

2026 Terry Fox New Frontiers Program Project Grant (PPG) Evaluation Criteria

Peer Reviewers evaluate the full programs and individual projects and cores, to include, but not limited to the following criteria.

Table 1: Evaluation Scale

Outstanding	Excellent	Very Good	Fair	Weak
Exceeds the criterion standard significantly in all respects	Satisfies the criterion standard in all respects	Satisfies the criterion standard with very few minor weaknesses	Partially satisfies the criterion standard with major weaknesses	Does not satisfy the criterion standard due to major weaknesses

Program Evaluation Criteria

1. *The scientific excellence, leadership and track record of the applicants and the evidence of the group working together as a team*

Are the team members recognized internationally for their contributions to the field to be studied?

- The caliber of the individual members of the team (principal investigators and co-investigators) relative to their stage of career: accomplishments, productivity and demonstrated leadership in their respective fields.
- How successful have the investigators been in exploiting discoveries and innovations in their field?
- The international recognition and expertise of the leader (or co-leaders) of the team to manage the program.
- The international competitiveness of the team in the proposed field to be studied
 - o For existing groups, the evidence of high quality work as a team (i.e., co-authored publications, shared trainees, and no fewer than three members from a previous application).
 - o For new groups, the potential to work together as a team.

2. *The quality of the question – its relevance and impact*

Does the proposal address an important and relevant question in cancer research?

- To what extent is this research an important question for cancer biology?
- What potential impact will this research have on cancer outcomes?

3. *Synergy: the importance to the research of each component, including how the Core integrates and adds value to the program*

Do the individual components make essential contributions to achieving the overall goal/objectives of the proposed program?

- How important is the expertise and technology of specific components to contribute towards achieving the overall goal of the program?
- The extent to which the specific components are synergistic. What is the benefit of the association of the specific components into a single integrated program?
- If appropriate, is the plan for inclusion of input from a Scientific Advisory Board, or patient representatives, well thought out and potentially effective?
- Are any components less important to the overall program synergy than others?
- Is the total more than the sum of the parts?

4. *The environment for the research*

Does the proposal leverage substantive institutional investments, and new commitments, in personnel and infrastructure that make, or have the potential to make, the team internationally competitive?

- How essential are elements in the environment to make this application successful, e.g., access to a genome centre which offers a high-quality platform?
- Are there aspects of the environment for which there is a risk that its absence will leave a significant gap in the program's needs?

5. *The training environment*

Does the team show evidence of, and the proposal display a commitment to, excellence in interdisciplinary training and mentorship of younger investigators?

- Does the program show potential for self-renewal by involving younger investigators within the program?
- Is there a high quality multi-disciplinary training program associated with this program? Do the investigators describe how they will enrich the experience of the research trainees associated with the program?

6. *Equity, diversity and inclusion*

How well does the team consider support of the five equity groups: visible minorities, women, Aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities, and persons of minority sexual orientations and gender identities?

- How will the team create opportunities to increase representation and reduce barriers for equity-seeking groups?
- Has the team integrated EDI elements into their program or are they superficial?

Project Evaluation Criteria

1. *The quality of the question – its relevance and impact*

Does the proposal address an important and relevant question in cancer research?

- To what extent is this research an important question for cancer biology?
- What potential impact will this research have on cancer outcomes?

2. *The research approach*

Is the research approach logical and likely to achieve the stated goals?

- Are the proposed experiments well considered/designed to address the issue?
- Do the experiments appear achievable based on the expertise of the team, their collaborators, the required infrastructure and (where applicable) preliminary data?

3. *The importance of the project to the overall research goals*

Is the proposed research at the leading edge internationally? Is it innovative and timely?

- Is the research unique in the field? How does the research compare to that of other groups in the field?
- How important is the expertise and technology of specific components to contribute towards achieving the overall goal of the program?
- The extent to which the specific components are synergistic. Is the total more than the sum of the parts?

Core Evaluation Criteria

7. *The extent of utility and integration of the Core with the program*

Is it shown that the Core is well integrated with components of the program?

- Evaluate the extent to which the core is used by other components of the program (NB: the Core must be used by at least two of the projects).
- Assess the essentiality and utility of the core platform to the successful completion of individual projects.
- Will it facilitate collaboration and communication between project groups?

1. *The management plan*

Is it shown that the Core is/will be productive and effectively managed?

- Assess the scientific productivity of the Core platform as it relates to the applicants.
- Evaluate the management plan for the Core platform. Will it provide satisfactory levels of service for the program?
- Does the core have sufficient resources and know-how to be able to achieve its goals?

2. *The potential and/or performance of the core*

The core is at the leading edge internationally. It is innovative, timely and essential.

- How do the services provided by the core compare to that of other cores in the field?
- How successful have the investigators been in exploiting discoveries and innovations?
- Does it contribute to the overall synergy of the Program?
- Does it leverage the best and/or innovative technologies and approaches?