

## **International Doctoral Research Awards (IDRC-IDRA)**

### **FAQs**

**1. I am a doctoral student interested in the IDRA. Could you please send me information concerning this award?**

All details concerning the IDRA are included in the guidelines, including eligibility criteria, application deadlines, and required documentation.

**2. What are my chances of being selected for an IDRA?**

The process is highly competitive. A high number of applications is received during each call.

**3. If I provide the title of my research proposal, could you tell me in advance if my project is aligned with IDRC's interests?**

No. It is not possible to determine whether the research complies with IDRC's interests by reading a title or short summary alone. It is the applicant's responsibility to determine whether their research is relevant to IDRC's development outcome areas of interest. These areas are listed in the Eligibility section of the guidelines.

**4. Before applying, can I contact IDRC or Universities Canada to discuss my research proposal and gain their input?**

No. This would represent an unfair advantage and would place IDRC or Universities Canada in a position of conflict of interest.

**5. Do I qualify for an IDRA if I am registered in a doctoral program but have not yet started my courses?**

No. You must have completed several courses of the doctoral program, but not necessarily all courses, when you submit your application. The selection committee will need to see the transcripts of the doctoral courses completed to date, as well as the transcripts of your completed master's program, and all other documents listed in the Supporting Documentation section of the guidelines.

**6. My university requires me to complete one course after returning from the field. Would I still be eligible for the IDRA if for this reason I have not completed all coursework before going to the field?**

If your university requires you to complete one or two seminar courses after your return from the field, it will not affect your eligibility. You will be asked to submit an official letter from your university or from your research supervisor (signed on university letterhead) indicating which course(s) must be completed after your return and explaining the reason(s).

## **7. I am a citizen of a developing country. Am I eligible for an IDRA?**

You must be a citizen or permanent resident of Canada, or a citizen of a developing country (i.e., defined as ODA-eligible by the [OECD](#) Development Assistance Committee) in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

## **8. Can a part-time doctoral student apply for this award and receive it (if awarded) while still being part-time?**

Part-time doctoral students are eligible to apply for the award, and receive it, if awarded (unless their university program rules otherwise), as long as it is understood that it is their responsibility to cover the fees outside of the scope of the award, as well as maintaining their university enrollment status.

## **9. I applied for an IDRA in the past but was not successful. Can I reapply?**

Yes, however, you may only apply twice for the IDRA, and this must be in consecutive call years.

If you were an unsuccessful applicant during the last call, that is, 2020, and want to reapply during the current 2022 call, you may do so by submitting a new application, including all supporting documentation. Re-applicants whose research projects no longer fit IDRC themes will not be allowed to reapply.

Applicants who have previously been awarded an IDRA, and who had received funding are not eligible to re-apply.

## **10. The guidelines state that applicants must "have completed all coursework and passed comprehensive examinations before taking up the award." Do I need to have completed my comprehensive exams when applying for the award?**

No, you do not need to complete all of your courses and comprehensive exams at the time of application.

If you are selected for an award, you will be asked to sign an Award Agreement. You have up to 12 months from the date indicated in the Award Agreement to start your field research. This allows time to finish your courses and pass your comprehensive exams.

You will be required to notify us three months prior to your expected date of departure. You will then be asked to provide your research supervisor's confirmation that all courses have been completed and that comprehensive exams have been passed. You will also be required to

provide confirmation that you have received approval from your university's ethics committee, as well as approval from a local research ethics board (if required by your university).

Once this information has been confirmed, your funds will be processed.

**NEW 11. The application requires a list of volunteer, community and or extracurricular activities, and asks whether these were part of a mandatory service. What is the distinction between these activities, and what is meant by “mandatory service requirement”?**

Volunteer / community / extracurricular activities may fall outside of participation in research, depending on the activity. Though the activity may overlap into two or more areas, the distinctions are as follows:

Volunteer activity: unpaid activity

Community activity: paid activity directly benefitting a community

Extracurricular: activity done for purely for interest

“Mandatory service requirement” relates to an activity that was required as part of an academic program.

**12. I am a professor supervising a doctoral student who is eligible to apply for an IDRA. The guidelines indicate that the research supervisor should have "approved the research proposal" by the time of application. Do you mean that the student's proposal should have been formally approved by the university supervisory committee, or that the supervisor has read and approved the research proposal that the student intends to submit as part of their application?**

The latter. It is expected that the applicant's research supervisor has read and approved the final version of the research proposal being submitted. This is to ensure that the research supervisor agrees with the proposal submitted, that he/she has made comments to the applicant and has ensured that the applicant has integrated these comments. We also want to ensure that the research supervisor is giving proper guidance to the applicant.

**13. I would like to start my field research before the awards are announced. Is this possible?**

Yes, but the award is not retroactive. Field research expenses will only be covered from the date indicated in the Award Agreement. If you have finished your field research by the time the results are announced, you will no longer be eligible to receive the award. If you are in the field when the results are announced, this award will not cover the used portion of your airfare or other research expenses incurred before this date.

**14. How much time must I spend in the field?**

If you are selected for an award, you have up to 12 months to start your field research from the date of the award agreement. You must plan to spend a minimum of 10 consecutive weeks in

the field. When your research involves more than one developing country or region, you must plan to spend a minimum of five consecutive weeks in the field in *each* region.

This award will cover research costs for a maximum of 52 weeks in the field.

***NOTE: Given the COVID-19 pandemic, please be realistic and prepare to be flexible in the proposed departure and return dates, as well as in the design of your field research.***

**15. Are the application deadlines the same every year?**

No, the application deadlines change annually.

**16. You indicate that you will be announcing the results in October/November. What is the exact date?**

The exact date is difficult to predict. Applicants will be notified by email of the results in late October 2022 or early November 2022.

**17. What does it mean when an applicant receives a conditional award?**

Receiving a conditional award means that you have been recommended for an award but on condition that you make changes to your proposal. You will have to respond to the selection committee's comments and the award will only be granted if your reply is satisfactory. Any delay in responding could delay the selection committee's final decision as well as your travel dates.

**18. Can the IDRA be used to cover doctoral tuition fees?**

No, this award cannot be used to pay university tuition fees. It is not a scholarship; it is a field research award.

**19. How can this award be used?**

This award covers field research expenses for advanced doctoral students who intend to conduct their field research in one or more developing countries. Funds may be used to collect data and samples in the field, conduct interviews or surveys with local populations, and organize focus groups or workshops. Applicants must use findings from their field research to write their doctoral dissertation or thesis. You are not eligible for this award if you intend to use it only to analyze or disseminate final results, finalize videos, or spend time in a lab.

**20. My total research costs will most likely exceed the CA\$20,000 that IDRC offers. Can I look for additional funding outside IDRC?**

Yes, however, the budget section of your application must indicate which field research expenses you intend to cover with the IDRA and which you intend to cover from other funding sources. It is your responsibility to ensure that your other sources of funding allow you to accept the IDRA.

## **21. Can I use the IDRA for different field research trips?**

If you outlined more than one trip in your application and the selection committee agreed with your reasons for additional trip(s), you may use the award to cover the related field research expenses (housing, local transportation, interpretation, etc.). However, please be aware that only one airfare from Canada to a country or region of research will be covered. You must cover any airfare related to other trips to and from Canada to another country or region of research. If you fly from one region directly to another (e.g. West Africa to Central America), IDRC will cover the flight out and the return home, but you must cover the flight between regions. (NB: In-country or in-region flights during field research are considered eligible research expenses.). Note that if you use the IDRA for different field research trips, you must plan to spend a minimum of 10 consecutive weeks in the field when your research involves one or more countries in one region. The regions are: Middle East, North Africa, West Africa, East Africa, southern Africa, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Far East Asia, Caribbean, Central America, South America, and Oceania. When your research involves more than one region, you must plan to spend a minimum of five consecutive weeks in the field in *each* region.

## **22. I am a nursing mother or a single custodial parent. May I use funds to cover my child's airfare, that of a caregiver, or childcare expenses?**

A nursing mother or a single custodial parent can include childcare or babysitting expenses in the budget, but no airfare or related travel expenses (for a child or an accompanying caregiver). The allowable cost is limited to overnight childcare costs, as reasonable and applicable in Canada or in the country of research (i.e. where the child is residing for the duration of the parent's travel).

## **NEW: 23. Will I be required to provide receipts for the costs accrued during my research?**

If you are selected for an award, you will be required to provide all receipts except for housing and food/household supplies. You will be required to provide the invoice confirming payment for the airfare, with a copy of the tickets and boarding passes.

## **24. What if I am selected for an award but my visa is delayed?**

There are some exceptional circumstances in which applicants cannot leave for the field when planned because of visa difficulties, health problems, or other reasons. If such a situation arises, send Universities Canada a written explanation and additional documentation (photocopy of your visa request, medical certificate, etc.). To avoid delays, please ensure that you request any necessary visa(s) as early as possible.

## **25. Where do I find the online application form?**

Eligible applicants can apply online here:

[https://portal.scholarshippartners.ca/welcome/IDRCIDRA\\_En/](https://portal.scholarshippartners.ca/welcome/IDRCIDRA_En/)

**26. Do I have to complete the entire IDRA application at once, or can I complete some sections, upload some documents, save them, and continue later?**

The online application may be completed gradually. You may upload one document at a time, save, and continue later. Please make sure click the to “Save Draft” before navigating away from the application. To submit your application, click on the “Submit” button. **Applications should be submitted at least one or two days before the deadline. Volume of submissions on the day of the deadline may cause delays or technical difficulties and the application deadline will not be extended.**

**27. Whom should I contact if I have a technical problem with my online application?**

Contact [jdrcidra.crdibird@univcan.ca](mailto:jdrcidra.crdibird@univcan.ca) to alert us to the problem. Support is available during ET working hours from Monday to Friday, but not on weekends or Canadian statutory holidays. Please note that we cannot guarantee a response to technical issues that arise during the last two days before the deadline.

**28. One of my professors has not completed the Recommendation Form on time. Consequently, I have not been able to hit the “Submit” button by the deadline. Can the Recommendation Form still be uploaded to my application and submitted after the deadline?**

Applicants are responsible for starting their online application several weeks before the deadline to ensure adequate time to fulfill all requirements. This includes allowing professors sufficient time to complete Recommendation Form. If the Recommendation Form has not been completed, the applicant will not be able to submit their application.

**NEW: 29. May my Recommendation Forms be submitted directly to Universities Canada in order to maintain confidentiality?**

Yes. If preferred, Recommendation Forms may be sent by the professor or research supervisor to [jdrcidra.crdibird@univcan.ca](mailto:jdrcidra.crdibird@univcan.ca) where it will be internally uploaded to the student's application.

**30. I was not able to submit my final document(s) to apply for an IDRA, may I submit them by email? Will you accept my late application?**

No, we are unable to accept documentation by email. All documents must be submitted through the online application portal. Incomplete applications will not be considered, and late applications will NOT be accepted.

**31. I was working on the system close to the deadline when it suddenly shut down. What can I do?**

The system shuts down at the exact deadline time indicated in the guidelines. There is no grace period. The system will not allow you to save what you wrote past the deadline. If this occurs, we invite you to apply for the next call.