

NSERC RTI Grant: *Strategies for Success*

September 12, 2023 @ 10:00am - 11:30am



Dr. Björn Herrmann, Scientist,
Rotman Research Institute



Dr. Jennifer Mitchell, Professor,
Dept. of Cell & Systems Biology

Register: cris.utoronto.ca/rdf/programs

NSERC Research Tools and Instruments Grant: Strategies for Success

September 12, 2023, 10:00am-11:30am

- 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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Dr. Jennifer Mitchell

Professor, Department of Cell And Systems
Biology

Dr. Björn Herrmann

Scientist, Rotman Research Institute; Assistant
Professor, Status Only, Department of
Psychology

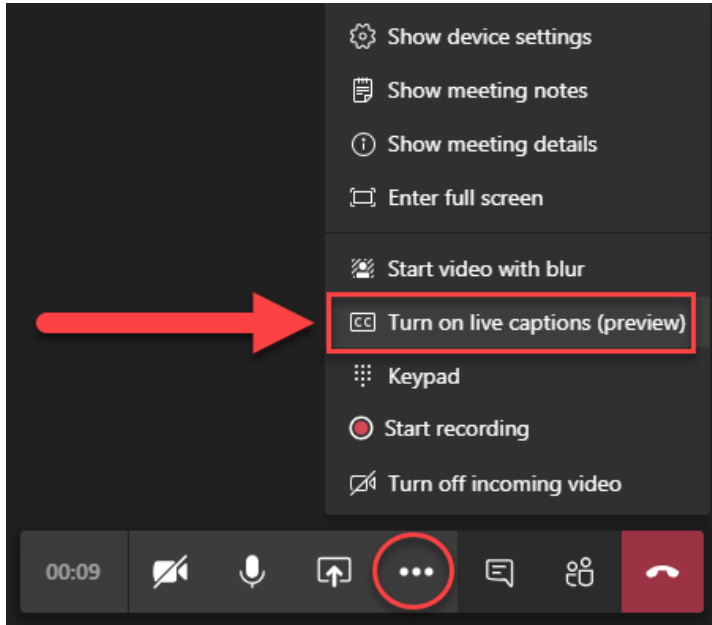
Jessica Keating


Research Funding Manager, Natural Sciences and
Engineering, Research Services Office

Keti Dzamova

Research Funding Officer,
Natural Sciences and Engineering,
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

Agenda

Time	Topic
10:05 am – 10:30 am	Overview of NSERC Discovery Grant with Jessica Keating and Keti Dzamova
10:30 am – 10:50 am	Faculty Panel with Profs. Dr. Jennifer Mitchell and Dr. Björn Herrmann
10:50 am – 11:25 am	Q&A
11:25 am – 11:30 am	Closing Remarks

Presenters



Dr. Jennifer Mitchell

Professor, Department of Cell & Systems Biology



Dr. Björn Herrmann

Scientist, Rotman Research Institute; Assistant Professor, Status Only, Department of Psychology

Jessica Keating

Research Funding Manager, Natural Sciences and Engineering, Research Services Office

Keti Dzamova

Research Funding Officer, Natural Sciences and Engineering, Research Services Office

NSERC Research Tools and Instruments Grants Program (RTI) COMPETITION

September 12, 2023



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NSERC
Administration
Procedures



01

**RTI Program
Updates**

01 RTI Program Updates

- ❑ RTI grants applicants and co-applicants who were successful in the previous year's (October 2022 competition) RTI competition will be ineligible to apply for one year. Eligibility will be reinstated the following competition year
- ❑ Researchers will be able to participate on one application per competition, either as an applicant or a co-applicant, but not both;
- ❑ The excellence of the researcher will no longer be assessed, instead the committee will evaluate the extent to which the research team has relevant experience or present a training plan to demonstrate how they will gain the ability to use the equipment.

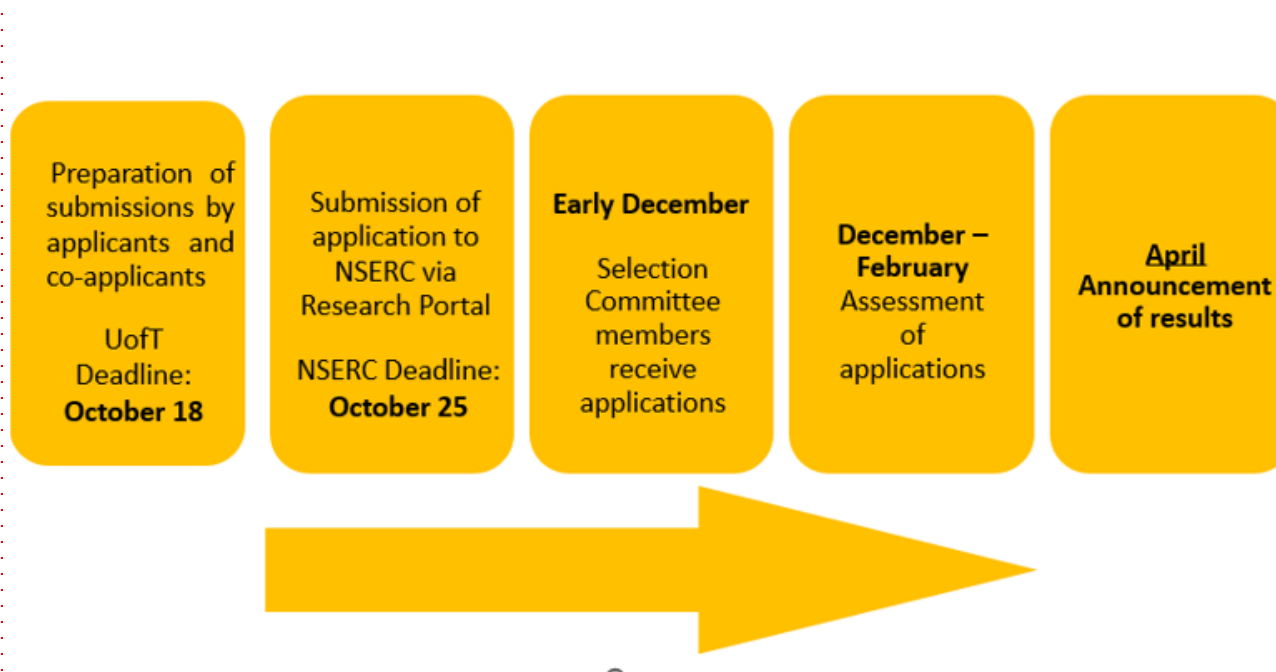
01 RTI Program Updates

- ❑ Change to the budget justification instructions to clarify and emphasize that an application will be rejected if the necessary quotations or the budget justification are not submitted with the application
- ❑ Additional instructions to specify correct tax and exchange rates in the budget justification
- ❑ Budget justification is now a 3-page maximum
- ❑ Confirmation of Financial Contribution documents no longer need to be submitted to NSERC

02

RTI Program Objective and Description

RTI APPLICATION CYCLE



02 RTI Program Objective and Description

RTI grants foster and enhance the discovery, innovation and training capability of university researchers in the natural sciences and engineering (NSE) by supporting the purchase of research equipment.

02 RTI Program Objective and Description

- ❑ The RTI Grants Program is a 1-year award that provides the primary avenue for university researchers in the NSE to obtain up to \$150,000 in support for research tools and instruments with a net* cost between \$7,001 and \$250,000
- ❑ RTI applications must be for the purchase, repair, rental or manufacturing of equipment that is not readily available off the shelf.

*Here, net cost is defined as the purchase cost of the equipment after any discount from the vendor and before taxes, customs and importation fees, transportation and shipping charges, and assembly and installation costs

02 RTI Program Objective and Description

- ❑ The vendor discount must be free of conditions, restrictions or limitations. In other words, it cannot be offered in exchange for services from users benefiting the vendor company.
- ❑ The research community is also encouraged to explore other avenues for funding research tools and instruments, including NSERC's other programs that allow the purchase of equipment as eligible expenses, such as the Discovery Grants program

03

Equipment Eligibility and Use of Funds

03 RTI Equipment Eligibility and Use of Funds

Use of Funds

- ❑ RTI grants must be used only for the specific type of equipment for which the grant was awarded.
- ❑ Grantees may, however, buy a model different from that requested in the application without prior NSERC approval (e.g., newer or upgraded model).
- ❑ Grantees who wish to purchase equipment different from that specified in the application must obtain written permission from NSERC's grants administration prior to its purchase.

03 RTI Equipment Eligibility and Use of Funds

Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

Type of Expenditure	Eligible Costs	Ineligible Costs (Costs not eligible for funding must not be included in the application)
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase or rental of equipment including taxes, shipping, and handling 	
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transportation / shipping costs for purchased equipment ▪ Fabrication, assembly, and installation of the equipment ▪ Extended warranty or service contract ▪ Brokerage and customs charges for the importation of equipment and supplies ▪ Testing/calibration costs ▪ On-site costs of training staff to use equipment ▪ Software licensing or upgrades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Salaries and benefits ▪ Travel ▪ Insurance costs for equipment and research vehicles ▪ Laboratory infrastructure ▪ Costs of the construction, renovation or rental of laboratories or supporting facilities ▪ Equipment or item intended to render other equipment compliant with health and safety standards

04

**Applying to the (RTI)
program**

04 Applying to (RTI) Program

Applications to the RTI program are assessed on the basis of the three following weighted selection criteria.

- ❑ Need, urgency and suitability (40%)
- ❑ Feasibility and impact (40%)
- ❑ Training of highly qualified personnel (HQP) (20%)

04 Applying to (RTI) Program

Deadline: **October 25** (Mandatory) via Research Portal

A complete submission includes:

- ❑ Proposal (limit of four pages)
- ❑ Budget Justification (limit of three pages)
- ❑ Two (2) recent quotations for any items or any systems costing more than \$25,000 before taxes
- ❑ NSERC Researcher CCV for each applicant and co-applicants

04 Applying to (RTI) Program

2023 RTI Application Content

Section in Research Portal	Notes / Limits	Completed by
Summary of Proposal	Max. 3000 characters (1/2 page)	Applicant
Activity Details	Complete section	Applicant
Proposed Expenditures	Complete table	Applicant
Identification / Eligibility Profile	Complete sections	Applicant & Co-Applicants
Time to be Devoted to Research/Activity	In hours per month	Applicant & Co-Applicants
Proposal [A]	Limit of four pages (PDF)	Applicant
Budget Justification [A]	Limit of three pages (PDF)	Applicant
Quotations [A]	2 quotations in PDF, 10Mb each (for items more than \$25,000)	Applicant
NSERC Researcher Common CV (CCV) [A]	Complete on CCV site and upload	Applicant & Co-Applicants
[A] – Attachment(s)		

04 Applying to (RTI) Program

- ❑ **Summary of Proposal (limit of 3000 characters)**

Summarize proposal in plain language that the public can understand. It will be available to the public if your proposal is funded.

- ❑ **Proposal (limit of four pages)-Attachment**

Refer to the 3 Selection Criteria section of the RTI program description. The applicant prepares the proposal with input from co-applicants, as required

04 Applying to (RTI) Program

Budget Justification (limit of three pages)-Attachment

- ❑ Explain and justify each budget item in the RTI Proposal
- ❑ Provide a breakdown of items requested; detailing the model, manufacturer, prices
- ❑ Exchange rates, and applicable taxes:

*To convert to Canadian currency, you must use an exchange rate consistent with the Bank of Canada rate at the time of application. Ensure that tax rates (i.e., applicable exemptions or rebates) used in the budget are consistent with the tax rates used by U of T which is 3.41%.

**Explain all financial contributions from industry, university or other sources towards purchase of equipment

04 Applying to (RTI) Program

Budget Justification (limit of three pages)- Attachment

- Provide a detailed explanation and justification for each budget item identified in the Proposed expenditures page. Provide sufficient information to allow reviewers to assess whether the items requested are appropriate, including details on models and manufacturers

04 Applying to (RTI) Program

Budget Table Template

Item	Quantity	Cost per unit in original currency	Exchange rate	Total cost in Canadian dollars
Subtotal:				
Institutional tax rate (%):				
Total tax:				
Total cost:				
Total confirmed from other source(s):				
Total requested from NSERC:				

04 Applying to (RTI) Program

Relationship to other research support (part of budget justification)

- ❑ Explain any relationship and/or overlap (conceptual or financial) between equipment supported by other funding sources and the current application;
- ❑ Provide sufficient information to enable the reviewers to assess the relationship between this application and other sources of support, including those of co-applicants.
- ❑ Two (2) recent quotations for any items or any systems costing more than \$25,000 before taxes (**Attachment**)

04 Applying to (RTI) Program

Checklist

Step 1: Applicant Eligibility

Ensure that you meet NSERC's eligibility criteria: and PI must currently hold*, or be applying* for one of the following NSERC research grants at the time of application list follows(list provided in next slide)

Ensure you are eligible to hold a research grant at UofT

Step 2: My Research Application (MRA)

Internal electronic approval form required for all grant applications submitted through UofT

MRA Must be received by Research Services no later than **October 18, 2023**, by 9:00am

Step 3: Application and CCV

Complete application on the NSERC Research Portal

Complete CCV on CCV website

Link CCV to NSERC Research Portal and submit by 9:00am on **October 25, 2023**

04 Applying to (RTI) Program

Step 1: Applicant Eligibility

- ❑ The PI hold, or have a firm offer of, an academic appointment at a Canadian Institution (minimum three-year position or tenure track) as of September 1, 2024
- ❑ Be in a position that requires independent research and allows supervision of HQP

04 Applying to (RTI) Program

Step 1: Applicant Eligibility

- ❑ To be eligible to apply for RTI, the applicant and co-applicants must currently hold*, or be applying* for one of the following NSERC research grants at the time of application: Alliance grant, Canada Excellence Research Chairs(NSERC), Canada 150 Research Chairs (NSERC), Canada Research Chairs(NSERC) , Collaborative Research and Development grant, Discovery Development grant, Discovery Grant, Discovery Horizons grant, Industrial Research Chairs grant, Strategic Partnership grant
- ❑ Applicants and co-applicants are responsible for ensuring they meet NSERC eligibility criteria for the RTI program

04 Applying to (RTI) Program

Step 1: Applicant Eligibility

Applicants and co-applicants are responsible for ensuring they meet NSERC eligibility criteria for the RTI program which include:

- ❑ Appointment eligibility
- ❑ Program eligibility
- ❑ Competition eligibility

If you are unsure, please contact our office to confirm eligibility

04 Applying to (RTI) Program

Step 2: My Research Application (MRA)

- ❑ Internal electronic approval form required for all grant applications submitted through U of T
- ❑ Must be received by Research Services no later than **October 18, 2023, 9:00am**

04 Applying to (RTI) Program

Step 3: Application and CCV

- ❑ Ensure you have completed and finalized your application on NSERC's Research Portal.
- ❑ Once finalized and completed, link your CCV to your application and verify.
- ❑ Submit to Research Services by clicking on the "Submit" button by no later than 9:00am on October 25, 2023, if not earlier.
- ❑ Once received by Research Services, your application will be approved and submitted to NSERC.

Important Links - RTI Program

RTI Peer Review Manual:

https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/doc/Reviewers-Examineurs/RTI-OIR_eng.pdf

RTI Program Description:

http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Professors-Professeurs/RTII-OIRI/RTI-OIR_eng.asp

RTI Program Instructions:

https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/ResearchPortal-PortailDeRecherche/Instructions-Instructions/RTIInstruct-SOIInstruct_eng.asp

RTI Frequently Asked

http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/doc/Reviewers-Examineurs/RTIFAQ-OIRFAQ_eng.pdf

NSERC Step by Step
Application Guide:

https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/doc/Webinars/2023_RTI_Webinar_e.pdf

Important Links - Procedures

Canadian Common CV – How to Complete NSERC’s Version:

https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/ResearchPortal-PortailDeRecherche/Instructions-Instructions/ccv-cvc_eng.asp

Research Portal FAQ:

https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/ResearchPortal-PortailDeRecherche/FAQ-FAQ/ResearchPortal-PortailDeRecherche_eng.asp

EDI Guide for Applicants:

[Considering equity, diversity and inclusion in your application](#)

NSERC and CCV Contact and resources

- If you have questions related to the Research Portal or to the instructions on how to complete the NSERC CCV:
 - Send an email to webapp@nserc-crsng.gc.ca or call 1-855-275-2861.
 - For technical issues, send an email to support-soutien@cihr-irsc.gc.ca or call 1-888-603-4178
- Help Manual: <https://ccv-cvc.ca/researcher-help-en.htm>
- How to Videos: <https://ccv-cvc.ca/indexresearcher-eng.frm>



Your Contacts at RSO

- ❑ Jessica Keating, Research Funding Manager
jessica.keating@utoronto.ca
- ❑ Keti Dzamova, Research Funding Officer
Keti.dzamova@utoronto.ca
- ❑ Kitishia-Trista Cordner, Research Funding Administrator
kitishia.cordner@utoronto.ca

Website: www.research.utoronto.ca
Address: 3rd Floor, McMurrich Bldg,
12 Queen's Park Crescent W.
Toronto, ON M1S 1S8



ROUND 1

Describe for attendees what the overall adjudication process was like for you as a member of your respective sub-committees?

- What instructions were you provided as reviewers?
- What evaluation criteria were you asked to use?



NSERC RTI info session

Björn Herrmann

Canada Research Chair in Auditory Aging (Tier II)

Scientist, Rotman Research Institute, Baycrest Academy for Research and Education

Assistant Professor, Psychology, University of Toronto

NSERC will only accept the following requests

- Tools and instruments that form a comprehensive system intended to support NSERC-funded research in the natural sciences and engineering:
 - a comprehensive system is one in which each tool or instrument forms part of an integrated system of operation to support the research program(s)
 - requests that bundle unrelated tools and instruments together will not be accepted
- Purchase of new, used or refurbished equipment, for the repair, upgrade or rental of equipment or for the fabrication of equipment that is not readily available off the shelf
- Equipment that is purchased or rented after the application deadline

Evaluation criteria

Need, urgency and suitability (40%):

1. demonstration that the equipment is essential for the research and that there are no other more cost-effective ways of obtaining the results
2. availability of similar equipment/facilities/services in the vicinity
3. impact of a delay in acquisition of equipment on the research and the pace of research progress
4. need to upgrade or replace obsolete or failed equipment
5. degree of utilization of the equipment by the applicant(s) and other users

Feasibility and impact (40%):

1. quality & significance research program(s), potential for major advances as a result of the equipment
2. feasibility of the plan to use the equipment
3. extent to which the applicant has relevant experience or has presented a training plan
4. consideration of EDI in the rationale of the team composition

Training of highly qualified personnel (HQP) (20%):

1. quality and extent of training
2. opportunity for hands-on training
3. potential to provide marketable skills for students trained on the equipment
4. consideration of EDI in the training of HQP

Scoring of applications

- First pass → Titles + abstract → Rate comfort level and flag conflict of interest
- Second → review of assigned applications → ratings (no committee meeting or discussion)

Scoring Summary and Guidelines											
Cells in this section with sets of scores that exceed the maximum allowed will turn red. Please avoid having any red cells.						Total Assigned:		19	Total Scored:		19
Scores		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Maximum percentage of applications with given score(s)	(120%)	10%	20%		30%		30%		20%		10%
Maximum number of applications allowed with given score(s)	(19)	2	4		6		6		4		2
(1) Need, urgency and suitability		1	3		5		6		3		1
(2) Feasibility and Impact		1	3		6		5		3		1
(3) Training of highly qualified personnel (HQP)		1	3		6		6		2		1

You are competing with others who submitted!

Strong applications




- Bigger teams, demonstrating clearly use of proposed equipment for different co-applicants (avoid *proforma* adding co-applicants) → How does everyone benefit?
- Need and urgency are important: a “nice-to-have” item will likely not suffice
 - Reviewers often face two needs: enabling novel research vs replacing broken equipment
 - Somewhat weaker motivation (but depends): NSERC DG application; having a perfectly good system but wanting to expand (better with bigger teams); wanting to supplement startup funds
- High-impact research in NSERC space
 - Write accessible for scientific expert outside of your field
 - Make clear why your research is important (what is your research for, why would a person care)
- Training: What does your training environment look like? Provide evidence for how impactful your training is (what you do well already is better than ‘only’ planning to do)
- Reviewers read 20-30 applications
 - About 45-60 min per grant
 - Read each application mostly just once
 - Be explicit, provide evidence for claims (need, impact, training, etc.)

ROUND 2

- What advice/lessons learned/best practices do you have for researchers and teams exploring this funding opportunity?
- What are some things you wish you had known that you learned from your insider perspective as a successful applicant?



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:

Webinar and Discussion – Addressing EDI Considerations in Your NSERC Discovery/RTI Application

Date: Sept. 26, 2022
10:00 am - 10:45 am

Addressing EDI Considerations in your NSERC Discovery/ RTI Application

September 26, 2023 @ 10:00 am-10:45 am



Andrea Gill, PhD, Research
Equity and Diversity Strategist,
Research Services Office

register: cris.utoronto.ca/rdf/programs



Centre for Research
& Innovation Support

cris.utoronto.ca/rdf/programs/

Upcoming Event:

Innovations 101

Date: Sept. 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 sitting on the ground with a laptop. A large white lightbulb with radiating lines is positioned above them. The text 'INNOVATIONS 101' is written in white, with '101' in a larger, bold font. Below the title, the date and time are listed, followed by the speaker's name. A registration link is provided in a rounded rectangle. The University of Toronto logo and the Centre for Research & Innovation Support logo are at the bottom left, and three wireframe geometric shapes are at the bottom right.

**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

cris.utoronto.ca/rdf/programs/

Thank you!

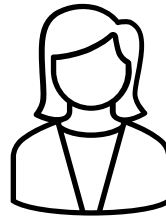
- A link to the recording, presenter slides, and feedback form will be sent out after the session
- Follow-up questions can be addressed to **Keti Dzamova** 'keti.dzamova@utoronto.ca'



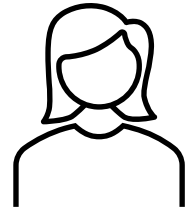
Jennifer Mitchell



Björn Herrmann



Jessica Keating



Keti Dzamova