

# SPARC PROJECT GRANT



This document has been updated to reflect the  
Fall 2023 Project Grant Funding Opportunity Details on ResearchNet  
(<https://www.researchnet-recherchenet.ca/rnr16/vwOpprtntyDtls.do?prog=3961&view=currentOpps&org=CIHR&type=EXACT&resultCount=25&sort=program&next=1&all=1&masterList=true>).

# SPARC

- SPARC: Support Programs to Advance Research Capacity, a unit in the Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation (VPRI).
- We provide grant development and proposal review services, primarily for Tri-Agency funding competitions (CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC, and NFRF).
- Our services are available at no cost for UBC faculty-led grant applications.
- SPARC does not support student or trainee competitions, so does not develop resources or collect or provide sample grants for these competitions.
- We also provide resources such as guidelines, templates, and checklists, and host an extensive sample grant library.
  - Find details and links on our website: <https://sparc.ubc.ca/resources-sample-grants>.
- All recommendations are our own and apply to the Fall 2023 Project Grant competition.
- Please consult the CIHR program page (<https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49051.html>) for official requirements (especially if viewing these slides at a later date).



# SPARC CONTACTS

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# 1. OVERVIEW OF PROJECT GRANT APPLICATIONS



# OVERVIEW OF PROJECT GRANT COMPETITION

- Managed by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).
- Designed to capture **ideas** with the greatest potential for important advances in fundamental or applied health-related knowledge, health care, health systems, and/or health outcomes.
- No term or budget limits, for Fall 2022 the average term was 4.46 years and the average awarded grants are approximately \$826K.
  - **Note:** Budgets vary by the 4 CIHR research themes: Biomedical, Clinical, Health Services, and Population and Public Health.
- Two competitions per year: Fall (~Sept. 15) and Spring (~Mar. 1).
- The Funding Opportunity for both (e.g., Fall 2023 and Spring 2024) was posted by CIHR on ResearchNet on July 7<sup>th</sup>: <https://www.researchnet-recherchenet.ca/rnr16/vwOpprtntyDtls.do?prog=3961&view=currentOpps&org=CIHR&type=EXACT&resultCount=25&sort=program&next=1&all=1&masterList=true>.
- Two competition stages: Registration and Application.



## COMPETITION STATS

- Each competition sees approximately 2,500+ applications and ~408 awards nationally, with about 10-12% from and to UBC researchers.
  - Fall 2022: 1899 applications (200 from UBC), 382 awards (32 to UBC)
- Average national competition success rates is 16%.
  - To ensure equal representation of certain demographics CIHR equalizes the success rates for specific (e.g., early career researchers (ECRs), French applications, and female applicants) health research applications. This means that the proportion of funded grants awarded to these groups is at least equal to the proportion of applications from these groups. For example, if 22% of applicants are ECRs, they will have a 22% success rate.
- Budget for Fall 2023 and Spring 2024: \$650M or \$325M per competition
- **Note:** While it is possible to get funded on a 1st try, it often requires a few attempts.



## EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER CRITERIA

- An ECR is a researcher within five years from the date of their first research-related appointment, minus eligible delays in research
- Eligible delays (maternity, parental, medical, bereavement) are credited as twice the amount of time taken
- Professional leaves (e.g., training, sabbatical, administrative) are not credited.



# REVIEW PROCESS

- All applications are reviewed by a Peer Review Committee (PRC):
  - PRC members give a score (0-4.9), and list strengths and weaknesses.
  - PRCs then meet (currently online) to discuss and rank applications, and may make budget recommendations.
    - Applications with low preliminary scores may be 'streamlined' (i.e., deemed non-competitive; <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49564.html#4.3.1>) and therefore not discussed or funded. FYI, approximately 55% of all submitted applications will be streamlined.
  - CIHR will then make a final funding decision.
- See CIHR Peer Review Manual for details: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49564.html>.



# EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Concept
  - Significance and Impact of the Research
- Feasibility
  - Approaches and Methods
    - Sex and Gender Considerations (if applicable)
    - Indigenous Health Research committee Considerations (if applicable)
    - Integrated Knowledge Translation ([iKT] if applicable)
  - Expertise, Experience and Resources



# PRIORITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- You can also **apply for up to 3 Priority Announcements (PAs)**.
  - PAs have a separate ResearchNet Funding Opportunity, yet are part of the regular Project Grant application.
- This is additional funding for target research areas, usually \$100K x1 year, to “next-in-line” grants (i.e., highly ranked, meritorious applications falling below funding cut-off).
  - Some PAs require a ½-page relevance form describing how and why their application is relevant;
  - Some PAs may be Prizes or Supplements (e.g., for early or mid-career investigators);
  - Applications rated below 3.5 (“fair”) will not be considered for a PA.
- Fall 2023 competition includes ~38 PAs.
- PA FAQs: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50762.html>.



# BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

3 key budget considerations are managed by CIHR:

1. **Equalization policy** – for equalization categories (ECRs, female applicants and applications written in French), the proportion of applications received is the minimum proportion of applications that will be funded.
  - In Fall 2022, the total number of fully funded projects for applicants in the ECR career stage went from 90 (before equalization) to 110 (after equalization).
2. **Across-the-board reductions** (usually ~23.5%) – in addition to cuts suggested by the PRC



# BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

## 3. Large budget envelope

- If you have a large budget (top 2% of total grant value), your application will be reviewed and scored by your PRC, but ranked among other large grants in the special large budget committee, which has a specific funding envelope.
- Your application may be ranked highly in your PRC, yet may not rank above the funding cut-off for the special large grant committee.
  - In the Fall 2022 competition, the cutoff for large grants was \$2.48M.
  - A total of 37 applications fell into this category (34 to panels other than IHR).
    - A budget of \$16.25M was available to fund non-IHR applications and 7/34 were funded (21%).
    - Large grants from the IHR panel are funded by IHR funds and 1/3 were funded (33%).



# RESULTS AND TIMELINE

Results are delivered in a 2-stage process:

1. Notice of Recommendation (NOR) – comments, scores and ranking, but **no** funding decision
2. Notice of Decision (NOD) – comments, scores and ranking, **plus** funding decision



CIHR guidelines to interpret the NOR's '% Rank Within Committee' value

- Applications ranked between 100 - 88% will likely be funded;
- Applications ranked between 82 - 0% will likely not be funded;
- Applications between **88 - 82% are usually within the uncertain range of funding.**
  - **Tip:** SPARC can help interpret your NOR scores, please email [sharon.marsh@ubc.ca](mailto:sharon.marsh@ubc.ca).

# DEADLINES

- Registration and Application deadlines are ~4 weeks apart.
- UBC's Office of Research Services (ORS) and some Faculties have additional application requirements, including:
  1. Research Project Information Form (RPIF), which requires signatures;
  2. UBC e-submission at least 24 hours before agency deadline.
- Consult ORS websites for official UBC submission procedures and deadlines:
  - **ORS Vancouver:** <https://ors.ubc.ca/cihr-project-grant-esubmission-procedures-institutional-e-approval>
  - **ORS Okanagan:** <https://ors.ok.ubc.ca/funding/>



# RESEARCHNET

- Create a ResearchNet account and register for a CIHR PIN
  - <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/38201.html>
  - PIN requests are not immediate, so please register in advance (e.g., minimum of 72 hours) of the registration/application deadline.
- Sign in to ResearchNet
  - <https://www.researchnet-recherchenet.ca/rnr16/LoginServlet?language=E>
  - Under “Current funding opportunities”, select “Project Grant: Fall 2023 and Spring 2024” and click the green “Apply to this Opportunity” button.
  - Once registration is complete, the application module will become available.

A screenshot of the ResearchNet website. The top navigation bar is green with the ResearchNet logo on the left and a 'Help' dropdown on the right. Below the navigation bar, there are two main sections. The left section, titled 'Current funding opportunities', contains a table with three columns: 'Name', 'Registration/LOJ Deadline', and 'Application Deadline'. The right section, titled 'Sign in', contains a login form with fields for 'Email' and 'Password', and a 'Sign in' button. Below the login form, there is a link for 'Forgot your password?' and a 'Sign in' button.

Name	Registration/LOJ Deadline	Application Deadline
Prize: Betty Havens Prize (2021)	N/A	2021-07-22
Operating Grant: Understanding and mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children, youth and families in Canada	N/A	2021-07-27
Team Grant: Indigenous Gender and Wellness Team Grant	2021-06-29	2021-07-29
Operating Grant: COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence	N/A	2021-08-10
Project Grant: Project Grant - Fall 2021 and Spring 2022	2021-08-18	2021-09-15
Project Grant: Fall 2021 Priority Announcement (Specific Research Areas)	2021-08-18	2021-09-15

# REGISTRATION TASKS (7 TOTAL)

CIHR Registration Instructions: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49503.html>

## 1. Identify Participants (role, participant type, name, CIHR PIN, phone #, institution)

- Nominated Principal Applicant (1 only) – responsible for application submission
  - NPAs can submit up to **2 applications** in a given competition
  - NPA and Institution Paid **cannot change** at the Application stage
- Principal Applicants, Co-Applicants, Collaborators – no application limits
- The **Institution code** for “The University of British Columbia” is “CAAA”. Using the wrong code will route your registration to the wrong institution.



## 2. Enter Proposal Information

- Overview: Title, Lay Title, Lay Abstract (2,000 characters, including spaces)
- Details: Various questions including location, duration, Indigenous component, new vs. resubmission, clinical trial, partner or knowledge-user re: iKT, and sex and gender
- Descriptors: Areas of research, CIHR Theme(s), CIHR Institute(s)

# REGISTRATION TASKS (CONTINUED)

## 3. Complete Summary (3,500 characters, including spaces)

- Can be changed at the Application stage, but used to match reviewers, so ideally don't revise significantly

## 4. Enter Budget Information

- Estimate only at this stage (finalized at Application stage)

## 5. Complete Peer Review Administration Information

- Suggest reviewers to include or exclude (optional)
- Select and justify a primary and (optional) secondary Peer Review Committee (PRC)
  - **Note:** The Registration is used to match appropriate reviewers, so committee choice also **can not** be changed at the Application stage.

## 6. Preview

## 7. Consent and Submit

- NPA must click **Submit** to send the registration to CIHR



# APPLICATION TASKS (10 TOTAL)

CIHR Application Instructions: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49560.html>

## 1. Identify Participants

- Re-confirm/update team members, roles, etc. **Reminder:** NPA cannot change.
- CV leave of absence attachment (over past 7 years)
- Canadian Common CV (CCV) confirmation number **or** Applicant Profile CV attachment
  - Generate CIHR Biosketch CV in CCV portal (<https://ccv-cvc.ca/indexresearcher-eng.frm>), then link to ResearchNet via the unique CCV number. **Tip:** The CCV can be very time consuming. Begin well in advance, especially if it's your 1<sup>st</sup> time or you have not updated it for a while.
  - The 3-page Applicant Profile CV (<https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/51872.html>) can only be used by knowledge users, non-academics, Indigenous organizations and international applicants.
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion self-identification questionnaire **required** for all applicants (not Collaborators): <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50956.html>
- Most Significant Contributions attachment (3,500 characters, including spaces)
  - For NPA, all Principal Applicants, and all Co-Applicants (not Collaborators).
- **Note:** Each applicant is responsible for completing their own questionnaire, providing their CCV # or Applicant Profile CV and uploading relevant attachments.



# APPLICATION TASKS (CONTINUED)

## 2. Enter Proposal Information

- Overview, Details, and Descriptors: re-confirm/update
- Attachments:
  - 10-page Proposal (12 pages for French proposals)
  - References (no page limit)
  - Optional: If a resubmission, you may wish to include the 2-page Response to Previous Reviews document, plus all reviews and SO notes that you are responding to
  - 2-page Summary of Progress

## 3. Complete Summary (3,500 characters, including spaces; ~1 page)

- Confirm/update



## APPLICATION TASKS (CONTINUED)

### 4. Identify Application Partners or Knowledge User Principal Applicants (for iKT/partnered applications, see pages 65-70)

- Provide contact info and partner letter, if applicable

### 5. Budget Request

- Detailed budget table with six categories: Research Staff, Trainees, Consumables, Non-Consumables, Knowledge Translation, Other
- Provide project, not annual, totals, in Canadian dollars
- If partnered, specify partner cash/in-kind contributions

### 6. Complete Peer Review Administration Information

- Peer Review Committees cannot be changed at this stage
- Suggest/exclude reviewers as applicable



# APPLICATION TASKS (CONTINUED)

## 7. Attach Other Application Materials

- Examples: letters of support, questionnaires, surveys, up to 5 publications from last 5 years, letter of appointment if pending, SGBA Training Module Certificate of Completion
- **Note**: Reviewers are **not** required to read appendices; the 10-page proposal should be stand-alone.



## 8. (Optional) Apply to Priority Announcements (PAs)

- Select up to 3 PAs and Relevant Research Areas, then press “Save”.
- A textbox (i.e., “Relevance Form”) may appear for the PA.
- **Note**: These forms are reviewed by CIHR staff, not the review committee. The PA relevance text does not affect your Project grant review.
- Ensure that in, “Task 2: Enter Proposal Information”, under “Descriptors”, you have selected the Institute(s) required for the PA, if applicable.

# APPLICATION TASKS (CONTINUED)

## 9. Preview

## 10. Consent and Submit

- All Principal Applicants and Co-Applicants must consent in ResearchNet before the NPA can submit the application.
- NPA will receive email confirmation from CIHR, after UBC ORS has approved the application and forwarded it to the agency.



# SPARC SUPPORT

- SPARC and local grant facilitation staff support is available for all UBC faculty researchers working on UBC-led grants, but you may also have faculty- or department-based grant support available to you: <https://ors.ubc.ca/funding-opportunities/grant-facilitators>.
- To ensure as many researchers are supported as possible, for grant review services please work with either SPARC or local support (e.g., Research & Technology Development Office (RTDO) at the BC Children's Hospital Research Institute).
  - SPARC offers a single review of the 10-page Proposal and the 2-page Summary of Progress documents at the Application stage, and we're always available for consultation.



## 2. PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE SELECTION



# OVERVIEW OF PEER REVIEW COMMITTEES

- All Project Grant applications are reviewed by a Peer Review Committee (PRC).
- There are ~50 Project Grant PRCs, each with a specific mandate:
  - <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50438.html>
- Each committee has a name and a code:
  - e.g., “Biological and Clinical Aspects of Aging”, BCA, and “Cell Biology – Disease”, CBD
- If a PRC receives a large number of submissions, they may divide into multiple committees:
  - e.g., “Health Services Evaluation & Interventions Research” divides into HS1, HS2, HS3



A screenshot of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) website. The header includes the Canadian flag, the text 'Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada', and navigation links for 'Canada.ca | Services | Departments | Français'. The main navigation bar features 'Canadian Institutes of Health Research' and a search bar. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links: 'Funding', 'Institutes', 'College of Reviewers', 'Initiatives', 'Collaboration', 'Priority areas', and 'Discoveries for life'. The main content area is titled 'Peer Review Committee Mandates – Project Grant Program'. It includes a sidebar with a 'Project Grant' menu containing 'Overview', 'Eligibility', 'Application Process', 'Review Process', 'Results', 'General Funding News', and 'Resources'. The main text area contains a notice about changes to the Fall 2022 Project Grant Competition, listing updates to the Developmental Biology (DEV) and Endocrinology (E) committees, the Clinical Investigation A (CIA) committee, and the NSA committee. It also mentions the renaming of the CBC committee to the Physiology to Cell and Developmental Physiology committee. The text explains that these changes were developed in consultation with the reviewer community during the Spring 2021, Fall 2021, and Spring 2022 Project Grant competitions. It advises applicants to ensure their mandates remain relevant in the current research environment and to read the mandates carefully before submitting their registration. The text further states that the following table presents an alphabetized list of peer review committees and their corresponding mandates for the Project Grant Program. When applying for funding, applicants should suggest up to two committees whose mandates most closely align with their research project. The text also notes that the committee mandates before applying in order to correctly identify the best committees for the review of their application. Suggested committees must remain unchanged between registration and application. If an application overlaps with more than one area of science, applicants should select the peer review committees that best reflect the research area and objectives of their application. CIHR will consult with committee Chairs and Scientific Officers in assigning applications to specific committees, and will make the final decision on which peer review committee will review each application based on the summary of proposed research received during the registration stage. The final committee selected may not necessarily be the first or second choice as the authority for the assignment of applications to a peer review committee rests with CIHR. The final list of committees held for a given competition may differ from the list of committees available at the time of the registration. Applicants will be informed of which peer review committee reviewed their application on their Notices of Recommendation and of Decision. At the bottom, there is a section for 'Behavioural Sciences – A: Neurobiological Basis of Behaviour' with a brief description of its focus on the neurobiological basis of behaviour and the focus of studies on this committee.

# OVERVIEW OF PEER REVIEW COMMITTEES (CONTINUED)

- Each committee has a Chair, 2 Scientific Officers (SOs), and Members:
  - Term of service: 3 years, or 6 rounds
  - Membership lists: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/39399.html>
  - Reviewer pathway: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/51666.html> (Reviewer in Training, Associate Member, Full College Member)
- Grants are reviewed according to the Peer Review Manual: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49564.html>.
- Grants are reviewed in comparison with others in the same PRC and within committee application rankings are submitted to CIHR for funding decisions:
  - e.g., if there are 40 grants being reviewed by your PRC, your ranking will be out of 40



A screenshot of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) website. The header includes the Canadian flag, the text 'Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada', and navigation links for 'Canada.ca', 'Services', 'Departments', and 'Français'. The main navigation bar features 'Canadian Institutes of Health Research' and a search bar. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with dropdown menus for 'Collaboration', 'Priority areas', 'Discoveries for life', 'Funding', 'Institutes', 'College of Reviewers', and 'Initiatives'. The breadcrumb trail reads 'Home &gt; Funding &gt; Peer review &gt; Information on peer review committees'. The main content area is titled '2022 Peer Review Committee- Project Grant Competition: Fall 2022 (202209PJT)'. It lists various funding programs: BCA, BMA, BMB, BME, BE2, BSA, BSB, BS2, BSC, CB1, CBB, CBC, CBT, CHI, CIA, CA2, CIB, CB2, CIC, CID, CMZ, CPT, CT2, CSA, CSB, CSC, DOL, E, G, GMX, GSH, HDK, HLE, HPM, HS1, HS2, HS3, IHR, IMN, KTR, MCC, MID, MOV, MPI, NSA, NSB, NUT, PB1, PH1, PH2, PS, PT, RC1, RC2, RS, SDA, TIR, VVP. A list of peer review committees follows, each with a right-pointing arrow: 'Biological and Clinical Aspects of Aging (BCA)', 'Biochemistry &amp; Molecular Biology - A (BMA)', 'Biochemistry &amp; Molecular Biology - B (BMB)', 'Biomedical Engineering (BME)', 'Biomedical Engineering 2 (BE2)', 'Behavioural Sciences - A: Behavioural Studies in Animal Models (BSA)', 'Behavioural Sciences - B: Clinical Behavioural Sciences (BSB)', 'Behavioural Sciences - B2: Clinical Behavioural Sciences (BS2)', and 'Behavioural Sciences - C: Behavioural Studies and Neural Imaging (BSC)'. A sidebar on the left lists other funding opportunities: 'Overview', 'Upcoming funding opportunities', 'ResearchNet', 'Funding programs' (including Training award programs, Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships, Baning Postdoctoral Fellowships, and Project Grant Program), and 'Foundation Grant'.

## SELECTING PRCS

- Applicants suggest 1-2 PRC(s) to review their proposal to help Chairs and SOs with 2 key tasks (i.e., to ensure alignment between research topic and expert reviewers):
  1. Decide whether the proposal meets the mandate of their PRC; and
  2. Identify a short-list of relevant reviewers within the PRC.
- Applications are usually assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> choice PRC, but on occasion they can be assigned to another PRC by CIHR. If an application is 'bumped' to an alternate PRC, applicants will only learn this upon receipt of their NOD.
  - **Tip:** To avoid 'bumping' of your application, even to your 2<sup>nd</sup> choice PRC, SPARC recommends selecting only 1 PRC. First time applicants and re-applicants that are considering switching PRCs for resubmission should do their due diligence in selecting and tailoring their proposal to their chosen PRC mandate.



## IDENTIFYING YOUR PRC (DUE DILIGENCE)

- Look through the list of committees and mandates: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50438.html>.
- Browse funded Project Grants by committee: <https://webapps.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/decisions/p/main.html?lang=en#sort=namesort%20asc&start=0&rows=20>.
  - Click “Program” tab, select “Project Grant” and your “Peer review committee[s]” of choice.
- Check past membership lists, and ask any UBC members if the committee is appropriate for your research: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/39399.html>.
  - **TIP:** Reach out to SPARC to inquire about seeing the spreadsheet of current /past UBC faculty who sit/sat on the various PRCs.



# PRC SELECTION IN RESEARCHNET

In the Registration module, under “Task: “Complete Peer Review Administration Information”:

- Select and justify a Primary and (optional) Secondary suggested PRC (750 characters, including spaces)
- Clearly delineate why the proposal should be assigned to your suggested primary PRC, especially if your work is interdisciplinary.
- Include keywords/descriptors from the PRC mandate to build a case and rationale for your preferred PRC, and why it should not be assigned to a different PRC.

**Tip:** Contact SPARC for help with this process.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Suggested Committees" with a green checkmark icon. It contains two main sections. The first section is labeled "\* Primary (required)" in red text with a green checkmark icon. It features a dropdown menu with "--" selected. Below this is a large text area labeled "\* Justification (required)" in red text with a green checkmark icon. The second section is labeled "Secondary" and also features a dropdown menu with "--" selected. Below this is another large text area labeled "Justification" with a green checkmark icon. The form is enclosed in a thin black border.

# PRCs WITH SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

## 1. Indigenous Health Research, IHR (<https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49564.html#4.2.4>)

- The proposal must explicitly describe engagement with the community in relation to the research.
- IHR has specific considerations under each Adjudication Sub-criterion (<https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49564.html#4.2.2>).
- Applications may be eligible for Iterative Peer Review to enable all promising Indigenous health research to continue to evolve.
  - Applications deemed good, as per CIHR's rating scale, have the opportunity to address necessary clarifications and/or panel recommendations with the goal of improving their application to increase their chances of being funded.



# PRCs WITH SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS (CONTINUED)

## 2. Randomized Controlled Trial, RCT (RC1/RC2)

- All applications containing an RCT must consider specific RCT Evaluation Criteria and Headings: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/39187.html>.
- If requested budget is >\$250k in every year, applicant must apply to the RCT committee.
- If requested budget is <\$250k in every year, applicants can apply to the most relevant PRC **or** the RCT committee, but you must still use the RCT headings.
- **Tip:** See SPARC “RCT Guidebook” resource (<https://sparc.ubc.ca/cwl/cihr-resources#projectgrant>; CWL required).



## 3. Commercialization, CMZ

- These are projects designed to advance discoveries and inventions towards technologies to be commercialized, attract new investment, create new science-based businesses, and ultimately improve health outcomes for Canadians.
- Assessed based on specific criteria including a Research and Technical Plan and a Commercialization Plan: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50439.html>.

# PRCs WITH SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS (CONTINUED)

## 4. Tri-Agency Interdisciplinary Review, TIR

- Health-focused applications that clearly utilize interdisciplinary approaches may select TIR.
- Research must be interdisciplinary (one voice) rather than multidisciplinary (different disciplines working in silos). Justification for choosing TIR must clearly address how the proposal integrates the interdisciplinary approaches to achieve the project goals.
- Applications will **not** be placed into the TIR committee by CIHR unless “TIR” is the applicant’s first suggested PRC. However, applications suggesting TIR for their PRC may be removed from TIR and placed in a different PRC if they do not fit the TIR mandate.
- Applications submitted to the TIR PRC will follow a specific review process with features that are distinct from all other Project Grant competition committees and will be evaluated according to specialized evaluation criteria: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/52483.html>.
- **NOTE:** UBC applicants have not yet been successful in this PRC, so SPARC doesn’t have any TIR-specific advice to offer.



# RESEARCH SUMMARY

- 3,500 characters, including spaces
- Used to confirm PRC and reviewer assignments at the Registration stage
- Content can be updated at the Application stage, but should not change so significantly as to result in reviewer mismatch



# SPARC TIPS

- Cover **all** aspects of the 10-page proposal.
- Suggest using headings to organize content and focus attention:
  - **Goal** – starting with your overall goal is a useful way to draw reviewers in
  - **Significance** – detail the reason for the study (in 2-4 lines)
  - **Aims** (or Objectives)
  - **Approaches** – provide enough methodological detail to enable reviewers to assess their ability to review
  - **Team** – show you have the expertise needed for the work
  - **Knowledge Translation**
  - **Impact** (or Expected Outcomes)
- Write this section (and your proposal) ‘to’ your PRC. **Tip:** Review the mandate carefully and look for sample grants funded by that PRC for helpful ideas.



## SPARC TIPS (CONTINUED)

- Join CIHR's College of Reviewers to participate as a PRC reviewer:
  - <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49923.html>
- For ECRs, apply to CIHR's Reviewer in Training (RiT) program (deadline to TBD) to conduct practice reviews, attend the peer review meeting, and participate in the committee discussion of their assigned applications.
  - Fall 2023 RiT program: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/52291.html>
  - **Tip:** Consider sitting on a PRC different than your 1<sup>st</sup> choice to avoid conflict.
- Consult SPARC's Research Summary and Peer Review Committee Justification Guidelines resource:
  - <https://sparc.ubc.ca/cwl/cihr-resources#projectgrant> (CWL required)
- SPARC provides consults for PRC selection. Please contact [sharon.marsh@ubc.ca](mailto:sharon.marsh@ubc.ca) for more information.



# 3. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS



# SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

- Mandatory 2-page document
- Primarily focused on the project NPA:
  - Co-PA and Co-Applicant information can be discussed if directly pertinent (e.g., progress related to the current proposal, real or perceived budget overlaps)
- Uploaded as a .pdf file:
  - **Format:** 2-page limit, Times New Roman (**mandated for Fall 2023**) size 12 black font, minimum 0.75” (1.9cm) margins all round, and minimum single line spacing must be used. Figures and tables are not allowed in this document.



# SUMMARY OF PROGRESS (CONTINUED)

This document has required sections (no prescribed length; page lengths below are suggestions only)

- **Progress/Productivity/Impact** (~3/4pg)
  - Contextualize results from research activities supporting the current application
- **ECRs** (~1/4pg)
  - Write a narrative about your intended program of research, relevant research undertaken as a trainee and any as an independent investigator, other sources of funds (e.g., start-up funds, awards) and how the funds will advance your research.
  - **Tip:** Consider merging this section with above, given the potentially overlapping content, and rename the new section as “**ECR Progress/Productivity/ Impact**”.
- **Impacts on Progress of Research** (~1/2pg)
  - Outlines the impact of specific factors (e.g., leave history, career stage, family responsibilities, pandemic impact or other circumstances) on research progress.
  - **Tip:** Include only impacts/challenges for which you have identified solutions!
- **Budget requested in relation to overall funding held currently or pending** (~1/2pg)
  - Include all current/pending funds listed in your CCV
  - Specify any contextual or financial overlaps; if no overlaps, clearly explain why



# SPARC TIPS

- Provide context for the proposed project within your overarching program of research:
  - Be authentic and humble; avoid empty descriptors.
  - Particularly useful to assigned reviewers with medium (vs. high) expertise, rather than sifting through to the CCV.
  - SPARC has heard that reviewers are very interested in how the proposed budget fits into your overall research program.
- Consult SPARC's Summary of Progress guide:
  - <https://sparc.ubc.ca/cwl/cihr-resources#projectgrant> (CWL required)
- SPARC can review your 2-page Summary of Progress document.
  - Submit with your 10-page Research Proposal.



# 4. RESPONDING TO PREVIOUS REVIEWS



## RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEWS

- During the registration phase, under the “Details” subtask, there is now the following question, “Is this a resubmission of an unsuccessful application to the same funding opportunity?” Only answer “yes” if it is a resubmission, as the response will pre-populate during the Application stage, and the response is not editable.
- **Tip:** If you are submitting to a different PRC than in the previous competition OR there has been over a year (i.e., more than two competition cycles) since the previous application, do not respond with “yes”– submit as a new application. **SPARC can provide advice on best strategy.**



# RESPONDING TO PREVIOUS REVIEWS

- Use the (optional) 2-page Response to Previous Reviews (R2PR) document to outline improvements to an unsuccessful application.
- Times New Roman (**mandated for Fall 2023**) size 12 black font, minimum 0.75” (1.9cm) margins all round, and minimum single line spacing must be used.
- Applicants who upload a R2PR are required to include **all reviewer comments** from the previous submission (**note:** these do not count toward the 2-page limit), although you do not have to respond to all comments, only those relevant to your revised application.



## RESPONDING TO PREVIOUS REVIEWS (CONTINUED)

- Responses should not require reference to any document from the previous application other than reviewer comments.
  - Do **not** include the NOD, the results letter or the score.
- Reviewers are not required to read your response if you do not include all previous reviews being addressed.
- If your response exceeds the 2-page limit, reviewers are not required to read these additional pages.
- The 2-page R2PR and previous reviewers comments must be uploaded as a single .pdf attachment.



# SPARC TIPS

- The following structure is suggested:
  1. Overview of strengths (0.25 page)
  2. Update since last submission (0.25 page)
  3. Selective responses (1.5 pages)



## 1. OVERVIEW OF STRENGTHS (0.25 PAGE)

- Begin with an overview of select strengths identified by reviewers:
  - e.g., “We thank the [PRC panel name or code] for a thoughtful review of our application, and the reviewers for highlighting the following strengths ...”
- For PA-funded or Bridge awards applications:
  - Thank the reviewers and summarize what you accomplished with the funds.



## 2. UPDATE SINCE LAST SUBMISSION (0.25 PAGE)

- Strategically describe **key updates** since the last application.
- Provide reviewers with a productivity and work update for example:
  - Productivity: recently accepted/published articles, relevant awards, leadership roles
  - Advances in your field of research: significant or conceptual shifts in research direction or hypotheses
  - Expertise: addition of co-applicants, collaborators, trainees to the team
  - Environment: new lab resources, centralized core facilities, research capacity
- Do not duplicate text from your 2-page Summary of Progress.



**Note:** A minimum of 6 months will have passed since the previous submission.

### 3. SELECTIVE RESPONSES (1.5 PAGES)

- If you received SO notes, focus on addressing these as they summarize the PRC's main discussion points.
- Respond to specific improvements, selecting the most constructive feedback that led to practical, value-added revisions.
- Applicants should not feel compelled to address all reviewer comments, but should pay careful attention to those concerns held by multiple reviewers.



## ADDITIONAL SPARC TIPS

- Because PRCs have standing memberships, your resubmission may be re-reviewed by some of the same reviewers.
  - Provide a thoughtful and well-considered response.
- If you are submitting to a different PRC than in the previous competition, do not respond to reviews – submit as a new application.
- Consult SPARC's R2PR Guidelines resource and Sample Grant Library (CWL required):
  - <https://sparc.ubc.ca/cwl/cihr-resources#projectgrant>
  - <https://vpri.share.ubc.ca/sparc/Pages/CIHR.aspx>
- SPARC can provide a R2PR template:
  - Please send your NOR/NOD (results page, reviewer comments, SO notes) to [sharon.marsh@ubc.ca](mailto:sharon.marsh@ubc.ca).



# 5. WRITING THE 10-PAGE PROPOSAL



# OVERVIEW OF THE 10-PAGE PROPOSAL

- Write this to be a **stand-alone document**.
  - Be sure to include a complete description of your project and all information required to support your research plan.
  - Provide all crucial information (including tables, charts, figures) that reviewers will need in order to assess your application.
  - **Note:** Reviewers are under no obligation to read other supplementary application materials (i.e., appendices).
- Follow CIHR's Acceptable Application Formats and PDF Attachments guidelines:
  - Letter size paper with 2 cm (3/4 cm inch) margins (**note:** 0.75" = 1.9 cm!)
  - Times New Roman style (**mandated in Fall 2023**), size 12, black font with minimum single line spacing must be used.
  - "Smaller text in tables, charts, figures and graphs is acceptable, as long as it is legible when the page is viewed at 100%."
  - <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/29300.html>



# STRUCTURING THE PROPOSAL – HEADINGS

- SPARC recommends using the following 3 **CIHR criteria as your main headings**:
  1. Significance and Impact of the Research
  2. Approaches and Methods
  3. Expertise, Experience and Resources
- **Reminders:**
  - If your grant is an RCT, your proposal must follow a different format with required headings: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/39187.html>.
  - Indigenous health research projects have specific review considerations: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49564.html#4.2.2> and <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49564.html#4.2.4>.
  - For commercialization projects, your proposal must include a Research and Technical Plan and a Commercialization Plan: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50439.html>.



# SAMPLE OUTLINE

## 1. Significance and Impact of the Research

- Overview:
  - Provide the 'big picture' for reviewers, including overall project importance and details about timeliness/urgency.
  - Include a central goal, as well as a hypothesis/research question.
- Background:
  - Describe the health problem and how you will address it.
  - Provide rationale (including novelty) and relevant literature.
- Preliminary Data:
  - Build logically on your previous research results.
  - **Tip:** Include pilot data for every aim/objective, with an optional figure/table to summarize key data.



# SAMPLE OUTLINE (CONTINUED)

## 2. Approaches and Methods

- Aims:
  - Approximately ~3 aims is standard (don't be overly ambitious; must be do-able within the timeframe of the grant).
  - Use sub-headings (if required) to ensure consistent details are provided for each aim.
- Methodology:
  - Provide a clear outline of your experimental plan with detailed descriptions.
- Analysis Strategy:
  - Provide a plan to analyze results (e.g., statistical methods, team expertise).
- Expected Results:
  - Discuss predicted results/outputs, interpretation, and significance.
- Pitfalls and Alternative Strategies:
  - Discuss potential pitfalls and present alternatives to strengthen feasibility.



## SAMPLE OUTLINE (CONTINUED)

### 3. Expertise, Experience and Resources

- Team and Feasibility:
  - Clearly demonstrate that your team has the expertise and experience required for project success and justify their selection as team members.
  - Describe collaborators, as appropriate.
  - Outline participant roles and everyone's time commitments.
- Environment:
  - Describe your research environment (e.g., space, personnel, infrastructure) to demonstrate your readiness to undertake the proposed research.



# SAMPLE OUTLINE: OTHER KEY DETAILS TO INCLUDE

## Timeline

- Aims must be feasible within the timeframe.
- A simplified Gantt chart is a useful visual for reviewers.
- Suggest including in Approaches and Methods.



## Knowledge Translation

- Describe your end of grant knowledge translation/dissemination plans.
- If you have asked for KT costs in the budget, justify them.
- Could be included in Approaches and Methods or in Expected Outcomes.

## Expected Outcomes

- Suggest using this as your conclusion and overall proposal summary.

# SEX AND GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS

## GENDER

Socially-constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities of girls, women, boys, men and gender-diverse people.



## SEX

Biological attributes of humans and animals, including physical features, chromosomes, gene expression, hormones and anatomy.



# WHERE TO INCLUDE SEX AND GENDER

Provide details in 3 key application sections:

1. 10-page Research Proposal
  - Recommend that sex and gender details be incorporated into multiple sections (e.g., literature review, workplan, analysis, etc.), and not as a standalone section.
2. 2,000-character sex and gender textbox
3. Optional 2-page Response to Previous Reviews (for resubmissions)



# SEX AND GENDER

- Reviewers are asked to explicitly assess whether the integration of sex (as a biological variable) and/or gender (as a socio-cultural factor) is a strength, a weakness, or not applicable to the proposal:



Please indicate your appraisal of the integration of sex as a biological variable as a strength, weakness, or not applicable to the proposal./Prière de sélectionner une option pour donner votre évaluation de l'intégration du sexe comme variable biologique en tant que point fort ou point faible de la proposition, ou en tant qu'élément non applicable à la proposition.

- ☒ Strength/Point fort
- ☐ Weakness/Point faible
- ☐ Not applicable/Non applicable

Please indicate your appraisal of the integration of gender as a socio-cultural determinant of health as a strength, weakness, or not applicable to the proposal./Prière de sélectionner une option pour donner votre évaluation de l'intégration du genre comme déterminant socioculturel de la santé en tant que point fort ou point faible de la proposition, ou en tant qu'élément non applicable à la proposition.

- ☐ Strength/Point fort
- ☒ Weakness/Point faible
- ☐ Not applicable/Non applicable

## SEX AND GENDER (CONTINUED)

- Reviewers are asked to comment on their assessment and provide recommendations on how applicants might improve the integration of sex and/or gender.
- Appropriate integration of sex and/or gender **forms part of the final score**.
- See the SGBA section of CIHR's website (<https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50836.html>) for helpful resources:
  - Sex, gender, and SGBA definitions
  - Applying SGBA to the development and assessment of research proposals
- CIHR also has a resource on “Why sex and gender need to be considered in COVID-19 research”:
  - <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/51939.html>



## WRITING THE PROPOSAL – WRITING TIPS

- Use the Peer Review Manual “Adjudication Criteria and Interpretation Guidelines”:
  - <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49564.html#4.2.2>
- Be sure to include preliminary data (reviewers expect this), plus expected pitfalls and mitigation strategies (a commonly missed requirement).
- Integrate sex and/or gender considerations **throughout** the 10-page Proposal, as relevant (vs. a separate sub-section). Sex and/or gender details in the 2,000-character textbox only is insufficient.



# SPARC TIPS

- Consult SPARC's Research Proposal Guidelines, Sex and Gender Considerations Textbox Guidelines, Sex and Gender Workshop slides (e.g., Sex and Gender Checklist) and RCT Guidebook resources:
  - <https://sparc.ubc.ca/cwl/cihr-resources#projectgrant> (CWL required)
- SPARC provides detailed editorial feedback – focusing on logic, coherence, and compelling statements of impact – to ensure all criteria are fully addressed.
  - Grantsmanship is critical given reviewers must provide a single overall application score, encompassing 3 criteria – and for getting all 3 reviewers onside!
- Submit the following well-developed application sections for editorial/criteria feedback:
  - 10-page Research Proposal
  - 2-page Summary of Progress



## SPARC TIPS (CONTINUED)

- SPARC's Sample Grant Library is generously populated by UBC faculty:
  - <https://vpri.share.ubc.ca/sparc/Pages/CIHR.aspx> (CWL required)
- Access the library for helpful examples of how to structure your proposal.
  - **Note:** We currently have grants from ~39 of the 50 PRCs.



SPARC Sample Grant Library

CIHR SSHRC NSERC NFRF MSFHR

VPRI » SPARC Sample Grant Library » CIHR

*We respectfully request that these resources are not distributed beyond the UBC community.*

CIHR Sample Grants

+ new document or drag files here

Find a file

✓ Name	Competition	Competition Year	Competition Cycle	Applicant
↳ <b>Competition : CHRP (1)</b>				
↳ <b>Competition : Project Grant (43)</b>				
↳ <b>Competition Year : 2019 (17)</b>				
Targeting PI3-kinase p110delta to treat Crohn's disease-associated intestinal fibrosis	... Project Grant	2019	Spring	Sly, Laura
The role of histone methylation in guiding de novo DNA methylation in the male germline	... Project Grant	2019	Spring	Lorincz, Mat C

# 6. KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION AND IMPACT

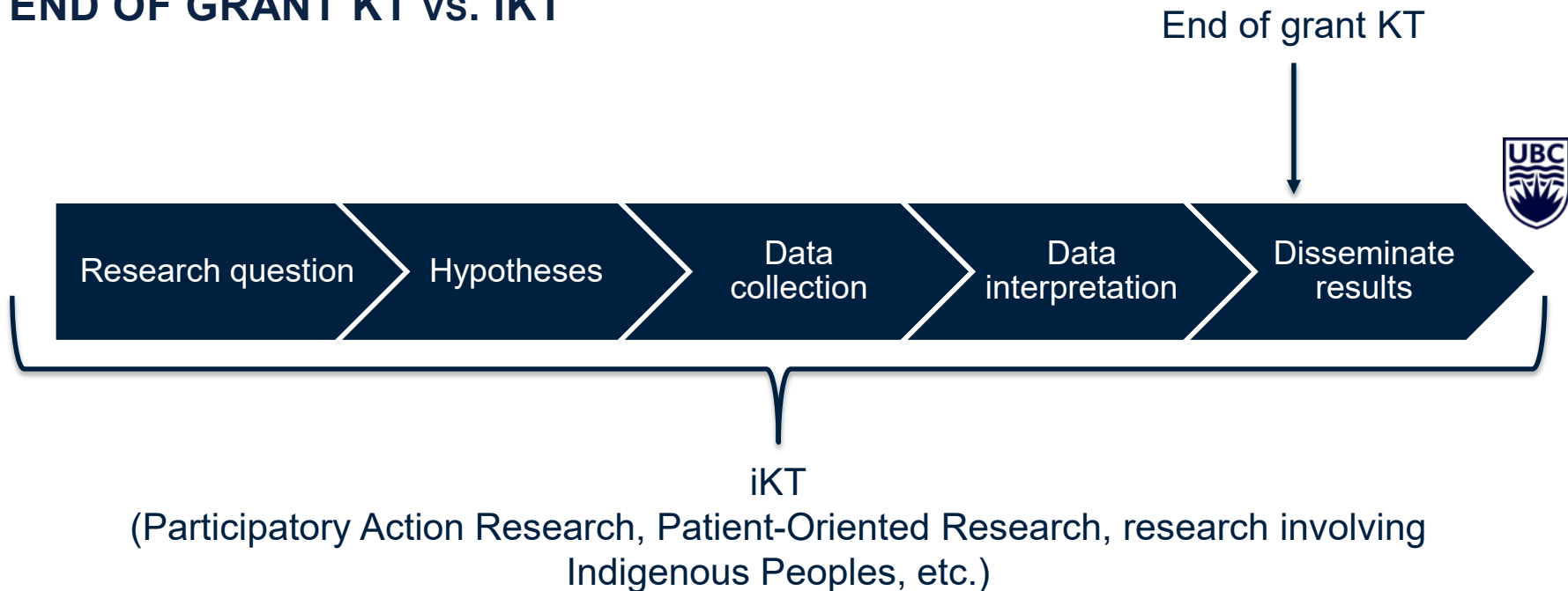


# KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION

- Knowledge translation (KT) falls into 2 categories:
  1. End of grant KT; and
  2. Integrated KT (iKT).
- With both of these KT categories, **CIHR expects researchers to disseminate their findings and facilitate their translation into improved health, more effective products or services, and/or a strengthened healthcare system.**



## END OF GRANT KT vs. iKT



**iKT approaches must also include an  
end of grant KT plan**

# KT COSTS

- KT costs are eligible CIHR grant expenditures, such as:
  - Open Access publishing fees
  - Venue expenses (catering, A/V, etc.)
  - Conferences (travel, registration, accommodations)
  - “Contracts and/or consultant fees for knowledge translation and communication activities for Indigenous Elders, community members, and other Indigenous Knowledge Keepers involved in activities related to the Indigenous community.” Please see the Indigenous Finance Guidelines for guidance on equitable and respectful compensation when working with Indigenous partners:  
[https://irsi.ubc.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Indigenous\\_Finance\\_Guidelines\\_-\\_12-10-2021\\_1.pdf](https://irsi.ubc.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/Indigenous_Finance_Guidelines_-_12-10-2021_1.pdf).



# iKT

- Stakeholders or potential knowledge users are engaged in the entire research process and the research is directed at producing solutions to issues or problems the stakeholders/knowledge users have identified--an iKT approach might be ethically imperative (e.g., research with patients).
- If a Project Grant application has a significant focus on KT with industry partners, particularly if it has commercialization potential, consider submitting to the Commercialization Peer Review Committee (CMZ).
  - **Note:** Grants submitted to CMZ differ slightly from a typical Project Grant because they must include a Research/Technical Plan and a Commercialization Plan (<https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50439.html>).



# iKT IN THE RESEARCHNET APPLICATION PORTAL

**ResearchNet question:** Does your application include a partner AND/OR a knowledge user? (see “Task: Enter Proposal Information / Subtask: Details”)

- Answer “yes” if a KT or commercialization project including a partner/knowledge user.
  - If a knowledge user is specified, at least 1 Principal Applicant must be a knowledge user (see “Task: Participants”).



## Enter Proposal Information

This task collects information related to your research proposal. To complete the task you must complete the sub-tasks listed on this screen.

For program specific information consult the "[Eligibility](#)" and the "[How to Apply](#)" sections of this funding opportunity.

Subtasks	Enter Proposal Information - Details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Overview</li><li><b>Details</b></li><li>Descriptors</li></ul>	<p>Fields that appear in bold with an Asterisk * are mandatory. It is important to save any additions or changes before navigating away from this page.</p> <p><b>Partnered/Integrated Knowledge Translation (iKT) projects</b></p> <p>* Does your application include a partner AND/OR a knowledge user? <i>(required)</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="button" value="v"/></p> <p>* My Application includes: <i>(required)</i></p> <p><input type="radio"/> A partner AND a knowledge user; OR</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A partner only; OR</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A knowledge user only.</p> <p><b>Primary location where research will be conducted</b></p> <p>* Institution <i>(required)</i></p> <p><input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Other"/> <input type="text"/></p>

## iKT IN THE RESEARCHNET APPLICATION PORTAL (CONTINUED)

- Confirm you have accurately answered the question.
  - Inclusion of a knowledge user does not automatically make application an iKT project. If not an iKT proposal, answer “no”.
    - **Tip:** iKT has a high bar for consultant/engagement; it is not a buzz word. If in doubt, go with end-of-grant KT only and select “no”.
  - A “yes” answer, specifying a knowledge user, triggers an assessment by both researcher and knowledge user reviewers. The latter group will expect to see a thorough iKT plan.
  - A “yes” answer, specifying a partner, means you will need to add corresponding information in the “Application Partners” and the “Budget Information” steps, specifying any cash/in-kind partnership contributions and providing accompanying signed letters of support from such partners.
  - Consult SPARC’s Mock Application Materials (Application Module):
    - <https://sparc.ubc.ca/cwl/cihr-resources#projectgrant> (CWL required)



# IMPACT STATEMENTS

Be specific and concrete!

- Specify why your research is needed.
  - A basic/mechanistic impact is as important as a translational impact, thus impact does not only mean near-future clinical relevance.
- Ultimately, the proposed work should answer a question/solve a problem to significantly advance your research area.
- State who will benefit from the work, such as partners and users (e.g., researchers, healthcare workers, patients).
- Detail your anticipated results leading to full-fledged impact (i.e., outcome/significance of adoption), and describe any indirect impacts (e.g., new models/pipelines/algorithms that can be applied to other disease types).



# SPARC TIPS

- Remember to incorporate sex/gender considerations in the KT plan
  - e.g., disaggregate results by sex/gender, disseminate to sex-/gender-specific groups
- Plan and budget for end of grant KT activities, such as:
  - Publishing findings as “gold” (\$\$\$) or “green” (free!) Open Access;
  - Presenting your findings at conferences; and
  - Disseminating plain language summaries (via website/social media or hard copies)
- Ensure you have appropriate letters of support for dissemination activities.
- Consult SPARC’s KT Plan for Biomedical Researchers and Integrating the Wellcome Trust Statement on COVID-19 Data Sharing into KT Plans resources:
  - <https://sparc.ubc.ca/cwl/cihr-resources#projectgrant> (CWL required)
- SPARC can provide feedback on the KT content in your 10-page Research Proposal.



## USEFUL LINKS

- CIHR's Guide to Knowledge Translation Planning:
  - <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/45321.html>
- Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications:
  - <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/32005.html>
- Writing a Meaningful Impact Statement:
  - <https://researchwhisperer.org/2021/06/01/the-prickly-impact-statement/>



## **SPARC Services for Fall 2023 Project Grant**

### **Consults: Available now**

- Consultations are available to all researchers, although particularly recommended for new/new-to-Project faculty. Contacts [marliese.dawson@ubc.ca](mailto:marliese.dawson@ubc.ca) and [christy.mctait@ubc.ca](mailto:christy.mctait@ubc.ca).

### **Peer Review Committee Selection: July 6 – August 11 (TBC)**

- Consultations are available for all researchers looking for assistance with selecting the most appropriate PRC. Contact [sharon.marsh@ubc.ca](mailto:sharon.marsh@ubc.ca).

### **Response to Previous Reviews: July 6 – August 17 @10am (TBC)**

- Applicants planning to submit a revised application can receive a tailored MS Word document for responding to reviewer comments. Contact [sharon.marsh@ubc.ca](mailto:sharon.marsh@ubc.ca).

### **Research Proposal Review: August 21 – September 7 @10am (TBC)**

- Review of 10-page Research Proposal and 2-page Summary of Progress. Contact [marliese.dawson@ubc.ca](mailto:marliese.dawson@ubc.ca).

### **Online Resources (CWL required)**

- Consult SPARC's online resources (<https://sparc.ubc.ca/cwl/cihr-resources#projectgrant>) including guidelines and checklists, and our sample grant library (<https://vpri.share.ubc.ca/sparc/Pages/CIHR.aspx>).

Resources have been updated to be consistent with the Fall 2023 requirements.

