University of Toronto Department of Psychiatry
Academic Scholar Awards
Request for Applications 2026

Background

The University of Toronto's (U of T) Department of Psychiatry will grant merit-based awards to support the professional development of full-time faculty members of the Department. The priority will be to support early-career and mid-career faculty members, so that they can progress towards attaining academic promotion. In addition, one award per year will be available for a Full Professor who has served on the Senior Advisory Committee (SAC), immediately following the end of their service on the SAC, if they are transitioning from a major academic administrative position to an academic position focused on scholarship (Research, Education scholarship, Creative Professional Activity [CPA] scholarship).

The primary criterion for these awards will be academic merit, based on the Application (see Application section below). Applications from i) researchers, scientists, or investigators; and ii) educators or faculty whose scholarship is primarily in the area of CPA (including Quality Improvement) will be reviewed in two separate streams, so as not to unfairly advantage or disadvantage one area of scholarship compared with another. All applications that receive a fundable score based on their academic merit, will be considered for the final allocation of awards based on additional factors including the distribution of funds across hospital sites, the distribution of funds across the Divisions in the Department of Psychiatry, and the Department's strategic priorities.

Specific Aims of Awards

- To protect time to support career development in one or more of the following domains:
  - research
  - educational scholarship
  - CPA scholarship, including quality improvement
- These awards are not intended to support operating costs, clinical activity, administration, teaching, or the provision of any other professional services to the University or a hospital.

Award Eligibility

- U of T faculty member with a primary appointment in the U of T's Department of Psychiatry (if you do not know whether you have a primary appointment in the Department of Psychiatry, email psych.appoint@utoronto.ca)

- Academic rank of Assistant Professor or higher, as of July 1, 2026

- Clinical faculty or Status-only faculty

- For Clinical faculty: Full-time membership of a conforming practice plan of a Toronto Academic Health Sciences Network (TAHSN) hospital, or a full-time appointment at an Associate TAHSN Affiliation or Community Hospital Affiliation of the U of T Department of Psychiatry.

- Full Professors with a funded Chair (hospital, university, external [e.g. Canada Research Chair]) or a funded Professorship (limited term Professorship or endowed Professorship) are NOT eligible to receive an Academic Scholar Award (ASA) at the time of holding the Chair or Professorship.

- A faculty member is limited to a maximum of 3 attempts to obtain an ASA.

Amount of Award

Clinical Faculty

- Assistant Professor: $60,000/annum, depending on the duration criteria (see 'Duration of Award' below)
- Associate and Full Professor: $70,000/annum

Note: The ASA for Clinical faculty is intended to protect one day per week of academic time. It is expected that the applicant's clinical site will protect as least one additional day per week of academic time (i.e., a minimum total of 2 days per week of protected academic time, including the ASA), through non-U of T sources of financial support for academic time (e.g., alternative funding payments, practice plan's academic tax).

Salaried Status-only Faculty

- Equivalent of 20% of the awardee's salary and benefits (e.g., if an awardee receives a salary of $125,000/annum plus benefits, the award would reimburse their employer $25,000/annum plus the proportional amount of benefits)

Note: The award would 'buy' academic time from the awardee's employer. Both the employer and awardee's manager would be required to protect this time for the awardee's academic activity and to ensure that the time is not used by the awardee for clinical activity, administration, or teaching.

Status-only faculty who already receive salary support to protect more than 80% of their time for academic activity are not eligible for the award.

Additional Funding Considerations

If an awardee's gross professional earnings from all sources (including the ASA) exceed $460,000 for Assistant Professors or $470,000 for Associate/Full Professors in any calendar year during the duration of the award, the amount above this threshold will be withheld during the following academic year. (Gross professional income is income prior to any practice plan deductions [e.g. operating expenses, academic tax] and income tax deductions). For example, if an Assistant Professor's gross annual professional income (inclusive of the ASA) in 2027 is $480,000, your ASA in 2028-2029 will be reduced by $20,000; if your gross annual professional income (inclusive of the ASA) in 2027 is $520,000 or more, your ASA in 2028-2029 will be nil. The purpose of this threshold is to ensure that you devote at least one day per week to academic activities, as opposed to full-time clinical and/or administrative activities.

Duration of Award

Overview

- Assistant Professor who is not promoted to Associate Professor during the term of award: 3 years, with option of a 2-year renewal based on satisfactory progress
- Assistant Professor who is promoted to Associate Professor during the term of award: 3 years, with option of a 3-year renewal based on satisfactory progress
- Associate Professor: 3 years, no option of renewal
- Full Professor: up to 2 years, no option of renewal

In the case of a justified leave of absence (e.g., parental leave, a prolonged period of illness), the award will be put on hold at the start of the leave and will resume at the end of the leave.

Specifics: Clinical Faculty

Assistant Professors

If an Assistant Professor achieves academic promotion within the first 3 years of their ASA award (including a promotion approved during Year 3 of the award, effective July 1 at the start of Year 4), they will receive $60,000/year for the first 3 years and $70,000/year for a second three years (irrespective of when promotion occurs during the first 3 years).

If an Assistant Professor achieves academic promotion after the first 3 years of their ASA award and during the 2-year renewal period (i.e., a promotion approved during Year 4 of the award, effective July 1 at the start of Year 5 or a promotion approved during Year 5 of the award, effective July 1 at the start of Year 6), they will get $60,000/year for whatever is remaining of the renewal, plus $70,000 for a 6th year. For example, if an awardee is promoted at the start of Year 5 or 6 (July 1) of the ASA, they will receive $60,000 for Year 5, plus $70,000 for Year 6.

If an Assistant Professor's promotion has not been approved during the time of holding an ASA, the original payment rule will remain in effect: original 3-year award + eligibility for a 2-year renewal based on academic progress, at $60,000/year.

Table: Payment of ASA initiated when an Assistant Professor

Assistant Professor	**Year 1-3**	**Year 4-5**	**Year 6**	**Total**
No promotion	60,000	60,000	-	300,000
Promotion during 1st term*	60,000	70,000	70,000	390,000
Promotion during 2nd term*	60,000	60,000	70,000	370,000

* "Promotion during term" means that the promotion is approved during the term (it can be effective on July 1 following the last year of the term).

Associate Professors

Associate Professors are eligible to apply for a 3-year award (no renewal) of $70,000/annum if they have not received an ASA as an Assistant Professor.

Table: Payment of ASA initiated when an Associate Professor

Associate Professor	**Year 1-3**	**Total**
Unique term	70,000	210,000

Full Professors

Full Professors who have served on the Senior Advisory Committee (SAC) will be eligible to apply for an award of $70,000/year for up to 2 years immediately following the end of their service on the SAC. Thus, they would be expected to apply for the award in the same calendar year that their service on the SAC ends

(e.g. if service ends June 30, 2026 the application would be due by March 1, 2026). The objective of these awards is to facilitate a transition from a major academic administrative position to an academic position focused on scholarship (Research, Education, CPA). Full Professors who hold a funded Chair (hospital, university, external [e.g. Canada Research Chair]) or a funded Professorship (limited term Professorship or endowed Professorship) are not eligible for this award. As is the case for Assistant or Associate Professors, an application is required.

Specifics: Salaried Status-only Faculty

Assistant Professors

Assistant Professors who are not promoted to Associate Professor during the term of their award, will be eligible for the original 3-year award + eligibility for a 2-year renewal based on academic progress, to support the equivalent of 20% of the awardee's salary and benefits.

Assistant Professors who are promoted to Associate Professor during the 3+2 year term of their award, will be eligible for a 6th year of award to support the equivalent of 20% of the awardee's salary and benefits.

Associate and Full Professors

Associate Professors are eligible for a 3-year award (no renewal) to support the equivalent of 20% of the awardee's salary and benefits.

Full Professors meeting the criteria described above for Clinical Faculty are eligible for up to 2 years of award (no renewal) to support the equivalent of 20% of the awardee's salary and benefits.

Start Date of ASA

All ASA will start on July 1 (i.e., the beginning of the academic year) and end on June 30 (i.e., the end of the academic year). In the rare case this is not possible (e.g., somebody is recruited from outside of U of T), the ASA term will still ends on July 1 within the next 36 months (and thus the term may be shorter than 36 months).

Timeline for the 2025 Competition

- Competition announcement – January 12, 2026
- Application Deadline – February 27, 2026, 5 PM
- Funding Start Date – July 1, 2026
- Progress Reports – On an annual basis from the start date for the duration of the award

Review and Adjudication of Applications

The Process

There will be two streams of scholarship for review: i) where research is the applicant's primary focus, and ii) where education or CPA is the applicant's primary focus. The merit and number of applications in each stream will be taken in to account when distributing awards, so that scholars from both streams have access to awards.

There will be several sequential steps to adjudicate the applications: i) all applications will receive a first round of review by the Department of Psychiatry Executive Committee; ii) the most meritorious applications

will then be reviewed by two reviewers external to the U of T Department of Psychiatry, based on a standardized review process; iii) the applications will be ranked in their respective streams; iv) the Department of Psychiatry Executive Committee will make a final decision on allocation of awards, based primarily on the rank of applications, the distribution by hospital site and by Department of Psychiatry Division, and other departmental strategic priorities.

Application Components

The review and adjudication will be based on the following components of the Application:

1) Submitted by the Applicant

- Academic Career Development Plan
- Academic Work Plan
- Applicant's Curriculum Vitae
- Disclosure of Professional Income Form

2) Submitted by the Applicant's Primary Mentor (for applications by Assistant professors only)

- Mentor's Letter
- Mentor's Curriculum Vitae

3) Letter of support from Psychiatrist-in-Chief

4) For salaried Status-Only Faculty: Letter of Institutional Commitment signed by both the employer and the manager

Application Details

The Applicant

1. Academic Career Development Plan (3-page limit, 11-point or larger Arial or Times New Roman font and at least one-half inch margins).

Four sections, following the headings and specified order below, and discussing each of the points listed below. Each section must start with the appropriate section heading: Applicant's Background, Career Goals and Objectives, Applicant's Plan for Career Development/Training Activities during the Award Period, Applicant's Plan for Mentorship.

i) Applicant's Background:
- Start this section with a **bolded** single sentence stating the academic stream of your application: i) Research; ii) Education; iii) Creative Professional Activity (including Quality Improvement).
- In a focused fashion, describe relevant past academic and professional history, indicating how the award fits into past and future academic career development (don't simply recite your curriculum vitae).
- If there are consistent themes or issues that have guided previous work, these should be made clear. Alternatively, if your work has changed direction, indicate the reasons for the change.
- If there has been a break in your career, for example due to parental leave or illness, please make note of this.

ii) Career Goals and Objectives:
- Describe your short-term and long-term career goals, for the full duration of the award (i.e 3 years, plus a renewal of 2 years [or renewal of 3 years if promoted] based on satisfactory academic progress for Assistant Professors; 3 years for Associate Professors; up to 2 years for Full Professors).

- Justify the need for the award by describing how the award will enable you to develop and/or expand your academic career. (Note: the award is intended to protect your academic time –if applicable, describe how additional academic time will be protected and supported).
- Include a timeline, with academic milestones; plans to apply for other support and, if relevant, grant support; and in the case of Assistant and Associate Professors plans for academic promotion (for information on the Faculty of Medicine's criteria for academic promotion visit: https://temertymedicine.utoronto.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/TFOM%20Sr%20Promotions%20Manual_2024oct.pdf

iii) Applicant's Plan for Career Development/Training Activities during the Award Period:
- Describe the new or enhanced research, educational, or other academic skills and knowledge you will acquire as a result of the proposed award.
- Describe any structured activities (if any) that are part of the developmental plan, such as coursework or workshops that will help you learn new techniques or develop needed professional skills.
- If coursework is included, specify where the courses will take place and provide descriptive titles of the courses.
- Briefly discuss academic and clinical activities, in addition to your primary focus of scholarship (research, education, CPA), in which you expect to participate. Where relevant discuss how these activities may enhance your career development (for example, in the case of researchers, is your clinical activity synergistic of your research activity by facilitating recruitment of participants to your research project or the projects of others). Include a percentage of time involvement for each activity by year.

iv) Applicant's Plan for Mentorship (for Assistant Professors only):
Effective mentorship is an important determinant of academic success. Therefore, applicants at the Assistant Professor rank will be required to have a primary mentor for the duration of the award.
- Describe your plan for mentorship, including the name and area of academic focus of your primary mentor (and possibly other mentors), the length of time you have known the mentor(s), the current and planned frequency of meeting with your mentor(s), and the foci of mentorship.
- How will your mentor's experience, reputation, and academic track record facilitate the development of your career?
- Do you anticipate more than one mentoring relationship during the time of the award, consecutively and/or sequentially? If so, how will these mentoring experiences complement each other, to support and foster your career development?

2. Academic Work Plan (3-page limit starting on a new page, 11-point or larger Arial or Times New Roman font and at least one-half inch margins).

The Academic Work Plan should cover the full duration of the award. A well prepared Academic Work Plan should include details on the expected *goals and their rationale*, an explanation of how the goals are likely to be achieved (*methodology*), a rationalization as to where the research/scholarship in education or CPA will be carried out (*environment and resources*), in collaboration with whom (*team and collaborators*) and finally details on the *timeframe* of the academic work.

In the case of research, the applicant should provide details of the overall plan of research, including the overarching goals, as well as details of individual research projects within the plan. A sound research plan should describe the rationale, aims and hypotheses, methodology, feasibility, innovation, and impact. It is also important for the application to describe how the plan of research relates to the applicant's career development goals and (for junior faculty) how the research plan will facilitate him/her becoming an independent researcher, leading his/her own research team.

In the case of scholarship in education, the applicant should provide details of the overall plan for the education scholarship as well as the specific processes to complete the plan. For example, for education, a clear rationale and vision for the education scholarship activities should be described. The plan should

include clear goals or objectives for each innovation/initiative or research (e.g., curricula, resource, etc.), along with the strategies and methodologies that will be used to complete these activities. Information should be provided on the significance of these education innovation/ initiative or research activities, as well as the plan for evaluation of each activity and how impact will be measured. Description of potential plans for dissemination in scholarly fora and relevant communities should be included as well as strategies for sustainability, if possible.

For scholarship in creative professional activity (CPA), a clear vision statement related to the CPA should be provided, along with a clear description of the CPA activities, including the process/product that will contribute to the academic enterprise (e.g., intervention programs, manuals, curriculum resource materials, films, etc.). The CPA plan should include clear goals for each CPA activity and description of partners and a clear statement of the applicant's and others' roles in the CPA. The application also should describe the plan for evaluation of the CPA (e.g., quantitative/ qualitative evaluation) and how its impact will be measured and on what populations. Descriptions of potential future implementations should also be provided if possible and methods towards the sustainability of the CPA, including information on populations and or partnerships, depending on the nature of the CPA. Plans for dissemination are to be included, including in scholarly fora, as well as involving strategies for dissemination to related populations/communities.

For both education and CPA scholarship, the applicant should provide the rationale for how the scholarship activity will enhance their career development plan.

Note: Although the applicant is expected to write the Career Development Plan and Academic Work Plan, the mentor should review a draft of these plans and discuss them in detail with the applicant. Review by other knowledgeable colleagues is also helpful.

3. Applicant's Curriculum Vitae
Use the Web CV format.

4. Disclosure of Professional Income Form

The Academic Scholar Awards are designed to support part of your academic time, to allow you to devote greater time to academic development activity: it is not intended to enhance your overall income. In order to ensure that the awards are used for their intended purpose, each applicant is required to complete a Financial Disclosure Form, at the time of applying for the award, as well as a part of the Annual Progress Report (CLICK FOR LINK TO FORM).

The Primary Mentor (for applications by Assistant Professors only)

1. Mentor's Letter

Reviewers will be asked to evaluate the primary mentor, in addition to the applicant. Therefore, a thoughtful and well-constructed letter from your primary mentor will be an important part of the application. Reviewers will be asked to consider the following questions in evaluating the mentor:
- Are the qualifications of the mentor in the area of proposed research/scholarship appropriate?
- Does the mentor adequately address the applicant's potential, the applicant's strengths, and the areas needing career development?
- Is there adequate description of the quality and extent of the mentor's proposed role in providing guidance and advice to the applicant?
- Is the mentor's description of the elements of the academic career development activities adequate?
- Is there evidence of the mentor's previous experience in fostering the development of independent academics?
- Is there evidence of the mentor's current academic productivity?

- Does the mentor describe adequate plans for monitoring and evaluating the applicant's progress toward independence?

Given the importance of the mentor's letter to the application, it is essential that your mentor be given enough notice to prepare his/her letter. In addition, he/she should be allowed sufficient time to review your application and provide you with feedback. The mentor's letter and curriculum vitae must be received by the Department of Psychiatry by the application deadline.

2. Primary Mentor's Curriculum Vitae

Letter from the Psychiatrist-in-Chief

A signed letter is required from the Psychiatrist-in-Chief (PIC) of the hospital where the applicant has his/her primary hospital appointment or employment. The purpose of the PIC's letter is to document the hospital's commitment to the retention, development, and advancement of the applicant during the period of the award. The PIC's letter should:

1. Document the percentage of time on annual basis that the applicant will have protected for his/her academic activity, should the applicant receive the award (it is expected that the successful applicant will have a minimum total of 2 days per week of protected time for academic activity, including the one day per week supported by the ASA).

2. Document other sources of financial support that are available to support the applicant's academic time and their annual dollar amount.

3. Describe the actions that will be taken to ensure that the applicant can devote the required time to academic career development (e.g., if necessary, a reduction of the applicant's clinical or teaching load, administrative assignments, and other clinical or professional activities).

3. Indicate that there will be sufficient institutional resources to support the applicant.

4. Indicate that the PIC agrees that the proposed mentor is suitable for the applicant.

For Salaried Status-Only Faculty: Employer's and Manager's Letter of Commitment

1. In the case of salaried Status-Only faculty, the Letter of Institutional Commitment must be signed by both the applicant's manager and the employer responsible for paying the applicant's salary, that attests to the fact that one day per week of the applicant's time will be released for the proposed academic activity for the duration of the award, in exchange for U of T Department of Psychiatry paying the institution the equivalent of one-day per week of the applicant's salary and benefits.

2. The Letter must describe the actions that will be taken to ensure that the applicant can have a minimum one-day per week of protected academic time (e.g., reduction of the applicant's clinical or teaching load, committee and administrative assignments, and other clinical or professional activities) and describe how this will be accommodated (e.g., hiring additional staff, reassigning staff, etc.).

3. The Letter must be dated and signed by both the applicant's manager and employer who are authorized to commit the institution to the agreements and assurances listed above. The signed Letter must be printed on the applicable institution's letterhead.

4. Letters that do not meet the above requirements will not be accepted and the application will be rejected.

Submission of the Application

1. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that all documents are submitted by the application deadline. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

2. In fairness to all applicants, supplemental material (e.g. appendices, additional letters of support including letters from more than one mentor) should not be included and will NOT be considered in the review process. Additionally, any material exceeding the specified 3-page limits of the Academic Career Development Plan and the Academic Work Plan (e.g. extra pages containing lists of references) will be discarded.

3. The following components of the application should be in a single pdf document, in the following order: i) Academic Career Development Plan, ii) Academic Work Plan, iii) Disclosure of Professional Income Form, iv) mentor's letter (if applicable), v) letter from the PIC, vi) for salaried Status-Only faculty-- the Letter of Institutional Commitment, vii) the applicant's curriculum vitae. In the case of applications by Assistant Professors, the mentor's curriculum vitae should be a separate pdf document.

4. The single pdf application document (plus the separate mentor's curriculum vitae, if applicable) should be submitted at this **Survey Monkey link.** You will be sent email confirmation of receipt.