

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
SSHRC HINTS FOR GRANT APPLICANTS

Revised 2003

*SSHRC's Web site address is <http://www.sshrc.ca>***RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAMS**

These include: 1) Standard Research Grants; and 2) Major Collaborative Research Initiatives (MCRI).

I. Standard Research Grants: The deadline for 2003 Standard Research Grants is postmarked October 15. These grants support programs of research by individuals or teams. Funding may be requested for a maximum of \$100,000 per year, but not totalling more than \$250,000 in a three-year period. A minimum budget of \$7,000, in addition to any Research Time Stipend request, in at least one of the three years is required. You may only hold one standard research grant.

The Research Grant Adjudication Process

Each SSHRC Adjudication Committee consists of scholars from across the country. Members are chosen to cover the various aspects of a field, but it is quite possible that no one on the Committee will be familiar with the current state of your specialty. Membership term is generally three years. Proposals will be judged in accordance with practices of the applicant's discipline. Currently the Council endeavours to obtain two written evaluations of an application from external specialists (assessors). Generalists may be consulted if specialists are not available. Assessors will not be asked to score or rank proposals. They will be asked for qualitative comments. **The Adjudication Committees take the assessors' comments into consideration, however, the final funding decision is made by the Committee.** Members of the current committee will not be given copies of earlier applications.

Support will not be provided solely on the basis of the reputation of a scholar. If the proposal is judged by the applicant's peers to be vague, inadequately planned, or of doubtful feasibility, the application will not be successful. The results of research conducted under any previous Council grants will be an explicit criterion for judging current applications.

Assessment of established researchers is based on a weighting of 60% given to the record of previous research achievement (RA) and 40% to the proposed program of research (PR). For new scholars the calculation will be based on the most advantageous rating for each individual scholar (either 60% RA and 40% PR or 40% RA and 60% PR). The minimum pass is a rating of 6 out of 10 for each of the RA and PR categories.

If you 1) have never held a SSHRC grant before; AND 2) have received a tenure-track position within the past 5 years; OR 3) do not hold a tenure-track position; OR 4) are within 5 years post-completion of your Ph.D. degree, then you will be considered a NEW SCHOLAR.

Special Cases: Those who have special circumstances to be taken into consideration should append a cover letter explaining the special case. This letter will be kept confidential by SSHRC staff and will be used to determine whether a scholar should be considered in the new scholar

category. Consideration will be given to those who have had a career interruption or delay (administrative duties, heavy teaching loads, family responsibilities, etc.).

Permanent Resident Status Policy: Council will accept applications from researchers in tenure-track positions who have made application for permanent resident status. A letter from the department head should accompany the application certifying that the researcher is a tenure-track faculty member awaiting permanent resident status.

Describing Your Program

1. The title is very important. Be sure that the title addresses the scholarly question you have posed.
2. Make clear what has been done, what you want to do, and why it is important that the Council support you. Provide details of long-term goals - what research directions are planned for the future? Describe your major research orientation over 3 years, by detailing a number of activities. Include theoretical challenges, choice of methodology, and a broadly defined budget. Include plans for dissemination of results, especially to those outside the academic community (oral presentations/reports to policy makers or Chambers of Commerce; continuing education classes; schools; newspaper articles; executive summaries; fact sheets).

Make reference to any pilot work you have done on projects within your program. If you have any such data to substantiate your proposed work, include it. Assessors often regard this as evidence that your program is feasible and that you are ready to begin the larger program of work.

3. The potential for significant impact of the results on the discipline can affect the Committee's decision. Tell the Committee why the work you are proposing is important. You can be direct about this: "The results of this inquiry will be important because..."; "it is important to know the answer to this because...". Point out that if this theory leads to result A, then you will head off in one direction, if result B, then another direction. Ideas that open up other important avenues for research are usually successful. Explain the potential impact of the research; relationship to existing knowledge; originality; and provide a review of the literature specific to this field. The Committee will judge the overall quality of the proposed program. Stress your proposal's unique relevancy to the existing literature in the field and if possible the interest to scholarly and educated readership nationally and internationally.

It should be clear that your proposal is not for your dissertation or for an intended textbook.

4. Observe the space limitations. Keep literature reviews concise and pertinent to your proposed research. The bibliography is counted separately above the word limit. Your proposal should be self-explanatory. Be certain to explain everything essential to your proposal within the description. Assessors shouldn't have to refer to appendices or references to understand your choice of method. Yet, if the crucial evidence for understanding your method or approach is in work just completed, or an in-press article, be certain to include that material as an appendix to enable the reviewer to adequately evaluate what you are doing.

5. Document your arguments with citations or prior research. Double check to ensure that all cited references are listed in your bibliography. Reviewers are annoyed by oversights, especially when it is a crucial article.
6. It is necessary to provide some technical detail on your choice of methodology. Reviewers don't like to take expertise on trust. You can use references to published techniques in order to save space, if these techniques are widely used. In any case, be sure to indicate why you think your choice is most appropriate. You will have to indicate in the design of your project that you are sensitive to pitfalls, contaminating variables, etc., and the precautions you are taking to avoid them. Reviewers take these considerations as evidence that you know what you are doing. They may regard the absence of these considerations as evidence that you do not know what you are doing.

In the humanities it may be necessary to draw analogies. For example "this methodology would be similar to X's study".

7. Assessors/reviewers normally try to do justice to the substance of the proposal, i.e. both the merit of the research topic and the way the topic is being attacked are considered. Be positive in tone. Your style should be professional; not rigidly formal and not chatty, and as reviewers may or may not be working on your topic area, avoid using jargon that is too specific to your field.
8. If you are a first-time applicant, start small and manageably, be realistic. Make sure it is clear that you can accomplish your goals in the time scheduled.
9. If you are working with collaborators avoid creating the impression that you are not the logical choice for principal investigator or that the others are the ones who are directing the work. The track record of the principal investigator will be the criterion used but the contributions of the co-investigators will also be taken into account. The principal investigator must not just be "lending their name" to the research.
10. Have a colleague critically read your application before it is submitted. Do this in plenty of time to enable them to thoroughly review and for you to make revisions. If possible ask someone who has served on the adjudication committee. Their feedback will be invaluable. This information is available from Research Grant and Contract Services.

Completing the SSHRC Application Form

1. Applications must be typed. Proofread the application for typos and grammatical errors. The three copies you are asked to provide are used by SSHRC to send to the assessors. Assessors tend to view the appearance of an application as a reflection of your scholarly sophistication. SSHRC makes additional copies for the Committee, so be sure that the type is legible, the pages are numbered and have your identification information.
2. Know the Council's guidelines and the scope and limits of their programs. Also be certain that SSHRC will regard each of your budget items as eligible.

The application form includes a checklist; make sure you have included all required

information. The Secretariat will screen all applications to ensure completeness. Applications classified as incomplete may not go forward for assessment.

A Committee has been established to consider **Interdisciplinary proposals**. Append a covering letter if you wish to be evaluated by the Interdisciplinary Committee.

Ethics Certification: Ethics certification is to be submitted to the University (not to SSHRC). Universities will not be able to release an award until the required certification has been obtained. Scholars in the humanities should also be aware of the ethical guidelines for proposals involving oral history, biography, private papers, interviews, cultural properties, etc.

Environmental Assessment: SSHRC has added a checkbox, appendices and detailed instructions to the application package to help identify proposals with potential impact on the environment. You should contact the program officer when in doubt about these requirements.

3. a) Ensure that your personal bibliography is completely accurate. Clearly distinguish between published works (in print) and forthcoming works (accepted for publication) and works which are merely submitted to a press or journal. Since the latter help to create a picture of an active and productive researcher, they should be listed if space permits, but don't try to mislead reviewers about the current status of such works.
- b) **Publications during the past 6 years will be considered in the scoring.** (This will provide assessors with an indication of contributions during 2 previous 3-year cycles). The criteria applied to past research will be the significance and importance of the contribution, originality, and recentness of the publications. Papers in refereed publications will be given priority. House organs will not be considered. Reviews written about your work or reviews that you have written for others will be considered. Quality will be assessed, not quantity.
- c) Indicate number of pages of a book or article; in the case of forthcoming works or works submitted, provide number of typescript pages. Place the most recent publications first, then list remaining significant publications. If you have no publications, list papers that you have read at scholarly conferences. This demonstrates some expertise. Clearly indicate and distinguish between books, articles, and notes. Don't exceed the space allowed. Summarize additional publications - such as "I published X articles in Y journals". If there is a contract for a book, provide a copy of the acceptance.

Contributions to student training will be given consideration. Provide details of thesis supervision including student's name, title of thesis and date.

4. Results of previously funded research will be taken positively as will awards from other sources. Show the amount granted, title and source. Committees will look for publications resulting from previous awards.
5. **SSHRC asks for three suggested assessors in the application form.** Make sure your suggested assessors are available, are academically suitable and sympathetic. You may also indicate in a cover letter to Council that a certain person should not be solicited as a reviewer and give reasons why. SSHRC chooses only one assessor per institution, so

don't name more than one. Program officers and adjudication committees will make the final decision on who the assessors will be. Assessors are chosen from your list and from SSHRC's list. **You may attach one page that addresses criticisms and suggestions offered by adjudication committees and external assessors who reviewed earlier versions of the proposed research program.**

- Budget:** Do not underestimate or inflate your research budget. An underestimated budget may indicate to the Committee that you do not have the expertise to understand the effort required to accomplish your objectives. The costs for all proposed staff must be fully justified and linked to the research work plan. In light of Council's strong preference for the inclusion of graduate students in projects and programs of research as a form of research training, **any request for non-student research assistants must be accompanied by a clear description of the reasons why the proposed work could not be done by students. Applicants can include stipends for MA students (up to \$12K per year), doctoral students (up to \$15K per year) or postdoctoral fellows (up to \$31,500 per year) as eligible expenses.** One page in the application is for the budget summary. One page is for the budget justification. Outline your rationale for specific budget categories. Provide full justification for each budget category. Almost as much award money is lost through insufficient budget justifications as through rejected applications. Explain significant budget items by reference to tasks or elements within the proposed research. You may feel that it is self-evident why you need so many assistants--but it may not be evident to the reviewers. In particular, be certain to justify all personnel costs, equipment purchases, and other special budget items. Explain why you have to travel during the high season. Describe specific tasks, research assistant's duties. Quote maximum salary levels, include fringe benefits and don't forget the Manitoba payroll levy. BUT, don't pad the budget. Budgets are carefully examined and committees may overreact in cutting an inflated budget. Applications must include a budget of \$7,000 or more in at least one year.

Support will be provided for a 3-year program. A request for a one- or two-year grant will be considered an exception. SSHRC expects scholars to apply in three-year cycles. If you apply for fewer than three years, and are successful, you will have to wait for the three-year cycle to end before you can re-apply.

There will be flexibility between the requested budget and the award. If the research takes you in a significantly different direction, you will be able to transfer funds from one category to another without seeking approval from SSHRC in advance. Major changes still require Council approval. The research time stipend is the only item within the budget that is NOT convertible to another use.

Research Time Stipend: For teaching replacement only. SSHRC asks universities to approve RTS requests by researchers prior to submitting their grant application. Provided that the RTS requested meets all eligibility requirements, **and that SSHRC has not exceeded its 5% budget for the RTS program**, SSHRC will automatically grant the RTS if the proposal is funded. SSHRC's contribution will be equal to 50% of the cost of a teaching substitute, up to a maximum of \$15,000 over three years. The matching contribution from the university would bring the total to a maximum of \$30,000 over three years. (University of Manitoba applicants require a letter from their Dean, agreeing to the provision of the 50% match. This letter must accompany the application when it is submitted to Research Services).

II. Major Collaborative Research Initiatives (MCRI):

These grants are for proposals that require a budget of at least \$100,000 in any single 12-month period and a ceiling of \$500,000 in any given year. Grants may be awarded for up to five years. The research team must be composed of at least two researchers from Canadian post-secondary institutions. The principal investigator may hold a major collaborative research initiative grant concurrently with a SSHRC Strategic Grant but not with a standard research grant. The Program objectives include fostering diverse research partnerships involving two or more universities and providing excellent opportunities for student training in a collaborative research environment. There is a two-stage application process. **As a first step, one copy of the letter of intent (not exceeding 8 pages)** must be submitted no later than January 31. Formal applications will be invited to be submitted by September 1.

Research Networks under MCRI have similar but more collaborative requirements. A research network is defined as one that involves a team of five or more investigators from at least three non-affiliated institutions.

STRATEGIC RESEARCH PROGRAMS

These include: 1) Community-University Research Alliances (CURA); 2) Image, Text, Sound and Technology: Networking Grants; 3) Image, Text, Sound and Technology: Summer Institute, Workshop and Conference Grants; and 4) Research Development Initiatives.

1. Community-University Research Alliances (CURA):

The purpose of the program is to support the creation of community-university alliances which, through a process of ongoing collaboration and mutual learning, will:

- foster innovative research, training and the advancement of knowledge in areas of importance for the social, cultural or economic development of communities;
- promote sharing of knowledge, resources and expertise between universities and organizations in the community;
- enrich research, teaching methods and curricula in universities;
- reinforce community decision-making and problem-solving capacity; and
- enhance students' education and employability by means of diverse opportunities to build their knowledge, expertise and work skills through hands-on research and related experience.

These grants provide up to \$200,000 annually for up to five years. The next CURA letter of intent deadline will be in the Fall 2003 (date to be announced, however, it will likely be a November deadline).

2. Image, Text, Sound and Technology (ITST): Networking Grants

This program will fund the networking of researchers involved in ITST research. This funding mechanism will allow researchers to undertake communication activities for the exchange of knowledge, best practices and development of team research activities. In view of the nature of the ITST, the networking should be multidisciplinary and, where appropriate, multi-sectoral.

Possible topics and areas to be addressed include:

- electronic editing and publishing
- e-literature studies
- web programming
- immersive and virtual environments in multimedia research
- textual analysis
- 3-D imaging technology
- creativity, culture, and computing
- digital image design
- information aesthetics
- computer gaming
- knowledge transfer of research results to fellow researchers, decision makers and the public at large.

These grants provide up to \$50,000 over one year. The deadline for the next competition is September 15, 2003.

3. Image, Text, Sound and Technology (ITST): Summer Institute, Workshop and Conference Grants

The program will provide funding for researchers and their graduate students to develop expertise in applying advanced technology through summer institutes, workshops and conferences.

Funds may be requested for the planning and implementation of events that bring together appropriate academic and government or industry researchers to exchange knowledge about the use of technology in ITST research. This includes Canadian and international scholars and experts.

Summer Institutes are intensive, one- to two-week, interactive seminars that introduce researchers and students to cutting-edge ITST technologies and skills.

Workshops, of two to five days' duration, concentrate on the elaboration and sharing of innovative technological methodologies being developed for use in ITST research.

Conferences provide venues for ITST researchers to present their research methodologies and results to a range of users and potential users from the academic, public, private and voluntary sectors.

These grants provide up to \$50,000 over one year. The deadline for the next competition is September 15, 2003.

4. Research Development Initiatives (RDI)

These support a variety of innovative research and dissemination activities that include intellectual exchanges, critical analysis, new modes of research collaboration, new ways of producing and structuring knowledge, as well as knowledge transfer and integration at the national and international levels. Activities may include meetings and electronic gatherings, networking and communication initiatives, intensive research institutes, and state-of-the-art activities. Initiatives that are eligible for funding under other SSHRC programs are not considered under RDI. A maximum request of \$40,000 over two years is allowed.



**Research Services & Programs
Research Grant & Contract Services**

Competitions are held twice per year. The next application deadline is December 15, 2003.

STRATEGIC JOINT INITIATIVES PROGRAMS

Programs are announced throughout the year. Refer to the SSHRC web site for updates. Recent programs include:

Multiculturalism Issues in Canada: Research and Workshop Grants: The objectives of the three-year (2003-06) Multiculturalism Issues in Canada program are to:

- facilitate and promote innovative research on multiculturalism issues in contemporary Canadian society;
- generate, disseminate and transfer knowledge that informs the development of policies, programs and practices that will help to foster and promote an inclusive society;
- help Canadian postsecondary and research institutions develop expertise in issues relevant to cultural, ethnic, racial and religious diversity; and,
- promote public dialogue about, and understanding of, multiculturalism and diversity issues.

Research Grants provide up to \$50,000 over one year; workshop grants provide up to \$100,000 over one year. The first competition deadline for research grants is October 3, 2003; the first competition deadline for workshop grants is February 3, 2004.

Federalism and Federations: There are several award mechanisms under this joint initiative between SSHRC and Intergovernmental Affairs. This program is currently under review. Please refer to SSHRC's web site for updates.

Relationships in Transition: SSHRC will post a revised description for this program in September 2003. The application deadline will be December 1, 2003.

Valuing Literacy in Canada: This program is currently under review. Please refer to SSHRC's web site for updates.

Committee and Assessors for Strategic Programs:

The Administrative Officers at SSHRC screen all applications first to rule on eligibility to the theme. Ineligible budget items are discounted. The Officer assigns reviewers (Strategic Workshops, Networks and Partnership Development grants are not sent to assessors). For Strategics, SSHRC asks you to suggest six specialists from outside your institution who may be asked to be assessors. The final choice of assessors is made from your suggestions and SSHRC's listings. Every effort will be made to secure two external written assessments. Strategic Research Grants proposals are assessed by 2 or 3 assessors. You may wish to attach a covering letter indicating those you feel are inappropriate to be assessors and why.

The Adjudication Committee receives the proposals plus the assessors' comments. The Committee members read the proposal independently and phone in their rating. They rate the scientific merit and the relevance to the program theme or objectives. There are generally 5 Committee members. Their ratings are compiled by the Officers and brought to the meeting. At the meeting, the proposals are rank ordered. All applications are adjudicated at the same time. Minutes are taken and they will be sent to you with your results as well as the assessors comments. All feedback can be valuable. Negative comments can help you prepare your arguments to answer questions that may arise when submitting articles for publication. The names of the Committee members are not made public until after the competition. Their terms are generally 2 years. A few changes in membership occur each competition.

The Proposal:

The Strategic Research Grants are project-based. Importance will be placed on objectives and linkages with the community. Priority will be given to multidisciplinary approaches.

Proposals are judged according to the requirements in the guidelines (scope and objectives; specific research questions; potential contribution to knowledge within the theme; theoretical approach or conceptual framework; social relevance or practical importance; research plans, methods, strategy for analysis (this is a critical element); work completed, in progress and to be undertaken; role of all members of the research team). Identify and define the variables. State the potential contribution to knowledge and social relevance for policy decisions. Be concise.

The Committee makes judgements based on current knowledge and theory. Usually the most poorly written section is the analysis section. Consult with statisticians or the Statistical Advisory Service when developing the proposal. Add this service to your proposal and budget, with justification if you will use it. Include appendices only if appropriate. In the body of the proposal, explain the validity and reliability of any appended instruments.

If your proposal presents a unique perspective, your justification becomes critical to the review process, in overcoming a perceived disadvantage of a non-conservative approach.

Make your intentions clear. The Committee is made up of generalists, not specialists, and their assessment will not necessarily allow for lack of information through your assumptions.

It is very important to show how the research results will be given to the user community (public, policy makers, practitioners, etc). A dissemination plan is required. You can spend up to 10% of the budget on dissemination of results.

Private Scholars: Private scholars are no longer eligible to apply in the Standard Research Grant competition. They are eligible to apply as co-investigators in Strategic Grant applications.

INITIATIVES ON THE NEW ECONOMY

This is a major new initiative with four broad themes: 1) General Issues Relevant to the New Economy; 2) Management and Entrepreneurship; 3) Education; 4) Lifelong Learning. Refer to the web site for complete details at:

http://www.sshrc.ca/web/apply/policies/regulations_ine_e.asp

Several types of grants will be supported:

a) **INE Outreach Grants:** To promote public understanding of the issues and knowledge transfer of research results. Up to \$50,000 for a one-year period. Suspended until September 2004.

b) **INE Research Grants:** To respond rapidly to changing research concerns about INE issues. Up to \$100,000 per year for 3 years, with a total of not more than \$300,000. A minimum of \$7,000 in at least one of the three years is required. The October 2003 competition has been cancelled.

c) **INE Research Alliances:** Similar to CURAs. Grants to institutions for diverse research programs and knowledge exchange activities. Two-stage process. Letter of Intent of \$10,000 to develop a full proposal. Full proposal by invitation only for funding of up to \$300,000 per year for 3 years. Formal application is by invitation only.

d) **INE Collaborative Research Initiatives:** Modelled on the SSHRC MCRI and Strategic Theme programs. To fund collaborative initiatives that bring together critical masses of research talent on complex INE issues. Two-stage process. Letter of Intent of up to \$10,000 to develop proposal. Full proposals by invitation only for requests of \$200,000 to \$750,000 per year for up to 4 years. Formal application is by invitation only.

e) **CESC-SSHRC Education Research Initiatives:** The CESC-SSHRC Education Research Initiative seeks to promote and support quantitative research in education that uses the SAIP and Statistics Canada educational data bases. The partners in this joint initiative also aim to support and develop closer relationships among researchers, those responsible for program and policy development, and those who implement program and policy changes. Grants are available for two-year programs of research, with a maximum value of \$100,000 over the two years. Application deadline to be announced; please refer to SSHRC's web site.

Specific Policies Governing INE Programs

Under the INE, the New Scholar category has been revised to become the **New Researcher category**. To request consideration under the New Researcher Category, an applicant must demonstrate: 1) hold an academic appointment and have completed highest degree fewer than five years before the year of the competition deadline; OR 2) hold an academic appointment and have completed highest degree within **nine** years before year of competition deadline - **if and only if** they have had careers interrupted or delayed for family reasons. As long as the applicant meets the New Researcher category requirements, they may submit applications and hold several INE grants. A researcher who holds an INE grant as a New Researcher cannot apply for or hold a grant as a New Scholar under the other non-INE program.

Under the INE program, **foreign researchers** are eligible as co-applicants and SSHRC will cover any costs incurred in the conduct of the research.

The INE will award a limited number of **Research Allowances (RAs)**. These have a maximum value of \$25K per semester and \$50K annually. RA requests must be included in the total budget. Applicants and co-applicants are eligible, but foreign co-applicants are not eligible. Universities do not have to provide matching funds. RAs will be adjudicated by competition, therefore, the budget justification must include an explanation of why it is required. RAs are not available for INE Outreach or Development Grants.

Refer to the SSHRC web site for additional changes expected to be announced in August/September.

For more information, contact:

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