

CCS Research Training Awards – 2024 | Rating Scales

Overall Scoring:

Criteria	Master's	Doctoral	Postdoctoral
Research Project Merit	40%	45%	50%
Relevance & Potential Impact	60%	55%	50%

There are two rating scales reviewers will use to score applications. A Research Project Merit (“Merit”) rating and a Relevance & Potential Impact (“RPI”) rating should be provided separately, resulting in two scores. Ratings should be given on a scale of 0-5. Only applications with final scores for **each** rating (Merit and RPI) of >3.5 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 (according to the competition level).

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). Applications with an average Merit and/or RPI score of <3.5 will be triaged. 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.

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.	

Merit Rating – Scale 1

The Research Training Awards **Merit** rating scale is to be used by reviewers to assess the merit of an applicant's proposed research project. 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 this scale to assess each application, assign a preliminary **Merit** score (0-5), and **record this score in EGrAMS prior to the panel meeting.**

Merit Rating Criteria – Scientific Reviewers
* Key activities and milestones for the project are described and feasible within the project timeline.
* The research project is feasible. All/most certificates/authorizations are in place to confirm this.
* Aims (and/or research questions, when relevant) are clearly articulated.
* Scientific approach, including methodologies, theories, and frameworks, is well-described and feasible.
There is a high likelihood that the project, as described, will result in new discoveries and/or knowledge.
Rationale and evidence for the proposed work are thorough and compelling.
There is thoughtful consideration of barriers to project success, and alternatives are proposed.
Sex, gender, and other dimensions of diversity (e.g. race, ethnicity) and their intersectionalities are appropriately addressed throughout the project, including the study design, methods, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination/implementation of findings/outcomes.

Merit Rating Criteria – Patient/Survivor/Caregiver Reviewers
*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.
There is a high likelihood that the project, as described, will result in new discoveries and/or knowledge.
Rationale and evidence for the proposed work are thorough and compelling.
There is thoughtful consideration of barriers to project success, and alternatives are proposed.
Sex, gender, and other dimensions of diversity (e.g. race, ethnicity) and their intersectionalities are appropriately addressed throughout the project, including the study design, methods, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination/implementation of findings/outcomes.

***Note:** 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.

Note: Initial scores given during the review process may not be the final scores, as some reviewers may need more information to evaluate the 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.

Relevance and Potential Impact Rating – Scale 2

The Research Training Awards **Relevance & Potential Impact** rating scales are to be used by reviewers to assess the relevance and potential impact of an application. This rating comprises two sections: **Relevance & Potential Impact in Cancer**, and **Relevance & Potential Impact for the Applicant**. 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 these scales to assess each application, assign a preliminary **Relevance & Potential Impact** score (0-5), and **record this score in EGrAMS prior to the panel meeting**.

Relevance & Potential Impact Rating Criteria: 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.
The statement of support describes a strong potential for impact in cancer.
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).
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).
The proposal indicates how knowledge may be shared with and beyond academia (with the affected community) in a relevant, accessible, feasible, and culturally appropriate way.
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.
The training described is commensurate with the award level. The associated budget is detailed and appropriate.

Relevance & Potential Impact Rating Criteria: Relevance & Potential Impact for the Applicant
Answers to the questions "Why am I the right candidate for this award?" and "What do I envision as my (long-term) contribution to cancer research?" strongly suggest the candidate's enthusiasm.
There is evidence of the supervisor's genuine commitment and inclusive support (i.e., equity, diversity, and inclusion actions described).
There is evidence that the research environment is inclusive and supportive.
CV and/or transcripts indicate a satisfactory academic record. (for PhD applicants only)
Relevant lived experience, community engagement, work experience, and other skills or experience with community, cancer, or healthcare is described and supports growth and innovation in cancer research. The level of expectations should take into consideration the applicant's education and/or career interruptions/obstacles.
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.
The mentorship plan is compelling and includes mentors for the trainee, ideally in different focus areas, who can support growth within their field.
The described responsibilities and expected benefits (i.e., specific skills or opportunities gained) of each mentoring relationship are detailed and adequate and support the trainee's growth.
Statements of support from potential mentors show commitment and enthusiasm for the mentorship. (if applicable - these statements are optional)
The provided mentorship plan is commensurate with the award level.
Applicants staying either in the same laboratory or under the supervision of their PhD supervisor(s) clearly articulate how they will establish their independence. (for postdoctoral applicants only)
Applicant shows evidence of leadership qualities and a career trajectory to suggest future leadership in the field. (for postdoctoral applicants only)