Office of Research Services

SSHRC Insight Grant – October 2025 Competition – Guide

This guide is intended to complement the SSHRC Insight Grant (IG) program guidelines and instructions available on the SSHRC website. Please consult these documents to ensure your application addresses all funding program requirements. Insight Grant applications are submitted through the SSHRC Online System.

The advice presented in this document reflects best practices learned from past SSHRC merit committee members, SSHRC Program Officers, IG review committee feedback and the review and facilitation of many SSHRC grant applications over several years. It is important to remember, however, that there is no one correct way to prepare an Insight Grant application; a successful application may diverge from the advice provided here in various ways, and researchers are encouraged to use their own judgment in determining how to best prepare their application.

LIST OF APPLICATION ATTACHMENTS AND PAGE LIMITS:

Mandatory Attachments	Page Limit
Detailed Description	6 pages
Knowledge Mobilization Plan	1 page
List of References or Bibliography	10 pages
Research Team, Previous Output and Student Training	4 pages
Budget Justification	2 pages
Research Contributions	4 pages
Impact Assessment – Appendix A (if you answered "yes" to at lease one of the questions in the Impact assessment Section on the Activity details, you must complete an Impact Assessment Form (Appendix A).	1 + pages
STRAC Attestation (if you answered "yes" to the Sensitive Technology Research Areas question in the "Research Activity" module) **you must complete and attach an attestation form for the applicant and any co-applicants and/or collaborators** (see below for details)	1 + pages
Optional Sections/Attachments	
Request for multi/interdisciplinary evaluation	1 page
Response to previous critiques	1 page
Research-Creation Support Material	1 page
Sport Participation Research Initiative Statement of Relevance (if applicable)	1 page
Department of National Defence Statement of Relevance (if applicable)	1 page
Exclusion of Potential Reviewers (if applicable)	1 page
Career interruptions and special circumstances	1 page

TIPS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING YOUR PROJECT AND CREATING YOUR APPLICATION:

Insight Grant Program Selection (Insight Grant vs. Insight Development Grant): SSHRC Insight Grants (IG) and Insight Development Grants (IDG) projects are both expected to respond to the objectives of the

Insight Program and align with SSHRC Subject Matter Eligibility. Both programs also have similar rules about the use of grant funds and applicant eligibility.

However, there are some key differences between the programs. Insight Grants support large-scale, long-term initiatives that can be aligned with past research contributions and the applicant's ongoing research program(s) (grants of 2-5 years, up to $500,000). IG applications from established scholars and emerging scholars are considered equally and adjudicated by the same committee. Insight Development Grants support short-term, clearly delimited projects, in the early stage of research, which enable the development of new research questions, as well as experimentation with new methods, theoretical approaches and/or ideas (grants of 1-2 years, up to $75,000). IDGs are not intended to support large-scale initiatives, which are a continuation of the applicants' previous research (IDG applications from established scholars must show that they will explore new research questions and/or approaches that are distinct from the applicant's previous/ongoing research). At least 50% of the IDG funding envelope is reserved for applications from Emerging Scholars. Finally, while the evaluation criteria for both programs are the same, the two programs weigh the criteria differently (IG: Challenge = 40%, Feasibility = 20%, Capability = 40%; IDG: Challenge = 50%, Feasibility = 20% Capability = 30%), such that the IG evaluation puts more emphasis on the applicants' previous track record of research contributions, while the IDG emphasizes the project itself.

Given these differences, we recommend that emerging scholars apply for the Insight Development Grant, while established scholars apply for the Insight Grant (unless the established scholar can make a strong case for how the proposed research is a departure from their previous work). Historically, emerging scholars tend to fare better in the IDG competition, while established scholars fare better with the IG.

Subject Matter Eligibility: SSHRC funds social sciences and humanities research involving any disciplines, thematic areas, approaches or subject areas that align with the SSHRC mandate. SSHRC places restrictions on health-related research, and will not fund research which is considered better aligned with the other two agencies (NSERC or CIHR). Clinical research, clinical education, psychomotor research and kinesiology, therapy, and epidemiology are ineligible for SSHRC support. There are also specific restrictions related to applications in psychology. Please review SSHRC's Subject Matter Eligibility Guidelines for more information. If you are planning to submit a proposal for health-related research, we strongly recommend that you submit your research summary to Amber Zapletal and/or the IG mailbox as soon as possible to confirm eligibility. (Applications deemed not sufficiently aligned with the SSHRC mandate will be considered ineligible for the IG competition; they will be "disqualified" by SSHRC program staff and will not be reviewed by the merit review committee.)

Projects whose primary objective is curriculum development, program evaluation, preparation of teaching materials, organization of a conference or workshop, digitization of a collection, or creation of a database are not eligible for funding under this funding opportunity.

An application will be declared ineligible if it is determined 30% or more of the requested budget has been allocated to ineligible expenses.

Funding Stream options: Applicants must choose a funding stream. Stream A is for requests between $10,000 and $125,000 over 2-5 years; Stream B is for requests over $125,001 up to $500,000 over 2-5

years. The deadline and application process is the same for both streams; however, note that the *targeted success rate for Stream A is higher than for Stream B.*

Research team selection: Insight Grant applications are submitted by one applicant, or one applicant and one or more co-applicants and/or collaborators. *Be sure to include on your research team co-applicants and collaborators whose expertise (both subject-matter and methodological) is necessary to carry out the project activities and is complementary to your own.* The inclusion of co-applicants is not a requirement and will not necessarily make your application more competitive, unless the co-applicants' involvement is well justified and integral to the research activities. Ensure that you have all of the expertise necessary on your team to achieve the objectives set out in your proposal. Knowledge users and community stakeholders can be included on the project team as collaborators. Co-applicants must hold a SSHRC-eligible position at a SSHRC-eligible institution and can receive grant funds from the applicant (the IG program does not allow international co-applicants). Collaborators can be any individual who makes a significant contribution to the project, but they cannot hold grant funds.

Mitacs Accelerate: Applicants working with for-profit corporations, eligible not-for-profit corporations, municipalities and hospitals in Canada that have training of students and/or postdoctoral researchers as a component of their SSHRC application are invited to apply for internship co-funding through the Mitacs Accelerate program at the same time they apply to SSHRC. The program funds undergraduate and graduate student, as well as postdoctoral, internship units worth $15,000 per each four-month unit ($7,500 from Mitacs and $7,500 from the partner organization). Applicants interested in the Mitacs Accelerate joint initiative must submit a completed Mitacs Accelerate application form to Mitacs within one week of the SSHRC Insight Grant deadline (by October 8, 2025). Your Insight Grant application should also include summary information about your Mitacs internships under the Research Team, Previous Output and Student Training section. Consult the Accelerate eligibility requirements before starting your application. To access the Accelerate application form, contact Grants Officer Amber Zapletal or our Mitacs Business Development Advisor: Katie Facecchia.

Sport Participation Research Initiative *(Optional)*: Supports research on matters related to enhancing participation in sports. Grants of $7,000 to $250,000 over 3 years (max $100,000 per year) are available, as well as supplemental funding to attend the SPRI conference (up to $20,000 in addition to the base grant). If your application pertains to Canadians' participation in sport, you are asked to outline the relevance of your project to the Sport Participation Special Initiative. If your application is highly ranked, yet not funded by SSHRC due to budgetary constraints, you may be eligible to receive funding from Sport Canada if your proposal proves to be relevant to their policy priorities. See the Sports Participation Initiative website.

Department of National Defence *(Optional):* Supports social sciences and humanities research aligned with areas of interest in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and DND, and fosters effective, evidence-based strategies, policies and programs in research areas identified by DRDC. Supplements valued at up to $20,000 per year for three years ($60,000 total), will be awarded to successful IG recipients in addition to the value of the Insight Grant. If you selected "Department of National Defence" in the "Joint or special initiative" field in the Identification module, clearly explain how the proposed research meets the Department of National Defence joint initiative's objectives.

Belmont Forum: Funding agencies from countries such as Canada, Australia, Brazil, US, UK, Japan, etc. have committed to working proactively to enhance co-operation and co-ordination of global environmental change research. This joint initiative applies to projects that involve international colleagues and partners that speak to Belmont Forum themes. SSHRC award holders working in areas related to the BF can use their existing research funds to participate as collaborators on applications being submitted to the Belmont Forum's calls for proposals.

TIPS TO CONSIDER WHEN DRAFTING YOUR APPLICATION, BY SECTION:

Participants: Research Team Participants (co-applicants and collaborators) on your IG application must be invited to the application through the SSHRC online system. Under the "participants" tab of the Insight Grant application, enter your co-applicants' and collaborators' email addresses (please note: *this must be the email address that is associated with their SSHRC account*). The SSHRC system will send them each an auto-generated email invitation, with a unique application ID number (please follow up with your team members to ensure that they received this email as it sometimes goes to the spam folder.)

Each application participant will enter the unique application ID number that they received in the invitation email in their SSHRC Portfolio page (under the "application invitations" tab; if the participant has never applied to SSHRC before, they may have to register for a new SSHRC account). An Accepted Invitation form will be generated and appear on their "Portfolio" landing page. Each co-applicant should update their SSHRC CV webform then click "Verify" until the system indicates they have successfully Verified their SSHRC CV. Co-applicants will also be required to complete and upload their Research Contributions document in their own SSHRC account after they have accepted the invitation. You will be able to see what they have attached and view their SSHRC CV webform. Collaborators will upload a simplified identification module, but they are not required to complete the Research Contributions document.

All participants must successfully complete and verify their application invitations before you will be able to Verify and submit the full application. As such, we strongly encourage you to create the application web form and send out participant invitations as soon as possible, as there are often technical issues with co-applicants and collaborators completing the application invitation forms. Please share the Insight Grant Co-applicant Instructions with your co-applicants to facilitate their completion of the application invitation forms. Please contact Amber Zapletal if you are having issues inviting application participants or if your participants are having issues accepting the application invitation.

STRAC Attestation: For those grants that indicate they aim to advance a Sensitive Technology Research Area, the applicant must collect and attach an attestation form for each team member, certifying that they have read, understand, and are compliant with the Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern (STRAC). (See p. 15 below for details.)

Response to Previous Critiques *(Optional):* This section is meant for persons who are re-applying to address comments received from the committee or external reviewers and outline the revisions made to the application since it was previously submitted. Be sure to do this in a positive way that will enhance your proposal – do not be defensive or argumentative. Keep in mind that the committee is not given copies of earlier applications or reviewer comments, but up to one third of committee members are the

same as the previous year's committee members and they will likely remember your previous application and the reason it wasn't funded.

Research-creation support materials *(Optional)*: If you selected that your proposal will involve research-creation, you may attach a research-creation support material document to provide samples of creative work that best illustrate the qualifications of the team and/or the nature of the proposed research-creation.

When including a website link, follow these instructions:

- include a list of up to three works or excerpts of works to which you would like to direct the reviewers (e.g., images, audio, video, written material). Provide titles, dates of creation/production and a brief context for the works presented. Explain why you are including these items and how they relate to your proposed project;

- provide the complete and exact URL and indicate the path to access the intended support material on the website;

- ensure the website and all links involved will be operational up to six months after the application deadline; and

- specify the browser and version that should be used.

Consult SSHRC's Guidelines for Research-Creation Support Materials for more information. SSHRC also provides specific guidance for preparing an application involving research-creation for Insight and Insight Development Grants.

Request for Multi/Interdisciplinary Evaluation *(Optional)*: If you selected one of the multi/interdisciplinary committees to review your proposal, you must provide a justification for doing so. Complete only if your application would benefit from review from a committee with expertise across disciplines and does not easily lend itself to one specific Merit Review Committee.

Note: SSHRC takes a fairly rigorous view of what constitutes multi- and inter-disciplinary research, so you should ensure that your proposal is meaningfully integrating the theories, methods, or perspectives of at least two disciplines before requesting a multi-/inter-disciplinary review. The bare fact that your project may be of interest to scholars in multiple fields does not necessarily mean that it is multi- or inter-disciplinary as SSHRC understands those terms.

Tri-Agency Interdisciplinary Peer Review Committee *(Optional)*: Applicants whose research spans the mandate of more than one federal research funding agency (SSHRC, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research) can select the Tri-Agency Interdisciplinary Peer Review Committee (committee 24). This committee will use a harmonized tri-agency peer review process and Tri-Agency Interdisciplinary Peer Review Committee-specific evaluation criteria that differ from the usual process used by this funding opportunity. Applications submitted to this committee via the Insight Grants competition must meet SSHRC's Subject Matter Eligibility guidelines. The dominant component of the research must be in the social sciences and humanities. Relevant

applications must represent research across disciplines and subject areas pertaining to two or more of the (1) social sciences and humanities, (2) natural sciences and engineering, and (3) health and wellness, and clearly articulate interdisciplinary approaches. Applications submitted to this committee will be reviewed *by a common interdisciplinary committee with broad expertise.* Committee members are recruited from across research areas supported by all three agencies. *If you are considering submitting your application to the TAIPR committee, you are strongly encouraged to contact Amber Zapletal as soon as possible so that she can assess the alignment of your proposed research with this committee and consult with SSHRC as required.*

For more information, please consult the committee's landing page, Committee Peer Review Guide and Frequently Asked Questions.

Summary of Proposed Research: This should be written in *plain language* and be accessible to the general public; external reviewers and committee members refer back to this page often, so is essential to craft a strong Summary that provides a clear, concise, and compelling overview of your proposed research project. Treat your Summary as an initial sales pitch: it is your first opportunity to get reviewers invested in your project. A strong Summary will be written in non-technical language and will contain all the elements needed for a reviewer to understand the novelty and importance of your project—remember, some of the reviewers on your committee will *only* read your Summary. Essential elements include: a description of the background context, the central problem that the project is intended to address, a statement of your research goals and objectives, an account of your approach towards meeting your research objectives, and an explanation of your project's expected contribution to knowledge and/or benefit to society.

Detailed Description: The Detailed Description must make a case for the novelty, importance and feasibility of the proposed research project. Think of the Detailed Description as an argument, the goal of which is to persuade a committee of non-specialist reviewers to fund your project. In order to be persuasive, your Detailed Description must be clearly structured and well-written, and it must demonstrate your understanding of the field and the urgency of your proposed research intervention. Your reviewers will be experts in your discipline, but not necessarily in your area of specialization. It is therefore essential that you write your Detailed Description in clear, jargon-free language, limit the use of acronyms, and define any specialist terms or concepts that are integral to the framing of your project.

Your detailed description must address the Challenge and Feasibility evaluation criteria listed under Merit review in the funding opportunity description, except for those criteria addressed in other sections of the application (for example, knowledge mobilization plan, research team, budget, etc.). We strongly recommend that you have the Evaluation Criteria open alongside your working documents and that you refer back to the criteria often when writing and reviewing your application.

Use the following headings in the order they are listed in the guidelines, sub-headings can also be used if deemed useful and space permits:

1. Objectives
2. Context
3. Methodology

1. Objectives
   - Clearly state the overall goal of your study and the specific objectives that it seeks to achieve.
   - Your objectives refer to what your study aims *to achieve*, rather than what you plan *to do.*
   - Ensure that your objectives are in fact achievable within the timeframe of the grant.
   - To ensure that your objectives can be easily located by reviewers, present them as an indented, numbered list that is separated from the main text. This will also allow you to easily refer back to specific objectives when discussing and justifying your methodology.
   - Your goal and objectives will make more sense to reviewers if they are stated in response to the central problem or issue that your project is intended to address. Rather than jumping straight into a statement of your objectives, appropriately contextualize them by first giving an account of the central problem your project will address.

2. Context
   - The purpose of this sub-section is to set your project within the context of the scholarly literature on the problem or issue that you are addressing. Your goal here is to demonstrate that your project represents a novel contribution—that it is responding to a clear gap in the literature that needs to be addressed.
   - There is wide variability in the approach that you might take to this section depending on the nature of the issue you are addressing and its corresponding literature. Whatever form it takes, however, it should perform at least three general functions:
     - Provide an organized and accessible overview of the existing literature on your topic
     - Clearly identify a gap in, or limitation of, that literature
     - Clearly explain why that gap or limitation is important to address
   - Ensure that your literature review is organized. A common pitfall in the Detailed Description is to present a meandering literature review with no clear organizational logic—this can be especially disorienting for a non-specialist reviewer. Find a way to categorize the existing literature on your topic and present it in an organized way.
   - Ensure that your literature review is sufficiently comprehensive (within the parameters set by the page limit). You want to give the impression that you have a clear command of the existing literature, and that the relevant gap you have identified is the product of a comprehensive review.
   - When explaining the importance of the gap you have identified, think about the costs that are associated with leaving that gap unaddressed. What negative consequences will follow if we forgo your proposed research intervention? Focus on these to communicate the importance and urgency of your project.
   - Provide an overview of the theoretical framework that will guide your inquiry. Identify and explain the relevant theory (or theories), describe how it (or they) will be used to analyze and make sense of data, and clarify any theoretical assumptions of your project.

3. Methodology
   - The purpose of the Methodology section is to explain in detail how you plan to achieve your research objectives.

- Provide a general description of your methodology and a justification of its appropriateness for your project. Explain in detail how this methodology will be employed in your project—provide a detailed description of your plan for collecting and analyzing data.
- Whereas the methodology section of a research paper may be limited to description and justification of the methods employed, the methodology section of an Insight Grant application should also provide details about logistics. For example, how will you recruit participants or gain access to documents for review? Provide a contingency plan if access to data, materials, or participants is limited or unavailable.
- Refer directly to your objectives when explaining and justifying your methodology. There should be a clear link between what your project plans to achieve and what you plan to do to achieve it—do not leave it up to the reviewers to draw these connections themselves.
- Provide an account of your data management plan. Explain how the research data gained from your project will be stored, protected, preserved, and (if applicable) shared with others. Review *Tri-Agency Statement of Principles on Digital Data Management*.

Timeline

- Provide a chart depicting a timeline of activities and the division of responsibilities between the PI, any co-PIs, and student research assistants.
- Ensure that there is a match between the timeline you display in the chart and the narrative you have provided in the Methodology section.

Significance

- Repeat the nature of your project's contribution to knowledge and the social science and humanities and/or its potential benefits to society.
- You may also wish to make a note about how this project will fit into your longer-term research plan and any other projects or partnerships that will emerge from it.

If your project includes a request for funds for the development of a tool for research or related activities consult SSHRC's *Guidelines for Support of Tools for Research and Related Activities*.

Knowledge Mobilization (KMb) Plan: In this section, applicants must clearly outline their overall plan to facilitate the flow and exchange of their research outcomes within and beyond the academic community. You must include discussion of the tools, activities, target audience and purpose of your KMb plan. Strive to use unique techniques, tools and activities highly relevant to your discipline rather than a cookie cutter approach (publications and conference presentations are no longer sufficient on their own). *The evaluation criteria place significant importance on the knowledge mobilization plan*, so this section is critical to the success of the application and should not be treated as an "afterthought".

In planning your KMb strategy, consider the ways in which merit reviewers assess knowledge mobilization activities. For example, reviewers are advised to evaluate, under the Feasibility criterion, the "quality and appropriateness of knowledge mobilization plans, including effective dissemination, exchange and engagement with stakeholders within and/or beyond the research community, where applicable." Review

SSHRC *Guidelines for Effective Knowledge Mobilization*, Tri-Agency Research Data Management Policy, Open Access overview and SSHRC's Guide to preparing a data management plan, and Knowledge Mobilization Toolkit.

In preparing your KMb plan, consider the following:

1. Research outcome – *who* will use your research and *how* will it be used? Think carefully about the different audiences that you plan to engage (academics, policy-makers, business leaders, community agencies, educators, the media, the general public) and tailor your knowledge mobilization strategy accordingly. An effective knowledge mobilization plan will often involve disseminating knowledge among multiple audiences in multiple formats.
2. Barriers to knowledge mobilization for your project – how will you anticipate and address these barriers?
3. Steps you can take to maximize the impact of your research. Be specific. Avoid general phrases like "we plan to mobilize the results of our research among an academic audience by presenting at international conferences and publishing in top-tier journals." If you plan to present at conferences, specify which conferences you will present at, and where and when they will take place; if you plan to publish in academic journals, specify which journals you plan to target. Similarly, details should be provided regarding how the various components of your knowledge mobilization plan will be undertaken. For example, if you plan to create a website to mobilize the results of your research among a general audience, explain who will develop and maintain it, what type of content will it feature, and how your targeted audiences will become aware of it.
4. Ease of implementation (feasibility) of your KMb plan relative to its impact

Your KMb plan should include:
- Knowledge Mobilization objectives (including an identification of target audiences, participants, stakeholders)
- Methodologies and approaches for achieving those objectives
- A specific timeframe or schedule for the KMb activities. Ensure that each component of the KMb is appropriately budgeted (e.g. conference travel, website development and hosting, open access fees, etc.).
- An explanation and justification of how the planned KMb activities will achieve the KMb objectives

Expected Outcomes
The purpose of this section is to elaborate the potential outcomes of your project that you may have touched on in the "Significance" section of your Summary and/or Detailed Description.

You might think of potential outcomes in terms of three general categories:
- Outputs: short-term results and project products (e.g. publications; KM events; student training opportunities)
- Outcomes: activities undertaken as a result of new insights (e.g. new research partnerships or collaborations)
- Impacts: long-term changes in attitudes, behaviour, beliefs, or policy.

Ensure that there is a match between the content in the "Expected Outcomes Summary" and the particular outcomes selected from the drop-down menus under "Scholarly Benefits" and "Social Benefits." Ensure that each of the target audiences that you identify under "Audiences" is accounted for in your Knowledge Mobilization Plan.

Organize the contents in the Expected Outcome summary under two main headings: "Scholarly Benefits" and "Social Benefits."
- *Scholarly Benefits:* elaborate on the three main scholarly benefits that you have selected under the corresponding drop-down menu.
- *Social Benefits*: elaborate on the three main social benefits that you have selected under the corresponding drop-down menu.

Research Team, Previous Output and Student Training: Describe your research team, previous output and student training using the prescribed subtitles in the same order:
- A. Description of research team (if applicable)
- B. Description of previous and ongoing research results
- C. Description of proposed student training strategies

A. Research Team

The purpose of this sub-section is to introduce the adjudication committee to each member of your research team and explain how they are qualified to undertake the proposed research. In presenting your team's qualifications, emphasize the competencies that are particularly relevant to the proposed research project, including knowledge of the background context, specific methodological or technical training, language skills, cultural fluency, community connections, etc. Be sure to clearly demonstrate the need for a team by outlining each person's role, contributions and expertise. The inclusion of co-applicants is not a requirement and will not make your application more competitive unless their expertise clearly complements yours and they are therefore integral to the research activities. Show that you have all the expertise (both subject-matter expertise and methodological expertise) necessary on your team to achieve the objectives set out in your proposal. Involve knowledge users as necessary and explain and justify their involvement. Describe the proposed research team's track record of working together to speak to the feasibility of the collaborative project.

Include a paragraph for each member of the research team (applicant, co-applicants, and collaborators). In each paragraph, include:
- a biographical note about the researcher, including their current position/institutional affiliation as well as their research expertise and its relevance to the project
- a clear explanation of their specific role in the research project, including the research-related activities for which they will be responsible
- the proportion (in percentages) of their contribution to the project relative to other research team members (e.g. 70%)
- the proportion (in percentages) of their own research time they will dedicate to the proposed project. (Please note that there is an expectation that the principal applicant

will dedicate a significant amount of their research time (e.g. >50%) to an Insight Grant project.)

B. Previous and Ongoing Research

Use this section to explain how the proposed research project fits into a longer-term program of research. Provide a narrative of how the project has emerged from, or is related to, your previous or ongoing program of research. Do not simply restate your CV.

C. Student Training

"Quality of student training and mentoring" is a key evaluation criterion for Insight Grant applications, so it is crucial to demonstrate (a) that students stand to benefit from participation in your project and (b) that you have a clear plan in place for training them in the relevant research-related skills.

- Clearly describe the specific roles and responsibilities of students and research assistants
- Rather than merely listing the skills that students will develop as a result of participating in your project, explain how they will develop those skills, and how you and your team will facilitate their development.
- Consider incorporating institutional resources into your student training plan, including School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies professional development workshops (such as "Base Camp"), or any other relevant opportunities offered through your faculty.
- When explaining how students will benefit from their participation in the project, focus on the development of professional skills in addition to academic competencies (e.g. project management, public speaking, etc.)
- Review SSHRC *Guidelines for Effective Research Training*

Ontario Tech continues to build graduate programs across faculties; however, some faculty members may not yet have access to doctoral students in their discipline. If you plan to train doctoral level students and do not have access to them through your faculty, you must clearly explain this in a positive light – if there will soon be a doctoral program in your faculty explain when this will happen and what you will do in the meantime. Many researchers are able to access graduate students at other universities where they have adjunct status, or through their co-applicant's institutions, or from other faculties' graduate programs. If undergraduate/master's student trainees are appropriate, explain that undergraduate/ master's students at Ontario Tech have a high level of research experience in comparison to students elsewhere, which makes them a viable alternative.

Budget Table: All budget costs must conform to the rates and regulations of the applicant's (or potentially co-applicant's) institution and take into account the Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration's principles governing the appropriate use of funds. If you are not aware of the appropriate amounts to request for your proposed expenses, please contact your Faculty's Director of Planning and Operations, or Amber Zapletal, Grants Officer in the Office of Research Services, for help with planning your budget.

In general, ensure that there is a match between the budget and the narrative sections of the application. Include all research and knowledge mobilization costs referenced in the application, and do not include costs for items or activities you have not previously discussed. Budget your project carefully. If the review

committee deems that your budget is more than 30% over or under what is required to carry out your project, your application may be rejected.

Personnel Costs: enter the number of students and non-students you plan to hire, whether as salaried employees or as recipients of stipends. Student **salaries** should be determined in accordance with Ontario Tech's Collective agreement governing TA/RA positions (see Appendix A, page 40) and must include the mandatory benefits. The following rates account for projected future salary increases:

Ontario Tech TA/RA minimum salary hourly rate

	Sept 1, 2024	Sept 1, 2025	Sept 1, 2026
Without bachelor's degree	$25.15	$25.78	$26.42
With bachelor's degree	$39.34	$40.32	$41.33
With master's degree	$43.73	$44.82	$45.94

+ 4% vacation pay (The vacation pay should only be applied to the contract value, not the STA payment)
+ $150 Supplemental Training Allowance (STA)/ semester
+ 11% non-discretionary benefits (added on top of total that includes STA)

Calculation: (((Rate*Hours)*1.04 vacation) + STA)*1.11 fringe

Stipends are given to students who work on a project that is connected to their thesis work. Stipend amounts are set by your faculty in order to meet graduate students' minimum funding requirements (together with other funding sources, such as a TAship):

Program	Minimum funding
MA, MHSc	$9,000 per year
MSc, MASc	$16,000 per year
PhD	$18,000 per year

Please talk to your faculty's Director of Planning & Operations, or Budget Officer to confirm Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) Stipend amounts.

Postdoctoral Fellows must be hired according to the university's collective agreement with Post-Doctoral Fellows. They must be hired with a minimum one-year contract worth the minimum salary levels described in the CA:

Salary Minimum	Sept 1, 2025	Sept 1, 2026	Sept 1, 2027	Sept. 1, 2028
	$42,000	$43,000	$44,000	$45,000

Please note that requests for funding for post-doctoral fellows are highly scrutinized by adjudication committees and should be very well justified. You must clearly make the case for the training value of your project for the PDF, but also avoid assigning them tasks that you (and the other research team members) should be completing.

Travel and subsistence costs: source the lowest possible travel fares, in line with Ontario Tech's Expense Policy. Travel costs should not make up a significant portion of the budget and should be very well justified. Consider limiting dissemination travel to on average one conference per year, with no dissemination travel budgeted in year one. Dissemination travel for student research assistants is encouraged, but should also be reasonable (e.g. travel to one conference for each student). Please consult Ontario Tech's domestic (Canada and USA) per diem rates. If traveling internationally (outside of Canada and USA), please consult National Joint Council per diem rates.

Professional/Technical Services: Provide an hourly rate for the services and the number of hours you will be using the services.

Supplies: list items such as software, stationery, postage and telephone calls.

Non-disposable equipment and other expenses: list computer/electronic hardware purchases and rental equipment only if they directly relate to the research and if they are not being provided by Ontario Tech. SSHRC committee members are not keen on funding laptops or devices unless you justify the request by stating why your home institution cannot provide the equipment. Ontario Tech IT has laptops available for rental for Research Assistants. Contact IT Services to determine the rate. Funds requested for computers, tablets, video/audio recorders, and the like should *be limited and well-justified*. You must be able to demonstrate that the equipment is both necessary to carry out the research and not something to which you currently have access. Be reasonable in all requests (e.g. do not request funds for an iPad Pro when a less expensive tablet can perform the same function).

Tools: select "Other expenses" and specify "Tools." You must combine all requested expenses related to tools (i.e., for software, equipment, and professional and technical services) into this category. Consult SSHRC's Guidelines for Support of Tools for Research and Related Activities for more information on social sciences and humanities tools.

Open-access fees: it is permissible to budget Open Access fees for journal publications, but they should be limited and well-justified. For example, if your project is expected to yield four

manuscripts, consider budgeting Open Access fees for only one or two that will be sent to the most prestigious journals.

Budget Justification: This attachment should complement your budget table included in the application form; you should therefore use the same headings as the budget table, in the same order.

- Provide adequate detail regarding each request, ensure that the committee members will clearly understand exactly why you need the amount requested and what/who it will be used for.
- Provide a detailed cost breakdown for each cost category. For example, when justifying personnel costs, provide the hourly rate of pay for the RAs (inclusive of benefits) as well as the number of hours they will be expected to work (in total and per week). Justify the number of you students you plan to hire/number of hours dedicated to research assistance relative to the objectives of the proposed project. For what specific tasks will each student be responsible? Are the tasks suitable for the type of student you want to hire.
- Similarly, when justifying travel costs, provide an itemized breakdown of airfare, hotel, ground transportation, and per diem. Distinguish between travel for research and for knowledge mobilization purposes; try to avoid travel to conferences during the first year of the grant unless you can truly justify the expense.
- Personnel costs for non-student research assistants or associates (including post-docs) require a special justification. SSHRC generally prefers to support students, so a convincing case must be made for why a particular non-student must be hired. Consulting fees for professional and technical services are eligible expenditures only if the budget justification demonstrates that expert advice is needed; SSHRC committees prefer that these technical skills be represented in the applicant team, so requests for funding should be well justified and not make up a large portion of the budget. Anyone named on the applicant team (applicant, co-applicant, collaborator), or whose position makes them eligible to hold SSHRC grants, cannot be remunerated from grant funds.

IMPORTANT: Avoid overinflating your budget as committees will use the principle of minimum essential funding to guide their budget discussions. While budgets may still be adjusted (usually reduced) by the adjudication committee, inaccurate and overinflated budgets will negatively affect the score of the application. Committees may consider failing a project on the Feasibility criterion if they deem that 30% or more of the overall budget request is insufficiently justified and/or not appropriate to the proposed objectives or outcomes of the project. An application will <u>automatically be failed</u> if the committee deems that 50% or more of the overall budget is insufficiently justified and/or not appropriate to the proposed objectives or outcomes of the project.

Suggested Reviewers: List up to three specialists in your field of research who may serve as external reviewers to your application. Choose those at arm's length (no personal or professional relationship previously or ongoing), who are likely to give you a positive review. It is a good idea to select a variety of both Canadian (those familiar with the Canadian funding system) and foreign researchers (to show that your research expertise is well known). Avoid selecting persons that are difficult to reach.

Office of Research Services

Exclusion of Potential Reviewers *(Optional)*: You have the opportunity to request that a specific person not be asked by SSHRC to review your application – you must provide a justification (which is kept confidential).

Research Contributions: This attachment builds on the information provided in your SSHRC CV form. The purpose of this section is to outline your research productivity over the last six years and to provide an account of what you take to be your most significant career contributions. This attachment is <u>mandatory for the applicant and all co-applicants</u>. Be sure to organize your publications as per SSHRC instructions using the provided headings in the order listed, and following the formatting guidelines:

- In the left margin, identify with an asterisk (*) research contributions that resulted from previous SSHRC support.
- Specify your role in co-authored publications.
- Identify each student author with a plus sign (+).
- For published contributions, provide complete bibliographic notices (including co-authors, title, publisher, journal, volume, date of publication and number of pages) as they appear in the original publication.
- For publications in languages other than French or English, provide a translation of the title and the name of the publication.
- For recent graduates, list theses.

Attachment sections:
1. Relevant Research Contributions Over the Last Six Years (Oct. 2019 - Oct. 2025)
   a. Refereed contributions (books, book chapters, scholarly articles, etc.)
   b. Other refereed contributions (papers presented at meetings or conferences)
   c. Non-refereed contributions (book reviews, reports, policy papers, etc.)
   d. Forthcoming contributions (publications submitted or accepted or in-press)
   e. Creative outputs (exhibitions performances, film, video, etc.)
2. Other Research Contributions (If applicable)
3. Most Significant Career Research Contributions
   - This section is not restricted to the last six years and allows you to provide context for your contributions. Focus on your most significant contributions over the course of your entire career.
   - Provide a narrative detailing your most significant career contributions and explaining why they are the most significant. Rather than focusing on individual outputs (e.g. individual journal articles published in top-tier journals), focus on general achievements that might span multiple outputs, e.g. addressing an important problem or issue, developing a particular theory or methodology, taking a unique approach toward knowledge mobilization, fostering research partnerships or collaborations, or contributing toward training and mentorship.
4. Contributions to Training
   - This is an important section as part of SSHRC's mandate is to support training of Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP). It is beneficial to clearly demonstrate the previous training experience you have had and the outcomes of this training (i.e. where students are now, awards/scholarships received).

- Provide both a list of current and past research students trained in the last six years, and a brief narrative about your approach toward student training and the efforts you have taken to involve students in your research activities. It is appropriate (though not mandatory) to use a table to depict the number/level of graduate students trained.

Career interruptions and special circumstances *(optional):* This is a new one-page attachment that will allow you to provide context about career interruptions or special circumstances that have affected your (and the co-applicants') record of research. **Career interruptions** occur when researchers are taken away from their research work for an extended period of time for health, administrative, family or other reasons, or reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic. **Special circumstances** involve slowdowns in research productivity or any circumstances that impact the progression of academic careers in a distinctive way. Note that normal teaching loads and service responsibilities are not considered special circumstances.

Researchers can use this section to indicate their research work was impacted by circumstances related to health (and/or disability), administrative, family, cultural or community responsibilities, socio-economic context, COVID-19, or other factors. For example, applicants from small institutions could indicate their teaching load in this section if the change in workload impacted their research output. Indigenous applicants and co-applicants can use the "Special Circumstances" section of their application form to describe special circumstances that may have had an impact on their academic or career paths.

STRAC attestation module: In accordance with the [Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern](#) (STRAC), all researchers involved in activities (applicant, co-applicants and/or collaborators) funded by a grant that aims to advance a [Sensitive Technology Research Area (STRA)](#) must review the [List of Named Research Organizations](#) (NROs) and attest that they are not affiliated with, or receiving funding or in-kind support from any listed NRO. *If you check that your research is advancing one of the STRAs, y*ou must submit [attestation forms](#) from the applicant, co-applicants and collaborators, as applicable, certifying that they have read, understand, and are compliant with this policy. Should your application be successful, you and your research team(s) will also be required to comply with the policy for the duration of the grant that aim to advance one or more STRAs. Please contact [Amber Zapletal](#) if you have any questions or concerns about this requirement.

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SCORING

Proposals will be evaluated by both external assessors and members of your selected adjudication committee(s). Funding decisions are made by SSHRC based on the recommendations of the adjudication committee. While the committee takes external assessments into consideration, keep in mind that the committee is *not bound by the judgements of the external assessors* and that applications are ranked relative to all of the other applications submitted to their committee in any given competition.

The following criteria are used by adjudication committee members to evaluate Insight Grant applications:

1. Challenge—The aim and importance of the endeavour (40%):

   - originality, significance and expected contribution to knowledge;

- appropriateness of the literature review;
- appropriateness of the theoretical approach or framework;
- appropriateness of the methods/approach;
- quality of training and mentoring to be provided to students, emerging scholars and other highly qualified personnel, and opportunities for them to contribute; and
- potential for the project results to have influence and impact within and/or beyond the social sciences and humanities research community.

The score for "Challenge" relates primarily to the quality of the research proposal.

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

- appropriateness of the proposed timeline, and probability that the objectives will be met;
- expertise of the applicant or team in relation to the proposed research;
- appropriateness of the requested budget, justification of proposed costs, and, where applicable, other cash and/or in-kind contributions; and
- quality and appropriateness of knowledge mobilization plans, including effective dissemination, exchange and engagement with stakeholders within and/or beyond the research community, where applicable.

The score on "Feasibility" is affected by the proposal itself as well as the appropriateness of the budget. Note that a proposal with an inflated budget will receive a low feasibility score and is unlikely to be funded.

3. Capability—The expertise to succeed (40%):

- quality, quantity and significance of *past experience* and published and/or creative outputs of the applicant and any co-applicants, relative to their roles in the project and the stage of their career;
- evidence of past knowledge mobilization activities (e.g. films, performances, commissioned reports, knowledge syntheses, experience in collaboration/other interactions with stakeholders, contributions to public debate and media), and of impacts on professional practice, social services and policies, etc.;
- quality and quantity of past contributions to the development of training and mentoring of students, postdoctoral researchers and other highly qualified personnel.

The score for "Capability" relates primarily to the CVs and Research Contributions attachment of the applicant and co-applicant(s).

The evaluation forms provided to reviewers directly reflect the wording of these criteria. It is therefore advisable to ensure that your application adequately addresses each bullet point listed above. *Note: In order to receive a score of "Excellent" for any of the three main criteria, the proposal must be scored as excellent in each sub-category.*

Merit Review Committees

Insight Grants are adjudicated by committees of academic and/or other experts drawn from, but not limited to, the following research fields:

- Philosophy
- History
- Fine arts, research-creation
- Literature
- Medieval, classics, religious studies
- Economics
- Sociology, demography and related fields
- Geography, urban planning and related fields
- Psychology
- Political science and public administration
- Education
- Education and social work
- Anthropology and archaeology
- Business, management and related fields
- Linguistics and translation
- Communications, media studies, gender studies, library and information science, related fields
- Law and criminology
- Indigenous research
- Multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary humanities
- Multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary social sciences
- [Tri-Agency Interdisciplinary Peer Review Committee](#) (see details above)

In the application form, applicants will be asked to indicate which committee they consider most appropriate for their proposal based on the subject and discipline of the proposal. SSHRC may adjust committee structure year to year as disciplines evolve and in accordance with number of applications received. Prior to choosing a committee, it may be helpful to review the make up of [recent selection committees.](#)

APPLICATION TIMELINE AND RESOURCES

Insight Grant Application Development Timeline	
SSHRC Insight Grant Webinar	Thursday, August 21, 2025 @ 1:00 – 3:00 pm
ORS Comprehensive Review Deadline (optional)	Wednesday, September 3, 2025
Internal Faculty Review Deadline (mandatory for FBIT and FSSH only)	Wednesday, September 17, 2025
ORS Admin Review Deadline (mandatory) + signed RGA	Wednesday, September 24, 2025
SSHRC Deadline	Wednesday, October 1, 2025 Please have your application submitted in the online system by 9:00am to avoid any last-minute technical difficulties.

ORS Comprehensive Review of Proposals

If you submit your draft application to ORS by the "Comprehensive Review Deadline," a Grants Officer will review all sections of the application against the evaluation criteria, program guidelines and university policies and provide you with substantive feedback with enough time for you to revise your application prior to submission to SSHRC.

Peer Review Honorarium

ORS review is often well complemented by the review of a disciplinary expert who can assess the methodological and discipline-specific aspects of your proposal. You are therefore encouraged to solicit colleagues (from within Ontario Tech and from your professional network) to act as peer reviewers to help refine your grant proposal.

ORS will offer a **$150 honorarium to external peer reviewers** in the applicant's field with previous success in the Insight Grant program. Consultant review should focus on the context and methodology of the application from the perspective of a disciplinary expert.

To receive the honorarium, you must:
- Solicit and coordinate the review from the consultant on your own
- Provide the name and contact information (mailing address) of your peer reviewer to ORS
- Provide ORS with a copy of the reviewer's feedback/review and a summary of the changes made no later than September 24,2025

Note that there is a limit of **one** honorarium per applicant.

It is your responsibility to manage the review such that there is sufficient time for the reviewer to provide comments and for you to incorporate them into your application by the September 24 deadline. The external review may occur before, after or in tandem with ORS review.

Please let Amber Zapletal know if you wish to take advantage of this program.

Examples of Successful Insight Grant Application

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ORS has permission from previously successful Insight Grant applicants to share their applications as examples for future applicants. Please contact Amber Zapletal to request a copy of a successful Insight Grant application.

Resources
- Program guidelines
- Application portal
- Application instructions
- Co-applicant instructions
- SSHRC Guidelines for Cash and In-Kind Contributions
- SSHRC Guidelines for Effective Research Training
- SSHRC Guidelines for Effective Knowledge Mobilization
- Knowledge Mobilization Toolkit
- Guidelines for Support of Tools for Research and Related Activities
- SSHRC's Resource Centre for information on preparing applications involving research-creation.
- SSHRC's Indigenous Research Statement of Principles and Guidelines for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research for applications involving Indigenous research
- Help: Online Application Form Support
- SSHRC Manual for Merit Review Committee Members
- Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research
- Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications
- Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration
- Tri-Agency Research Data Management Policy
- SSHRC Guide to preparing a data management plan
- Tri-agency Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern

QUESTIONS? CONTACT:

Amber Zapletal, Grants Officer:
Amber.Zapletal@ontariotechu.ca

SSHRC Insight Grant Program Officer:
insightgrants@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca

SSHRC Online Application Help:
Resource Center
Frequently Asked Questions
Phone: 613-995-4273
E-mail: webgrant@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca