

SSHRC Insight Grant: *Budget Information Session*

Thursday, August 24, 2023 @ 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Register: cris.utoronto.ca/rdf/programs

SSHRC Insight Grant – Budget Information Session

August 24, 2023 @ 10:00 am – 11:00 am

- Thank you for joining us, the session will begin shortly
- You are currently placed on mute
- Reminder: this session will be recorded and transcribed

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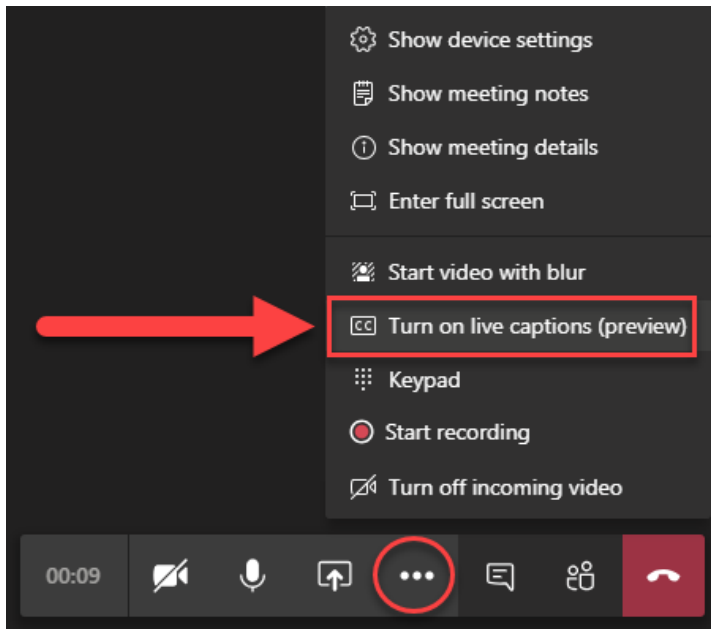
Mark Bold

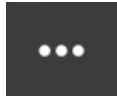
Research Funding Manager, Social
Sciences & Humanities, Research
Services Office

Wei Ye

Research Funding Officer, Social
Sciences & Humanities, Research
Services Office

Turning captions on and off



- Go to your meeting controls
- Select **More options**  Turn on/off live captions

Land Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates.

For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.



Housekeeping

- This webinar is being recorded & transcribed
- Please mute your audio and turn off your video
- A link to the recording will be sent to all participants after the session
- Presenter slides will also be shared
- We will hold questions until the end
- Please put questions into the chat box



Presented by

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SSHRC 2023 INSIGHT GRANT BUDGET SESSION

Insight Grant budgets – right off the bat...

3 things to always consider when completing your proposed IG (or any SSHRC) budget:

- As per the [SSHRC IG application instructions](#): “Committees will use the principle of ***minimum essential funding*** to guide their budget discussions” (so all costs need to be **fully justified** in the application (particularly in the “Budget justification” section))
- Applicants should consult the [Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration](#) concerning eligible/ineligible costs, particularly the [4 basic principles](#) that govern the appropriate use of grant funds, which state that grant expenditures must:
 - contribute to the [direct costs](#) of the research/activities for which the funds were awarded, with benefits directly attributable to the grant
 - not be provided by the administering institution to their [research personnel](#)
 - be [effective and economical](#)
 - not result in [personal gain](#) for members of the research team(NOTE: the underlined phrase in each of the 4 principles above is linked to SSHRC’s glossary, as it is worth reading and understanding the definition of each)
- If the Tri-Agency Guide is silent on anything (e.g., rates of pay for RAs, per diem rates), then UofT institutional policies apply (so consult the UofT [GTFM](#), or speak to your Business Officer or Dept/Divisional Research Facilitator)

Insight Grant budgets – the basics

- \$7,000 to \$400,000 over 2, 3, 4 or 5 years, maximum annual budget of \$100,000*

*SSHRC application site will not allow you to submit your application if the budget for any one year is greater than \$100k (but the site won't notify you of this until you go to "Verify" your application)

- Funding streams
 - A: \$7,000 - \$100,000
 - B: \$100,001 - \$400,000**

**The two streams are adjudicated by the same committees, and receive the same level of merit review, but Stream A applications have a higher targeted success rate than Stream B (5-7% higher)

Insight Grant in brief cont'd

	2020		2021		2022	
	UofT	national	UofT	national	UofT	national
<i>Number of Eligible Applications</i>	119 (of 119)	1213	88 (of 91)	1084	104 (of 104)	1145
<i>Number of Awards</i>	70	637	57	560	46	510
<i>Success Rate</i>	58.8%	52.5%	64.8%	51.7%	44.2%	44.5%
<i>Total Amount Requested</i>	\$20,740,358	\$224,744,976	\$14,984,492	\$210,915,050	\$19,382,160	\$233,136,322
<i>Total Amount Awarded</i>	\$10,752,570	\$104,001,032	\$8,477,763	\$96,443,016	\$8,156,367	\$89,470,021
<i>Average Request</i>	\$174,289	\$185,280	\$170,278	\$194,571	\$186,367	\$203,613
<i>Average Grant</i>	\$153,608	\$163,267	\$148,733	\$172,220	\$177,310	\$175,431

Insight Grant – UofT stats

2022 IG stats at UofT

Number of applications (successful and unsuccessful): 104

Total amount requested: \$19,382,160

Total amount awarded: \$8,156,367

% of awarded funds compared to requested: 44.2%

Number of successful applications: 46

Total amount requested (for successful apps): \$8,572,882

Total amount awarded (for successful apps): \$8,156,367

% of awarded funds compared to requested: 95.1%

Insight Grant – UofT stats – by sextile

Year	Sextile	# of funded applications	# of applications fully funded	% of applications fully funded	Total \$ request of grants not fully funded	Total \$ awarded of grants not fully funded	% of budget cuts for grants not fully funded
2022	1	24	5	20.8%	\$ 3,545,715	\$ 3,121,244	12.0%
	2	14	7	50.0%	\$ 1,866,637	\$ 1,597,993	14.4%
	3	8	1	12.5%	\$ 1,045,480	\$ 838,041	19.8%
	4	0	0	0.0%	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%
2021	1	18	9	50.0%	\$ 2,045,145	\$ 1,743,187	14.8%
	2	19	8	42.1%	\$ 1,915,849	\$ 1,603,906	16.3%
	3	18	9	50.0%	\$ 1,472,264	\$ 1,172,680	20.3%
	4	2	1	50.0%	\$ 99,964	\$ 89,964	0.0%
2020	1	25	11	44.0%	\$ 2,674,194	\$ 2,354,909	11.9%
	2	21	10	47.6%	\$ 2,619,410	\$ 2,020,792	22.9%
	3	22	9	40.9%	\$ 2,001,801	\$ 1,663,831	16.9%
	4	2	2	100.0%	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%
2020-2022	1	67	25	37.3%	\$ 8,265,054	\$ 7,219,340	12.7%
	2	54	25	46.3%	\$ 6,401,896	\$ 5,222,691	18.4%
	3	48	19	39.6%	\$ 4,519,545	\$ 3,674,552	18.7%
	4	4	3	75.0%	\$ 99,964	\$ 89,964	10.0%
2020-2022	1-4	173	72	41.6%	\$19,286,459.00	\$ 16,206,547.00	16.0%

The above takes the same 3-year period but shows the # of successful apps by sextile (i.e., SSHRC's ranking system from 1-6, where the top-ranked apps are categorized as sextile 1).

- Overall, budget cuts vary from year to year and there are no discernible trends in sextiles
- But ultimately, 58.4% (1-41.6%) of UT applications over this time period had their proposed budgets cut to some degree.

Insight Grant – UofT stats – by Streams

Year	Stream	# of UT applications	# of funded UT applications	Success rate for UT apps	# of fully funded UT applications	% of successful UT apps fully funded
2022	A	41	18	43.90%	4	22.22%
	B	63	28	44.44%	9	32.14%
2021	A	38	30	78.95%	16	53.30%
	B	50	27	54.00%	11	40.70%
2020	A	53	31	58.49%	13	41.90%
	B	66	39	59.09%	17	43.60%
2020-2022	A	132	79	59.85%	33	41.77%
	B	179	94	52.51%	37	39.36%
2020-2022	A & B	348	205	58.90%	95	46.30%

- SSHRC says the targeted success rate for Stream A applications is 5-7% higher than for Stream B, and the overall stats over this 3-year UT sample don't always bear this out (but national stats likely would).
- This 3-year sample also indicates among the funded applications, neither Stream A nor Stream B applications show a noticeable trend in the terms of budget cuts.

2022 Insight Grant – UofT stats cont'd

	Stream A	Stream B
# of funded applications	18	28
Total amount requested for funded applications	\$1,582,249	\$7,474,563
Total amount awarded for funded applications	\$1,432,241	\$6,724,017
Avg grant requested for funded applications	\$87,903	\$266,949
Avg grant awarded for funded applications	\$79,569	\$240,143
Avg budget reduction for funded applications	\$8,334	\$26,805
# of FULLY funded applications	4 (22.2%)	9 (32.1%)
Avg budget reduction (for grants not fully funded)	\$10,715	\$39,502
Amount of smallest budget cut	\$2,500 (or 2.69% of proposed budget)	\$3,250 (or 1.9% of proposed budget)
Amount of largest budget cut	\$33,500 (or 39.13% of proposed budget)	\$100,000 (or 25% of proposed budget)

Some reasons for budget cuts in IG proposals

(not an exhaustive list)

- The number and quality of submitted applications
- The size of SSHRC's IG funding envelope (which changes annually)
- Possible that cuts are made in order to fund other proposals that may not have been funded otherwise

The above are not really in the hands of applicants. However, the following are (in some ways, though not always) in the control of applicants:

- Committee determined that some items in a proposal's budget were ***inessential*** or ***inadequately justified***.
- ***Ineligible items*** were included in budget.

Budget attributes of funded IG applications

- Attentive to evaluation criteria and instructions
- Clarity (both in terms of details and formatting/presentation)
- Budget is consistent and aligned with other sections of proposal
- Costs are fully justified, presented as essential to the project
- No ineligible expenses
- Advice/reviews from other faculty members or dept/divisional research supports

Insight Grant Evaluation Criteria

- **Evaluation criteria and scoring:**
 - Challenge – The aim and importance of the endeavor (40%)
 - **Feasibility – The plan to achieve excellence (20%)**
 - *3rd subcategory under “Feasibility”*: Appropriateness of the requested budget, justification of proposed costs, and, where applicable, other cash and/or in-kind contributions
 - Capability – The expertise to succeed (40%)*

*See [SSHRC IG webpage](#) for full evaluation criteria and scoring

CHALLENGE
(40%)

Detailed Description (e.g., objectives, context (lit review/theoretical approach) methodology), Expected Outcomes, potential impact, Student Training plan

FEASIBILITY
(20%)

Funds Requested from SSHRC (i.e., the budget table), Budget Justification, and Funds from Other Sources

KM plan and Timeline

CAPABILITY
(40%)

Quality, quantity and significance of past research contributions, creative outputs, KM activities, training and mentoring, etc. (for applicant and co-apps)

The different sections of the application should speak to the budget, and the budget should speak to them (i.e., there should be no surprises when a reviewer gets to the budget after reading through the other material in the application)

Minimum Essential Funding

From SSHRC's [Manual for Adjudication Committee Members](#)

“Committees will use the principle of minimum essential funding to guide their discussions of project budgets.”

- Committee may recommend cuts if budget is deemed inessential, insufficiently justified or not appropriate
- Budget cut by 30% or more? Application may fail on Feasibility
- Budget cut by 50%? Application must fail on Feasibility
 - Know the typical budgets in your field (speak to colleagues or Business Officer if need be): unrealistically high or low budgets will lower score
 - Detail and justify all costs (HOW and WHY – see slide 17, “Budget Justification”)
 - Budget should be consistent with proposal description, KM plan, student training plan, etc.
 - avoid red flags! (e.g., conference travel costs in year 1, funds for Postdocs without adequate justification, expenses where it is unclear how they are essential to the project or their direct grant-related purpose)

Minimum Essential Funding

Example 1: Proposal with a strong emphasis on minimum essential funding

Below is how the applicant opens their “Budget Justification” document, immediately acknowledging that SSHRC’s concept of “minimum essential funding” was used when constructing the budget.

This concept was emphasized throughout the document:

- Referring to other sources of funding that could supplement the requested funds from SSHRC
- Reduced RA hours in the final year of the project when things are winding down (rather than the uniform RA hours across years that is often seen in applications)
- No funds requested for travel accommodation due to alternative arrangements

Ultimately, this Stream A application (below \$100k) was successful and fully funded, with no budget cuts.

Costs have been calculated on a “minimum essential funding” principle, and as indicated below I have especially minimized costs related to my own research travel. The key requirement is sustained, high-level research assistance from two doctoral students who will work extensively in large primary-source databases, present research once each at a Canadian conference, and travel once each to the UK for a combined conference / archival research visit. Less advanced research tasks will be economically allocated to Work Study students at 4th-year undergraduate or possibly Masters level. For further specification of the RA work to be undertaken as the project proceeds, see the “Detailed Description” and “Student Training” sections.

Some caveats: this applicant had another source of research funding and alternative travel arrangements that could be referred to (not all applicants may have these options). Also, while this was fully funded, the applicant believes that more funds (for student RA costs) should have been requested (suggesting a fine balance between “minimum essential funding” and being overly cautious).

Ineligible Expenses (i.e., don't include them!)

From the Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration, the “[Principles governing the appropriate use of grant funds](#)”, which states that grant expenditures must:

- contribute to the [direct costs](#) of the research/activities for which the funds were awarded, with benefits directly attributable to the grant
- not be provided by the administering institution to their [research personnel](#)
- be [effective and economical](#)
- not result in [personal gain](#) for members of the research team

The Tri-Agency Guide no longer offers a prescriptive list detailing specific items that are eligible/ineligible (as was the case in the old guide), as it is now primarily principles-based, but it should be consulted (along with the [SSHRC IG webpage](#), [application instructions](#), and UofT institutional policies (where applicable)) for direction when inquiring about the types of costs that are eligible/ineligible.

Ineligible Expenses cont'd

Ineligible expenses include:

- Remuneration and/or travel and subsistence costs of presenters or guest speakers
- Indirect costs (i.e., overhead)
- Payments (i.e., any form of remuneration) to Applicant, Co-Applicants, or Collaborators (including PDFs serving in any of these capacities)
- Collaborators' research costs (but their travel and subsistence expenses related to research planning, the exchange of information with the grantee, and for the dissemination of research results are considered eligible)
- Consultation fees are eligible for expert and/or professional and technical services that contribute directly to the proposed research as long as the service is not being provided by a team member (i.e., Applicant/Co-Applicant/Collaborator) or other persons whose status would make them eligible to apply for a SSHRC grant (i.e., Canadian-based researchers who could apply for their own SSHRC grant).

Upon initial review, if 30% or more of budget is ineligible, then application will not reach committee.

Budget Justification

3 questions that should be answered for each item in one's budget:

How much? How did you calculate this cost? Why is this expense essential?

(and an additional one for personnel costs:

What tasks will they be doing, and how are those tasks commensurate with their level of education?)

The budget is split into two mandatory sections (and a third if applicable):

1. Funds requested from SSHRC (i.e., the budget table)

- This section is just for the numbers (i.e., How much?)
- The budget for any one year cannot exceed \$100,000

2. Budget Justification document (max 2 pages)

- Should be organized by budget category (i.e., categories listed in the “Funds requested from SSHRC” budget table)
- Show HOW an expense was calculated and WHY it's necessary for the project
 - HOW: Don't make the reviewers do math, indicate how the # was calculated
 - WHY: link justification to your methodology, student training, knowledge mobilization sections, etc. – account for every dollar, justifications should align with the project description and other parts of application

3. Funds from other sources – for any other cash/in-kind contributions to the project (could benefit an application in terms of feasibility)

Personnel Costs

- **Undergrad, masters and doctoral students:** ask your business officer for rates of pay, indicate that hourly rates include benefits and vacation pay
- Explain **meaningful tasks** students will do and why that level is needed (essential presence of students for successful completion of project) – this should be done in the “Budget Justification” document, but also in the “Research Team, previous output and *student training*” document.
- **Stipends** may be used for grad students or postdocs – as per the [IG instructions](#): “Stipends must be justified in terms of the research, research training and/or research-related objectives. The work performed by stipend recipients should be an integral part of the project”.
- Costs of **research assistants or associates who are not students** must be fully justified in terms of the needs of the research

Personnel Costs cont'd

- **Postdocs:** must be justified in such a way as to show that a PDF is essential to the project “in terms of the needs of the research”, and their tasks could not be adequately performed by another kind of trainee (e.g., a PhD student)
 - If a postdoc is a co-applicant or collaborator, they cannot be paid from the grant, and they would have to establish a formal affiliation to remain as a co-applicant on the grant if the proposal is successful
 - Duration of engagement of PDFs is dictated by UofT institutional policy (no longer by the Tri-Agency). Please see the [UofT SGS website](#) and the official [UofT Governing Council guidelines](#)
- **Professional or Technical services (e.g., consultants):** eligible only if you can demonstrate that expert advice is needed and contribute directly to the proposed research.

Personnel Costs cont'd

Example 2: a Budget Justification document where the personnel costs are justified in various ways, including trainee tasks

A. PERSONNEL COSTS

Undergraduate Student Salary and Benefits

The Applicant's current lab manager is paid a base salary of \$15 per hour for 20 hours of work per week inclusive of vacation pay and benefits, based on the current student salary scales at the University of Toronto. The base salary is increased by 2% each year to account for inflation [\$15.00, 15.30, \$15.61, \$15.92, \$16.24]. The Applicant's current lab manager (or suitable replacement in future years) will serve as the project coordinator for the planned studies. This student will be responsible for the administrative oversight of the research including recruitment, contacting participants, scheduling in-lab sessions, preparing research materials, managing research assistants and volunteers in the lab, data entry, data coding, and participant debriefing and payment. The lab manager will be assisted by undergraduate student volunteers. Studies 2 and 3 will be conducted solely in the Applicant's lab. For Study 1, in order to recruit our target sample size within the appropriate time frame, we will conduct in-lab sessions in both The Applicant's and the Co-Applicant's labs. Utilizing both labs will enable us to recruit from the different communities where the labs are located. Therefore, we have also budgeted for a lab manager for the Co-Applicant's lab for 10 hours a week in Years 1 and 2. The total amounts will be: Year 1 (\$23,400), Year 2 (\$23,868), Year 3 (\$16,234), Year 4 (\$16,557), and Year 5 (\$16,890).

Graduate Student Salaries and Benefits

The Applicant's Department at the University of Toronto has set the required level of financial support (i.e., stipend) from the supervisor to \$7,000 for both MA and Ph.D. students. The Applicant has a current Ph.D. student who is eager to work on this project for two years. In addition, the Applicant will recruit a new MA student in Year 2 and another in Year 3 who will be heavily involved in the project. Three graduate students are needed on the project given the intensive nature of coordinating these studies and the data collection involved. The projects allow ample opportunity for graduate students to build in questions for their thesis and dissertation projects. Thus, the total requested amount for graduate support is \$7,000 in Year 1, \$14,000 in Year 2, \$14,000 in Year 3, \$21,000 in Year 4, and \$14,000 in Year 5.

Elements of this budget justification include:

- How much and how the costs were calculated (with reference to institutional/departmental rates where applicable)
- Overall yearly costs (at bottom of each paragraph) are consistent with what was entered in the "Funds requested from SSHRC" budget table
- Distinction made between levels of student RAs and their tasks on the project (further enhanced in the "Student Training" section of the application)

Ultimately, this Stream B application (for greater than \$300k) was successful and fully funded, with no budget cuts.

Personnel Costs cont'd

Example 3: a Budget Justification document with some of the details (but pointing reviewers to a separate section of the proposal to fill in the gaps)

This applicant used a great amount of detail in their Budget Justification document, and incorporated much of it in groups of tables, but the information mostly covered student level, duration of work, and rates of pay (rather than describing the work the students will be doing, which should generally be part of this document).

Budget Justification			
Personnel Costs (See student tasks in "Research Team, Previous Output and Student Training.")			
Students	#	\$	Justification
Year 1: 2020–2021			
Masters	1	\$3,705	130 hours (approx. 5 hours/wk, 13 wks per term, 2 terms) at \$28.5/hr (\$25 + 4% vac pay + 10% benefits).
Doctoral	2	\$14,364	A: 130 hours in Toronto (approx. 5 hours/wk, 13 weeks per term, 2 terms) and 210 hours in xx and yy, 7 hrs/day (relevant sections in the libraries open 9–5, minus lunch), 5 days/wk for 6 weeks in summer 2021, at \$34.2/hr (\$30 + 4% vac pay + 10% benefits). B: 80 hours (approx. 3 hours/wk, 13 weeks per term, 2 terms), at \$34.2/hr (\$30 + 4% vac pay + 10% benefits).
Year 2: 2021–2022			
Doctoral	1	\$11,628	130 hours in Toronto (approx. 5 hours/wk, 13 weeks per term, 2 terms) and 210 hours in xx and yy, 7 hrs/day (relevant sections in the libraries open 9–5, minus lunch), 5 days/wk for 6 weeks in summer 2022, at \$34.2/hour (\$30 + 4% vac pay + 10% benefits)
Year 3: 2022–2023			
Doctoral	2	\$8,892	A: 130 hours (approx. 5 hours/wk, 13 weeks per term, 2 terms), at \$34.2/hr (\$30 + 4% vac pay + 10% benefits). B: 130 hours (approx. 5 hours/wk, 13 weeks per term, 2 terms), at \$34.2/hr (\$30 + 4% vac pay + 10% benefits).

However, the applicant referred reviewers to a separate section of the application where the student activities and their essential roles in the project were described in great detail (i.e., by trainee level, skills needed, tasks to be completed, all incorporated in a detailed timeline). This was done due to the limited space available in the "Budget Justification" document (2 pages).

Ultimately, this Stream A application (below \$100k) was successful and fully funded, with no budget cuts.

Personnel Costs cont'd

Some things to consider when documenting **Personnel Costs** (which could also apply to other types of costs):

- **Precedent:** Relating the costs of current proposal to any past research activities, and the costs (and number of RAs) that were included in those past projects, shows one's experience in managing projects and adds a level of justification to the costs and number of research support personnel you are detailing (i.e., this worked in the past)
- **Based on the needs of the research:** Defining the personnel costs on a per year basis (including varying numbers of RAs each year depending on the nature of the work and the progress of the project), and not just putting in the same general costs per year for the same number of RAs
- **RA levels:** Justifying the level of RA (doctoral students) needed for the project, and defining the work that they will be doing (while also highlighting the training that the RAs will do)
- **Cost breakdown:** Breaking down the costs sufficiently (including per hour costs plus benefits and vacation), and referring to institutional rates and collective agreements as needed
- Referring to the concept of “**minimum essential funding**” and how your proposed budget was constructed with that in mind could be beneficial in a certain way (in that you are reciting SSHRC's own language back to them)

Personnel Costs cont'd

Small tip (for the “Funds Requested from SSHRC” table)

	Year 1		Year 2	
	#	\$	#	\$
Personnel costs				
Student salaries and benefits/Stipends				
Undergraduate	0	0	0	0
Masters	0	0	0	0
Doctorate	0	0	0	0

The table will ask you to enter salaries and benefits/stipends on a per year basis, and it will ask you for the number of research support personnel being employed (by level) in the “#” column and the total cost for that year/level in the “\$” column.

The table will not do the calculations for you within individual sections of the table (it only does the final, overall calculations, in the “Total” row at the very bottom of the table).

So (using a rough example), let’s say in year 1, you intend to employ 2 Doctoral students, 100 hours each, at \$30/hour, which would come to \$3,000 each, or \$6,000 total. In the “Year 1” columns, you need to enter “2” in the # column, and \$6,000 (the total for those two students) in the \$ column (and NOT “2” and “\$3,000” since the table won’t do the calculation for you).

	Year 1	
	#	\$
Personnel costs		
Student salaries and benefits/Stipends		
Undergraduate	0	0
Masters	0	0
Doctorate	2	6000

Travel costs

- *Format:* The budget table has one section for “Travel and subsistence costs”, but [SSHRC’s IG instructions](#) ask that you use separate sections in the “Budget Justification” document to distinguish between “travel for research purposes” vs “travel for communication purposes (e.g., conference travel)”
- *Breakdown the total costs:* airfare, accommodation, per diems, conference registration fees (if applicable), etc.
- Use [institutional per diems](#) (as of Jan 2020: \$80/day domestic, \$100 international. However, long-term travel in excess of 30 days = 75% of the applicable per diem rate)
- Use economy airline rates
- Justify multiple visits to one destination
- *For conference travel:* give dates if known, briefly justify why that particular conference, relate to your KM section
- *If for student travel:* explain benefits to students, relate to your Student Training section

Travel costs

Example 4: detailed travel expenses from a Budget Justification document

B. Travel and subsistence costs (\$39,836 total)

The following estimates of airfare are based on Google Flight (which automatically searches for the most economical flights by comparing across airlines). Estimates of accommodation and registration fees are based on conference websites. The standard Canadian and International per diem rates are provided by the University of Toronto.

Applicant: Canadian Travel. I will present the research findings at the annual meeting of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA), including the Social/Personality preconference, in Years 2, 3, and 4. The current budget is estimated based on the 2022 meeting, which will be held in Calgary, Alberta. The travel and subsistence costs include airfare (\$669), hotel (4 nights at \$335/night at the conference hotel), registration (~\$225), and meals (5 days of standard Canadian per diem rates of \$80/day). An estimated budget of \$2,634 is requested per year in Years 2, 3, and 4.

Applicant: Foreign Travel. In order to reach the international scholar community, I will present findings from the proposed research in the two top international conferences of my field, namely, the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) meeting and the European Conference of Personality (ECP). I will attend the ECP in Madrid in Year 2, SPSP in Atlanta, USA in Year 3, and ECP in unknown location in Year 4. The estimated cost of the 2022 ECP includes airfare (\$817), hotel (5 nights at €159/night [~CAD\$249/night] at the conference hotel), registration (€410 ~ CAD\$642), and meals (6 days of standard international per diem rates of \$100/day), totaling \$3,055. The estimated cost of the 2023 SPSP includes airfare (\$232), hotel (USD\$209 + 8.9% tax in Atlanta ~ CAD\$303), membership and registration fee (~CAD\$778), and meals (5 days of standard international per diem rates of \$100/day), totaling \$2,722. The cost of the 2024 ECP is estimated to be similar to the 2022 ECP (\$3,055), as the location has not been determined yet.

The applicant gives the parameters of their proposal's travel expenses, and talks about the sources of the costs (e.g., Google Flight (with reference to "economical flights"), conference websites, UofT rates)

The applicant breaks down the numbers (airfare, hotel, registration, meals/per diem), refers to specific conferences and their locations to give context for the budget request, and when a conference location is unknown (such as in future years of the grant), the estimate is based on the travel costs from previous years. And (unseen here, outside of this Budget Justification) these travel plans are additionally supported by the information the applicant entered in the Knowledge Mobilization plan.

Ultimately, this Stream B application (for close to \$300k) was successful, with minimal budget cuts.

Supplies and Non-disposable Equipment

Supplies (e.g., software, stationary, postage, telephone calls) and Non-disposable equipment (e.g., computer hardware, tablets, digital recorders) are allowable, but you must show/state how they are:

- directly related to the research project being proposed
- a necessary expense and essential to the successful completion of the project objectives (like any other expense in your budget)
- not provided to you by UofT (so it's good to mention this in the application/Budget Justification document for supplies and equipment not generally supplied to you by UofT)

Supplies and Non-disposable Equipment cont'd

- If you are requesting some funds in order to cover a top-of-the-line computer, then explain why this particular (costly) computer is necessary to the project (and if your reasons are not compelling, consider revising your request).
- Are you requesting funds for a computer late in the grant? (e.g., year 4 or 5 of a 5-year grant). If so, why? (and if you had already requested funds for a computer in year 1, a second computer later in the grant would likely be viewed as inessential unless your reasons for it are compelling)

Real-life example:

- Stream A IG application, with a relatively modest budget, with most funds requested for personnel costs.
- \$2,500 was requested for a laptop in year 1, and another \$2,500 for a laptop in year 5 (the final year). The request was made with little justification, and there was no indication in the Budget Justification nor in the rest of the application why computer equipment was needed (or why two laptops were needed, especially one in the final year of the grant)
- Application was successful, but the budget was cut by \$5,000

Tools for research and related activities

Between \$7,000 and \$100,000 for expenses related to development of a tool that is not “routine” and “typical” such as a survey or questionnaire (e.g., tools related to the creation of a database, where the database is not the primary objective of the project, but could help lead researchers to the primary objective)

Consult the following for instructions on how to include costs for tools for research and related activities:

- SSHRC’s [Guidelines for Support of Tools for Research and Related Activities](#)
- The IG application instructions (look at the bottom of the “[Funds Requested from SSHRC](#)” and “[Budget Justification](#)” sections)

Workshops or seminars

Costs of holding a workshop or seminar, the activities of which relate directly to the funded research, are eligible. However:

- No conference organization, as the organization of a conference or workshop cannot be the primary objective of an Insight Grant proposal
- No remuneration and/or travel and subsistence costs of presenters or guest speakers

Open Access fees

- Open Access costs? Try to be specific (no blanket costs), and link these to your KM plan
- Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications
 - For SSHRC, applies to peer-reviewed journal publications
 - <https://science.gc.ca/site/science/en/interagency-research-funding/policies-and-guidelines/open-access/tri-agency-open-access-policy-publications>
 - <https://onsearch.library.utoronto.ca/copyright/funding-policy-cihr-nserc-and-sshrc>

Open Access fees cont'd

Example 5: detailed OA costs from a Budget Justification document

E. Other expenses: Open-access Publication (\$15,666 total)

As described in the KMP, we will target 3 journal articles at Nature Communications (USD\$5,380 + 3.41% tax ~ CAD\$7,406), Psychological Science (USD\$3,000 + 3.41% tax ~ CAD\$4,130), and Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (USD\$3,000 + 3.41% tax ~ CAD\$4,130). The costs of open-access publication are obtained from the journal websites. Open-access publication facilitates knowledge mobilization and the transparency of science. The targeted journals are top-tier high-impact journals with wide and multidisciplinary readership, and the total cost of open-access publication is \$15,666.

Some attributes of the information included in the above:

- Applicant refers reviewers to the proposal's Knowledge Mobilization Plan, where more supporting details can be found (so this is consistent with other parts of the application)
- Specific journal names are cited
- States that OA costs for each journal were sourced from journal websites (so is clear concerning the basis of the costs/numbers)
- Justifies why OA costs are being asked for, and why these journals in particular are being targeted

At the risk of being redundant, this example was taken from the same application that Example 4 ("Travel Costs") was taken from. So again, ultimately, this Stream B application (for close to \$300k) was successful, with minimal budget cuts.

Formatting – Budget Justification

The only formatting guidelines SSHRC offers for the “Budget Justification” document are:

- Use 12 pt Times New Roman font, $\frac{3}{4}$ ” margins, and single spaced (as with other attached documents)
- Use the categories listed on the “Funds requested from SSHRC” budget table (budget categories and line item \$ amounts from your Budget table should also appear in your “Budget Justification”)
- Distinguish between types of travel and their costs (“Travel for research purposes” vs “Travel for communication purposes (e.g., conference travel)”) – this distinction is not done in the “Funds requested from SSHRC” budget table, but you are required to make the distinction in your “Budget Justification”
- Requests for funds to support tools for research (see SSHRC’s [Guidelines on Tools](#) and the [IG application instructions](#))

There is no template for the “Budget Justification” document, and all successful applications are not necessarily similar in how their budgets are visually presented. So ultimately:

- Strive for clarity and fully justify all costs, whether using text, tables, or a combination of the two
- Be consistent with other sections of the application
- Try to put yourself in the position of the person reading your application. Are things presented clearly? Is anything opaque?
- Ask colleagues and dept/divisional research facilitator to take a look at your Budget table and Budget Justification

Funds from other sources

- From the [instructions](#): “List all contributors (e.g., host institution or organization, individuals, philanthropic foundations and private sector organizations) that are providing [cash and/or in-kind contributions](#) for the proposal. Indicate whether or not these funds have been confirmed”.
- Separate section from the “Funds requested from SSHRC” table and the “Budget Justification” document
 - However, the [instructions](#) for the “Budget Justification” say the following should be included in that document: “Briefly describe all attempts at obtaining funds from other sources and, if applicable, provide details in your budget justification”.

Budget tips from UofT Research Administrators/Facilitators

- **Students:** SSHRC emphasizes student training and engagement throughout the life of one's project, so don't underbudget for students: but all personnel costs must be fully justified, in terms of student level (e.g., why a PhD?), activities and duration of employment – don't be vague.
- **PDF or non-student personnel:** why are they necessary? Committee may wonder if a student trainee could perform the work, so make sure the activities to be completed match the person's level/expertise/credentials (budget cuts are common when funds are requested for PDFs without airtight justification)
- **Dangers of overestimating:** don't pad or inflate costs. Are 10 RAs needed? Could the work be performed by fewer trainees? **But don't underestimate either**, as this could bring down the feasibility score as well. What is *essential* to the project, but also what is most *effective*? (but not necessarily cheapest)
- **Dissemination costs** in the 1st year of a grant, or 2-3 conference and/or research trips per year – are all of these essential? Don't over-ask on travel.
- **Travel costs for the same location multiple times:** why? Is this effective? Justify these multiple trips.
- **Major activities or purchases late in the grant:** How essential or effective is significant fieldwork or equipment costs in the final year of the project? (e.g., if funds for a laptop are requested in year 1, why is a second laptop needed in the 4th year of a 4-year grant?)

Budget tips from UofT Research Administrators/Facilitators cont'd

- **Alignment with other sections of the application:** Budget table and Budget Justification must be consistent with one another (and with the rest of the application) – strive for clarity and consistency, and don't surprise reviewers with unexpected costs in your Budget/Budget Justification that aren't aligned with the objectives of the project or the work described (e.g., a reviewer should not be surprised by funds being requested in your budget for a PhD student, or a PDF, or non-student personnel, etc., after having read through the other sections of the proposal).
- **Typical costs:** Know the kinds of costs typical in your field, as those should be emphasized (especially if your application will be reviewed by a committee made up of people in your field).
- **Ineligible items:** Don't include them! (e.g., compensation-based costs for Research Team members (Applicant, Co-Applicants, Collaborators), research expenses for collaborators, conference organization costs, overhead, etc. See slide entitled "Ineligible Expenses")
- **Try not to "ballpark" costs:** try to get real numbers (e.g., for costs associated with open access fees, dissemination and travel expenses (e.g., per diem rates), personnel costs) – how were the costs calculated and where are you quoting them from? Speak to Business Officer for rates of pay (including benefits and vacation pay).
- **Institutional rates:** when using them (e.g., per diem rates, rates of student pay (if applicable)), state that they are institutional UofT (or departmental) rates in order to give a basis for the costs.
- **Math errors:** Avoid them!

Impacts of COVID-19

IG application instructions (<https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/instructions/insight-savoir-eng.aspx>) describe where one may (if appropriate) speak to the possible impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the proposed research project, and also on how the pandemic has had an effect on the applicant's previous or current research activities.

SSHRC notes that this is not a mandatory part of the application.

Impacts of COVID-19

1. In the “Detailed Description” document

From the IG instructions: “Contingency plans related to the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on your research project may be described in this section, if appropriate. This is not mandatory, but it may assist the merit review committee in assessing the feasibility of your proposal if your research plans are significantly disrupted (e.g., if international travel is not possible).”

2. In the “Career Interruptions and Special Circumstances” section of the “Research Contributions” document

Again from the IG instructions: “**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. Researchers can use this section to indicate that 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 . . . Use this optional section to outline any career interruptions or special circumstances that have affected your research activities. Provide dates of interruptions and indicate the reason for the delay in general terms (e.g., illness, disability, family loss or illness, cultural or community responsibilities, socio-economic context, COVID-19).”

*****NOTE that the instructions do not say to detail these contingency plans in the application’s Budget sections (that is, do not try to add a full, contingency budget plan)**

Impacts of COVID-19

So not a mandatory part of the 2022 IG application, but...

A message during the pandemic from a SSHRC Senior Program Officer:

“Given the current COVID-19 situation, I suspect a committee will likely be looking critically at whether what is being proposed is feasible within the current context and whether any ongoing research remains incomplete.”

...so referring to the pandemic within the context of either contingency plans for your proposed IG project or career interruptions or slowdowns in research should be considered if appropriate for your proposal.*

*But just to be the devil’s advocate, a former committee member suggested that if a proposal is excellent, then the potential (negative) impact of the pandemic on the proposed project would not have a great impact on its chances of being funded.

Insight Grant budgets – most common resources

- [SSHRC 2023 Insight Grant funding opportunity](#)
- [SSHRC 2023 Insight Grant application instructions](#)
- [SSHRC Manual for Merit Review Committee Members](#)
(particularly the section, “Reviewing budget proposals and determining grant size”)
- The [Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration](#) (new version in effect April 1, 2020)
- The [UofT Guide to Financial Management](#) (for institutional rates)
- Your UofT Business Officer and/or your Dept/Divisional Research Facilitator
- Other faculty members

IG application instructions – Budget sections

(additional (and redundant) “Resources” slide, added for emphasis)

!!!CLICK on the 3 LINKS below!!!



[Funds requested from SSHRC](#)

[Budget justification](#)

[Funds from other sources](#)

Also consult the main [SSHRC IG webpage](#), as it has information (in the [Eligibility](#) section) on the types of projects that *are not* eligible for an Insight Grant (that is, projects where the main objective is curriculum development, program evaluation, preparation of teaching materials, conference or workshop organization, digitization of a collection, or the creation of a database), and information on what costs are ineligible (in the [Regulations, policies and related information](#) section)

UofT Resources

Department/Division

- Business officer (compensation, travel, supplies costs)
- Grant writing support (peer review, archived applications, internal deadlines)
- Dept/Divisional Research Facilitator (for proposal development/editorial services)

Guide to Financial Management: <http://www.finance.utoronto.ca/gtfm.htm>

- UofT travel policies and per diems

UofT Centre for Research & Innovation Support (CRIS) : <https://cris.utoronto.ca/>

- Central Research & Innovation hub (partnership between VPRI, UTL and ITS)

UofT Libraries

<http://onesearch.library.utoronto.ca/triagencyopenaccesspolicy>

- Advice on compliance with Open Access Policy, publication

<https://onesearch.library.utoronto.ca/researchdata>

- Advice on data management, DMPs

<https://utsc.library.utoronto.ca/librarians>

- List of UTSC Library Liaisons to assist with OA pubs and DMPs

<https://library.utm.utoronto.ca/scholarly-communications>

- UTM library info for help with OA pubs and DMPs

UofT Resources

Research supports/contacts at Divisional levels

CORE:
Community for Research
Excellence

FAS: Lee Slinger & Gabrielle
Sugar

FASE: Myriam Couturier

TFoM: Golnaz Farhat

UTM: Kate Steinmann

UTSC: Jovana Drinjakovic

Law: Kelly Nolan

Music: Ely Lyonblum

OISE: Madeleine Taylor

DLSPH: Caroline Godbout

iSchool: Emina Veletanlic

FIFSW: Vesna Bajic

LDFP: Lia Cardarelli

Nursing: Karin Trajcevski

KPE: Kay Li & Nina Hamou

Rotman: Joanne Pereira

FALD: Shirley Chan

UofT Resources

Research Services Office

- UofT IG website: <https://research.utoronto.ca/funding-opportunities/db/insight-grants>
- Tip-sheet at the above website
- Research Services SSHRC team
 - Wei Ye, Research Funding Officer (wei.ye@utoronto.ca)

MRA

- Login: <https://easi.its.utoronto.ca/administrative-web-services/my-research-mr/>
- Technical help and access: raise@utoronto.ca or 416-946-5000

SSHRC Contacts




- SSHRC IG program staff (funding opportunity questions) - insightgrants@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca
- Technical support for Application Form and CV - webgrant@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca or 613-995-4273

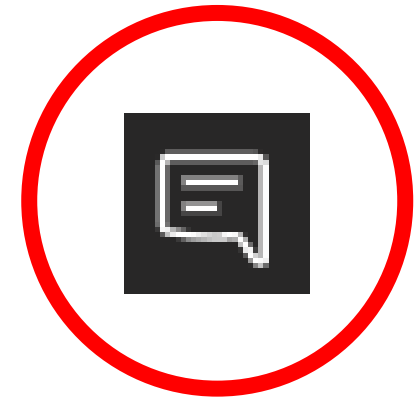
Submitting your application/Deadlines

- Complete a My Research Applications (MRA) record
 - <https://easi.its.utoronto.ca/administrative-management-systems/my-research-mr/>
 - Upload draft proposal, firm budget amount
 - Due at Research Services by **noon on Thursday, September 21, 2023**
 - Check with your dept/faculty/divisional research office for their internal deadlines (ie, for MRA or editorial review options)
- Submit SSHRC application online
 - https://webapps.nserc.ca/SSHRC/faces/logon.jsp?lang=en_CA
 - Internal deadline for online submission through SSHRC website is **9 am, Wednesday, September 27, 2023**

**Keep calm
and
justify everything!**
(and ask questions if you need to)

Q & A – How to ask questions

- Please use the chat
- Click on the  icon in the bottom menu to bring up the Meeting Chat pop-out window
- Type your question and hit Enter on your keyboard or click  button to submit.
- We will **not** be using the “Raise your hand”  feature.



Please note: You may be asked to Unmute to clarify your question

Upcoming Event:

Innovations 101

Date: Sep. 19, 2023
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm



The poster features a dark green background with a pattern of light green dots. In the center, there is an illustration of three stylized figures in yellow and white clothing. One figure is sitting on a blue block, another is lying on the ground with a laptop, and a third is reaching up towards a large glowing lightbulb. The lightbulb has several lines radiating from it, signifying an idea. In the top left corner, there is a small geometric wireframe sphere. In the bottom right corner, there are three more wireframe spheres of varying sizes.

INNOVATIONS 101

September 19, 2023 @ 2:00pm - 3:00pm
Online Webinar

With:
Jennifer Fraser, Director, Innovation

Register here: cris.utoronto.ca/rdf/programs

UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

Centre for Research
& Innovation Support

<https://cris.utoronto.ca/rdf/programs/>



Thank you!

- A link to the recording, presenter slides, and feedback form will be sent out after the session
- Follow-up questions can be addressed to wei.ye@utoronto.ca

