



**Lakehead**  
UNIVERSITY

**Senate Research Committee  
(SRC)**

**Grant Writing Workshop**

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**29 September 2015**

# How are Internal Funds and Grants Funded?

- 1) Largely through success in tri-council competitions (SSHRC/NSERC and CIHR) by faculty at Lakehead;
- 2) In part through the budget of the Office of the Vice-President, Research & Innovation (VPRI);
- 3) In part from funding received from a SSHRC Institutional Grant (SIG), which can only be used to support SSHRC researchers and fund programs and activities.



# Internal Funding Programs:

- **Research Development Fund (RDF)\***
- Open Access Author Fund
- Conference Travel Grants
- Publication Assistance Grants
- Visiting Scholar Grant



# Seed Grants: RDF

- Up to \$7,000/year for short-term research activities.
- Applications must be submitted through the Romeo Research Portal (available through MyInfo).
- Applicants must complete the online form, including a detailed research proposal and a project budget.
- Submission prior to deadline date is required to accommodate time for online approval by Department Chair and/or Faculty Dean.
- Applicants must also include the following attachments:
  - Canadian Common C.V. (NOTE: this is time consuming and frustrating, especially the first time!)
  - List of Scholarly Literature References

# Eligibility

- Tenured and tenure-track faculty members at Lakehead are eligible to apply.
- Funds are limited, and preference is given to new faculty and to those who currently hold, or are currently applying for, external funds, especially tri-council (SSHRC, NSERC, and CIHR).

# Criteria

- Grants are awarded to support the following eligible research initiatives:
  - (a) to support the research programs of new, full-time, faculty members (typically within three years of their initial appointment);
  - (b) to support efforts by faculty members to gain or regain funding by a major funding agency;
  - (c) to support new initiatives by faculty members who are changing fundamentally their direction of research and are seeking appropriate external support;
  - (d) to support new collaborative initiatives between faculty members who are also seeking appropriate external support; and
  - (e) to support acquisition of research infrastructure or matching funds of 10% to a maximum of \$7,500 towards infrastructure programs (i.e., NSERC RTI, CFI, etc.).

# Vetting Process

- The SRC has two subcommittees tasked with reviewing the internal funding competitions: the NSERC/CIHR (biomedical) subcommittee, and the SSHRC/CIHR (social) subcommittee. All faculty members appointed to the SRC by Senate Nominations will be assigned to one of the subcommittees based on their self-identification as a SSHRC, CIHR, or NSERC researcher.
- Given the composition of the subcommittees, which depends on the appointed faculty serving on the SRC, the subcommittees' membership is multidisciplinary. Make sure your research proposal is clearly written for a wide audience rather than for experts in your field.
- All faculty members of the SRC are members of the subcommittees. The Chair of the SRC oversees the review process of both subcommittees. If the Chair is unavailable or has a Conflict of Interest, the Vice-Chair will review the process.



- All subcommittee members review the applications in their general areas submitted through ROMEQ, and make comments and/or rank the applications prior to the subcommittee's meeting.
- A meeting of each subcommittee is held to discuss the applications and the members' comments/rankings. The subcommittees then make their recommendation for funding to the whole SRC. NOTE: subcommittees can choose to fund no applications if the applications are deemed ineligible or not-fundable, even if sufficient funds are available.
- The subcommittees' recommendations are brought to the full SRC. All members, voting and non-voting, have access to the applications and participate in the discussion to accept or reject the subcommittees' recommendations. NOTE: All members of the SRC will sign a confidentiality agreement to ensure the privacy and intellectual property of all applications.

# Advice from SRC Members (Current and Past):

- **Know your audience.** Your application will be read by your colleagues, all of whom are actively teaching, researching, and providing service to the institution. Reading up to 30-40 files each competition date (October 10 and March 10) is time-consuming.
- **Make sure your application is complete.** Romeo has made it easier to ensure all fields are filled before submitting an application, but you still need to ensure all the attachments are easily accessible and all the necessary approvals have been secured by the deadline. If competition is particularly stiff, you do not want to render your application ineligible.

- **Make sure your application meets the criteria.** Read the criteria carefully, and make sure your application is eligible. Make sure you are very clear how your research proposal meets the criteria: this is not the time for subtlety or creativity, but rather time to be straightforward and clear.
- **Use headings to guide the reader.** Let the readers know they are now reading about your methodology, etc. Remember your colleagues are reading other research proposals, marking student papers. Have your ideas and sections well organized for a clearer proposal.
- **Be really clear on the "so what"?** Why does your research matter? What difference will it make, and to whom? Why should it be funded? Spell out clearly any scholarly, professional, policy, community, or other impacts. Remember this is seed funding. How will this project allow you to submit a strong proposal for external funding? How will it lead to another research project?
- **Strategic Research Priorities.** Does your research proposal fit within any of Lakehead's strategic research priorities? If it does, explain how and why, as well as to any projected outcomes.

- **Give yourself time to write a strong proposal.** Leaving the application to the last minute can lead you to gloss over the directions quickly, and leave out important details, miss criteria, make errors, etc. that you otherwise would not do. Some parts of the application are also time consuming (and frustrating), like the Canadian Common C.V. If it is a tight competition, a sloppy proposal is not likely to be funded. Remember, as well, that applications can be turned down even if there are sufficient funds to fund all applicants.
- **Pay attention to detail.** Typos, spelling errors, missing references, etc., will make your application seem sloppy or premature. Ask for help – another reader can often pick up on minor mistakes that can be costly!
- **Get as much feedback as possible.** Ask your colleagues, family members, friends, graduate students, those within your discipline and those outside your discipline to read your proposal. Address any questions they may have about your methodology, budget, literature review, ideas, goals, etc. Remember there will be readers from different disciplines reading your application. Your proposal needs to be intelligible to an informed, intelligent reader with no background in your field.

- **Training of HQP.** If your proposal identifies hiring or training students, specify what the students will be required to do and how you will be supporting, supervising, and training them. Check the Office of Research's website for the costs of hiring students.
- **Realistic Budget.** How much money will you need to successfully complete this project? Be clear and realistic about the cost of individual items. Have a clear budget that outlines what you will be using the funds for, and ensure that these meet the eligibility criteria set by the tri-council agencies. Check with the Office of Research whenever in doubt.
- **Realistic Time-Frame and Goals.** Is your project doable in the amount of time and timeline you have identified? The RDF is not intended to fund your program of research; it is meant to support your research as you prepare to compete for external funds to support a longer-term program of research. What can you realistically accomplish, and when?

# What makes reviewers grumpy?

- Sloppy and incomplete proposals. Make sure you include all required documents and information, and make sure that these are all clearly visible and legible.
- Poorly written proposals. Reviewers have identified two common problems: writing issues (clarity, grammar, etc.), and sloppiness. Seek help with writing or editing your proposal to ensure it is clear, and give yourself time to write and rewrite as necessary.

# What makes applicants grumpy?

- The most common complaint is that the RDF application is an involved and time-consuming process for too little money. Why should researchers invest valuable time applying for an internal application to receive up to \$7,000?
- Remember that this is seed money to help new tenured-track and tenured faculty establish their program of research, and to help them compete for external funding. Part of that support is in immersing researchers into successful grant writing practices. This includes crafting a legible and clear proposal and budget.

# Any Questions?



# Thank You

For more information on the SRC funding competitions, and for the guidelines for submission, please visit our website:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/research-and-innovation/research-services/funding-prizes/internal>

Please direct all questions to the Chair of the SRC (a new Chair will be elected at the September 30 meeting of the SRC), or to the VPRI's Executive Assistant, Sarah Jane Walker, at: [ea.vpri@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:ea.vpri@lakeheadu.ca)



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