

University Delegates Meeting
May 6th, 2021 – 12:30-1:30pm (EDT)
Meeting Minutes

Chair: Adrian Mota - Associate-Vice President, Research Programs (Operations)

1. CIHR UPDATES

Tri-Agency Grants Management Solution (TGMS) proof of concept demo session

The Chair provided a reminder that a bilingual demonstration of the Proof of Concepts (POC) of both software solutions that TGMS is currently evaluating as part of the procurement process will take place on **Monday, May 17th, 2021 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30pm EDT** for University Delegate Network (UD) members. To take part in the session, UD members must read and **sign the confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement and send the signed copy** by email to the [University Delegates mailbox](#) by Thursday, May 13th, 2021. If you are a UD member or a CARA-CIHR Working Group member and have not received the invitation, please let us know by contacting us at University.Delegates@cihr-irsc.gc.ca.

For information about the TGMS initiative, please visit the [TGMS website](#).

Tri-Agency EDI Action Plan

As mentioned in the message sent to the network on April 14, 2021, the three federal research-funding agencies have released the [Tri-Agency Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan](#). The Action Plan is designed to establish a foundation for ongoing inter-agency collaboration on EDI as a shared priority and to further enhance EDI in the Canadian research ecosystem. The Action Plan was developed under the leadership of the Canada Research Coordinating Committee (CRCC) and includes measures to embed EDI within the agencies' policies, programs, and practices. The two overarching objectives of the EDI Action Plan are to increase the equitable and inclusive access for all members of the research community to granting agency funding opportunities; and to influence the achievement of an inclusive post-secondary research system and culture in Canada. Numerous initiatives mentioned in the EDI Action Plan are already being implemented such as the [Dimensions pilot program](#), which provides a framework for postsecondary institutions to identify and address EDI gaps in their environments.

The Agencies are also in the process of expanding mechanisms for collecting self-identification data from individuals applying for agency funding, performing peer review, and sitting on advisory and governance committees. Analysis of the data will help identify inequities and inform future operational decisions to address them, with the goal of eliminating systemic barriers and creating a more equitable and diverse research ecosystem. In addition, the Agencies are implementing EDI training with staff members and enhancing EDI training for peer reviewers. The implementation of the EDI Action Plan will evolve as the Agencies continue to engage with and hear from the community.

The [recent statement](#) from the Tri-Agency presidents affirms their commitment to EDI and calls on the research community to help drive systemic change. If you have any feedback or questions, we invite you send them by email to edi@cihr-irsc.gc.ca.

Tri-Agency Interdisciplinary Peer Review Committee

On May 5th 2021, the tri-agencies announced a new pilot project: the creation of a tri-agency interdisciplinary peer review committee. The committee provides an option for researchers working in interdisciplinary research to direct their applications to a committee with expertise from across the social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, engineering, and health sciences. Individuals applying to the Project Grant competition (and the other tri-agency investigator-initiated competitions) are eligible to have their grant applications reviewed by this new interdisciplinary peer review committee. For CIHR, the use of this new peer review committee will begin for the CIHR Fall 2021 Project Grant competition.

More information can be found on the [CIHR website](#).

Application Profile CV

In recent years, the research community has expressed frustration with the current process to capture CV data via the Canadian Common CV (CCV). Concerns raised include the focus on academic outputs and the usability of the application,

which is often considered a barrier to applying for funding, especially for knowledge users, non-academics, Indigenous organizations, and international applicants. The Applicant Profile CV was piloted during the COVID-19 competitions and more recently, implemented for the Spring 2021 Project Grant competition. CIHR is now working towards implementing the CV template more broadly across CIHR funding competitions.

The Applicant Profile CV is a PDF CV template aimed at capturing CV information from knowledge users, non-academics, Indigenous organizations, and international applicants. Unless otherwise noted in the funding opportunity (FO), these applicants may choose to submit the CIHR Biosketch CV or the Applicant Profile CV, regardless of their role within the application. Canadian academic (independent) researchers must continue using the CIHR Biosketch CCV template.

A set of Frequently Asked Questions to help support knowledge users, non-academics, Indigenous organizations and international applicants who are completing the Applicant Profile CV will soon be made available on [CIHR's website](#). Please consult the How to Apply section of FOs for the applicable instructions.

For any questions, please reach out to the [Contact Centre](#).

Requesting ResearchNet Test Registration and Application

The Chair provided a reminder to the UD members that Research Granting Offices can request a test registration for funding opportunities with more than one stage (i.e. registration and application stage). To obtain a test registration, research administrators should submit a request to the Contact Centre support email address (support-soutien@cihr-irsc.gc.ca) with their name, CIHR PIN and the email address associated to their ResearchNet account. Please note that this option applies only to funding opportunities with a registration *and* application stage. A request must be submitted with each new FO launch (i.e. the test account does not carry over from one competition to the next competition). CIHR's goal in reminding the UD network of this option is to increase the uptake of this functionality and better equip research administrators in supporting their colleagues through the registration and application process. The Chair asked the network to share this information with their RGOs.

For any questions, please reach out to the [Contact Centre](#).

2. 2021 Federal Budget

The 2021 Federal budget is a 724-page document, outlining the plan to get Canadians back to work and ultimately improve Canada's growth potential. A presentation on certain proposed measures and investments relevant to CIHR and its partners was provided, including excerpts from the Budget document on the Clinical Trials Fund, the tri-council biomedical research fund, support for pediatric cancer research, the National Institute for Women's Health Research, and the development of national mental health service standards.

The Treasury Board Submission Process

CIHR staff outlined that the process to obtain the funds following the release of a federal budget takes time and requires the development of a Treasury Board Submission. The Treasury Board Submission process ensures that initiatives are aligned with Government of Canada priorities and that they are designed, implemented and delivered with respect to their intended results, while ultimately achieving value for money. A Treasury Board Submission transforms policy objectives previously approved by a Cabinet committee into an initiative that will achieve the proposed objectives. CIHR collaborates with the Treasury Board Secretariat through an iterative review process to ensure that TBS is comfortable with the justification and implementation of the initiative. This process usually requires between 4-5 months.

3. CRCEF Results

The Canada Research Continuity Emergency Fund (CRCEF) brought forward data from the recently closed program. The program was part of the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan and had a budget of \$450 million. The Tri-agency institutional program had two objectives: provide wage support to research-related personnel and to support extraordinary incremental costs associated with maintaining and ramping-up essential research activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. There were four funding stages delivered from June 2020 to January 2021. At the close of the program, 93% of the budget was used to fund 65 universities and 61 health research institutions.

In terms of wage support, CRCEF was meant to cover 75% of salaries from non-governmental sources with eligibility parameters similar to the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy program. The data stated that out of the \$323 million dollars received for wage support by institutions, students received 29%, 10% was received by postdoctoral fellows and 61% was received by other research personnel. Furthermore, the data reflects that 32,000 individuals were supported, 20,000 being from universities and 12,000 being from affiliated health research institutions.

The research maintenance and ramp-up of research was supported with \$93 million, covering 75% of exceptional and incremental costs incurred between March 15th, 2020 and November 15th, 2020. Moreover, close to 22,000 research projects were supported.

The audience was invited to visit the info graphics on the [CRCEF website](#) to learn more about the program's results, including on how EDI requirements were incorporated to ensure fair access was followed for the funding.

4. Spring Project Grant Competition Update

Application-specific data was discussed, and historical application-specific data from past competitions was analyzed in comparison to data from the Spring 2021 Project Grant Competition. The following parameters were analyzed: Total competitions, the language in which an application was submitted, Nominated Principal Applicant (NPI) sex, NPI gender, the NPI's Indigenous identity, whether an NPI identified as a visible minority, whether an NPI identified as a person with a disability, NPI career stage, whether NPIs self-declared that they identified as Indigenous, average requested budget per year and average total requested budget.

The UD members had a particular interest in CIHR's mitigation plan concerning COVID-19 and the impacts of the pandemic on researchers, particularly on women and ECRs. The importance of considering personal circumstances, outside of professional interruptions, was brought forward. CIHR reiterated that reviewers have been advised to consider these circumstances, and further stated the importance of applicants reaching out to CIHR asking for flexibility in specific conditions when submitting applications.

Reviewer-specific information data was deferred to the June 3rd UD meeting, due to lack of time.

5. Appendix A

A list of current and released funding opportunities was provided in Appendix A of the slides.

6. Adjournment

The meeting concluded at 1:35pm. The Chair thanked the members for their participation. The next meeting of the University Delegates will take place on June 3rd.