

SSHRC  CRSH

INSIGHT DEVELOPMENT GRANTS FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Manual for Adjudication Committee Members

March 2011



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada 

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL	1
II.	THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL	2
	1. SSHRC's Mandate and Objectives	2
	2. Governing Structure	2
	3. SSHRC Structure	3
III.	FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES FOR ADJUDICATORS	4
	1. Confidentiality	4
	• <i>Access to Information Act and Privacy Act</i>	
	• <i>SSHRC Grant and Fellowship Applications</i>	
	• <i>Reviewer Identity</i>	
	• <i>Committee Deliberations</i>	
	• <i>Release of Results</i>	
	2. Managing Conflict of Interest	5
	3. Ethics and Integrity in Research	6
	• <i>Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans</i>	
	• <i>Integrity in Research and Scholarship</i>	
	4. Non-Discrimination Policy	7
	5. Appeals and Complaints	7
IV.	SSHRC'S PRINCIPLES FOR PEER REVIEW	9
V.	ADJUDICATION COMMITTEE ROLES AND FUNCTIONING	10
	1. Composition of Insight Development Grants Adjudication Committees	10
	2. How Members are Chosen	10
	• <i>Selection Process</i>	
	• <i>Selection Criteria</i>	
	3. General Responsibilities	11
	• <i>Committee Chair</i>	
	• <i>Committee Members</i>	
	• <i>Program Officers</i>	
	• <i>SSHRC Observers</i>	
	4. Committee Expense Claims	12
VI.	INSIGHT DEVELOPMENT GRANTS	13
	1. Context	13
	2. Value and Duration	13
	3. Eligibility	14
	• <i>Subject Matter</i>	
	• <i>Applicants</i>	

VII. EVALUATION AND ADJUDICATION 16

1. Adjudication Milestones 16

2. Adjudication Process 16

- *Reading and Assessment*
- *Teleconference with Committee Chairs*
- *Calibration Teleconference*
- *Before the Committee Meeting*
- *During the Committee Meeting*
- *After the Committee Meeting*

3. Evaluation Criteria 17

4. Scoring 20

- *Proposals from Research Teams*
- *Adjudicating Intended Outcomes*
- *Table 1: Challenge and Feasibility*
- *Table 2: Capability*

VIII. REVIEWING BUDGET PROPOSALS AND DETERMINING AWARD SIZE 25

1. Funding Budgets and Process 25

2. Duration of Award 25

3. Budget Review and Size of Award 25

- *Eligible and Ineligible Expenses*
- *Multiple-Source Funding*

I. PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

Adjudication plays a vital role in the operations of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Committees adjudicate applications to the various SSHRC funding opportunities that provide support for research, research training, research communication and knowledge mobilization.

This manual:

- provides adjudicators with summary information on SSHRC's mandate, objectives, structure, policies and funding opportunities;
- sets out policies and procedures for the adjudication of applications submitted to the Insight Development Grants funding opportunity; and
- encourages uniformity and consistency in the application of SSHRC's policies and principles.

Complete information for all SSHRC programs and funding opportunities—including funding opportunity descriptions, eligibility and evaluation criteria, application instructions, guidelines for using funds, and submission deadlines—is available on SSHRC's website at:

www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca

II. THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL

1. SSHRC's Mandate and Objectives

SSHRC is the federal agency responsible for promoting and supporting research and training in the humanities and social sciences. Through its programs and policies, SSHRC enables the highest levels of research excellence in Canada, and facilitates knowledge-sharing and collaboration across research disciplines, universities, and all sectors of society.

SSHRC was created by an act of Parliament in June 1977 with a legislated mandate to:

- promote and assist research and scholarship in the social sciences and humanities; and
- advise the minister with respect to matters relating to such research as the minister may refer to the Council for its consideration.

In an increasingly globalized world, SSHRC programs aim to develop the **talent** needed across the public, private, not-for-profit and academic sectors. They help generate **insights** about people, ideas and behaviour, and build **connections** within and beyond academia to address the needs and perspectives of all sectors of society.

SSHRC is currently renewing its program architecture to strengthen its programs, simplify and consolidate support for excellent research in the social sciences and humanities, and better connect that research within and beyond academia.

Through its Talent, Insight and Connection programs (see www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/index-eng.aspx), SSHRC fosters the development of talented and creative people who become leaders across all sectors, and who are critical to Canada's success in the rapidly changing 21st century. In turn, SSHRC encourages the participation of experts from across these sectors in some of its adjudication process.

Three ambitions characterize SSHRC's vision:

- to enhance the **quality** of, and support for, research and research training in the social sciences and humanities;
- to enable **connections** among disciplines, including those in engineering and the natural and health sciences, as well as between research and the larger community, in Canada and in the rest of the world; and
- to increase the **impact** of research and research training for the benefit of society.

SSHRC obtains its funds through an annual parliamentary appropriation and reports to Parliament through the minister of Industry. SSHRC's total estimated budget for the support of its funding opportunities in the 2009-10 fiscal year was \$335.3 million (excluding the Indirect Costs Program). SSHRC functions as a departmental corporation and has full authority to determine its priorities, policies and programs, and to make funding decisions.

2. Governing Structure

SSHRC is governed by a council consisting of SSHRC's president and not more than 21 members who are appointed by the governor-in-council. The membership reflects the complexity and diversity of Canadian society. The president is normally appointed for a

five-year term and is SSHRC's chief executive officer. Council members are normally appointed for three years. Both the president and council members are eligible for reappointment.

The vice-president and chair of council calls and chairs meetings of the executive committee and of council. Council members elect the vice-president and chair of council, subject to approval by the governor-in-council.

SSHRC's governing council is mandated to advise the president of SSHRC on strategy, risk management, performance management and stakeholder relations, with the goal of ensuring that SSHRC's priorities and programs support high-quality research, training and knowledge mobilization, as well as enable a strong, vibrant research community in the social sciences and humanities.

The governing council's role strengthens the president's ability to lead the organization with the conviction that comes from independent advice and, with the support of council, to confidently account to the minister and to Parliament for the decisions made, the resources expended and the results achieved.

3. SSHRC Structure

SSHRC Programs consists of two directorates—Research Capacity and Research—responsible for administering SSHRC's independent grant, scholarship and fellowship funding opportunities. The directorates include the following divisions:

Research Capacity

- Research Training Portfolio
- Chairs Secretariat

Research

- Partnerships Portfolio
- Research Portfolio
- Knowledge Mobilization and Program Integration

The Chairs Secretariat is responsible for administering the Canada Research Chairs, Canada Excellence Research Chairs and Indirect Costs programs on behalf of SSHRC, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

III. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES FOR ADJUDICATORS

SSHRC research grants and fellowships are awarded through an independent peer review process designed to ensure the highest standards of excellence and objectivity. Peer review is universally recognized as the most impartial and effective way to allocate public research funds.

The principles set out in the following sections apply to all adjudicators, and are vital to maintaining the well-established tradition of integrity and transparency in conducting SSHRC business and peer review.

1. Confidentiality

Access to Information Act and Privacy Act

All information provided to SSHRC is subject to the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy Act*.

In order to assist SSHRC in complying with the *Privacy Act*, adjudication committee members sign a declaration in which they ensure the confidentiality of information in all applications for grants, scholarships and fellowships. The purpose of the act is to protect the privacy of individuals regarding personal information about themselves held by government institutions, and to provide individuals with a right of access to that information. The *Privacy Act* also stipulates that, without the consent of the individual to whom it relates, personal information obtained shall not be used except for the purpose for which it was collected or for a use consistent with that purpose.

All information gathered by SSHRC is used for reviewing applications, administering grants or awards, program planning and evaluation, and developing repositories of potential external assessors and adjudication committee members. It is also used, if necessary, for consultations with NSERC, CIHR, and the Canada Council for the Arts concerning the eligibility of the proposed activity, and may be used for statistical studies conducted by SSHRC on research funding in Canada.

Committee members should direct any questions or concerns about the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy Act* to SSHRC's co-ordinator, ATIP, ethics and integrity (613-992-1058).

SSHRC Grant and Fellowship Applications

Information in applications should be considered confidential and handled in a secure fashion. In handling applicant/application information, committee members must adhere to these requirements:

- Information placed in the custody of committee members is to be used only for the purpose for which it was collected—the evaluation of SSHRC applications. No other use is permitted.
- All copies of documents must be secured to maintain confidentiality. In addition, material that a committee member no longer requires must be destroyed in a secure manner, i.e., burning or shredding. All CD-ROMs, binders, files, and assessments must be left on SSHRC premises at the conclusion of the meetings. For adjudications by teleconference, committee members should ensure that the documents are destroyed after results have been announced. Similarly, any member's work that has been saved as a computer file or on diskette must be deleted.

- Access to a SSHRC extranet is limited to the committee members. Members must not disclose their ID or password.

Reviewer Identity

Applicants for SSHRC grants, scholarships and fellowships have the right of access to personal information about them stored in SSHRC files. However, this does not include the right to know the identity of the reviewer. Under the provisions of the *Privacy Act*, the name or identifying details of an external assessor or appraiser of an application for SSHRC funding must be withheld from the applicant, unless the reviewer consents to its disclosure.

Applicants to SSHRC grant opportunities have access to the full text of any external assessments obtained for their proposal, with the exception of the assessor's identity and any comments made regarding other applicants and their identities. In the scholarships and fellowships opportunities, the full texts of letters of appraisal, departmental appraisals and research appraisals, if applicable, are available to the applicant, with the exception of the names of the individuals who wrote the letters and any comments made regarding other applicants and their identities.

In the interest of transparency, committee membership is made available to the public on the SSHRC website.

Committee Deliberations

All matters discussed during adjudication meetings or teleconferences are confidential. Committee members must not impart, refer to, or consider information about the applicant that does not appear in the application materials. Committee members must not disclose results prior to their official release by SSHRC. If approached by an applicant concerning a decision, committee members should decline to discuss the matter and advise the enquirer to contact SSHRC directly.

Release of Results

Following SSHRC approval of committee recommendations, it is the responsibility of SSHRC staff to notify applicants of the results of committee deliberations.

2. Managing Conflict of Interest

SSHRC recognizes that real or potential conflicts of interest can and do arise in the adjudication of grant, scholarship and fellowship applications. SSHRC's position is that these situations must be managed in an open and transparent manner. Committee members are responsible for identifying and addressing real or apparent conflicts of interest in order to maintain the community's confidence and trust, and to ensure accountability.

A committee member is considered to be in a conflict of interest vis-à-vis an application if it is from a team that includes:

- a friend;
- a relative;
- a research collaborator;
- an institutional colleague;
- a former thesis supervisor or mentor;
- a student previously under the member's supervision;

- a person with whom the member is involved in a dispute; or
- a person with whom the member is involved in a partnership.

In the case of certain funding opportunities, further information on conflict of interest may also be available further in the manual. While SSHRC cannot anticipate all potential conflict of interest situations, SSHRC staff make every effort to avoid possible conflicts before assigning applications to committee members for review. It is the responsibility of members to declare any conflict of interest related to an application, and to inform SSHRC staff immediately of the conflict. It is the role of the program officer to advise the committee in ambiguous cases.

In adjudication meetings or teleconferences, a member declaring a conflict must withdraw from the room or conference call during the committee's discussion of the application in question. In cases where the chair of a committee withdraws because of a conflict of interest, the committee will designate an alternate chair for its review of the particular file(s).

A committee member who submits an application to the committee on which he or she is serving must withdraw from the committee in the year in which the application is submitted. However, the member may resume service on the committee in a subsequent year.

3. Ethics and Integrity in Research

Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans

In August 1998, the three federal research granting agencies (SSHRC, CIHR, and NSERC) released to the university community the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*, which was followed in 2010 by the second edition, *TCPS 2*. This policy statement articulates ethical norms for research activities involving humans (as defined by the TCPS 2) in institutions eligible to receive or administer research funding from the agencies. It outlines core principles, mandatory requirements and guidance for the interpretation of research ethics principles for researchers, institutions and research ethics boards, as they apply to proposals for research involving human participants. The full policy statement can be found by going to the [Policies](#) page of SSHRC's website.

As a condition of eligibility for agency funding, institutions must agree to comply with a number of agency policies, including the TCPS. Institutions must therefore ensure that research conducted under their auspices adhere to this policy. Researchers are also expected, as a condition of funding, to adhere to the TCPS. Institutions should support their efforts to do so. Responsibility for ensuring that all proposed research meets the ethics guidelines set by the granting agencies rests with the applicant's institution. SSHRC does not require applicants to submit a research ethics certificate with their application.

Notwithstanding an institutional ethics review, adjudication committees may comment on research ethics, and members are encouraged to raise questions of ethics for committee discussion if they have concerns about proposed methods of research.

Integrity in Research and Scholarship

The [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Integrity in Research and Scholarship](#) (available by clicking on "Integrity in Research and Scholarship" on the [Policies](#) page of SSHRC's website, defines the policies and expectations of the agencies regarding scholarly integrity. It also sets out procedures for handling allegations of misconduct in research and scholarship.

The document includes the following principle concerning adjudication committees:

“In the event that a Council, or one of its peer review committees, identifies evidence of misconduct as part of the peer review processes, the Council will request the institution(s) involved to carry out an enquiry and to inform the Council of the outcome.”

Committee members are invited to raise any concerns regarding scholarly misconduct on the part of a grant, scholarship or fellowship applicant with their SSHRC program officer, or to contact SSHRC's co-ordinator, ATIP, ethics and integrity (613-992-1058) prior to the adjudication meeting.

4. Non-Discrimination Policy

No persons meeting the eligibility requirements will be subject to discrimination under any funding opportunity or activity receiving financial assistance from SSHRC.

5. Appeals and Complaints

Decisions may be appealed on the following grounds:

- where there is evidence of procedural error in the adjudication process; or
- where there is evidence that a committee based its decision on factual error.

Procedural error includes both departures from SSHRC's policies and procedures (for example, regarding conflict of interest), and any failures by SSHRC's staff to provide the prescribed information to the adjudication committee. In those funding opportunities where external assessments of proposals are employed, SSHRC makes every effort to secure external assessments from knowledgeable and objective reviewers. In certain cases, however, this is not possible. Under such circumstances, the adjudication committee is asked to give the application an in-depth review, and the lack of external assessments does not constitute grounds for appeal.

Factual error exists where there is compelling evidence that the adjudication committee based its decision to not recommend an award on a conclusion that is contrary to information provided by the applicant in the application. This does not include disagreements over interpretation or analysis of facts by adjudication committee members or external assessors. Evidence of factual error would, for example, be a committee statement that an application was not recommended due to the applicant's lack of any peer-reviewed publications, where, in fact, the application lists several publications universally acknowledged to be peer-reviewed.

SSHRC will not accept appeals where the committee has made a reasonable attempt to judge fairly the merit of an application. Nor is the appeal process intended to deal with differences of scholarly opinion among applicants, adjudication committees and external assessors. Similarly, SSHRC does not permit appeals based on the composition of adjudication committees or on the amount awarded.

Notwithstanding its published policy on appeals, SSHRC routinely receives calls and letters complaining about decisions. If committee members are contacted by an applicant, whether before or following the adjudication, members must not engage in correspondence or dialogue with applicants, but, rather, should refer all calls or letters directly to SSHRC for a response. Committees are not responsible for dealing with queries or complaints; SSHRC staff will ensure that appropriate action is taken and that the reasons for SSHRC's decisions are carefully explained to applicants.

SSHRC's [Appeals of Decisions Based on Peer Review](#) policy can be found on the [Policies](#) page of SSHRC's website.

IV. SSHRC'S PRINCIPLES FOR PEER REVIEW

The following describes SSHRC's peer review principles.

Transparency

Publish the criteria for assessing proposals, as well as details of the review process, defining how the assessment process will operate and be managed, before applicants submit proposals.

Due diligence and appropriateness

Use a peer review process that is appropriate to the type of proposed research and in proportion with the investment and complexity of the work.

Managing interests

Ask all participants to declare interests when carrying out review activities, so that any conflicts can be identified and managed.

Confidentiality

Treat proposals in confidence, and ask those who advise us to do the same.

Expert assessment

Use appropriate expert reviewers to assess the individual merit of all proposals against the published criteria.

Separation of duties

Separate the peer review of proposals against the assessment criteria from the making of funding decisions. Those acting as peers will not also be responsible for authorizing the funding decision, responsibility for which lies with SSHRC.

No parallel assessment

Avoid assessing the merit of the same proposal more than once.

V. ADJUDICATION COMMITTEE ROLES AND FUNCTIONING

1. Composition of Insight Development Grants Adjudication Committees

Insight Development Grants applications are adjudicated by experts drawn from, but not limited to, the following research fields:

Group 1: History; medieval studies; classics; literature; fine arts; philosophy; religious studies; and related fields.

Group 2: Anthropology; archaeology; linguistics; translation; political science; public administration; law; criminology; geography; urban planning and environmental studies; and related fields.

Group 3: Business and management; economics; and related fields.

Group 4: Sociology; demography; communication studies; journalism; media studies; gender studies; cultural studies; library and information science; and related fields.

Group 5: Education; psychology; social work; career guidance; and related fields.

Applicants must indicate which of the five groups they consider most appropriate to their proposal, and select a primary discipline and area of research from a detailed list available on the application form. Applicants submitting proposals that are multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary in nature, and who wish to have the proposal evaluated in a multidisciplinary adjudication, must also indicate secondary and tertiary disciplines and areas of research.

SSHRC will create disciplinary and/or multidisciplinary committees to evaluate applications grouped by discipline or by area of study, as appropriate. The exact number and composition of review committees will be determined by the number and nature of proposals received.

Applicants requesting a multidisciplinary adjudication must include with their application a one-page document explaining how their research will integrate intellectual resources (theories, methodologies, perspectives, etc.) drawn from two or more disciplines.

2. How Members are Chosen

Selection Process

SSHRC regularly requests universities and professional associations to nominate adjudication committee members. Former committee members and SSHRC staff may also nominate committee members.

Members are selected based on research achievement and the knowledge and experience they can bring to the committee.

Selection Criteria

The primary considerations taken into account in structuring adjudication committees are:

- the overall competence and credibility of the committee;
- the expertise and stature of the individual nominees;

- appropriate representation on the basis of areas of expertise, university, region, language and gender; and
- appropriate knowledge of both official languages (in order to participate in bilingual discussions without simultaneous translation, members must normally have a reading knowledge and good aural comprehension of the other official language).

3. General Responsibilities

Committee Chair

The adjudication committee chair is responsible for ensuring that the committee carries out its work with fairness, thoroughness and integrity. The chair is also responsible for managing the committee's time efficiently, so that each application can be discussed adequately.

The committee chair plays a vital role in ensuring that SSHRC's policies and procedures are observed, including that potential or actual conflict of interest situations involving committee members are avoided. The chair works closely with the program officer, from whom he or she seeks guidance, as appropriate, before and during the adjudication process.

The committee chair also:

- guides the committee's discussion of applications;
- ensures that the committee's final recommendations accurately reflect the consensus of its members; and
- summarizes members' views and arguments in order to provide the applicant with a rationale for the committee's decision.

Committee Members

Committee members are responsible for evaluating the relative merits of each Insight Development Grant application submitted for their review—except those that pose a conflict of interest—on the basis of the funding opportunity's evaluation criteria.

In addition, members are responsible for evaluating the requested budget of each proposal that they recommend for funding.

Readers A, B and C

To facilitate committee discussion, three committee members (other than the chair) examine each application in detail. They are designated as readers A, B and C, and have the following responsibilities:

- Prepare comments on each application, with a view to the discussion that will take place at the committee's adjudication meeting in May. The comments must, on the Committee Comment and Scoring Sheet, include a summary of the reader's observations according to the three evaluation criteria set out in this manual. Readers' notes on the scoring sheets will serve as their speaking notes during committee discussions. To the extent that the committee endorses the readers' observations, their notes will also form the basis of the comments that the committee forwards to applicants.
- Using tables 1 and 2 at the end of Part VII of this manual assign preliminary scores to each of their assigned applications.

- In cases where readers assign a score of 3.0 or higher to each of the three evaluation criteria, they must suggest, for each year, an amount to be awarded that is sufficient to allow the applicant to conduct the research successfully.

Program Officers

Program officers serve as both resource people for committee members and SSHRC's representatives during the adjudication process. Officers are responsible for ensuring that, throughout the competition, all concerned understand fully and apply consistently all relevant SSHRC policies, evaluation criteria and regulations, and treat each application equitably and fairly.

Prior to the committee meeting, program officers ensure that all applications to be considered meet SSHRC's eligibility requirements. They assign applications to committee members who act as readers of these applications. Once the members have completed their initial or preliminary scoring of applications, the officers also prepare a provisional rank-ordered list of applications to help guide the group discussions.

During the committee meeting, the officers serve as secretaries to the committee, recording scores, funding recommendations and the comments that reflect the committee's collective opinion about each application. The officer will intervene whenever necessary to guide and advise the committee and to help interpret SSHRC policy. The program officer also alerts the committee to any problems with specific applications or recommendations and suggests possible solutions.

After the committee meeting, program officers forward to each applicant the committee's recommendation. Officers also respond to applicants' queries and/or complaints about competition results.

SSHRC Observers

Observers, appointed by SSHRC senior management, may be invited to attend the adjudication committee meetings. The observers act as liaisons between the selection committees, SSHRC management and SSHRC's governing council, and make recommendations regarding SSHRC policies, procedures, selection criteria, etc. Observers attend the committee meetings, but do not participate in the discussion of the applications.

4. Committee Expense Claims

SSHRC will cover the cost of committee members' travel, accommodation and meals in accordance with Government of Canada Treasury Board guidelines. SSHRC will also reimburse committee members for long-distance telephone charges directly related to the adjudication.

SSHRC will, in advance of the meeting, send committee members a memo concerning travel arrangements. The memo will include a travel number with which to bill air or train tickets directly to SSHRC, as well as information regarding reimbursement of travel expenses. Committee members should be aware of the maximum allowances that federal regulations permit.

VI. INSIGHT DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

1. Context

The Insight Development Grants funding opportunity was launched in November 2010 as part of SSHRC's [program architecture renewal](#). The new program architecture reduces complexity, eliminates overlaps in program objectives, and minimizes logistical barriers for applicants. It supports research activities undertaken by individuals or teams. Within the renewed architecture, SSHRC continues to support research in all fields, including through disciplinary, interdisciplinary and cross-sector approaches.

Insight Development Grants support research in its initial stages. The grants enable the development of new research questions, as well as experimentation with new methods, theoretical approaches and/or ideas. Funding is provided for short-term research development projects, of up to two years, proposed by individuals or teams.

Insight Development Grants foster research in its early stages, but are not intended to support ongoing initiatives. Longer-term support for research will be offered, instead, through SSHRC's [Insight Grants](#).

Insight Development Grants proposals are expected to respond to the objectives put forward in the call for proposals for the [Insight program](#).

Proposed projects may involve, but are not limited to, the following types of research activities:

- case studies;
- pilot initiatives; and
- critical analyses of existing research.

Projects may also involve national and international research collaboration, and the exploration of new ways of producing, structuring and mobilizing knowledge within and across disciplines and sectors.

Within the Insight Development Grants funding opportunity, funding is available for two distinct categories of scholars: [regular scholars](#) and [new scholars](#).

Regular scholars: Funding for [regular scholars](#) provides support to explore new research questions and approaches that are distinct from the applicant's previous/ongoing research. These questions and approaches may or may not lie outside the scholar's existing area(s) of specialization.

New scholars: This funding supports high-quality research projects by [new scholars](#) to develop new research questions and/or approaches. Such projects may represent a continuation of the applicant's (or team's) graduate work and/or overall research trajectory.

2. Value and Duration

The maximum value of an Insight Development Grant is \$75,000 over one or two years. A minimum budget of \$7,000 in at least one of the years is required.

The total competition budget for the 2011 Insight Development Grants competition is expected to be \$8 million over two years, including funding envelopes for both [regular](#) and

[new scholars](#). For the current competition, at least 50 per cent of funds will be reserved for applications from new scholars.

3. Eligibility

Subject Matter

Most SSHRC funding is awarded through open competitions. All disciplines, thematic areas, and approaches are eligible for consideration, and proposals are welcome from all subject areas eligible for funding at SSHRC. Please see the [Subject Matter Eligibility](#) section of the SSHRC website for more information.

In certain cases, priorities have been identified for either additional support, a more tailored adjudication, or both. SSHRC's current [priority areas](#) are:

- [Aboriginal Research](#)
- [Canadian Environmental Issues](#)
- [Digital Media](#)
- [Innovation, Leadership and Prosperity](#)
- [Northern Communities: Towards Social and Economic Prosperity](#)

Applicants requesting funding under one of these [priority areas](#) should identify their Insight Development Grant proposal as being related to one of SSHRC's priority areas.

Applicants

Applications for an Insight Development Grant may be submitted by an individual researcher or by a team of researchers (consisting of one [applicant](#), plus one or more [co-applicants](#) and/or research [collaborators](#)).

Eligibility under the [new scholar](#) definition is determined solely by the status of the applicant.

All team members must meet the eligibility criteria specific to their category.

Applicants and co-applicants must be affiliated with an [eligible institution](#) before the grant is awarded.

Researchers who maintain an affiliation with a Canadian postsecondary institution, but whose primary affiliation is with a non-Canadian postsecondary institution, are not eligible for principal applicant status within the Insight Development Grants funding opportunity.

Researchers whose primary affiliation is with a non-Canadian postsecondary institution are eligible to participate as co-applicants. In such cases, the rationale for international collaboration must be clearly outlined in the application.

Postdoctoral fellows are eligible to be applicants for an Insight Development Grant. However, in order for SSHRC to release grant funds, successful applicants must formally establish an affiliation with an eligible postsecondary institution within three months of the grant start date, and maintain such an affiliation for the duration of the grant period.

Students enrolled in a program of study are not eligible to apply. However, a PhD candidate, whether holding a faculty position or not, is eligible to receive an Insight Development Grant if he or she:

- has met all requirements for the PhD before the grant is awarded;

- establishes a formal affiliation with an eligible Canadian postsecondary institution within three months of the grant start date; and
- maintains such an affiliation for the duration of the grant period.

Applicants may apply for and hold, as a principal applicant, only one Insight Development Grant at a time. Please refer to SSHRC's [regulations regarding multiple applications](#) for more information.

Applicants who have received a SSHRC grant of any type but have failed to submit a [final research report](#) by the deadline specified in their Notice of Award are not eligible to apply for another SSHRC grant until they have submitted the report.

VII. EVALUATION AND ADJUDICATION

1. Adjudication Milestones

Application deadline	February 1
SSHRC posting of applications to the extranet and designation of readers A, B and C	Mid-March
Calibration teleconference	Early April
Committee meetings in Ottawa	Early May
SSHRC senior management approval of grants awarded	Late May
Announcement of results	Early June

2. Adjudication Process

Reading and Assessment

Committee members read all applications, but assign marks only to those assigned to them as either reader A, B or C. Applications must be marked in accordance with the evaluation criteria and scoring table outlined in “Evaluation Criteria” and in “Scoring” below.

Committee members are asked to identify any conflicts of interest that may exist between themselves and the applicants, co-applicants and research collaborators from whom applications have been submitted to their committee (see “Managing Conflicts of Interest” in section III).

In preparation for the committee’s discussion at the adjudication meeting, committee members prepare comments on, and recommend a budget for, each application to which they have been assigned as reader (see section VIII below regarding determining award size). Program officers compile the preliminary scores submitted by committee members into a spreadsheet, and send this to all committee members prior to the adjudication meetings.

Teleconference with Committee Chairs

Committee chairs are asked to participate in a pre-adjudication committee teleconference with the program officer (to be scheduled for late March), to discuss their roles and responsibilities, and to ensure consistency between all Insight Development Grants committees in the application of SSHRC policies, practices and evaluation criteria.

Calibration Teleconference

All committee members participate in a calibration teleconference, led by the committee chair, to discuss the application of the evaluation criteria and scoring system, and to devise a strategy for managing committee time in Ottawa.

Before the Committee Meeting

Readers will readjust their scores in consideration of the calibration teleconference, and will submit their List of Scores to SSHRC **one week before the adjudication meeting**. This will allow SSHRC to compile a master spreadsheet of preliminary scores with the average score assigned to each application.

Preliminary scores will facilitate the committee’s discussions by providing an initial overall ranking of the applications. The program officer will provide the committee with the

preliminary ranking based on the scores assigned by Reader A, Reader B and Reader C prior to the meeting.

Throughout the preliminary scoring process, committee members should communicate with the program officer as needed and, if necessary, with the committee chair. Committee chairs are also asked to co-operate closely with the program officer to ensure the success of the adjudication.

During the Committee Meeting

All of the Insight Development Grants adjudication committees meet during the first week of May. Meetings are held in Ottawa. Committee meetings last from two to four days, depending on the number of applications before the committee.

Discussing applications

During the meeting, committee members discuss applications on the basis of their preliminary scores. Reader A provides members with a brief oral summary of the proposal, identifies strengths and weaknesses, and makes a preliminary recommendation. Readers B and C make any additional comments they deem appropriate. The committee discusses in more detail those applications that show a discrepancy between readers A, B and C. With the goal of reaching a consensus, any member may request further discussion of any application. Committee members decide, by consensus, on a final score for each application.

Ranking applications

The committee reviews the rank-ordered list of applications and finalizes the scores, rankings and budgets. The committee chair signs the spreadsheet. **Note:** After this step, it is no longer possible to change the ranking of any application.

The final list divides the adjudicated applications into three categories: successful applications; applications recommended for funding, but for which funds are not available (lack of available resources does not permit support of all meritorious applications); and applications not recommended for funding.

Policy discussion

Following the adjudication, the committee will hold a policy discussion in order to inform SSHRC staff of any difficulties encountered in the adjudication and to advise on program policy issues. SSHRC senior management uses policy minutes as feedback from the committee and as a basis on which to improve policies and procedures.

After the Committee Meeting

SSHRC senior management approves the funding of applications for the competition. All applications that the committee has recommended for confirmed funding are submitted to SSHRC's vice-president, Research, for his or her approval. Recommended but not funded applications may be eligible for support should funding become available.

In order to explain SSHRC's decision, the program officer prepares a written recommendation for each application, based directly on the committee's discussion and the readers' comments.

3. Evaluation Criteria

As part of SSHRC's program architecture renewal, SSHRC now has a single, consistent set of evaluation criteria applicable across all of the funding opportunities available under its Insight and Connection programs.

The following Challenge, Feasibility and Capability criteria are used by the adjudication committees to evaluate Insight Development Grant applications:

Challenge—The aim and importance of the endeavour (50%):

- originality, significance and expected contribution to knowledge;
- appropriateness of the theoretical approach or framework;
- appropriateness of the methodologies or approaches;
- quality of training and mentoring to be provided to students, emerging scholars and other highly qualified personnel, where appropriate; and
- likelihood of influence and impact within and/or beyond the social sciences and humanities research community.

Applicants should provide the following information, which will inform the evaluation of their Challenge component:

- the location of the proposed research in the context of the relevant scholarly literature;
- the relationship and relevance of the proposed research to the individual's ongoing research or to experience and insights gained from earlier research achievements;
- the importance, originality and anticipated contribution to knowledge of the proposed research;
- the theoretical approach or framework (if applicable);
- research methodologies (approaches/procedures) that will be used to achieve the stated objectives; and
- specific roles and responsibilities of students and research assistants, including how their duties will complement their academic training.

Training opportunities

SSHRC considers research training to be a key priority. In evaluating the application against the Challenge criteria, the committee must take into consideration, where appropriate, the training opportunities to be provided to students. The committee should be careful to evaluate the nature and extent of research training included in the research proposal, and to reflect it in the application's final score. The committee should also take into account how this training will complement the students' own academic training.

Feasibility—The plan to achieve excellence (20%):

- probability of meeting the objectives of the [Insight program](#), the Insight Development Grants funding opportunity and, where appropriate, expected outcomes of a [priority area](#);
- strategies and timelines for the design and conduct of the research and/or related activities;
- appropriateness of the requested budget, justification of proposed costs, and indications of other planned resources (time, human and financial); and
- quality of knowledge mobilization plans, including for effective dissemination, exchange, and engagement within, and/or, where appropriate, beyond, the research community.

Applicants should provide the following information, which will inform the evaluation of their Feasibility component:

- the explicit objectives of the proposed research in relation to the Insight program, the Insight Development Grants funding opportunity and, if appropriate, one of SSHRC's priority areas;
- the key activities and research strategies/timelines for the proposed research;
- relationship of the requested budget to the proposed research; and
- plans for communicating research results within and, where appropriate, beyond the academic community.

Capability—The expertise to succeed (30%):

- quality, quantity and significance of past research activity and published outputs relative to the stage of the applicant's career;
- evidence of other contributions through, for example, publications (such as commissioned reports, etc.); professional practice; and contributions to public discourse, public policies, products and services, and the development of talent; and
- potential to make future contributions.

Applicants should provide the following information, which will inform the evaluation of their Capability component. Contributions to research may include:

- refereed publications, including books, chapters of books and articles;
- book reviews by the applicant/co-applicant, or published reviews of his or her work;
- research reports, papers presented at scholarly meetings or conferences, and other forms of written scholarly expression or participation in public discourse and debate which constitute a contribution to research;
- where appropriate, contributions to the training of future researchers, including the supervision of graduate theses and/or the involvement of students in research activities;
- research results from previous research grants, other awards from SSHRC or other sources; and/or academic awards and distinctions, especially in the case of those applying as new scholars.

SSHRC uses two scoring schemes to assess capability: one applies to regular scholars, the other to new scholars (see Table 2: Capability, below).

Committee members must base their evaluation of capability primarily on the contributions to research the applicant has made within the last six years or, if the applicant's research career has been interrupted, his or her most recent period of research activity. In evaluating the record of regular scholars, members are asked to also take into account the applicant's five most significant contributions, where indicated. These will help to accurately situate the most recent six years in the context of the applicant's overall career.

Members should also evaluate each applicant's overall contribution to research in relation to, or measured against, **the stage of the applicant's research career**. Committee members are also asked to take into consideration any special circumstances or career interruptions that may have delayed or interrupted an applicant's research career.

Career interruptions occur when, for health, administrative, family or other reasons, a researcher is taken away from his or her research work for an extended period of time. In these cases, the researcher should explain the absence(s) and ask that an equivalent period of research activity prior (but as near as possible) to the present day and leading to a total of six years be taken into consideration by the adjudication committee.

Special circumstances involve slowdowns in research productivity created by health, administrative, family or other reasons (i.e., the researcher was not taken completely away from his or her work).

In addition, committee members should take into account the type of organization with which the researcher is affiliated. A researcher affiliated with a small university that does not have a graduate program in his or her area of expertise will necessarily make rather different contributions to student training than a researcher from a large university that offers an extensive and well-established graduate program.

In the case of applications from research teams, evaluate the team's overall capability in light of each member's role in the project, placing more weight on the achievements of those with more central roles (do not include collaborators). Refer to the section of the application entitled "Description of the Research Team" for information on the planned roles and responsibilities of team members. The principal investigator's achievements should form an important component of your team evaluation, as this person is responsible for the planning and co-ordination of the entire research project.

4. Scoring

Overall efficiency and fairness to all applicants require that different readers—both within and across committees—eliminate as far as possible any variations in the standards of evaluation applied to applications.

The proposed research is evaluated using the scoring system set out in Table 1: Challenge and Feasibility. Readers evaluate applicants' capability using the two different scoring schemes—one for regular scholars and one for new scholars—set out in Table 2: Capability. Scores are assigned out of 6—to the first decimal place, if necessary.

To be recommended for funding, applications must receive a minimum score of 3.0 or higher for each of the three criteria. The appropriate weighting is then applied to each of the three scores as they are entered on the spreadsheet.

Proposals from Research Teams

Committee members should evaluate the team's capability score in light of the roles played by each team member in the project, assigning greater weight to members with more central roles. The principal investigator's capability should form an important component of the evaluation of the team's record, as this person is responsible for the planning and co-ordination of the proposed research.

If the adjudication committee determines that the principal investigator is not responsible for, or equipped to exercise, the leadership of the research team, the committee may lower the score assigned for Feasibility.

Adjudicating Intended Outcomes

SSHRC is interested in capturing information on research outcomes at the application stage in order to gain a greater understanding of the intellectual, cultural, societal and economic contributions of social sciences and humanities research, and of how outcomes evolve throughout the lifespan of a research project. This outcome information, along

with the information provided on research outputs (e.g., scholarly journal articles, conferences, books, workshops, etc.) in follow-up research reporting, will enable SSHRC, scholars and institutions to communicate the contributions of social sciences and humanities research to various audiences.

Applicants have been asked to elaborate on the potential benefits and/or outcomes of their proposed research and/or related activities. Specifically, applicants are asked to identify intended research outcomes, such as the development of enhanced curriculum and teaching materials, graduate student supervision, enriched public discourse, improved public policies, enhanced business strategies, and, indeed, innovations in every sector of society. Applicants are also asked to identify scholarly benefits, social benefits and target audiences related to their intended research outcomes.

Table 1: Challenge and Feasibility

The following grid applies to both new and regular scholars. If the nature of the research proposed is such that a theoretical framework or any other component mentioned in this table is not necessary, this component should not be taken into account in the evaluation of the proposed research.

Score Range	Challenge	Feasibility
5-6	<p>Excellent: Highly original, at the forefront of the field. The theoretical/conceptual approach or framework is focused, fully explained and well developed. The literature review is reasonably complete, up-to-date and linked to the proposed research. The methodology is well described and will lead to meaningful results. The training, where applicable, and likelihood of influence/impact within and/or beyond the research community, are excellent.</p>	<p>Excellent: Objectives are explicit and clearly defined, and there is a very high probability of meeting them. The strategies/timelines for the proposed research are coherent, realistic and appropriate. All budget components are well justified, and the budget's overall link to the proposed research is evident. The knowledge mobilization/dissemination plan, where appropriate, is effective and very likely to achieve success.</p>
4-4.9	<p>Very good: Original, meets quality standards and will contribute to the development of the field. One or more of the following elements should have been better developed: literature review, theoretical/conceptual framework, and/or methodology. The training, where applicable, and likelihood of influence/impact within and/or beyond the research community, are very good.</p>	<p>Very good: Objectives are defined and it is likely that they will be met. One or more of the following elements should have been better developed: strategies/timelines for the proposed research, justification for the budget, and/or knowledge mobilization/dissemination plans.</p>
3-3.9	<p>Good: A good research proposal, but lacks at least one compelling element. The committee has concerns regarding one or more of the following: originality/novelty, literature review, theoretical/conceptual framework, and/or methodology. Training, where applicable, is good, as is the likelihood of influence/impact within and/or beyond the research community.</p>	<p>Good: Objectives are identified but the committee has doubts that they will be met. Concerns exist regarding one or more of the following elements: strategies/timelines for the proposed research, justification for the budget, and/or knowledge mobilization/dissemination plans.</p>
Below 3	<p>Not recommended for funding: Low probability of significant contribution to the field. Serious shortcomings in one or more of the following elements: originality/novelty, literature review, theoretical/conceptual framework, and/or methodology. Training, where applicable is modest, as is the likelihood of influence/impact within and/or beyond the research community.</p>	<p>Not recommended for funding: Objectives are ill-defined and there is a low probability of achieving success. Serious shortcomings in one or more of the following elements: strategies/timelines for the proposed research, justification for the budget and/or knowledge mobilization/dissemination plans.</p>

Table 2: Capability

Apply the scores and descriptors presented in the following grid. Take into account the scholar's stage of career and any special circumstances, as appropriate. If your rationale for assigning a score to a particular application differs significantly from what is prescribed in the table, be prepared to briefly explain your reasons when reporting on the application at the committee meeting.

Score Range	Regular Scholar	New Scholar
5-6	Excellent: Recognized nationally and perhaps internationally for the excellent quality and substantial impact of his or her publications within or beyond the field. The researcher has a distinguished publication record, and has published both consistently and recently. Where applicable, has had significant publications from previous funding; has made a significant contribution to the training of future researchers; and, where appropriate, has disseminated results beyond academia.	Excellent: Recognized for the originality and quality of the research and publications within or beyond the field. Has demonstrated significant recent productivity. Where applicable, has made good contributions to the training of future researchers; and where appropriate, has disseminated results beyond academia.
4-4.9	Very good: Recognized for the quality and impact of publications within or beyond the field. The researcher has published both consistently and recently. One or more of the following elements could have been better demonstrated: where applicable, publications from previous funding; contribution to the training of future researchers; and, where appropriate, dissemination of results beyond academia.	Very good: Research and publications are considered to be fairly original and of very good quality. Has demonstrated good recent productivity. One or both of the following elements could have been better demonstrated: where applicable, some contribution to the training of future researchers; and, where appropriate, dissemination of results beyond academia.
3-3.9	Good: Has made some impact within or beyond the field. Has published fairly regularly and recently. The committee may have concerns regarding one or more of the following elements: where applicable, publications from previous funding; contribution to the training of future researchers; and, where appropriate, dissemination of results beyond academia.	Good: Has demonstrated competence to conduct research. Has made some progress toward establishing a track record. The committee may have concerns regarding one or both of the following elements: where applicable, contribution to the training of future researchers; and, where appropriate, dissemination of results beyond academia.
Below 3	Not recommended for funding: Does not appear to have made an impact within or beyond the field. Does not appear to have published regularly or recently. Fails to demonstrate experience in one or more of the following areas: where applicable, publications from previous funding; contribution to the training of future researchers; and, where appropriate, dissemination of results beyond academia.	Not recommended for funding: Has not yet demonstrated the capacity to successfully carry out the research proposed. Has yet to make demonstrable progress towards establishing a track record. Fails to demonstrate experience in one or both of the following areas: where applicable, contribution to the training of future researchers; and, where appropriate, dissemination of results beyond academia.

VIII. REVIEWING BUDGET PROPOSALS AND DETERMINING AWARD SIZE

1. Funding Budgets and Process

During the adjudication meetings, the committees determine which proposals merit funding support and recommend a budget for each.

After the meetings, grants are awarded on the basis of the total funding recommended by all the committees and the total funds available for the Insight Development Grants funding opportunity. The available budget is applied to the rank-ordered list provided by each committee. Individual committee budgets may be adjusted slightly so that applicants falling on the funding cut-off line still receive the full recommended budget.

This allocation process is sensitive to changes and growth in funding requirements. It allocates funds among committees on the basis of excellence rather than according to the number of applications.

2. Duration of Award

SSHRC offers Insight Development Grants over a period of one to two years. Only in exceptional circumstances should a committee recommend funding for a shorter period than that requested by the applicant.

3. Budget Review and Size of Award

For each application that has received a score of 3.0 for each of the three evaluation criteria, the committee is responsible for recommending a level of funding that will be sufficient to enable the applicant(s) to attain the goals of the proposed research.

The committee should base the grant value recommendation on the following criteria:

- the budget requested (which must bear clear and reasonable relation to the applicant's program of research);
- the justification provided; and
- the normal standards and requirements of the relevant discipline(s) or field(s).

Please note that the budget appropriate for team research is likely to be somewhat larger than that required for individual research.

In addition, it is important to take into account the type of institution with which an applicant is affiliated: a researcher working at an isolated institution will tend to assign a larger part of his or her budget to travel and communications expenses than would a researcher located in a major centre.

The primary task of the adjudication committee in this respect is to **establish an appropriate overall level of funding for the research**, rather than to examine in minute detail each element of the proposed budget.

Recommended award amounts should be rounded to the nearest \$1,000. Committee members are asked to bear in mind that, for any given year, they may not recommend an amount greater than the applicant requested. Since grant holders are free to allocate

their funds as they see fit in the pursuit of their research objectives, committees should avoid a detailed examination of each line item.

Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

Applicants must justify all proposed budget expenditures. The [Tri-Agency Financial Administration Guide](#) outlines both eligible and ineligible costs. In reviewing an applicant's proposed budget, committee members should bear the following in mind:

Stipends and salaries for students and postdoctoral fellows

Given the importance SSHRC attaches to the training of new researchers, exercise caution in reducing funds requested for student participation.

When students are paid by salary, the amounts should be determined in accordance with the university's collective agreement or policy. No SSHRC maximums apply when paying students by salary.

Applicants may request a stipend for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. Stipends must be justified in accordance with the objectives of the research project or program, and the work performed by recipients of the stipend should be an integral part of the proposed research. Full-time master's students are eligible for stipends of up to \$12,000 per annum; full-time doctoral students up to \$15,000 per annum; and full-time postdoctoral fellows up to \$31,500 per annum from SSHRC grants.

Students and scholars who hold a SSHRC or Canada Graduate Scholarship master's or doctoral award or a SSHRC postdoctoral fellowship may not receive stipends from grants, although they may continue to work as research or teaching assistants for an hourly wage.

Equipment

SSHRC policy is that the cost of durable equipment such as computers may form part of the grant budget when—and only when—essential to the proposed research. However, researchers cannot use SSHRC funds to help defray the costs of university overhead.

Travel and subsistence costs

These are eligible only if data or sources of information essential to the research are not available in the applicant's immediate vicinity, or if required for the communication of research results.

The travel and subsistence costs of research collaborators, both Canadian and foreign, may be included in the budget only if the purpose of such visits is research planning, exchange of information or dissemination of research results. SSHRC accepts per diem rates as established by the applicant's university.

International collaboration

SSHRC encourages Canadian researchers to develop international research collaborations. To this end, applicants to this funding opportunity may include in their budget the research costs of foreign co-applicants, as well as travel and subsistence costs of foreign research collaborators that conform to the requirements set out in the previous paragraph. Furthermore, when the proposed research involves research abroad, foreign research assistants may be hired, if necessary.

Dissemination

Researchers may allot whatever portion of their budget they deem reasonable to disseminate research results as widely as possible. Eligible items include the circulation of findings, travel to scholarly conferences or other meetings to report on the research, translation, development of web-based information, and the cost of holding a workshop directly related to the research funded. Researchers may also charge to the grant the cost of preparing a manuscript for publication. Here, eligible expenses may

include the cost of preparing a camera-ready manuscript and the preparation and/or purchase of illustrations.

Multiple-Source Funding

SSHRC encourages jointly funded activities and will complement but not duplicate funds another organization or agency has awarded. Applicants and co-applicants must, therefore, list the research funds they have requested from other granting bodies. The availability or anticipation of funding from another source is not an evaluation criterion, nor is such funding grounds for reducing an applicant's budget. SSHRC program and monitoring officers are responsible for verifying any duplication of funding.