SSHRC Explore

Instructions and Guidelines

OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Fun Facts:

- SSHRC Explore Grant funding is provided to USask based on an annual grant made to the University of Saskatchewan by SSHRC in general support of research and scholarly work in the social sciences, humanities, and fine arts.
- The value of this annual grant is based on the University's performance in SSHRC's research grants programs and the number of University faculty members who are eligible for SSHRC funding.
- This means that if you receive a SSHRC Explore grant, you have USask colleagues to thank for their efforts to receive SSHRC external funding. If they hadn't applied externally and been successful, these resources would not be available to you.
- We hope this information helps you consider "paying it forward" to other USask colleagues by applying externally for other SSHRC opportunities so that we continue to have this wonderful resource available to our scholarly community.
- SSHRC Explore Grant applications are subject to competitive adjudication by members of the University of Saskatchewan SSHRC Committee, appointed by the Office of the Vice-President Research.

Purpose

- to foster research-based knowledge in the social sciences and humanities by supporting small-scale research projects that fall under the scope of eligible research within SSHRC's Insight program.

Objectives

- to help researchers build a foundation to better position their research on the national scale
- to support emerging scholars with small-scale research opportunities to help them establish their research agendas.
- to support established researchers with extension opportunities for established research agendas, and/or opportunities for exploration of new avenues of research.

Note: Priority will be granted to research activities that have a strong foundation of equity, diversity and inclusion inherent within the design of the research and/or the creation of the research team. Priority will also be extended to research activities involving Indigenous communities.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND DEADLINE

UnivRS internal deadline for compliance: February 13, 2026.
Agency submission deadline: February 23, 2026.

Note: Please consult with your Research Facilitator or Associate/Vice Dean Research/Director regarding Departmental/College Level Approvals.

The form-fillable application can be downloaded from the USask Website. Applications must include the application form and required CV documentation and must be submitted via UnivRS.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Applicants are eligible to apply to both the SSHRC Explore and SSHRC Exchange competitions in the same competition year. Sufficient justification must be provided when applying to both programs.
- Recipients can be awarded only one SSHRC Explore Grant per competition year.
- Recipients can hold only one SSHRC Explore Grant at a time and cannot apply again until the minimal term of the Explore competition is complete (one academic year). For example, if an award holder requests a two-year term for the research grant, but the research is completed within a year, the researcher is eligible to forward a new application. However, a researcher who completes a one-year project earlier than expected cannot apply again until the one-year time period is complete.
- Previous recipients of SSHRC Explore funds are eligible to apply for a SSHRC Explore Grant again, provided that the project has been completed.
- Researchers seeking support for health-related social sciences and humanities research should review SSHRC's eligibility guidelines prior to applying.

The maximum level of support is **$10,000**, including up to $1,000 for conference travel expenses. **The term of the grant is a maximum of two years**. Projects must commence within six months of the award notice.

In the interest of funding as many meritorious proposals as possible, if funding is not sufficient to award all proposals recommended for funding, the USask SSHRC Committee may reduce each grant awarded for the current competition, and/or hold another grant competition within the one-year period.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must be eligible under SSHRC's criteria. Eligibility criteria specific to each funding opportunity are detailed in the individual SSHRC funding program descriptions.

Applicants:

All faculty members holding a professorial rank (Professor, Associate Professor or Assistant Professor) including probationary, tenured, continuing status, without term and limited term appointees within those ranks, are eligible under SSHRC's criteria. Applicants must additionally meet the requirements and eligibility criteria established by applicable university policies and corresponding procedures (Research Administration and Eligibility to Apply for, Hold and Administer Research Funding).

Applicants holding a limited term or without term appointment and postdoctoral fellows are eligible to apply, provided the terms of their appointment and assigned duties support the eligibility to apply in compliance with university policy and the term of their appointment with USask extends for a period sufficient to make it feasible to carry out the proposed research project and/or travel. Individuals who apply for awards must confirm they are eligible to hold and administer funds requirements as per [Eligibility to Apply for, Hold and Administer Research Funding Policy](#).

A full-time faculty member of St. Thomas More College who has a cross-appointment at USask and who is applying jointly with an eligible USask faculty member is also eligible to apply provided that their appointment meets eligibility criteria as per applicable policy requirements.

Adjunct professors are not eligible to apply for this grant.

Co-Applicants:

In order to be eligible to apply for a SSHRC Explore Grant as a co-applicant, an individual must be one of the following:

1. A faculty member from an eligible postsecondary institution (national or international)
2. A postdoctoral fellow

Collaborators:

Collaborators do not need to be affiliated with a postsecondary institution. With the exception of certain travel- and subsistence-related expenses, SSHRC Explore does not cover expenses that collaborators incur in the conduct of research or research-related activity.

Students and Research Staff:

Students and research staff are ineligible to apply as either an applicant or a co-applicant.

Emerging Scholars (utilizing SSHRC's definition):

1. hold a USask appointment that is eligible to hold research funds for less than six years; or
2. have had their careers significantly interrupted or delayed for health or family reasons within the past six years.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. **Challenge: 40%**
    a. Clarity of purpose and objectives;
    b. Originality and significance of the research;
    c. Research is appropriately grounded in the scholarly literature;
    d. Research gaps and rationale for the research is clear;
    e. Theoretical/conceptual framework is appropriate for the research question and research design;
    f. Methods (data collection, analysis, etc.) are clearly described;
    g. Quality of student/researcher/personnel training and mentorship strategies;
    h. Potential for influence/impact within the scholarly community;
    i. Potential for influence/impact beyond the scholarly community;

      j.   Extent to which constructs and practices that support equity, diversity and inclusion are evident in the conceptualization/design of the research project.

2. **Feasibility: 40%**
    a. Achievable within the stated timelines;
    b. Budget justification and appropriateness to the research;
    c. Quality of knowledge mobilization plan within the scholarly community;
    d. Quality of knowledge mobilization plan beyond the scholarly community;
    e. Indications of leveraging cash or in-kind support from other sources.
3. **Capability: 40%**
    a. Quality of research team (including roles and responsibilities);
    b. Applicant's research record relative to career stage;
    c. Evidence of past knowledge mobilization activities (e.g. publications, contributions to public debate, media) and impacts on policy and practice;
    d. Applicant's record of student/researcher/personnel training relative to career stage;
    e. Extent to which practices that support equity diversity and inclusion are evident in the design/recruitment/training of the research team.

CONDITIONS OF GRANT

Support received from the SSHRC Explore Grant must be acknowledged in any resulting publications and presentations.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF GRANT

Applicants will normally be advised of results within eight weeks of the competition deadline. Funds will be available following the award decision and a research fund will be established. Funds will be accessible once all required approvals are in place.

ACHIEVEMENT REPORTS

All recipients of SSHRC funding must report on how they have used grant funds, and on the outcomes and impact of their research.

Unless otherwise stated, achievement reports must be submitted within six months of the end of the grant period, inclusive of any extension.

Recipients who do not meet this deadline will be ineligible for future grants or awards until the outstanding report has been submitted.

OVER-EXPENDITURES AND EXTENSIONS

Over-expenditures of grants are not permitted. Arrangements may be made to extend the term of the grant due to extenuating circumstances that must be articulated in the extension request. An extension may be requested for up to a maximum of six months and must be made a minimum of 30 days before the grant end date. **No additional extensions will be entertained**.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

APPLICATION FORM

Section 1: Application Details

- List your name, email address, and department/college in the space provided.
- Indicate the type of academic position currently held.
    - For those who hold term positions, please indicate the expected date of your term completion.
- List the year of your first appointment.
- Optional: If you so choose, please indicate if you self-identify as belonging to one or more of the minority groups as designated by the University's equity policy.
- Optional: If you so choose, please indicate if you are willing to share a successful application in a grant repository to be available to future applicants as an exemplar.

Section 2: Project Details

Project Title: List your project title in the space provided.

Names of Co-Applicants: List the project co-applicants and their affiliation in the space provided.

Please note: to be eligible to apply for a SSHRC Explore Grant as a co-applicant, an individual *must be* one of the following:

1. a faculty member from an eligible postsecondary institution (national or international) OR
2. a postdoctoral fellow

Students and research staff are ineligible to apply as either an applicant or a co-applicant.

Names of Collaborators: List the project collaborators and their affiliation in the space provided.

Please note: Collaborators do not need to be affiliated with a postsecondary institution. Excepting certain travel- and subsistence-related expenses, SSHRC Explore does not cover expenses that collaborators incur in the conduct of research or research-related activity.

Total SSHRC Explore Funds Requested: Please indicate the amount of funding you are requesting, up to a maximum of **$10,000**.

Applicable approvals required: Please indicate whether you require any or all of the following approvals: Human Ethics Approval, Animal Care Approval, Biohazard Approval or No Approval Required. Please note: You need not have already applied for these approvals.

Section 3: Detailed Budget

Provide a detailed justification for each expenditure using the table provided on page 2 of the application form. Be sure to provide sufficient information to allow reviewers to assess whether the resources requested are appropriate. Please refer to the Compensation Budgeting and Calculation Tool for guidance on salary costs (*Note: changes to costs are based on institutional requirements that can*

change during the application period. It is recommended that applicants confirm costs with a research facilitator or the SSHRC Research Development Specialist).

Note: The expenditures and justifications must be written in plain language; avoid using jargon or acronyms that have not been defined previously.

Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

All expenditures must be justified and are subject to the use of grant funding restrictions listed below and in the [Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration](). All costs must be justified in terms of the needs of the project, including costs for organizing and integrating team activities and for communicating results to audiences, stakeholders and the public.

Further SSHRC Explore Grant restrictions on the use of funding include the following:

- Conference travel is eligible only up to a maximum of $1,000 of the proposed budget. Conference travel must occur within the SSHRC Explore grant tenure. ***Explanation of how conference attendance is essential to the project must be included in the application.***
- For personnel costs, please use the [current University rate of pay]() and include non-discretionary benefits (Canada Pension Plan, Workers' Compensation, Employment Insurance, vacation).
- Release time stipends and teaching releases are not eligible.
- Research conducted under contract for a public or private agency or firm is not eligible.
- Collection or preparation of material primarily intended for personal classroom needs or teaching purposes is not eligible.
- Purchase of software or equipment will be considered only if strong justification is demonstrated, and funding is not available from other sources. The purchase of computers is not an allowable expense. All software and equipment purchased through a SSHRC Explore Grant remains the property of the University. Purchase of equipment normally provided by a University unit or through University allocations for the purpose of capital equipment is not eligible.

Section 4: Timeline

Provide a detailed timeline of research activities in the table provided on page 3 of the application form. Please ensure the proposed timelines are appropriate and clearly indicate how the proposed objectives will be met.

ATTACHMENT GUIDELINES: DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Before writing the project description below, please ensure you have consulted the SSHRC Explore evaluation criteria as outlined on page 2 of this guide.

Using non-technical terms that can be understood by a multi-disciplinary committee, please provide a detailed description of your project that addresses all of the following sections (1-10).

Presentation Standards:

- Calibri 12pt font, 1 inch margins submitted as a PDF.

- Each section below includes an **approximate page length** to guide your writing. These are based on **standard formatting** (Calibri 12pt font, 1 inch margins). Character counts are provided as **rough estimates only**. The **maximum length is 4 pages** (approximately 2500 characters/page), plus 1 page for references (5 pages total).
- **NOTE: Any text that exceeds 4 pages (not including references) will not be read by the committee.**

1. **Lay Summary** *(approximately 800 characters with spaces – 1/3 page)*
   a. Provide a short lay summary of your project. Using simple terms, briefly describe the nature of the work to be done. Indicate why and to whom the research is important within and beyond the scholarly community, the anticipated outcomes, and the benefits to the research field.

2. **Objectives** *(approximately 800 characters with spaces – 1/3 page)*
   a. List the purpose and/or objectives of the proposed activities including a rationale that explains the context, originality, and the need for the project.

3. **Theoretical Framework and Context** *(approximately 1600 characters with spaces – 2/3 page)*
   a. Clearly describe your conceptual approach or theoretical framework.
   b. Situate your research within the current scholarly literature, identifying the relevant knowledge/research gaps.

4. **Methods** *(approximately 1600 characters with spaces – 2/3 page)*
   a. Describe your proposed research design and activities, including specific instruments or procedures, data collection, and analyses. Please provide sufficient details to allow the reviewers to assess the feasibility of the research activities and the appropriateness of the methods/approach.

5. **Significance of Research** *(approximately 800 characters with spaces – 1/3 page)*
   a. Describe the originality and significance (economic, social, cultural, or intellectual) of your project, as well as its expected contribution to knowledge in the social sciences and/or humanities.

6. **Knowledge Mobilization** *(approximately 1200 characters with spaces – 1/2 page)*
   a. Describe the audience interested in your research and how you plan to engage and share results with them. Describe the potential for the results to influence and have an impact within and/or beyond the social sciences and humanities research community.

7. **Research Team** *(approximately 1200 characters with spaces – 1/2 page)*
   a. Outline the roles, responsibilities, and contributions of each of the team members, including the principal applicant (PI), co-applicant(s), and collaborator(s).
   b. Research Training:
      i. Describe your approach to training students, postdoctoral scholars, emerging scholars, and other highly qualified personnel, detailing your mentoring approach and the type of research training and development opportunities that

will be provided. Clearly indicate the duties (especially with respect to research) that they will be undertaking, as well as how these will complement their academic training. Please see SSHRC's Guidelines for Effective Research Training for guidance.

8. **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)** *(approximately 800 characters with spaces – 1/2 page)*
   a. Address considerations of equity, diversity and inclusion in the research conceptualization/ design. EDI considerations should be integrated into the composition of the trainee group as well as that of their supervisors, role models, and mentors. Material for this section can be integrated within other sections. For ideas to support this section, please visit the RASI EDI website.

9. *Additional Funding Support* *(approximately 400 characters with spaced – 1/6 page)*
   a. List any other active research grants which may be used to fund this or any directly related projects during the funding period of the proposed SSHRC Explore Grant. Do not include information concerning previous applications or grants that ended or will end before the funding period of the proposed Explore grant.
   b. Discuss any cash or in-kind funding that might be used to leverage this research project (e.g. APEF usage, college in-kind opportunities, partner cash or in-kind support).
   c. If applicable, indicate the percentage of overlap in funding and describe the ways in which proposed Explore Grant would constitute a departure from the other grant(s).

10. **List of References** *(1 page)*
    a. List all references cited or works referred to in your proposal. The use of different referencing styles is permitted.