	Below 2.0	Few (<20%) scoring criteria have been met. Multiple major weaknesses. The proposal needs significant development before being competitive in this program.	

Scientific Merit (SM) Rating Scale

The Research Training Awards **Scientific Merit (SM)** rating scale is to be used by reviewers to assess the scientific merit of the application. This rating comprises two sections: **proposal merit** and **relevance and potential impact in cancer research merit**. The lists below show the criteria to be evaluated, and reviewers are asked to use these criteria to help them holistically assess each application. For example, weaknesses in some areas may be compensated for by strengths in other areas.

Reviewers are asked to use this scale to assess each application, assign a preliminary **SM** score (0-5), and **record this score in EGrAMS prior to the panel meeting**.

Scientific Merit	SR	PSC
Research Proposal		
Rationale and evidence for the proposed work are thorough and compelling.	x	
Aims (and/or research questions, when relevant) are clearly articulated.	x	
Scientific approach, including methodologies, theories, and frameworks, is well-described and feasible.	x	
There is thoughtful consideration of barriers to project success, and alternatives are proposed.	x	x
There is a high likelihood that the project, as described, will result in new discoveries and/or knowledge.	x	x
The research project is feasible. All/most certificates/authorizations are in place to confirm this.	x	x
Key activities and milestones for the project are described and feasible within the project timeline.	x	x
The public summary clearly identifies the need, goal, methods (including co-creation methods where applicable), and expected outcomes of the project and is written in non-technical language.	x	x
Sex, gender, and other dimensions of diversity and determinants of health (e.g., race, ethnicity, education, economic status) and their intersectionalities are appropriately <u>addressed</u> and <u>incorporated</u> in the design, methods, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination/implementation of findings/outcomes.	x	x
Relevance & Potential Impact in Cancer		
The potential impact (short- or long-term) of the proposed research on people at risk/affected by cancer is clearly described and compelling.	x	x
The application describes and has a high potential to lead to improvements in the prevention, detection, treatment, and/or duration and quality of life for people affected by cancer, and/or equitable and timely access to cancer care (i.e. CCS Research Goals).	x	x
The proposal indicates how knowledge will be shared with <u>and</u> beyond academia (with the affected community) in a relevant, accessible, feasible, and culturally appropriate way.	x	x
Impact on patients/affected communities has been appropriately considered, and the project will not exacerbate or place undue hardship on these patients/communities (and/or mitigating strategies have been clearly described).		x

Applicant Merit (AM) Rating Scale

The Research Training Awards **Applicant Merit (AM)** rating scales are to be used by reviewers to assess the applicant's merit. The list below shows the criteria to be evaluated, and reviewers are asked to use these criteria to help them holistically assess each application. For example, weaknesses in some areas may be compensated for by strengths in other areas.

Reviewers are asked to use these scales to assess each application, assign a preliminary **AM** score (0-5), and **record this score in EGrAMS prior to the panel meeting.**

Applicant Merit	SR	PSC
General Criteria		
Application strongly suggests the candidate's enthusiasm for cancer research. The experience statement clearly addresses the questions: What has shaped my path? Why am I passionate about cancer research? What impact do I envision through this award? How will this program support my growth?	x	x
CV indicates a satisfactory academic record. The level of expectation should take into consideration the applicant's career interruptions/obstacles.	x	x
The applicant has demonstrated an understanding of the purpose of this training award and shown they will leverage the IGNITE learning opportunities for personal and professional growth.	x	x
The applicant has shown a personal commitment to patient engagement and knowledge sharing initiatives (commensurate to their training level).	x	x
The candidate has relevant lived experience, community engagement, work experience, and/or other skills/experience with community, cancer, or healthcare. The level of expectation should take into consideration the applicant's career interruptions/obstacles.	x	x
Training & Mentorship		
There is evidence that the research environment is inclusive and supportive.	x	x
There is evidence of the supervisor's genuine commitment and inclusive support (i.e., equity, diversity, and inclusion actions described).	x	x
There is evidence of the supervisor's genuine commitment to patient (or community) engagement and knowledge sharing initiatives.	x	x
The trainee and supervisor have identified an approach to patient engagement that suits their research area and expertise. If relevant, they have identified training that will allow for future meaningful engagement of patient or community partner(s) or in collaboration with partnered organizations (depending on the letter of support/reference submitted).	x	x
The cross-disciplinary training described brings new knowledge or perspective(s) to the trainee's cancer research or offers other key experiences to support growth and future innovation.	x	x
The associated training budget is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed • Commensurate to the amount distributed (maximum \$5,000 over 2 years) • Appropriately used for training (not for ineligible lab/host institution expenses as described in CCS policy such as reagents, lab equipment, etc.) 	x	x
The mentorship plan is compelling and includes mentors ideally in different focus areas who can support growth within their field.	x	x



Statements of support from potential mentors show commitment and enthusiasm for the mentorship. <i>(if applicable - these statements are optional)</i>	x	x
The described responsibilities and expected benefits (i.e., specific skills or opportunities gained) of each mentoring relationship are detailed and adequate to support the trainee's growth.	x	x
The statement of support from the community member/patient/caregiver is suggestive of a strong and meaningful connection/collaboration presently and/or in the future.		x