

Guidelines for the General Research Fund (GRF) at Lambton College (NSERC and SSHRC only)

1. Description

A General Research Fund (GRF) is a special account opened as a trust account under the authority of the President of the College (and authorized delegates by the President), into which the unspent funds of expired or terminated grants are transferred with the authorization of the granting agencies.

Lambton College keeps separate GRF accounts 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 will be kept separate. The funds are administered in a centralized manner, and Lambton College manage the funds meticulously. This document is used a guideline 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. It is the responsibility of the Research and Innovation Department for the GRF, that is, the president of the institution and his/her authorized delegate, to authorize expenditures charged to the GRF in accordance with the requirements and conditions of the grants and with the institutions' and the agencies' policies. No other party may initiate or authorize expenditures without the president's or his or her delegate's written delegated authority.

2. Objective

The GRF is used to reinvest unspent funds from previous years in order to:

- a. Support research in the fields of natural sciences and engineering or social sciences and humanities, as applicable.
- b. Provide small start-up grants to new professors.
- c. Bridge funding to professors who are between applications, or additional funds for professors to support their research.

3. Transfer Conditions

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

- a. The amount to be transferred corresponds to the definition of a residual balance (A 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.)
- b. The institution has completed the annual reconciliation of active awards by submitting the Statements of Account (Form 301);
- c. The institution has spent at least 50% of the opening balance of its GRF during the current year.

4. Allocation Process

- a. Eligible applicants should be employees of Lambton College (Faculty and Staff Researchers).
- b. The maximum individual grant for each project from the Lambton College GRF Fund will be established annually by the Research Innovation Fund Committee of Lambton College. Grants may be provided for the entire proposal or a portion of it.
- c. Applicants have to submit a full Proposal (using Lambton College's Research Innovation Fund proposal template). The submitted proposal will be reviewed and recommended by the three Research Review Panel and forwarded to the Executive Dean of Research and Innovation based on the goals mentioned in section 2 as well as criteria and priorities established by the Lambton College for Research Innovation Fund. Funding for all projects will be granted on the merits of the proposal.
- d. The Application for Funding must be reviewed and approved by the applicant's supervisor before submission. Final approval of an application will be dependent upon the supervisor's statement of support that will include affirmation of discussion and awareness of the proposal, and agreement that approval of the project could result in release time for the applicant.
- e. Priority will normally be given to applicants who are not currently receiving and have not previously received College funding for research. Where applicants have received previous funding, only those who have demonstrated achievement in their approved deliverables will be considered.
- f. All the funding for individual GRF funded project must be used exclusively for the approved project and proper records kept. All unused funds will be returned to the Office of Research and Innovation. As long as the funds are used exclusively to support the employee in her approved research initiative, by mutual agreement of the supervisor and the employee, and with the approval of the Office of Research and Innovation, funds may be applied in a manner different than originally indicated in the application.

5. Eligible Expenses

The policies and requirements of the agencies stated in the Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration always apply to the use of GRF funds.

It is Lambton College'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.

The Use of Grant Funds section under the NSERC website provide detail and 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.

6. College GRF Utilization Mandate

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

7. Reports

Every year, Lambton College must submit to the agencies a Statement of Account (Form 301) for each GRF (NSERC and SSHRC) for the period of April 1 to March 31. The deadline to submit the Form 301 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.