

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Women in Academic Leadership Research

Senior Women Academic Administrators of Canada Fellowship

The Senior Women Academic Administrators of Canada (SWAAC) invites proposals for research fellowships, which examine the current and future state of women's leadership in academic institutions in Canada.

Overwhelmingly institutional senior leadership roles at academic institutions across Canada at the decanal, associate vice president, vice president and presidential levels, continue to be held by men. Some estimates indicate only 13 percent of presidents at U15 institutions are women, and that rises to just 30 percent when looking at a larger sample that includes non-U15 institutions. A closer examination reveals that the gap is far more pronounced when considering intersecting social identities such as race, ethnicity, disability, and gender and sexual diversity.

Not unlike women leaders in non-academic settings, it is expected that women leaders in universities face considerable complexities around gender role expectations, precarious assignments, intense scrutiny around appearance, menopause at work, lack of mentors with similar experience, and other unconscious bias across the academy.

This call for a research fellow aims to provide insights to aspiring and current women leaders in academic institutions as they navigate in patriarchal, heteronormative and colonized cultures. It also aims to provide much needed guidance for university administrators and governing bodies, and governments as they strive to meet espoused commitments to Truth and Reconciliation and equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

The objective is to investigate leadership and organizational challenges associated with women's experiences of leadership in the academy and identify paths forward to create sustainable change which redresses the underrepresentation of women in academic leadership.

More specifically, the call is for research to address such questions as:

1. Do women in senior academic leadership roles face a glass cliff and what impact has this had on their tenure in such roles and the decisions of others to engage in such roles?
2. What role does mentorship and sponsorship play in the career advancement of women academic leaders?
3. What leadership styles are adopted by women academic leaders and what is the perceived effectiveness?
4. What are senior women academic leaders experience of menopause at work and what role does this have on their health and leadership journey?
5. Are women academic leaders viewed as tall poppies and how does that manifest in academic institutions?
6. Are women-only leadership development programs in academic effective and for whom?

7. What are the experiences of women academic leaders who have intersecting identities?
8. When is the 'right' time for women to take on leadership roles in academic institutions?

All projects should include recommendations on addressing the underrepresentation of women in senior academic roles.

This call is part of the Senior Women Academic Administrators of Canada (SWAAC) initiative to celebrate women leaders in academic institutions and to better understand the experiences of women leaders in academia in Canada and promote women's leadership in Canadian universities, colleges and technical institutes.

Researchers and faculty who are SWAAC members are invited to submit a research proposal including any of the above or related topics. The proposal should clearly indicate the topic of interest. We welcome any and all disciplines, methodologies and frameworks.

Important Deadlines:

Research Fellowship Study Proposal Due: July 31, 2026

Award of Grant: October 31, 2026

Project Completion: October 31, 2027

Report Deadline: December 31, 2027

Dissemination:

Report and/or publications will be available on SWAAC public repository. Award recipients may be invited to present their report at the annual SWAAC Conference and / or present a webinar on their research findings.

Grant value:

SWAAC will provide a financial award of \$10,000 one successful proposal. Eligible expenses are consistent with those outlined in [Tri-Council principles guiding the appropriate use of grant funds](#) and should be in accordance with recipient's institutional policies. Any unused funds following the completion of the project are expected to be returned to SWAAC. A six-month extension for completion of your research is available upon request.

For any queries, please contact SWAAC Registrar and Treasurer at swaacadmin@uwo.ca

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

Proposals should be 3 to 5 pages maximum, exclusive of appendices, and should be organized in the order described below.

Proposal Abstract

Resume (50-80 words) of research focus, objectives, methodology, and primary deliverables.

Proposal Summary

- Primary researcher's name, contact information, and credentials.

- Explain how, in your view, this research will support SWAAC's overall mission to expand the organization's knowledge and understanding of the issue.
- How could the report be used to further our knowledge and understanding of the problem in a way can be of value to SWAAC, its members and important stakeholders in the Canadian management education sector?

Research Description

There are a number of issues addressed in the call for proposals document. Please describe the particular approach you would choose for this research. What would be the focus of the research? What is your understanding of the key issues? Why is this topic important?

Methodology

Describe your proposed methodology and explain how it will answer or lead to a better understanding of the research problem.

Expected Results / Deliverable Description

- What do you see in terms of length of final document?
- What information would be included and how does this coincide with the proposed methodology?

Budget

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Timeline for Completion

- Proposals will be reviewed by a committee in the spring, with an intended award decision to be made in annually in July.
- The project is expected to be completed by within one year and the deadline for the final report six months following. Information on expected progress reports and other details are to be negotiated with selected candidates before the final award is granted.

Appendices

Curriculum vitae of researcher.

Submit Proposals via Email to:

swaacadmin@uwo.ca

For more information please contact:

SWAAC Registrar and Treasurer at swaacadmin@uwo.ca