



Application Guidelines

Internal Research Grants – NSE Stream

Overview	
Value	Maximum \$4,000 per CUE-NSE application; combined maximum including other Internal Research Grants (Seed and Impact) is \$5000 per twelve-month period
Term	Start date is the application deadline. Maximum term of up to 12 months
Application Deadline	May 1
Results Announced	Usually within 3 weeks of the application deadline
How to Apply	Email completed application package as a single PDF document to research@concordia.ab.ca

Concordia University of Edmonton's (CUE) **NSE Grants** are awarded for research projects that focus on the natural sciences and engineering. Additionally, **NSE Grants** provide funding to eligible CUE faculty members who intend to apply for external research funding from NSERC's Discovery and/or Alliance grant programs. Grants awarded through this fund serve as seed funding to carry out essential developmental work that will be used to generate research required for such NSERC funding applications, including:

- Proof-of-concept experiments to support project hypotheses
- Employment of research assistants for experimental work
- Purchase of reagents, equipment not provided by CUE, fees for services for equipment use (i.e., flow cytometry, DNA sequencing, etc.), or other expenses directly related to the project and for which CUE departments do not provide direct funding
- Purchase of software not provided by CUE
- Computer upgrades not provided by CUE (specialized video cards, hard drives, specialized computer screens, etc.) that are required for the research project
- Research article publication costs, when required to enhance a researcher's NSERC CCV for external applications
- Employment of research assistants to help the faculty member with the preparation of an NSERC application, including literature searches, experimental design, etc.
- Other expenses directly related to an NSERC application

NSE Grants are intended to strengthen a vibrant research culture in the natural sciences and engineering at CUE; to develop and support research and innovation; and to enhance the competitiveness of CUE researchers in Tri- Agency and other external funding opportunities.

Special Considerations for NSE Grants

Due to the nature of these awards, the proposed research project must meet NSERC's subject matter eligibility requirements.

Successful recipients must agree to submit an application to NSERC's Discovery or Alliance grant programs within two years of the award start date.

Knowledge dissemination activities (i.e. conference travel) are not eligible. However, networking activities (e.g., research travel, workshops) related to the preparation of a grant application to NSERC are eligible and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Applicants are encouraged to read the guidelines for NSERC's [Discovery Grant](#) and [Alliance](#) programs.

Funds from CUE-NSE awards cannot be used as cash or in-kind contributions for Alliance grant applications.

Value and Duration

The grant start date is the application deadline. Once awarded, grant funds remain active for one year from the grant start date. After completion, funds will expire, and unused funds will be reclaimed. The maximum level of support is \$4,000 for an application. The maximum total of \$5000 per 12-month period in combined internal CUE grants (including NSE, Impact Grants and Seed Grants) applies. As the demand for funds normally far exceeds the funds available, not all meritorious proposals can be adequately supported.

Deadlines

The application deadline is May 1 at 11:59 p.m. (Mountain Time).

Late submissions will not be accepted, and incomplete applications will not be considered. Results are usually announced within three (3) weeks of the application deadline; however, timelines may vary depending on the number of applications received.

It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance with these guidelines during the application process and, if successful, for the duration of the award.

COVID-19 considerations

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, activities that include travel **may** be allowed on a limited basis. Researchers interested in applying for travel-related research funding are strongly encouraged to contact the Office of Research Services (research@concordia.ab.ca) to discuss restrictions and exemption application processes.

Eligibility

The principal applicant must be a CUE faculty member at the time of application. Non-faculty members interested in taking part in this program are encouraged to partner as co-applicants with CUE faculty members. Team grants led by an eligible applicant with one or more co-applicants or collaborators (academic, industry, and non-profit organizations) are accepted.

Applicants who hold NSERC Discovery Grant funding are ineligible to apply under the NSE program to prepare another application to the same program. However, they may use these funds to prepare an application to the NSERC Alliance program.

While the applicant can have an appointment in any of the Faculties at CUE, the proposed research project must meet NSERC's subject matter eligibility requirements. See the following excerpt from the ["Selecting the Appropriate Federal Granting Agency" website](#):

General Guidelines for the Eligibility of Subject Matter at NSERC

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

- 1. The program of research must be primarily in the natural sciences and engineering, other than the health sciences (i.e., aligned with NSERC's function legislated in the NSERC Act); and*
- 2. The intended objective(s) of the research must primarily be to advance knowledge in one or more of the natural science or engineering disciplines.*

According to CUE's Internal Research Grant policy, applicants are allowed a maximum of two unsuccessful applications in any twelve-month term.

Research and Faculty Development Committee members may apply to the **NSE Grant** program; however, they may not participate in the adjudication process.

All applicants must have completed and reported on any previously funded Internal Research Grants and must be in good standing with CUE's Research Ethics Board. Ineligible applications will be removed without adjudication.

Multiple Applications

For each competition, applicants may apply for one **NSE Grant**, with one additional application for either the Seed or Impact programs (maximum of two applications in total submitted in a call for applications). Researchers may only hold one **NSE Grant** per any twelve-month period.

Reviewers

Applications are assessed by the Research and Faculty Development Committee (RFDC). The RFDC is composed of faculty members from all five of CUE's Faculties. Committee members possess a wide range of research experience, methodological expertise, and disciplinary knowledge. Applications should be crafted so that they can be reasonably evaluated by a multidisciplinary committee.

Adjudication

Applications are adjudicated, and 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 according to Tri-Agency evaluation criteria. (See next page for details.) Scores are then averaged, and applications ranked. The RFDC provides a list of applications recommended for funding and their ranking. This process determines which applications will be selected for funding. As the demand for funds normally far exceeds the funds available, not all meritorious proposals can be awarded.

CV Requirements

CUE's Office of Research Services only accepts Common CVs (CCVs) for Internal Research Grant application packages.

For information about how to prepare a Common CV, please review the resources available on the following websites:

- https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/researchportal-portailderecherche/instructions-instructions/ccv-cvc_eng.asp
- <https://concordia.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/How-to-create-an-application-version-of-the-Common-CV-for-CUE-Research.pdf>

Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

The following criteria and scoring schemes are used to evaluate **NSE Grants**

Challenge (60%)	The aim and importance of the proposed research
	Originality, significance, and expected contribution to knowledge
	Clarity of objectives
	Appropriateness of literature review
	Appropriateness of theoretical approach or framework
	Appropriateness of methods / approach
	Quality of training and mentoring to be provided to students and emerging scholars, and opportunities for students and emerging scholars to contribute
	Compliance of the proposed research with NSERC's subject matter eligibility
Feasibility (20%)	The plan to achieve excellence
	Probability that objectives will be met within proposed timeline
	Appropriateness of requested budget and justification of proposed costs
	Probability that proposed research will provide substantial support for an application to NSERC's Discovery Grant or Alliance Programs
	Suitability, eligibility, and contributions of partner for an Alliance grant application (as applicable)
Appropriateness of research design and strategies for conducting 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 career stages
	Evidence of other knowledge mobilization activities (e.g., films, performances, commissioned reports, knowledge syntheses, experiences in collaboration/other interactions with stakeholders, contributions to public debate, media) and of impacts on professional practice, social services, policies, etc.
	Evidence of contributions to the development of students and emerging scholars, and evidence of support for new faculty members and emerging scholars
	Potential of the applicant/co-applicant(s) to make future contributions and secure external grants

Adjudication committee members assign a score for each of the criteria listed above and arrive at a final score. The Office of Research Services will notify applicants of the results of their applications.

Score	Descriptor
5-6	Very Good - Excellence
4-4.9	Good – Very Good
3-3.9	Satisfactory -Good
Below 3	Unsatisfactory

Terms and Conditions of the Grant

Compliance with CUE Policies

All CUE policies, regulations, and administrative processes apply. Research must comply with CUE's policies on the conduct of research, research ethics, and research integrity. It is the responsibility of the principal applicant to secure appropriate permissions, certifications, and approvals for the proposed research activity.

Research Ethics and Certifications

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

Research Definition

Research is defined as the process of purposeful inquiry that generates new insights, knowledge, and innovation through scholarly investigation, experimentation, scientific practices, or artistic practices in a field of specialization. Research activities typically result in quantifiable outcomes and knowledge mobilization activities where research knowledge is communicated to audiences both within and beyond academia to create positive impacts.

Partnerships

CUE encourages research partnerships. However, CUE Internal Research Grants are personal awards. Any co-applicant, whether internal or external, must be included in the application form. If funding will be used to cover the expenses of an external co-applicant, the principal applicant must contact the Office of Research Services to request preparation of a Transfer of Funds Agreement to manage the transfer of funds to the external co-applicant's institution.

Approval for such Agreements must be obtained from the Vice-President Academic and Provost. In absence of a Transfer of Funds Agreement, expenses for external partners may be deemed ineligible and become the sole responsibility of the investigators.

Duplicate requests for funding

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 work that you are submitting for CUE-NSE Grant funding, you are required to immediately disclose this information to the Office of Research Services (ORS) and in the appropriate sections of the application form. Failure to disclose duplicate funding requests may result in disciplinary actions. Please contact the ORS at research@concordia.ab.ca for more details.

Responsible Use of Grant Funds

The policies and requirements detailed 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.

Expenditures are permitted only for expenses 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 from internal research grant funds are not permitted. However, some expenses can be covered directly by the institution (e.g., purchase orders). All research activities and expenditures must occur within the grant term. At the end of grant term, the grant account will be closed, and all unused funds will expire and be reclaimed.

Equipment purchased shall remain the property of CUE, 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

As a pre-condition for the release of funds, all investigators who are awarded NSE grants must attend and complete a training session, facilitated by CUE's Finance Office and the Office of Research Services, regarding expenses for internal research grants.

Expense claims must be prepared by the investigator according to the directions provided by CUE's Finance Office. The onus is on the investigator to prepare and submit acceptable expense claims. Additional information on how to prepare an expense claim can be found on CUE's Research website and in Alfresco.

All expense claims must first be submitted to the Office of Research Services for compliance review.

Eligible Expenses

Eligible expenses are expected to align with all of the following four principles:

- a. contribute to the direct costs of the research/activities for which the funds were awarded, with benefits directly attributable to the grant;
- b. not be usually provided by CUE to faculty members or staff;
- c. be effective and economical; and
- d. not result in personal gain for members of the research team.

NSE Grant funding is intended to cover the direct costs of the research or creative activity, including, but not limited to:

- 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; and
- for specialist services such as translation.

Any expense for which there are eligibility concerns must be reviewed by CUE's Office of Research Services.

Ineligible Expenses

All requested budget items must adhere to CUE's policies and guidelines. Funds are not intended to provide release time, salaries, or living expenses for faculty members. Funding does not support credential research, tuition, and other costs affiliated with the completion of degrees or coursework. Retroactive funding and expenses incurred prior to the application deadline, or after the end date noted in the signed letter of award, will not be considered.

Term of the Grant

The maximum term of an award is twelve months from the application deadline. The term is specified in the letter of award. After this date, funds will expire, and unused funds will be reclaimed. A signed acknowledgement and acceptance of the award, included in the letter of award, must be returned to the Office of Research Services within ten (10) days of receipt. Otherwise, the award will be considered forfeited, and the funds will be returned to CUE.

Appeals

All applications are confidential and the decisions of the RFDC are final. CUE has no provisions for appeal of funding decisions.

Acknowledgment

Public acknowledgement of CUE's financial assistance is a condition of receiving an Internal Research Grant. Recipients should acknowledge support from the institution in publications, presentations, and other forms of dissemination.

Reporting

Within thirty (30) days of the end of the grant term, the principal applicant must submit a report to the Office of Research Services. The reporting template can be requested via email from research@concordia.ab.ca. Failure to provide an end-of-grant report may result in forfeiture of the existing award and ineligibility for subsequent Internal Research Grant competitions.

Commitment to CUE dissemination

CUE's research community acknowledges the importance of giving back to the broader CUE community. Thus, all recipients of Internal Research Grant awards must participate in the annual Faculty Research Symposium that is closest to the end date of the award. Information on this event, sponsored by the Office of Research Services, can be obtained via an email to research@concordia.ab.ca.

Application Procedure

1. Ensure you are using the correct grant application form for the proposed activity.
2. Complete all sections of the application form.
3. Complete the checklist at the end of the application form.
4. Sign application form and obtain the required signature from the department head or director.
5. Collect all required and/or supplementary attachments.
6. Bundle all documents as a single PDF package.
7. Send the application package by email to research@concordia.ab.ca

The application must be submitted as a single, complete document in PDF format.

Paper submissions will not be considered.

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

Up until two (2) working days before the competition deadline, incomplete and/or non-compliant application submissions will be returned to applicants for correction.

Non-compliant submissions received less than two (2) working days before the competition deadline will not be accepted and will be removed from the competition. Deadlines still apply.

Extraneous attachments and/or supplemental materials will be removed from received applications.