

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Grant Writing Workshop

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CIHR Approach

- CIHR takes a **problem-based** and **multidisciplinary** approach to the health challenges facing Canadians
- Multi-faceted approach encompasses research in **four pillars**:

Biomedical

Clinical

Health systems and services

Population and public health



CIHR Pillars (themes)

- **Biomedical Research:**

Goal of understanding normal and abnormal functioning at the molecular , cellular and whole body level (Theme 1)

- **Clinical Research:**

Goal of improving the diagnosis and treatment of disease and injury and improving the health and quality of life of individuals (E.g. clinical trials)
(Theme 2)

- **Health Systems and Services Research:**

Goal of improving efficiency and effectiveness of health professionals and the health care system through changes to practice and policy (Theme 3)

- **Social, Cultural, Environmental and Population and public health:**

Goal of improving the health of the Canadian population through a better understanding of the ways in which social, cultural, environmental, occupational and economic factors determine health status (Theme 4)



How CIHR Funds

- Approx. 70% of research funding is investigator-driven while 30% is reserved for strategic initiatives
- **Investigator-Initiated (Open Competition)**
 - University-based researchers develop proposals and submit applications
 - Successful applications based solely on peer-review
 - Includes operating grants, salary awards, training awards, etc.
 - Regular competition cycle (September & March)
- **Strategic Initiatives**
 - Targeted to address major health challenges and priorities
 - Developed by Institutes along with other partners
 - Successful applications based on peer-review and merit review
 - Competition cycles held throughout the year



CIHR Open Operating Grant Program

- The CIHR Open Operating Grant Program (OOGP) provides operating funds to support research proposals in **all areas of health research**, including randomized controlled trials.
- Specifically, this funding opportunity is to contribute to the **creation, dissemination and use** of health-related knowledge, and to help develop and maintain Canadian health research capacity, by supporting **original, high quality projects or teams/programs of research** proposed and conducted by individual researchers or groups of researchers, in **all areas of health**.
- The OOGP is further expected to: Contribute to the creation and use of health-related knowledge; Contribute to the **dissemination, commercialization/knowledge translation, and use of health-related knowledge**; Develop and maintain Canadian health research capacity, including **research training**.



CIHR Open Operating Grant Program (OOGP) basics

- Currently, 2 competitions per year – March 1st and September 15th
- Grants will usually be awarded for a **period of 2 to 5 years**. Operating grants are renewable.
- There is **no limit** to the number of applications an applicant can submit as a Principal Applicant, or to the number of applications for which an individual is a Principal Applicant or a Co-applicant, as long as these applications are different.
- **No max. or min.** with respect to funds being requested.
- Be aware of any applicable **Priority Announcements** announced by the Institutes.
- No specific requirements or restrictions on the specific research activities to be undertaken.
- CIHR uses **ResearchNet** and the **Common CV**.



Eligibility to apply

- To be eligible to apply as the Nominated Principal Applicant for CIHR funding, you must have an independent **academic or research appointment** with an eligible Canadian institution or organization by the time the funding begins.
- All Principal Applicants must be independent researchers (additional PA's are optional).
- A **co-applicant** can be an independent researcher, a knowledge user, or a trainee (additional Co-A's are optional).
- Foreign researchers can be principal applicants, but not nominated principal applicants on CIHR grants.



Applying to the OOGP: Timeline



Evaluation Criteria

Criterion #1: Research Approach

Criterion #2: Originality of the Proposal

Criterion #3: Applicant(s)

Criterion #4: Environment for the Research

Criterion #5: Impact of the Research

<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/39914.html>



CIHR OOGP peer review basics

- 48 peer review committees (term membership or by invitation; no reliance on external reviewers)
- Applicants provide primary and secondary choice of peer review committees for their application. *CIHR has final say on committee allocations.*
- Each peer review committee given approximately the same success rate. *Ultimately, success is determined by the percentage rank of your application score at the committee-level.*
- No distinction between new applications, renewal applications, new/senior investigators in application or peer review process.

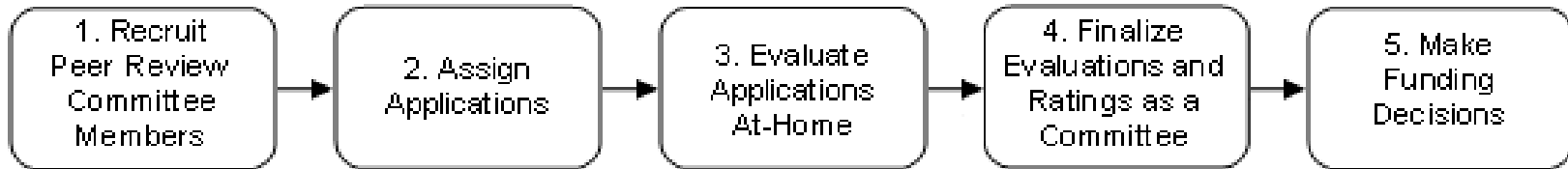


CIHR OOGP peer review basics: rating scale

Descriptor*	Range**	Outcome
Outstanding	4.5 - 4.9	May Be Funded - Will be Discussed by the Committee
Excellent	4.0 - 4.4	
Very good	3.5 - 3.9	
Acceptable, but low priority	3.0 - 3.4	Not Fundable - May or May Not be Discussed by the Committee
Needs revision	2.5 - 2.9	
Needs major revision	2.0 - 2.4	
Seriously flawed	1.0 - 1.9	
Rejected	0.0 - 0.9	



OOG peer review process



- Each application assigned a **primary** and **secondary** reviewer as well as a reader.
- Applications are “**streamlined**” and **not discussed by the committee** when they are ranked by both reviewers in their bottom group and more specifically, in the bottom 25-30% of all applications in the committee (can mean applications ranked with an average score of 3.8 and below are not discussed at the committee table)
- Internal reviewers provide brief assessment of each application including score. Reader raises additional issues as appropriate.
- Committee discussion recorded by the **Scientific Officer (SO)**; SO notes provided along with reviewers’ comments to applicants.
- Internal reviewers agree on a consensus score for the application; all committee members vote on final application score +/- 0.5 of consensus rating (confidential vote)
- Budget is discussed following voting.



CIHR New Open Suite of Programs and Peer Review process

- New Open Suite of Programs to include a Project Scheme and a Foundation (Program) scheme
- CIHR will hold 3 more OOGP competitions (March 2013, September 2013 and March 2014). There will also be a transitional OOGP competition in March 2015. (There will be no September 2014 OOGP competition.)
- The first Foundation (program) competition is scheduled for August 2016.
- The first formal Project competition is scheduled for January 2016.
- The last CIHR New Investigator Award competition will be held in September 2015.
- CIHR is establishing a College of Reviewers – expert reviewers (trained and mentored) to span the spectrum of health research



CIHR New Open Suite of Programs and Peer Review process

- **Project Scheme** – most like the current OOGP
 - grants to be **1-5 years** in duration
 - avg. grant value approx. **\$125,000/year**
 - individual researchers or teams of researchers and/or knowledge users can apply
 - not renewable
 - **2 competitions** per year (spring and fall)
 - **2 stage approach**: reviewers virtually review applications (5-7 page proposal) in 1st stage; limited # of committees meet in stage 2 to determine successful applications



CIHR New Open Suite of Programs and Peer Review process

- **Foundation (Program) Scheme** – new funding opportunity!
 - To provide long-term support to top researchers at any career stage
 - grants to be 5-7 years in duration
 - avg. grant value approx. \$300,000/year
 - single or multiple Program Leaders
 - requires institutional commitment for research support
 - 1 competitions per year (early fall)
 - 3 stage approach: calibre of applicant (1st stage); quality of proposed program (2nd stage); and final assessment (stage 3)

