



Name: **Research Policy (RP) Internal Grant Guidelines**

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RP GRANT APPLICATIONS (UPDATE 2015)

Cape Breton University

The Office of Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS), through the Research Assistance Committee of Senate (RAC), awards internal grants of up to \$8,000 to support various forms of research and scholarly activity. CBU RP Grants are intended for CBU faculty who are members of the CBUFA or NSGEU. All other CBU employees can apply for RP funding through collaboration with a CBUFA/NSGEU faculty member who is designated as the principal investigator for the research project. A CBU faculty member, with union affiliation as above, employed via a contract of 12 months or less is eligible only if the proposed research is to take place within the time frame described in the employment contract.

Research Policy (RP) Grants are intended for basic research and scholarly activity directed to the creation of fundamental new knowledge, and for applied research and scholarly activity directed to understanding how to bring about specific changes to solve particular practical problems. To be considered research or scholarly output in this context, it is essential that the work makes a contribution to a body of knowledge and represents an advance over routine application of existing knowledge or interpretation. This definition of research and scholarly output includes the design or improvement of products, services, or processes but excludes the routine production and provision of products, services, or processes.

The inclusion of student assistants is encouraged, where feasible, and a well-thought out role will be looked upon favourably. However, not all research proposals can or should include such opportunities and proposals will not be penalized for failing to include requests for such funds. Expenses related to graduate students or other research associates are also allowed and will be considered positively.

The RP Grant policy and guidelines, as well as the application format, should be carefully reviewed before engaging in the actual application process. It is very much in the interest of applicants to **adhere to all policies and guidelines**, and to **provide all of the information that is requested in the manner in which it is requested**.

It is the responsibility of applicants to **ensure that one electronic copy (in PDF format), completed according to the RP GRANT APPLICATION FORMAT, reaches the Office of Research and Graduate Studies by the application deadline. Paper copies may also be required if the committee requests them.**

Applicants whose **proposed research project involves human subjects or animals** should note that access to RP Grant funds is contingent upon the approval of the project by the **CBU Research Ethics Board** or the **CBU Animal Care Committee**.

Note that the funds previously allocated to Spring/Summer Research Awards (SSRA)

have been folded into the RP budget and everyone who would have applied for SSRA should now apply for an RP grant. Applicants with budgets of \$1000 or less will not enter the main RP competition, but be judged separately.

RP GRANT POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

- 1) Grant rounds will be conducted once or twice each year, per group. The Research Assistance Committee will consider applications in winter-term and also in the next fall-term if there are two rounds. Applicants are encouraged to apply in the winter round even if their research will take place in the fall or the following winter.
- 2) CBU RP Grants are intended for CBU faculty who are members of the CBUFA or NSGEU. All other CBU employees can apply for RP funding through collaboration with a CBUFA/NSGEU faculty member who is designated as the principal investigator for the research project. A CBU faculty member, with union affiliation as above, employed via a contract of 12 months or less is eligible only if the proposed research is to take place within the time frame described in the employment contract.
- 3) The funding upper limit is \$8,000 in total for both rounds. A lower limit may be applied for the fall-term round if the funds available at that time are deemed to be too small for the expected number of applicants. Priority for funding will be lessened for any applicant who receives funding from RP regularly.
- 4) Joint projects are acceptable but all applicants must be eligible to receive RP Grant funding. If more than one applicant is named in an application, principal and secondary co-applicants must be specified. A detailed explanation of the division of responsibilities is expected.
- 5) A person cannot be an applicant or co-applicant on more than one RP Grant application during each round of RP Grant adjudications, but may submit multiple sub-projects in one proposal.
- 6) Research Assistance Committee members may be applicants or co-applicants for RP Grants. However, such applicants and co-applicants must be absent when their research proposals are discussed, evaluated, and rated. Furthermore, such applicants and co-applicants must not in any way, formally or informally, influence or attempt to influence the discussion, evaluation, or rating of their own RP Grant applications. To do so creates a clear conflict of interest and will result in the removal of the RP Grant application from the adjudication process.
- 7) RP Grants are awarded to help faculty and research workers in their first five years at CBU to launch research careers, to help faculty and research workers who have established research records to continue to progress, and to help full-time faculty and research workers without extensive research records to improve their research profiles. Although the quality of the research proposal is of paramount importance, priority will be given to research and scholarly projects proposed by a new faculty member or research worker, and to research and scholarly projects

that help position a faculty member or research worker to apply for external funding. In addition, consideration may be given to projects that initiate new lines of research or projects that further develop an existing research program. Projects that hire CBU students and provide them an educational experience will also be looked upon favourably. Applicants requesting \$1000 or less will be assessed on their proposal's merits, their research history and the soundness of their budget.

- 8) RP Grants are intended to support all research and scholarly activities except those directly related to CBU program development, CBU course development, or an applicant's acquisition of degrees or other credentials. RP Grants fund:
 - (a) basic, or pure, research and scholarly activity directed to the creation of fundamental new knowledge.
 - (b) applied research and scholarly activity directed to understanding how to bring about specific changes to solve particular practical problems
 - (c) applied research and scholarly activity, including innovation and technology transfer, directed to the design or improvement of products, processes, and services.
- 9) If essential for the proposed project, RP Grants may be used for expenses in the following categories (subject to the conditions in item 10):
 - (a) periodicals, books, and other library resources
 - (b) computers and computer accessories
 - (c) travel
 - (d) research assistants (CBU students and graduates)
 - (e) duplicating, dissemination, conference registration and publication costs
 - (f) miscellaneous equipment and other items
- 10) The following conditions apply to eligible budget items:
 - (a) Periodicals, books, or other library resources must be specifically enumerated in the RP Grant application. The onus is on the applicant(s) to determine that each budget item is not currently available at CBU. The Research Assistance Committee also must be convinced that it is not practical or economically advantageous to secure each item through interlibrary loan or some other temporary arrangement. Purchased periodicals, books, or other library resources are issued to the grantee(s) but remain the property of CBU, and must be given to the library upon completion of the proposed project and related projects.
 - (b) Required hardware and software computing items must be specifically enumerated in the RP Grant application. Funds for computers and computer accessories will only be granted if the Research Assistance

Committee is convinced that the computing items are **absolutely essential** for the proposed research project, that computer equipment and accessories adequate to complete the proposed project are not already available for use at CBU by the applicant(s), and that the computing items cannot be purchased through other CBU channels. Note that ORGS has laptops available to borrow as well as other equipment and Computer Services can be requested to supply computers for research purposes. RP funding should not be viewed as a source for routine computer purchases and upgrading. Purchased hardware and software computing items are issued to the grantee(s) but remain the property of CBU, and future utility to other researchers will be looked on favourably.

- (c) To be eligible for funding, travel must be directly related to the completion of the proposed project. RP Grants cannot be used for travel to conferences. For eligible research travel, requests for transportation expenses will be considered. Requests for living expenses also will be considered but the funding limit for all costs combined is \$200 per day per person. Travel expense records and receipts are required for reimbursement. The Research Assistance Committee reserves the right to reduce travel budgets presented in RP Grant applications.
- (d) RP Grants may be used to fund the salaries of CBU student research assistants for up to 100 hours during each semester and for 16 weeks during the spring and summer months (It is expected that in most cases, students will be enrolled at CBU, however expenses related to supervision of graduate students are allowed). Salaries of research assistants are based on current standard hourly rates at CBU. Standard differentials are applied depending upon academic level. Fringe benefits and required contributions also must appear in the budget and must be enumerated separately for each student research assistant. Information regarding student salaries, standard differentials, fringe benefits, and required contributions can be obtained from the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. The advantages of hiring graduate assistants for both the research and CBU should be clearly outlined in the application.
- (e) Extensive duplicating and other office costs must be adequately justified in the application. Both CBU and external costs may be charged to the RP Grant. The costs of dissemination, including printing of posters and publication charges should be included in the budget. Page costs for journals and other such costs resulting from publication should be carefully justified and explained within the context of your field. Conference registration fees up to a maximum of \$500 are eligible, but will be assessed depending on the level of prestige attached to the academic exposure gained from the conference.
- (f) Necessary miscellaneous equipment and other items must be specifically enumerated in the RP Grant application. The onus is on the applicant(s) to

determine that each budget item is **not currently available** at CBU and that each budget item cannot be purchased through other funding channels at CBU. Equipment and other items obtained with RP Grant funds are issued to the grantee(s) for the duration of the project and future related projects but remain the property of CBU. Sensible cooperation is expected to optimize the potential use of the equipment and other items by others at CBU. When no longer needed by the grantee(s), the equipment and any unused items fall under the control of the appropriate CBU body (e.g., department, library, centre, institute).

- 11) RP Grant funds must not be used as salary for the applicant(s) or for any member of the immediate family of the applicant(s). RP Grant funds also must not be used as salary for any other employee of CBU or members of their immediate families, without approval of the Research Assistance Committee. An exception can be made for students who are related to CBU employees but employed by unrelated researchers.
- 12) The applicants shall be assigned to one of three groups: new faculty (who have started a tenure-track position within the last five years), small grant applicants (whose budget totals \$1000 or less), and then all other researchers. Each group will be judged separately, perhaps even at different times of the year. The first stage of the process is judging whether each application is fundable within its group.

The following five criteria will be considered for each application and, after a discussion, every Committee member will privately judge each application with regard to each of these criteria as being either satisfactory, unsatisfactory or excellent, where excellent is reserved only for the best examples.

- (a) Completeness, specificity and clarity of the research proposal
- (b) Originality, suitability of theoretical perspectives, research strategies, and methodologies proposed
- (c) Appropriateness of the budgetary projections, feasibility of the proposed research, and relation to any other existing or requested funding
- (d) Degree of expected contribution to the advancement of knowledge, the solution to a practical problem, or the development of a novel product, process, or service
- (e) The general research and scholarly activity of the primary applicant.

For their initial proposals, new faculty will be judged with the intention of providing any needed additional funding over and above their start-up grants. Applicants in the small grant group will be judged solely on a), c) and e). The chair of RAC will collate the responses of all Committee members who were

present for the discussion and then the Committee will consider the distribution of excellent and unsuccessful judgements for each and set a quantitative threshold for the group. Those applications which exceed the threshold for their group will be judged fundable.

If the funds available are not sufficient to fund all of the applications judged fundable it will be necessary to rank the fundable applications. Scores will be assigned according to which group the applicant comes from and their excellent and unsatisfactory judgments. This basic score will then be additionally modified positively or negatively by several factors which will also be decided at a meeting held before any applications are read so as to ensure impartiality. These modifiers can represent the number of recent successful RP applications by that applicant (more applications could mean their priority is lessened), their track record with regard to applications for external funding (using RP funds to seed an external application or being judged fundable but unfunded by outside agencies would increase priority), etc. Once the applicants are ranked the funds will be allocated in that order.

- 13) The Committee reserves the right to seek confidential assessments of research proposals from persons external to the Committee and perhaps external to CBU. If the applicant has had an application judged non-fundable, they can request that the same application (with any time-sensitive details updated) be submitted to the next grant round with an external review of the projects' quality. A reviewer that is agreeable to both the Committee and the applicant will be selected.
- 14) Applicants must adhere strictly to the Research Assistance Committee **POLICIES AND GUIDELINES** and the preparation of the application must follow the **RP GRANT APPLICATION FORMAT** in the specified manner. Applicants are expected to supply sufficient documentation to allow the Committee to make an informed assessment. Because the Research Assistance Committee is comprised of representatives with various professional backgrounds and is unlikely to contain a specialist in the field of most research proposals, it is especially important that the proposed research project is explained as clearly and concisely as possible. **The onus is on each applicant to explain and place the project in context within their discipline in a way that is comprehensible to non-specialists.** Incomplete or improper applications may be excluded from further consideration in the adjudication process.
- 15) If the Committee decides that it desires additional information to proceed with an application, the applicant(s) may be requested to appear before the Committee to provide further clarification.
- 16) The Office of Research and Graduate Studies will notify each applicant of the Research Assistance Committee's decision, provide general information about the application adjudication procedures to all applicants, and announce all awards to the University community.

- 17) Funding decisions are final for each allocation period. Applicants should be aware that even though a proposal is meritorious, it may not be successful because funds are limited and other applications may be judged to be more competitive.
- 18) For applicants who do not receive funding and for applicants who receive less funding than requested, selected additional information about how their application was judged will be provided by the Chair of the Research Assistance Committee.
- 19) Grantees make final decisions in the execution of projects. However, major changes (more than 20% change in a budget category) in proposed projects must receive prior authorization from the Research Assistance Committee.
- 20) Within whatever restrictions the Committee imposes on awards, principal grantees hold ultimate authority and responsibility for decisions regarding expenditures, and must authorize all such expenditures in writing.
- 21) Principal grantees are bound by signed contract at the time of acceptance of the award to provide full reimbursement for expenditures beyond the value of the award.
- 22) For a grant received in the winter-term round, principal grantees are required to submit a final written report by the following April 30. For a grant received in the fall-term round, principal grantees are required to submit a final report by the following September 30. Each report must include an outline (of not more than 500 words) of the work accomplished and a detailed financial statement showing the status of the RP Grant funds to the date of the report. The reports may be accompanied by products of the research, such as published or unpublished documents. If a final report cannot be submitted by the reporting date, an explanation of the cause of the delay and a request for an extension must be sent to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies by the reporting date. If an extension is granted, the report in question normally will be due by the following reporting date unless other arrangements are negotiated with the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. Until reporting violations are successfully resolved, RP Grant balances may be temporarily frozen. If reporting violations cannot be resolved, the RP Grant balance may be permanently unavailable to the grantee(s) and the success of future applications may be jeopardized. Any outstanding reports for *any* (CBU or external) prior grants will mean that the researcher is ineligible for consideration for RP funding until the reports are submitted.
- 23) After the project is complete and the final report has been filed, any unspent funds remaining in an RP Grant account are returned to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies and are unavailable to the grantee(s).
- 24) If a sole principal grantee ceases to be employed by CBU, the RP Grant normally terminates immediately and any unspent balance is returned to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. If any principal or secondary co-grantee ceases to

- be employed by CBU, the remaining grantee(s) must notify the Research Assistance Committee immediately and seek Research Assistance Committee approval to continue the RP Grant funding.
- 25) Applicants may receive RP Grants while awaiting news concerning a simultaneous external grant application but must reimburse the Office of Research and Graduate Studies in full if an award is received from the external source. All research funded by an RP Grant should be distinguishable from any research funded by external grants and the distinctions between the research made clear in the application, so that all expenses and products are reported accurately.
 - 26) Acknowledgement of an RP Grant received at CBU is appropriate and expected for any product arising in whole or in part from RP Grant support.
 - 27) Insofar as is possible within the preceding policies and guidelines, the Research Assistance Committee will maintain the principles of applicant privacy and confidentiality in the RP Grant application, adjudication, and announcement procedures and processes.