

## **2020 Innovation Grant Program Guidelines**

Updated May 2020

These guidelines provide detailed information regarding the Innovation Grant program offered by the Women & Children's Health Research Institute (WCHRI).

These guidelines will be reviewed annually and may be subject to amendment. It is the responsibility of awardees to ensure continued compliance with these guidelines.

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## 1.0 Award overview

This grant competition offers operating funds for research investigations that lead to improved health outcomes for women and/or children. All applications are peer-reviewed by one of the Biomedical or the Applied Health Grant Advisory Committees. All applications submitted to this grant competition may be either stand-alone projects or projects that provide preliminary data for future applications to provincial and/or national agencies.

## 2.0 Eligibility

All applications to WCHRI must align with our [relevance criteria](#) in order to be eligible for funding.

- The principal investigator must hold a full-time academic appointment at the University of Alberta
- The principal investigator must be a WCHRI academic member for not less than 1 year prior to application; except new recruits with an academic appointment of less than 1 year at time of application deadline.
- Each principal investigator may submit one application (maximum).

All applications must be complete and have been approved by the University of Alberta on behalf of the applicant prior to submission. Refer to section [9.0 Institutional sponsorship](#) for further details. WCHRI Innovation grants are tenable at the University of Alberta only.

## 2.1 Application restrictions

Principal investigators currently holding Innovation Grant funding must evidence, at the time of application submission, that the spend-rate and research progress for the previous award is a minimum of 75% spent/complete before further eligibility will be considered. Additional considerations such as compliance with reporting requirements also applies (refer to [11.0 Reporting](#) below).

A maximum of five co-investigators are permitted on this grant. WCHRI defines a **co-investigator** as an individual who contributes to the proposed research activities.

A maximum of six collaborators are permitted on this grant. WCHRI defines a **collaborator** as an individual whose role in the proposed activities is to provide a specific service or resource (e.g., access to equipment, provision of specific reagents, training in a specialized technique, statistical analysis, access to a patient population, etc.).

## 3.0 Budget details

All funding requests are limited to a total maximum of \$60,000. The budget request in this grant application represents the total budget for the 24 month period of support. Funding associated with this award cannot be used as either match or top-up funding. All principal investigators, co-investigators and collaborators must demonstrate an independent stipend/ salary source.

## 3.1 Eligible expenses

Eligible expenses include (but are not limited to):

- materials, supplies, and other expendables;
- equipment costs may not exceed 10% of the total proposed project budget;
- animals and animal facilities;
- computer/CPU time, data access charges and library resources;
- computer and computing equipment or software limited to \$1,000.

- publication costs (including open access publishing);
- salaries (including benefits) for research assistants, technicians, postdoctoral fellows;
- stipends for summer and graduate students;
- travel - limited to \$2,000.00 (total) for conference attendance (includes transportation, registration fees, per diem/ meals, and accommodation, etc.);
- travel required for research data collection (mileage paid according to U of A guidelines).

### **3.2 Ineligible expenses**

Ineligible expenses include:

- secretarial and clerical support;
- stipend for members of the research team;
- renovations;
- maintenance of equipment;
- installation of major equipment;
- membership fees;
- equipment purchases valued at over 10% of the total proposed budget;
- indirect university costs.

### **3.3 Award limitations by area of research**

WCHRI may limit awards by area of research; where limitations apply, up to one (1) application (maximum) may be considered for funding based on committee recommendation and availability of financial resources. For the innovation program, funding contributions to global health and breast cancer research will be limited.

Excluded from this limitation is breast cancer research that includes the participation and engagement of the Allard Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer Clinic (HBOC) at the Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH).

### **3.4 Award priority and/or priority calls**

WCHRI may offer priority calls to build and/or attract applications in areas of research. All applications in an area of priority must evidence scientific merit and relevance with WCHRI to be eligible for WCHRI funding.

### **4.0 Research project**

The research project must clearly detail the work that will be done by the principal investigator and each Co-investigator. A letter of collaboration may be provided by each proposed collaborator with the application submission. Letters of Collaboration must clearly detail the role of the collaborator.

All applications must clearly evidence that the proposed research will be completed within the 24-month period of support.

The research project should not be substantially altered from that proposed in the original application. If significant changes should become necessary, the principal investigator must seek WCHRI's approval prior to any significant change being made.

## **5.0 Application**

### **5.1 Research and scholarship integrity**

WCHRI supports the University of Alberta's efforts to ensure the highest standards of research and scholarship practice and behaviour. By submission of the signed application, the principal investigator asserts that the information provided in the document(s) adheres to all research policies and procedures in place at the University of Alberta. WCHRI reserves the right to request institutional confirmation of assertions contained within this application.

Misrepresentations of authorship, credentials or research support may result in disqualification of the application from this competition. Further actions may include: disqualifying the principal investigator and/or research team member(s) from future competitions for a time period determined solely by WCHRI, withdrawal of any remaining installments of support for any existing WCHRI grant or award for which misrepresentation appears in the submission, and seeking partial or full repayment of any past financial support under any WCHRI grant or award for which misrepresentation appears in the submission.

Please refer to [UAPPOL](#) for further information on the University of Alberta's [research and scholarship integrity](#) policy.

### **5.2 Application process**

The complete, signed application must be submitted on a current WCHRI application form through the [WCHRI Innovation grant electronic submission portal](#) by the deadline date. Printed or late application material will not be accepted. Applications with missing information or documentation may be submitted to the Committee "as is" provided program eligibility is confirmed. It is the principal investigator's responsibility to ensure the application is accurate and complete. Where information is not provided as required in the application, eligibility to participate in the competition and/or hold funds may be affected.

### **6.0 Review process**

WCHRI uses [the four themes of CIHR funded health research](#) to allocate applications in this competition to committees.

Applicants should note that WCHRI will make the final decision as to the appropriate review panel. Applications are forwarded to the panel where overall expertise and/or capacity to review the proposed work is available.

Application panels are composed of experts from the University of Alberta and are broadly representative of the application demographic for this program opportunity. All eligible applications are forwarded to a relevant Innovation Grant Committee and undergo peer-review according to program review criteria.

### **7.0 Review criteria and scoring**

All applications that are forwarded to the committees undergo rigorous peer-review. Scientific merit of the following review criteria is assessed by committee:

<b>Review criteria</b>	<b>Scoring allocation</b>
Quality of Proposal	75%
Quality of Research Team	15%
Impact / KT	10%

WCHRI has adopted a rating scale similar to CIHR to assess the merits of applications submitted to this program. Committee members are asked to review the above criteria using the rating scale provided below:

<b>Narrative Rating</b>	<b>Numerical Rating</b>
Outstanding	4.4 – 4.9
Excellent	4.0 – 4.4
Very Good	3.5 – 3.9
Good	3.0 – 3.4
Needs Revision	2.5 – 2.9

Applications which score below a 3.5 consensus rating, will not receive an in-depth, detailed discussion of the relative scientific merits. For applications scoring above a 3.5 consensus rating, the committee will engage in a full application discussion, and provide a consensus recommendation (rating) and Scientific Officer Notes.

### **8.0 Competition results**

Awardees will be posted on the WCHRI website. Official result letters and competition feedback will be emailed to the principal investigator 1 week following the competition result posting. In the event of discrepancy between the website posting and the formal outcome letter, the formal outcome letter constitutes our notification of outcome. All institutional sponsors will be provided with application outcomes.

### **9.0 Institutional sponsorship**

All applications must be institutionally sponsored on behalf of the principal investigator. Changes to institutional support may result in WCHRI's withdrawal of an application during the competitive process or financial commitments for an offered or currently implemented award.

Application sponsorship confirms that adequate support exists at the institutional level to achieve the proposed/ funded research and that all signees have reviewed and agreed that: 1. the application meets research scholarship and practice requirements and 2. is consistent with UAPPOL policies and procedures. Please refer to the [Meaning of Signatures](#) for details on sponsorship responsibilities.

Institutional sponsors also agree to the public release of information and/or support of any WCHRI communication initiatives subsequent to award funding. By signing the application, institutional sponsors agree to timely disbursement of award funding to RSO established accounts. Where changes to employment, and/or human resources concerns arise that affect institutional sponsorship, WCHRI must be contacted without delay.

WCHRI disburses award funding upon confirmation from the Research Services Office (RSO) that an account has been opened (Advice Notice). Note that ethics and all other institutional approvals must be received by RSO in order to open the account. *WCHRI must be listed as the award funder.*

## **10.0 Award Funding**

Effective April 2020, award funding policies affecting award payments, installments and/ or annual commitments have been amended. Financial disbursements are based on the availability of financial resources, followed by financial need, research progress and award compliance.

### **10.1 Funding implementation**

Funding provided at the commencement of the award will not exceed 50% of the total award value except where recommended by committee and confirmed by WCHRI in the offer of award. Remaining award funding (commitments) will be disbursed based on evidence of financial need, and correspond with cash flow requirements (or evidenced spent rate). Satisfactory progress must be evidenced in reporting, where limitations and/or barriers to completing work are disclosed/ and actively addressed and evidence that the project should in all likelihood be completed within a 24-month period of support.

Where research progress is satisfactory, WCHRI expects that the remaining funding commitment will be released after review of award reporting.

### **10.2 Deferred implementation**

Awardees may not actively hold funding for more than one Innovation grant concurrently. In order to implement new award funding, all previously awarded funding must have concluded as per the application for which funding was made, and award terms and conditions met, including but not limited to reporting.

Awardees may also opt to defer implementation where either research supports (such as staffing, equipment) or institutional approval (such as ethics) will not/ may not be in place by the required (start) date. Awards may be deferred for up to 1 year from the (earliest) award commencement date. A deferred start must be requested prior to WCHRI approval of the award commencement date.

A deferred start date exhausts no-cost extension eligibility in the same manner as an end date no-cost extension. WCHRI will consider up to a single, one-time (1), one-year (1) start date deferral. Where an award that has benefited from a deferred start, is non-compliant to commence at the deferred start date, the WCHRI offer of award and all financial commitments will be void.

### **10.3 Deferred payment**

Where funding has accrued in a research account, awardees may either request payment deferral or deferral may be allocated by WCHRI.

Where a deferred payment has been either requested by the awardees or allocated by WCHRI, a no-cost extension may also be applied against the grant to allow the awardee time to support/ resource research activities that will be achieved within the reporting cycle.

Extension offered following a deferred payment exhausts end of grant no-cost extension eligibility; deferred payment extension may not exceed 1 year (total). Where an award that has benefited from a deferred payment extension is unable to satisfactorily resolve concerns that impact limit research progress, the award may be subject to the termination, where financial commitments will be void and residual award funding is recovered.

#### **10.4 Extension requests**

Where an awardee has benefited from a deferred start, only the residual remaining extension balance may be considered as an end of grant no-cost extension. The total period of extension will not exceed 1 year, including any extension offered at the time of implementation.

In the event that progress is delayed after award implementation, WCHRI may consider a no-cost extension to the period of support. In order for WCHRI to assess extension eligibility, formal reporting with a request to extend the award must be submitted to WCHRI 2 months prior to the end of the period of support.

Awards implemented on or after July 2020 are eligible for a single, one-time (1) one-year extension where reporting supports that research will be complete, up to and including publication/ research outcomes as defined by the funded application within the period of extension.

At the end of the period of support, WCHRI will recover residual funds.

#### **11.0 Leaves of absence**

##### **11.1 Maternity/paternity leave**

WCHRI awardees who take maternity/ paternity leave during the tenure of the award must provide WCHRI with formal notification prior to the commencement of the leave. This notification should be supported by the awardee's department chair or faculty dean. Following the period of leave, the awardee may request an extension to the term of the award equal to the time allocated to the leave but not exceeding 1 year.

##### **11.2 Unpaid leave(s) of absence**

WCHRI must be notified of any unpaid leaves of absence not less than 1 month prior to the leave and will consider all requests on a case by case basis. WCHRI may consider extending the award by an amount of time not exceeding the duration of the approved leave. Formal notification of intent to return from a leave must be provided to WCHRI within one month of returning and request of award extension must be requested within this one month period. Formal notification must include institutional support to reinstate the award.

#### **12.0 Reporting**

##### **12.1 Research day presentation**

Either during the term of the award or no later than the November following the end of the period of support, a member of the research team is expected to present outcomes related to the research at WCHRI's Research Day.

##### **12.2 Progress and/or final reporting**

The principal investigator must complete and submit the report form within 30 days of the request to report. An on-line survey link will be sent to the principal investigator to facilitate reporting.

Failure to comply with reporting requirements may result in ineligibility to apply to future WCHRI funding programs, interrupt access to current grant and/or awards, and/or may affect or interrupt support through WCHRI [Research Platforms](#). In addition to research achievements and current requirements, annual progress reporting must clearly detail research activities that are to occur within the next funding period and the corresponding budget requirements for these activities. No funding will be released until

reporting has been reviewed, satisfies grant requirements and evidences the need for further funding payment where further funding commitments exist.

### **13.0 Communications and acknowledgements**

All publications, including public messages, arising from research supported by WCHRI grants and/or awards must acknowledge the support of WCHRI. Funding acknowledgement is provided in the formal offer of award letters and can found on our [website](#).

Awardees are asked to inform WCHRI in advance if their research will be published in a major journal and/or receive media coverage. WCHRI reserves the right to publish and/or disseminate information relevant to grants and awards. Awardees may be highlighted in WCHRI communication initiatives.

### **14.0 Award termination**

WCHRI reserves the right to terminate any award if the conditions of the award are not met, or if there is evidence of unsatisfactory progress.

The principal investigator must immediately notify WCHRI of any changes to the research team particularly if the change may affect eligibility to hold an award. This includes termination of employment, and leaves of absence.

### **15.0 Contact information**

If you have any questions regarding this program or application process, please contact WCHRI grants administration at [wcgrants@ualberta.ca](mailto:wcgrants@ualberta.ca).