SSHRC Explore Grants and SSHRC Exchange Grants Program Guidelines

September 2021

Program Overview

This funding opportunity is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) through its Institutional Grants (SIG) program. With the SIG program, SSHRC provides annual block grants to fund internal grant competitions at selected Canadian post-secondary institutions (PSIs). SIG funds are intended to help these PSIs strengthen research excellence in the social sciences and humanities.

Description

Concordia University of Edmonton (CUE) was successful in the latest SSHRC SIG competition and has been awarded funding for the period 2018 - 2021. The size of this annual grant is based, in part, on CUE's performance in Tri-Agency research grant programs. CUE reports SIG competition results and use of SIG funds to SSHRC.

Grant Streams

SSHRC SIG funds are used to offer SSHRC Explore Grants and SSHRC Exchange Grants to researchers from eligible disciplines at CUE, in accordance with the guidelines established for the SSHRC Institutional Grant.

SSHRC Explore Grants	SSHRC Exchange Grants
For Research Projects	For Dissemination Activities
Allows for small-scale innovation and experimentation by providing funding to develop a research project or conduct pilot work.	Allows researchers to present their research at scholarly conferences, and other dissemination venues that align with SSHRC's mandate, to advance their careers and encourage the exchange of ideas and research results at the national and international level.
Enables researchers to hire students at any level to participate in their research projects. SSHRC expects that all SIG-funded research training will incorporate appropriate dimensions of the Guidelines for Effective Research Training.	Supports the organization of small-scale knowledge mobilization activities, such as workshops and seminars, to encourage collaboration and dissemination of research results within and beyond the academy.
Supports social sciences and humanities researchers at any career stage with modest research funding requirements.	

Important Considerations on the Use of Technical Language

Faculty members who wish to participate in this competition must keep in mind that SSHRC Explore and Exchange Grant applications are adjudicated internally by CUE's Research and Faculty Development Committee (RFDC). The RFDC is a multidisciplinary General Faculties Council committee with elected representatives from all CUE Faculties. <u>RFDC members are highly educated scholars, but they are not expected to be experts in all fields</u>. Applications must use language that takes the multidisciplinary structure of the RFDC into consideration. To ensure that applications are appropriate for adjudication by this committee, applicants should avoid using discipline-specific jargon and other highly technical language in their proposals.

<u>If the RFDC determines that an application is not comprehensible to a non-expert, the application may be removed from the competition.</u>

Subject Matter Eligibility

Applications must fall within the Subject Matter Eligibility of SSHRC. Briefly:

"Applications to SSHRC as the primary source of research or research training support must meet the following two criteria:

- *The proposed research or related activities must be primarily in the social sciences and humanities (i.e., aligned with SSHRC's legislated mandate).*

- *The intended outcome of the research must primarily be to add to our understanding and knowledge of individuals, groups, and societies—what we think, how we live, and how we interact with each other and the world around us."*

Eligibility

- The applicant must be a Concordia University of Edmonton faculty member conducting research in a discipline supported by SSHRC.

- Individuals may not hold more than one SIG-funded grant at a time for the same activity. Faculty members holding an active SSHRC Institutional Grant are ineligible for a grant of the same kind, but are eligible for an additional grant from the other stream. For example, an awardee of a SIG Grant under the Explore Stream is eligible for a grant from the Exchange Stream, and vice versa. Faculty members may only hold one award per stream in any twelve-month period. <u>This restriction also applies to individuals with an active award due to an approved extension due to COVID-19.</u>

- There must be no duplication of funding for the project or activity from other sources, internal or external.

- Applicants may not apply for a subsequent SSHRC Explore or Exchange Grant until all expense claims and a complete final report have been submitted for the previous grant.

- If awarded an Explore Grant, the applicant must commit to submitting a SSHRC grant application (e.g., Insight; Insight Development; Partnership Engage) within two (2) years of the expiration date of the Explore Grant.

- Grant recipients must acknowledge SSHRC support for their research or dissemination activity.

CV Requirements

Effective November 18, 2020, CUE's Office of Research Services (ORS) no longer accepts CAQC-format or free-form CVs for applications for internal grants and other awards. The ORS only accepts Common CVs (CCVs) in application packages. This decision was made to provide consistency in the application process. In addition, the Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) has phased out the use of the CAQC CV format, and this change will help those who are considering applying, or have already applied, for Tri-Agency funding.

For guidance on how to prepare a CCV, please consult these resources:

- https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/forms-formulaires/instructions/ccv-eng.aspx and

- https://concordia.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/How-to-create-an-application-version-of-the-Common-CV-for-CUE-Research.pdf).

The ORS has also prepared instructional videos on this requirement, which can be requested from research@concordia.ab.ca.

Important Dates

Competition	Application Deadline (End of Day)	Effective Dates for Awards
Fall 2021	September 30, 2021 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the **SIG-EXCHANGE stream is restricted to online activities only (no travel allowed)**	September 30, 2021 to September 29, 2022
Spring 2022 (last call)	April 30, 2022 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the **SIG-EXCHANGE stream is restricted to online activities only (no travel allowed)**	April 30, 2022 to March 31, 2023

Value and Duration

- *SSHRC Explore Grants:* Awards of up to a maximum of $4,000 CDN each.

  - Explore Grants are valid for a maximum of 12 months.

- *SSHRC Exchange Grants:* Awards of up to a maximum of $1,500 CDN each.

  - Exchange Grants are valid until five (5) days after the end of the funded activity or a maximum of 12 months, whichever is shortest.

  - Exchange Grants are restricted to online activities until further notice, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. **No travel-related expenses are allowed**.

- Maximum combined: $5,000 in any 12-month period

Final Reports

- *SSHRC Explore Grants:* All expense claims and a complete Final Activity Report must be submitted within 30 days of the end of the 12-month grant term.

- *SSHRC Exchange Grants:* All expense claims and a complete Final Activity Report must be submitted within 30 days of the completion of the dissemination activity.

Multiple Applications

Applicants may apply for one SSHRC Explore and one SSHRC Exchange Grant, using the appropriate application form for each stream, per competition. Applicants may not submit more than one application to a particular stream. Multiple requests on one application form will NOT be considered (e.g. multiple conference presentations or two different research projects).

Conceptual or Budgetary Overlap with Existing or Future Applications

Neither SSHRC nor CUE allow duplicate funding requests. Therefore, applications with significant conceptual and/or budgetary overlap with existing or upcoming awards—internal or external—will not be accepted. If you have applied for, or are considering applying, for additional funds—internal or external—to support the research that you are submitting for consideration for the competition, you are required to disclose this information to the ORS (research@concordia.ab.ca) and include this information in the appropriate sections of the application form. Failure to disclose this information may result in disciplinary action.

Reviewers

Applications are assessed by the Research and Faculty Development Committee (RFDC). Please read the "Important Considerations on the Use of Technical Language" section above.

Adjudication

Available funds are awarded through a competitive process. Applications are evaluated through a single-stage committee review process. Each reviewer reads and scores all applications based on the listed Tri-Agency evaluation criteria. The ranked list is submitted to the Vice President Academic and Provost for final approval and dissemination of funds. As the demand for funds normally far exceeds the funds available, not all meritorious proposals can be awarded.

Appeals

All applications are confidential. The decisions on awards during a competition are final. There are no provisions to appeal funding decisions. The RFDC and/or the ORS are under no obligation to provide feedback about the adjudication process.

Evaluation Criteria and Scoring – Explore Grants

The following criteria and scoring scheme are used to evaluate Explore Grants

Challenge 60%	**The aim and importance of the proposed research**
	Originality, significance and expected contribution to knowledge
	Clarity of objectives
	Appropriateness of the literature review
	Appropriateness of the theoretical approach or framework
	Appropriateness of the methods / approach
	Quality of training and mentoring to be provided to students, emerging scholars and opportunities for them to contribute
	Potential influence and impact of the research within and/or beyond the academic research community, including potential to secure future external funding
Feasibility 20%	**The plan to achieve excellence**
	Probability that the objectives will be met within the timeline proposed
	Appropriateness of the requested budget and justification of proposed costs
	Quality and appropriateness of knowledge mobilization plans, including effective dissemination, exchange and engagement with stakeholders within and/or beyond the research community, where applicable
	Appropriateness of the research design and strategies for conducting the activity/activities proposed
Capability 20%	**The expertise to succeed**
	Quality, quantity and significance of previous research experience and published and/or creative outputs of the applicant(s) relative to their roles in the project and their respective stages of career
	Evidence of other knowledge mobilization activities (e.g., films, performances, commissioned reports, knowledge syntheses, experience in collaboration/other interactions with stakeholders, contributions to public debate and media), and of impacts on professional practice, social services and policies, etc.
	Evidence of contributions to the development of students and emerging scholars; Support for new faculty members and emerging scholars
	Potential of the applicant/co-applicant to make future contributions and secure external grants

Applications that are written in a language that is considered to be highly-technical may not be adjudicated.

Evaluation Criteria and Scoring – Exchange Grants

The following criteria and scoring scheme are used to evaluate Exchange Grants

Challenge 60%	The aim and importance of the endeavor
	Clarity of the stated objectives and defined scope of the knowledge mobilization activity
	Evidence of the quality and significance of the research results to be disseminated, including a clear delineation of a well-defined body of knowledge to be disseminated
	Quality, innovativeness, and appropriateness of the knowledge mobilization activity, including effective dissemination, exchange, as well as engagement with stakeholders, where applicable
	Evidence of the quality and significance of the event, its scope and potential contribution, including the degree event attracts appropriate participants
	Likelihood of influence and impact within and/or beyond the immediate research community
Feasibility 20%	The plan to achieve
	Probability that the objectives of the activity will be met within the timeline proposed
	Appropriateness of the requested budget and justification of proposed costs
Capability 20%	The expertise to succeed
	Quality, quantity and significance of previous research experience and published and/or creative outputs of the applicant(s) relative to their roles in the project and their respective stages of career
	Evidence of previous knowledge mobilization activities and of impacts on professional practice, social services and policies, etc.
	Potential of the applicant to make future contributions and secure external grants

Applications that are written in a language that is considered to be highly-technical may not be adjudicated.

Application Procedure

1. Deadlines are fixed and will **not** be extended upon request.

2. Application forms have been upgraded to PDF forms. Ensure you are using the correct and updated grant application form for the proposed activity. There are separate forms for Explore (Project) and for Exchange (Dissemination) grants.

3. Open the form using a PDF reader program such as Adobe Reader or other. You will not be able to edit the form using Word or other text editing software. Complete all sections of the application, according to the instructions. There are strict space limits for each section.

4. Ensure that the language used in the development of the application is appropriate for the RFDC (read the "Important Considerations on the Use of Technical Language" section above).

5. Use the checklist.

6. Sign application and obtain department head signature.

7. Attach all requested attachments or supplemental documents.

8. Submit complete application package as **a single document in pdf format**. For guidance on how to combine files into a single PDF document, CUE Research recommends the use of the combine feature of Adobe Acrobat (if available), or printing-scanning documents into a single PDF. There are additional options [available elsewhere](#).

9. Send application package by email to research@concordia.ab.ca

   - The application must be compiled as one complete document in pdf format.

   - Outdated forms will not be accepted. Please, ensure that you are using the latest version of the form, which can be obtained from the Inside CUE posting specific to the call.

   - Applications received past deadline or that are not complete will be not be considered.

   - Non-compliant submissions, or those containing missing application components will be returned to the applicant for compilation and formatting, as long as they were received at least two working days prior to the deadline; deficient applications received after this time will not be submitted for adjudication.

   - Unrequested and extraneous attachments or supplemental material will be removed from the application.

Terms and Conditions of the SSHRC Explore Grants and SSHRC Exchange Grants

Grant recipients must agree to abide by the following terms and conditions.

Compliance with University Research Policies

All policies, regulations and administrative processes of Concordia University of Edmonton apply. Research must comply with University policies on the conduct of research, policies on research ethics, and research integrity. It is the responsibility of the primary applicant to secure the appropriate permissions and approvals for the proposed activity.

Research Ethics and Certifications

The Tri-Council Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and related documents require that researchers at eligible institutions ensure human ethics oversight for all funded research which involves human participants (regardless of the source). Applicants whose research involves human participants must submit a research ethics application to the Concordia Research Ethics Board and secure Research Ethics Board (REB) approval. REB approval must be in place before funding can be released and before any research involving human participants can take place.

Acknowledgement

Recipients of the SSHRC Explore and SSHRC Exchange Grant are required to acknowledge SSHRC support for their research or research-related activities in all outputs. The following wording is suggested: *This research [or activity] has been supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Explore/Exchange Grant.*

Acceptance of the award

All recipients of SIG awards must provide a signed "Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Award", included in the Letter of Award, to the Office of Research Services **within ten working days of receipt of the letter**. Failure to provide this signed document will result in forfeiture of the award.

Responsible Use of Grant Funds

The policies and requirements of the agencies stated in the Tri Agency Financial Administration Guide apply at all times. The award recipient is responsible for the use of the funds and for any over- expenditure of accounts. All activities and expenditures must be completed within the duration of the grant. Upon completion of the grant, the grant account will be closed and all unused funds will expire and be reclaimed.

Expenditures are permitted only for those elements identified in the application. Reasonable substitutions or alterations may be permitted as well as minor transfers of funds from one budget category to another. Use of funds for a previously unspecified purpose, or major changes in the scope of work must be submitted to the Office of Research Services for approval.

Cash advances of internal research grant funds are not normally permitted; however, some expenses can be covered directly by the institution (e.g. purchase orders).

Equipment purchased shall remain the property of Concordia University of Edmonton and costs associated with the care and use of any equipment purchased will be the responsibility of the award recipient and their department.

Expense Claims

Expense claims must be prepared using the forms prepared by Finance, which can be found in Alfresco. The onus is on the investigator to use the proper, updated forms, and to prepare acceptable expense claims. Information on how to prepare an expense claim can be found online in CUE's Research website and in Alfresco. All expense claims must first be submitted to the Office of Research Services for compliance review.

For Exchange grants, no expense claims will be processed until a Final Report has been submitted to the Office of Research Services, and by the reporting deadline set in the award. Please, see below for Reporting instructions.

Eligible Expenses

SIG awards are not retroactive and cannot be used to pay for expenses incurred beyond the effective dates of the award. Funding is intended to cover the direct costs of the research or research activity and expenses must be eligible as outlined in the Tri-Agency Financial Administration Guide. All items must be essential to the proposed work and must be carefully justified. A list of eligible expenses can be obtained from the ORS website.

Explore Grants: Examples include hiring student research assistants, specialized software, materials and supplies not available through the institution, data collection costs including travel to field research sites for data collection, libraries, archives, and institutions, technical services such as translation.

Exchange Grants: Intended to cover the direct costs of the dissemination activity such as economy travel, accommodations, meals, conference registration, open access publishing costs.

Ineligible Expenses

University finance policies and guidelines must be adhered to for all requested budget items. Funds are not intended to provide release time for faculty, salaries, or living expenses. Funding does not support teaching related costs, credential research, tuition and other costs affiliated with the completion of degrees or coursework. Funding does not support professional development such as attendance at meetings or conferences where work is not being presented, nor does it support training such as language or computer training. Retroactive funding and expenses incurred prior to the date of award letter will not be considered.

Grant Expiry

The maximum term of an award is twelve months. After this date, funds will expire and unused funds will be reclaimed.

Reporting

Within 30 days of completion of the research activity, or the termination of the grant, whichever comes first. This final achievement report is available from the Office of Research Services by email at research@concordia.ab.ca. Final reports must be submitted in electronic form to the Office of Research Services. Failure to submit a report in time will result in forfeiture of any remaining funds. For Exchange grants, no expense will be processed if a Final Report has not been submitted.

Commitment to CUE dissemination

CUE's Research Community acknowledges the importance of giving back to the members of our Institution. For this, all recipients of SIG awards must participate in the upcoming Faculty Symposium that is closest to the end date of the award. This is particularly relevant for Exchange Grants. Information on this new activity, sponsored by the Office of Research Services, can be obtained by email at research@concordia.ab.ca.