Social Science and Humanities Researchers @ CIHR:

Tips for Writing for a Health Audience

Anna van der Meulen
Major Projects Coordinator, Health Sciences
OFFICE OF RESEARCH SERVICES
Workshop Overview

- About ORS
- Intro to CIHR
- Essential Features of Successful Grants
- Main Sections of a Typical CIHR Operating Grant
- Small Group Exercise
- Supplementary Materials (Appendices, Budget, CV)
- Review Process
ABOUT ORS
Office of Research Services (ORS): Research Development Staff

• Robin Ashcroft (First point of contact at ORS)
  – Research Facilitator (Health Sciences)
  – Administers and coordinates the external research grants submission process for Queen's researchers
  – Coordinates transfers from other universities

• Anna van der Meulen
  – Co-ordinator, Major Projects (Health Sciences)
  – Coordinates and provides project management support for the development of competitive research applications for external funding

• Karina McInnis
  – Interim Director
  – Reviews and signs research grant applications and contracts on behalf of the University
  – Manages Office of Research Services
ORS Website

- www.queensu.ca/ors

- Website contents:
  - Best Practice documents
  - Links to Community of Science/Pivot
  - Funding opportunities
    - Calendar
    - Listserv sign-up and archives
  - Data Summary and Signature (DSS) Sheet
ORS Submission Procedure

• Note: ORS staff are available to advise, address questions and to review your grant; please connect with us early in the grant process

• **ORS requirements for grant submission:**
  – Complete a Data Summary and Signature form (DSS), a min. of 5 days prior to funding agency deadline
    • Submit for department head e-approval (and hospital approval if conducting research in affiliated hospitals)
  – Send ORS your penultimate draft and budget for institutional signature (if needed) and for final approval of DSS.
  – Once DSS is approved, you can submit your application to CIHR.
  – For CIHR Open Operating Grant proposals (and a few other competitions), ORS will approve and submit directly to CIHR on your behalf.
Intro to CIHR
About CIHR: 13 virtual Institutes
• Mandate: “To excel, according to internationally accepted standards of scientific excellence, in the creation of new knowledge and its translation into improved health for Canadians, more effective health services and products and a strengthened Canadian health care system…”

• Fund research across 4 pillars:
  – Biomedical,
  – Clinical,
  – Health Services and
  – Social, Cultural, Environmental and Population Health
How CIHR Funds

• **Open Competitions (~70%)**:  
  – Operating grants, salary awards, training awards, knowledge translation grants, etc  
  – Researchers develop proposals in any area of health and submit applications to the appropriate open competition  
  – Regular competition cycle  

• **Strategic Initiatives (~30%)**:  
  – Target: major health challenges, strategic priorities  
  – Developed by Institutes/Branches/Initiatives  
  – Fluctuating competition cycle
Top Down Strategy

Strategic Reform

Targeted to specified areas of health research and knowledge translation. These programs and initiatives are intended to:

• Focus on gaps in specific research areas and research communities or
• Leverage existing strengths for impact

Bottom up Strategy

Reform of Open Suite of Programs

Open to all areas of health research and knowledge translation. This suite of programs is intended to:

• Capture excellence across all pillars
• Capture innovative/breakthrough research
• Improve sustainability of long-term research enterprise
• Integrate new talent
Current Signature Initiatives

1. Evidence Informed Healthcare Renewal
2. Canadian Epigenetics, Environment and Health Research Consortium
3. Community Based Primary Health Care
4. Personalized Medicine
5. Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples
6. Inflammation in Chronic Disease
7. Strategy on Patient-Oriented Research: Networks and SUPPORT Units
8. International Collaborative Research Strategy for Alzheimer’s Disease

Enhance Patient-Oriented Care and Improve Clinical Results through Scientific and Technological Innovations

Support a High-Quality, Accessible and Sustainable Health-Care System

Reduce Health Inequities of Aboriginal Peoples and other Vulnerable Populations

Prepare For and Respond To Existing and Emerging Threats to Health

Promote Health and Reduce the Burden of Chronic Disease and Mental Illness
Major changes proposed:

- Two funding schemes: foundation/programmatic versus project
- Separate stream for new/early career researchers (in programmatic scheme)
- Application-centric system (rather than peer review committee driven) & creation of a “College of Reviewers”
- Multi-phased application process (& mix of virtual and in-person review)
- Mainstreaming of “knowledge translation” across funding schemes

## Sample* CIHR Programs (vs SSHRC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SSHRC</th>
<th>CIHR (examples)</th>
<th>CIHR Description</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>SRG/Insight Grants</td>
<td>Open Operating Grant</td>
<td>Priority Announcements (PA)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Operating funds for all areas of health research</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDG/PG</td>
<td>Team Grants/Emerging Team Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDG/PG</td>
<td>Partnerships for Health System Improvement (PHSI)</td>
<td>Support for research by new or emerging teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDG/Connection</td>
<td>Knowledge Synthesis Grants</td>
<td>PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strengthen Canada’s health care system via collaborative, applied, policy-relevant research</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDG/PDG</td>
<td>Catalyst Grants</td>
<td>PA</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Support teams of researchers/knowledge users to produce knowledge syntheses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Planning &amp; Dissemination Grants</td>
<td>PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Meetings, planning, dissemination activities</td>
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</table>

*For all CIHR funding opportunities, click on “find funding” from CIHR homepage*
CIHR Tools: Common CV & ResearchNet

Welcome to ResearchNet
ResearchNet is an innovative web portal that will provide a virtual meeting place for the research community, providing a single point of contact to share information, collaborate, and conduct business with funding agencies. ResearchNet is in its pilot phase. It currently provides a user web portal to perform the electronic workflow for the submission of grant and award applications, and the submission of peer reviews.

Common CV

Please ensure that pop-up blockers are disabled when using the Common CV.

Accessed by permission:
The site is optimized for Internet Explorer version 5.5 or higher and for Netscape Navigator version 6.2. In addition, your browser must have JavaScript enabled.
While you may use either version of Internet Explorer (4.0 or higher) or Netscape Navigator (6.2 or higher), system performance might be affected.
The Common CV site is optimized for Accessable. This software is required to access and print this page.
System maintenance scheduled:
System maintenance is scheduled daily during the following period: 9:00 am to 9:00 pm EST. Access to the Common CV is not guaranteed during these hours.

ResearchNet

Welcome to ResearchNet
ResearchNet is an innovative web portal that will provide a virtual meeting place for the research community, providing a single point of contact to share information, collaborate, and conduct business with funding agencies. ResearchNet is in its pilot phase. It currently provides a user web portal to perform the electronic workflow for the submission of grant and award applications, and the submission of peer reviews.

System messages
ATTENTION: Windows & Mac OS users:
ResearchNet does not support Internet Explorer on the Mac OS. This system has been tested using Firefox, Internet Explorer 6.0, and Safari version 2.x. 8.x.

Firefox interface version 3.x.x is NOT supported.
ResearchNet officially supports the following browsers for Windows/Internet Explorer 6.0, Netscape Navigator 6.4, Mozilla 2.x
ResearchNet - Registration, Schedule, Procedures
ResearchNet - Registration, Schedule, Procedures
System Maintenance:
System Maintenance is scheduled daily between 9:00 pm - 9:00 pm EST. The system may be unavailable during this time.
CIHR - Electronic Systems Service Standards
CIHR - Electronic Systems Service Standards
Resources for Researchers
Funding Opportunities Database
This Funding Opportunities Database contains information pertinent to active funding opportunities in Canada. It allows users to search for funding opportunities along
CIHR Website: www.cihr.irsc.gc.ca (bookmark)
Essential Features of CIHR grants
Essential Features of Successful Grants

– User (i.e. reviewer) centred approach
– Three classifications to features:
  • EXPECTED (from guidelines)
  • QUALITY (strength in all areas)
  • INNOVATIVE* (the ‘wow’ factor)

* You are best positioned to determine what will distinguish your application from others in your field
EXPECTED Features

Reviewer Satisfaction

- Required to satisfy reviewer
- Absence can enrage reviewer
- Increased implementation does not affect satisfaction

Implementation of Feature
QUALITY Features

- Increased implementation increases reviewer satisfaction
- Decreased implementation decreases reviewer satisfaction
INNOVATIVE Features

- Lack of implementation does not affect reviewer satisfaction
- Increased implementation greatly increases reviewer satisfaction
Proposal Ingredients

- Identify the Problem
- Pose the Solution
- Show the Value
A Typical CIHR Operating Grant Application

*see also ORS Best Practices: CIHR operating grant proposals @
http://www.queensu.ca/ors/researchgrantsanddevelopment/wringwinningproposals.html
CIHR operating grant: Main Sections

• Lay Abstract (1/2 page)
• Summary of Research Proposal (1 page)
• Summary of Progress (1 page)
• Response to Previous Reviews (2 pages)
• Research Proposal (11 – 13 pages):
  – Specific Objectives & Research Questions
  – Background & Rationale (Literature Review)
  – Preliminary Studies
  – Methodology (research design, methods & timeline)
  – Team (if relevant)
  – Significance/ Knowledge Translation
• References & Appendices (unlimited)
• Budget/ Budget Justification
Lay Abstract (~1/2 page, character limit)

- Written in clear, plain language – have a family member read it
- Benefits of the research – media release for funding agency
- Should state all critical components of the proposal:
  - Goal and specific aims/objectives
  - Research design and methods (concise)
  - Why proposal is unique, important, significant and worth supporting.

30 second elevator pitch
Summary of Research Proposal (1 page)

• First Impression: have someone outside your field read it
  – generate excitement, confidence, a sense of why this work is significant, must be done, and must be done now

• The Essentials:
  – Context: importance of your proposal (to field, to funder, to broader society)
  – Problem (subject matter): in one-two sentences
  – Solution (research plan): Goal, objectives, research questions, preliminary work, methodology
  – Significance: best case scenario outcomes (value for investment) & alignment with relevant research areas; end with statement about the significance of your work for the health of Canadians, health services and/or health care system (i.e. address CIHR mandate)

• One of the most important pages of your application!
Importance of Summaries

“Summaries are more important than you might think… While it may be tempting to give these summaries short shrift, given all of the other tasks you must complete, they are among the most important parts of your application. “ CIHR

- Used by Chair/SO/program officers at Registration to assess fit with committee overall; Used by peer review committee members at to determine whether or not they have appropriate expertise to review an application.
- For strategic competitions, the summary may be used to determine whether or not your proposal is relevant to the funding opportunity’s strategic research areas.
- May be the only page read by all reviewers!
Summary of Progress (1 page)

• Translate some of the highlights of your CV in this section
• Stress what you have achieved to date (show logical progression of your previous work; cite relevant publications and grants, and highlight any preliminary findings if available)
• Complete this section whether or not you are submitting a new proposal or a renewal
• Provide an overview of feasibility (e.g. collaborations secured, access to data, infrastructure support if needed, etc.)

• New Investigators: describe research undertaken as a trainee, and, if applicable, as an independent researcher. Should address your research relationship with your previous supervisor(s).
Response to Reviewers (2 pages)

• There is no “official” memory of previous submissions, although a re-submitted application is commonly assigned to a new reviewer and one who has reviewed the application in the past (if possible).
• Be positive in tone, you need friends on the committee
• Include:
  – Thank the SO and reviewers for their comments; If you scored well in the last competition, mention this
  – Pay particular attention to the SO notes, which provide a summary of the discussion (individual reviews may be contradictory).
  – Summarize concerns into sub-headings. Address each concern specifically and indicate how the current proposal has been revised accordingly.
  – If you do not agree with a concern raised, provide a strong justification for your decision without sounding defensive
Research Proposal
(11 pgs max if 1-2 applicants; 13 pgs for 3+ applicants)

Introduction (1):
Introduce ‘Problem’ of interest to CIHR & committee
• May be multifold:
  – Pragmatic problem: related to objectives of the funding opportunity (esp for strategic opportunities); related to health care system, health services, health of Canadians (i.e. CIHR mandate)
  – Conceptual/Technical problem: related to your field (advancing current knowledge)
• Articulate significance of problem (scope and broader relevance)

* Engage reviewers in a story about the value of your proposal; each following section needs to be a case for funding...
“..one of the most common weaknesses of academic prose is to provide too much background before showing value. There will be world enough and time for background after you’ve constructed a motivating problem. (Though it is worth noting that powerful writers never merely state background at any point in their texts. What they do is enrich the problem.)”

Research Proposal, cont’d...

Introduction (2):

• Get to the point early – provide a synopsis of proposal: what you want to do & why it is important (overall goal, concise overview of research plan – i.e. your solution to the problem you introduced)
• List Specific Objectives & related hypotheses/research questions if applicable
  – Should be focused, clearly conceptualized and feasible (what you will accomplish)
  – Need to have expertise to address each objective
Rationale & Background:

- Offers context and builds a case for your proposal
- Should progress from description of state of knowledge to specific gap(s) that the proposal will address
- Cite recent, most important literature & position your work within the field
- Need to review literature relevant to specific objectives
- Review topics in same order as suggested in your objectives
- TIP: include a brief summary at the end of this section to highlight most important take-away messages that support your application (summaries embedded in your proposal will help keep reviewers focused and provide nice bridges between sections)

* Common mistake = too long, be sure to leave enough room for your methodology
Preliminary Studies (if applicable)

• Purpose: to convince reviewers that you/the team has the expertise and experience to carry out the proposed work; the work is feasible; sufficient groundwork has been done
• Present relevant publications or progress
• Show feasibility, validity, reliability of proposed methods (especially if untested)
• Choose figures/tables carefully (for open operating grants program, proposal should typically be text only with references to figures in appendix)
• Add strength to your rational
• Can be incorporated into background section, or included as stand alone section
Methodology:

- The heart of the proposal (‘what’ & ‘how’) – devote ~ 50% of the page allowance to this section
- tell reviewers how you will meet each specific objective
- Important to distinguish overall research design and specific methods to be used
- Need to state clearly why you’ve chosen the approach you have to address the problem
- Be focused and very clear – lead the reviewer through your ‘case’
- Show that you really understand the methods you propose including the shortcomings of selected methods
Methodology (2):
Should be…

– Appropriate
– Clear
– Feasible (demonstrate this, e.g. access to data, resources)
– Realistic and Timely (include a timeline/work plan either in proposal or refer to appendix)

• Address any strengths and weaknesses (anticipate criticisms and address them) DON’T LEAVE QUESTIONS UNANSWERED
• Continuity is critical – relate background to objectives to methods to analysis plan.
Methodology (3):

• Provide enough details that the reviewers have a clear picture of what you will do
  – (if relevant) Sampling frame & power/sample size calculation
  – Data collection and analysis plan (append tools when available)
  – Discuss potential limitations and alternative approaches (although, don’t provide ammunition to kill your project)
• Address any ethical issues and regulatory approvals required
Team (if relevant):

- Show why YOU should do the proposal (expertise, collaborators to complement skills)
- Study organization:
  - for team projects, who will do what? Describe expertise of all team members
  - Evidence of solid collaborations (esp. for multi-centre studies)
- Research Environment:
  - Describe resources available for the proposal
- Training:
  - Name any students involved (if possible) and provide an overview of training opportunities
Significant & Knowledge Translation:

- Expected outcomes (e.g. new knowledge, training of students, social, economic, health benefits, improved services etc.)
- How will you share your results
  - Describe your dissemination plan in detail. Consider all potential audiences (academic & non-academic) and how you will reach these audiences (be creative!)
  - (if appropriate) How will you engage with ‘knowledge-users’? What strategies may facilitate the use of your research findings?
About knowledge translation (KT) at CIHR

• Currently there are dedicated funding opportunities for KT at CIHR; these will be ‘mainstreamed’ with upcoming reforms
• Two types of KT at CIHR:
  – “End of Grant” KT: targeted dissemination and
  – “Integrated” KT: engagement of ‘knowledge users’ to varying degrees throughout the research process

• For links to KT resources for researchers, visit: http://www.queensu.ca/ors/researchgrantsanddevelopment/wringwinningproposals.html
• For more about KT at CIHR: http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/29418.html
Common Pitfalls

• Qualifications/experience of researcher (e.g. do not match the proposal)

• Specific objectives are poorly focused, underdeveloped or overly ambitious

• Methodology is underdeveloped or not well explained

• Proposal is too ambitious or not feasible (resources, time allocated)

• Criteria have not been addressed adequately

• Non-compliance with agency requirements (CIHR has a ‘no tolerance’ policy for incomplete proposals)

• Proposal is premature: preliminary or pilot work lacking, or inadequately described, or not linked to proposal
Timeline

- 1 year: your idea; vision; connect with ORS; monitor funding opportunities
- 3-9 months:
  - Start/Update CV
  - Generate preliminary data (if applicable)
  - Clarify and focus your research
  - Review funding guidelines, previously funded grants, review committees
  - Start summary (will be re-written) and outline & draft proposal
- 6 weeks: Intensify writing to completion; Write every day
- 4 weeks: registration (for OOGP)
- 2-3 weeks: Internal review (with colleagues, ORS etc)
- 1 week: submit DSS & ORS final review
- Final Push: respond to reviews, revise, final proof
- Submit
Recall: Essential Features of Successful Grants

- Reviewer-centred approach
- Three classifications to features:
  - EXPECTED
  - QUALITY
  - INNOVATIVE
EXPECTED Features

- Required to satisfy reviewer
- Absence can enrage reviewer
- Increased implementation does not affect reviewer satisfaction
Review the one page summary of person to your left; You should be able to answer these questions:

- What do they want to do?
- Why do they want to do it?
- How are they going to do it?
- What is the expected outcome(s)?
- Why is it a good thing?

Highlight *anything* that you don’t understand and that you think could be clarified
QUALITY Features

- Increased implementation increases reviewer satisfaction
- Decreased implementation decreases reviewer satisfaction
BREAK OUT DISCUSSION (15 mins)

Review one page summary again; highlight any elements that you think reveal ‘quality’ features:

Some things to consider:

- Are you convinced that the problem is significant and worth investing in? If so, what convinced you?
- Are objectives specific and clear? Is the methodology linked to the objectives?
- Do you know if the applicant has expertise in this area, in the methods proposed? Does the summary refer to preliminary work that supports the proposal?
- Do you think the proposal is likely to deliver on its promises to impact the mandate of CIHR? the scientific field? health of Canadians, health care system and/or services?
INNOVATIVE Features

- Lack of implementation does not affect reviewer satisfaction
- Increased implementation greatly increases reviewer satisfaction

Reviewer Satisfaction

Implementation of Feature
Reflect on your OWN summary:

– On the back of your summary page, list elements that you think distinguish this application from others in your field; have you detailed these specifically in the summary?
– What are you most excited about in this proposal?
– What are the strongest features from your point of view?

Ask your reviewer whether these elements came through in their reading.
SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS
Supplementary Materials: Appendices

• Don’t overwhelm reviewers: they are not obligated to read appendices (and may not)
• Keep in mind that your proposal should stand alone – do not include critical information in your appendices
• Things to include: figures/tables; research instruments (consent forms, questionnaires etc); regulatory approval notices; letters of support etc.
• Ensure appendices are well organized:
  – include a table of contents and can include a cover sheet to each appendix to identify content if at all unclear
  – Label each appendix page with the name of the PI (or it might get lost in the shuffle)
Supplementary Materials: Budget

• Budget
  – get sample budgets
  – Reasonable and justifiable
  – Link directly to proposal activities (should fully support your methodology)
  – Do not economize too much…but….do not pad budgets
  – Know expense eligibility and follow guidelines carefully (e.g. Tri-Council Use of Grant Funds: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Professors-Professeurs/FinancialAdminGuide-guideAdminFinancier/FundsUse-UtilisationSubventions_eng.asp)
  – Check internal policies & consult with ORS
Supplementary Materials: Budget Justification

• “Is the bang worth the buck?”
• Justify don’t just describe; no page limit, so justify *everything*
• Committees will draw on their experience to assess what is appropriate
• For personnel & trainees, name the people involved (or categories, e.g. RA, PhD) and the portion of their time spent on the project; describe specific work and responsibilities
• For travel expenses, list who is travelling and for what purposes (e.g. name conferences)
• NOTE: it is very common for budgets to be reduced.
Supplementary Materials - Your CV...

- Common CV (new version launch June 2012)
- Should demonstrate you have the appropriate background through:
  - Education
  - Awards (explain and put in context)
  - Publications (critical!)
  - Conference presentations
  - Supervisory experience
  - Previous grants held
- Acknowledge any delays, interruptions
- Keep up-to-date!
How decisions are made…

REVIEW PROCESS
Evaluation: CIHR Review Processes

• Methods of review:
  – face-to-face meeting
  – teleconference meeting
  – virtual (typically no discussion among reviewers)
• Types of review at CIHR:
  – Relevance review (by Institutes/partners for strategic calls)
  – Merit review (for some KT & strategic calls)
  – Peer review (most common)
• Evaluation Criteria (see Guidelines!)
  – Standard criteria for grants: http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/4656.html#s3_7_2
  – Standard criteria for training and salary awards: http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/41178.html
• Will be composed of researchers (in your field and outside) and may include (for KT & strategic competitions) ‘knowledge users’: health care providers, decision makers, patient representatives, etc.

• Get a sense of who may be reviewing your grant (based on previous membership; likely overlap with current competition)

• NOTE: All submissions undergo an initial screening process for completeness, eligibility, compliance and relevance.
  – With the ‘no tolerance’ policy at CIHR, your proposal could be turned away before it even goes through peer review…
CIHR Merit Review

Merit review:

• used to assess scientific merit AND potential impact of research projects that engage knowledge users throughout the research process (only some competitions; will be stated in guidelines)

• Equal representation of researchers and knowledge users in review committee membership

• Must score in fundable range for both scientific merit & potential impact

• Criteria (evaluated by all members of the committee): research question, research approach, feasibility, outcomes (http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/41192.html)
## Merit Review: Rating Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Impact</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Scientific Merit</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>May be Funded</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Significant</td>
<td>4.5-4.9</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very significant</td>
<td>4.0-4.4</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>3.5-3.9</td>
<td>Excellent, may still require revision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not Fundable</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>3.0-3.4</td>
<td>Very good however needs revision to be fundable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>2.5-2.9</td>
<td>Needs major revision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>0.0-2.4</td>
<td>Seriously flawed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Peer Review: Open Operating Grant Program

- Currently: nearly 50 peer review committees
- Full list & mandates: [http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/4657.html](http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/4657.html)
- Each committee has:
  - Chair
  - Scientific Officer
  - 6-18 members
  - Community member (sometimes; review lay abstract)
  - CIHR staff member
- Review ~10-70 applications over 1-3 days, twice a year (typical committee reviews ~ 60 applications with each reviewer assigned to ~ 8-10 applications)
• Examples of existing committees:

  – Gender, sex & health
  – Humanities, social sciences, law, ethics in health
  – Psychosocial, sociocultural & behavioural determinants of health
  – Public, community & population health
  – Social & developmental aspects of children’s & youth health
  – Social dimensions of aging
• 2 internal reviewers + 1 reader assigned to each application.
• Sometimes external reviewers are sought from subject matter experts (not common)
• All reviewers submit written reviews at least one week before the meeting.
• Once internal reviewers submit their review and score they are given access to view comments of other internal reviews.
RCT Review Process
At meeting

• Each internal reviewer states their score; if average is < 3.5, the application is ‘streamlined’ and not discussed (unless any member objects or the scores are wildly divergent).
• First reviewer provides complete review. 2nd reviewer add comments not already covered by the first reviewer. First reviewer will summarize external reviews, if available. Reader adds any final comments.
• Discussion opens to entire committee; moderated by Chair & SO
• 2 internal reviewers come to a consensus score after considering committee discussion. (The consensus score can be quite different from initial scores).
• All committee members vote to within +/- 0.5 of the consensus score.
• Discussion of budget if consensus is over 3.5
• The SO summarizes the committee discussion in her/his notes, which are read back to and approved by the committee.
## Review Process: Peer Review Rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>outstanding</td>
<td>4.5 – 4.9</td>
<td>MAY BE FUNDED – WILL BE DISCUSSED BY THE COMMITTEE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>excellent</td>
<td>4.0 – 4.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very good</td>
<td>3.5 – 3.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acceptable, but low priority</td>
<td>3.0 – 3.4</td>
<td>NOT FUNDABLE – MAY OR MAY NOT BE DISCUSSED BY THE COMMITTEE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>needs revision</td>
<td>2.5 – 2.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>needs major revision</td>
<td>2.0 – 2.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seriously flawed</td>
<td>1.0 – 1.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rejected</td>
<td>0.0 – 0.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Very good          Excellent

Weak               Outstanding
Things to consider about Peer Review

• Proposals may have at best 15 minutes for committee discussion:
  – yours should be memorable (in a good way 😊)
  – Summary should include all important points and be well written
• Reviewers receive huge boxes of grants, spend consecutive, LOOONG days in committee meetings, receive no remuneration – make their job as easy as possible; do not give them a reason to discount your grant.
• The typical peer review process is highly CONSERVATIVE and risk averse (concerned more with feasibility than innovation)
• Success rates at CIHR are discouragingly low, especially in the open operating grant program; If you are not funded, you are not alone!
Thank you for your attention!

Questions?

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