



# Tri-Agency Research Expense Eligibility and Documentation Guide

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## Administration of Tri-Agency Grants

This guide contains details regarding expense eligibility guidelines for research projects funded by NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR, collectively known as the Tri-Agencies. This documentation has been prepared to assist Principal Investigators and their delegates in the administration of these federal research funds. It is important to note the following:

- The funding agencies amend their guidelines periodically.
- There are many different types of research grants and various funding agencies. The details contained in this guide are specifically for Tri-Agency projects. Eligibility requirements for other research projects may differ from those shown here.
- Expenditures listed are not exhaustive and have been provided for general guidance. Additional details may be found on the Tri-Agency website:

[http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Professors-Professeurs/FinancialAdminGuide-GuideAdminFinancier/FundsUse-UtilisationSubventions\\_eng.asp](http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Professors-Professeurs/FinancialAdminGuide-GuideAdminFinancier/FundsUse-UtilisationSubventions_eng.asp)

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

- **Tri-Agency grants are awarded to eligible researchers and are administered through Queen's University's General Ledger.**
- **Researchers must spend these funds in compliance with Tri-Agency guidelines, as well as university policies.**
- **Research expenditures must be authorized by the Principal Investigator or their authorized delegate(s). If the claimant is the Principal Investigator, the Department Head or Dean must approve the expense claim, as approval signatures must be provided by someone at a higher level in the organization than the claimant.**
- **The university establishes appropriate systems and controls to ensure that agency policies are followed.**

## Use of Grant Funds - General Principles

- Expenses must be for the direct costs of research.
- Principal Investigators must ensure grant funds are spent effectively and economically.
- Queen's University retains ownership of equipment purchased using research grant funding.
- If an agency policy does not exist for a specific purchase, the institution's policy will apply. Policies can be viewed at the following locations:  
<http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies>  
<https://www.queensu.ca/financialservices/policies-procedures>  
<http://www.queensu.ca/urs/policies-and-forms>
- Agencies defer to the institution's conflict of interest policies to ensure accountable and responsible use of grant funds.
- Queen's University may deny approval of expenditures approved by Principal Investigators, if the spending contravenes with agency or university policies.
- Eligible and non-eligible expenses specific to a program are detailed in the Agency's program literature. The Agency's program literature prevails over this guide.

## Compensation Related Expenses

### Eligible Expenses

- Salaries, stipends and non-discretionary benefits for research personnel (salaries to postdoctoral fellows limited to 2 years of support for NSERC and SSHRC, or 3 years if justified and approved by agency (NSERC only))
- For those with a PhD degree, the maximum period of support is 3 years, for those with a health professional degree and **not** enrolled in a graduate degree program, the maximum support is 4 years, and those with a health professional degree enrolled in a graduate degree program, the maximum period is 5 years and includes funding received to complete a Master's degree or non-degree research training (CIHR only)
- Consulting fees
- Fees and gifts paid to research participants
- Subcontract costs
- Clerical salaries directly related to dissemination activities
- Honoraria for guest lecturers
- Grant funds may be used to supplement salaries or stipends paid from other sources, such as other Tri-Agency grants and individual training awards
- Federal employer compliance fee for engaging foreign nationals who are eligible to be paid using Tri-Agency funds

### Ineligible Expenses

- Salaries for grant holders or persons eligible to apply for Tri-Agency funding
- Administrative or management charges and fees
- Discretionary severance and separation packages
- Payments to practicing clinicians who wish to participate in the research on a part-time basis, or to individuals who wish to participate in the research as an investigator and who at the same time receive remuneration for teaching or service work, except when deemed eligible in a particular funding opportunity (CIHR only)

### **Supporting Documentation Requirements for Compensation Related Expenses:**

- Name of payee and position of employment
- Total salary or stipend amount
- Duration of compensation
- Details of supplementary benefits
- Authorization of grant holder or delegate

# Travel and Subsistence Expenses

## Eligible Expenses

- Air travel must be at the most economical rate available, unless a medical note exists and agency has granted pre-approval
- Meals and accommodation
- Travel cancellation insurance and seat reservation charges
- Travel health insurance (if not provided by employer or from other sources)
- Child care expenses as specified by the agencies (applicable to traveling nursing mothers or single parents)
- Relocation expenses for eligible research personnel and their immediate family members (economy airfare or cost of land travel up to the equivalent of economy airfare)
- Collaborators' travel and subsistence expenses related to research planning and exchange of information with grantee or for dissemination of research results
- Entry visa fees if required for research
- Gratuities (cannot exceed 20%)

## Ineligible Expenses

- Commuting costs between a residence and place of employment, or between two places of employment
- Passport and immigration fees
- Costs associated with thesis examination or defense, including external examiner costs
- Reimbursement for airfare purchased with personal frequent flyer points programs
- Alcoholic beverages

### **Supporting Documentation Requirements for Travel and Subsistence Expenses:**

- Purpose of trip
- Dates and destination details
- Prospectus or program for conference related travel
- Details of daily expenses
- Details of vehicle usage
- Original receipts/invoices (credit card slips and accommodation reservation confirmations alone are not acceptable)
- Boarding passes, if available
- Separate claim for each claimant per trip
- Traveler's affiliation to the Principal Investigator's research project
- Signature of claimant
- Signature of Principal Investigator or delegate
- If claimant is the Principal Investigator, a one-up approval must be provided (Department Head or Dean)
- If claim is submitted by visiting researcher, the Department Head must approve the claim

## Sabbatical and Leave Periods

### Eligible Expenses

- Travel costs for research field work, unless incurred in sabbatical location
- Travel to research related conferences
- Equipment & materials transportation (to and from sabbatical location)
- One round trip ticket between home institution and sabbatical location

### Ineligible Expenses

- Travel costs to transport the grantee to the home institution for supervisory or academic purposes
- Travel costs to transport research personnel to and from a grantee's sabbatical location for supervisory or academic purposes
- Living expenses (includes accommodation and meal expenses incurred in sabbatical location)

### **Supporting Documentation Requirements for Sabbatical and Leave Period Expenses:**

- Original invoices, contracts, and receipts
- Travel claims and supporting documents for travel
- Signature of claimant
- Signature of Principal Investigator or delegate
- If claimant is the Principal Investigator, a one-up approval must be provided (Department Head or Dean)

## Equipment and Supplies Expenses

### Eligible Expenses

- Research equipment and specific research supplies (general office supplies are deemed ineligible by the agencies)
- Travel to manufacturers (for major equipment purchases)
- Transportation costs for purchased equipment (e.g. shipping, brokerage and customs charges)
- Extended warranty for equipment
- Staff training on use of equipment or specialized facility
- Maintenance and operating costs for equipment/vehicles used for research (vehicle repair costs require pre-approval)

### Ineligible Expenses

- Insurance costs for equipment and research vehicles
- Space/facilities rentals
- Construction/renovation costs

### **Supporting Documentation Requirements for Equipment and Supplies Expenses:**

- Original invoices, contracts, and receipts
- Detailed justification for eligible supplies expenses
- Signature of Principal Investigator or delegate
- If claimant is the Principal Investigator, a one-up approval must be provided (Department Head or Dean)



## Computers & Electronic Communication Expenses

### Eligible Expenses

- Computers, tablets, modems, hardware and specialized software required for research (software cannot be purchased “off the shelf”)
- Cellular phones and smartphone devices (e.g. BlackBerry, iPhone, Pocket PC), when necessary for research data collection, and with adequate justification

### Ineligible Expenses

- Monthly connection or rental costs of telephones
- Connection or installation of communication lines
- Voice mail
- Library acquisitions, computer and other information services provided to all members of the institution
- Home internet costs

### **Supporting Documentation Requirements for Computers and Electronic Communication Expenses:**

- Original invoices, contracts, and receipts
- Written justification for cellular phones, smartphone devices and for all software purchases establishing need in relation to funded research
- Signature of Principal Investigator or delegate

## Hospitality Expenses

Hospitality costs are deemed eligible expenses if they are for networking purposes in the context of formal courtesy between the grantee and guest researchers and for research-related activities in the context of assemblies that facilitate and contribute to the achievement of the research objectives (e.g. grantee meetings with partners and stakeholders).

### Eligible Expenses

- Non-alcoholic beverages
- Meals
- Gratuities (cannot exceed 20%)

### Ineligible Expenses

- Alcoholic beverages
- Entertainment costs

### Supporting Documentation Requirements for Hospitality Expenses:

- Purpose of the event
- Date(s) of the event
- Names of participants
- Original receipts
- Signature of Principal Investigator or delegate
- If claimant is the Principal Investigator, a one-up approval must be provided (Department Head or Dean)

## Services and Miscellaneous Expenses

### Eligible Expenses

- Recruiting costs for research personnel (e.g. advertising or airfare)
- Costs for safe disposal of waste
- Books, periodicals, specialized office supplies, computing equipment and information services not provided by the institution
- Training/development in novel techniques required for research
- Professional association or scientific society memberships if necessary for research
- Monthly parking fees for vehicles specifically required for field work and only during period when field work is being conducted
- Fingerprinting fees related to new security clearance requirements for Stats Canada Research Data Centres, if access is necessary for research purposes

### **Supporting Documentation Requirements for Services and Miscellaneous Expenses:**

- Original invoices, contracts and receipts
- Signature of Principal Investigator or delegate
- If claimant is the Principal Investigator, a one-up approval is required (Department Head or Dean)

## Services and Miscellaneous Expenses Continued

### Ineligible Expenses

- Education related costs such as thesis preparation, tuition and course fees, leading up to a degree
- Costs for preparation of teaching materials
- Regulatory compliance costs (e.g. ethical review, biohazard or radiation safety, environmental assessments)
- Professional training or development (e.g. computer or language training)
- Costs related to staff recognition and awards
- Monthly parking fees for vehicles, unless specifically required for field work
- Regular clothing
- Patenting expenses
- Indirect costs/overhead (e.g. utilities, insurance, etc.)
- Costs of moving a lab
- Sales taxes to which an exemption or rebate applies

## **Dissemination of Research Results Expenses**

### **Eligible Expenses**

- Development & maintenance of web based information
- Dissemination of findings using traditional & contemporary venues (e.g. videos, CD-ROMs, etc.)
- Page charges for published articles, including costs associated with ensuring open access to findings (e.g. costs of publishing in an open access journal or making a journal article open access)
- Manuscript preparation costs, including paper and ink cartridges for printing different manuscript versions
- Translation costs
- Costs of holding workshops or seminars directly related to the funded research
- Specific costs related to indigenous research such as engaging in cultural traditions or community protocols (e.g. modest gifts or incentives)

### **Supporting Documentation Requirements for Dissemination of Research Results Expenses:**

- Original invoices, contracts and receipts
- Signature of Principal Investigator or delegate
- If claimant is the Principal Investigator, a one-up approval is required (Department Head or Dean)

If you have questions regarding your research project, you may access Research Accounting staff contact details:

<http://www.queensu.ca/financialservices/contact-us/research-accounting>

or

Email: [research.accounting@queensu.ca](mailto:research.accounting@queensu.ca)

University Research Services contact details are available at:

<http://www.queensu.ca/urs/contact-us>

Tri-Agency contact details are available at:

<http://www.queensu.ca/financialservices/researchers/tri-council-grants>