



Nova Scotia Health Research Fund 2024: Q&A

Deadline	Date
Project Registration	May 13, 2024 at 16:00 ADT
Application deadline	July 13, 2024 at 16:00 ADT

Application categories and Eligibility

To be eligible for Research Fund, the Principal Investigator must be:

- An employee or affiliate of Nova Scotia Health, or;
- A member of our African Nova Scotian, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+ or other marginalized groups/communities.

Successful applicants will be required to agree to the following:

1. Acknowledgement of Nova Scotia Health as funder in all presentations, publications
2. Serving as reviewer on subsequent competitions administered by Nova Scotia Health
3. Submitting a final report that includes outcomes of the funding award
4. Prior to accepting new funding, successful applicants must submit any outstanding reports from previously funded Nova Scotia Health research awards.

Funding category eligibility is inspired by CIHR Researcher Career Status: [Glossary of Funding-Related Terms - CIHR \(cihr-irsc.gc.ca\)](#).

Funding Categories and CIHR Researcher Status

Funding Category	Researcher Career Status	PI Independent Research Experience (Years)
Category 1: Experienced	Senior	≈ 15
Category 2: Early Career	Early career	≥ 5
Category 3: Mid-Career	Mid-career	5 - 15
Category 4: Student/Trainee	Trainee	Not Applicable

Q: What is the cutoff for being an early career researcher?

A: Early career researchers (Category 2) are within 5 years of their first independent research position as per [CIHR's eligibility requirements for Early Career Researcher status](#).

Q: What is an experienced researcher? What determines eligibility for Category 1 PIs?

A: Category 1 Principal Investigators should align with CIHR's definition of Senior Researcher status: 15 years of independent research experience. Principal Investigators with less than 15 years of experience are permitted to apply to Category 1 but are advised to first consider applying to Category 3.

Applying to Category 1 without an established Principal Investigator may result in an uncompetitive submission or prevent a project from proceeding to review altogether.

Q: What does the requirement that “the project must be conducted at Nova Scotia Health” mean in practical terms?

A: This means the majority (not necessarily all) of the awarded funds must be held at Nova Scotia Health AND one of the following other conditions:

- The study must involve participants recruited specifically because of and/or through their association with NS Health (as patients, staff, or otherwise)
- At least some of the work must be conducted in NS Health facilities
- The study must use tissues, samples, and/or data held at NS Health
- NS Health patients and/or personnel must be part of the research team

Q: I would like to submit multiple applications to this competition as the PI. Can I receive more than one award from this competition as PI?

A: While PIs can submit multiple applications, they cannot accept funding for more than one application per cycle. If one researcher is listed as PI on multiple projects, they must select one project to be funded if multiple are successful. This rule does not apply to any role other than PI.

Note: Category 4 supervisors are not considered PIs and are eligible to act as PI on a Category 1-3 award.

Q: I currently hold a Nova Scotia Health Research Fund award from a previous competition. Can I still apply as PI?

A: PIs can hold awards from *separate* Research Fund competitions simultaneously.

Q: Can a Research Fund application have Co-PIs, or can only one person be the PI?

A: There can be Co-PIs, although one person will be designated as the lead PI for administrative purposes (e.g. contact, finance). To be a PI, you must be affiliated with Nova Scotia Health.

Q: I am a university-based researcher who does not currently have an affiliation with Nova Scotia Health. Do I need to apply for a Scientific Affiliate appointment for research in order to apply to this competition?

A: Yes. If you do not have a current Scientific Affiliate appointment with Nova Scotia Health, you must [submit an application](#) (or re-application, for expired appointments) for Scientific Affiliate status before submitting your Registration.

Q: I meet the requirements to serve as the PI for the application, but I would like to include a team member who is a faculty member at a university. Is that permitted?

A: Yes, the PI must meet eligibility criteria for Research Fund, but is welcome to include other non- NS health individuals on the project team.

Q: I am a student/trainee/resident. If I am successful in obtaining a Research Fund award, am I able to hold the funds in my own research account at NSH?

A: No, student/trainee awards are held in a Nova Scotia Health research account in the name of the supervisor, even though the student remains the PI on the study.

Awardees can have access to these accounts with designated signing authority. Note that supervisors must be eligible to hold research accounts at Nova Scotia Health. Students/trainees/residents should have their supervisor complete the Nova Scotia Health Supervisor/Mentor Agreement form.

Q: What do I need to include if I am resubmitting an application?

A: Resubmissions to the Nova Scotia Health Research Fund must include a section explaining how the previous reviewers' comments have been addressed.

Q: Are Canadian Common CVs (CCVs) needed for all team members?

A: No. A CCV is only required for the PI.

Q: What type of CVs am I required to submit?

A: Your application must include the Principal Applicant's validated Canadian Common CV in Biosketch format. Five-page (max) CV's are required for all team members listed on the application and they can be included in any format.

Q: How do I submit my application?

A. NS Health uses Submittable, an online submission portal, for all applications and related study materials for the NSH Research Fund competition (and all other internal funding competitions). Our submission platform for NS Health Research Fund 2024 can be accessed via the following link:

<https://nshealth.submittable.com/submit/262439/nova-scotia-health-research-fund2023>

Q: Can I write my proposal as a word document and send it via email or upload it to the submission portal?

A: No, all applications must be entered into Submittable, including all required fields. Applications from outside of Submittable are not accepted.

Q: Can I seek feedback prior to submitting my application?

A: Yes. Applicants can request an administrative pre-review of their application by contacting ResearchDevelopment@nshealth.ca. Applications will be pre-reviewed and supported on a first-come-first served basis, and should be sent no less than two weeks prior to the final deadline.

Q: What do I include in the plain language summary?

A: The plain language summary is a very important part of your application and, for successful applications, is used in communications regarding the competition and as a means of soliciting continued investment in the Fund by donors. A plain language summary is used to explain complex issues and scientific terms to people who do not have prior knowledge of the subject. This should include a brief statement of the research area of interest, or the problem to be researched, as well as the project objectives. Summarize the potential impact of the proposed project on the health of Nova Scotians, and/or how the project will strengthen a grant submission to a peer-reviewed provincial, national or international health research competition. Please ensure that your plain language summary is written in plain English and is understandable to someone who is not an expert in your field (e.g. write for a grade 10 level). Include the rationale and outline of your proposed research.

Q: What might Research Fund reviewers expect to see in the knowledge translation plan section of the project proposal?

A: The expectation is that the KT plan should be more robust than just a conference presentation and/or a publication. Consider your audiences and innovative ways to get information to them. Consider reviewing the Toolkit of Research Resources on the NS Health website: Research Development | Research Toolkit, or contact the Maritime SPOR Support Unit for a consultation: Home – MSSU

For assistance with project design, methodology or data analysis, contact: RMU@nshealth.ca. Please contact RMU at least 4 weeks prior to the final deadline if you are seeking full support for the development of your grant application.

Q: If the research team includes a patient partner, what information does the patient need to provide?

A: Indicate in the proposal what the role of the patient will be. If possible, include a 5-page (or less) CV as part of the application package.

Q: If the project requires funding from another agency, in addition to Research Fund, does this need to be stated in the application?

A: The Budget table in the Research Fund application should include the funding that you are requesting from the Research Fund competition only. If your project requires additional funding (e.g. beyond the Research Fund award), please explain these sources in the Budget Justification.

Q: When will applicants be notified about the funding decision?

A: We anticipate being able to announce funding awards by late September.

Q: Do you expect the Research Fund to be offered twice annually? Is there a set schedule?

A: The Research Fund competition is expected to be held once annually with a Spring deadline.

Q: Is there a mailing list I could sign up for to receive Research Fund updates?

A: The Research, Innovation and Discovery newsletter "Research in Action" is circulated every 2 weeks and provides information on internal and external funding opportunities (including Research Fund). Signup Form (constantcontactpages.com)

Q: The research team and lab are based in Central Zone, but recruitment will be from all NS Health Zones. Would this be considered Central Zone or Provincial?

A: Provincial

Q: For Category 4 applications, which team members require a CV in CIHR Biosketch form?

A: The supervisor/mentor submits a CCV in Biosketch format. The rest of the team, including the student/trainee, submits a CV in any form with a 5-page limit.

Q: For early career researchers applying to Category 2, will time off for parental leave be permitted if needed (i.e., can the 3 years of the award be extended if needed)?

A: If the PI takes parental leave during the award, they will be granted additional time to complete the project. Likewise, early-career researcher status, and thus eligibility for Category 2, may be extended based on parental leaves or other justified absences from early-career research duties.

Q: Will unsuccessful Category 1 and 2 applicants be considered for funding under category 3? Or should applicants check off any relevant categories?

A: The PI must select one category and choose the Category that is most appropriate for their career stage and application funding requirement. Please contact Research.Fund@nshealth.ca if you are uncertain which category to apply to.

Budget and Eligible Expenses

Q: I am applying as a medical resident or other student. If my application is successful, will I be eligible to hold these funds at Nova Scotia Health?

A: No. As part of their application, residents and other students must identify a supervisor or mentor who is eligible to hold funds at Nova Scotia Health to hold the awarded funds on their behalf.

Q: Can I hold my Nova Scotia Health Research Fund award at another institution such as Dalhousie or the IWK?

A: It is generally expected that funds awarded through the Research Fund competition will be held at Nova Scotia Health; however, in cases where it is required, funding may also be transferred to other institutions within Nova Scotia. Applicants must indicate their proposed host site in the application and should contact Research.Fund@nshealth.ca for further information.

Q: Are price quotes that support budget items necessary?

A: No, price quotes are not necessary but are often helpful and could be included as appendices.

Q: What expenses are considered eligible?

A: Eligible expenses fall under the following funding categories:

- A. Personnel
- B. Equipment
- C. Materials, supplies and services
- D. Knowledge translation and dissemination
- E. Other

Examples of Eligible Expenses:

Personnel

- Research Assistant
- Biostatistician
- Research Nurse

Service Providers

- Testing, lab shared services, diagnostic imaging, Immunovaccine Inc. etc.
- Consulting fees from Research Methods Unit
- Creation and distribution of surveys

Equipment

- Computer
- Tablets (for data collection etc)
- Other equipment required to accommodate requested personnel

Notes on equipment required to carry out research project:

- Partial funding for equipment intended for both clinical and research purposes will be considered as an eligible expense only if the research portion can be clearly separated from the clinical use portion and guarantees provided that clinical needs will not infringe upon research needs.
- Equipment purchased with funds from the Nova Scotia Health Research Fund is Nova Scotia Health property and must remain in the applicant's department when it is no longer required for the research project or if the applicant leaves Nova Scotia Health.

Materials, Supplies and Administrative Services

- Cadavers
- Software
- Courier services
- Videoconferencing
- Include price quotes and source; e.g., page from software supply company catalogue showing prices of software.

Travel, KT and Dissemination

- Travel costs
- Presentation costs
- Publication fees
- Patent fees

- **New:** Open access publication fees can now be included as part of your project budget.
- Travel for KT purposes is eligible under the following terms:
 - For Category 1, 2, and 3 applicants, travel costs cannot exceed 10% of the study budget.
 - Departments of Category 4 (trainee) applicants will bear all costs for travel and knowledge dissemination.

Other

- Participant cost reimbursement
- Patient partner compensation
- For other types of costs, provide an explanation in the budget justification section.

Q: Are external biostatistical, qualitative, health economics, or data management supports an eligible cost?

A: Yes. If you require biostatistical, qualitative, data management, or health economics support for your proposed research study, please contact Nova Scotia Health's Research Methods Unit (RMU) at: RMU@nshealth.ca

Q: Can funds from this competition be used to pay the Principal Investigator?

A: No, this is not an allowable expense for this competition.

Please Note:

Research grants administered through Nova Scotia Health must use Nova Scotia Health salary scales and benefits. Please contact Research HR for assistance with determining the appropriate salary scales for research positions. To cover the cost of benefit entitlements for PT and FT Long Assignment positions, 25% must be added on top of salaries. 15% benefits are required for PT or FT Short Assignments and Casual Relief positions.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Priority will be given to applications that are led by and/or directly impact African Nova Scotians, Indigenous People, people of color, 2SLGBTQIA+ and other marginalized groups and communities.

Demonstrated evidence of community consultation and collaboration where applicable is required for applications indicating alignment with this priority. Inability to detail adequate engagement practices will result in ineligibility.

Information from CIHR about equity diversity and inclusion practices in research can be found here: [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the Research System - CIHR \(cihr-irsc.gc.ca\)](https://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/en/equity-diversity-and-inclusion)

Please visit the website for further updates on Research Fund: Nova Scotia Health Research Fund (NSHRF) | Nova Scotia Health Innovation Hub (nshealth.ca)

Questions? Please email: Research.Fund@nshealth.ca

Last Updated: June 18, 2024