

UM / SSHRC Explore Grants Program **General Guidelines**

Purpose

The purpose of the UM/SSHRC Explore Grants Program (formerly known as UM/SSHRC RGP) is to provide support for small-scale research and research/creation¹ projects in the social sciences and humanities. The program is funded by SSHRC through an annual block grant to the University. The size of this annual grant is based on the University's performance in the Council's research grants programs as well as the number of University faculty members who are eligible for funding by SSHRC.

Funding Priorities and Principles

The UM/SSHRC Explore provides seed funding for original, high quality research projects that are small scale in nature and are pre-requisite to long-term SSHRC support. The UM/SSHRC Explore does not provide continuing support of ongoing research projects/programs nor is it a substitute for SSHRC funding. As the block grant from SSHRC to the University is, in part, a performance-based award, it is imperative that researchers apply directly to SSHRC for support whenever possible. Accordingly, UM/SSHRC Explore, project budgets should not be artificially constrained in order to remain below the \$7,000 funding limit of this program. Similarly, individuals proposing research projects which are likely to extend over a two- to three-year period should seriously consider developing a multi-year funding proposal in support of a full program of research and submitting such proposals directly to SSHRC for consideration.

Recipients of support from the UM/SSHRC Explore are expected to use the funds awarded to develop their research to the point where applications for SSHRC external funding can be made. Individuals who repeatedly submit applications to the UM/SSHRC Explore cannot expect to receive any support unless they have applied to SSHRC for research support.

The UM/SSHRC Explore does not support the production of works of art alone; however, it does support research on the history and philosophy of art, architecture, theatre, music and film as well as scholarly biographies of artists and critical studies of their work.

Eligibility

All full-time academic faculty members *with professorial or academic librarian rank* and in disciplines supported by SSHRC, holding tenure or tenure-track appointments; and geographical full-time (GFT) academic faculty members, appointed for three years or longer and who have a minimum 40% protected time for research are eligible to apply to the UM/SSHRC Explore for support. In addition, holders of "SSHRC post-doctoral fellowships" are also eligible. Researchers in the areas of psychology, geography and those conducting research with a health focus are referred to [SSHRC's website](#) for further information regarding those research areas eligible for SSHRC support. UM/SSHRC Explore applications submitted that are deemed to be related to health will be moved to the URGP competition as appropriate and the applicants so notified.

Contingent, nil-salary and adjunct professors are not eligible to apply for internal grants.

Applicants who are eligible to apply to both the University Research Grants Program (URGP) and the UM/SSHRC Explore Grants Program competitions may submit only one application to either of these programs in any given competition period, i.e., April 1 or November 15.

¹Research/Creation is supported and refers to any research activity or approach to research that forms an essential part of a creative process or artistic discipline and that directly fosters the creation of literary/artistic works. Artistic disciplines supported include: architecture, design (including interior design), creative writing, visual arts (e.g., painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, textiles), performing arts (dance, music, theatre), film, video performance art, interdisciplinary arts, media and electronic arts, and new artistic practices.

Type, Nature, and Extent of Support

The Explore is a flexible program designed to provide support for a wide range of activities², provided these activities are eligible under SSHRC regulations and they support the stated purpose of the Explore, that is, to enhance the University's national competitiveness in terms of SSHRC research support. Such support includes *but is not limited to* the following:

- seed grants for high quality, original and innovative projects of a short-term nature that are pre-requisite to long-term SSHRC support;
- development grants to defray the costs associated with the preparation of large-scale research initiatives for which external research support from SSHRC is being sought;
- funding for the partial support of post-doctoral fellows, where SSHRC external research funding is held; and
- funding for minor pieces of research equipment

The program, however, does **not** provide funding for:

- conference travel;
- equipment servicing;
- publication or page charges;
- visiting professorships/lectureships;
- start-up and bridge/emergency support; or
- travel costs for leaves, including research and study leaves

With respect to international conference travel, requests should be directed to the UM/SSHRC Exchange Grant Program. In terms of visiting professorships/lectureships, support may be sought from the Samuel Weiner Distinguished Visitor Fund, the Distinguished Visiting Lectureship Fund, or the Robert and Elizabeth Knight Distinguished Visitors Program. Information on the first of these funds is available from the Office of the Vice-President (Research and International); the latter two funds are administered by the President's Office. Requests for start-up or bridge/emergency support should be referred to the appropriate dean/director.

Support is provided for the **direct** costs of research, including research assistance, support for technical, professional and secretarial services, equipment (purchase or rental), research-related travel and supplies. All items must be essential to the conduct of the proposed research and must be carefully justified. Expenses will not be eligible for support if these are incurred prior to the grant start date.

As the demand for funds normally far exceeds the funds available, not all meritorious proposals can be adequately supported. **The maximum level of support is \$7,000 and often is considerably less.** In short, only modest research needs can typically be met by this program. Applicants must develop their proposed budgets with these figures in mind.

²The Explore does not support research leading to a degree for the principal or co-investigators. Similarly, this program does not provide support for research conducted by graduate students in partial fulfillment of degree requirements unless such research is part of the faculty member's ongoing research program.

Evaluation Process and Criteria

Applications for research support are reviewed and adjudicated by members of the UM/SSHRC Grants Selection Committee.

Applications are assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- the quality and originality of the proposal and the extent to which it is consistent with the purpose of the Explore;
- the research/scholarly/creative achievements of the applicant(s);
- the research outcomes resulting from previous UM/SSHRC Explore support, as evidenced by final project reports;
- the previous efforts of the applicant(s) to secure external research funding and/or plans of the applicant(s) to apply for SSHRC external funding;
- any special circumstance or other factor deemed appropriate in a particular instance (e.g., research career interruptions/delays, career patterns and responsibilities).

In all cases, the overriding factors in the evaluation of an application are the quality and originality of the research, as reflected in the research proposal, and the achievements of the applicant(s), measured against the stage(s) of their career(s) as well as their career patterns and responsibilities.

Competition Deadline Dates and Program Administration

Two competitions are held annually with deadline dates of **November 15** and **April 1**. If these dates fall on a weekend or statutory holiday, the deadline moves to the next business day. The UM/SSHRC Explore is administered by the Office of Research Services.

Conditions of the Award

Successful applicants who do not hold a SSHRC grant will be expected to apply to the next appropriate SSHRC program competition normally **within one year** of the expiration of their UM/SSHRC Explore grant. UM/SSHRC Explore grant-holders who do not submit an application to a SSHRC competition within this timeframe may be ineligible from applying for future UM/SSHRC Explore funds.

Research supported by the UM/SSHRC Explore must comply with the University policies on the conduct of research, specifically the University policy on research ethics and, where applicable, the University policies on research involving the use of animals, human subjects, or biohazards. It is the responsibility of the applicant(s) to secure the appropriate approval for the proposed research; funds will not be released until all such approvals have been obtained. **If appropriate approvals have not been obtained and forwarded to the Office of Research Services within six (6) months following the award notice, funds will automatically be returned to the UM/SSHRC Explore. Grant-holders may request to extend the period within which approvals must be obtained by writing to the Office of Research Services, to the attention of the appropriate contact person, prior to the return of funds as noted above. Such requests must include a justification.**

Research grants must be used for the project and purposes described in the application. Grant-holders wanting to transfer funds from one budget category to another in response to changing research needs or to use funds for a new budget item must secure the prior written approval of the Office of Research Services.

The award recipient is responsible for the use of the funds and for any over-expenditure of research accounts. Expenditures must comply with University regulations concerning the use of special project funds and must be made in accordance with standard University financial procedures. Grants involving the purchase of equipment are made on the understanding that any costs associated with the installation, operation, and maintenance of any equipment purchased will be the responsibility of the researcher and his/her department.

UM/SSHRC Explore awards normally terminate on the date specified in the award notification letter and any unspent funds are automatically returned to the UM/SSHRC Explore. Grant-holders may request to have the period of the award extended by writing to the appropriate contact person in the Office of Research Services not later than one month prior to the end date of the award. Such requests must include a justification for the extension.

Within three months of the completion or termination of the grant, a final report must be submitted to the Office of Research Services. This report should not exceed one page and should describe: what was accomplished, including a summary of the major research findings; the plans for research dissemination, including an indication of any publications/paper presentations resulting from the grant or in press/in preparation; research personnel trained; SSHRC and other external funding that has been obtained or applied for as a result of the project; and future funding prospects. **Subsequent applications for research support will not be considered unless all final reports pertaining to previous awards have been submitted to the Office of Research Services.**

If an award recipient receives an award for the same work from an external agency as a result of a concurrent or previous application, the UM/SSHRC Explore award of balance remaining will be recalled.

If an award recipient loses his/her eligibility to hold internal grant funding during the term of award, all unused funds must be returned to the program's funding pool.

Grant-holders are requested to acknowledge the assistance of SSHRC in all publications and media coverage resulting from UM/SSHRC research grants.

Guidelines for Preparing a UM/SSHRC Explore Grant Application

General Presentation

- **Font** must be 12 pts (where unrestricted by the form itself).
- **Margins** should be set at a *minimum* of 3/4" on free-form attachments.

Attachments:

The description of your proposed research must not exceed three pages. You may include an additional two pages for references, but **no further attachments** will be accepted with the exception of quotations for equipment costing >\$500.

Preparing the Research Proposal

Through the research proposal, applicants demonstrate their competence to conduct the proposed research. Accordingly, applicants are expected to provide a systematic, logical narrative which demonstrates familiarity with the subject matter, and a carefully formulated plan of the research. Applicants are reminded that the members of the Grants Selection Committee must make their judgments on the basis of what is presented. Other things being equal, applications are more likely to be funded if they are concise, lucid, and complete.

A narrative style should be used, with headings included for the sake of clarity. As the Grants Selection Committee might not include a member from an applicant's discipline, applicants are advised to avoid highly specialized technical language and/or disciplinary jargon, where possible. Avoid using acronyms and abbreviations or explain them fully.

In general, the proposal describes the plan for carrying out the work, proceeding from theoretical and/or conceptual considerations to a description of the specific project to be conducted, and culminating in a budget that describes the resources required to complete the project. While the content and organization of the proposal may vary according to the nature of the project and in the interests of clarity, certain essentials must be covered in the proposal. These include:

- the objectives of the research, including its relationship to existing research and literature;
- the potential theoretical and practical significance of the proposed research;
- the theoretical/conceptual framework guiding the research and/where applicable, the research hypotheses;
- the methods and procedures to be used and the resources that are required, with particular emphasis on those for which funding is requested; and
- a timetable for the completion of the proposed research.

References to similar or related work should be included as appropriate. *Curriculum vitae* or article reprints should not be included and will not be circulated to Grants Selection Committee members.

Preparing and Justifying the Budget

The budget quantifies the research plan in terms of personnel, materials, supplies and other requirements. Accordingly, it is essential that the link between the research proposal and the budget be clear (e.g., what duties assistants will perform, how materials and equipment will be used, etc.). All budget items must be essential to the conduct of the research and a brief, clear justification for each budget item must be provided. The following general guidelines are provided for each of the major budget categories.

Personnel (student, technical, secretarial, professional): The details regarding the nature of the tasks to be carried out, the level of responsibility, the period of employment and the proposed rate of pay (hourly, monthly) must be specified. Fringe benefits and payroll levy must be included in the calculation of salaries for research personnel.

When requesting secretarial support, a case must be made as to why departmental secretarial services are insufficient or unavailable.

Materials and Supplies: It is assumed that standard office and laboratory supplies (including photocopying) are provided by the department. When this is not the case or when unusual items or large quantities are requested, a complete justification must be provided.

Equipment: When requesting essential research equipment costing over \$500 per item, the applicant must confirm that he/she has made efforts to determine if the needed equipment is owned by the University and, if so, whether it is available for use. Applicants must also comment on the extent to which the requested equipment will be made available for use by other university researchers and on the likely extent of this use. For items over \$500, quotations must be provided.

Travel: The specific details regarding the purpose of the trip, destination and length, mode and cost of travel, must be provided. When travel is proposed for the purpose of research collaboration, the need for such collaboration in lieu of mail, telephone, FAX, and electronic mail must be clearly demonstrated. Similarly, when proposing travel to consult library or archival materials, a justification for this travel in lieu of reviewing or purchasing materials through inter-library loan, document delivery, etc. must be provided.

Post-doctoral support: As this fund provides only partial support for the salary of a post-doctoral fellow, the applicant must provide details on the SSHRC funding source. Applicants are reminded that the salary of any individual supported under this program must meet the University minimum (please consult the Office of the Vice-President (Research and International) at 474-9488 for the current support levels).

Application Procedures

Application forms are available on the web at: http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/um_funding.html. If you have any questions, please contact the ORS Research Grants Officer listed. **The application must be filled out in the format provided.**

The complete signed application with all supporting documentation must be forwarded to the Office of Research Services, researchgrants@umanitoba.ca. Late and incomplete applications will **not** be considered.

Final reports for all projects receiving support within the last four years from URGP, UM/SSHRC Grants Program and Creative Works **must be** attached to the application.

The application deadline dates are November 15 and April 1. If these dates fall on a weekend or statutory holiday, the deadline moves to the next business day.

Results of the competitions will normally be announced approximately eight weeks after the application deadline. There is no provision for appeal of funding decisions.