

SSHRC Insight Grant Workshop

An overview of the SSHRC Insight Grant program
and some practical tools for improving your proposal.

Today's Objectives

- ❖ to gain a better understanding of SSHRC's Insight Grant program
- ❖ to be able to better prepare the different components of the SSHRC Insight Grant application
- ❖ to build strategies for developing a successful Insight Grant proposal

Before you start....

❖ research the opportunity:

- ❖ ensure eligibility
- ❖ confirm SSHRC is the right sponsor and program for your research
- ❖ understand all of the requirements

Is this the right grant for you?

Insight Grants

- ❖ for projects from 3 – 5 years
- ❖ any stage of research
- ❖ \$7,000 to \$400,000
- ❖ all researchers evaluated equally

❖ 2016 national success rate = 31.1%

Insight Development Grants

- ❖ for projects from 1 – 2 years
- ❖ initial stage of research
- ❖ \$7,000 - \$75,000
- ❖ emerging scholars evaluated differently than established researchers
 - ❖ last year 50% of funds were for emerging scholars

❖ 2016 national success rate = 45.4%

IG / IDG Grant Holding Restriction

- ❖ A researcher:
 - ❖ cannot apply as the PI for an Insight Grant (IG) and an Insight Development Grant (IDG) in the same calendar year.
 - ❖ A researcher who applied for an IDG in February 2016 may not apply for an IG in October 2016.
 - ❖ A researcher who applies for an IG in October 2016 may apply for an IDG in February 2017 provided the objectives are different.
 - ❖ can hold an IDG and an IG grant at the same time provided that the objectives are different.

Insight Grant 2016 Timeline

❖ July 15

- ❖ DEADLINE for Notice of Intent to apply for Internal Review.

❖ August 15

- ❖ DEADLINE for submission of application for Internal Review.

❖ October 8

- ❖ RSEO DEADLINE for submission of Insight Grant application through UnivRS.

❖ October 17

- ❖ SSHRC DEADLINE for submission of Insight Grant application.

Application Submission

- ❖ SSHRC uses the SSHRC online system and SSHRC CV for the IG.
 - ❖ https://webapps.nserc.ca/SSHRC/faces/logon.jsp?lang=en_CA
- ❖ Deadline is 8 p.m. (EDT), 6 p.m. (SK), 17 October 2016

Application Process

❖ You must:

1. Complete all mandatory fields (boldfaced labels).
2. Attach all mandatory electronic uploads (application).
3. Ensure that all co-applicants have submitted their “*Accept Invitation Form*” and have included all relevant attachments.
4. Verify and correct the data until the Verification Report indicates successful verification.
5. Click “*Submit*” (Submit to Research Administrator) for institutional approval.

Insight Grant Contents

- ❖ Identification
- ❖ Participants
- ❖ Research Activity
- ❖ Response to Previous Critiques — maximum one page
- ❖ Request for Multi/Interdisciplinary Evaluation — maximum one page
- ❖ **Summary of Proposal — maximum one page**
- ❖ **Detailed Description— maximum six pages**
- ❖ **Knowledge Mobilization Plan — maximum one page**
- ❖ List of References — maximum 10 pages
- ❖ **Research Team, Previous Output and Student Training — maximum four pages**
- ❖ **Funds Requested from SSHRC**
- ❖ **Budget Justification — maximum two pages**
- ❖ Funds From Other Sources
- ❖ Expected Outcomes
- ❖ Appendix A (Environmental Impact) and Appendix B (CEAA Pre-Screening Checklist)
- ❖ Suggested Assessors
- ❖ Exclusion of Potential Assessors — maximum one page
- ❖ Research Contributions — maximum four pages

**Today's
Focus**

Summary: Purpose

- ❖ What are you trying to do?
- ❖ Aim to show the work's
 - ❖ originality,
 - ❖ importance,
 - ❖ feasibility.
- ❖ Indicate clearly the problem or issue to be addressed and the potential contribution of the research both in terms of the advancement of knowledge and of the wider social benefit.

Summary: Tips

- ❖ Think of it as a stand-alone document.
- ❖ Do not cut and paste from your proposal.
- ❖ Write so that the general public will understand what you have planned....and why.
 - ❖ Imagine explaining your research to a friend / your new father-in-law / an overly-curious border services agent / a high school kid / your grandmother.

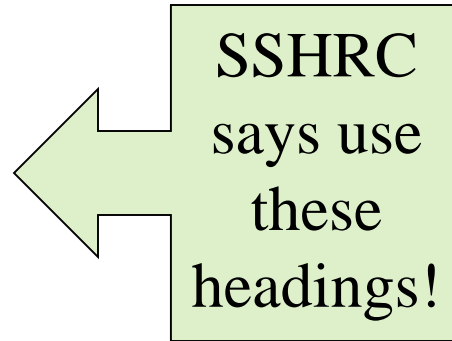
Detailed Description

- ❖ This is where you demonstrate the importance, originality, and anticipated contribution to the advancement of knowledge of your proposed research.
- ❖ You must:
 - ❖ lay out each stage of your research plan clearly; and
 - ❖ define all key terms or concepts.

Detailed Description

❖ broken into three main sections

- ❖ *Objectives*
- ❖ *Context*
- ❖ *Methodology*



SSHRC
says use
these
headings!

Objectives

- ❖ should be clear and precise research statements
 - ❖ Don't provide multi-level objectives.
 - ❖ Limit yourself to two or three distinct objectives.
 - ❖ Bulleting or numbering is encouraged.
- ❖ Make sure your objectives can be completed within the proposed timeframe of the grant.

Context

- ❖ includes literature review and theoretical approach
- ❖ the *why* and *what* of your proposed project

Literature Review

- ❖ It is an analysis, not a summary.
- ❖ Identify appropriate literature and key researchers on the topic.
 - ❖ particularly current / recent literature
- ❖ Include literature from your previous research.
 - ❖ It shows that you are qualified to do this research.
 - ❖ If this is building on your previous work, say so.
 - ❖but don't cite work not relevant to this topic

Theoretical Approach

- ❖ A conceptual framework or theory that provides the structure to guide the development of the study.
 - ❖ What are your assumptions?
 - ❖ How do you turn the problem into a research question?
 - ❖ What kind of design do you need to answer the question?
 - ❖ What types of results do you expect?

Theoretical Approach

- ❖ Be clear about how you plan to advance the current state-of-knowledge.
- ❖ Explain why this work is original.
- ❖ Explain the rationale behind your plans.
 - ❖ What are the specific research questions to be answered to attain your objectives?
 - ❖ Be sure to explain how each of these will work towards solving the issue at hand.

Theoretical Approach

- ❖ Relate to the big picture.
 - ❖ It helps reviewers know where your research fits and who to compare you to.
- ❖ Where feasible / appropriate, demonstrate the potential impact of the research within or beyond the academic world.

Methods

- ❖ Don't just identify your methods, state why they are appropriate for your study.
 - ❖ What information will they give you?
 - ❖ Why were specific sample groups, comparison communities, etc. chosen?
- ❖ Provide references for the methods chosen.
 - ❖ preferably recent references

Methods

- ❖ Explain *how* you will successfully complete this project.
 - ❖ Provide clear and detailed description of both data collection and analysis techniques (as appropriate).
- ❖ Be specific about implementation.
 - ❖ Who is responsible for what?
 - ❖ What are the outcomes?
 - ❖ Address possible obstacles to your research.
 - ❖ Provide information about how you will address them.

Methods: Tips

- ❖ Clearly lay out each stage of your plan.
 - ❖ Lay it out in a sequential or step-by-step manner.
- ❖ Demonstrate the link between the objectives, the methodology, and the budget.
- ❖ Include a timeframe.
 - ❖ relates directly to feasibility
 - ❖ Consider a Gantt chart or other graphical representation.

Detailed Description



Knowledge Mobilization

- ❖ *“Effective knowledge mobilization is seen as facilitating and enabling the benefit and impact of research on and beyond the campus (as described under Expected Outcomes) through enhanced accessibility and interaction.”*

SSHRC Insight Grant Instructions, 2014

Knowledge Mobilization

- ❖ Consider who is interested in your research and where they would go to find the outcomes.
- ❖ Provide an appropriate strategy for disseminating results.
 - ❖ within the academic community
 - ❖ refereed journals, books, conferences, etc.
 - ❖ within the non-academic community
 - ❖ to practitioners, policy makers, etc.

Knowledge Mobilization

- ❖ Detail specific activities and tools including new digital technologies, Open Access, and plans to engage the various stakeholders.
- ❖ Incorporate knowledge mobilization into training.
 - ❖ Have your students involved in the KM activities.
- ❖ Impact should be explained / demonstrated.

Research Team and Student Training

- ❖ Make sure every person / position listed is required for the project.
- ❖ Match the trainee to the task at hand.
 - ❖ Postdocs may be more efficient, but their roles must match their levels of expertise.
 - ❖ Don't have a postdoc doing an undergrad's job, or vice versa.

Research Team

- ❖ If the application involves team members, clearly explain why a team approach is appropriate.
 - ❖ Describe the roles, responsibilities, and contributions of each member.
 - ❖ Describe the unique skills brought to the project by each team member.
 - ❖ Include the proportion of time to be spent by each member in light of their current commitments.

Student Training Strategies

- ❖ Provide a strong plan for student training which benefits both the students and the program of research.
 - ❖ As much as possible, be specific.
 - ❖ identify potential thesis / project topics
 - ❖ Outline the particular duties students will be engaged in.
 - ❖ Indicate the contributions that will be made to the students' training.
 - ❖ Will students will be encouraged to publish / present at a conference? Specify where.

Previous Output

- ❖ How does this fit within your longer term program of research?

Do:	Don't:
Expand on relevant discussion in the Context section.	Repeat what's in your CV.
Discuss any related work and highlight outputs important to the development of this project.	List previous grants received.

- ❖ In the case of a research team, include brief summaries for any relevant projects undertaken by co-applicants.

The Budget

❖ Personnel Costs:

- ❖ student
- ❖ non-student

❖ Travel and Subsistence Costs:

- ❖ applicant/team member(s)
- ❖ student

❖ Other Expenses:

- ❖ professional/technical services
- ❖ supplies and non-disposable equipment

Note:
Do not include
indirect costs
of research.

Personnel Costs

- ❖ SSHRC no longer specifies the amounts for stipends paid to graduate students and postdocs.
- ❖ Students or postdocs cannot be paid both a stipend and a salary / wages on a grant during a given year.
 - ❖ However, it is possible to choose a different form of payment in a subsequent year of the tenure of the grant with justification.
- ❖ Relate all paid personnel to specific tasks / objectives.

Travel, Subsistence, and Other Costs

- ❖ When explaining your analytical / technical / data gathering costs, be specific about why the costs are appropriate.
 - ❖ Relate the expenses to the justification of your methods.
 - ❖ Is there a less expensive way of doing this that is equally as effective?
 - ❖ Don't be cheap, but don't be extravagant; be reasonable.

Know what's eligible before you start...

❖ SSHRC's guidelines:

- ❖ http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Professors-Professeurs/FinancialAdminGuide-GuideAdminFinancier/FundsUse-UtilisationSubventions_eng.asp

❖ UofS salary and stipend guidelines:

- ❖ <http://working.usask.ca/documents/salaries/salarydetails/studentratesofpay.pdf>

- ❖ If you're not sure if an expense is eligible, ask your research facilitator or grants specialist in RSEO.

Budget Justification

50% is an
automatic
fail.

- ❖ *“Committees may consider failing a project on the Feasibility criteria if they deem that 30 per cent or more of the overall budget request is insufficiently justified and/or not appropriate to the proposed objectives or outcomes of the project.”*

SSHRC Manual for Adjudication Committee Members 2014-15, p.17

What every justification should have...

- ❖ You must demonstrate the needs of the research.
 - ❖ details
 - ❖ justification
 - ❖ relate to research objectives and methods
 - ❖ if for travel, state the goal / expected outcome of the trip
- ❖ Follow the stated format.
 - ❖ Use the categories listed on *Funds Requested from SSHRC*.
 - ❖ You can use tables.
 - ❖ In many cases they are much easier to follow.

Budget Justification: Tips

Do:	Don't:
Make things match. Check and recheck your numbers.	Artificially request the same amount every year in a multiyear proposal.
Follow the same order in your justification as they are laid out in your budget.	Request the maximum allowable to the penny.
Use headings to make things easier to follow.	Include negative justifications.

Budgets



Proposal Evaluation

❖ 2-level review system

1. external assessors (peer reviewers)
2. members of the Insight Grants adjudication committees

❖ external peer reviews

- ❖ two or three discipline experts from Canada and abroad
 - ❖ number partly determined by budget request
- ❖ generally evaluate only one proposal

Proposal Evaluation

- ❖ SSHRC program adjudication committees
 - ❖ thematic, and/or multi-disciplinary, and/or disciplinary
 - ❖ expertise drawn from the academic community, the public, private, and/or not-for-profit sectors, as appropriate
 - ❖ readers within committee review specific applications in detail and lead evaluation discussions on proposals
 - ❖ not bound by external peer reviews
 - ❖ All committee members vote on / rank all proposals in their specified cohort.

Evaluation Criteria

❖ Challenge

- ❖ the aim and importance of the endeavour = 40%

❖ Feasibility

- ❖ the plan to achieve excellence = 20%

❖ Capability

- ❖ the expertise to succeed = 40%

http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/insight_grants-subventions_savoir-eng.aspx#5

SSHRC Committees' Top 4 Critiques

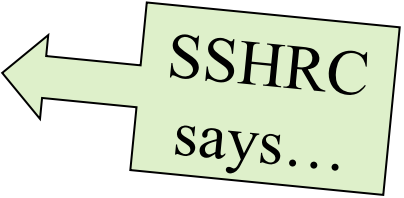
- ❖ incomplete or outdated literature review
- ❖ lack of theoretical rationale
- ❖ lack of specificity and justification in the methodology
- ❖ no link between the conceptual framework and the methodology

Final Thoughts...

- ❖ Insight Grants focus on advancement of knowledge.
 - ❖ Describe / promote the need, importance, and relevance of your research, as well as how it advances knowledge.
- ❖ While writing your application it is important to keep in mind that not all members of the adjudication committee will be experts in your specific field.

Final Thoughts...

- ❖ Ensure the overall presentation is pleasant to read.
 - ❖ Respect formatting guidelines.
 - ❖ Use headings and subheadings.
 - ❖ *“You must follow the specified requirements for margins and font size (12-point Times New Roman) or your application will be rendered ineligible.”*
- ❖ Read your proposal out loud...if it doesn't sound right, it probably doesn't read right.



SSHRC
says...

Final Thoughts...

- ❖ Don't wait until the last moment to write your proposal; experience shows they tend not to be successful.
- ❖ Take advantage of the Internal Review Process available at the University of Saskatchewan.
- ❖ Have peers and non-specialists read your application.
 - ❖ Remember....what is self-evident to you may not be to someone else.

Resources for Researchers

- ❖ [UofS Internal Review](#)
- ❖ [Research Facilitation](#)
- ❖ [UofS Grants Repository](#)
- ❖ Previous UofS recipients and adjudicators
- ❖ SSHRC's [Resource Centre for Grants](#)
- ❖ SSHRC Insight Program Officers
 - ❖ insightgrants@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca
 - ❖ 613-996-6976

Questions

