



2021

OPERATING GRANTS

Program Description and Guidelines

Effective November 16, 2020 – December 1, 2020 *

***This document will be updated prior to the call for full proposal**

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1. Program Description

Founded in 1945, the Cancer Research Society (CRS) is a Canadian not-for-profit organization whose sole mission is to fund research on all types of cancer to help prevent, detect, and treat this disease.

The Operating Grants competition is the principal means by which CRS fulfills its mission to support fundamental, early translational and environment-cancer research on all types of cancer.

The competition is held every year and is open to researchers across Canada. Both new and established researchers are encouraged to apply. All valid proposals undergo a diligent peer-review process and are scored based on scientific merit and originality.

Operating grants are usually awarded for a period of **two years** for a maximum amount of **\$60,000** per year.

2. Eligibility Requirements

CRS Operating Grants are intended to support Canadian researchers in their pursuit to advance scientific knowledge in the following three (3) areas:

- 1) Fundamental/basic cancer research
- 2) Early translational cancer research, including preclinical research cellular or animal models, biomarkers for diagnostics and prognosis and imaging
- 3) Research studying the environmental causes of cancer including viruses, pollutants, work environment, lifestyle and diet.

The following research areas are not eligible for Operating Grants:

- Clinical trials;
- Applied research for the development or improvement of tools such as instruments, medical devices, software, questionnaires, information tools, patient registries, biobanks, TMA collections, etc.;
- Psychosocial or social studies, survivorship, etc.;
- Health care economics, or any study aiming at measuring the use and costs of the health care system;
- Any other type of research not included in the main three funded areas.

Please contact us at grants@src-crs.ca should you have doubts about the eligibility of your project.

There must be only one main applicant, **Principal Investigator (PI)**, and one host institution who will be responsible for administering the grant, if awarded. All other applicants are considered co-applicants.

Applicants and co-applicants must hold an academic appointment at a Canadian university or accredited institution to be eligible to apply for a CRS Operating Grant. Applicants must have their own laboratory and the possibility of hiring students and postdoctoral fellows.

Postdoctoral fellows, research associates, staff and research scientists without an academic appointment are **not** eligible to apply.

Definitions and Rules

- **Principal Investigator (Main Applicant).** *Individual responsible for leading all aspects of the project. All applicants must hold an academic appointment at a Canadian university or accredited institution. They must have their own laboratory and the possibility of hiring students and postdoctoral fellows. There must be only one main applicant for the purposes of this award.*
- **Co-applicant.** *Individual who actively participates on the project but does not hold a leadership role. Co-applicant must hold an academic appointment at a Canadian university or accredited institution. They must have their own laboratory and the possibility of hiring students and postdoctoral fellows. All co-applicants must reside in Canada.*
- **Collaborators.** *Individual(s) who contribute to the project in a specialized manner and may be from outside of Canada; however, CRS funds must not be transferred outside of the country. A collaborator will not be listed as a co-applicant, however, must provide a letter of support detailing the involvement in the project.*
- **A Young Investigator** *is an independent investigator, who has started their career in a university or research institution within the last 5 years (i.e. after August 31, 2016).*
- *All Principal Investigators and co-applicants must sign the “Disclaimer and Indemnity” page, at the time of Full Proposal submission.*

3. Application and Review process

New this year: The main applicant/PI must register at the CRS Research Portal, ProposalCentral, click [HERE](#)

The application process is comprised of two stages: 1) **Letter of Intent** (LOI) submission, and if invited, 2) **Full Proposal** submission. All applicants must submit a LOI that will include a high-level description of their research project goals. Refer to section 5 for LOI submission instructions. LOIs are reviewed for conformity and quality by CRS at the time of submission. Once the LOI has been reviewed, the applicant will be notified via e-mail as to whether or not they have been invited to submit a Full Proposal.

Both LOI and Full Proposal must be submitted electronically at the CRS Research Portal, ProposalCentral [click HERE](#).

LOIs must be received by **December 9, 2020, 11:59 pm (ET)**.

Full Proposals must be received by **February 11, 2021, 11:59 PM (ET)**.

Only complete proposals received by the submission deadline will be considered. Proposals that do not respect the guidelines will be rejected.

Full proposals are evaluated by an expert panel made up of renowned Canadian and international scientists, with expertise in specific areas of cancer research. Each proposal is initially reviewed and scored by two expert and impartial reviewers; and subsequently, the proposal is presented, discussed and scored by the entire panel. The average score is then calculated. To be considered for funding, a **project must have received a minimum score of 7.5 out of 10**.

Panel reviewers use the following criteria for the evaluate a proposal:

- The file of the applicant must demonstrate their capacity or potential to be a competitive researcher at the provincial, national, and international level;
- Quality of the proposed project and originality of the research plan;
- Ability of the applicant to conduct the research in their respective milieu;
- Significance of the project to cancer research;
- Strengths and weaknesses of the proposal;
- Budget appropriate to the proposed project.

The Operating Grants are awarded to the proposals with the highest scores. All applicants, regardless of their score, will be notified of the outcome of their application in August 2021.

If an applicant refuses the award, CRS may offer the grant to the next meritorious proposal on the list.

The Cancer Research Society's decisions are final.

4. Key Dates

Call for proposals	November 16, 2020
Letter of Intent submission deadline	December 9, 2020, 11:59PM (ET)
Invitation to submit Full Proposal	December 16, 2020
Full Proposal submission deadline	February 11, 2021, 11:59PM (ET)
Update publication list deadline	April 15, 2021
Review process completed, awards announced	August 2021
Grant start date	September 1, 2021

The submission deadlines will be strictly enforced. Times are Eastern Time (ET).

Applicants are encouraged to submit their LOI and Full Proposal well in advance of the deadline. The CRS Research Portal, ProposalCentral, automatically shutdowns submission after the deadline has passed.

5. Letter of Intent Instructions

An LOI submission is compulsory for the 2021 CRS Operating Grants Competition and must be completed via the CRS Research Portal, ProposalCentral, by **December 9, 2020, 11:59 pm (ET)**. Click [HERE](#) to access PorposalCentral

Applicants may submit more than one LOI, but there will be a maximum of 1 new project proposal per main applicant.

Applicants should be mindful that the information provided in the LOI will automatically populate those sections in the Full Proposal. If the LOI is approved, the applicant will be notified by an automated email from ProposalCentral stating that they may proceed to the Full Proposal phase.

The LOI includes the following sections:

- 1) Program Guidelines:** Download Program Guidelines here
- 2) Principal Investigator (Main Applicant):** General information about the PI and co-applicants
- 3) Title Page:** General information about the proposal like title, type (new, renewal or resubmission) and additional targeted funding opportunities.

Renewal: Applicants who currently hold a CRS Operating Grant that will end August 31, 2021 may apply for a renewal.

Resubmission: A proposal previously submitted to CRS but not funded. Applicants will be required to upload the previous Evaluation Reports.

Main applicant must indicate if they qualify as an Established Investigator or a Young Investigator. An **Established Investigator** is an independent investigator with who has held an academic position in a university or research institution for a minimum of 5 years.

A **Young Investigator** is an independent investigator, having who has started their career in a university or research institution within the last 5 years (i.e. after August 31, 2016)

CRS may offer additional targeted funding opportunities to Young Investigators and/or for specific types of cancer. Refer to [Appendix A](#) for instructions and details on *Targeted Grant Opportunities*.

- 4) Abstract and Research Focus:** Abstract of intended research project, cancer type, key words and potential impact of project.
Abstract: Describe the research aims, anticipated outcomes and their potential impact for patients. Character limit of 5000.
- 5) Panel:** Applicants must indicate, based on the research area and topic, their first and second choice among the 5 expert review panels. The second choice **must differ** from the first one. CRS will do its best to respect the applicant's first choice, however, reserves the right to assign the proposal to the most suitable panel. Refer to [Appendix B](#) for areas of expertise covered by each panel.
- 6) Validate:** Clicking on the 'Validate' button will allow applicants to check for any missing REQUIRED information or files.
- 7) Print Page:** Applicants have the possibility to review the LOI prior to submitting.
- 8) Submit:** Applicants will be unable to submit if they have not provided all the required information. Any missing information will be listed on the screen. If the submission is successful, applicants will receive a confirmation message on the screen and a confirmation email from pcsupport@altum.com will be sent to the applicant.
Please add pcsupport@altum.com to your safe senders list to ensure receipt of your submission.
- 9) Enable Other Users to Access this Proposal:** *Optional.*

6. Full Proposal Instructions *

Applicants of selected LOIs will be invited to submit a full application.

Full Proposals must be received by **February 11, 2021, 11:59 PM (ET).**

The degree of conciseness and clarity can significantly influence the evaluation of the application.

All information required for the evaluation of the proposal must be included and submitted electronically as indicated in the specific instructions within each section.

The settings of the different document fields are pre-set. The number of pages and/or documents must be limited to the detailed instructions within each section.

Please note that non-compliance to the guidelines could lead to an administrative rejection of a submitted application prior to its scientific evaluation.

In addition to information provided in the LOI, the Full Proposal includes the following:

- CVs of each applicant and co-applicants (uploaded);
- Layman summary of the project (maximum of 10 lines);
- Description of the proposed research (maximum 4 pages)
 - References and figures are NOT to be included in the 4-page description of your project.
- References (no page limit)
- A maximum of 1 page of figure (8.5" x 11");
 - A maximum of one (1) page (8.5" x 11") of preliminary data presented as figures and/or tables may be included in this section. The font type and size may vary, but figures and their accompanying legends must be readable when printed on a 8.5" x 11" page at normal (100%) scale.
 - **Using another format may lead to application rejection.**
- Detailed budget;
- Financial support from all other sources, held or applied, for applicants and co-applicants (with appended scientific abstracts);
- Relationship with the financial support from all other sources (held or applied);
- Previously-held financial support from the past five years;
- Copies of relevant publications supporting the project and/or communications with editors of scientific journal to which you submitted a manuscript.

** This section will be updated prior to the call for full proposal*

7. Contact information

For questions regarding the **2021 Operating Grants Competition**, contact the Cancer Research Society at grants@src-crs.ca.

For questions regarding **ProposalCentral**, contact Customer Support

Monday through Friday 8:30am - 5:00pm Eastern Time

By e-mail: pcsupport@altum.com

By phone (toll-free): 800 875 2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada)

8. Appendix A: Targeted Funding Opportunities

*** This section will be updated prior to the call for full proposal.**

Thanks to alliances with several organizations and to the generosity of major donors whose families have been affected by cancer, CRS may offer additional “targeted” funding opportunities specifically for Young Investigators and/or for prioritized research areas, as part of its Operating Grants competition.

This year however, many organizations are facing the financial challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, CRS is not in a position at this stage of the competition to confirm the “targeted” grant opportunities that will be offered in the 2021 Operating Grants competition. CRS and its partners remain committed to funding research and supporting the cancer research community. This section will be updated prior to the call for a full proposal.

9. Appendix B: Panels

All proposals will be evaluated by a peer-review committee (panel) made up of 14 to 17 Canadian and/or international scientists with expertise in the appropriate domains of cancer research.

Applicants must indicate, based on the research area and topic, their first and second choice among the 5 expert review panels. The second choice must differ from the first one. CRS will do its best to respect the applicant's first choice, however, reserves the right to assign the proposal to the most suitable panel.

Panel A: Cell Signaling

- Signal transduction
- Roles and mechanisms of growth factors, cytokines, chemokines
- Mechanisms of apoptosis
- Cell migration, adhesion and chemotaxis
- Cell cycle
- Regulation of protein activity via interactions or modifications
- Animal models

Panel B: Pharmacogenetics/Cancer Immunology

- Mechanisms of action of chemotherapeutic drugs
- Pharmacological drug development
- Mechanisms of drug resistance
- Immunotherapy and animal models
- Immunological studies and cancer prognosis
- Tumour immunology
- Genes, viruses or viral genes, vaccines as anti-cancer drugs
- Radiations and radiosensitizers as therapeutic tools

Panel C: Tumour suppressor genes, oncogenes and DNA repair

- Transcriptional and translational regulation
- Tumour suppressor genes and oncogenes

Mechanisms of action of oncolytic viruses, viral oncogenesis
DNA damage and repair, DNA replication
Epigenetic mechanisms
DNA integrity and genomic instability
Cell cycle

Panel D: Tumour progression and metastasis

Cell culture and animal models
Angiogenesis
Late events implicated in cancer progression
Metastasis progression model
Cell adhesion and invasiveness

Panel E: Early translational research and epidemiology

Tumour imaging
Biomarkers discovery and validation
Diagnostics and prognostic assays
Pre-clinical studies
Environmental epidemiology (physical, biological, chemical)
Clinical epidemiology