NSERC Discovery Grants
Office of Research Services
Information Session

June 8, 2022

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Today's Information Session

- Welcome
- Revised Guidelines on Assessment of Contributions
- ORS Program Overview and Updates
- Introduction and Insights from Panel Members
- Q&A Session
- Closing Remarks

The slides with linked resources will be circulated.

Revised Guidelines on Contributions

Dr. Beverley Hale, Associate VP Research (Agri-Food Partnership) and UofG's NSERC Leader

New for the 2023 Competition:

- NSERC has released revised Guidelines on assessment of contributions to research, training and mentoring.

- Applicants will now be able to select a broader variety of contributions and suitable indicators to demonstrate and quantify the impact of their work.

- Applicants should review these guidelines and consult the program instructions before applying.

- For questions, please email dora@nserc-crsng.gc.ca.

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Program Overview and Updates

For full details on the NSERC Discovery Grants program, please visit the program web-page.

NSERC Live Q&A Sessions

NOI Sessions
Thursday, June 23, 2022, 1pm ET.
Tuesday, July 5, 2022, 1pm ET.

Full Application Sessions
Tuesday August 23, 2022, 1pm ET.
Thursday September 22, 2022, 1pm ET.

For complete details, please visit the NSERC Webinars web-page.

Program Eligibility

Subject matter eligibility and funding from other sources:
- Must be eligible under NSERC's mandate.
- Must be distinct from research supported by CIHR or SSHRC.
- Other sources of funding should not be from CIHR or SSHRC.

Eligibility criteria for faculty:
- Must hold an academic appointment for the duration of the award.
- The position cannot be under the direction of another individual and must authorize the supervision of students.
- College Research Managers can be consulted for determining eligibility to apply

Proposed expenditures:
- For full details on eligible expenses, please review the Tri-agency guide on Financial Administration.

For program eligibility criteria, please visit Discovery Grants program web-page.

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Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Start Here:
- ✓ NSERC Guide for Applicants in Considering EDI
- ✓ ORS EDI Quick Resource Guide (Updated 2022)
- ✓ NFRF Best Practices in EDI

Past Contributions to HQP Training
- If describing a record of training a diverse group of trainees, demographic information should be linked to practices which achieved EDI and only in aggregate format for privacy and confidentiality.

HQP Plan
- *Training Philosophy* must include specific measures committed to implementing to promote EDI in training environment

Ensure you consult the Discovery Grant's Merit Indicators for EDI considerations throughout the proposal

COVID-19 Considerations

- NSERC has published guidelines on the consideration of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on research and training activities.

- All active Discovery Grant holders in their final year can elect to receive a one-time funded extension due to COVID-19. NSERC will contact eligible grantees in June with information on how to accept this extension.

- In addition to a one-year extension with funds, researchers may apply for an in-time (no-cost) extension through the ORS in their auto-extension year.

- For more information on funded extensions due to COVID-19, please visit the frequently asked questions web-page.

UNIWeb & Canadian Common CV

- U of G has launched UNIWeb as a replacement for the Sedona eCV platform used for tenure, promotion, and performance reviews.

- Uniweb is an academic CV tool that is compatible with the Canadian Common CV (CCV) and also an optional platform for research networking across the University.

- We encourage applicants to plan well ahead of competition deadlines, to migrate their Sedona CV to UNIWeb to prepare their CCV.

- Support materials and opportunities can be found here.

- Navigate to the UNIWeb Communication Hub

NOI and Full Application Deadlines

Notification of Intent (NOI):
- External deadline – August 2, 2022.
- For more details, please visit NSERC DG NOI Research Alert.
  - Faculty member submits NOI directly to NSERC via Research Portal.

Full Application:
- Internal deadline – October 25, 2022
- External deadline – November 1, 2022
- Please consult with your College Research Manager and/or Associate Dean of Research regarding any College-specific internal deadlines.
  - Faculty member submits a signed OR-5 to ORS and also clicks "submit" in the Research Portal so the 'Full Application' appears on the Office of Research server.
  - ORS reviews the application and formally submits to NSERC.

Applicant Resources

Discovery Grants Information Centre

NSERC Live Q&A Sessions

Instructions for Completing an Application

EDI Guide for Applicants

Peer Review Manual

FAQ on the Evaluation of the HQP Criterion

Discovery Grants Merit Indicators

Policy and Guidelines on Contributions to Research and Training

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ORS Contacts

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Amy Bossaer
Senior Grants & Contracts Specialist, abossaer@uoguelph.ca

Please also consult your College Research Manager

Insights from NSERC DG
Peer Review Panel Members

Dorothee Bienzle
- Professor, Pathobiology, OVC
- **1501** – Genes, Cells and Molecules

John Cant
- Professor, Animal Biosciences, OAC
- **1502** – Biological Systems and Functions

Richard Manderville
- Professor, Chemistry, CEPS
- **1504** – Chemistry

Eric Poisson
- Professor, Physics, CEPS
- **1505** – Physics

Kari Dunfield
- Professor and CRC Tier 2, School of Environmental Sciences, OAC
- **1506** – Geosciences

NSERC Discovery Grant "Strategies"

June 8, 2022

University of Guelph

Dorothee Bienzle

General Points

- There is a tremendous amount of information on the NSERC website, including the *Peer Review Manual*

- Guidelines are exact, and you need to follow them

- Do not underestimate the many subsections of each proposal – they all need detailed attention

What Evaluation Group?

- Look at the titles from the previous year's [results](#) to decide
- Communicate with the program officer(s) if you think your proposal is <u>interdisciplinary</u> – it is common for proposals to be reviewed by more than 1 evaluation group
- Program officers are highly educated persons who can be tremendously helpful

Principles of Review

- Reviewers have multiple 'calibration' sessions and mock reviews in the months prior to the actual competition week

- Reinforcement against <u>implicit or unconscious bias</u> – prior training modules

- Goal is to <u>calibrate</u> everybody to consistent application of the MERIT INDICATORS from the <u>grid</u>

DISCOVERY GRANTS MERIT INDICATORS

		EXCEPTIONAL	OUTSTANDING	VERY STRONG	STRONG	MODERATE	INSUFFICIENT
		The Merit Indicators should be used in conjunction with the Peer Review Manual, which outlines how reviewers arrive at a rating.					
Excellence of the Researcher		Acknowledged as a **leader** in terms of research excellence, accomplishments, and service.	Research excellence, accomplishments, and service are **far superior** to others.	Research excellence, accomplishments, and service are **superior** to others.	Research excellence, accomplishments, and service are **significant**.	Research excellence, accomplishments, and service are **reasonable**.	Research excellence, accomplishments, and service are **below an acceptable level**.
		Contributions presented in the application are of the **highest level of quality**.	Contributions presented in the application are of **high quality**.	Contributions presented in the application are **above average in quality**.	Contributions presented in the application are of **good** quality.	Contributions presented in the application are of **reasonable** quality.	Contributions presented in the application are **limited** in quality.
		Impact and importance of the work is **clearly evident** and **groundbreaking**.	Impact and importance of the work is **clearly evident** and **influential**.	Impact and importance of the work is **clearly evident**.	Impact and importance of the work is **evident**.	Impact and importance of the work is **somewhat evident**.	Impact and importance of the work is **not clearly evident**.
Merit of the Proposal		Proposed research program is clearly presented, is **extremely original** and **innovative** and is **likely to have impact** by **leading to groundbreaking advances** in the area and/or **leading to a technology or policy** that addresses socio-economic or environmental needs.	Proposed research program is clearly presented, is **highly original** and **innovative** and is **likely to have impact** by **contributing to groundbreaking advances** in the area, and/or **leading to a technology or policy** that addresses socio-economic or environmental needs.	Proposed research program is clearly presented, is **original** and **innovative** and **is likely to have impact** by **leading to advancements** and/or addressing socio-economic or environmental needs.	Proposed research program is clearly presented, is **original** and **innovative** and is **likely to have impact** and/or address socio-economic or environmental needs.	Proposed research program is clearly presented, has **original** and **innovative** aspects and **may have impact** and/or address socio-economic or environmental needs.	Proposed research program, as presented **lacks clarity**, and/or is of **limited originality** and innovation.
		Long-term vision and **short-term objectives** are **clearly defined**.	**Long-term goals** are **clearly defined** and **short-term objectives** are **well planned**.	**Long-term goals** are **defined** and **short-term objectives** are **planned**.	**Long-term goals** and **short-term objectives** are **clearly described**.	**Long-term** and **short-term objectives** are **described**.	**Objectives** are **not clearly described** and/or likely not attainable.
		The methodology is **clearly defined** and **appropriate**.	The methodology is **clearly described** and **appropriate**.		The methodology is **described** and **appropriate**.	The methodology is **partially described** and/or **appropriate**.	The methodology is **not clearly described** and/or **appropriate**.
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Principles of Review

- 5 people per EG; multiple observers (cross EG's) and disciplines
- Readers 1 – 5; first person presents 'your proposal' and needs to be your **advocate**, others add (or detract)
- All 5 vote according to the grid (after ~10 min)
- Median vote is used as score (= bin)
- [Bin translates to funding or not, and level of funding](#)

Quality bin distribution
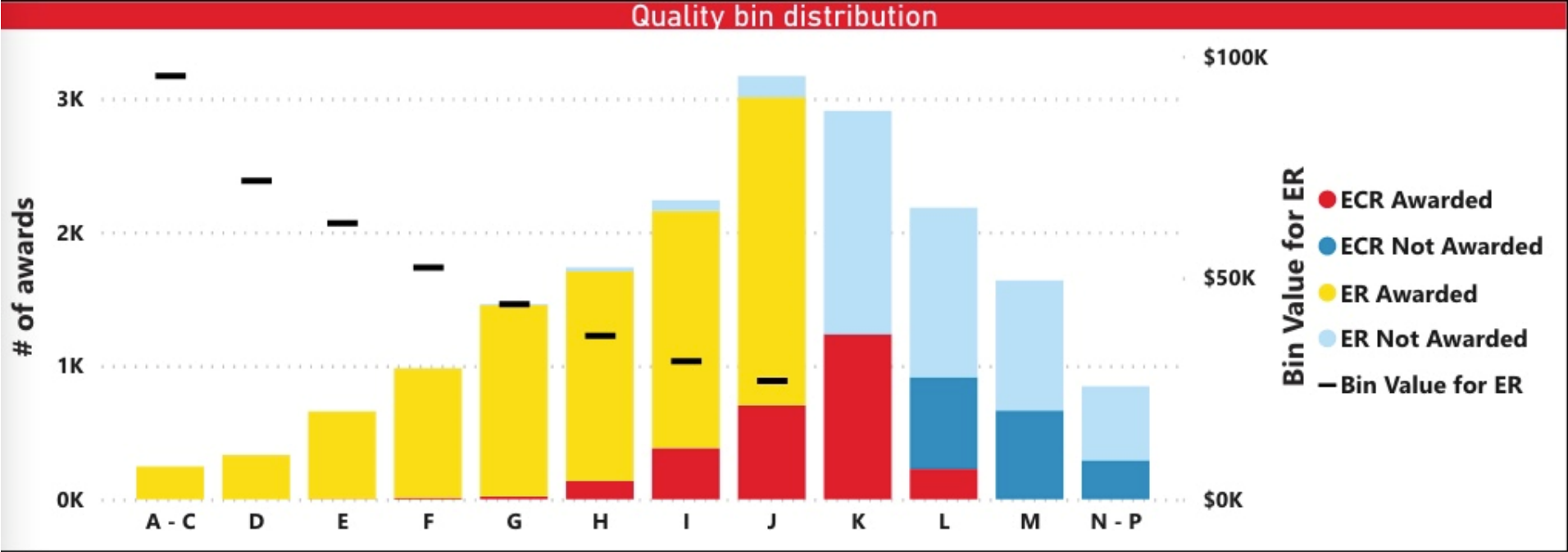
Assessments – equal weight!

Excellence of the researcher (over 6 years)

- **Most significant contributions** - quality and impact
- **Samples of research contributions -** single or bundled (could be in related areas)
- **Additional Information on Contributions - c**hoices of venues, order of authors
- **CCV contributions, recognitions, activities** Additional information
    Leaves of absence attachment (if applicable)

Merit of the proposal

- **Research proposal (5 pages) = key**
- **Proposed expenditures and budget justification**
- **Relationship to other research support**

Contributions to the Training of HQP

- Past contributions to training
- Future plans for training
- Research training
- Outcome, skill, <u>EDI</u>
- Awards, publications, etc.
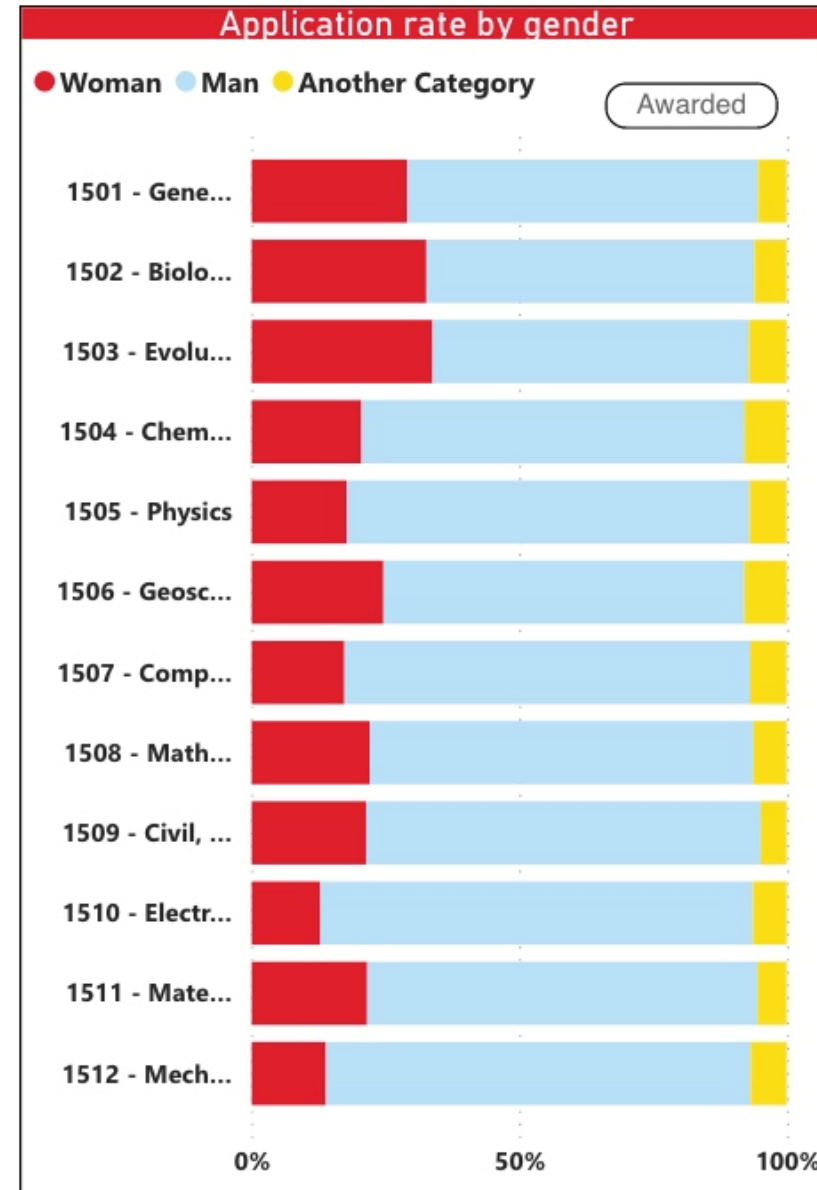- *Don't skimp here!*

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

- Incorporate EDI into <u>each</u> of the 3 assessment criteria
- National funding agencies are making a huge <u>effort to address</u> EDI
- Applicants also need to make a huge effort

Flag bearers:

[Elizabeth Willis](#)

[Imogen Coe](#)

Proposal itself

- Follow the guidelines!
- Provide everything you want to be considered
- No additional information will be reviewed i.e. no PubMed or Google Scholar searches can be considered by reviewers
- Use concise language, and put yourself into the shoes of a <u>peer reviewer</u> – a scientist in good standing but rarely really familiar with your research area

- Find a modicum between describing the background to your research in reasonably general terms, and then providing details for those familiar with the area
- <u>Program not project</u> – think 20 years!

- <u>External reviewers</u>: Often those you list are contacted. Guidance is provided – sometimes very valuable input, and sometimes input is not professional or too superficial, and not considered

<u>Different approaches:</u>
Background
Prior/preliminary work
Research objectives 1, 2 and 3, each including a short paragraph on expected results and future directions
Summary

Long-term goals
Literature review
Research progress
Research objectives 1, 2 and 3 (with subheadings)
Impact

Overall objectives (1-3, brief)
Literature review
Recent progress
Objectives 1-3 with subheadings for each of a) rationale and hypothesis; b) experimental approach; c) expected outcomes and future directions
Impact

Good luck!

- long-term goals of research program (10 to 20 yrs) + short-term objectives (1 to 4 yrs)
  - highlight
  - program, not project
- cutting edge, state of the art
- clear language, like *Scientific American*, not *Science*
- sufficient method details to satisfy biologist from outside your field
- i.d. role and skills gained of each proposed HQP (typically 1 to 2 summer students/yr, 1 to 2 grad students/yr)
  - proposal
  - budget justification
  - HQP training plan
- relevance to NSE
  - clinical methods and references will not be considered

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Kari Dunfield
Member and Co-Chair 1506,
Panel member for 1501 and 1503, 1507
for select grants

TIPS/TRICKS

- Use **text sections wisely**. Ie., explanation of contributions should be used

- 3000 characters- nature of collaborations, rational for authors incl. order of authors, student authors, your role in publications, impact of research activities, significance of reports, any other relevant information

- ECR: 5 year window – adjusted to account for eligible leaves and credited for twice the amount of time taken – TIME IS NOT ACCOUNTED FOR IN CCV – YOU MUST ADD AN ATTACHMENT

- Leaves attachment – new. Supplemental contributions to research and training – Includes COVID delay

- EDI statement – Be realistic and thoughtful, avoid boilerplate statements. Consider providing multiple training opportunities and methods. Just showing you don't carry a bias is not enough.

TIPS/TRICKS

- HQP Training- can be undergraduate theses, summer projects, PDF other research personnel. Explain your role clearly.

- Past HQP training- use to explain past training – Opportunities for training – collaborative/interdisciplinary training, any challenges encountered, how you ensure an inclusive training environment, mentorship approach, initiatives for training HQP

- Clearly link HQP in the CCV with asterisks to publications. If not listed as your HQP in your CCV do not list them as HQP on publications

Discovery Grant application

Review process

Merit Indicators

Criteria

DISCOVERY GRANTS MERIT INDICATORS

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Merit of the proposal

- Keep in mind that two audiences read your application: expert and non-expert

- Provide a progress report on related research

- Position the research within the field and state-of-the-art

- Clearly articulate short- and long-term objectives

- Provide a detailed methodology and realistic budget

- Consider comments/recommendations you may have received for previous applications

- Integrate HQP into the proposal

- Follow research portal presentation and attachment standards

Thank you!

We appreciate your feedback on this session through completion of the Evaluation Survey.

The slide deck will be circulated to participants after the session.

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