

Saskatchewan-CIHR Regional Partnership Program

Policies & Procedures

August 25, 2011

1 This Document

This document contains all policies and procedures related to the SK-CIHR Regional Partnership Program. It is updated annually and posted on the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF) website (www.shrf.ca). Researchers applying to Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) should read this document carefully before submitting applications to CIHR; general CIHR policies can be found at <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/805.html>.

2 About the SK-CIHR Regional Partnership Program

2.1 Background

The Regional Partnership Program (RPP) was started by the Medical Research Council of Canada (MRC) as an initiative to strengthen funded research capacity in the smaller, less populous Canadian Provinces where federal research funding had declined during the 1980s and 1990s. The program was adopted in Saskatchewan in 1999 with a five-year funding agreement between MRC and the province of Saskatchewan, each party contributing \$1 million/year. The program was continued when CIHR was created. RPP is offered in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the four Maritime Provinces. Each province has its own local priorities, rules and regulations, in addition to CIHR's requirements. In Saskatchewan, the CIHR Regional Partnership Program is overseen by the Saskatchewan-CIHR Regional Partnership Program (SK-CIHR RPP) Advisory Committee.

2.2 Purpose

The Regional Partnership Program is a partnership program offered by the CIHR to support the development of health research capacity in a number of provinces, including Saskatchewan, where CIHR funding has historically been low. The program contributes to CIHR's mandate of supporting quality health research in Canada as defined in the CIHR Act. In Saskatchewan, RPP helps to build health research capacity as part of the province's *Health Research Strategy* and raises the level of federally-supported health research activity in Saskatchewan, leading to increased new knowledge with the potential to benefit health, health care and the economy.

2.3 Funding Partners

The Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF) has an agreement with CIHR that outlines how the program operates. The RPP funding envelope in Saskatchewan is \$2M/year, with CIHR providing \$1M/year and provincial matching funds providing \$1M/year, as shown below.

Canadian Institutes of Health Research	\$1 million/year
Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation	\$700,000/year
Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour	\$250,000/year
Saskatchewan Universities	\$50,000/year

2.4 SK-CIHR RPP Programs

The SK-CIHR RPP Advisory Committee indicates which CIHR funding programs it will match, as per the agreement with CIHR. Based on available resources, for 2007-08 through 2012-13, the SK-CIHR RPP will support:

- Open Operating Grants;
- New Investigator Salary Awards;
- Fellowship and Postdoctoral Fellowship Awards; and
- Doctoral Student Awards.

The Table below provides a synopsis of the awards that are normally made in each fiscal year.

Program	Usual RPP decision date	Usual number of awards	Usual Funding Start Date	Normal Duration
Operating Sept 15th	Early February	2-4	Apr 1	2y
Operating March 1	Early July	2-4	Oct 1	2y
New Investigators	June	0-3	Jan 1	5y
Doctoral Students	June	2-5	Sept 1	<3y
Fellowships (students)	August	0-1	Sept 1	<3y
Fellowships (PDFs)	August	0-2	Oct 1	<2y

Section 3 outlines eligibility for SK-CIHR RPP, process to be followed in applying for SK-CIHR RPP. Other relevant funding information is described. Researchers are strongly advised to read this document carefully and to contact SHRF or the Universities with any questions.

3 Application Process and Requirements

Applicants for Operating Grants and New Investigator Salary Awards must determine eligibility for RPP with their University before applying to CIHR. Researchers apply directly to CIHR, which operates RPP as part of its Priority Announcement system and should be sure to check that they are RPP eligible in the CIHR application in order to be considered for RPP. Researchers who are not eligible for support through RPP can still apply to CIHR.

3.1 Eligibility for SK-CIHR RPP

It is very important that researchers notify their Research Services Office about CIHR applications as early as possible so that Research Services can provide accurate and timely eligibility information to the SK-CIHR RPP Advisory Committee.

Any change in Researcher status, such as leave or departure from the institution where the award is held, can change the eligibility of the researcher to hold the award. Research Services should notify the Chair of the SK-CIHR RPP Advisory Committee immediately of any changes so that appropriate adjustments can be made to the award. Adjustments will be made according to CIHR policy, the policies of the institution where the award is held, and the policies contained in this document. Please note that in most cases researchers who take an extended leave are ineligible to hold RPP funding.

3.2 Internal Review

In order to be eligible for SK-CIHR RPP funding, researchers must have their CIHR applications for Operating Grants and New Investigator Salary Awards vetted by the internal review procedures at their home institution. Contacts for these processes include the Office of the Associate Vice-President Research- Health at the University of Saskatchewan and the Office of Research Services, University of Regina. Institutions without internal review policies should contact the Chair of the SK-CIHR RPP Advisory Committee.

3.3 CIHR Priority Funding

A CIHR Institute may offer priority funding to researchers eligible for SK-CIHR RPP funding who must accept the CIHR Priority Funding even if the amount is less than a recommended SK-CIHR RPP award or the length of the award is less than 2 years.

The SK-CIHR RPP can support the difference in the award value: e.g. if the RPP recommendation is for \$116,000/y and the priority is \$100,000/y, SK-CIHR RPP can fund the \$16,000 difference. In addition, the SK-CIHR RPP will provide funding up to 2 years in total. Researchers awarded priority funding are encouraged to re-apply to CIHR at the earliest possible time.

3.4 Saskatchewan Health Research Priority Areas

As noted in the Background section above, the Province's *Health Research Strategy* (www.shrf.ca) identifies the SK-CIHR RPP as a key mechanism for building health research capacity in the province and outlines the health research priority areas. The SK-CIHR RPP Advisory Committee will dedicate 50% of Operating Grant and New Investigator Salary Award funding to the provincial health research priority areas. The priority areas are:

- Health needs of specific populations, with emphasis on Aboriginal people and seniors;
- Health systems and policy research, with emphasis on: health human resources; quality improvement; health service delivery in primary care and mental health, and rural and remote health service delivery;
- Determinants of health status, including early childhood development and the prevention and underlying causes of chronic and lifestyle-related disease (particularly diabetes, obesity and smoking);
- Public health, including infectious disease, water safety and food safety; and
- Synchrotron-based health research.

Applicants for CIHR Operating Grants and New Investigator Salary Awards who apply to the Priority Announcement for the Regional Partnerships Program – Saskatchewan (RPP-SK) will be asked to complete a relevance form at the time of application describing how the proposed research fits within one or more priority areas, if applicable. Confirmation of fit with the priority areas is assessed by the Saskatchewan-CIHR RPP Advisory Committee.

Fellowship, Postdoctoral Fellowship and Doctoral Award applicants do not need to complete a relevance form but should make every effort to keep Research Services informed about their applications.

4 SK-CIHR RPP Decision Process

The SK-CIHR RPP considers grants and awards that receive ratings 3.5 or greater in the competitions and makes recommendations for SK-CIHR funding based upon:

- the peer review committee percentile rankings from CIHR;
- provincial priority areas (at least 50% of SHRF funds will be used to support provincial health research priority areas in the Operating Grants and New Investigator Salary Awards);
- budget considerations; and
- priority funding programs (Postdoctoral Fellowships are lower priority, as are Operating Grants submitted by a nominated principal investigator who already holds another CIHR grant).

The Advisory Committee does not act as a second review committee.

5 RPP Award Management

For each award, two funds are established, one from CIHR and one from the matching partner. These awards are subject to standard CIHR policies and procedures and will be managed consistently with CIHR regulations. Research Services will provide a copy of the original CIHR application to the matching partner.

SK-CIHR RPP must be held at a Saskatchewan institution eligible to receive CIHR funding and funding from the matching partner. 75% of CIHR funds must be spent in SK, and normally 100% of the matching partner funds must be spent in SK.

The SK-CIHR RPP Advisory Committee expects all equipment purchased with SK-CIHR RPP funds to remain in the province, recognizing that the host institution owns any equipment purchased and makes the final decision.

6 SK-CIHR RPP Program Descriptions

6.1 Operating Grants

6.1.1 Key Eligibility Criteria

1. A nominated principal investigator cannot hold two RPP operating grants simultaneously.
2. The renewal (i.e. first re-application) of an RPP operating grant is ineligible for RPP support. In other words, consecutive RPP funding is not allowed for the same project.
3. Early reapplication of an RPP operating grant, does not affect the original award if unsuccessful. If successful, the RPP award will be terminated effective the start date of the CIHR award.

6.1.2 Important - Process to be followed

1. Confirm Eligibility for SK-CIHR RPP
2. Internal Review
3. Apply to CIHR—make sure to select RPP on Research Net and complete the relevance form
4. CIHR Results
5. SK-CIHR RPP Committee Decision
6. CIHR provides the official notification
7. Start date: April 1 or October 1

6.1.3 Funding Conditions

The normal expectation is that researchers who hold a two-year Sask-CIHR RPP Operating Grant will submit an application for renewal within 18 months of their grant's start date in the regular CIHR competition; as noted above these renewal applications are not eligible for RPP funding.

Examples:

Application in March 2009; Start Date October 2009; Renewal application March 2011

Application in Sept 2009; Start Date April 2010; Renewal application Sept. 2011

6.2 New Investigator Salary Awards

6.2.1 Key Eligibility Criteria

1. Holders of New Investigator Awards should hold and maintain national peer-reviewed operating funding. Lack of such funding may lead to SK-CIHR RPP declining to make an award, or during the tenure of the award, review of the award, and even loss of the award. New Investigators currently holding less than \$50,000 a year in operating funding may be eligible to receive top-up funding to bring the total level of operating support to \$50,000 during the first two years of the New Investigator Award, subject to annual review. Candidates must apply to CIHR by July 1 to be considered for this research allowance.
2. Holders of New Investigator Awards through SK-CIHR RPP must be faculty or faculty equivalent at a Saskatchewan institution with the expectation and opportunity to undertake research, the right to hold research grants at the university and a responsibility to supervise graduate students.
3. The SK-CIHR RPP Advisory Committee requires the submission of a Research Plan by the Dean, Director or appropriate designate prior to the recommendation of an award (see 6.2.3 below). The late submission of a plan may result in funds being assigned to other potential awards. See “Funding Conditions” below for details about the Research Plan.

6.2.2 Important - Process to be followed

1. Confirm Eligibility for SK-CIHR RPP
2. Internal Review
3. Apply to CIHR—make sure to select RPP on Research Net and complete the relevance form
4. CIHR Results (May-June)
5. Submit Research Plan to SK-CIHR RPP Committee (August 15)
6. SK-CIHR RPP Committee Decision
7. CIHR provides official notification
8. Start date: usually January 1 (subject to budget and research plan)

6.2.3 Funding Conditions

A Research Plan submitted by the appropriate designate should address the following:

1. Commitment with respect to the time of the awardee. The awardee has the benefit of release time and is expected to spend at least 70% of their time on research. The benefit to the individual should be a significant reduction in teaching and administrative duties. Guidelines would be 50% of a normal assignment in a unit, or no more than 2 half-courses per year (~40 h contact lectures) whichever is less. Reductions in clinical duties will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
2. A plan for how fall-in funds shall be used to create further research capacity in the unit. The use of these funds should have a greater benefit than providing direct support to the individual who received the award. However, the use of the funds should be of benefit to the individual’s area of research, which may be different from the academic unit. Examples of capacity building include using funds to:
 - a. bridge to existing retirement positions to allow earlier hiring;
 - b. accumulate start up funding to attract an earlier hiring;

- c. establish core facilities and services to benefit a group of researchers including the awardee; and
- d. reduce teaching loads of a number of active research faculty who collaborate with or are colleagues of the awardee by appropriate measures such as appointment of sessionals, lecturers or instructors.

6.3 Fellowships, Postdoctoral Fellowship and Doctoral Awards

6.3.1 Key Eligibility Criteria

Three programs for trainee stipends are supported by SK-CIHR RPP: *Fellowships*, which support those who hold a health professional degree for graduate training; *Post-doctoral Fellowships* that support those who have attained a Ph.D., and *Doctoral Awards* that support those doing graduate studies towards a Ph.D. The Fellowship, Post-doctoral Fellowships and Doctoral Awards must be to trainees who have a supervisor and are registered at a university or institution in Saskatchewan.

6.3.2 Important - Process to be followed

1. Confirm Eligibility for SK-CIHR RPP
2. Apply to CIHR—make sure to select RPP on Research Net
3. CIHR Results
4. SK-CIHR RPP Committee Decision
5. University support for the Doctoral Awards is confirmed
6. CIHR provides official notification
7. Start date: Usually September 1 (subject to budget)

6.3.3 Funding Conditions

1. In order to fund Postdoctoral Fellowship Awards, the Advisory Committee will consider proposals for the provision of matching funds from other sources such as funds available to Colleges/Faculties and Departments, arrangements with other mission-oriented health research agencies, etc. None of the matching funds can come from a Tricouncil-funding source or funds that have already been used to match a Tricouncil opportunity. Decisions about Postdoctoral Fellowship Awards supported by SHRF matching funding are normally made after the results of both competitions have been announced; i.e. not until August or September following the competitions

2. Doctoral Awards are normally funded through matching funding from the Universities.

3. Fellowship Awards are funded through matching funds from SHRF

4. Trainees supported by SK-CIHR RPP must be treated in a manner similar to other trainees who receive stipends from the Tricouncils. In particular, matching support should not have a requirement for any form of service or teaching. Supervisors should inform their trainees to consult with the appropriate Dean of Graduate Studies before accepting any position other than their graduate research.

5. CIHR normally recommends 2-3 years of funding. Doctoral awards and Fellowships awarded to health professionals for the purpose of doctoral training will be funded by SK-CIHR RPP for up to three years. Post-doctoral fellows (PDFs) will be funded for up to two years; however, PDFs who have been supported by the SHRF Postdoctoral Research Fellowship program for 2 years, will only be supported for 1 year through the RPP.

6. Both the SK-CIHR RPP and CIHR itself will wish to review the conditions of any internship that is required for a program of training during which a person is funded by either the Doctoral or Fellowship support programs. The supervisor should inform the Chair of the SK-CIHR RPP Advisory Committee

about any such requirement in the program such that the nature of the internship can be considered. It is advised that any query to CIHR should be made by the Research Offices at the universities in order that the information provided to CIHR leads to a consistent response.

The issues that will be considered are:

- the balance between the value of the internship to the research activity (and capacity building) and required service aspects of the internship; and
- the level of stipend provided by the internship.

7 The SK-CIHR RPP Advisory Committee

Beth Horsburgh, Chair

Associate Vice-President Research-Health, University of Saskatchewan, and
Vice-President Research & Innovation, Saskatoon Health Region

Mary Hampton, Vice Chair

Professor, Department of Psychology
Luther College
University of Regina

June Bold

Chief Executive Officer
Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation

Heather George

Director, Public Institutions and Infrastructure
Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment & Immigration

Jim Thornhill

Associate Dean Research, College of Medicine
University of Saskatchewan

Rod Kelln

Dean Graduate Studies & Research
University of Regina

8 Advisory Committee Support

Anne Neufeld

Ph. 306-966-1733

Email: anne.neufeld@usask.ca

Sarah Savage

Ph: 306-337-2479

Email: sarah.savage@uregina.ca

Karen Glazebrook

Ph: 306-975-1686

Email: kglazebrook@shrf.ca