

RAPID RESPONSE

Queen's SARS CoV-2/COVID-19 Research Opportunity

March 30, 2020 - *Updated May 13, 2020*

Objective:

The Queen's SARS CoV-2/COVID-19 research funding competition is a \$200,000 Vice-Principal (Research) initiative to fund and support research projects that will contribute to urgent efforts to **accelerate the development, testing and implementation of medical or social countermeasures to mitigate the rapid spread of the SARS CoV-2 virus and its negative consequences on people and communities in Canada and globally.**

To a large extent this opportunity mirrors the recent SARS CoV-2/COVID-19 funding opportunity available through CIHR and will support **research across all disciplines**: health sciences; natural sciences and engineering; and social sciences and humanities.

Funding:

\$10,000-\$50,000 per project (total available is \$200,000)

Important Dates:

Competition 1

- **April 17, 2020** - Full applications due
- **April 27, 2020** - Decisions released
- **October 31, 2020** - Project Spending Deadline

Competition 2

- **May 20, 2020** - Full applications due
- **June 5, 2020** - Decisions released
- **December 31, 2020** - Project Spending Deadline

Eligible Research:

This competition will support research across all disciplines.

Based on recommendations from the World Health Organization and per the, now closed, [CIHR-led competition](#) (plus several additions shown in contrasting black font), eligible research will align with the countermeasures below.

Focus on one or more of the following Medical countermeasures:

- pathogenicity, zoonotic sources, and reservoirs of SARS-CoV-2, a One Health approach is encouraged;
- epidemiological studies, including those examining incubation period, differential susceptibility among populations especially related to age and sex, environmental factors, and/or using mathematical modelling;
- development and evaluation of diagnostics tools for early case detection and surveillance, including approaches based on serology, high throughput and artificial intelligence (AI), and/or supporting the development of rapid point of care tests;
- development and evaluation of candidate vaccines, including development of animal models, identification of correlates of protection, and understanding issues around examination of the antibody-dependent enhancement of infection;
- development and evaluation of candidate therapeutics, including studies on new and re-purposed anti-viral agents, antibody treatments, and combination therapies;
- evaluation and optimization of infection prevention control measures, including improving protection of health care workers and community and optimizing personal protection equipment;
- clinical characterization and management of disease, including identification of biomarkers for clinical outcomes, optimization of treatment, understanding the full spectrum of disease and the role of comorbidities, and identifying and evaluation of best adjunctive and supportive therapies; or
- clinical trials design and ethical considerations, including approaches capitalizing on and coordinating with existing clinical trial networks, developing master protocols that will improve collaboration and comparison across different studies internationally, and optimize development of new drugs, vaccine and diagnostics.
- technology innovation specific to SARS Cov-2 mitigation strategies

OR

Focus on one or more of the following Social/Policy countermeasures:

- cultural dimensions of the epidemic such as examining how individuals and communities understand and react to the disease and how the public health response can be tailored to the unique circumstances of different populations;
- the public health response, including the feasibility and effectiveness of social policies aiming to prevent and contain COVID-19 and to mitigate its secondary impacts (e.g., supply shortages, school closures, travel restrictions, quarantines, racism);
- identification of approaches for supporting the psychosocial needs of those who are caring for people with COVID-19;
- development of strategies to combat misinformation, stigma, and fear, to address their underlying drivers, and to improve public awareness, knowledge, and trust during the outbreak response;

- the logistics of the response (e.g. infrastructure, transport, evaluation) and opportunities for their immediate improvement;
- methods for involving local perspectives, citizens, and communities in the outbreak response effort;
- international relations, global coordination, response systems, and crisis management in order to identify which international coordination mechanisms can optimize the global response to the COVID-19 outbreak and best complement national and sub-national responses; or
- understanding of the social dynamics of transmission and vulnerability and how to best communicate related risks, uncertainties, and implications.
- psychological, social, political and/or cultural factors in the emergence, spread and treatment of COVID-19 and the legal, moral, economic and ethical implications
- development of strategies to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on global, national, and regional economic development, value creation chains, and businesses
- study of the development of measures to ensure that COVID-19 responses serve the values of equity and justice
- development of public policy strategies to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations, including social welfare provisions

Sex and gender differences exist in the research areas above, making sex and/or gender issues an important component of this research initiative. Other identity factors may also be relevant. Applicants will be required to consider sex as a biological variable and gender as a socio-cultural factor and/or other identity factors in their research, where applicable.

Funded Projects:

Funded Projects will strike a balance between Medical and Social/Policy countermeasures research, based on the number of proposals received in each category.

Eligible Expenses:

All expenses directly related to the research are eligible with the exception of equipment purchases and teaching release allowance.

Eligible Applicants:

The Principal Investigator must be Queen's tenured, tenure-track, or clinical faculty with protected research time.

Co-investigators must hold a faculty appointment at Queen's.

Other team members may be Queen's tenured, tenure-track, or clinical faculty with protected research time, adjuncts, research associates, students, post-doctoral fellows, etc.

Assessment Criteria:

Two criteria are assessed as pass/fail:

1. The proposed project is aligned with the objective of the competition.
2. The proposed project is aligned with the selected countermeasure(s).

An additional four criteria are assessed equally (25% weight each):

3. Effectiveness of the proposed approach (i.e., extent to which the approach is likely to lead to meeting the objectives of the proposed research).
4. Ability of the project team to carry out the proposed research.
5. Ability of the project team to marshal sufficient resources, including infrastructure and the funding from this competition, to successfully carry out the proposed research in the required timeframe.
6. Potential impact of the proposed project.

Adjudication:

A panel of reviewers from Queen's will be engaged for each category of research (Medical Countermeasures and Social/Policy Countermeasures).

Each application will be assessed by 3 reviewers.

Projects receiving a Fail from all three reviewers on Criteria 1 and/or 2 will not be funded.

Reviewers will provide a score for each of the remaining 4 criteria. Based on assessments from the three reviewers, each application will be given an average score (criteria 3-6) and will be ranked accordingly.

Reviewers will be asked to comment on whether sex and gender and other identity factors have been adequately considered.

An expert will comment on whether engagement with Indigenous populations has been adequately considered, where applicable.

All adjudication information will be provided to the Vice Principal Research who will convene two panels (Medical and Social/Policy) to make the final decisions.

Application Form:

The [application form](#) is available online.

Submit to: research@queensu.ca

TRAQ DSS:

To expedite the process, a TRAQ DSS will only be required for successful applications.

Release of funds will be subject to all usual certifications and approvals, including from all applicable hospitals.

An expedited Ethics Clearance process will be available, where applicable.

Notice to Associate Deans Research:

In the absence of the TRAQ DSS approval process, Associate Deans Research will be provided with the names of all Principal Investigators and Co-Investigators.

Questions:

Please send all questions to research@queensu.ca

Answers to [FAQs](#) are available online