

Guidelines for the Government of Canada Tri-Agency General Research Fund at BCIT

Description

The BCIT Tri-Agency General Research Fund (GRF) is a restricted organization code opened under the authority of the President of BCIT (or his/her authorized delegate, the Dean of Applied Research), into which the unspent funds of expired or terminated grants are transferred with the authorization of the granting agencies.

BCIT keeps separate the GRF organization code for each of the agencies, namely the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). The financial administration of the funds is also kept separate.

BCIT follows the [Tri-Agency Financial Administration Guide](#) (TAFAG) as well as its internal policies and directives with respect to the management, disbursement and use of the funds. The agencies' eligibility and compliance requirements for expenditures charged to grants also apply to expenditures charged to the GRF. BCIT's President or his/her authorized delegate, authorizes expenditures charged to the GRF in accordance with the requirements and conditions of the Tri-Agency grants and with BCIT's and the agencies' policies. No other party may initiate or authorize expenditures without the President's or his or her delegate's written authority.

Objective

The GRF is used to reinvest unspent funds from previous years in order to support research in the fields of natural sciences and engineering or social sciences and humanities, as applicable. Funds from the GRF may be used to provide small start-up grants to new researchers, bridge funding to researchers who are between applications, or additional funds for researchers to support their research. Priority will be given to applicants whose research grants have contributed towards the funds available in the GRF.

Pursuant to BCIT Policy, all research must receive appropriate approvals **before** the research starts. Required certifications must be maintained throughout the research project or the duration of the specific activity.

Access to funds

There is no deadline for submissions of grant applications. Applications are to be submitted electronically to the Applied Research Liaison Office (ARLO) Department at research@bcit.ca and will be adjudicated by the President's delegate – the Dean of Applied Research on an ongoing basis. All proposals must include the Pre-Submission Supplementary Signature page. Although not part of the Institute Research Fund grant funding process, for simplicity applicants may use the Institute Research Fund application template. Applications must include a scope of work, budget, budget justification,

timeline, certifications (if required), and amount of funds being requested. A letter of support must be provided by the Dean and Associate Dean of the researcher requesting the funds. There is no restriction on the amount of funds that may be requested from the GRF (other than the limit of available funds within the organization code), but it should be noted that these funds are intended as seed funding or bridge funding for researchers between grant submissions. It is intended that these grants are normally for 12 to 18 months in duration or less. Again, priority will be given to applicants whose research grants have contributed towards the funds available in the GRF.

Transfer Conditions

Transfers to the GRF are authorized by the agencies under the following conditions:

- The amount to be transferred corresponds to the definition of a residual balance;¹
- BCIT has completed the [annual reconciliation of active awards](#) by submitting the Statements of Account (Form 300 or 301);
- BCIT has spent at least 50% of the opening balance of its GRF during the current year.

Exceptions

The unspent funds of grants in certain programs, however, are not eligible for transfer to the GRF. In this case, a reimbursement is required. In the case that BCIT has not spent 50% of the opening balance of the GRF, new transfers are put on hold, and BCIT must demonstrate a tangible need for additional funds. If no rationale is provided, a reimbursement is required. To facilitate the annual reconciliation of the GRF, a list of all authorized transfers to the GRF for each institution as of March 31 will be displayed **solely** on the Government of Canada Tri-Agency **Grants and Scholarships Administrative Portal (GSAP)**.

The preliminary list of authorized transfers to the GRF is posted once a year, in mid-November.

To reflect all of the changes implemented during the fiscal year, the list of authorized transfers to the GRF is updated once a year, and the revised version is posted on the secure site in mid-May.

For example, for the GRF annual reconciliation exercise for the 2014-2015 fiscal year, the preliminary list of authorized transfers to the GRF **as of March 31, 2015** was posted on the secure site in the fall of 2015. If necessary, a revised version (final list) will be posted in the following spring.

However, changes can be requested throughout the fiscal year. If applicable, BCIT would submit a request by email to grf_ggsf@nserc-crsng.gc.ca.

Eligible Expenses

The policies and requirements of the agencies stated in the [Tri-Agency Financial Administration Guide \(TAFAG\)](#) apply at all times to the use of GRF funds. It is BCIT's and the researcher's responsibility to ensure that GRF funds are used to cover eligible expenses associated with the direct costs of research and that all expenses charged to the GRF are authorized by the person responsible for the GRF or his/her authorized delegate.

Indirect or overhead costs, such as costs associated with facilities and basic utilities, the purchase and repair of office equipment, administration fees, insurance for research equipment and vehicles, and basic communication devices such as telephones and fax machines, are not eligible.

Please consult the [Use of Grant Funds](#) section in the TAFAG to obtain additional information on eligible expenses, such as expenses associated with compensation, travel and accommodation expenses, research equipment and supplies, computers and electronic communications, dissemination of research findings, and miscellaneous services and expenses.

To promote the active use of unspent funds for various research projects, the agencies expect BCIT to spend at least 50% of the GRF opening balance during the year.

Reports

Statement of Account (Form 300) and Annual GRF Reconciliation

Every year, BCIT must submit to the agencies a Statement of Account (Form 300) for each GRF (NSERC and SSHRC) for the period of April 1 to March 31. The deadline to submit the Form 300 for the GRF is **June 30**, the same date as for the [annual reconciliation of active grants](#).

This annual GRF reconciliation exercise allows the agencies to track incurred expenses and accumulated balances. It is also used to authorize or not authorize transfers to the GRF of the upcoming fiscal year.

¹A residual balance is an amount corresponding to 50% or less of the allocated grant. Any higher amount is deemed to be an unspent grant and a reimbursement is required.