

# Collaborative Research Seed Grants Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry Terms of Reference

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**Purpose:** The Collaborative Research Seed Grants (CRSG) program provides seed funding to foster interdisciplinary collaborative research teams. The intent is to: (1) encourage collaborations that build on different scientific and scholarly backgrounds; (2) facilitate breakthroughs in solving research questions in a collaborative manner; and (3) position Schulich researchers to successfully apply to Tri-Council or other external funding agencies. The program is designed to help increase Schulich's competitiveness in research involving innovative approaches and to build our portfolio of translational and interdisciplinary research projects.

**CRSG will support:**

- new collaborations between basic and clinical researchers.
- faculty members from different disciplines/departments to collaborate in a new area of research or to approach a problem in an innovative way.
- existing collaborations between basic and clinical researchers to further enhance or expand their research program.

Grants are intended to provide seed funding to help generate novel data, initiate new intellectual directions for faculty, and foster relationships across disciplines and/or departments. Only proposals which clearly describe a collaboration between faculty members will be considered for funding. Proposals must describe a definitive plan for continuing the research effort proposed once the CRSG funding ends.

**Eligibility:** CRSG is open to all faculty in the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry. The Nominated Principal Investigator (NPI), Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) and Co-Investigator(s) (Co-I) must have their Western primary academic appointment within Schulich. The PI(s) and Co-Investigator(s) may propose a new collaboration or may propose to enhance or expand on an existing collaboration.

While researchers from outside of Schulich may be Collaborators on projects, they may not be PIs or Co-Investigators. Funding will not be made available to Collaborators from outside of Schulich.

Schulich faculty members can only submit one CRSG application as a Principal Investigator (PI) and only one additional application as a Co-investigator (Co-I). Faculty members who do not submit an application as a PI can participate as a Co-Investigator on a maximum of two CRSG applications. Previous CRSG awardees in the role of Nominated PI or Co-PI will not be eligible to apply as PI for a new project until the funding period for their previous CRSG award has ended, the work on the project has been completed and a [final report](#) has been submitted to the Schulich Research Office by the NPI.

Faculty can participate on a maximum of two active CRSGs as an investigator and only hold one active CRSG as a Principal Investigator (NPI or Co-PI) at any one time.

Projects will only be eligible for funding once. Renewal applications will not be accepted. Applications for funds to augment or supplement currently funded projects (internal or external) will not be

accepted. **Proposals for clinical trials are not eligible for this competition.** We use the CIHR definition of a clinical trial (see [CIHR link](#) and CRSG Frequently Asked Questions for details). Project success should not be contingent on obtaining additional funds from other sources (in addition to CRSG).

**Funding:** We expect to fund 4-6 awards through this competition. While there is no specified maximum amount for proposal budgets, budget requests and justification should reflect the appropriateness of the request to carry out the proposed research. For reference, awards from the 2022 competition ranged between \$40K and \$60K. There is no obligation to dispense funds if applications do not meet the standards set by the terms of reference for the award.

Successful applicants are invited to meet with the Schulich Research Office to discuss their plans for seeking external funding to sustain the collaborative effort.

**Location of Project:** The research activity is expected to be performed at Schulich or an affiliated site. If another location is proposed, a justification must be provided.

**Management of Funds:** Funds will be administered through a research account established through Research Western.

Applicants will be required to submit a completed ROLA proposal by the application deadline. ROLAs are required to establish a research account at Western. If research involves human subjects, animals, or biohazards, appropriate approvals must be in place before funds can be accessed. For assistance with ROLA, please contact [rolahelp@uwo.ca](mailto:rolahelp@uwo.ca).

**Award Duration:** Projects are expected to begin April 1, 2024, and be completed by March 31, 2026. Funds will be released as one lump sum at the beginning of the project once all approvals are in place. Funds must be utilized within 24 months from the date of award. Any unexpended funds at the end of the award period must be returned to Schulich.

**Reports:** A [final report](#) must be submitted by the Nominated PI and submitted to the Schulich Research Office within 90 days after the project period end date.

The Schulich Research office may reach out to you 1-3 years after the project end date to learn about additional outcomes that have resulted from this collaborative project.

It is expected that any presentations or published materials generated as a direct result of this funded research will acknowledge this award.

**Application Process:** The application process consists of two phases:

- 1) **Expression of interest (EOI) (mandatory):** Please send an email to [research@schulich.uwo.ca](mailto:research@schulich.uwo.ca), notifying us of your interest in applying **by/before 4:00 p.m. EST on November 29, 2023**. Please include the following information in the email:
  - Subject Line: **“2023 CRSG EOI-Last Name of Nominated PI”**
  - Name of NPI, Co-PI, Co-I, Collaborators and Project Title in the body of the email.

This information is requested to help find reviewers. The NPI cannot change between the EOI and full application, however all the other information can change. If you make changes to the co-

investigators or collaborators, please notify Mary Ann Pollmann-Mudryj at [maryann.pollmann@schulich.uwo.ca](mailto:maryann.pollmann@schulich.uwo.ca) as soon as possible.

- 2) **Full Application:** Submit a completed ROLA proposal and send the full application with required signatures in a **single** PDF file to [research@schulich.uwo.ca](mailto:research@schulich.uwo.ca) **by/before 4:00 p.m. EST on Friday December 15, 2023**. Include in the subject line “2023 CRSG-Last Name of Nominated PI”

**Applications submitted with multiple PDF attachments will not be accepted. Separate attachments will not be accepted.**

**Adjudication:** Proposals will be reviewed in early 2024 by a committee convened by the Vice Dean, Research and Innovation, who will make recommendations to the Dean regarding disbursements. Reviewers will evaluate the proposal focusing on adjudication criterion (interdisciplinarity, innovation, scientific merit, and team & environment). Decisions will be made based on the assessment of the proposal and congruence with the CRSG guidelines and terms of reference. Results will be announced in Spring 2024.

**Questions:** Any questions may be directed to Mary Ann Pollmann-Mudryj ([maryann.pollmann-mudryj@schulich.uwo.ca](mailto:maryann.pollmann-mudryj@schulich.uwo.ca)) or Lee-Ann Briere ([lbriere2@uwo.ca](mailto:lbriere2@uwo.ca)) in the Schulich Research Office.

## Collaborative Research Seed Grants

### Evaluation Criteria

#### Adjudicated Criteria

##### Interdisciplinarity

- Does the proposed project involve a collaboration between a clinician and basic scientist or involves faculty members from at least 2 different disciplines?
- Does the research entail a new (between basic and clinical researchers OR 2 or more different disciplines or departments) or leverage an existing (between basic and clinical researchers) interdisciplinary collaboration?
- Is there a clear explanation of why an interdisciplinary approach is required to address the identified important problem or critical barrier?

##### Innovation

- Does the proposal suggest, explore or apply a novel or potentially transformative concept, theory, approach, methodology, tool or line of inquiry?
- Does the proposal describe the innovative (i.e. transformative, original, unique and creative) aspects of the research, positioning it within the current state of knowledge in the field?

##### Scientific Merit of Proposed Research

- Does the proposal identify and address an important problem, need, gap or critical barrier in the field?
- Is the rationale compelling and clear?
- Are the overall goals, aims and hypothesis well-defined and clear?
- Are the conceptual framework, design, methods and analyses adequately developed, well-integrated, and well-reasoned?
- Is the proposed methodology appropriate and justified for the stated research aims?
- Are sex (as a biological variable) and/or gender (as a socio-cultural factor) taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings (as appropriate)?
- Is the proposed timeline realistic and achievable?
- Are the anticipated impacts of the research (e.g. outputs, knowledge exchange plans) described?
- Is the importance and potential impact of expected outcomes clearly explained?

##### Team

- Are the roles and expertise of each team member clearly defined?
- Is there evidence of complementary and integrated expertise?
- Is it clear why each team member is important to the collaboration?
- Is the team's expertise well-suited to carry out the work?

##### Environment

- Are the appropriate resources in place to carry out the proposed research?
- Is the project feasible?

##### Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- If applicable, have applicants clearly described equity, diversity and inclusion plans and/or processes in relation to the research proposal, research team, dissemination of results and anticipated impacts?

## Other Considerations

### Future Plans and Funding Prospects

- Is there a description of how the team plans to continue the collaboration beyond the term of the grant?
- Are there clear plans for seeking external funding? (including what potential targets are; can be provincial or federal granting agencies, foundations, industry or non-profit support)
- Is the proposed project likely to attract external funding?
- Have applicants clearly justified why it is appropriate to apply for this seed funding rather than apply to the target external agency now?

### Budget and Budget Justification

- Is the budget reasonable and well-justified relative to proposed project?