

Research Initiatives Program



General Research Stream Funding Guidelines

WorkplaceNL

Health | Safety | Compensation

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1.0 Introduction

WorkplaceNL’s Research Initiatives Program provides funding for workplace health and safety research to inform the development of innovative solutions to prevent workplace injuries and support return to work following an injury.

These guidelines are intended to provide researchers with clarity on the funding available for research projects approved under the General Research Stream of this program. The guidelines describe the amount of funding available for projects, the general process for fund disbursement and eligible project expenses. The guidelines do not replace any provisions included in an agreement made between a researcher and WorkplaceNL for research projects approved under this program.

2.0 Overall Project Budgets

A research project approved under the General Research Stream may receive funding from WorkplaceNL of up to \$100,000 per year of the project, to a maximum of \$200,000, as projects have a maximum time length of two years (see Table 1).

Table 1: Project Funding and Duration	
Maximum Project Duration	Two years
Maximum Project Funding	\$100,000 per year; maximum of \$200,000 for a two-year project

The funding maximum of \$100,000 per year is not pro-rated; that is, should a project be less than 12 months the project may still receive up to \$100,000 in funding. Similarly, if the project is longer than 12 months but less than 24 months duration, the project may receive funding for up to \$200,000 total (see Table 2). WorkplaceNL will consider the reasonableness of project costs as part of its assessment of research proposals.

Table 2: Examples of Eligible Funding Requests			
Funding Request	Project Duration	Eligible for Approval?	Reason
\$100,000	12 months	Yes	Does not exceed budget or duration limits
\$200,000	24 months	Yes	Does not exceed budget or duration limits
\$200,000	12 months	No	Exceeds project budget maximum
\$100,000	9 months	Yes	Does not exceed budget or duration limits
\$200,000	15 months	Yes	Does not exceed budget or duration limits
\$300,000	12 months	No	Exceeds project budget maximum

Table 2: Examples of Eligible Funding Requests			
Funding Request	Project Duration	Eligible for Approval?	Reason
\$100,000	30 months	No	Exceeds project duration maximum

WorkplaceNL will not provide funding for project expenses exceeding the agreed-upon budget for an approved research project; the researcher is responsible for any project cost overruns. Furthermore, while time extensions may be considered for research projects that require longer than expected to complete, project budget increases will not be considered by WorkplaceNL.

3.0 Project Payments

Forty per cent of the total budget for an approved research project will be paid upfront to the researcher by WorkplaceNL following full execution of a project agreement. To facilitate this payment, the researcher must remit an invoice for 40 per cent of the total project budget to WorkplaceNL for payment. This payment does not require an accompanying progress or financial report to be approved by WorkplaceNL.

Ten per cent of the approved project budget will be held back by WorkplaceNL until successful completion of the project, which is defined as:

- The researcher has submitted the project’s final report and executive summary to WorkplaceNL, to WorkplaceNL’s satisfaction;
- The researcher has submitted any other project deliverables (defined in the project agreement) to WorkplaceNL, to WorkplaceNL’s satisfaction;
- The researcher has completed a presentation on the project’s findings to WorkplaceNL’s Board of Directors and senior management team; and
- All other project progress and financial reporting has been completed to WorkplaceNL’s satisfaction.

The remaining 50 per cent of the approved project budget must be invoiced by the researcher to WorkplaceNL. The project agreement will specify at least two payments to comprise this 50 per cent. The schedule and amounts per payment will be established in the project agreement based on a project’s duration and other relevant factors, as required (see Table 3).

Table 3: General Research Stream Payment Schedule	
Project Agreement Execution	40%
Mid-Project	50% (divided into at least two payments)
Project Completion	10%

Apart from the 40 per cent upfront payment, WorkplaceNL requires satisfactory progress and financial reporting from the researcher prior to any payment being issued for the research project.

WorkplaceNL's program provides funding only for actual expenses incurred, which must be outlined in the progress and financial reporting for approved research projects. Expenses must meet certain requirements to be eligible for funding, as outlined in Section 4.0 of these guidelines. For these reasons, if a project does not expend its full budget or if certain expenses do not meet the eligibility requirements:

- The 10 per cent holdback described above may be adjusted to a lower amount;
- The 10 per cent holdback may be withheld by WorkplaceNL; or
- The researcher may be required to return unspent funds to WorkplaceNL, at WorkplaceNL's request, if the amount of funding already provided exceeds the actual eligible expenses incurred.

4.0 Eligible Project Expenses

All costs included in a budget for a proposed research project, and all subsequent expenses for approved projects, must clearly relate to the objectives and activities of the project. Separate application forms and guidelines available on WorkplaceNL's website provide additional details on the presentation of budgets in project proposals.

Table 5 describes eligible project expenses and related restrictions for certain items.

**Table 4:
Eligible Project Expenses and Restrictions**

Budget Item	Restrictions
Salaries	<p>Funds may not be used as salary support for the project’s Lead Researcher, Secondary or Key Researcher(s) or Co-Applicants.</p> <p>Funds may be used to provide salary support for other members of the research team and project personnel. Students (undergraduate and graduate), post-doctoral fellows, research assistants, transcriptionists, statisticians and data entry or analysis personnel are examples of team members who may be eligible for salary support.</p> <p>No more than 20 per cent of salaries shall be used towards the costs of benefits (e.g., Employment Insurance (EI), Canada Pension Plan (CPP), health benefit coverage) for employees.</p> <p>The salary details must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number and job titles of people to work on the project • The base hourly or annual wage (excluding benefits) • Dollar amounts of benefits (CPP, EI, other) • The percentage or number of hours and time period paid project team members will devote to the project
Equipment	<p>No more than 10 per cent of the total budget can be used for permanent equipment expenditures that are integral to the proposed research project. Permanent equipment includes items that may be used again following project completion (e.g., laptop computer).</p>
Materials and Supplies	<p>Funds may be used for materials and supplies required to complete the research project, provided they are clearly separate from any materials or supplies included in any overhead or indirect costs. Any materials or supplies accounted for in the Overhead or Indirect Costs budget section must not also be listed in the Materials and Supplies budget section.</p>

**Table 4:
Eligible Project Expenses and Restrictions**

Budget Item	Restrictions
Overhead (Indirect Costs)	<p>A rate of no more than 20 per cent of the project costs can be applied for overhead (i.e., indirect project costs). The costs must be itemized and may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirect salaries and benefits of administration and managerial supervision • Office supplies • Professional fees (e.g., accounting) • Office equipment use (e.g., photocopiers and computer equipment) • Postage or courier costs • Telecommunications costs (e.g., phones, internet access) • Lease of office space • Utilities <p>WorkplaceNL does not require an itemized cost listing for overhead or indirect costs associated with a university policy. The associated policy should be shared in the research project proposal. In the absence of a specific policy, an itemized cost list is required.</p> <p>Project costs, including any overhead or indirect costs, must fall within the maximum project budget as described in Section 2.0.</p>
Travel, Accommodation and Meals	<p>Reasonable travel to conduct research activities may be considered; any such requests must be appropriately explained in the research proposal.</p> <p>Travel costs are to be at rates no greater than those permitted by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for the public service, which are available on its website: https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/tbs/policies/travel/</p> <p>The proposed project budget must present costs associated with travel to conduct research activities separately from travel costs associated with attending a conference (see Knowledge Transfer and Exchange (KTE) and Conferences below).</p>

**Table 4:
Eligible Project Expenses and Restrictions**

Budget Item	Restrictions
<p>Knowledge Transfer and Exchange (KTE) and Conferences</p>	<p>Expenses related to conference participation may be allowed for the purposes of disseminating research project results.</p> <p>The proposal budget must separate conference-related expenses into two categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conference fees and related costs (\$1,500 project maximum) – This includes the conference registration fees and any materials required to participate or prepare for the conference, such as printing costs. 2. Conference-related travel costs (\$3,000 project maximum) – This includes transportation, accommodation and meal costs associated with attending a conference. <p>The budget maximums for conference fees and travel only apply to conferences.</p> <p>Any other travel associated with KTE that does not include conference participation (for example, to share findings with a stakeholder group) may also be considered. This type of KTE-related travel is not subject to the maximum amounts associated with conference participation.</p> <p>All travel costs must be reasonable, justified as important for the research project and adhere to Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Travel Policies.</p>
<p>Publications</p>	<p>Funding to publish research findings in open-access journals may be considered, provided the amounts are reasonable and the benefits for the research project are clearly explained.</p> <p>Funding will not be provided for publication subscriptions or society membership fees.</p>
<p>Entertainment and Hospitality</p>	<p>Research project funds may not be used for entertainment or hospitality of any kind. This includes, but is not limited to, providing meals, beverages, transportation or gifts to individuals participating in or with an interest in the project that would be reasonably assumed to be different than participant honorariums (see Honorariums item below).</p>

Table 4: Eligible Project Expenses and Restrictions	
Budget Item	Restrictions
Honorariums	<p>Research project funds may be used for participant honorariums, provided the costs are reasonable, appropriate and in-line with similar research practices.</p> <p>The research proposal should clearly explain why the provision of the honorariums are necessary for project success.</p> <p>The proposal should also clearly show that the honorariums proposed are not excessive and should therefore not be construed as entertainment or hospitality.</p>

5.0 Budget Adjustments

WorkplaceNL will not provide additional funds beyond the approved amount in the project agreement.

Project payment amount(s) may be adjusted in consultation with a researcher to ensure the funding provided by WorkplaceNL does not exceed the actual eligible expenses incurred. If an overpayment of funding occurs, WorkplaceNL reserves the right to collect any amount paid to the researcher for the project that exceeds actual eligible expenses.

Project proposal budgets are understood to be reasonable estimates of future project spending. WorkplaceNL understands that budget item or category expenditures may be somewhat above or below these estimates. Project progress and financial reporting must be used by the researcher to explain any variance in budget item or category spending. These variances should be reasonable, comply with the eligibility requirements for expenses, and be explained in progress and financial reports for the project.

Researchers should discuss any anticipated or experienced budget variances with WorkplaceNL as soon as reasonably possible, to ensure that any project spending adjustments do not violate the project agreement.