GradWRITE: Graduate Writing Conference

Writing Grant Proposals

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Before you start:

• what do you need?
  • money for... travel
    • equipment
    • analytical costs
    • food/beer?

• what resources do you have available?
  • your supervisor
  • your grad chair
  • your colleagues
Before you start:

• who are you writing for?

• what funding agencies are out there?

• most students go to OGS, SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR

• there are others....
Student Finances

As one of Canada’s leading research institutions, we place great importance on helping you finance your education. It is crucial that you devote your full energy to the successful completion of your studies, so we want to ensure that stable funding is available to you.

STRATEGIC SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION SUPPORT

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies is committed to providing our students with strategic support as they prepare for the rigours of external scholarship competitions.

Our services range from providing students with critical information on processes and eligibility, to connecting students with experts who share their experiences and insights into scholarly excellence.

- Scholarship Library
- Preparing for Competition
- Scholars to Leaders Speaker Series

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Some funding is awarded to you upon entry into a program, some is based on recommendations from the program that is admitting you, and others you must apply for yourself, either to Western University or to an external funding agency.

- Western Graduate Program Funding
- Western Donor-Funded Awards
- Western Financial Assistance
- Provincial Scholarship Competitions
- National Scholarship Competitions
- International Student Scholarship Opportunities
- International Study Opportunities
- Graduate Program Contacts
• [https://pivot.cos.com/funding_main](https://pivot.cos.com/funding_main)
• (need a UWO IP address)
Dissertation Fieldwork Grants

Dissertation Fieldwork Grants are awarded to aid doctoral or thesis research. The program contributes to the Foundation’s overall mission to support basic research in anthropology and to ensure that the discipline continues to be a source of vibrant and significant work that furthers our understanding of humanity’s cultural and biological origins, development, and variation. The Foundation supports research that demonstrates a clear link to anthropological theory and debates, and promises to make a solid contribution to advancing these ideas. There is no preference for any methodology, research location, or subfield. The Foundation particularly welcomes proposals that employ a comparative perspective, can generate innovative approaches or ideas, and/or integrate two or more subfields.

The maximum amount of the Dissertation Fieldwork Grant is US $20,000. Please note that the Foundation has suspended the Osmundsen Initiative supplement. Grants are non-renewable.

Students must be enrolled in a doctoral program (or equivalent, if applying from outside the United States) at the time of application. Students of all nationalities are eligible to apply. There is no time limit on the duration of the grant, and funding may be requested to cover distinct research phases (for example, two summers) if this is part of the research design. Application deadlines are May 1 and November 1. Final decisions are made six months later.

Applicants must submit application materials using the Foundation’s online application submission procedure as well as send printed copies to the Foundation by regular mail.

For more detailed information on program requirements, application procedures, and review criteria, please refer to the links below.

Eligibility
Before you start:

• who are you writing for?
  - what funding agencies are out there?

• most students go to OGS, SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR

• whatever the agency – READ THE INSTRUCTIONS
  - what do they want?
  - ask around – what works and what doesn’t
  - any drafts of previous applications?

• know your audience
Selecting the Appropriate Federal Granting Agency

- Introduction
- General Guidelines for Submitting and Accepting Applications
- General Guidelines for the Eligibility of Subject Matter
  - SSHRC
  - NSERC
  - CIHR
- Guidelines for the Eligibility of Applications Related to Health
  - SSHRC
  - NSERC
  - CIHR
- Guidelines for the Eligibility of Applications in Psychology

Introduction

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) support and promote high-quality research in a wide variety of disciplines and areas.

The granting agencies were created by Acts of Parliament, which define their individual mandates. In turn, these mandates define the areas of research funded by each agency. The agencies have each developed their own general guidelines for the eligibility of subject matter, described below.

Subject Matter Eligibility

Overview
General Guidelines for the Eligibility of Subject Matter at SSHRC
Guidelines for the Eligibility of Applications Related to Health
Guidelines for the Eligibility of Applications in Psychology

Overview
The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) support and promote high-quality research in a wide variety of disciplines and areas. This includes research that bridges more than one discipline or that requires the skills of several disciplines.

SSHRC collaborates closely with the other granting agencies to encourage and promote support to the full range of social sciences and humanities research and research training, including collaboration across disciplines and subject areas. The following guidelines have been prepared to assist applicants in directing their proposals to the most appropriate funding agency. These guidelines apply to research, research training, and related activities such as conferences or scholarly journals. In any given application, applicants should apply to the agency that is responsible for the dominant research discipline or area. A researcher, research team or student may not submit the same application to more than one of the three federal research granting agencies.

Applications submitted to SSHRC that would be more appropriately evaluated by NSERC or CIHR will not be accepted. In such cases, applicants may be required to submit a new application to the appropriate agency.

Applicants working in research areas where boundaries overlap are advised to state clearly in all applications for funding why they believe their proposals are primarily appropriate for support by the agency to which they are submitting their application.

Such applicants should contact the research services office at their institution for guidance. In addition, they should seek the advice of the appropriate program officer in charge of the program to which they are considering applying.

Complete guidelines on selecting the appropriate federal granting agency are also available.

General Guidelines for the Eligibility of Subject Matter at SSHRC

Applications to SSHRC as the primary source of research or research training support must meet the following two criteria:

- The proposed research or related activities must be primarily in the social sciences and humanities (i.e., aligned with SSHRC’s legislated mandate).
- The intended outcome of the research must primarily be to add to our understanding and knowledge of individuals, groups and societies—what we think, how we live, and how we interact with each other and the world around us.

Applicants to any of SSHRC’s grant or scholarship funding opportunities who wish to collaborate with researchers working in fields other than the social sciences and humanities should explore options for Multi-agency Research Funding Collaboration.

Guidelines for the Eligibility of Applications Related to Health

The following are considerations when preparing or assessing the eligibility for SSHRC support of applications with subject matter related to health:

- Investigators whose proposed research is health-related should consult CIHR’s mandate first to explore eligibility. CIHR has policies and procedures in place to adjudicate the full range of social sciences and humanities research proposals related to health research.
- The use of social sciences or humanities theories, methodologies and hypotheses is, in and of itself, not sufficient to make a proposal eligible for SSHRC funding.

Ineligible for SSHRC Support

Examples of ineligible research include:

- clinical education for health care professionals;
- psychomotor research and kinesiology;
- clinical research (e.g., treatment, prevention or diagnosis of a condition, disorder or disease; testing or evaluating the impact of interventions, medication or medical aids);
- therapy (e.g., counselling, interventions, psychotherapy, rehabilitation, speech and occupational therapy, validation/testing of diagnostic tools); and
- epidemiology.

To start:

• what do you need?
• when do you need it?

• **what are you doing?**

• “so what?” / “who cares?”
  • be able to position your research within your field
  • be able to articulate your question clearly and concisely

• clear research question / hypothesis / problem
Writing:

• start writing
  • outline
  • rough out the sections
  • brain storm

• flesh out the outline
  • go back over the requirements
  • do the sections flow?
  • do the methods and theory match?
  • are your expectations realistic?
How Are Research Grants Evaluated?

Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

The following criteria and scoring scheme are used by adjudication committee members to evaluate Insight Grant applications:

1. **Challenge**—The aim and importance of the endeavour (40%):
   - originality, significance and expected contribution to knowledge;
   - appropriateness of the literature review;
   - appropriateness of the theoretical approach or framework;
   - appropriateness of the methods/approach;
   - quality of training and mentoring to be provided to students, emerging scholars and other highly qualified personnel, and opportunities for them to contribute; and
   - potential influence and impact within and/or beyond the social sciences and humanities research community.

2. **Feasibility**—The plan to achieve excellence (20%):
   - probability of effective and timely attainment of the research objectives;
   - appropriateness of the requested budget and justification of proposed costs;
   - indications of financial and in-kind contributions from other sources, where appropriate;
   - quality of knowledge mobilization plans, including for effective knowledge dissemination, knowledge exchange and engagement within and/or beyond the research community; and
   - strategies and timelines for the design and conduct of the activity/activities proposed.

3. **Capability**—The expertise to succeed (40%):
   - quality, quantity and significance of past experience and published and/or creative outputs of the applicant and any team members relative to their roles in the project and their respective stages of career;
   - evidence of contributions such as commissioned reports, professional practice, public discourse, public policies, products and services, experience in collaboration, etc.;
   - evidence of contributions to the development of talent; and
   - potential to make future contributions.

How Are Research Grants Evaluated?
How Are Research Grants Evaluated?

but... for SSHRC doctoral fellowships.... (committee intel 2018)

- there is no clear indication on the web site of what is expected
- assessment committees are told that they have to give an application a score between 1 and 10
- but they get no guidance as to how to weigh the different components of the application
  - or in terms of what they should be looking for
To start:

- common sections
  - introduction
  - literature review / theoretical context
  - methods/materials
  - anticipated conclusions
  - impact
  - knowledge mobilization

- or, maybe you have to have all this stuff together in a single 1 or 2 page section!

- often grad fellowship applications include a discussion of why institution X is the perfect place to do this research
Writing:

- organization
  - say what you are doing and why it is important within the first paragraph (or two)
    - *grab the reader*
  - contextualize what you’re doing
    - is this new? innovative?
    - related research

- conclude by telling the reader again why this is important
Writing:

- literature review / theoretical context
  - more important in some areas/for some grants than others
  - important for positioning the research in the field
  - key rationale for the research question

- methods
  - consistent with the theoretical context?
  - why these methods?
  - if the methods are non-standard – rationalize

- timeline
  - is your research “doable” within the available time
Writing:

• budget
  • do you need to include a budget?
  • budget justification?
    • if so, make sure that you can demonstrate how the budget items are critical for the success of the research
    • don’t pad!

• your record - CV
  • include relevant items
  • e.g. work at MacDonald’s might not be relevant, unless you were a manager and leadership is relevant to the proposal
  • awards
  • service (get involved!)
  • don’t be shy! – but don’t bulls—t!
Writing:

• general strategic tips
  • don’t fill every available inch of space
    • give the reader’s eyes a break
    • if you are desperate for space and are including citations, the author-date citation system takes up a lot of space – a numeric system with numbered bibliography saves space
  • also “University of Western Ontario” (29 chars); “Western University” (17 chars); “UWO” (3 chars)

• review the requirements
  • any enclosures/attachments required
  • complete all sections – leave nothing blank
  • proof read – have a colleague read – NO TYPOS
  • *project professionalism*
Writing:

- polish
  - consider your audience
    - will your application be assessed by a disciplinary or multidisciplinary committee?
    - most often these days it will be a multidisciplinary committee
    - the answer will affect your use of language
    - in general... “*describe your program of study in non-technical terms. Write your proposal in clear, plain language and avoid jargon...*”.

- think about the reader – a single reviewer might have 40 or more files to read
- you want yours to stand out!
  - and don’t give them an excuse to throw out your application!
Letters of Recommendation:

- who do you ask?
  - your supervisor
    - did they recruit you? – if so have them say that
  - beyond that – how well do you know the person? / they you?
    - what is their rank/reputation?
    - academic? industry? leadership?

- equip them well
  - give them info on the grant
  - why are you asking them in particular?
  - give them what you have written
  - CV, transcripts (anything there they can address?)
  - any info they might need to fill out the form (eg student #)
  - example of written work (if they haven’t seen that before)
  - give them PLENTY OF TIME!!!
Submit:

• how do you submit?
  • online, by mail?

• what is the deadline?
  • postmark deadline?
  • online deadline?
    • if so... watch for system crashes.... submit early!!

• DON’T LEAVE THINGS TO THE LAST MINUTE
  • ESPECIALLY REQUESTS FOR LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION!!!!
Great applications are:

• Excellent throughout
• Creative
• “So what?” is clear to an interdisciplinary audience, including “so what?” beyond academia if appropriate
• Seamless:
  • Lit review supports methods
  • Budget justification, plan of work are consistent
  • there is expected impact – either to the academy, to the public or both
Go for it...

you certainly won’t get funding if you don’t apply!!!!