SHRF
SASKATCHEWAN
HEALTH RESEARCH
FOUNDATION

Funding Guide

SHRF Research Funding Application and
Management Guidelines

Last Updated October 1, 2020

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About This Guide

Overview

This guide outlines the purposes, processes, and terms and conditions of Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation's (SHRF) research funding. The policies and procedures within apply to individuals who applying for SHRF funding and to all new and existing recipients of grants and awards, along with their host institutions, unless specifically amended or declared void by SHRF.

This guide is reviewed regularly, and updates communicated to the research community as needed. The guide is posted online at shrf.ca.

SHRF will normally announce a funding program, including all required steps and information at least three months before the application deadline. Funding opportunities and related guides are available at shrf.ca/opportunities.

Our programs and processes evolve and adapt as the research environment in Saskatchewan evolves and grows. SHRF welcomes suggestions that might help us improve this guide and our funding opportunities.

All applicants, recipients and their host institutions are responsible for being aware of and complying with the requirements outlined in this guide. If you have any questions about the interpretation or application of any policies contained within this guide, please contact SHRF's Programs team at fundinginfo@shrf.ca.

> **Note**: October 1, 2020: SHRF has updated and renamed this guide (formerly the Awards Guide) to better reflect our processes for each stage of the funding cycle, from application to grant management. Additionally, information previously contained in individual application packages which was common across programs is now included in this Funding guide for common reference.

Contacts

For general inquiries: fundinginfo@shrf.ca

For SHRF technical issues: helpdesk@shrf.ca

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Website: shrf.ca

About SHRF

1.1 Mandate

SHRF was established by an act of legislature in 2002. SHRF is governed by a Board of Directors and reports to the Minister Responsible for Innovation. The mandate provided to SHRF by the Government of Saskatchewan is to:

- Seek and receive funding to support health research;
- Encourage and facilitate health research;
- Fund research according to the strategy; and
- Disseminate information about funded research.

1.2 Strategic Alignment and Guiding Principles

Health research is vital to the improved health of Saskatchewan citizens through a high-performing health ecosystem with a robust culture of research and innovation.

SHRF is vital to enabling the best health research that supports Saskatchewan solutions to Saskatchewan health challenges by upholding a rigorous peer review process, measuring and sharing the impact of funded research, and collaborating with partners who can help maximize the impact of this work.

SHRF's purpose is enabled through three strategic goals:

1. Strengthen research capacity and competitiveness
2. Increase investment in research and innovation
3. Align research with stakeholders' needs

Accountability, adaptability, collaboration, excellence and integrity represent a vital part of SHRF's strategic foundation and exemplifies our fundamental beliefs and guiding principles for how we work with each other and all stakeholders.

In achieving our strategic goals, we will adhere to our organization's core values and promote inclusiveness, excellence, creativity and breadth in health research. Integral to this work is supporting the health and research goals of the Indigenous community and continuing to ensure that sex- and gender-based analysis is incorporated into the research we fund.

At the core of all SHRF programs, and the opportunities SHRF partners on, SHRF will adhere to four guiding principles that align with our strategic direction. These are:

1. solving Saskatchewan health problems;
2. responding to ecosystem needs;
3. expanding partner dollars; and
4. streamlining administrative duties.

1.3 Scope

All SHRF-funded research must have relevance for human health and is intended to support health research in Saskatchewan. SHRF defines human health research broadly as encompassing biomedical science research, clinical research, health services and systems research, and research on the cultural, social and environmental determinants of population health.

SHRF funds only the research and closely related components of projects; specifically, SHRF does not pay for overhead or administration of research funding and does not fund any components that aim to develop or deliver health care service programs.

1.4 Partnerships

Strong partnerships are essential to innovative health research. SHRF joins with other funding agencies, non-profit organizations, industry and other health research supporters to maximize efficiencies, reduce duplication and increase the impact of health research investments and activities. SHRF partnerships benefit the Saskatchewan research community by combining resources to support research through programs offered by SHRF or the partner and by leveraging each other's strengths, connections and resources.

1.5 Access to Information and Protection of Privacy

SHRF is subject to provincial legislation on privacy and access to information, specifically *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. SHRF is committed to openness and transparency and to protecting the private information and intellectual property of our researchers. A copy of our operational policy in this area is available from the SHRF office.

1.6 Confidentiality

All applications are submitted to SHRF in confidence with personal and proprietary information used only for the purposes for which it is originally gathered, plus related activities necessary to fulfill SHRF's mandate.

Application Process

2.1 Eligible Institutions

The following institutions have presently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SHRF and are eligible to host SHRF grants and awards:

- Parkland College
- Saskatchewan Health Authority
- Saskatchewan Polytechnic
- St. Thomas More College
- University of Regina
- University of Saskatchewan

Exception: Where stated in an individual program guide (e.g. Research Connections grant program), Registered Canadian Not-for-profit organizations are also eligible to apply. Please see the relevant program guide for full eligibility details.

Only individuals associated with an eligible MOU institution or Canadian Not-for-Profit, where applicable, can view open funding opportunities and start a new application in the SHRF Research Management System (RMS). Other individuals participating in a research grant application gain access through invitation from the principal applicant and can view open funding opportunities at shrf.ca.

2.2 Preparation

In preparation for applying for SHRF funding, applicants, in particular principal applicants, should:

- Read the following documents, available on SHRF's website:
  - ✓ The current SHRF Funding Guide
  - ✓ Relevant Program Guide and related application instructions
  - ✓ SHRF RMS User Manual
- Contact your institution's research office regarding internal requirements and timelines
- Update your Canadian Common CV and ensure you have fields completed for the appropriate SHRF CV template. Ask other researchers on your project team to do the same.
- Log in to the SHRF RMS at shrf.smartsimple.ca
  - ✓ Register or update your personal profile and affiliations
  - ✓ Complete all personal profile fields (mandatory for principal applicant)
  - ✓ Begin a draft eligibility check/application
- Communicate relevant information, tasks and deadlines to the project team and support individuals in completing required application contribution forms on the SHRF RMS

![SHRF logo](shrf.ca)

2.3 Determining Eligibility

SHRF determines eligibility of all applications according to criteria defined in the relevant program guide, available on SHRF's website. Part of determining eligibility for a SHRF application includes completing an Eligibility Check prior to having access to the full application.

The eligibility check is reviewed internally by the SHRF program manager checking only for eligibility by following the below principles:

- The application is submitted to the appropriate funding opportunity, identifying relevance to the purpose, objectives and focus areas;
- The Principal Applicant is eligible;
- Minimum team requirements are met;
- To facilitate the creation of the review committees and search for appropriate reviewers with expertise to the proposed projects;
- To inform partners of interest regarding partnered funding opportunities; and
- To formalize the process of eligibility so that decisions made by SHRF are available to applicants and reviewers.

If questions arise regarding eligibility, the program manager will contact the principal applicant for further clarification and may require that revisions be submitted. Multiple revisions can occur until a final decision can be made or the eligibility revisions deadline has passed. Please see the appropriate program guide for further information regarding team eligibility requirements and eligibility check cut-off timelines.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact SHRF with any questions about eligibility at their earliest convenience prior to the preparation of an application.

If eligibility is no longer met at application submission or at the review period, SHRF reserves the right to remove the application from the competition.

2.4 Project Roles

Individuals associated with the proposed research project fall in to three categories of project roles: applicants, supporters and personnel (i.e. trainees and research staff). An individual can only fulfill one of the following roles on a given application. It is important to understand how each of these are defined and what information they must provide (or not provide) for a specific application. See the following role definitions and refer to the Project Roles table for more details about the application requirements for each role.

Applicants/Investigators

Applicants/Investigators are individuals who contribute to the intellectual or scientific direction of the proposed work. They share responsibility for the direction of the proposed activities. They are designated as Principal Applicant, Co-Principal Applicant, or Co-Applicant based on their level of leadership responsibilities and involvement. Individuals in these roles may be researchers, knowledge users; or people with lived experience (see 2.4.3 and 2.4.4. for definitions).

Personnel

Personnel (Trainees and Research Staff) are individuals tasked to carry out aspects of the research project and will be compensated from the grant funds. Individuals invited to this Project Role are not named to the grant (as they are compensated from it) and do not count towards the team member eligibility requirements.

Supporters

Supporters are individuals or organizations who provide a specific service in a limited and defined role in the proposed activities, have an interest in the research outcomes (i.e. knowledge user organization) and/or represent private industry. Individuals invited to this Project Role are not named to the grant and do not count towards the team member eligibility requirements.

Project Roles	Applicants/Investigators	Supporters	Personnel
Counts towards eligibility requirements	✓		
Can start an application in the SHRF RMS	Principal applicant only		
Accepts invitation from Principal Applicant to application and registers application affiliation(s) as needed	✓ (Co-Principal and Co-applicants)	✓	✓
SHRF RMS Personal Profile required	✓ (Principal Applicant); Co-Principal and Co-Applicants Strongly encouraged	Strongly encouraged	Strongly encouraged
Can be compensated from grant funds	**Researchers**: No **Knowledge Users**: Time release as allowable in program **Persons with lived experience**: Honoria per standard practice	✓ (see program details for industry supporter requirements)	✓
Complete contribution form on SHRF RMS	✓	✓	✓
Can submit completed application on the SHRF RMS	Principal applicant only		

2.4.1 Partner Conflict of Interest

Individuals who are affiliated with an organization partnering with SHRF on a program must not engage in any work that creates an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

- Potential applicants (i.e., principal applicants, co-principal applicants or co-applicants) employed or otherwise affiliated with a partnering organization must provide a letter from the appropriate supervisor attesting to this and describing any modification of duties as needed

for the duration of the program, including planning, application and review periods, and for the term of a successful grant.

- Potential supporters (i.e., individuals providing a specific service as part of the proposed research) employed or otherwise affiliated with a partnering organization may provide a letter of support in the application per program guidelines; however, this letter must speak only to the service which will be provided, thus addressing feasibility of the proposed research. The letter must not speak in any way to general support for the importance, quality, or other interest in the proposed research.

2.4.2 Application Contribution Forms

Each individual in a project role of applicant/investigator, supporter and personnel is required to login to the SHRF RMS and complete a contribution form which will be included as part of the application for review. If an individual is on multiple applications, they must complete the appropriate contribution form for each one.

The Principal Applicant must invite the individual to the application in the correct role and should provide direction and support as needed to register in the RMS and complete the contribution form; however, the invited individual must accept the invite and, once the application has passed eligibility, find the contribution form on their RMS home page under Action Required – Contribution Form. While individuals may be invited at both eligibility and full application stages, the contribution form must be completed during the full application stage and submitted by the invited individual before the application deadline.

Depending on the project role, the information required for the contribution form is different. Please see the following table for a preview of the information required on the SHRF RMS for each project role.

> **Note re: Internet Access:** SHRF acknowledges that there are rare circumstances where an individual may have limited to no internet access or not have an email account and therefore cannot access the emailed invitation to join the application or complete the contribution form online. When this circumstance occurs, the principal applicant will take on the responsibility of creating an email alias, adding the individual on their behalf to the SHRF RMS application, collaborating with the individual to complete their contribution form and sharing all application correspondence with the individual.
>
> To implement this work around, both the principal applicant and the individual who cannot access the invitation will sign/accept the "Signature Page for Individuals Unable to Access Internet" form found on SHRF's website.

Misuse of this option will not be tolerated. Where an individual has an email address and internet access but needs support in completing the required steps, the individual's own email should be used, and support should be provided per the individual's preference (e.g. entering information while a person dictates).

Contribution Form Requirements	Applicants/Investigators	Supporters	Personnel
Select Organizational/Individual affiliation for this application (pulls from SHRF RMS Personal Profile)	✓	✓	✓
Project Role Descriptor options	Researcher, Knowledge User, Person with Lived Experience	Community; Private Industry; Institutional Support; Government; Not-for-Profit; Health Care System; Individual; Other	Undergraduate; Graduate; Research Fellow; Research Staff
Indicate hours per week on proposed project	✓	✓	✓
Describe role in proposed project (100 words)	✓		✓
Describe research career development in relation to the project			✓ (Undergraduate; Graduate; Research Fellow)
Employer support letter	Knowledge Users using employment related time for proposed research project activities		
Letter of support for application		✓	
Provide information on relevant experience and expertise	**Researcher**: Validated CCV Using SHRF template **Knowledge User**: Knowledge User CV Template from SHRF **Person with lived experience**: Testimonial (written or media file upload)		

2.4.3 Applicant/Investigator Definitions

When the Principal Applicant invites an individual to an application on the SHRF RMS in the applicant/investigator project role described in the previous section, the person is designated as a co-principal or co-applicant depending on their level of leadership and involvement. Following are definitions for each of these terms.

> **Note**: The Principal Applicant may also invite an individual in the role of grant writer on the application. The person is not considered an applicant but has access to edit the application.

Principal Applicant

The individual who is responsible for the overall direction of the proposed activities, assumes administrative responsibility for the grant and receives all related correspondence from SHRF.

To be eligible, the Principal Applicant must:

- Be self-directed and autonomous regarding their research activities (i.e. not a trainee or contracted employee);
- Be able to hold peer-reviewed funds as a principal investigator and publish research results;
- Be affiliated with a Saskatchewan institution, which has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SHRF and agrees to administer the funds as the host institution;
- Be obliged to conform to institutional regulations concerning the conduct of research, supervision of trainees (undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate, as applicable) and the employment conditions of staff paid with SHRF funding; and
- Reside and work in Saskatchewan during the funding period of the grant.

Part-Time Appointment

Where an applicant has an agreement with their institution to work a portion of the regular amount of time in a work week to accommodate for an illness, disability or any other major event/action that affects the principal applicant's ability to work full time. This does not include part-time appointments where accommodations are made for other work-related responsibilities at the same or for a different organization/institution.

Co-Principal Applicant

An individual who makes a significant contribution to the intellectual or scientific direction of the proposed work, sharing responsibility for the direction of the proposed activities at a level similar to that of the principal applicant, but who is not the designated project manager.

They must be based in Saskatchewan for the term of the grant and may not be trainees; however, they do not need to meet the other eligibility requirements of a principal applicant.

Co-Applicant

An individual who makes a significant contribution to the intellectual or scientific direction of the proposed work and actively participates in the proposed activities. Co-applicants may be from in or outside Saskatchewan.

Trainees and research associates with expertise to contribute to the research may be co-applicants provided they are not compensated from SHRF grant funds.

2.4.4 Applicant/Investigator Role Descriptor Definitions

Applicants must select from one of the following three role descriptors to indicate the perspectives, expertise, and contributions they bring to the proposed research as a researcher, knowledge user or person with lived experience. Following are definitions for each of these terms.

> **Note:** While a person may generally meet the definition for more than one of the following role descriptors, they must select which is most relevant to their role and contributions for the proposed research.

Researcher

An individual with formal research training who holds a position which supports them to pursue research and whose expertise supports the proposed research project.

Knowledge User

An individual interested in the applications of the knowledge generated from the proposed research, who plays an active role in mobilizing knowledge to ensure research results have an impact.

A knowledge user may be a practitioner, health system manager, policy maker, educator, decision-maker, health care administrator, knowledge keeper, community leader or an individual in a health charity, patient group or government organization, etc.

> **Note:** While industry collaboration is encouraged where appropriate, due to the potential for real or perceived conflict of interest of industry knowledge users on SHRF research funding applications, individuals representing industry should be in the role of Supporter on an application (and not Applicant/Investigator).

Person with Lived Experience

An individual whose contributions to the proposed research are related to their personal experience with a health issue or experience as informal caregivers, including family and friends.

2.5 Allowable Expenses

Included here are general principles that apply across all programs unless specifically voided in a program guide. Additional program-specific guidelines and restrictions may apply.

1. Allowable expenses are those necessary to carry out the proposed activities and not provided through other means.

2. SHRF funding supports research activities in Saskatchewan. Funds may not be transferred to institutions out of province and may not support trainees or research staff based outside of Saskatchewan.

   - If part of the research takes place outside of Saskatchewan, funds required to complete this work should be shown in the budget from sources beside SHRF.
   - If necessary, you may seek approval from SHRF prior to the deadline for limited expenses budgeted outside Saskatchewan and include SHRF approval with your application.

3. SHRF is publicly funded and grantees should choose economical and fiscally responsible options whenever possible.

4. Equipment is:
   - defined by SHRF as any item (or collection of items comprising a system) of nonexpendable tangible property used for research having a useful life beyond the original term of the project, no matter the cost;
   - also called non-consumables; and

- not an eligible expense in some programs. Where eligible:
  - applicants are encouraged to seek access to existing equipment where possible, and
  - maintenance and operating costs are eligible expenses.

5. All purchases, reimbursements for services, travel costs and personnel support must follow guidelines and rates set by the Principal Applicant's host institution where the grant is held and must be undertaken according to the host institution's standard procedures.

6. When the proposed research involves industry as a supporter on the grant there is potential for actual or perceived conflict of interest. Industry supporters are required to provide cash or in-kind contributions in an amount equal or greater than 50% of any reimbursement received from the grant for goods and services.

7. SHRF grants may not be used to provide compensation, including any form of time-release, to applicants on the grant except where special considerations are deemed eligible in a specific program guide.

8. When permitted in a program, release time allowance may be requested to facilitate participation of a knowledge-user in the activities directly related to the proposed research.
   - Persons receiving release time allowances are not considered SHRF employees. Funds for research time allowance must be requested and justified in the budget section of the grant application accompanied by a letter of support from the relevant employer confirming support for the hours allocated.
   - Release time allowance cannot be used for clinicians, employees of private business and anyone with research responsibilities.

9. Honoraria for persons with lived experience participating as part of the research team should follow applicable guidelines, such as those set by the Saskatchewan Centre for Patient-Oriented Research (SCPOR) and be consistent with local and customary practice.

10. Participant honoraria is eligible where appropriate and clearly justified in the research proposal.

11. Hospitality costs are not permitted for internal and/or team meetings (i.e. with students, staff and research team).

12. Academic knowledge sharing costs should be budgeted separately from non-academic knowledge sharing and integrated knowledge translation costs. Most programs limit the portion of the grant which can be spent on academic research dissemination (i.e. journal publications, academic conferences).

2.6 Formatting Rules

After submission of the application, SHRF checks components of the application, including attachments to ensure formatting rules are adhered to. Attachments that do not follow the rules will be reformatted by SHRF and any extra pages will be removed from the application prior to sending for review. SHRF is not responsible for notifying applicants when such reformatting is necessary to ensure fairness. All application attachments must adhere to the following formatting rules:

- *Header*: For each attachment include the principal applicant last name, title/label (e.g. 'Research Proposal' title of data collection tool, etc.);
- *Footer*: Page X of X (for the particular attachment);
- *Margins*: minimum one inch (1") all around;
- *Page size*: 8.5 x 11
- *Font*: **Calibri, Ariel or Times New Roman ONLY**, black type, 11 point minimum;
- *Line Spacing*: 1.0 single-spaced minimum

2.7 Approvals

Required applicant and institutional signatures are indicated on the signature page provided for download from the 'Approvals' section of your application in the SHRF RMS. The principal applicant is required to print this page, sign and upload the completed document prior to electronic submission.

Other applicants (i.e. co-principal, co-applicant, etc.) added to the application are not required to sign the signature page.

The principal applicant is responsible for ensuring that all co-principal and co-applicants accept the invitation to be added to the application on the SHRF RMS and are aware of and agree to their role in the proposed project as described in the submitted application.

> **Note re: Internet Access:** SHRF acknowledges that there are rare circumstances where an individual may have limited to no internet access or not have an email account and therefore cannot access the emailed invitation to join the application. When this circumstance occurs, the principal applicant will take on the responsibility of creating an email alias, adding the individual on their behalf to the SHRF RMS application, collaborating with the individual to complete their contribution form and sharing all application correspondence with the individual. To implement this work around, both the principal applicant and the individual who cannot access the invitation will sign/accept the "Signature Page for Individuals Unable to Access Internet" form found on SHRF's website.

Research office approval signature must be obtained from the eligible institution that will be responsible for hosting the SHRF grant or award, if funded. It is the principal applicant's responsibility to comply with institutional policies for obtaining signatures prior to the SHRF application deadline.

SHRF accepts scanned pen-to-paper signatures as well as electronic signatures.

2.8 Pre- or Internal Review

Collegial review prior to submission improves the quality of proposals. SHRF encourages applicants to have their applications reviewed prior to submission with special consideration of the feasibility and quality of the research plan and overall grantsmanship. The research office at your institution may help in this regard.

2.9 Timely Submission

Applications must be submitted electronically by the deadline (date and time of day) indicated in the relevant program guide. **Late applications will not be accepted.** It is the responsibility of the principal applicant to submit the application by the deadline.

2.10 Complete Applications

Applications will only be accepted according to requirements at the time of submission for that competition, by completing the current online application available on the SHRF RMS.

Applicants must provide all requested information by the application deadline. All information is entered in to the SHRF RMS and submitted electronically; no other materials should be sent to SHRF. It is the responsibility of the principal applicant to ensure all components of the application are complete and attached by the deadline for each application step.

Additionally, the principal applicant is responsible for ensuring all invited applicants, supporters and personnel login to the SHRF RMS to complete the required information in the application contribution form by the submission deadline, including uploading letters of support, CV's or testimonials as appropriate to their role. See section 2.4.2 for more information.

Failure to comply with program requirements, guidelines and/or deadlines can negatively impact the status and evaluation of your application in a competition. Applications received in any other format, exceeding page limits or incomplete, may be declared ineligible. It is the principal applicant's responsibility to ensure all information is completed, properly formatted and that all supporting documents (letters, testimonials, CVs, etc.) are included before the deadline. Missing signatures, incomplete sections and missing information all constitute an incomplete application.

Material extraneous to that requested in the application will be removed before the application is sent for review. Attachments not following formatting instructions may be reformatted by SHRF and additional pages that result from this process may be removed. SHRF assumes no responsibility to notify applicants or follow-up with respect to particulars of incomplete or non-compliant applications.

> **NOTE:** While the SHRF RMS provides validation of some fields, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure all aspects of their application are complete and in accordance with program requirements.

2.11 Screening

After the application deadline and prior to applications being sent for review, SHRF undertakes an initial screening process, which includes:

1. Evaluating applicant and/or team eligibility; and
2. The application's completeness.

Applications that do not meet requirements of the application package and/or are not complete as stated under section 2.10 may be declared ineligible.

2.12 Sharing Information with Funding Partners

By applying for research funding to SHRF, applicants agree to allow SHRF to share only essential components of the application (i.e. title, research summary) of their application with current and potential funding partners for their consideration. Partners agree to follow SHRF's confidentiality and conflict of interest policies when it comes to shared applications.

Funding Decision Process

3.1 Review

Applications are assessed by experts, who follow peer-review principles and SHRF-established criteria for identifying worthy applications. Committees are constituted appropriately to suit the nature of applications under review and can include active health researchers, health professionals and other experts. Each committee is chaired by a respected researcher from a relevant field. Committee members may be from within or outside Saskatchewan depending on the nature of the program, but all are from within Canada. Grants may also be evaluated by external reviewers selected for their expertise in the proposed field of study. In the case where SHRF is partnering on programs administered by another funding agency, peer review may be done by the other agency, so long as SHRF's requirements are met.

Peer review committee membership is published in SHRF's Annual Report, available on our website at shrf.ca/publications. To learn more about our peer review process, including review procedures and criteria, please visit shrf.ca/peer-review.

3.2 Criteria

The criteria used in the peer review process are specified in the relevant program guide. Generally, reviewers will consider the following criteria when assessing applications alongside additional program specific criteria:

- Fit with purpose and requirements of the funding program, as described in the application package;
- Originality of the proposed research;
- Quality and feasibility of the research design;
- Importance and potential impact;
- Suitability of the research environment;
- Potential of the applicant(s) to carry out the work;

- General soundness of the overall research plan;
- Appropriateness of the budget; and
- Adherence to principles of ethical research.

3.2.1 Review of Application Budgets

Budgets are reviewed very carefully and must include only allowable expense, as outlined in this guide and the relevant program guide and must be necessary for the proposed research. Committee members may recommend a budget reduction based on the fit between a proposed budget and proposed activities.

Where there may be budget overlap with other applications, it is important the applicants submit the requested information informing the review committee of the overlap. The SHRF program manager will then work with the applicant, if successful, to identify and resolve any overlap identified.

3.3 Rating

SHRF is committed to excellence and will fund only proposals that achieve an overall committee rating of 3.5 or higher on the following 5-point scale:

4.5 - 4.9	Outstanding: highest funding priority
4.0 - 4.4	Excellent: very high funding priority
3.5 - 3.9	Very good: high priority; should be funded
3.0 - 3.4	Good: acceptable, but low priority
2.5 - 2.9	Fair: not acceptable for funding but shows promise
2.0 - 2.4	Poor: needs major revision
< 2.0	Seriously flawed

3.4 Funding Allocations

When applications to a program are reviewed by more than one committee, the funding envelope is split based on demand (e.g. value of applications received in each area) so that an equal success rate is achieved across committees. This occurs after applications have been submitted, screened and assigned to the appropriate review committee. Committee members are made aware of the funding split and the number of potential grants that can be funded.

Criteria to allocate funding are as follows:

- Only applications rating 3.5 or higher on SHRF's 5-point scale will be eligible for funding;
- Where SHRF partners with another agency, the highest ranked relevant application scoring 3.5 or higher will be funded;
- Funding will be allocated by score from highest to lowest until funds for the competition are exhausted; and
- To ensure applicants have sufficient resources to complete their research as planned, SHRF will normally only fund whole grants as recommended by the review committee.

Funding is offered for as many grants/awards as possible given available resources.

3.4.1 Allocation of Partner Funding and Focus Areas

When there is a separate envelope dedicated to partner funding or priority areas, the applications that have been identified as eligible for this funding envelope will be pulled out of the committee rankings and placed in the order of score. Funding allocation steps will then be followed until envelope is exhausted or all applications rating 3.5 or higher are funded. Any applications still above 3.5 but are below funding amount from partner/focus area envelope will be placed back in their respective committees, where they would be eligible for the open envelope funding.

3.5 Notification

All applicants are notified electronically in writing of the outcome, along with anonymous feedback from the peer reviewers at the final stage in the competition. This information is made available on the SHRF RMS. Successful applicants receive an Award Letter outlining any outstanding terms and conditions of funding. SHRF does not provide competition results over the telephone.

SHRF does not have an appeal process.

3.6 Acceptance

Once an offer has been made, successful applicants must accept the grant or award by signing the Notice of Acceptance (NOA) form provided on the SHRF RMS, constituting an acceptance of the terms and conditions for funding. SHRF funds are not released until SHRF receives the signed acceptance and confirmation that all terms and conditions have been met.

> **NOTE:** SHRF is aware that there sometime may be a scenario where a start dates may be postponed (i.e. illness, parental leave, etc.). SHRF will work with applicants on a case-by-case basis when this occurs to determine the best route. It is up to the applicant to contact the program manager as soon as the need for a postponement to the start date is known.

Grants and Awards Management

4.1 Releasing Funds

SHRF funds will only be issued to an eligible Saskatchewan-based institution that has a current Memorandum of Understanding with SHRF. Terms and conditions or SHRF Funding are outlined in the Notice of Acceptance (NOA) and agreed upon by the principal investigator. Any special terms and conditions are outlined in the Award Letter. All conditions must be fulfilled before funds are released.

Once any outstanding terms and conditions have been met, SHRF sends an Authorization for Funding form (AFF) to the institution where the funds will be held and managed in a separate research fund, according to accepted accounting practices for research funds. SHRF pays research funds to the host institution on a monthly basis per our MOU; however, grant amounts are authorized for use on a yearly basis according to the AFF.

Continued funding authorization for SHRF grants and awards is based on researchers' progress reports and financial statements from host institutions, ensuring that terms and conditions continue to be met. These monitoring and authorization procedures apply to all funded SHRF grants and awards.

4.2 Orientation

Newly awarded grantees are strongly encouraged to attend an orientation session where SHRF staff present information about SHRF, managing research funds and general expectations. Recipients will also have an opportunity to ask questions of SHRF staff. Recipients will be informed of the date, time and location of the Orientation following their notification of funding.

4.3 Fund Management

Research and financial offices at host institutions are responsible for managing the disbursement of research funds, ensuring timely flow of funds to researchers and access to the yearly authorized amounts. They are also responsible for ensuring expenditures from grants and awards stay within approved budgets and SHRF guidelines included in this guide along with any program-specific guidelines.

Researchers are responsible for providing documentation to the financial office at their institution so that annual and final statements may be prepared for SHRF on a timely basis and according to the SHRF financial statement template categories.

4.4 Expenditures

SHRF and partner funds (when applicable) contribute to the direct costs of research and knowledge translation according to budgets approved during the review and decision process. SHRF does not pay for overhead or administration of research funding.

Refer also to section 2.5 Allowable Expenses in this guide as well as the relevant funding program guide for details on any program-specific policies on allowable expenses.

The following policies on grant expenditures apply to all SHRF's programs:

- Equipment (see 2.5 for definition) purchased with grant funds becomes the property of the original institution administering funds
- It is expected that SHRF funds will be used to support health research in Saskatchewan. If required to meet research objectives and SHRF-approved budget changes, a portion of the grant funds may be used outside the province. This is for extreme scenarios only, that will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, where a decision must come from the SHRF program manager
- Research time release is only permitted for knowledge user applicants where program guidelines allow. See 2.5 for more information on knowledge user time release.

SHRF grants and awards may be used **only** for expenses incurred during the term of the grant or award. In particular:

- Researchers are to limit spending to the authorized amounts within the identified grant year, as outlined in the Authorization for Funding (AFF)
- Funds may not be spent or encumbered prior to the commencement of the grant or award, reflected in the start date identified on SHRF's AFF; and

- Funds not spent or encumbered by a project's conclusion will revert to SHRF and the funding partner, when applicable, after the final financial statement prepared by the host institution and signed by the principal investigator is approved by SHRF.

It may be necessary to reallocate grant funds between approved budget categories if the needs or circumstances of the research project have changed. Grantees should contact SHRF for approval if they anticipate significant or meaningful changes to their objectives and/or research activities that may result in significant changes to their budget and/or if such reallocation involves 25% or more of the grant's total.

Researchers should also contact SHRF if they anticipate substantial under-spending and/or inactivity. For SHRF grants of $100,000/year or more, SHRF will act if 25% of a yearly budget is carried over to the next grant year. This includes contacting the grant or award holder to explore the matter and, if warranted, taking appropriate financial action.

4.5 Reporting to SHRF

Researchers are required to provide annual and final progress reports to SHRF (reminders are sent to researchers one month prior to the anniversary of their funding start date). These reports are an important tool for SHRF's accountability to the provincial government and funding partners, and in evaluating and communicating the impact of our funding programs.

Continued funding depends on submission of satisfactory annual progress reports. A satisfactory annual progress report is one that:

- Is provided by the anniversary of a grant or award's start date;
- Confirms the terms and conditions of funding continues to be met; and
- Confirms research is being carried out as described in the application and budget approved for funding by SHRF; or
- Describes any changes in timelines or objectives for the next year, indicating whether the following grant-year will proceed as outlined in the application, and explaining any changes that would materially affect the research plan set out in the application.
- Provides information to SHRF about ongoing impact of the grant in key areas such as employment, knowledge mobilization activities, and collaborations.

    NOTE: SHRF funding partners may require additional reporting to meet their specific needs.

SHRF is also committed to evaluating the long-term impact of our programs in order to assess the extent to which program goals are achieved and to understand their contribution to Saskatchewan's health research ecosystem and health of Saskatchewan citizens. SHRF uses the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS) Framework for measuring the impact of health research and may follow-up to assess how the recipient has built capacity, advanced knowledge, informed decision making, and provided health, economic and social impacts in Saskatchewan. See shrf.ca for more information about how SHRF uses the CAHS framework.

> **NOTE:** SHRF reserves the right to delay release of funds for subsequent grants if previous reporting requirements, including post-grant follow up requests, are outstanding.

Financial statements (Statements of Account) are prepared by the host institution's financial office on an annual basis, and when the research has been completed. Researchers must review and sign their Statements of Account in a timely manner before they are forwarded to SHRF. The financial office must provide the statements using SHRF's template withing two months following the anniversary of the funding start date and as indicated on the AFF.

4.6 Extensions

SHRF grantees may request to extend the availability of grant funds beyond the original end date. Extensions will be considered if:

- The grant is eligible for an extension (see relevant program guide or most recent SHRF communication);
- There are funds remaining in the research account;
- The grant's terms and conditions continue to be met;
- The request is provided to SHRF in the requested format at least one month before funds are due to expire; and
- The request describes the reason for, and length of, the extension requested (up to one year at a time).

SHRF will consider requests for extensions due to professional or personal delays, including, but not exclusive to, unanticipated delays in data collection, parental responsibility, family responsibility or illness. Requests should be made as early as possible after the need is known by contacting SHRF. SHRF will direct the grantee to complete a change request and/or progress report as applicable.

4.7 Change of Principal Investigator

Principal investigators (PI) in charge of managing SHRF grants must be residing in Saskatchewan, except for SHRF-approved leaves. SHRF will consider requests for changes to a grant's PI on a case-by-case basis should the need arise due to circumstances such as re-location or death.

Written requests to SHRF must include the following information:

- Reason for change;
- Progress to date on planned objectives and activities;
- Identification of trainees and other personnel supported by the grant;
- Remaining funds and work to be completed, including any changes to original plans;
- Identification of a current team member who will take over as PI and description of their qualifications to carry out research as planned;
- Description of the nature of continued involvement of original PI, if relevant;

- Signed agreement from the following parties:
    - ✓ Original PI, if possible;
    - ✓ New PI agreeing to proceed as proposed and agreeing to provide reporting to SHRF;
    - ✓ Department Head and/or Dean of new PI supporting the proposed change.

If approved, SHRF will provide a revised AFF to the host institution, however the database and SHRF website will reflect the grant as originally awarded.

4.8 Compliance

SHRF expects researchers to carry out their research responsibly and to make sound decisions on resource allocation. Researchers must operate in compliance with local, national and international ethical and legal standards, and all applicable policies of their host institution that govern:

- Management and conduct of research, including safety;
- The financial management of research; and
- The management of research personnel and students involved in research.

Research undertaken for SHRF grants or awards is also subject to all policies laid out in this *Funding Guide* and the relevant program guide. Where there is neither an existing SHRF policy nor an existing host-institutional policy, researchers are to seek, through their institution's research administration, appropriate advice and/or a ruling from SHRF.

4.8.1 Non-Compliance

SHRF reserves the right to stop funding and/or research activity (see 4.9) at any time if it determines that researchers are in breach of terms and conditions of funding, as outlined in the NOA signed by the grant/award holder and the Award Letter. Examples of a breach include, but are not limited to:

- Changes in eligibility to hold funds or conduct research; and/or
- Failure to provide satisfactory annual reports (see 4.).

4.9 Changing or Stopping Funding

Financial actions that may be taken if a grant or award holder is determined by SHRF to be significantly under spent, inactive or in breach of terms and conditions include:

- Stopping payments temporarily or permanently;
- Stopping access to the research funds;
- Asking the employing institution to stop all research activity; and/or
- Rescinding all or part of the grant or award.

If at any time it is determined that any representation or warranty made by the grantee/supervisor/award holder in the grant application is not true or accurate, or is materially misleading, SHRF may at its discretion terminate the grant.

For funding programs administered by SHRF, continued funding depends on whether, in the fiscal year in which an anniversary date of a grant/award falls, the provincial government shall have

provided sufficient funding for SHRF to cover all its budgeted operating expenditures and grants and similar commitments for such fiscal year. Where the funding provided to SHRF is not sufficient to cover such amounts, it is within the discretion of SHRF to determine what funds it might allocate to grants and awards.

4.10 Sharing with Partnering Agencies

Grant and award recipients who receive funding from partnering agencies agree via the NOA to allow SHRF share annual and final progress reports and financial statements with the partnering agency, and to allow the partnering agency to contact the recipient directly for the purposes of knowledge exchange and promotion.

4.11 Promoting Your Research

Health research and innovation is the cornerstone of a healthier society and we all have a part to play. SHRF strongly encourages you to promote your research to relevant communities and audiences in a variety of traditional and non-traditional ways. SHRF's Engagement Specialist is available to help you connect with key audiences and employs various tools to share the impact of SHRF-funded research. Throughout the term of your grant, and beyond, you may be contacted by SHRF for photographs, stories and other information that can be shared with key audiences on SHRF's website, through publications, reports and blog posts, on SHRF's social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn, or in person at SHRF events, such as the annual Santé Awards and other in-person or virtual events.

If you have questions about promoting your research, contact SHRF at info@shrf.ca. We encourage you to connect with us and keep up to date on SHRF news by subscribing to our newsletter (sign up at shrf.ca/contact) and social media channels and by visiting our website regularly.

4.12 Acknowledgement of Funding

Researchers should acknowledge SHRF support in all study materials (i.e. recruitment materials and consent forms), resulting publications, abstracts, posters, presentations, events, media coverage and other dissemination avenues and applications of their research. In the case of partnership awards, awardees shall acknowledge the financial support provided by SHRF and the partner(s).

The most current SHRF logo files, along with our Visual Identity Guide, can be downloaded from shrf.ca/logos.