Project Grant Competition

Part 1: Updates to the Project Grant Competition

Title

Welcome to this learning module in the Project Grant competition series: Part 1: Updates to the Project Grant competition. In this module, reviewers will learn about updates to the upcoming project grant competition to ensure they are well prepared for the peer review process.

Playbar buttons

This course is designed to be self paced.

Use the playbar below to resume playback, navigate between slides, mute and unmute audio, and toggle closed captions. You can also browse the full table of contents, and collapse or move the playbar.

Updates to the Project Grant competition

For the Spring 2025 Project Grant competition, there are five important updates for peer reviewers.

1. Multi-factor authentication for ResearchNet
2. Mandatory attachment requirement for Response to Previous Reviews
3. Research Security Policies
4. Changes to Randomized Controlled Trials and Commercialization Projects, and
5. Formatting reminder.

The Spring 2025 peer review committee meetings will be held virtually. For more information, you can review the frequently asked questions.

Multi-factor authentication for ResearchNet

CIHR is committed to keeping our systems secure and protecting our users' privacy. As part of this commitment, CIHR implemented multi-factor authentication (MFA) in ResearchNet in fall 2024.

The MFA process will be triggered every time a user signs in to ResearchNet. When a user signs in, they will be required to enter a code that is sent to the email address connected to their ResearchNet account profile. MFA will apply to all users and cannot be skipped. Should a ResearchNet session time out after 60 minutes of inactivity, users will need to re-authenticate themselves using MFA.

If you have any questions, please consult the Frequently Asked Questions or reach out to the Contact Centre.

Mandatory attachment requirement for response to previous reviews

New for the Fall 2024 competition, if applicants choose to submit a Response to Previous Reviews, they must include all the reviews and Scientific Officer (SO) Notes (if available) received in that round of submission in a new attachment called Previous Reviews.

Reminder to reviewers: Response to Previous Reviews remains an optional task and both these attachments are independent of the resubmission question. Reviewers will only see the Response to Previous Reviews in an application if the Previous Reviews attachment was included.

Research security policies

There are two research security policies that will be in effect for applicants to the Spring 2025 competition. The Risk assessment form for the National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships (NSGRP) and the attestation form for the Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern (STRAC). Reviewers will not see these attachments in their review

packages and should not raise research security concerns as part of their review. Reviewers should focus their assessments on the scientific review and specific evaluation criteria provided. If concerns or questions related to research security are raised by committee members during the review or peer review meeting, CIHR staff will redirect the information to CIHR's Research Security team for their awareness.

Changes to Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) headings and evaluation criteria

Reviewers assessing applications with randomized control trials (RCT) as a major component of their research proposal should be aware that the RCT headings and evaluation criteria have changed. The adjustments provide applicants and reviewers with guidance on pilot RCTs and better align instructions with peer review expectations.

These applications must be structured according to the specific headings. Only the main headings should be referred to by title, while the subheadings may be referred to only by number. The main headings are:

1. The Need for a Trial
2. The Proposed Trial, and
3. Trial Management.

Irrespective of the suggested peer review committees, evaluation of all applications with an RCT as a major component will need to consider key questions within each of the specific headings mentioned above, and other important issues such as health economics, quality of life, patient engagement, and more. An entry is required under every heading and subheading.

Changes to Commercialization (CMZ) projects

In addition, commercialization projects submitted to the commercialization (CMZ) peer review committee must now adhere to a prescribed structure of research proposal headings. Feedback to CIHR from peer reviewers suggests that, at times, applicants do not adequately describe plans from a commercialization perspective. These changes aim to provide added guidance and clarify peer review expectations for the benefit of applicants.

All applications submitted to the CMZ committee must be structured according to the three main headings:

1. Overview
2. Research and Technical Plan, and
3. Commercialization Plan

The evaluation of applications reviewed in the CMZ committee will include the assessment of both the Research and Technical plan and the commercialization plan based on specific criteria.

Formatting reminder

While CIHR has simplified its attachment formatting requirements for applications, all applicant-prepared attachments must continue to use a minimum of 12 point, Times New Roman font in black type. Other fonts and font sizes may be used for text in tables, charts, figures, graphs and legends only, as long as it is legible when the page is viewed at 100%. If these are not legible when viewed at 100%, reviewers are not required to read them or account for them as part of their assessments.

Additional Resources

This concludes the updates for peer reviewers of the Spring 2025 Project Grant competition. You can review the peer review process in Part 2: Overview of the Peer Review Process or explore the other resources listed on the screen. Before concluding this module, please complete the survey to assist CIHR in tracking the uptake and improving the quality of the learning.