

## **Guidelines the MMSF/U of M Adjudication Panel for the MMSF Allen Rouse Basic Science Career Award (ARBSCDRA)**

*(Portions have been extracted from the CIHR Peer Review Manual, of Nov 14, 2019)*

*Created: April 13, 2020*

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### **1. Principles of Peer Review**

The integrity of the peer review process relies on well-established principles and policies that:

- ensure fair and effective evaluation

Manitoba Medical Service Foundation (MMSF) principles of review are:

- Confidentiality
- Absence of conflict of interest
- Fairness

#### **1.1 Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is information about a person that will not be disclosed directly or indirectly to anyone else without that person's prior expressed consent. The information provided by applicants in their applications is protected by the [Privacy Act](#) and is made available to external assessors for reviewing purposes only. The use of this information for any other purpose is a breach of the Privacy Act. Committee members are reminded not to approach or communicate in any way with applicants, or anyone outside of the committee, any information relating to the review of a specific application, or to offer opinions on the applicant's chances of success or failure. In turn, applicants are not to contact committee members, regarding the status of their applications (for example ratings).

#### **1.2 Conflict of Interest**

MMSF makes every effort to ensure that its decisions are fair and objective by identifying and addressing any conflicts of interest between an applicant and a peer review committee member. According to the Manitoba Medical Service Foundation Policies of Grant Review Agreement (PGRA), a conflict of interest means a conflict between a participant's (e.g., committee members and observers) duties and responsibilities with regard to the review process, and a participant's private, professional, business or public interests. A conflict of interest may be deemed to exist or be perceived as such when committee members and observers:

- are currently affiliated with the applicant's institutions, organizations or companies. Note: *A reviewer is not automatically in conflict with an application if they are from the same institution as the applicant, but do not know or work with the applicant;*
- are closely professionally affiliated with the applicants, as a result of having:

- collaborated, been a co-applicant or published with the applicant, within the last five years (exception will be made for funded networks designed to increase partnerships among disciplines or institutions, and thematic research) or have plans to do so in the immediate future;
- has been a student or supervisor of the applicant within the last ten years;
- is a close personal friend or relative of the applicant, or have a personal relationship with the applicant;
- has had long-standing scientific or personal disagreements or disputes with the applicant;
- are in a position to gain or lose financially/materially from the outcome of the application (e.g., holds stock in the company of an industry partner or a competitor, outside of a mutual fund); or
- feel for any reason unable to provide an impartial review of the application.
- have frequent and regular interactions with the applicants in the course of their duties at their department, institution, organization or company;

All committee members (Chair, reviewers) are subject to the same conflict of interest guidelines. The Chair is responsible for resolving areas of uncertainty. All committee members must read and agree to abide by the PGRA policy prior to viewing any application information.

### **1.3 Fairness**

- Success of the peer review system is critically dependent upon the willingness and ability of all reviewers to:
  - exercise rigorous scientific judgement
  - be fair and reasonable
  - be impartial
  - understand and take into account in a balanced way the particular context of each application and,
  - provide constructive, quality review which helps the applicant by pointing out strengths and weaknesses that contributed to the application rating.
  - help to convince an applicant that they have received a fair and useful assessment.

## **2. MMSF Adjudication Criteria and Interpretation Guidelines [see Award Scoring Sheet (provided separately)]**

## 2.1 Mandatory Criteria

The mandatory Criteria must all be present to consider the applicant. These include:

- Must have a faculty appointment (date and appointment must be validated)
- Has conducted independent basic science health research for not more than 7 years
- Must guarantee 75% time commitment to research during the award
- Must be judged to be in the early stages of a productive research career
- Should have received one or more grants from a national granting agency (eg: CIHR)
- Has appropriate qualifications and training experience
- Should have a satisfactory publication record
- Letters of support
- Completed application
- Presentation to the Adjudication Committee

## 2.2 Scoring (Maximum of 100 points)

### 2.2.1 Quality (50 points)

From the application and presentation, scores will be developed primarily based upon the Quality (50%), as determined by the Concept and Feasibility.

#### Criterion 1. Concept (20%)

- Significance and Impact of the Research

#### Criterion 2. Feasibility (30%)

- Approaches and Methods
- Expertise, Experience and Resources

### 2.2.1.a Criterion 1: Concept (20 points)

#### Significance and Impact of the Research

This sub-criterion is intended to assess the quality of what is being proposed.

a. Is the project idea creative?

The project idea is among the best formulated ideas in its field, stemming from new, incremental, innovative, or high-risk lines of inquiry; new or adapted research in basic science.

b. Is the rationale of the project idea sound?

The project rationale is based on a logical integration of concepts.

c. Are the overall goals and objectives of the project well-defined?

1. The overall goal and objectives of the project are well-defined and clear.

2. The goal states the purpose of the project, and what the project is ultimately expected to achieve.
  3. The objectives clearly define the proposed lines of inquiry and/or activities required to meet the goal.
  4. The proposed project outputs (i.e., the anticipated results of the project) are clearly described and aligned to the objectives.
  5. Are the anticipated project contributions likely to advance basic health-related knowledge?
- d. The context and needs (issues and/or gaps) of the project are clearly described.
  - e. The anticipated contribution(s) (e.g. publishing in peer-reviewed journals) are clearly described and should be substantive and relevant in relation to the context of the issues or gaps.
  - h. The anticipated contribution(s) are realistic, i.e., directly stemming from the project outputs, as opposed to marginally related.

### **2.2.1.b Criterion 2: Feasibility (30 points)**

#### **2.2.1.b – 1 Approaches and Methods**

This sub-criterion is intended to assess the quality of the project's design and plan; including how and when the project will be completed. Each **Evaluation Checkpoint** is presented as a question and is followed by the **Evaluation Guideline(s)** for that Checkpoint.

- a. Are the approaches and methods appropriate to deliver the proposed output(s) and achieve the proposed contribution(s) to advancing health-related knowledge.
  - methods and/or strategies are well-defined and justified in terms of being appropriate to accomplish the objectives of the project.
  - Opportunities to maximize project contributions to advance health-related knowledge.
- b. Realistic?
  - Timelines for the project should be appropriate in relation to the proposed project activities. Key milestones and deliverables should be aligned with the objectives of the project, and be feasible given the duration of the project.
- c. Does the proposal identify potential challenges and appropriate mitigation strategies?
  - Critical scientific, technical, or organizational challenges should be identified, and a realistic plan to tackle these potential risks should be described. An exhaustive list is not expected.

#### **2.2.1.b – 2 Expertise, Experience and Resources**

This sub-criterion is intended to assess the appropriateness of the complement of expertise, experience and resources among the applicants (Principal Applicant(s) and Co-Applicant(s)), and

their institutions / organizations, as it relates to the ability to collectively deliver on the objectives of the project.

It is the responsibility of the Principal Applicant to ensure the proposed project is poised for success.

- a. Does the applicant(s) bring the appropriate expertise and experience to lead and deliver the proposed output(s), and to achieve the proposed contribution(s)?
  - The applicant(s) should demonstrate the combined expertise and experience needed to execute the project (i.e., deliver the proposed outputs as well as achieve the proposed contribution(s)).
  - The roles and responsibilities of each applicant should be clearly described, and linked to the objectives of the project.
- b. Is there an appropriate level of engagement and/or commitment from the applicant(s)?
  - The level of engagement (e.g., time and other commitments) of each applicant should be appropriate to the roles and responsibilities described.
- c. Is the environment (academic institution and/or other organization) appropriate to enable the conduct and success of the project?
  - Project applicants should have access to the appropriate infrastructure, facilities, support personnel, equipment, and/or supplies to:
    - Carry out their respective roles, and;
    - As a collective, manage and deliver the proposed output(s), and achieve the proposed contribution(s).

### **2.2.2 Presentation (25 points)**

The Presentation will account for up to 25 points of the adjudication.

It will be based upon:

1. clarity of the presentation
2. response to questions
3. communication skills
4. answers about utility of this award in helping to advance the career path
5. description of intended career path
6. assurance of 75% time commitment to research

### **2.2.3 Publications (10 points)**

Publications (number and quality) will account for up to 10 points.

## 2.2.4 Awards (5 points)

Awards will account for up to 5 points.

## 2.2.5 Letters of Support (10 points)

Letters of Support will account for up to 10 points.

**Total = 100 points**

## 3. Proposed Process

Information on the candidates and the evaluation criteria and review process will be circulated before the scheduled sessions.

The Committee will meet 30 minutes before the scheduled sessions to discuss evaluation process and to answer questions.

Candidate will meet online, and instructions will be reviewed. Candidate will have 30 minutes, 15 for presentation and 15 minutes for questions.

Each member of the adjudication committee will be given an opportunity for one question in rotation.

After all of the questions, the candidate will be excused and the panel will discuss the *strengths and weaknesses*, starting with the assessment of quality, then the assessment of the presentation. *Briefly*, the adequacy of publications, letters of support, and awards *will be discussed*. Panellists will then determine a composite score and submit it as described, by email in the chat room, directly to Tannis Novotny.

Each panelist will determine a composite score, to be submitted in confidence to our recording Administrative Assistant. The AA will compile the individual scores across the panelists which will be averaged and revealed anonymously at the end of the competition.

Each panelist is encouraged to evaluate in a consistent manner across all candidates.

Candidates will be rank-ordered, based upon the average composite score of each.

After the final presentation, we will look at the overall results and by consensus confirm the rank order of the candidates.