PLACING RESEARCH PROJECTS IN STRATEGIC CONTEXT

U of T investigators are often asked to articulate how their work corresponds to the strategic research priorities of the institution, whether for major funding applications to bodies such as the Canada Foundation for Innovation or Canada Research Chairs Program, or in communicating the significance and context of their work to academic, government, private-sector or public audiences. To help investigators place their work in the context of the Strategic Research Plan of the University, we have provided some examples, suggested wording and a complete lists of the University’s priority areas (see Lists A & B below).

For example, CFI application forms typically request the following information:

INTEGRATION WITH THE STRATEGIC RESEARCH PLAN

Using the space below, describe how the requested infrastructure will aid in the attraction or retention of excellent researchers to advance the university’s strategic research objectives.

When asked to describe how your work relates to the University’s strategic research objectives, we recommend investigators incorporate language like this in their response:

“My research is well-aligned with the strategic research objectives of the University of Toronto. In particular, my work relates directly to the unit or area priorities of X (choose your unit name from List A, below) and/or the theme Y (choose one or more themes in list B below) in the Institutional Strategic Research Plan.”

Example 1: Professor W is a researcher in the Department of English and Drama at UTM and wants to make an application to develop a multimedia conferencing centre to facilitate an international collaboration on research into global narrative structures. When responding to the CFI on their question about the integration of her work with the Strategic Research Plan, Professor W may write:

“My research is well-aligned with the strategic research objectives of the University of Toronto. In particular, my work is in the area of English and Drama at UTM and relates directly to the theme ENGAGE: Mind, Language, Culture, Values, in the Institutional Strategic Research Plan.”

Example 2: Professor X is a researcher in the Department of Medical Biophysics and St. Michael’s Hospital and wants to apply for funding for a new microscopy facility to investigate the genetic basis of heart disease. When responding to the CFI on their question about the integration of her work with the Strategic Research Plan, Professor X may write:

“My research is well-aligned with the strategic research objectives of the University of Toronto and St. Michael’s Hospital. In particular, my work is in the area of Medical Biophysics and relates directly to theme PROMOTE: Healthy People, Healthy Communities, Healthy World in the University of Toronto Institutional Strategic Research Plan. Our work also contributes directly to the priority of “Advancing Research to Practice” in the St. Michael’s Hospital Strategic Plan…”
Example 3: Professor Y is a researcher in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering developing novel semiconductor devices for communications applications and wants to apply for infrastructure funding to build a fabrication laboratory. When responding to the CFI on their question about the integration of his work with the Strategic Research Plan, Professor Y may write:

“My research is well-aligned with the strategic research objectives of the University of Toronto. In particular, my work crosses many boundaries in the area of Electrical and Computer Engineering, including Communications, IT and Engineering/Sciences and relates directly to theme ENABLE: Technologies for the 21st Century, and to sub-themes Nanoscience & Nanotechnologies and Information & Computation, as well as to the theme ENGAGE: Mind, Language, Culture, Values, under the subtheme of Language and Representation in the Era of ICT, Digital Media and Social Networking…”

Investigators should provide additional information on specific details of their proposal and how it speaks to the University’s priorities, in particular how the proposal contributes to the training of highly qualified personnel, how it will contribute to the development of multidisciplinary research clusters in priority areas, etc. The Research Services Office can provide additional advice on how to approach this. In addition to consulting Section 4 of this document, Strategic Objectives and Enabling Actions, please also refer to Towards 2030, the University’s current academic plan and the current Academic Plan for your division, and describe how your proposal contributes to priorities and objectives identified within those documents.
List A: University of Toronto Academic Unit Priority Areas

- Adult Education & Counselling Psychology
- Aerospace Studies
- Anesthesia
- Anthropology
- Anthropology (UTM)
- Architecture, Landscape & Design
- Art
- Astronomy & Astrophysics
- Biochemistry
- Biological Sciences (UTSC)
- Biology (UTM)
- Biomaterials & Biomedical Engineering
- Cell & Systems Biology
- Chemical & Physical Sciences (UTM)
- Chemical Engineering & Applied Chemistry
- Chemistry
- Cinema Studies
- Civil Engineering
- Classics
- Communication, Culture & Information Technology
- Comparative Literature
- Computer & Mathematical Sciences (UTSC)
- Computer Science
- Criminology & Sociological Studies
- Curriculum, Teaching & Learning
- Dentistry
- Diaspora & Transnational Studies
- Drama (Graduate)
- East Asian Studies
- Ecology & Evolutionary Biology
- Economics
- Economics (UTM)
- Electrical & Computer Engineering
- Engineering Science
- English
- English (UTSC)
- English & Drama (UTM)
- Environment
- European, Russian & Eurasian Studies
- Family & Community Medicine
- Forestry
- French
- Geology
- Geography
- Geography (UTM)
- Germanic Languages & Literatures
- Global Affairs
- Health Policy, Management & Evaluation
- Historical Studies (UTM)
- History
- History & Philosophy of Science & Technology
- Humanities (UTSC)
- Human Development and Applied Psychology
- Immunology
- Industrial Relations & Human Resources
- Information
- Italian Studies
- Kinesiology & Physical Education
- Laboratory Medicine & Pathobiology
- Language Studies (UTM)
- Law
- Linguistics
- Management
- Management (UTM)
- Management (UTSC)
- Materials Science & Engineering
- Mathematical & Computational Sciences (UTM)
- Mathematics
- Mechanical & Industrial Engineering
- Medical Biophysics
- Medical Imaging
- Medical Science
- Medicine
- Medieval Studies
- Molecular Genetics
- Music
- Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations
- Nursing
- Nutritional Sciences
- Obstetrics & Gynaecology
- Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy
- Ophthalmology & Vision Sciences
- Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery
- Paediatrics
- Pharmacology & Toxicology
- Pharmacy
- Philosophy
- Philosophy (UTM)
- Philosophy (UTSC)
- Physical & Environmental Sciences (UTSC)
- Physical Therapy
- Physics
- Physiology
- Political Science
- Political Science (UTM)
- Psychiatry
- Psychology
- Psychology (UTM)
- Psychology (UTSC)
- Public Health
- Public Policy & Governance
- Radiation Oncology
- Rehabilitation Science
- Sexual & Diversity Studies
- Social Sciences (UTSC)
- Social Work
- Sociology
- Sociology (UTM)
- Sociology & Equity Studies in Education
- Slavic Languages & Literatures
- Spanish & Portuguese
- Speech-Language Pathology
- Statistics
- Study of Religion
- Surgery
- Theoretical Astrophysics
- Theory & Policy Studies in Education
- Visual Studies (UTM)
- Women & Gender Studies
List B: Strategic Research Plan Themes & Sub-themes

EXPLORE: Our Place in the Universe
- EXPLORATION OF THE COSMOS
- PLANET EARTH
- ORIGINS AND DIVERSITY OF HUMANITY, SOCIETY AND CULTURES

SUSTAIN: Humanity and the Environment
- SUSTAINABLE IDEAS
- GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE
- FOOD, AIR AND WATER

PROMOTE: Healthy People, Healthy Communities, Healthy World
- HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH THROUGH THE LIFESPAN
- MOLECULAR MEDICINE AND THE BIOLOGY OF DISEASE
- GLOBAL HEALTH, PUBLIC HEALTH

ENGAGE: Mind, Language, Culture, Values
- LANGUAGE AND REPRESENTATION IN THE ERA OF ICT, DIGITAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKING
- VALUES IN PERSONAL AND PUBLIC LIFE
- MIND, BRAIN AND THE HUMAN

ADVANCE: Institutions, Peace and Prosperity
- THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY, DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INNOVATION
- PEACE AND CONFLICT
- LAW, ETHICS AND THE PUBLIC/PRIVATE INTERFACE

ENABLE: Technologies for the 21st Century
- NANOSCIENCE AND NANO TECHNOLOGIES
- SIMULATION AND IMAGING
- INFORMATION AND COMPUTATION

BUILD: Community and Liveable Societies
- LIVEABLE CITIES
- HUMAN RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND HUMANITARIANISM
- IMMIGRATION, INTERNATIONALIZATION, MULTICULTURALISM AND IDENTITY