



Update on Program Structure and Peer Review Changes at CIHR

August 5, 2016 • Reply to [Drew Gyorke](#)

A message from the Vice-President, Research and Innovation to the University of Toronto's CIHR Community:

On July 5th, I wrote to the research community about the efforts my office was undertaking, in collaboration with our divisional leaders, affiliated hospitals, the U15 and other organizations, to monitor CIHR's program and peer review changes. I also shared the [Minister of Health's statement](#) asking that CIHR establish a working meeting to identify solutions to the challenges raised by the research community regarding CIHR's peer review system.

CIHR convened a [Working Meeting](#) on July 13th. The immediate focus was on the Project Grant program for the upcoming fall competition. The peer review changes implemented for the Project Grant program will be subsequently assessed for suitability to the Foundation Grant program. The Working Meeting established the [Peer Review Working Group](#) to guide immediate implementation of the Working Meeting outcomes, and to identify ways to strengthen peer review practices and processes. Those outcomes include:

- Face-to-face discussions in peer-review will be restored and virtual discussions will no longer be needed.
- Teams of Virtual Chairs and Scientific Officers will be organized to oversee a group of applications throughout the peer review process.
- A complementary iterative process will be implemented for indigenous focussed research.
- Project Grant applications will increase to 10 pages (including figures and tables), and applicants can upload unlimited references and letters of support.
- Project Grant applications will be assessed based on "significance and impacts of the research" (25% of final score), "approaches" (50% of final score), and

- “expertise, experience and resources” (25% of final score).
- The Common CV (CCV) for the Project Grant will include publications from the past seven years rather than the past five years.
 - Researchers may only submit two applications as the Nominated Principal Investigator.
 - Rebuttal page will be included in the application to allow applicants who are resubmitting to address major concerns and identify improvements.
 - Those funded will be strongly encouraged to be reviewers when asked.

Dr. Paul Kubes, Chair of the Peer Review Working Group, provided an [Update](#) to the community at the end of July. The Working Group will next meet on August 5th to bear down on the peer review process and how to move forward for the fall competition. As a result, **registration for Project and Foundation Grants will not occur prior to September 1st**. Timelines for the Fall competitions are expected to be confirmed during the week of August 8th.

I encourage you to share any constructive feedback on how to implement the Working Meeting outcomes with Dr. Kubes (pkubes@ucalgary.ca), and kindly ask that you copy me (vp.research@utoronto.ca) on your message to him.

In the meantime, we will continue to engage in formal and informal dialogue with our partners and peers as we monitor implementation of the Working Meeting outcomes, and changes to the peer review process. I will update the community once CIHR provides additional information.

I also remind you that the broader [Fundamental Science Review of the federal research funding system](#) is underway. I encourage all members of the committee to review the mandate of the Panel and to consider submitting input to the panel. Please copy my office with your submissions.

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