Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)

This fact sheet is part of a set of eight on *Research Granting Agencies* produced by the Association pour la recherche au collégial. It introduces the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, an agency that supports public research in the area of social sciences throughout Canada, and situates it within the overall configuration of agencies that, in Québec and in Canada, support public research in the areas of health, natural sciences and engineering, social sciences, humanities, fine arts and literature, as well as the acquisition or maintenance of the infrastructures needed for conducting such research.

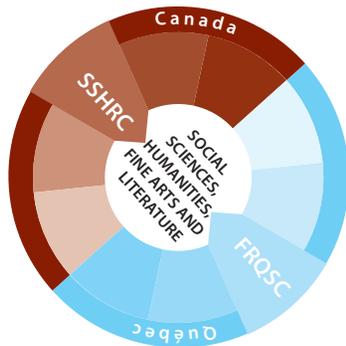ARC | Association pour la recherche au collégial

ARC?

As a professional association, ARC fosters the development of research throughout the college system, in particular through the dissemination of position papers on research issues, the hosting of research-related activities and conferences, the establishment of research support measures, the awarding prizes and, more recently, through meta-research projects.

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)

SSHRC is a federal agency that encourages and supports the training offered and the research conducted within postsecondary institutions in humanities and social sciences. It reports to Parliament through the Minister of Industry Canada.

www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca
Dialogue Newsletter

The Connecting with Society section of SSHRC's website presents promising SSHRC-funded research, and the outcomes and impacts of these projects.

Mandate

SSHRC's mandate is to support research in humanities and social sciences by funding studies that foster a better understanding of social, cultural, technological, environmental and economic issues, for the betterment of Canadian society.

SSHRC-supported work encourages the deepest levels of enquiry. It spurs researchers to learn from each other's disciplines, delve into multi-party collaborations and achieve common goals. To do so, SSHRC's mandate includes a section that focuses on knowledge-sharing and knowledge mobilization through partnerships among research communities, businesses, community organizations, non-profit organizations and public bodies.

SSHRC also supports student training in the social sciences and humanities by awarding scholarships and funding research training.

Eligible Projects

Most SSHRC funding is awarded through open competitions accessible to all disciplines, areas and approaches. However, since its creation in 1977, SSHRC has identified priority research areas based on input from the research community and from partners across the private and non-profit sectors. These areas of research target key challenges for Canada in an evolving global context. In some cases, SSHRC awards additional funding to projects related to these areas of research. At the present time, SSHRC's priority areas are as follows:

- Aboriginal Research
- Canadian Environmental Issues
- Digital Economy
- Innovation, Leadership and Prosperity
- Northern Communities: Towards Social and Economic Prosperity

Research areas

SSHRC supports and promotes research on a broad range of topics and in a wide variety of disciplines and areas. Still, the research must meet the following criteria:

1. The proposed research or related activities must be primarily in the social sciences and humanities (aligned with SSHRC's legislated mandate);
2. 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.

Researchers who submit an application for a research project overlapping into more than one area of research (such as applications in the areas of health sciences or psychology) should consult the guide *Subject Matter Eligibility* to make sure they are submitting their applications to the right funding agency.

Applying for a grant

Roles of individuals participating in a grant application

Under SSHRS's eligibility requirements, an individual may participate in a grant application in four different ways: as an *applicant*, *co-applicant*, *collaborator* or *partner*. The *applicant* is the person or institution responsible for the grant application. If the applicant is a person, he or she is the principal investigator or project director, and is responsible for the intellectual direction of the research or research-related activity, and for administration of the grant. If the applicant is an institution, it must appoint a principal investigator or project director who is responsible for the overall leadership of the team or partnership. The *co-applicant* is a researcher who contributes significantly to the intellectual direction and conduct of the research or research-related activity, and assumes some degree of responsibility for the financial administration of the research. For the co-applicant, eligibility requirements may vary according to funding opportunities. The *collaborator* contributes significantly to the intellectual direction of the research or research-related activity and may play a significant role in the conduct of the research or research-related activity, but does not have access to grant funds. For the collaborator, eligibility requirements may vary according to the funding opportunities. The *partner* is an organization that plays an active role in a partnership and contributes in a meaningful way to the success of the endeavour. A partner organization may be, for example, a postsecondary institution, a federal, provincial, territorial or municipal government department, or a private or non-profit organization or foundation. For administrative purposes, the partner must name a contact person. SSHRC expects the partner to support the activities of the partnership by sharing in intellectual leadership or providing expertise. SSHRC also expects the partner to provide cash and in-kind contributions.

Status of the applicant

The position of applicant is generally reserved for postsecondary educational institutions and individuals affiliated with them. Applicants who are affiliated with a college, i.e. a CEGEP, funded private college or government school, may be either teachers or professionals. Unlike applicants affiliated with a university, they must demonstrate that their proposed research or research-related activity is not related to the normal duties for which they receive payment from that employer. In some cases where funding is awarded, the role of applicant may be filled by a non-profit organization, such as a research centre, or by individuals affiliated with it. This possibility applies to research centres that are legally constituted as non-profit organizations, whether or not they are recognized as college centres for technology transfer.

Under the Insight program, the applicant is assigned one of the three following statuses: *emerging scholar* (or new researcher), *established scholar* or *artist-researcher*. An *emerging scholar* is someone who has not yet had the opportunity to establish an extensive record of research achievement, but is in the process of building one. Applicants identifying themselves as emerging scholars must also meet certain additional requirements. An *established scholar* is someone who has established — or who, since the completion of his or her highest degree, has had the opportunity to establish — a record of research achievement. The *artist-researcher* is a person whose work involves research and the creation of works of art. This work may include the training and mentoring of students or postdoctoral researchers.

Management of federal grants

Institution or organization

Under SSHRC rules, individuals identifying themselves as applicants must entrust the management of their grants to the organization or institution with which they are affiliated. Colleges may administer SSHRC funds, provided that they have been recognized as eligible to submit an application and receive funding from the Council (consult the list of eligible institutions). With some funding opportunities, a non-profit organization may administer SSHRC funds, provided that they are recognized as being eligible to do so. Otherwise, the organization may also form a partnership with an eligible institution and work out an agreement whereby that institution administers the funds awarded.

Eligible and non-eligible expenses

Under the rules governing the Use of Grant Funds, which apply to all three federal granting agencies – the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and SSHRC –, SSHRC grants fund most of the direct costs of the research. They therefore do not cover the salaries, either in full or in part, paid to applicants or co-applicants for a funded project.

Salary research allowances, provided for and included in partnerships established under the Insight program, allow for the use of funds to facilitate the participation of an employee of a non-profit organization in a research project as an applicant or co-applicant. These funds provide compensation to the organization for the time that its employee has spent engaged in the project. Teachers or professionals who hold positions within a college are not eligible for a salary research allowance.

Regular SSHRC operating grants

General programs

SSHRC offers three grant programs, each providing different funding opportunities. The goal of the Talent program is to support university students and postdoctoral fellows, while the Insight and Connection programs are aimed at researchers. The Insight program funds research in all subject areas eligible for SSHRC funding. The Connection program supports specific activities and tools that facilitate the flow and exchange of research knowledge.

Funding opportunities

The funding opportunities offered under the Insight and Connection programs are aimed at researchers working alone, in teams, or within partnerships.

Insight Program

Researchers working alone or in teams

- Insight Development Grants foster research in its early stages
- Insight Grants support research excellence in the social sciences and humanities, providing funding for long-term research initiatives.

Partnerships

- Partnership Grants provide support for new and existing formal partnerships between academic institutions, or between one or more academic institutions and one or more non-academic partners.

Connection Program

Researchers working alone or in teams

- Connection Grants are geared toward short-term targeted knowledge mobilization initiatives.

Partnerships

- Partnership Grants provide support for new and existing formal partnerships between academic institutions, or between one or more academic institutions and one or more non-academic partners.

Grant program specific to colleges

The College and Community Innovation Program (CCI) is a joint initiative of the three federal granting agencies: SSHRC, NSERC and CIHR.

This program is addressed specifically to colleges. Its objective is to increase innovation at the community and regional levels by enabling Canadian colleges to increase their capacity to transform the results of research and development into useful economic activities in the social sciences and humanities, in partnership with the private sector.

Under the CCI program, the applicant is a college administrator who assumes administrative and financial responsibility for the grant. In this case, applicants are members of the faculty and professional or technical staff of the applicant college. They must be qualified to undertake research independently, but are not required to meet the requirements of the regular SSHRC programs. The college uses its own criteria to determine who can participate in the funded project.

Applications submitted for a project covered by the humanities and social sciences sector of the CCI program must be forwarded to NSERC, which manages the process of assessing and approving all applications. Once a project is approved, the grant file will be forwarded to SSHRC, which will handle the transfer of funds.

According to the guidelines set out in the Use of Grant Funds section, the CCI program provides financial measures tailored specifically to the reality of colleges. In particular, it provides that part of the grant funds can be used to cover some of the costs associated with the reduction in the teaching load, so that faculty can take part in applied research projects. Also, for some types of grants offered under the program, colleges may apply for funding to cover overhead and administration costs associated with the project; such costs may not exceed 20% of the grant.

Six types of grants are offered under this program:

- Applied Research Tools and Instruments (ARTI) Grants
- Applied Research and Development (ARD) Grants)
- College-University Idea to Innovation (CU-I2I) Grants
- Industrial Research Chairs for Colleges (IRCC) Grants
- Innovation Enhancement (IE) Grants
- Technology Access Centre (TAC) Grants

Submitting Applications

On its website, SSHRC publishes General Instructions for submitting a grant application.

Other funding opportunities

The Indirect Costs Program (ICP) awards grants to institutions that are either eligible for SSHRC funding or are receiving SSHRC funding to cover the indirect costs of research or research infrastructures. However, colleges that receive funds under the CCI program are not eligible for the ICP.

Insight Grant or Partnership Grant applicants who need to fund their research infrastructure may be eligible for assistance from the Leaders Opportunity Fund of the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI). SSHRC and CFI jointly review proposals submitted to the Leaders Opportunity Fund.