SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH BOARD (SSHRB)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The objective of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Board (SSHRB) Grants Program is to provide critical one-time funding to support research activities of individual investigators for the subsequent development of strong, competitive proposals for submission to external peer-reviewed research sponsors, in particular SSHRC. Eligibility focuses on the individual researcher as the Principal Investigator (PI) with the expectation that the awarded researcher will seek Tri-Agency support as the PI within two years of receiving the award. The SSHRB is a non-entitlement program and is not intended as support for ongoing programs of research.

The SSHRB will have two priority areas:

1) **Seed Grant** – to provide one-year funding to SSHRC-eligible Early Career Researchers to develop competitive externally-funded research proposals. Early Career Researchers (ECRs) are applicants who are within three years of the start date of their first eligible academic research position at Western (typically in a probationary tenure-tracked appointment). Eligible ECR applicants have not held external SSHRC funding as a PI, and likely have not submitted as a Principal Investigator to a prior external SSHRC competition; and

2) **Bridge Grant** – to provide one-year funding to established SSHRC-eligible investigators to bridge a SSHRC funding gap or crossover from an equivalent external funding source to SSHRC support. *See the Bridge funding guidelines for more details.*

SSHRB funding is not to be seen as a replacement for SSHRC funding. To be eligible for SSHRB funding, applicants must explicitly describe how funds would be spent and their plans to secure external SSHRC funding. Applicants must submit an external grant application within 2 years of the start date of the SSHRB award. Applicants are encouraged to also apply for other external support.

Competition Framework and Award Value
There will be two competitions each year with submission deadlines on May 15th and November 15th. If either date falls on a weekend, the deadline will be automatically extended to the next business day. Both the Seed and Bridge grants may be matched 1:1 by the applicant's Faculty; however, please note for 2013-14, awards may be fully supported by the program. The maximum allowable award is $25,000, which would include any Faculty match. Budget envelopes are limited to a one-year period and where funds have not been fully spent after one year, an automatic terminal year will be activated.

Allocation of Funds
The goal of the program is to fund excellence and innovation; there is no guarantee of funding for each application submitted. The SSHRB Review Committee will allocate funds toward those projects deemed fundable, based on the availability of funds and likelihood of securing SSHRC support within a two year period.

SSHRB Review Committee Membership
SSHRB will have a voting membership of individuals from six key positions:

- VP Research (or delegate)
- Associate VP Research (or delegate)
- Associate Dean Research, Social Sciences
- Associate Dean Research, Arts and Humanities
- Associate Dean Research, Ivey
- Two Faculty members selected from the Faculties of Information and Media Studies, Law, Music, or Education*

*Members are appointed by the SSHRB (through a nomination process) for a two-year term, with an initial staggered term to allow for overlap between members.

Chair appointments will rotate each year. Each new member will participate as a committee member in Year 1, and then be asked to act as Chair in Year 2 of their term. This will ensure that each Chair has had the opportunity to sit as a committee member before assuming the Chair role.

Administrative support for SSHRB is provided through Research Development & Services (RDS).

REVIEW CRITERIA

Merit of the Proposal: A research project must be of high quality to warrant support. It must be clear that genuine research problems in the Social Sciences and Humanities will be addressed. The program must not be limited to the development of specific applications of existing knowledge; it must promise an original and innovative contribution. In assessing the merit of the proposal, the following elements should be considered:

- Originality and innovation: To what extent does the proposal suggest and explore novel or potentially transformative concepts and lines of inquiry?
- Significance and expected contributions to research/ potential:
    - What will be the likely impact of the research?
    - Will it advance the applicant's publication and teaching record?
    - Does the program show potential for launching a program of research with the likely notable advancement or innovation or results of importance to a broad range of applications? Will the results be appropriate for open dissemination to, critical appraisal by, and use in the research or receptor community?
- Clarity and scope of objectives: A vision should be of greater breadth and scope than simply plans and objectives. Similarly, clearly defined objectives demonstrate a more thought out research plan than do objectives that are simply stated.
    - Are there long-term goals as well as short-term objectives?
    - Are the objectives specific, well-focused and realistic?
- Clarity and appropriateness of methodology: Applications must be clear and logical.
    - Does the proposal clearly outline the methodology to be used?
    - Is the proposed methodology current and appropriate (i.e., will it contribute to the stated research goals; has the applicant justified the methodological approach)?
- Clarity and appropriateness of the HQP training plan:
    - What skills and experience will the HQP develop?
    - Is the proposed activity appropriate for the skill and educational level of the students involved?
- Feasibility:
    - Will the applicant's expertise and the proposed methodology allow the objectives to be reached within the proposed time frame?
    - Does the budget request relate well to the proposed methodology and the expected results in terms of scale and feasibility of research?

Submission Procedure:

Researchers who intend to apply for SSHRB funding are encouraged to contact their Faculty Deans (or Associate Deans) and the Research Development & Services (RDS) for proposal development guidance.

All applications must be reviewed and signed by the Department Chair and Dean prior to submission to RDS and must include a ROLA Proposal submission.

The application will undergo administrative review for completeness and suitability in RDS. Any additional information or documentation beyond the requested page limits and/or requested documents will be removed from the application prior to review, ensuring all applications are evaluated in an equal context.

A COMPLETE Application consists of:
1. SSHRB Application Form including budget request and one page proposal summary (signed by Department Chair and Faculty Dean).
2. Abbreviated CV Summary.

Adjudication Process:

Applications are adjudicated by SSHRB bi-annually and will be pre-screened by the SSHRB Adjudication committee for alignment with the goals of the funding priority as described above under "Review Criteria". Based on this pre-screen, proposals will be "triaged" to determine which applicants will be asked to make a 10 minute presentation to the Committee.

Each member of the Review Committee will be asked to rank each proposal as follows: **1 – highest**   2 – middle   **3 – lowest**. Scores will be averaged and weighted equally between each member of the evaluation committee. The SSHRB Review Committee will meet to finalize funding decisions which are final. There is no appeal process.

All scoring results and review comments are then submitted to RDS in order to process and distribute decision letters to all applicants.   All decision letters must be approved by the Research Board before distributing.

Post Award:

RDS to monitor and follow up on all funding conditions, including final report submission and application to SSHRC competitions.

Final Report:
Successful applicants will be required to provide RDS with a final report within 6 months of the end date of the funding period. The final report should address the use of funds and the impact on the research program, and confirm the plan for submission to SSHRC within an identified time period.