

Stage 2 Foundation 2014 Applications: Most Common Strengths Observed by CIHR Reviewers

Outlined in this document is a summary of the most common strengths listed by CIHR reviewers in feedback received by University of Alberta applicants to the Stage 2 Foundation 2014 competition. Analysis was performed on 53 reviews of 11 applications. Four of the applications analyzed were approved at Stage 3 and seven applications were not approved.

The common strengths were analyzed by the [Stage 2 review sub-criteria](#): Research Concept, Research Approach, Expertise, Mentorship & Training, and Quality of Support Environment. The particular evaluation points for each sub-criterion, as they were presented to reviewers in ResearchNet, are marked with arrows. The number of reviews that commented on a particular evaluation point is shown as a percentage of the total number of comments for that evaluation point for applications that were approved (A) (19 reviews total) or not approved (NA) (34 reviews total). The actual number of mentions is given in square brackets after each percentage. Representative types of comments within each evaluation point are also listed, with their frequencies.

Sub-Criterion Research Concept

- The potential program outputs are significant to health and could have high impact – A: 58% [11]; NA: 53% [18]
 - Outputs are significant – A: 53% [10]; NA: 41% [14]
 - Outputs could have high impact on health – A: 21% [4]; NA: 21% [7]
 - Basic research with clinical applications – A: 16% [3]; NA: 12% [4]
 - Clear clinical applications – A: 11% [2]; NA: 9% [3]
- Objectives and/or goals of the proposal are well-defined – A: 42% [8]; NA: 44% [15]
 - Objectives/goals/aims are well-defined – A: 42% [8]; NA: 44% [15]
 - Objectives/goals/aims are well-justified – A: 32% [6]; NA: 12% [4]
- The framework is coherent and there is conceptual coherence within the program of research - A: 37% [7]; NA: 41% [14]
 - Framework is coherent – A: 5% [1]; NA: 3% [1]
 - Program of research and goals are coherent – A: 32% [6]; NA: 41% [14]
- The program has a translational (ex. clinical studies) or strong Knowledge Translation (KT) component – A: 37% [7]; NA: 12% [4]
 - Program has a translational component – A: 26% [5]; NA: 9% [3]
 - Program has a strong knowledge translation component – A: 11% [2]; NA: 3% [1]
- The concept, hypothesis and/or approach are novel – A: 16% [3]; NA: 12% [4]
 - Concept is novel – A: 11% [2]; NA: 3% [1]
 - Hypothesis is novel – A: 5% [1]; NA: 0% [0]
 - Approach is novel – A: 0% [0]; NA: 9% [3]

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- Made a discovery to advance field – A: 21% [4]; NA: 0% [0]
- The area of study is of high importance and/or intriguing – A: 5% [1]; NA: 32% [11]
 - Area of study is important – A: 0% [0]; NA: 15% [5]
 - Research questions are of high importance or intriguing – A: 5% [1]; NA: 18% [6]
- The applicant has a strong track record in field – A: 16% [3]; NA: 9% [3]

Sub-Criterion Research Approach

- Research approach is reasonable, appropriate, and will deliver on objectives – A: 47% [9]; NA: 41% [14]
 - Research approach is reasonable or appropriate – A: 42% [8]; NA: 38% [13]
 - Research approach will deliver on objectives – A: 21% [4]; NA: 18% [6]
- Approach allows for flexibility – A: 21% [4]; NA: 15% [5]
- Approach considers challenges and mitigation strategies – A: 32% [6]; NA: 35% [12]
- Applicant(s) has expertise and resources to execute the approach – A: 37% [7]; NA: 38% [13]
 - Applicant has expertise to execute the approach – A: 37% [7]; NA: 32% [11]
 - Applicant has resources to execute the approach – A: 5% [1]; NA: 12% [4]
- Appropriate methodology – A: 11% [2]; NA: 21% [7]
 - Methodology described is appropriate – A: 5% [1]; NA: 12% [4]
 - Broad range of approaches described – A: 5% [1]; NA: 9% [3]
- Research approach is innovative – A: 5% [1]; NA: 0% [0]
- Proposed work is clinically important – A: 5% [1]; NA: 15% [5]
- Research approach includes a Knowledge Translation (KT) plan – A: 11% [2]; NA: 3% [1]
- Clear timeline provided – A: 5% [1]; NA: 3% [1]
- Measurement of program success is appropriate – A: 11% [2]; NA: 21% [7]
 - Clear description of success metrics and progress/outcome measures – A: 5% [1]; NA: 12% [4]

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Sub-Criterion Expertise

- The applicant(s) have the appropriate expertise and relevant experience to lead and manage the proposed program of research, considering its objectives and scope – A: 100% [19]; NA: 94% [32]
 - Strong publication record – A: 42% [8]; NA: 38% [13]
 - Applicant has received strong funding, awards, speaking invitations – A: 26% [5]; NA: 15% [5]
 - Made discoveries with impact – A: 21% [4]; NA: 9% [3]
 - Leader in the field – A: 42% [8]; NA: 41% [14]
- There is an appropriate complement and level of engagement and/or commitment from key Program Expert(s) – A: 68% [13]; NA: 68% [23]

Sub-Criterion Mentorship & Training

- The research program include a comprehensive mentorship and training plan for building capacity and positioning students, trainees, knowledge users, emerging scholars, and/or new/early career investigators for successful research careers and/or other career paths in non-academic health-related fields – A: 95% [18]; NA: 94% [32]
 - Training of future academic researchers – A: 32% [6]; NA: 56% [19]
 - Training of researchers for industry careers – A: 5% [1]; NA: 9% [3]
 - Training of clinicians or future clinicians – A: 21% [4]; NA: 18% [6]
 - Training of knowledge users – A: 11% [2]; NA: 6% [2]
 - Mentoring of junior colleagues – A: 5% [1]; NA: 6% [2]
- The proposed plan demonstrate an appropriate and innovative approach for meeting its objectives in relation to the program of research and the research field – A: 37% [7]; NA: 41% [14]
 - Training in skills beyond direct research – A: 16% [3]; NA: 15% [5]
 - Multidisciplinary training opportunities – A: 11% [2]; NA: 9% [3]
 - Strong training environment outside the applicant's research group – A: 16% [3]; NA: 12% [4]
 - Training opportunities with collaborators – A: 11% [2]; NA: 15% [5]
- The plan includes a strategy for identifying and mitigating potential challenges – A: 11% [2]; NA: 15% [5]

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Sub-Criterion Quality of Support Environment

- Is the described environment(s) appropriate to enable the conduct of the program of research, and to manage and deliver on the objectives and key components of the proposed research program (e.g., research, knowledge translation, mentoring/training) through the provision of, or access to, the required infrastructure – A: 95% [18]; NA: 100% [34]
 - Physical infrastructure – A: 42% [8]; NA: 41% [14]
 - Expertise of colleagues, consortia, professional networks – A: 21% [4]; NA: 50% [17]
 - Equipment and specialized facilities – A: 37% [7]; NA: 47% [16]
 - Cash or in-kind support from department, Faculty or university – A: 21% [4]; NA: 32% [11]