

New Frontiers in Research Funds (NFRF) - Exploration Grant 2021

Updated Information

Update: The "How to Apply" section has been updated as follows:

Webinars on the Notice of Intent (NOI) stage for the 2021 Exploration competition were held on July 13th, 2021. The recording of the webinars can be accessed at the links below

- English Recording: <https://youtu.be/dQu2xKlpHTY> [1]
- French Recording: https://youtu.be/MgDjyt_X3p4 [2]

Also, a slide deck has been added. The presentation slides can be accessed under the 'Attachments' section

Sponsor

Tri-Agency Institutional Programs Secretariat (TIPS), on behalf of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), and Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC).

Program

New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF) – Explorations Grants 2021

For More Information

[Notice of Intent to Apply Guide](#) [3]

[Full Application Guide](#) [4]

[Best Practices in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Research](#) [5]

[Merit Indicators for the Review Process](#) [6]

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) [7]

File Attachments:

[New Frontiers in Research Funds \(NFRF\) Exploration Competition - 2021 - Information Webinar \(PDF\)](#) [8]

Description

The objective of the Exploration stream is to support high risk, high reward and interdisciplinary research. It seeks to inspire projects that bring disciplines together beyond traditional disciplinary or common interdisciplinary approaches by research teams with the capacity to explore something new that might fail, but has the potential for significant impact.

Exploration grants support research that pushes boundaries into exciting new areas. Researchers are encouraged to think “outside of the box,” undertake research that would defy current paradigms, and bring disciplines together in unexpected ways and form bold, innovative perspectives. With the Exploration stream, there is recognition that innovation often carries risk; proposals for high-risk research projects that have the potential to deliver game-changing impacts are strongly encouraged.

Exploration stream grants support projects that:

- bring disciplines together beyond traditional disciplinary or common interdisciplinary approaches;
- propose to explore something new, which might fail; and
- have the potential for significant impact.

Exploration grants support research with a range of impacts, some of which might be social, cultural, economic, health-related or technological. This list is not exhaustive; other types of impacts are also recognized. Diversity of perspectives is important, and the fund encourages research proposals led from any discipline, from those in the social sciences and humanities, to health, the natural sciences and engineering.

Subject matter (fit to program)

To meet the minimum requirement to be considered interdisciplinary, a proposed research project must include elements from at least two different disciplines (as defined by a [group-level classification](#) [9] based on the [Canadian Research and Development Classification](#) [10]).

Projects that incorporate two disciplines with a long and established tradition of working together (e.g., biology and chemistry or psychology and education) may satisfy the above requirement but not meet the expectations of the program. The onus is on the applicant to explain the novelty of the interdisciplinary approach to justify the fit to program.

The following elements are indicative of projects that do not meet program expectations for high risk, and are considered ineligible: research that is the obvious next step; data collection without interpretation of underlying mechanisms or patterns; professional practice or consulting services

(contract research); set-up and operational management of an institute or a formal or informal group of researchers (network); curriculum development; organization of a conference or workshop; digitization of a collection or creation of a database; application of existing technology or commercialization of a product/process; routine analyses; and/or acquisition and maintenance of research equipment.

Applications for projects that are the same or similar, in whole or in part, to ones that have been funded by other federal research granting agency programs should not be submitted to the NFRF program. Applications for projects the same as or similar to projects that have been unsuccessful in receiving funding from other agency programs may be submitted to the NFRF program in cases where the lack of success is due to the high-risk and/or interdisciplinary nature of the project, rather than limited funds in a highly competitive pool.

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

EDI is a core element of the NFRF program.

Applicants must clearly demonstrate their commitment to EDI in their research teams, including among students, postdoctoral fellows, co-PIs, co-applicants and/or collaborators, as applicable. They must explain what actions they will take, the outcomes expected, and the assessment planned for each of the following three key areas:

- team composition and recruitment processes;
- training and development opportunities; and
- inclusion.

Actions taken are expected to remove barriers and provide opportunities for the meaningful integration of individuals from all groups, including the four designated groups (women, Indigenous Peoples, members of visible minorities and persons with disabilities).

An application must not include any personal information about members of the research team in the EDI section; the focus is on the team's commitment to EDI, not its EDI profile.

For more information, see NFRF's [Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research](#) [5].

High risk

High risk can be defined by elements such as, but not limited to:

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proposing unique directions;

- challenging current research paradigms;
- enhancing understanding of complex and challenging issues;
- bringing new disciplines together with different perspectives, to use novel approaches for solving existing problems; and/or
- developing or adapting frameworks, methods and techniques.

High reward

High reward can be defined by elements such as, but not limited to:

- having an economic, scientific, artistic, cultural, social, technological or health impact;
- impacting and/or affecting large communities, or unique communities or subpopulations with the potential to provide lessons for other contexts;
- transforming and/or disrupting conventional thinking;
- resolving a longstanding issue or debate; and/or
- significantly advancing current knowledge, methods and/or technologies.

Feasibility

While a focus on high risk may seem at odds with feasibility, risk must be related to the idea being proposed, and not to a lack of a concrete plan or inability to execute the activities. Feasibility considers elements such as the:

- research problem being addressed;
- knowledge, expertise and capacity of the research team;

- current research in the field;
- workplan and timeline;
- proposed approach, including GBA+ where appropriate;
- project's engagement and reciprocity with First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis peoples (for Indigenous research), where appropriate; and
- suitability of the research environment.

Eligibility

To encourage projects that push the boundaries in terms of interdisciplinarity, proposals must be submitted by research teams composed of at least two individuals. In addition to a [nominated principal investigator](#) [11] (NPI), the team must include either a [co-principal investigator](#) [12] (co-PI) or a [co-applicant](#) [13]. Teams may include up to one co-PI and any number of co-applicants and/or [collaborators](#) [14]. The NPI and team members can be from any discipline.

To ensure that Exploration grants support high-risk, high-reward projects across the broadest spectrum of disciplines, individuals can participate in only one Exploration stream application or grant at one time.

These restrictions do not apply to collaborators. These restrictions also do not apply to the NFRF Transformation and International streams. An individual may simultaneously apply as or be an award holder as an NPI, co-PI or co-applicant for grants under separate streams (Exploration, Transformation and International).

For a proposal to be considered led by early career researchers (ECRs), both the NPI and co-PI (if applicable) must be ECRs. An ECR is a researcher within five years from the start date of their first research-related appointment, minus the length of any eligible delays in research (e.g., illness, maternity, parental), as of the first of the month in which the competition is launched (June 1, 2021, for this Exploration competition), where:

- “research-related appointments” are defined as those where an individual has the autonomy to conduct research independently;
- all eligible leaves (e.g., maternity, parental, medical, bereavement) are credited at twice the amount of time taken; and
- professional leaves (e.g., training, sabbatical, administrative) are not credited.

Research interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., closures) are recognized as, and may be counted as, an eligible delay (credited at twice the amount of time) beginning March 1, 2020.

If a first academic appointment was a part-time appointment/position, years of experience are counted at 50%, until the researcher's appointment to a full-time academic position.

Funding Availability

A minimum of \$25 million over two years. A minimum of 100 will be awarded. A proportion of awards equal to the proportion of applications received from [early career researchers](#) [15] will be reserved for them.

Maximum Project Value

Up to \$125,000 per year (including indirect costs). Maximum direct costs per year is \$100,000 (with an additional \$25,000 indirect costs).

Indirect Costs

25%

Project Duration

Up to two (2) years.

Special Notes

COVID-19

Please note that research activities carried out in the context of COVID-19 need to adhere to the University of Guelph COVID-19 research principles, policies, guidelines and processes as they may be updated from time to time and communicated on the [Office of Research web-page](#) [16].

Research Team:

Nominated principal investigator (NPI):

- is responsible for the direction of the project and the coordination of proposed research activities, in conjunction with the co-PI (if applicable);
- completes and submits the NOI and full application, through the research administrator at their institution;

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- assumes administrative and financial responsibility for the grant; and
- receives all related correspondence from the agencies.

The NPI must be considered an independent researcher at their primary affiliation. A primary affiliation is defined as the primary organization at which an individual is employed, appointed or conducts research.

Part-time students, postdoctoral fellows or research associates are not eligible to apply as NPIs.

Co-applicants: share responsibility with the NPI for the direction of the proposed activities, and may access grant funds. Co-applicants must be [independent researchers](#) [17].

They may be affiliated with a Canadian or international organization, but must not be affiliated with a federal, provincial, territorial or municipal government department or a for-profit organization. Students, postdoctoral fellows, research associates, etc. are not eligible to participate as a co-PI.

Collaborators: contribute to the execution of research activities, but do not have access to grant funds. Collaborators do not need to be affiliated with an eligible institution. Any individual who will contribute to the project is eligible to be a collaborator. Collaborators may include individuals affiliated with a federal, provincial, territorial or municipal government department or a for-profit organization. They may also be affiliated with a Canadian or international organization. Any individual whose contributions to the project will be supervised by the NPI, co-PI, co-applicant and/or another collaborator cannot be considered a collaborator.

Deadlines

If College-level review is required, your College will communicate its earlier internal deadlines.

| Type | Date | Notes |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Internal Deadline | Tuesday, August 3, 2021 - 4:30pm | Notification of Intent to Apply (NOI) The Nominated Principal Investigator must submit their NOI through the Convergence Portal [18]. The NOI is mandatory to progress to the next stage. A complete, signed OR-5 form is required at this stage to verify eligibility, etc.. Please estimate the maximum budget, including 25% indirect costs, on your OR-5 form, and it can be updated at the Full Application stage when finalized. |

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| Type | Date | Notes |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| External Deadline | Tuesday, August 10, 2021 - 8:00pm | NOI The Office of Research Services will submit the completed NOI directly through the Convergence Portal on behalf of the research team. Please Note: Once an NOI has been submitted by ORS, the NPI, co-principal investigator and/or co-applicants may not remove themselves from the project to join a different project within the Exploration stream. |
| Internal Deadline | Tuesday, October 12, 2021 - 4:30pm | Full Application NOIs are not adjudicated, so all teams can proceed with Full Application. The Nominated Principal Investigator must submit their completed Full Application in the Convergence Portal [18], and notify research.services@uoguelph.ca . |
| External Deadline | Tuesday, October 19, 2021 - 8:00pm | Full Application The Office of Research Services will submit the completed Full Application directly through the Convergence Portal on behalf of the research team. |

How to Apply

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Please see the NOI and Full Application Guides linked in the 'For More Information' section above.

Webinars on the Notice of Intent (NOI) stage for the 2021 Exploration competition were held on July 13th, 2021. The recording of the webinars can be accessed at the links below:

- English Recording: <https://youtu.be/dQu2xKlpHTY> [1]
- French Recording: https://youtu.be/MgDjyt_X3p4 [2]

The presentation slides can be accessed under 'Attachments' section

Information For Co-applicants

If you are a formal Co-Principal Investigator or Co-Applicant on an NFRF Exploration Grant led by a Nominated Principal Investigator at another institution, you are required to submit a copy of the Notice of Intent to Apply (NOI) and a signed OR-5 form to research.services@uoguelph.ca [19] at the NOI Internal Deadline.

For Questions, please contact

For more information, contact: NFRF-FNFR@chairs-chaire.gc.ca [20].

Office of Research

Carolyn Osborn, Director, Research Support Services

Research Services Office

cosborn@uoguelph.ca [21]

Alert Classifications **Category:**

Funding Opportunities and Sponsor News

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URL: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/research/alerts/content/new-frontiers-research-funds-nfrf-exploration-grant-2021>

Links

[1] <https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2FdQu2xKlpHTY&data=04%7C01%7CGabriela.Jamett%40sshrc-crsh.gc.ca%7Cccc2385f0d0f45f2ac0708d947bb3a70%7Cfbef079820e34be7bdc8372032610f65%7C1%7C0%7C637619691752986009%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=vDDpgTxxd0LTgKgoQV3go7LNGV98W7k6Af>

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[2] https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2FMgDjyt_X3p4&data=04%7C01%7CGabriela.Jamett%40sshrc-crsh.gc.ca%7Cccc2385f0d0f45f2ac0708d947bb3a70%7Cfbef079820e34be7bdc8372032610f65%7C1%7C0%7C637619691752995963%7CUnknown%7CTWFPbGZsb3d8eyJWlloiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQlloiV2luMzliLCJBtIl6lk1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=hd26nvg1sYmqg1gbV3Rg4TgzkGsZFTe5P4Pz24tV1Ns%3D&reserved=0

[21] <mailto:cosborn@uoguelph.ca>