UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
College of Medicine
OFFICE OF THE VICE-DEAN RESEARCH
MEDICINE.USASK.CA/RESEARCH.PHP

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE RESEARCH AWARDS
COMRAD

2023 GUIDELINES

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST: JUNE 21, 2023
APPLICATION DEADLINE: AUGUST 23, 2023

SUBMISSIONS AND INQUIRIES: COM.RAD@USASK.CA

College of Medicine Research Awards
CoMRAD Timeline

Call for Submissions
APRIL 11
Expression of Interest, Guidelines and Final Application form are posted to OVDR Funding Initiatives Website.

Expression of Interest Deadline
JUNE 21
Faculty must submit the Expression of Interest to be eligible to put forward an application.

Final Application Deadline
AUGUST 23
Applications are reviewed and sent to adjudicators external to the University for evaluation.

Award Notification
OCTOBER 25
All applicants are notified of results.

Signed Award Letters Due
NOVEMBER 1
Awardees have two months to ensure all required approvals and supports are in place (U of S Ethics, SHA Operational Approval, etc.).

Funding Period
JAN 3 - DEC 31, 2024
All expenditures must take place during the funding period. Expenditures cannot be processed before or after these dates.

Reporting Requirements
JAN 2025, 2026
Awardees will submit a one-year follow up report in January 2025, as well as an annual project report in January 2026.

Contact

For all inquiries, please contact:

Keleigh Garcea or Nayoung Kim
Project Coordinators
Office of the Vice Dean Research
com.rad@usask.ca

Purpose

The Office of the Vice Dean Research (OVDR) is proud to announce the College of Medicine Research Awards (CoMRAD). This initiative will provide seed funding for novel pilot and/or feasibility studies that will facilitate future applications to provincial, national, and international funding opportunities.

Important Dates

Expression of Interest Deadline:	June 21
Final Application Deadline:	August 23
Funding Decision:	October 25
Funding Start Date:	January 2024

Funding Available

Applicants may request up to $30,000.

The number of projects selected for funding will be dependent on the following criteria: proposed topics, budgets requested, number of applications, and quality of applications. In order to be considered for funding, all applications must comply with CoMRAD terms and meet the minimum required reviewer score of 70%.

Duration

Projects may be up to one year in length– to be completed between January 1 – December 31. All unused balances remaining at the end of the funding period will be returned to the OVDR. Extensions will only be considered for exceptional circumstances.

Eligibility

Faculty must submit an Expression of Interest by stated deadline in order to be eligible to submit a Final Application.

Faculty must have a primary academic appointment in the College of Medicine (CoM) that will continue until the end of the full granting period. All CoM faculty are eligible to apply, including those employed by ACFP, other contracts, or USFA, who do not hold primary academic appointments outside of the CoM.

Successful applicants are ineligible for funding the following year. The intent of this competition is to provide funds for as many eligible faculty as possible in order to assist them with their applications to external funding agencies. This applies to PIs and Co-PIs with _exception of_ Regina and Early Career faculty.

Multiple Applications

Eligible faculty members may submit:

• **One** application as PI/Co-PI		• **No** applications as PI/Co-PI
• Up to **two** applications as Co-I	**OR**	• Up to **three** applications as Co-I

Faculty may only submit **one** application as the Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI). However, applicants may participate in up to three applications per competition: if an applicant is a PI on a CoMRAD proposal, no more than two applications can be submitted as Co-Investigator (Co-I). An applicant is eligible to be a Co-I on a maximum of three applications if he/she is not a PI on a CoMRAD application.

Principal Investigator Category

All applications, regardless of category, must have a minimum reviewer score of 70% to be considered for funding.

- **Clinician Career Development**
    - The OVDR has earmarked funding for clinical faculty members who are new or returning to research and have less than 0.10 FTE (four hours/week) Research Time. Seed funding and funds for planning and pilot work will be available to support studies that improve health or influence practice and health-care delivery.
    - The key goals for this funding are: to increase the number of clinical research studies; to increase the College of Medicine success in attracting Tri-Council funding for clinical studies; and to improve the health of Saskatchewan people.

- **Early Career Faculty**
    - Faculty member who, at the time of the application deadline, has assumed their first independent academic appointment (term or tenure track) within the last six years (72 months). The six-year window for being considered Early Career Faculty can be adjusted to account for instances where a researcher has had an institutionally approved delay in research or period of inactivity (e.g., parental, bereavement, medical, or administrative leave). Please contact our office to confirm status. Applicants who have taken leaves of absence may address them in the appropriate section of the CCV.
    - Given funding priority to build further research capacity.

- **General Faculty**
    - Primary academic appointment in the CoM.
    - Principal Investigators (PI) and Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PI) are required to make a time commitment of *at least* 0.10 FTE (four hours/week) Research Time.

- **Regina Faculty**
    - Given funding priority to build further research capacity.

Adjudication Process

Applications will be assessed by 2 – 3 reviewers external to the University of Saskatchewan with a range of expertise in the following research fields: Biomedical Sciences, Clinical Sciences, and Social, Cultural, Environmental, and Population Health and Health Services and Education Research.

All applicants must ensure they use language understandable to reviewers who may be outside their field of research and to write their project descripton as clear and well-organized as possible, avoiding unnecessary jargon and explaining abbreviations.

Evaluation Criteria

The following evaluation criteria will be used:

1. Strength of Research Team (20%)
2. Research Proposal (60%)
    a. Research Question, Background and Objectives (20%)
    b. Research Design, Methods and Planning (20%)
    c. Expected Outcomes, Impact and Outputs (20%)
3. Budget Justification (20%)

Please see the *CoMRAD Scoring Guide* for a more detailed breakdown of what is expected from each section.

Applicants will be notified by email of the reviewers' funding decision.

Sex and Gender Equity Inclusion

Following CIHR's implementation of accounting for sex and gender in health research, the CoMRAD will also incorporate this to the application and review process. Where appropriate, applicants will integrate sex and gender into their program of research. Biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences exist between women, men, boys, girls, and gender-diverse people, which significantly contribute to health differences and disparities. Considering sex and gender in your health research has the potential to improve the rigor, reproducibility, and applicability of your work. Applicants must ensure they not only fill out the check boxes and text boxes but also incorporate these considerations into the rest of the proposal.

Indigenous Health Research

Includes research in any field of discipline that is conducted by, grounded in, or engaged with First Nations, Inuit, Métis or other Indigenous nations, communities, societies or individuals, and their wisdom, cultures, experiences or knowledge systems, as expressed in their dynamic forms, past and present.

Saskatchewan Patient Oriented Research

Applicants proposing patient-oriented research are eligible for partnered funding with the Saskatchewan Centre for Patient-Oriented Research (SCPOR). An additional survey addressing patient engagement criteria defined in the Patient-Oriented Research Level of Engagement Tool (PORLET) will be assessed by a committee of SCPOR Patient Partners. Applicants must meet a minimum score of '3' in each of the PORLET's five criterion to be eligible for this funding partnership.

CoMRAD-SCPOR Data and Data Support Opportunity

There is an opportunity for patient-oriented research CoMRAD proposals to receive support from data and data services through the Saskatchewan Centre for Patient-Oriented Research (SCPOR) in partnership with the Health Research Data Platform – Saskatchewan (HRDP-SK). If a project requires data and data services support, the Principal Investigator must follow the process outlined below prior to submitting their full application to ensure support is available.

Applicants conducting patient-oriented research who are interested in access to data in the Health Research Data Platform-Saskatchewan (HRDP-SK) to address their research question should complete the Stage 1 – Feasibility & Resource Check Form. If assistance is needed, a consultation may be scheduled by contacting hrdp-sk@hqc.sk.ca. The team will be provided with a Confirmation of Feasibility and Resources Letter if their request is approved. This document must be uploaded to Supplementary materials and included your application submission to SHRF. For more information about the HRDP-SK please visit the HRDP-SK website or contact hrdp-sk@hqc.sk.ca.

Application Instructions

The application includes the following sections:

1. Application
2. Budget and Justification
3. Research Proposal
4. References
5. CIHR Biosketch CV's:
    a. Principal Investigator CV
    b. Co-Investigator(s) CV
6. Letters of Support (Optional)

Research Proposal Formatting
- **Header**: Include Applicant's last name and title/label (e.g., Smith, Project Title)
- **Footer**: Page X of X
- **Margins**: 1"
- **Page**: 8.5" x 11"
- **Font**: Arial, 11 point
- **Line Spacing**: single-spaced
- **Figures/Tables**: must fit into the four page limit and follow the formatting guidelines specified above. No additional space is provided for figures/tables.

Research Proposal
Four page maximum, addressing the following sections:

A. **Part A: Research Question, Background and Objectives**
- Research Question or Hypothesis
- Rationale for Research
- Objectives of the Research
- Quality and Clarity
- Novelty of Project

B. **Part B: Research Design, Methods and Planning**
- Research Design and Methods
- Applicant's Detailed Timeline
- Availability of Resources
- Roles in Proposed Research
- Consideration of Sex and Gender
- Project Feasibility

C. **Part C: Expected Outcomes, Impact and Outputs**
- Expected Outcomes and Impact
- Intended Outputs

Cited References

- Use American Medical Association (AMA) style referencing.
- Bold your name in any references in which you were an author.

Budget and Justification

A detailed budget is required and all expenses must be justified. The level of financial support will be influenced by the budget justification. Justify personnel and salaries, general operating expenses, travel, and equipment directly related to the project. List all amounts inclusive of taxes, both provincial and federal.

Any applications that do not provide a sufficiently detailed outline of their expenses for the full year may be disqualified. When writing up a budget, it is best to err on the side of caution and thoroughly explain all expenses. Any application asking for more than the maximum amount ($30,000) will not move forward to adjudication.

We recommend that you send an electronic draft of your application and budget to your Research Facilitator/Coordinator for review and comment prior to submission. To find the research facilitator responsible for your department, please see a full list here.

All expenditures must occur during the period of time in which the research grant has been awarded. Expenses incurred prior to January 1, 2024, or after December 31, 2024, will not be eligible.

Personnel and Salaries

Tasks for all members of the research team need to be described in this section of the application. Please ensure to:
- List names and time commitments of all staff on the application form and budget, including any part-time and/or casual assistants.
- List salaries of proposed personnel in the budget. Show the role, hours committed, wage including benefits, and, where known, the name of the individual.
- Provide a full description of the tasks of the research staff and fully justify the amount of work to be carried out by the research staff.
- Salary for PIs, Co-Is, and/or collaborators is a non-eligible expense from CoMRAD funds.
- Follow University policy for salary costs and clearly indicate the number of hours to be worked by each individual at $ XX/hour plus benefits.

Student Pay:

CoMRADs are intended to support an applicant's own research program. Although students may contribute to the research project, the achievement of the project should not depend on the efforts of the students whose own research is expected to be supported through other sources. Those seeking student funding should apply to the *CoMGRAD* funding initiative. Applicants can request funding for wages to be paid to graduate students. Graduate students can work up to 12 hours/week provided the research being undertaken is independent from thesis work.

Personnel Planning Resources:
- Research support staff guidelines and salary rates from the Human Resources page on the University website can be found here. In instances where research support staff are non-unionized employees, their salaries will still align with the pay scales of ASPA and/or CUPE.
- Student salary rates from the Human Resources page on the University website here.
- Classification Guidelines for Research Funded Positions can be found here.
- ASPA Family & Phase Criteria Matrix can be found here.
- Employee benefit details are available on the University website here.

General Operating Costs

- Includes consumables and minor equipment
- Consumables and equipment should be listed individually under operating expenses and fully justified, including a statement about the availability of any requested equipment elsewhere. A listing in itself does not constitute a justification.
- User-charges for equipment must be carefully justified and detailed, and accompanied by a written quote from the Administrator of the Department in which the equipment is housed.

Research Equipment

Applicants must attach quotes for requested equipment to their application. Requests for funding of equipment (including computers and software) may be put forward only if the item:

- Could not normally be expected to be available in a department
- Is essential to the project because of its specialized research nature and fundable only by the CoMRAD rather than from other sources
- Equipment purchased from College of Medicine Research Awards becomes the property of the University of Saskatchewan

Travel

Conferences are not an eligible expense for the CoMRAD. Travel, accommodation, and meal per diem expenses will be funded only where the research cannot be conducted without the requested travel. Only key stakeholders, individuals paid salary from the grant, applicants, and research participants are eligible to receive travel, accommodation, and/or meal per diems. All travel requests must be fully justified.

Eligible travel expenses include:
1. Travel to access specific physical locations
     a. Archives or special collections not available through electronic or published means, field sites, or, in limited cases, specialized equipment that requires the PI to operate it.
2. Travel to access individuals or groups in specific locations,
     a. Community focus groups or clinical research participants, where other means (such as phone, Skype, or electronic communication) are inappropriate for the people, subject matter, or methodology.
3. Travel to access a specific named research Co-I who needs to be physically present to undertake the project. This might require the investigator to travel to the Co-I or vice versa.
     a. Such travel is to undertake the research itself as opposed to planning research or accessing a particular skill or technique.

Applicants including travel costs must address the following points (as applicable):
- Applicants should provide detailed explanation for travel over 14 consecutive days, which should align to the Project Methodology and Timeline .
- Requests for accommodation and sustenance should be based on actual and reasonable rates and may not exceed the University Guidelines here.

Research Participant Payment and Honoraria

Honoraria paid to research participants must be no greater than $100 and follow University of Saskatchewan guidelines. https://knowledgebase.usask.ca/finance/travel-and-expense/research-participants-funding-guidelines.phpExpenses for Indigenous protocol and Elder honoraria are eligible expenses. The U of S Research Ethics Board must approve payment amounts.

Ineligible Expenses:

- Student stipends
- Salary for applicants or collaborators
- Travel to conferences
- Miscellaneous items of stationery, printer paper, postage, and courier. The cost of printing and postage may be requested in applications where large surveys form part of the research proposal. This needs to be fully justified and items costed in detail.
- General photocopying
- General reusable laboratory consumables (e.g., glassware, safety glasses, etc.)
- General computer discs, storage, software, and license fees
- General communication costs
- Computers, including laptops, for routine data analysis and word processing
- Any expenses normally paid for by departmental funds
- Travel and other expenses to fund overseas researchers visiting the CoM
- Publication costs

Application Submission

The full application includes below sections. Arrange all parts in the following order, saved as *Applicant's last name, first name,* and submit as one document to com.rad@usask.ca by **August 23**. Late and incomplete submissions will not be considered for funding. Applicants must have previously submitted an Expression of Interest.

1. Application
2. Budget and Justification
3. Research Proposal
4. References
5. CIHR Biosketch CV's:
    a. Principal Investigator CV
    b. Co-Investigator(s) CV
6. Letters of Support (Optional)
7. SCPOR Survey (for patient-oriented research proposals)

After submission, the OVDR will contact applicant's Department Head for review and approval.

Award Conditions

Awarded Funding

All expenses related to an awarded CoMRAD project must be charged directly to the Principal Investigator's CoMRAD fund. Once the recipient's signed award letter is returned to the OVDR and ethics is secure, a new fund is created in the FAST UniFi system. This fund will be a 6-digit number (4XXXXX) created specifically for the CoMRAD project**. All expenses must be charged to this fund**. The OVDR will not accept the invoicing of this fund by any corporations or independent contractors without prior approval.

All expenditures must occur during the period of time in which the research grant has been awarded. Expenses incurred prior to January 1, 2024, or after December 31, 2024, will not be eligible.

Research Eligibility

CoMRAD funding is intended as seed funding for a project and/or feasibility study. All projects must be clearly distinct from any of the applicants' research projects currently funded by external research agencies or internal sources (e.g. Departmental or College). This funding does not cover shortfalls in external funding.

Alternative Funding

The OVDR recognizes that most research active faculty apply for funding from several external agencies concurrently. When applicants are awarded alternative funding (either fully or partially) for the project outlined in this application, CoMRAD funding must be returned proportionally to the OVDR. If overlapping funding is secured and is not reported to the OVDR, this individual may not be eligible to apply for any future funding from the OVDR.

Approvals

PI's are responsible for securing any approvals required for the project. Any research or study conducted at University facilities, or undertaken by persons connected to the University, involving human subjects, animals, or biohazardous materials must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate Research Ethics Board (REB) or Committee.

Recipients must send the Ethics Certificate of Approval number to our office to confirm that the ethics application has been submitted within one month of receiving the award letter. If this is not possible, recipients must contact the OVDR why the necessary paperwork will be delayed.

Research must also comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (and related federal, provincial, and municipal regulations), University policies on Occupational Health Safety and Environmental matters, and all University research-related policies. A copy of approvals must be forwarded to the Research Services and Ethics Office, before the grant account can be activated.

A research account cannot be opened until appropriate protocols have been approved. Recipients must secure the appropriate approvals by December 31 of this year to receive their funding.

Reporting Requirements

Written Report

A brief report will be emailed to PI to complete and return following the end date of their research fund and continuing on an annual basis.

Applicants with SCPOR-partnered funding will be required to complete an additional brief report addressing project patient engagement following the end date of their research fund.

Failure to submit the reports will exclude the PI from being eligible to apply for future funding from the OVDR.

Proof of External Submission(s)

Applicants who have been awarded a CoMRAD in previous years must submit, as Principal Investigator, at least one application to external funders proposing to expand on their CoMRAD research before they are eligible to apply for another CoMRAD. As evidence of their external application, PIs must provide the OVDR with the following information:

- The project name of the externally applied for application
- The funding agency and grant program
- Application status (e.g., pending, awarded, not-funded, etc.)

Presentation

Successful applicants must participate in the Annual CoMRAD Research Symposium (date TBA).

Publication Acknowledgement

All publications resulting from the research funded by the grant must acknowledge University of Saskatchewan, College of Medicine Research Award (CoMRAD): Research Resumption funding.