



Simplifying the Insight Grant application (2015)

Structure:

- Institutional, applicant's and proposal basic info –mostly drop down boxes
- Research ethics, enviro-impact, key words, disciplines –mostly drop down boxes
- Response to Previous Critiques– 1 page(3800 characters), max. pasted in
- Request for Multi/Interdisciplinary Evaluation–1 page (3800 characters), pasted in
- Summary of Proposal–1 page (3800 characters) max. pasted in
- Detailed Description– attach pdf; 6 pages, max. Follow margin & font rules.
- Knowledge Mobilization Plan–1 page (3800 characters), max.
- List of References–10 pages, max
- Research Team, Previous Output and Student Training–4 pages, max. (~15k chars)
- Funds Requested from SSHRC–mostly fill in the box
- Budget Justification–attach pdf; 2 pages, max
- Funds From Other Sources–mostly fill in the box
- Expected Outcomes Summary –1 page (3800 characters), max.
- **Suggested Assessors (list up to 3)**
- Exclusion of Potential Assessors– 1 page, max.
- Research Contributions–4 pages, max.
- Other potential inclusions:
 - Appendix A (Environmental Impact)
 - Appendix B (CEAA Pre-Screening Checklist re: Permanent Physical Structure)
 - Research-Creation Support Material—1 page max. Can include a URL

Key points to remember:

Follow the instructions! https://webapps.nserc.ca/SSHRC/Instructions-Help/ig_instr_e.htm#top

White space is your friend. (hint: Subtitles enable white space *and* organizational cueing)

Be **succinct**, eloquent and **non-specialist** in your language.

In 2013, SSHRC received 2,144 applications. Pity the poor colleague who has to read 100s⁺ files:

Organize your material the way they ask you to: Objectives; Context; Methodology (& by Evaluation Criteria)

Avoid the trauma of last minute cuts. Know how much to write in advance:

- 1 page on SSHRC's cut & paste file = **3800 characters** (including punctuation, spaces, etc.)
- 6 pages is therefore ~ **22,800 characters**

For attachments: SSHRC requires **Times New Roman**, 12 pt font, 2.5 cm margins ('Normal' in Word).

Convert your documents into one **PDF** file per section (.pdf) before attaching.

Submit for internam peer review with the Grant Assist Program.

How does SSHRC Adjudication work?

Adjudication combines collective knowledge from [committee members](#) and [external reviewers](#), drawn from Canada and internationally. The experts required to evaluate proposals may come from postsecondary institutions or public, private or not-for-profit institutions. Committee composition and the number of committees involved in the adjudication of applications may vary between funding opportunities, according to the expertise required and volume of applications. Other factors, including the applicant's preference (ie; for multidisciplinary adjudication), diversity and appropriate knowledge of both official languages, affects the structure of adjudication committees.

Committees have a chair and several readers. All members must read all applications assigned to them (except in cases of conflict of interest), long with the pertinent assessments provided by the external assessors. The committee score the applications according to a table provided by SSHRC's program officer. Most committees conduct a [calibration teleconference](#), led by the committee chair, several weeks prior to the adjudication. The teleconference offers an opportunity to discuss the consistent use of evaluation criteria and the scoring system.

Committee members submit their preliminary scores to the program officer before the [adjudication committee meeting](#). The officer compiles all the interim scores, translating them into an [initial overall ranking](#). This ranking is used during the [committee meeting](#) to identify where members differ in their assessments. Depending on the volume of applications, and at the discretion of the committee chair, it may also be used as a tool to determine the order of [discussion of applications](#). After discussion, and the final calibration of scores, all applications receive a unique rank. [There are no ties](#).

Grant Type	Submission Deadline	Applications to Extranet	Members Orientation	Chairs' Orientation	Calibration Teleconference	Adjudication Meetings	Results Available
<i>Insight Grant</i>	<i>October 15,</i>	<i>December</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>December</i>	<i>Jan / Feb</i>	<i>Early March</i>	<i>April</i>

Applications (and committee memberships) are organized according to "Research Groups"

The Research Group you select = the group of scholars you want to evaluate your proposal

Multidisciplinary adjudication is available. You must justify this request in one page. *However: most scholars are not happy with multi-disciplinary adjudication results.*

In no way should you expect your evaluation committee to all be expert in your specific field of research. This means your prose must be non-technical. Geographers must write so that a political scientist or an anthropologist or criminologist could understand the issues. And vice-versa.

Don't know your group? The department of your principle placement is a good clue (unless you are in public health, rehab medicine, nursing, design...) [Groups are listed on the next page]

SSHRC Research Groups:		
Anthropology	Group 2	Group 1: History; mediaeval studies; classics; literature; fine arts; philosophy; religious studies; <i>and related fields.</i>
archaeology	Group 2	
business & management	Group 3	
classics	Group 1	
communication studies	Group 4	
criminology	Group 2	
cultural studies	Group 4	
demography	Group 4	
economics	Group 3	
education	Group 5	
fine arts	Group 1	
gender studies	Group 4	
geography	Group 2	
history	Group 1	
journalism	Group 4	
law	Group 2	
library and information science	Group 4	Group 2: Anthropology; archaeology; linguistics; translation; political science; public administration; law; criminology; geography; urban planning and environmental studies; <i>and related fields.</i>
linguistics	Group 2	
literature	Group 1	
media studies	Group 4	
mediaeval studies	Group 1	
philosophy	Group 1	
political science	Group 2	
psychology	Group 5	
public administration	Group 2	
religious studies	Group 1	
social work	Group 5	Group 3: Business and management; economics; <i>and related fields.</i>
sociology	Group 4	
translation	Group 2	
urban planning & environmental studies	Group 2	
		Group 4: Sociology; demography; communication studies; journalism; media studies; gender studies; cultural studies; library and information science; <i>and related fields.</i>
		Group 5: Education, psychology; social work; <i>and related fields.</i>

Insight Grant Evaluation Criteria:

<i>Three categories</i>		Section of the proposal
Challenge	40%	Detailed description (including literature review, theoretical approach, methodology); also: Student Training; Expected Outcomes;
Feasibility	20%	Detailed description; (including timelines portion of methodology & other activities); Budget Justification; Funds Requested from SSHRC; Funds from Other Sources; Knowledge Mobilization Plan.
Capability	40%	SSHRC CV (pubs, supervision); Research Team; Research Contributions; Previous Output (also: indications of potential).

Scoring

It's *really important* to pay attention to the scoring system. Marshal your energy and focus where it will score the most points: *The Detailed Description, Budget and your CV.*

Part 1: Challenge - The aim and importance of the endeavour (40%)

Sub-criteria (No specific weighting assigned to each sub-criterion)	N/A	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory-Good	Good-Very Good	Very Good-Excellent
Originality, significance and expected contribution to knowledge					
Appropriateness of the literature review					
Appropriateness of the theoretical approach or framework					
Appropriateness of the methods/approach					
Quality of training and mentoring to be provided to students, emerging scholars and other highly qualified personnel, and opportunities for them to contribute					
Potential influence and impact within and/or beyond the social sciences and humanities research community					

Feasibility—The plan to achieve excellence (20%):

- probability of effective and timely attainment of the research objectives;
- appropriateness of the requested budget and justification of proposed costs;
- indications of financial and in-kind contributions from other sources, where appropriate;
- quality of knowledge mobilization plans, including for effective knowledge dissemination, knowledge exchange and engagement within and/or beyond the research community; and
- strategies and timelines for the design and conduct of the activity/activities proposed.

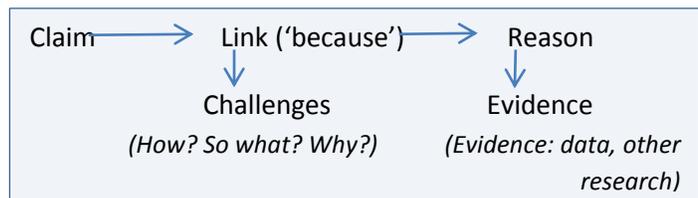
Capability—The expertise to succeed (40%):

- quality, quantity and significance of past experience and published and/or creative outputs of the applicant and any team members relative to their roles in the project and their respective stages of career;
- evidence of contributions such as commissioned reports, professional practice, public discourse, public policies, products and services, experience in collaboration, etc.;
- evidence of contributions to the development of talent; and
- potential to make future contributions.

Elements of excellence in the Detailed Description:

- Use the subject headings provided by SSHRC:
 - Objectives
 - Context (including literature review and theoretical approach)
 - Methodology
- Show mastery of the genre of “proposal argumentation”

All grant proposals ask you to identify¹:



- A Problem
 - Demonstrated by the literature, public concern, research data, mystery...
 - A Solution
 - Based on analysis of the relevant literature, data, situation & the *missing information/insight that will resolve the problem*
 - Your Means to the Solution = *you will provide the missing bits*
 - Research to collect and analyse the required data, create the necessary documentation / creative product
 - Rationale as to why this solution is the best one to fund
 - Rationale as to why you are the researcher
 - Rationale as to the benefits that will accrue from the research
- Presents the complicated research literature and trajectory as if it is linear (makes it seem simple):
 - Research question justifies research methodology;
 - research methodology will produce projected Research outcome;
 - Research outcome contributes to humanity / society / future scholarship
 - Research is a reasonable value for the funds requested.
 - Is flawless in format, rhetoric, prose, punctuation and grammar.

How to get there? Start with the elevator pitch method:

1 Sentence each:

What is your research problem? [how do you know it's a problem?]
What is your method of investigation? [why is this the right method]
What is your work plan? [how will you gather info? Who will help you? How long will it take?]
What will your investigation produce? [Expected outcomes; collateral outcomes]
What will the results of your contribution contribute? To whom? [Relate back to the problem].

¹ Based on “Grant Proposals: How to Write & Argue Effectively” presentation by Roger Graves, 2012.