

Call for Applications

"From Living Soils to Resilient Societies: Accelerating Urban Agroecology"

CANADA EXCELLENCE RESEARCH CHAIR (CERC) IN URBAN AGROECOLOGICAL

Posted on: June 26, 2025

Closing date: September 19, 2025

Université Laval, located in Québec City, is a leading teaching and research institution recognized for its strong societal commitment and exceptional learning environment. It offers approximately 600 programs across 17 faculties, with a strong emphasis on internships and flexible learning modalities. A major player in research and a pioneer in sustainable development, Université Laval welcomes over 55,000 students, including 9,000 international students, and maintains an extensive network of global partnerships.

Through its Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FSAA) Université Laval stands out as a center of excellence in the agri-food sector. The FSAA comprises over 100 renowned faculty members and more than 2,200 students. Its academic programs cover the entire biofood chain, from production to consumption. The Faculty also hosts an Institute of Nutrition and Functional Foods, four high-performance research centers, and six research groups.

The Department of Soils and Agri-Food Engineering is committed to providing leadership in Québec and Canada in training highly skilled professionals in soil and environmental sciences, agri-environmental engineering, and food engineering. Community engagement and knowledge mobilization with industry and society are central to its mission. All departmental activities are guided by principles of sustainable development and environmental protection in agricultural, urban, and industrial contexts.

Université Laval's research ecosystem is supported by unique infrastructure and advanced technologies. For the Canada Excellence Research Chair (CERC) in Urban Agroecology, research will be anchored in: The Québec Agropark, a 203-hectare protected agricultural area in the heart of Québec City, serving as a living laboratory to bring sustainable food production closer to urban communities and to connect scientific knowledge, regenerative agricultural practices, and citizen participation. Université Laval's infrastructure, including existing high-performance greenhouses, the developing Innovaserre, and the future Agtech 5.0 Dome—a high-tech geodesic greenhouse designed to test prototypes under real conditions. This facility will include a static dome for studying soil-water-carbon dynamics and a retractable dome to assess crop resilience.

The CERC in Urban Agroecology aims to accelerate the agroecological transition in urbanized areas by developing a living laboratory for regenerative, community-based agriculture in northern climates, centered on the Québec Agropark. The Chair's research program is structured around three main axes: 1. Designing agroecosystems adapted to northern climates and resilient to contaminants; 2. Promoting circularity of organic and water resources through innovative remediation technologies; 3. Co-constructing inclusive, sustainable local food systems with active citizen participation. This ambitious initiative seeks to demonstrate the environmental, economic, and social value of a circular and participatory agri-food model.

The person selected by the Nomination Committee must successfully pass an internal selection at Université Laval as well as the national selection as part of the Canada Excellence Research Chair competition. For more information on the program and eligibility criteria, please visit the [Canada Excellence Research Chair website](#).

The successful candidate will receive:

- A tenured full professor position;
- \$8 million in funding over 8 years (i.e., \$1 million per year, including salary) from the Canada Excellence Research Chairs (CERC) Program;
- An \$800,000 allocation from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) to equip the research laboratory (total equipment value: \$2 million);
- Competitive and attractive start-up benefits;
- A competitive salary package, including base salary, employee benefits, and recruitment incentives.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement

Université Laval rejects all forms of discrimination, promotes excellence in research and research training, and guarantees equal opportunity for all candidates. We support the principle that excellence and equity are compatible and complementary. We welcome and encourage applications from racialized people, visible minorities, women, Indigenous Peoples (in Canada), people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, 2SLGBTQ+ communities, and all qualified individuals with the skills and knowledge to engage productively with diverse communities.

By choosing Université Laval, you will benefit from the following integration measures:

- welcome days for new professors
- peer mentoring
- free French courses for you and your spouse
- support for settling in Quebec City and job search assistance for your spouse,
- a tax exemption for professors from abroad (under certain conditions)

Career Interruption and Special Circumstances

Université Laval acknowledges that career interruption and special circumstances (e.g., maternity or parental leave, leave for prolonged illness, clinical training, care for a family member, the COVID-19 pandemic) as well as a disability may influence productivity and contributions in research. Applicants are invited to explain, as appropriate and if they wish so, these effects, so that they are considered in the assessment of their applications.

Accommodation

In complete confidentiality, accommodation can be offered to candidates according to their needs in this competition, including accessibility. If you need accommodation for the process, we invite you to contact the equity officer using contact information below.

Marie-José Naud

Advisor, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research

marie-jose.naud@vrr.ulaval.ca

Job Description

Université Laval is seeking applications for a strategic position as Canada Excellence Research Chair (CERC) in Urban Agroecology. The ideal candidate is an established researcher with a distinguished track record and demonstrated leadership. The successful candidate will join Université Laval's dynamic research ecosystem, which includes expertise in soil health, agroecology, organic matter valorization, soil organic carbon, agroecosystem resilience, peri-urban water management, circular economy, and soil microbiology.

The appointed Chairholder will lead an interdisciplinary research program focused on developing a living laboratory for regenerative, community-based agriculture in northern climates, centered on the Québec Agropark, a 203-hectare protected urban agricultural zone. Funded at \$8 million over 8 years (including the Chairholder's salary), the program aims to improve soil health, enhance functional biodiversity, sequester carbon, reduce emerging contaminants, and close soil-organic matter-water loops using advanced technologies (e.g., biochar, smart sensors, AI, blockchain). It also seeks to strengthen food sovereignty through active citizen engagement.

Aligned with several federal priorities—sustainable food systems, carbon neutrality, resilient communities, technological innovation, and public health—this ambitious project aims to transform the urban-agriculture interface by demonstrating the value of circular, intelligent, and socially inclusive agri-food systems.

Candidates must have recognized expertise in soil science, agroecology, environmental engineering, or a related field, along with an outstanding record of publications and research funding, and a proven ability to collaborate across disciplines and engage with stakeholders. The Chairholder will supervise graduate students and contribute to the national and international visibility of Université Laval and the CERC program. A strong research performance and the ability to develop an innovative program focused on sustainable and resilient agri-food systems—drawing on diverse expertise such as pedology, microbial ecology, ecotoxicology, environmental engineering, artificial intelligence, and life cycle analysis—are essential.

The position is hosted by the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FSAA), and the successful candidate will be appointed to the Department of Soils and Agri-Food Engineering. Depending on qualifications, the appointment will be at the Associate or Full Professor level. The Chairholder will collaborate in preparing the official CERC application dossier in accordance with program guidelines. They will be expected to structure an intersectoral research program anchored in the Québec Agropark, demonstrating the practical feasibility of sustainable, community-based food systems. The Chairholder will play a key role in uniting scientific expertise around soil-organic matter-water-society interactions at the urban and peri-urban scale, thereby strengthening Université Laval's strategic positioning in sustainable agriculture, circular economy, and ecological urban transitions.

Requirements

Candidates must meet the eligibility criteria of the Canada Excellence Research Chairs (CERC) Program. Specifically, applicants must hold a tenured or tenure-track position at the rank of associate or full professor, or be expected to be appointed to such a position within one to two years of nomination. Candidates from outside the postsecondary education sector must possess the necessary qualifications to be appointed to a similar academic position.

Applicants must hold a Ph.D. in soil science, agroecology, environmental engineering, or a discipline relevant to the research focus of the Chair. They must demonstrate recognized scientific expertise and significant experience in agroecology and soil sciences, with a proven record of international-caliber publications and research funding. Research specializations may include, but are not limited to: pedology, soil microbial ecology, ecotoxicology, environmental engineering, applied artificial intelligence, or life cycle analysis. Candidates must show a strong ability to conduct independent, original, and transdisciplinary research in collaboration with diverse partners.

Candidates must also demonstrate their ability to make outstanding contributions to research, training, and teaching, as well as a clear commitment to fostering equitable, diverse, and inclusive research and learning environments. The ability to supervise graduate students, work collaboratively, and exhibit creativity, ethical judgment, and autonomy is essential.

Application Package

A complete application must include:

- A cover letter (max. 2 pages) outlining the candidate's motivation and strategic vision;
- A full curriculum vitae;
- A research program proposal (max. 5 pages);
- A statement of teaching and mentoring philosophy (max. 2 pages);
- A statement on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) (max. 1 page);
- The names and contact information of three referees;
- The [Université Laval Self-Identification Form](#).

Applicants must meet the [CERC eligibility requirements](#). They must be full professors or associate professors who are close to obtaining tenure. Applicants from outside academia must have the necessary qualifications to be nominated as full professors.

Selection Process

Candidates selected following the preliminary evaluation will be invited to participate in a remote interview stage, which will include a public presentation of their strategic vision for the Chair, followed by an interview with the selection committee between September 26 and October 17, 2025.

Application Submission

Applications must be sent to **François Richard**, Associate Dean of Research at the FSAA:
Francois.richard@fsaa.ulaval.ca

The faculty representative for EDI will remove the self-identification form from the application packages before they are shared with the evaluation committee members. However, the information from the form will remain accessible to the EDI officer serving on the committee.

Competition Stages and Evaluation Criteria

1. Competition Stages and Submission Deadlines

| Stage | Target Date |
|---|----------------------------|
| Full application deadline | September 19, 2025 |
| Preselection Results announcement | October 30, 2025 |
| Application deadline at VPR Office | November 15, 2025 |
| Final results announcement | December 2025 |
| Full application deadline at CERC Program | March 18, 2026 |
| CERC Program results announcement | No later than January 2027 |

Starting Date : up to 12 months following CERC Program results announcement.

2. Evaluation #1

A Nomination and Selection Committee, formed at the faculty and departmental levels, is responsible for reviewing applications and selecting a candidate to recommend to senior leadership for the Canada Excellence Research Chair (CERC) in Urban Agroecology. The selection is based on a rigorous evaluation according to the following criteria and sub-criteria, aligned with the position's requirements:

1. Scientific excellence

- Quality, originality, and impact of publications
- Success in securing competitive national and international research funding
- Recognition in the field (awards, invitations, collaborations)

2. Relevance of expertise

- Alignment of the candidate's profile with the Chair's themes (agroecology, soil science, environmental engineering, etc.)
- Experience in complex research environments (e.g., living labs, open infrastructures)
- Ability to integrate transdisciplinary approaches

3. Strategic vision and research program

- Clarity, ambition, and feasibility of the proposed program
- Integration of the Chair's three core themes (soils, circularity, community engagement)
- Potential for scientific, social, economic, and environmental impact

4. Leadership and engagement

- Demonstrated ability to lead research teams and build partnerships
- Experience in city-agriculture partnerships and community engagement
- Leadership in training highly qualified personnel (HQP)

5. Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

- Integration of EDI principles in research, teaching, and governance
- Demonstrated leadership in advancing EDI
- Contributions to inclusive work environments

6. Institutional Fit

- Proficiency in French or commitment to acquire it within a reasonable timeframe
- Ability to contribute to Université Laval's francophone mission
- Commitment to community service

The Nomination and Selection Committee is composed of professors from diverse disciplines, selected for their expertise and commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In addition, an institutional equity officer from Université Laval will participate in the committee's meetings to ensure compliance with evaluation standards. All committee members receive clear instructions on their role, the expected definition of excellence as well as on the impact of career interruptions and special circumstances in the evaluation of applications. Members must also complete unconscious bias training in peer review.

3. Evaluation #2 at Vice-President Research (VPR) Office

The application of the selected candidate will be sent to the VPR Office for a final internal selection according to the [selection criteria of the CERC Program](#). The final decision will be made by a committee chaired by the Vice-Rector, Research, Creation and Innovation, who will also consult with senior management at Université Laval.

Contacts

Questions related to the Application call process

Silvio José Gumiere

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Questions related to the CERC competition process

Jean-Philippe Marquis

Research Development Advisor

Office of the Vice Rector, Research and Innovation

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Questions related to EDI principles

Marie-José Naud

Advisor, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research

Office of the Vice Rector, Research and Innovation

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