

Terms of Reference: Queen's Health Sciences (QHS) Internal Review Process for CIHR Project Grants

Overview

Preamble: The QHS Internal Review Process for CIHR Project Grants is a faculty-wide initiative aimed at improving success rates of CIHR applications. All QHS faculty submitting CIHR Project Grants are invited to participate in this internal review process. PIs within 10 years of their first academic appointment are expected to participate, and PIs with resubmissions that scored over 4.0 are encouraged to participate. Only those faculty members that participate in the internal review process will be eligible to be considered for bridge funding within the QHS.

1) **Internal Registration.** PI planning a CIHR Project Grant application will register for the QHS Internal Review Process and identify any co-applicants. They will be asked to suggest a minimum of 3 internal and 2 external reviewers with expertise in the research area (external reviewers are welcome to participate remotely, some remuneration is available). PI will identify the target CIHR panel(s) & provide a draft title and application keywords.

2) **Phase I: Project Pitch Session.** PI provides a PowerPoint presentation (15 min maximum) pitching the grant idea to reviewers; PI pre-circulates slides a minimum of 2 days prior to the meeting, which should include a grant summary, hypothesis, objectives, preliminary data, and prior reviews & rebuttal if a resubmission. Admin will schedule a meeting with Chair/reviewers & PI/co-PI(s) (via Zoom during COVID). *Target timeline:* ~ 4-5 months before CIHR full application deadline. Applicants incorporate reviewer feedback into their drafts, or may choose to defer submission to CIHR to allow for further grant development.

3) **Phase II: Full Application Review.** PI provides a draft of the 1-page summary and full application (proposal with figures/captions) to Admin a minimum of 2 weeks in advance of the meeting, who then circulate the draft to the Chair/reviewers for review. At the meeting, the Chair/reviewers meet with the PI/co-PI(s) to discuss the grant and provide feedback (via Zoom during COVID). The Chair will capture key points (e.g. SO notes) during the meeting. *Target timeline:* ~2 months before CIHR full application deadline. Applications outside this window will not proceed.

4) Chair will provide the PI with the SO notes, reviewer reports, and any marked-up copies of the proposal. A copy of the SO notes and reviewer reports will also be sent to the QHS Research Office.

5) **Optional Penultimate Version Review:** The PI will have the option to receive written feedback on a penultimate version of their full application (proposal with figures/captions); target timeline ~3-4 weeks in advance of CIHR deadline.

Phase I. Project Pitch Session Process

Project Pitch Presentation (provided by PI):

The PI/co-PIs will provide a PowerPoint presentation to the reviewers, pitching the proposed project using scientific or technical terms and providing the following information (as applicable):

- The clinical need and broad goal(s) of the proposed research.
- A brief overview of relevant background information and/or rationale.
- Specific research aims and hypotheses with a brief overview of the methodology that will be used to address each of the research aims.
- Current and expected supporting data prior to the CIHR deadline.
- The nature of the core expertise being brought together to address the proposed research. Information may include important collaborations, within or outside of the research community that will be accessed to achieve the outlined research goals.
- Expected outcomes of the proposed research highlighting the significance of the proposed research and how it will advance knowledge and/or its application to health care, health systems and/or health outcomes.
- Response to previous CIHR reviews (if applicable).

Slides should be pre-circulated to the Chair/reviewers a minimum of 2 days prior to the meeting. The slides will be presented during the first ~15min of the 1-hour meeting, followed by reviewer feedback and discussion. The Chair and reviewers can advise the applicant on whether the grant would benefit from further development and should be deferred to a future competition. In these cases, another Phase 1 meeting will be scheduled with the committee during the next cycle.

Phase I. Project Pitch Session Reviewer Report (*completed by reviewers*)

PI Name:

Please insert comments below, taking into consideration the following:

Is the health problem, rationale, and hypothesis stated clearly?

Will the aims or objectives test the hypothesis?

Is preliminary data sufficient?

Are the research methods likely to deliver results to the stated objectives?

Does the response to previous reviewer comments address key points (if applicable)?

Does the study seem feasible? If not, why?

Is the study likely to impact knowledge or healthcare approaches?

What is your overall assessment of the application?

Phase II. Full Application Review Process

PART A: Draft application submission

PI/co-PIs will distill Phase I feedback into a complete CIHR Project Grant draft application package (PI/co-PIs will provide a 1-page summary, 10 page proposal including figures with legends; reference list; CCV; budget request) within four weeks of the Phase I feedback.

PART B: Review mini-panel (Chair/reviewers + PI)

Admin will arrange an in-person or remote 1-hr meeting with the Chair, reviewers, and PI/co-PIs to discuss the reviewers' feedback and recommendations (ideally within 2-3 weeks of receipt of the full application materials).

1. PI/co-PIs will be present for the entire mini-panel meeting to discuss reviewer feedback and recommendations
2. Each reviewer will provide a summary of their perceived strengths, weaknesses and overall impressions of the grant
3. Chair will facilitate the discussion to address any differences in opinions about the grant
4. PI/co-PIs can ask for clarification of any key points that were raised
5. Chair will ask for comments on the budget
6. Chair will ask if sex/gender issues are relevant & addressed in the proposal
7. Chair will take notes (e.g. scientific officer (SO) notes) of key points raised by reviewers, and ask reviewers for their scores
8. If warranted, the Chair may discuss strategies and recommendations for the grant application timing and future content (e.g. deferral to next cycle)
9. Chair will secure copies of all written reviewer reports & edits/comments made on the draft grant application from each examiner and provide to the PI/co-PIs along with SO notes

Penultimate Version Review (Optional)

The PI/co-PIs will have the option to receive feedback on a penultimate version of their application. The PI will submit the near final version to Admin, who will send to the reviewers for feedback. Edits on the revised application will be sent to the PI/co-PIs.

Phase II. Full Application Reviewer Report *(completed by reviewers)*

PI Name:

Reviewers are invited provide feedback directly on the draft grant application and/or to insert comments below, taking into consideration the following:

Project strengths?

Project weaknesses?

Overall impressions & specific recommendations for improvement?

Does the proposal consider sex/gender issues sufficiently?

Is the budget appropriate and justified?

Comment on response to previous reviews (if applicable)?

Phase II. Scientific Officer Notes & Ranking *(completed by Chair)*

Applicant Name:

Please list any specific recommendations for improvement (attach additional pages if necessary).

Please rank the proposal as is and the proposal if the proposed revisions are made.

Please use the two digit CIHR rating system: 4.5 – 4.9 outstanding, 4.0 -4.4 excellent, 3.5 – 3.9 very good, 3.0 – 3.4 acceptable but low priority, 2.5 – 2.9 needs revision, 2.0 – 2.4 needs major revision, 1.0 – 1.9 seriously flawed, 0 not acceptable.

<u>Reviewer Names</u>	<u>Rating of Proposal (As is)</u>	<u>Rating of Proposal (After suggested revisions made)</u>

Name of Chair:

Date of Review: