



AVA National Health Research Training Platform

AVA National Early Career Researcher (ECR) Teaching Release Program Guidelines

AVA's Objectives & Guiding Principles

- **Strengthen and build capacity** to transform population (community) health and social services to promote the health and wellness of girls, women, and gender-diverse people, at risk/affected by violence and adversity over the lifecycle;
- **Use a collaborative, innovative**, cross-sectoral/disciplinary/jurisdictional training platform to train hundreds of Canadian service providers and academics in the social services/community health field working with this population; and
- **Make intergenerational and population impacts**, and promote a positive lifespan for girls, women, and gender-diverse people.

AVA is also committed to addressing inequities and health disparities disproportionately impacting girls, women, and gender diverse people with intersectional identities. This includes, but is not limited to, (dis)ability, race, Indigeneity, and gender identity. AVA relies on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) initiatives, and Sex and Gender-Based Analysis (SGBA+) is at the core of reaching AVA's objective. Visit the [AVA Training website](#) to read the full AVA Guiding Principles document.

Section 1: Program Overview

Background

*The purpose of the AVA Early Career Researcher¹ (ECR) Teaching Release program is to support ECR training in **national leadership** and **research career development** by allowing ECRs to be released from their teaching obligations so they can devote that time and energy to participating in various national leadership activities of the AVA National Health Research Training Platform.*

This program will be available competitively to ECRs at Canadian post-secondary institutions who want to engage in their own national AVA training (e.g., leadership, mentorship) or AVA training of others, and foster research career development in high-need/priority areas that relate to girls, women, and gender-diverse people.

The high-need/priority areas (deemed as such, by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) Girls' and Women's Health and Wellness Research Pool) mentioned above include:

¹ Early Career Researchers (ECRs) are academics who are 8 years or less from their first tenure track academic positions.

- **Youth and Family Wellness**, especially gender roles and identities, mental health and wellness (e.g. stress, anxiety, depression), physical and psychological abuse (e.g. gender-based violence, harassment, discrimination, racism and cyber abuse), justice system involvement (e.g. witness to/victim of crime) and substance misuse.
- **Sexual and Reproductive Health**, especially postpartum health, including depression, often an outcome of exposure to childhood adversity and violence and sexually transmitted infections including HIV.
- **Health Services and Population-Based Approaches to Wellness**, especially limited access to health services, health promotion and social determinants of health for non-communicable disease (e.g. mental health problems).

Funding

Course “buy-out” funding is provided for **one to two courses or reasonable equivalent** and is dependent on affordability of the requested course buy-out which varies based on ECR’s academic institution. As outlined by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), it is anticipated that one to two ECRs will receive one course buy-out per year to be used within twelve months of being awarded. Note, this requires approval or knowledge of applicant’s senior administrator (based on the CIHR definition).

Teaching Release Renewal

AVA Teaching Releases can also be renewed, but renewal is pending the ECR’s renewal application approval. See Section 3 on page 4 for more information on the renewal process.

What to Expect If You Are Awarded an AVA Teaching Release

- You will be involved in **national leadership** with AVA for one year (or other arranged period of time) in exchange for the one to two course teaching release. The year will start from the date that is agreed upon during an initial onboarding meeting with the AVA Scientific Director and the AVA Project Manager.
- Individual ECR deliverable(s) will be agreed upon at the onset of the program and will be established during the onboarding meeting. The deliverable(s) will be related to the duration the ECR is available (e.g., start/stop dates, or ability to continue without teaching release funding). This might only be 4-6 months (duration of 1 course) or span the entire academic year. If the ECR does not complete the number of hours agreed upon at the onset of the program, the duration of their time in the ECR program may be extended until they complete the required time commitment.
- You can anticipate spending a range of approximately 1-5 hours per week for 12 months on AVA ECR activities/tasks. Regular engagement is essential to ECRs making the most of their time with the AVA Training Platform. It is our hope that ECRs continue to stay engaged with the AVA Training Platform beyond the time of the teaching release, just like other team members.
- In addition to activities that are already expected (e.g., attending AVA meetings, attending AVA workshops, completing AVA training), **national leadership activities** that ECRs will receive mentorship in include high level program conceptualizations, program operationalization, program oversight, and national strategic plan development, management, and evaluation. The specific activities will be related to the ECR’s research career goals and the high-needs areas (as outlined above and will be established at the onboarding meeting).
- For program evaluation purposes, ECRs are required to complete an “End of Award” report. This will also aid justification to re-apply if the ECR chooses to request renewal.

Timeline

- January: Call for Applicants. This extended time period is to allow the applicant the opportunity to have conversations with their faculty's administration.
- Late September: Application deadline
- Late September/early October: Application adjudication
- Early-to-mid October: Award announcement

Recruitment

Our recruitment approaches will take many forms and includes the call for applications (CFA) in shorter and longer forms as appropriate (e.g., shorter Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and list-serve postings; longer CFA postings on university and centre websites). We will utilize a range of platforms to attract high-caliber ECRs, including: the seven Alliance Centre websites, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn sites of all active Alliance Centres and leaders (e.g., NPA N. Letourneau has nearly 25,000 Twitter followers) and those of their host faculties and institutions. We will rely on the listservs of all team members' faculties and departments and partnering community agencies to advertise in regional university electronic news/media sources.

Eligible Expenses

Funds will be paid to the ECR's academic institution to cover the costs of teaching release for one to two courses in the award's fiscal year, dependant on cost and AVA's ECR budget. If funding a course buy-out is not feasible (for budgetary reasons) a reasonable equivalent (e.g. funds to hire a research assistant to assist an ECR with AVA related activities) may be considered on an individual basis.

Section 2: Eligibility & Evaluation Criteria

Teaching Release Eligibility Criteria

- Applicant must be an ECR, defined as an independent researcher who is within 8 years of beginning their first independent research or faculty position.
- The ECR should hold an academic appointment at a Canadian post-secondary institution and be affiliated with or willing to be affiliated with the AVA National Training Platform.
- There is no limit on the number of ECR Teaching Releases that an applicant can apply for or be awarded over the 6 years of the AVA Training Platform; however, ECR's can only receive a maximum of two course buy-out per year (see Eligible Expenses above).
- The ECR's research should align with high-need/priority areas for girls, women, and gender-diverse people (as outlined on pages 1 and 2 above).

Evaluation Criteria

AVA ECR Teaching Release Applications will be evaluated by delegated sub-committee members based on the following criteria (in no particular order; weight of each area is provided in parentheses):

1. Alignment with the eligibility criteria (10%);
2. Alignment of the ECRs research program with the AVA National Training Platform objective (see [AVA Training website](#)) and high-need/priority areas (20%);
3. Excellence of candidate's research program potential, knowledge translation training, and productivity (e.g. publications), and awards (20%);
4. Quality of anticipated impact of participating in the AVA National Training Platform (20%);

5. Quality of anticipated contribution to the AVA National Training Platform curriculum and mentorship (20%); and
6. EDIA considerations (see [AVA Training website](#)) (10%)

***Adjudication will also depend on the cost and affordability of the requested teaching release, and whether the applicant has spoken to their senior administrator about the course buy-out.**

Section 3: Application & Adjudication Processes

How to Apply

Applicants who have not previously participated in the AVA ECR Teaching Release program should submit their applications using the [online application form](#) that can be accessed on the [AVA Training website](#). An ECR may also request access to the online application and application guidelines by contacting avatraining@ucalgary.ca.

New applications to this program must consist of:

- The ECR's contact and EDIA information;
- AVA ECR Teaching Release Application Form and ECR Statement (see below);
- One-page letter of support from an experienced AVA Training Platform member; and
- ECR's two-page curriculum vitae (CV) from ECR. The CV should detail the following:
 - Education: Current and completed post-secondary degrees (degree, institution, country, supervisor, years)
 - Current Position: Title, Institution
 - Past/Other Positions: Relevant work experience (i.e., year, position, institution/company, and country)
 - Awards: Prizes, honours, and awards (i.e., name, awarded by, year won/held)
 - Research Grants: Funder, including year(s) and amount(s)
 - Knowledge Translation: Publications, presentations, etc. in traditional and social media forms.

Please note: If you are completing an online application, there are options to upload required documents on the online application form.

ECR Teaching Release Award Renewal Process

If you have previously received an AVA Teaching Release award and wish to be considered for a renewal (12-month commitment), you can forego the application process as noted above. Please submit a letter describing what you achieved with your past AVA teaching release, and what you plan to achieve with a renewal. The deadline to submit renewal letters is the same as new applications.

Deadline for Applications (2024/2025)

The deadline for applications for AVA's third year of ECR Teaching Release will be end-of-day on September 20, 2024. The ECR who is awarded the teaching release will be able to use the "course buy-out" within 18 months of award. Application deadlines for subsequent years is TBA.

Adjudication Process

Applications will be adjudicated using a score card with weighted criteria, by the AVA Scholarships & Funding Committee National Chair, other committee members, and the AVA

Program Manager, unless there is a perceived conflict with an applicant. Guest adjudicators may be invited, such as an EDIA champion.

We look forward to receiving your inquiries and/or applications!