



Appendix 1

Guidelines Governing Membership of Selection Committees and Panels

The following criteria and guidelines govern the appointment of members of NSERC selection committees and panels. These guidelines were approved by the three program standing committees (Committee on Scholarships and Fellowships, Committee on Research Grants and Committee on Research Partnerships) and presented to NSERC's Council at its June 2001 meeting.

Composition

In order to perform its task efficiently and equitably, each selection committee or panel must represent diversified expertise in the areas of research covered by the committee or panel and have good judgement and a broad knowledge of the areas, including new and emerging ones that are often at the frontier between disciplines, and an ability to assess the potential contribution of the proposals against the objectives of the program.

Selection committees and panels are peer based. Although the majority of panel members are drawn from Canadian universities, committees and panels should include research managers, experienced practitioners (those with hands-on experience) and researchers from industry, government laboratories and/or foreign institutions. Recently retired individuals who remain very active in research are potential members.

Members from the private and public sectors provide an important perspective in the assessment of applications. Their participation in the review process can enhance awareness and appreciation of the value of applied research and the potential for application of basic concepts to technology transfer or, where appropriate, commercialization. Members from the private and public sectors can offer an understanding of the potential exploitation of research results in commercial operations.

Members from outside the Canadian university system provide valuable contributions and help bring fresh ideas to the process. This is particularly important in relatively small disciplines, or in areas where Canadian expertise is concentrated in only a few institutions.

In addition to bringing an international perspective, foreign members bring with them valuable experience with other peer review systems and research communities.

Although each committee or panel should be representative of the community it serves, members should not be considered representatives of their university, industry or government department.



Potential members include accomplished researchers, new scientists and engineers from all sectors and all universities, large or small. Members need not be NSERC grantees. Scholarships selection committees should also include postdoctoral fellows.

Because of the diversity of the population of Canada and of the research community, other factors need to be taken into account to ensure equitable representation of various groups. For example, both women and men should participate in the selection process, the various fields of research under the purview of a committee must be adequately represented over time, the different regions of Canada must participate fully in the selection process and each committee must be able to assess applications in Canada's two official languages.

Membership Dynamics

To maintain a certain stability in membership while providing a mechanism for membership renewal, NSERC has established a rotation pattern based on three-year terms for committee and panel members. These terms represent an appropriate balance between giving members time to become familiar with policies and procedures and time to deal with the workload. Three-year terms also address the need for renewal, so that it is not always the same people involved in the review process. Inasmuch as possible, one third of the membership should be replaced each year.

Roles and Responsibilities for Appointments

Selection committee and panel members are appointed by the Corporate Secretary to Council, upon co-approved by the appropriate Director and/or Vice-President. In developing recommendations, Program Officers, in consultation with Team Leaders and/or the Director:

- review nominations from the universities, professional and learned societies and the committees or panels themselves;
- consult the selection committees and panels (including the incoming Chair) on their perceived needs for the short and medium term and on the suitability of nominations received; and
- consult advisors, including the Chair of the Committee on Research Partnerships, to seek references on the suitability of nominees.

The committee and panel chairs are appointed by NSERC, generally from the continuing members of the committee or panel.

Guidelines for Nominators, Panels and NSERC Staff

It is essential that committees and panels examine trends in research and lend special consideration to planning their expertise requirements for the next three years, noting particular pressures, or changes in direction of research; it is important to recommend the



appointment of new members to cover new or priority areas. One-for-one replacement is not always appropriate.

Prime considerations in the renewal of membership are the nominees' stature in the research community, their areas of expertise and breadth of interest, their good judgement and their ability to work on a committee or panel. In addition to the requirements of competency and being representative of the community the committee or panel serves, the following guidelines are taken into account in considering nominees:

1. Each committee or panel must have the capability to review applications in Canada's two official languages. In addition to recruiting a minimum of two members whose first official language is French, committees should have as many bilingual members as possible.
2. Each committee or panel should reflect the gender balance of the community it represents and, if possible, include a minimum of two women and two men.
3. The extension of a term for one additional year may be accepted in exceptional circumstances, for example in situations where a disproportionately high turnover of membership occurs.
4. Individuals who have previously served on a selection committee or panel may be re-appointed to that same committee or panel to ensure the necessary stature or to satisfy other guidelines. However, a minimum of four years should elapse before re-appointment.
5. Consecutive representation from a given institution should be avoided. Exceptions may occur if there is a concentration of excellent researchers in a few large departments or if other guidelines cannot otherwise be satisfied.
6. Except in unusual circumstances (e.g., when a member moves or areas of research are rearranged between panels), the simultaneous membership of two persons from the same university on a committee or panel is not permitted. Because of conflict of interest guidelines that preclude members from being involved in the review of applications from their own institution, the committee or panel would be short two members when applications from that institution are reviewed.
7. Individuals from the university sector whose duties include fund-raising for research and co-ordination of research contracts or the selection of PGS applications submitted to NSERC cannot be considered for membership on a selection committee or panel, as their functions put them in the position of a real or perceived conflict of interest. These groups include Research Grants Officers, Directors of Research Offices and Vice-Presidents (Research) for grants selection committees and panels, and Scholarships Liaison Officers and Deans of Graduate Studies for scholarships and fellowships committees. Such individuals may, however, be considered for appointment to NSERC standing committees, where the principal function is policy development.
8. Members should be drawn from the various regions of the country and from large and small institutions.
9. Representation from outside the Canadian academic community is important. This includes the Canadian public and private sectors, and also researchers from



foreign institutions. Committees and panels should have at least one person from an institution other than a Canadian university. Canadians or ex-Canadians working abroad are generally valuable participants in the NSERC peer review system. The balance of university, private and public sector members changes from committee to committee or panel to panel and reflects the nature of the fields covered by each committee or panel, or the need for consideration of the application of research results. Some committees or panels will require a larger representation from outside the academic sector than others.

Recommendations not consistent with the guidelines, as well as recommendations for a change in the size of the committee or panel, must be fully documented.

***Note:** Committee or panel members who find themselves in the position of having to respond to formal allegations of financial or professional impropriety will not participate in the work of the committee while an investigation is under way.*