Government of Canada Helps Science and Engineering Graduates Enter the Workforce

Kingston, Ontario, June 1, 2011 — An investment by the Government of Canada will give young researchers in universities across the country an opportunity to expand their skills and help them transition from trainees to productive employees in the Canadian workforce. The Honourable Gary Goodyear, Minister of State (Science and Technology), made the announcement while speaking at Queen’s University.

“Our government is focused on what matters to Canadians—the economy and jobs,” said Minister Goodyear. “To remain at the forefront of the global economy, our government is investing in the people and ideas that will produce tomorrow’s breakthroughs.”

The projects announced today are being funded through the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC)’s Collaborative Research and Training Experience (CREATE) Program.

Eighteen projects will receive a total of $29.6 million over six years to help science and engineering graduates add job skills to their academic expertise. The projects explore a variety of research areas, including neurotechnology, clean energy, freshwater conservation and bionanotechnology.

“Our government is committed to developing, attracting and retaining the world’s best researchers here in Canada,” said Minister Goodyear. “This investment will help young scientists gain professional experience so they can make the successful transition into the workforce and strengthen our country’s economy.”

Queen’s University will receive over $1.6 million to train postdoctoral fellows, graduate and undergraduate students in the advanced concepts of Ultra Large Scale Software—systems that process the financial, healthcare and network connections data of millions of people worldwide. To address the current and foreseeable demand in both industry and academia, the university will build Canadian expertise in Ultra Large Scale Software systems.

“NSERC’s CREATE Program helps graduating students become highly sought-after professional researchers in the natural sciences and engineering, both in Canada and abroad,” said Suzanne Fortier, President of NSERC. “The program not only helps improve the skill set of Canada’s next-generation of research talent, but it also helps to support their retention in the workforce.”

For more information, read the backgrounder below or view the complete list of funded projects.

The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council is a federal agency that helps make Canada a country of discoverers and innovators for all Canadians. The agency supports some 30,000 post-secondary students and postdoctoral fellows in their advanced studies. The granting council promotes discovery by funding more than 12,000 professors every year and fosters innovation by encouraging more than 1,500 Canadian companies to participate and invest in post-secondary
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Backgrounder

Collaborative Research and Training Experience (CREATE) Program

Launched in May 2008, the CREATE Program was designed to add professional skills training to the qualifications and technical skills of Canadian researchers to better prepare them for careers in industry, government or academia. Since the program’s inception, grants have been primarily used for direct student and postdoctoral support, while remaining funds have been used to establish and maintain training programs.

At least 60 percent of CREATE Program funding targets the following priority areas:

- Environmental science and technologies;
- Health and related life sciences and technologies;
- Information and communications technologies; and
- Natural resources and energy.

Funded projects are led by teams of Canadian university researchers who see the value in helping students acquire personal and professional skills that are not part of their normal academic training. Students have the opportunity to enhance their ability to work productively in a research environment that has become increasingly multidisciplinary. Important areas of training include leadership training, entrepreneurship, communication and project management.

While the primary focus is on the natural sciences and engineering, training may also include interdisciplinary projects across the natural sciences and engineering and the social sciences and health domains. If appropriate, students may also be exposed to other research groups, either nationally or internationally, establishing links that will further their chosen careers.

The 2011 grants support 18 projects that will receive a total of $29.6 million over six years and focus on a variety of areas, including: neurotechnology, clean energy, freshwater conservation and bionanotechnology.
The CREATE Program attracts highly qualified people and retains them in Canada’s workforce; and increases student mobility, nationally and internationally, between universities and other sectors.