

CIHR – Information and Updates

September 8, 2016

Presenters:

- Mark Filiaggi, Associate Vice-President Research, DRS
- Gerald C. Johnston, Faculty of Medicine
- Sara Lavender, Research Grants Facilitator, DRS



Recommendations & Changes

* Following July 13th working meeting

- A Peer Review Working Group (led by Dr. Paul Kubes) was created to further refine the recommendations moving forward

The mandate is to ensure the effective and timely implementation of the agreed upon solutions to further strengthen peer review practices and processes. While the working group will be focused on the application of these solutions to the upcoming fall 2016 CIHR Project competition, where applicable, peer review process recommendations may be applied to the upcoming CIHR Foundation competition.

Project Grant - *Applications*

- Project Grant applications will be 10 pages (including figures and tables), and applicants can also upload unlimited references and letters of support;
- Applications will be assessed based on “significance and impact of the research” (25% of final score), “approaches” (50% of the final score), and “expertise, experience and resources” (25% of final score);
- The Common CV (CCV) for the Project Grant application will include publications from the past seven years, and applicants will be able to upload additional information on leaves of absence in the past seven years;

Project Grant - *Applications*

- A rebuttal page will be included in the application structure to allow applicants to address major concerns and to demonstrate improvement;
- Applicants will be able to make recommendations about the types of expertise required to review their application;
- 40% of the applications will move from Stage 1 to Stage 2, but the working group is still working out the peer review process details.

Project Grant - *Peer Review*

- The Working Group endorsed the proposed criteria to select Chairs, Scientific Officers, and to screen reviewers. Chairs must have significant experience on CIHR committees, as well as Tri-Agency funding within the last five years;
- Reviewers will be assigned by Chairs and Scientific Officers at multiple points. Firstly, the Chairs and Scientific Officers will assign and potentially add to the list of potential reviewers before **and** after the reviewers have completed the new Conflict of Interest/Ability to Review (CAR) assessment for a group of applications. Secondly, they will have the ability to work with CIHR to add additional reviewers as required;

Project Grant - *Peer Review*

- Each application will be assigned to **four (4)** reviewers at Stage 1;
- Asynchronous online discussion will be eliminated from the Stage 1 process;
- The alpha scoring system (E+, O++) will be replaced, and instead, each of the three criteria will be scored on a 100-point scale. Applications will receive a total score between 0 and 100 (based on criteria weighting);
- Stage 2 will include highly ranked applications and those with large scoring discrepancies;

Project Grant - *Peer Review*

- Chairs will work with CIHR to regroup and build dynamic panels, based on the content of applications advancing to Stage 2. This process is in discussion;
- The Working Group is proposing a ranking within each cluster as opposed to rank across face-to-face committees.

Other Recommendations

- CIHR grantees will be strongly encouraged to review if invited. The College Chairs will continue this discussion;
- Host a face-to-face meeting with all of the Chairs and Scientific Officers in the fall. CIHR is evaluating the feasibility of hosting this meeting for the 2016 competition;
- Make peer review training mandatory for all reviewers. (including a module on unconscious bias);
- Invite early career investigators (ECIs) to observe the Stage 2 face-to-face peer review meetings. The Chairs in the College of Reviewers have made mentoring ECIs a priority;

Other Recommendations

- Adjust the CCV requirements for non-academic co-applicants as well as academic co-applicants who are not appointed at a Canadian institution. A plan will be put together to address this issue for the spring 2017 competition;
- Incorporate a mechanism between Stage 1 and Stage 2 to let applicants respond to reviewer comments. This will be further explored for implementation for the spring 2017 competition.

Multiple Applications

- Researchers may only submit two applications per Project Grant competition in the role of Nominated Principal Investigator (NPI);
- Restrictions are lifted for applying to both Foundation and Project competitions effective Fall 2016; *however*

*If you receive a 2016 Project grant as a Nominated Principal Applicant and go on to receive a Foundation grant as a Program Leader in future years, your Project grant will be rolled into your Foundation grant as is the case for all CIHR Investigator Initiated grants

*You cannot submit the same or similar application to overlapping competitions. If, at Stage 2 of the Foundation Grant competition, it becomes obvious that the same application has been submitted to the Project Grant competition, you will be asked to withdraw one of the applications

Foundation Grants

- No substantive changes have been made to either the application or peer review process
- CIHR will be capturing more “codes” during the submission process to help better identify expertise required for reviews

Some Key Program Dates

Foundation Grant

- Registration period: August 30 to September 13
- **Deadline: October 13** (application available September 14)
- Funding start date: July 2017

Project Grant

- Registration period: September 8 to September 20
- **Deadline: October 18** (application available as soon as the registration is submitted)
- *peer review process is still being modified*
- Funding start date: April 2017

Internal Peer Review Process

- Important to ensuring that only high-quality applications are submitted to CIHR
- A collaborative (Health Faculties; IWK; NSHA; DRS) internal peer review process has been drafted; we will look to implement at least in part for this round – *very much a work in progress*
- Process will reflect the emerging peer review process for Project grants
- Will utilize a “Panel” of experienced researchers (~15-20) as reviewers
- Inaugural “Chair” of the panel: Gerry Johnston

Internal Peer Review Process

- Researchers will communicate through their respective research offices
- Reviewers will NOT be anonymous
- Timelines (*ideally*)
 - ~8 weeks in advance: Title, lay summary, expertise key words
 - ~6 weeks in advance: Draft proposal to research office
 - ~4 weeks in advance: Written, informal (bulleted) feedback provided based on Project grant criteria (2-3 reviewers);
 - ~3 weeks in advance: “Meritorious” applications proceed to face-to-face panel discussion (with applicant present); notes generated by scientific officer will be provided to applicant
- Applicants will be expected respond to comments and meet with the primary reviewers as necessary

Internal Peer Review Process

(Fall 2016 Competition)

- Timelines

September 16th: Title, lay summary, expertise key words

September 23rd: Draft proposal to research office

October 3rd: Written, informal (bulleted) feedback provided based on Project grant criteria (2-3 reviewers);

Week of October 10th: “Meritorious” applications proceed to face-to-face panel discussion (with applicant present); notes generated by scientific officer will be provided to applicant

Please observe all DRS internal deadlines

DRS Review & Deadlines

- Internal DRS deadline is September 29th for Foundation Grants and September 30th for Project Grants;
- Our review focuses more on the following:
 - * eligibility of the researcher
 - * completeness
 - * budget and budget justification
 - * Knowledge translation
 - * general lay person comments
- Please contact Sara Lavender at sara.lavender@dal.ca with any questions.

Moving Forward

Stay tuned to the DRS newsletter for updates, including information from CIHR on a series of upcoming webinars for both Foundation Grants and Project Grants, starting on September 22, 2016.