

Innovations in IBD Research Application Guidelines

1. Our Promise

Crohn's and Colitis Canada's Promise Statement is to cure Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis and improve the lives of children and adults affected by these chronic diseases. Crohn's and Colitis Canada raises funds to invest in inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) research, foster advances in prevention, treatments, cures and health policy; educate patients, families, industry and government about IBD; increase public awareness of IBD and Crohn's and Colitis Canada; and advocate to governments and stakeholders on behalf of those affected by IBD.

2. General Information

Crohn's and Colitis Canada's Innovations in IBD (INN) program is committed to supporting novel or innovative research on inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Funds are dedicated for the support of research conducted by qualified investigators with academic appointment at Canadian universities with research being conducted at not-for-profit research or academic facilities located in Canada.

These guidelines are designed to help applicants apply for an INN grant. **Please read the guidelines carefully.** Applications that do not conform to these guidelines and eligibility criteria will not be reviewed.

3. Innovations in IBD Research Grants

Through the Innovations in IBD (INN) Research Program, Crohn's and Colitis Canada is committed to funding novel or innovative approaches to IBD research. INN grants support research projects with a defined objective, conducted by an investigator working alone or in collaboration with others. INN grants support research projects directly related to IBD that are aligned with Crohn's and Colitis Canada's Promise and strategic directions.

The program is intended to stimulate and support IBD-related research which may not be encompassed within the boundaries of other research funders. This includes pilot projects and high risk but innovative ideas that could potentially contribute significantly to the advancement of finding the cures for Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis and/or improving the quality of life of people with these diseases. This competition will fund innovative projects deemed scientifically excellent, will refine hypotheses and/or produce preliminary data that will help seed larger projects, and have the potential to improve diagnosis, therapy, or prevention of IBD.

There are a number of diseases and conditions that are associated with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis (e.g. liver, intestinal cancer, arthritis, ophthalmologic) that can impact the lives of patients with IBD. Crohn's and Colitis Canada will consider applications that focus on IBD-associated diseases and conditions. However, applicants submitting an application focused on IBD-associated diseases and conditions must provide a strong rationale for how their project aligns with the Crohn's and Colitis Canada Promise.

Funding is limited to a maximum of \$50,000 for one year.

- Pay technician and/or student salaries;
- Purchase materials, supplies, and items of equipment (maximum \$5,000 annually);
- Buy and maintain animals, and;
- Support travel costs (maximum \$2,500 annually).

All proposals must conform to sound principles of research and all studies involving human subjects and/or animals must be reviewed and approved by an appropriate Institutional Review Board of a recognized institution before funding flows.

4. Grant Eligibility

Postdoctoral fellows or investigators who hold an academic appointment at a Canadian University in a Faculty of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Veterinary Medicine or other Graduate Faculty are eligible to apply to Crohn's and Colitis Canada as principal investigator for grant support of their research. The research proposed must have a clear connection to [Crohn's and Colitis Canada's Promise Statement](#). Principal Investigators must reside in Canada to apply for funding. Co-Principal Investigators based outside of Canada are acceptable.

A Co-Principal Investigator is an individual who is expected to actively participate in the proposed activities but not to direct them.

A Collaborator is an individual whose role in the proposed activities is to provide a specific service (e.g. access to equipment, provision of specific reagents, training in a specialized technique, statistical analysis, access to a patient population, etc.).

If an applicant does not hold an academic appointment at the time of submitting an application, a cover letter from the Dean of the Faculty must be uploaded to the application, indicating the planned position and the date it will take effect. Investigators in Faculties other than the health sciences may also apply if the proposed research is deemed relevant to Crohn's and Colitis Canada's Promise and strategic directions.

If the research is to be done in a hospital or other healthcare facility, the signature of that institution's officer certifies that appropriate space and resources are available and will be provided to the applicant.

Support for qualified undergraduate and graduate students within the operating budget is permissible.

In order to be eligible to receive funding for an INN grant from Crohn's and Colitis Canada, recipients must be members of the [Crohn's and Colitis Canada IBD Research Institute](#).

5. Level of Funding

Grants to a maximum of \$50,000 CDN for up to one year may be awarded. **Specific Crohn's and Colitis Canada Board policy forbids the use of any funds to cover institutional overhead.**

6. Period of Support

Grants may be awarded for one year, contingent upon available funds. All funding periods begin in April, with the grant payment being made in one installment.

7. Application Deadlines and Procedure

By the deadline specified, applicants must submit a grant application via [Proposal Central](#).

2023 Deadline:

- Full applications must be received by November 30, 2022, 5:00 PM (ET).

It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure their applications are complete. Incomplete applications will be disqualified from the competition. Applicants must complete the online application forms available via Proposal Central. Applications submitted via email or other modes will not be accepted.

8. Assessment of Applications

Each full application is assessed for its scientific merit, relevancy and translatability potential by a Grant Review Panel.

The grant reviewers discuss each application and by consensus (or by majority vote if necessary) assigns it a score between 0 and 5. These scores represent the following categories:

- 4.5 to 5.0 – Outstanding

- 4.0 to 4.4 – Excellent
- 3.5 to 3.9 – Very good
- Under 3.5 – Triage, application not fundable

This assignment is based on the review panel's assessments of the application in light of the discussion, consideration of the application itself, and the reports of the reviewers. Each member of the panel who has participated in the discussion (excluding members from the same institution or otherwise in conflict) then assigns to the application a score within a range of +0.5 of the consensus score. A mean of these submitted scores then determines the final score and rank. Only those proposals receiving a score in the range of very good or better (3.5 or above) are discussed in detail by the panel. Those that fall below a score of 3.5 are triaged and not considered fundable. In addition, relevancy to Crohn's and Colitis Canada's Promise and prospect for translatability are considered in the overall rating. Those deemed not relevant or translatable would be unacceptable and therefore rejected.

The Grant Review Panel is also required to recommend a budget or appropriate level of funding for each application. This is decided by consensus. In arriving at a recommended budget, the Crohn's and Colitis Canada National Board of Directors expects that the Grants Review Panel will bring its collective judgment and knowledge of research requirements and costs. It should consider closely the budget submitted by the applicant and recommend funding that will permit the applicant(s) to make reasonable progress over the period of the grant. This recommendation of the budget is separate and distinct from the assessment of scientific merit and is made subsequent to that assessment.

In accordance with Board direction, Crohn's and Colitis Canada considers the ratings and the recommended budgets by the Grants Review Panel along with its program priorities and budgetary constraints and announces the final decision. There will be no appeals of these decisions.

9. Notification

Applicants will be sent official notification of Crohn's and Colitis Canada's decision. The Finance office of the University or Institution concerned is also notified of grants awarded.

10. Evaluation Reports

Copies of all evaluations made by reviewers will be forwarded to applicants without identification of authors. A summary of the panel discussion will also be included for those applications discussed, scored, and ranked by the Grant Review Panel.

11. Applicant

The applicant(s) is/are recognized by Crohn's and Colitis Canada as the author(s) of the intellectual content of the application submitted. In the case of multi-authored applications, Crohn's and Colitis Canada will correspond with the first (principal) applicant listed. Principal applicants must be affiliated with a not-for-profit Canadian research institution.

Applications with Co-Principal Investigator(s) or Collaborator(s) need to submit through the online application the information requested for each Co-Principal Investigator and Collaborator.

12. Institution

The Institution is considered by Crohn's and Colitis Canada to be responsible for the provision of space, facilities, furniture and general services required for the conduct of the research project described.

13. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval and standard assurance for animal, human experimentation, and/or biological and chemical hazards must be obtained within six months of notification of funding. Documentation should be completed and returned as soon as possible following granting of funds and no later than six months following first payment. Subsequent funding from Crohn's and Colitis Canada may be delayed or denied if required documentation is not received.

14. Language

Crohn's and Colitis Canada is prepared to serve the scientific community and the public in either of Canada's official languages where feasible. Please indicate your preferred language of correspondence on the online form.

Crohn's and Colitis Canada does not accept French applications. All applications must be submitted in English. This change is in effect as of 2018 due to the significant costs incurred by Crohn's and Colitis Canada to translate applications from French into English and our inability to guarantee the fidelity of translations. Crohn's and Colitis Canada prioritizes scientific expertise when selecting reviewers. Because of the challenges in identifying reviewers with the appropriate scientific expertise *and* French language skills, Crohn's and Colitis Canada is unable to guarantee French speaking reviewers.

15. Payment and Administration of Grant Funds

The Institution where the applicant conducts the project and/or holds an academic appointment may be designated to receive and administer the grant funds at the discretion of the PI. If the Institution designated is not the one in which the applicant conducts the project, please explain in a cover letter.

Funds must be used during the period of the grant: Should the annual financial report indicate that less than 70% (“minimum spend”) of the disbursed funds have been spent, Crohn’s and Colitis Canada will withhold the next scheduled disbursement until the institute sends an updated financial statement demonstrating that the minimum spend requirement has been met. Any remaining funds at the end of the grant period must be returned to Crohn’s and Colitis Canada.

16. No-Cost Extension (NCE)

If the funds will not be spent during the specified time period of a grant, a no-cost extension may be requested by submitting a letter on official letterhead from the Principal Investigator outlining the commitment to complete the Crohn’s and Colitis Canada approved grant and the reason for the no-cost extension to the Vice President, Research and Patient Programs of Crohn’s and Colitis Canada (VP). The NCE must be submitted at least three (3) months before the end of the funding period of the grant.

If the NCE letter is not submitted to the VP at least three (3) months prior to the end of term of the grant, then unspent funds for the Crohn’s and Colitis Canada approved grant must be returned to Crohn’s and Colitis Canada.

Review of NCE Request

All NCE requests will be reviewed by the VP, the Chair of Crohn’s and Colitis Canada’s Scientific & Medical Advisory Council (SMAC), and the Chair of Crohn’s and Colitis Canada’s Grant Review Panel. An NCE request is approved by a majority decision determined by an anonymous vote of the reviewers.

A Principal Investigator denied their no-cost extension may appeal the decision and submit additional written information for the appeal. The appeal will be reviewed by the VP, the Chair of SMAC and the Chair of the Grant Review Panel. The outcome of the majority vote (conducted anonymously) will be presented to Crohn’s and Colitis Canada’s Research Committee of the Board for decision. The Research Committee of the Board’s decision will be final.

Period of NCE

A no-cost extension may be granted for up to a period of one year. Under exceptional circumstances, an NCE may be extended for another year for a maximum of two (years) for each research project. To request a subsequent one year no-cost extension, the Principal Investigator is required to submit a new letter on official letterhead outlining the commitment to complete the Crohn’s and Colitis Canada approved grant and the reason for another one year no-cost extension to the VP. Decision to approve or deny the request will follow the Review of NCE Request process outlined above.

17. Changes to the Research Protocol

For research proposals funded by Crohn's and Colitis Canada, any substantial change to the research protocol after funding has been granted must be approved by the Research Committee of Crohn's and Colitis Canada. A substantial change may be defined as, but is not limited to: a change to the scientific methodology, research objectives, principal investigator or funded centre, and/or budget re-allocation for different major categories.

The Principal Investigator must submit a detailed description of the protocol change with budget allocation changes to the Vice President, Research and Patient Programs.

The proposed changes to the research protocol will be reviewed by the Vice President, Research and Patient Programs, the Chair and Vice-Chair (Research) of the Scientific and Medical Advisory Council, and the Chair of the Grants-in-Aid Committee.

A recommendation will be made to the Research Committee, which will approve/deny the request. If the request is denied, Crohn's and Colitis Canada reserves the right to withdraw funding for the project.

18. Grant Reporting

Progress and financial reports must be submitted via Proposal Central at the end of the funding year by April 30th. Both the research and financial reports must use the forms provided on the grant portal. The report must be certified by the grantee and a finance officer designated by the receiving institution.

Future funding from Crohn's and Colitis Canada will be withheld until the research and financial progress reports have been received. Any funds remaining at the end of the grant period must be returned to Crohn's and Colitis Canada within 90 days of the grant end date.

End-of-Grant Report

An end-of-grant research report is due one (1) year after the end date of the grant. Grantees who do not submit end-of-grant progress reports will be ineligible to apply to future Crohn's and Colitis Canada grant competitions until progress reports have been received.

19. Signatures

The signatures on the application commit both the applicant(s) and the Institution to specific responsibilities. Signatures of Principal Investigators and Co-Principal Investigators are required. The applicant(s) and the Institution are jointly responsible for adherence to the general conditions

governing the award of a research grant as outlined in the Canadian Institutes of Health Research Grants and Awards Guide, including the:

- Guidelines of the Canadian Council on Animal Care with respect to animal experimentation;
- Review for ethical propriety of all proposals relating to human experimentation;
- CIHR guidelines that may apply for handling recombinant DNA molecules and animal viruses and cells, and;
- Administration according to accepted accounting practices of the funds provided.

20. Grant Application Sections

The INN application form includes the following sections:

I. Project Summary Abstract

This should be written in non-scientific language in a style suitable for the lay members of Crohn's and Colitis Canada or a press release. It must not exceed 2,500 characters (approx. 400 words). Please review the "Guide for writing lay summaries" (via Proposal Central).

II. Detailed Research Report

Applicants should provide a clear, concise description of their research proposal. A **maximum of 6 pages may be submitted**. Page limits do not include bibliographic references, tables, charts, figures and photographs. These must be included after the bibliography. Applicants are permitted to submit figures and/or tables describing preliminary data and relevant legends. Legends should be succinct.

Detailed descriptions of methods and discussion of results should be included in the body of the proposal, they should not be in the legends nor included as an appendix. Questionnaires and consent forms may be uploaded as appendices, where applicable. A knowledge translation plan must be included.

No other additions or appendices are permitted. Excess data will be returned to the applicant, who will have 48 hours for re-submission.

Detailed Research Report Formatting:

- Text must be single-spaced, 11 point Arial font size (including labels and descriptions accompanying figures, tables, charts, photographs, etc.), with $\frac{3}{4}$ inch margins on all sides.
- Header: "Innovations in IBD Proposal" in the left corner with applicant's name in right corner.
- Footer: Number pages consecutively with page numbers centered.
- A knowledge translation plan.

III. Budget

Applicants must provide estimates of expenditures for a **full year** regardless of when the work proposed will begin.

Itemize by category and justify funds requested for each year of support. The amount requested must be quoted in Canadian dollars. Applicants must complete the budget pages within the application, budget pages in the CIHR version may not be substituted.

IV. Personal Information

Both Principal Investigators and Co-Principal Investigators are asked to provide a biosketch that includes education, research training, academic positions, distinctions and awards, and number of publications. Principal Investigators must submit this information through the online form. The current Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) CV format (or Common CV) will not be accepted. Both Principal Investigators and Co-Principal Investigators are asked to upload to the online application a publications list from the last 5 years.

When completing the Professional Profile sections of the application, **only provide the personal information requested by Crohn's and Colitis Canada**. The Professional Profile in Proposal Central defaults to asking private questions including date of birth, passport number, and social security number. **DO NOT PROVIDE THIS INFORMATION.**

V. Other Funds

All applicants must list all research projects proposed to other agencies concurrently with this application, and those intended for submission in the next twelve months. List all projects for which funding is currently or has been received for all applicants, over the past 3 years. State the nature and percentage of any overlap with this application. The title, summary, budget, agency, precise dates, and tenure of these award(s) must be provided.

The applicant **MUST UPLOAD** the summary and budget pages for every other grant currently held by the Principal Investigator, or applied for concurrently with this application, whether perceived to be relevant or not. If an application on the same subject is pending from another agency, the applicant should immediately notify Crohn's and Colitis Canada of the results as soon as they are known. Summary and budget pages for other grants held by Co-Principal Investigators are not required unless they overlap with the current application.

21. Contact Information

For technical support with the online application, contact Proposal Central:

pcsupport@altum.com

1-800-875-2562 (Toll-free)

Weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Eastern)

For program information or application content requirements, contact Crohn's and Colitis Canada:

Crohn's and Colitis Canada

439 University Ave, Suite 2110,

Toronto, ON M5G 1Y8

Attn: Coordinator, Research Grants

Tel. 416-920-5035 Ext. 251

Em. research@crohnsandcolitis.ca