Canadian Institutes of Health Research — Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada

Canada

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Guide for Reviewers - CIHR Master's Award

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Responsibilities of Reviewers

- Avoid conflict of interest;
- Respect the confidentiality of applications;
- Review and rate each assigned application using the criteria provided by CIHR;
- Submit reviews and ratings to CIHR via ResearchNet by the deadline specified; and
- Provide a re-review if requested by CIHR.

Avoid Conflict of Interest

- As soon as you receive the applications to be reviewed, look over the candidates' names, the names of their proposed supervisors and their institutions, and indicate using ResearchNet your ability to review each application that has been assigned to you.

You must not be involved in the review if the applicant or the proposed research supervisor:

- **Is from your institution** (unless they are located in another campus);
- **Has collaborated with you** within the last five years;
- **Has been supervised by you** within the last ten years;
- **Is a close personal friend or relative**;
- **Has major differences of opinion with you**;
- **If you could be affected financially** from the outcome of the application; or
- **Are for some other reason unable to provide an objective review**.

If you would be in conflict of interest, or might be perceived to be in conflict of interest, notify CIHR immediately (via ResearchNet) and the application will be assigned to another reviewer.

Respect the Confidentiality of Applications

Do not forward copies of applications or discuss them with others.

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Reviewing the Assigned Applications

Read the Applications

Read all of your assigned applications before rating any of them. As you examine each application, jot down notes to capture your impressions. Please do not forward copies (paper or electronic) of these notes to CIHR.

Be alert to unconscious bias related to gender, discipline or geographic location. Remember that:

- Career interruptions for child bearing and raising can influence opportunity for knowledge production, publications and related variables;
- Different disciplines and environments offer different opportunity for publication; and,
- The reputation of institutions should not affect your view of applicants or their research training environment.

You are free to consult published lists of journal impact factors when assessing the candidate's research accomplishments. Note however that journal impact factors vary from one discipline to another and that they do not necessarily indicate the quality of individual articles.

Rate the Applications

Examine each application in detail and rate it against each of the three criteria described in Annex 1. Use the rating scales and notes to reviewers described in Annex 2 to help in determining an appropriate rating for each criterion.

Please note that only applications rated 3.5 or higher are eligible for CIHR funding. The range 3.0 to 3.4 should be used for applications which, while rated as good, are not considered to be a high priority for CIHR funding. Please note that applications rated 3.0 to 3.4 are not eligible for CIHR funds, including those from partnership programs.

Reviews and ratings for CIHR Master's Award applications are submitted to CIHR via ResearchNet. The electronic rating forms are available to reviewers when they access ResearchNet.

Provide Other Information for CIHR and Feedback to Applicants

Length of Term: If you think that the proposed duration for the master's award is too long or too short, indicate the length that you recommend.

Human Stem Cell Research: Indicate if the candidate's research involves human stem cells.

Other Comments for CIHR: Mention any ethical issues, et cetera.

Feedback for the Applicant: Prepare brief comments on the application for transmittal to the candidate by CIHR via ResearchNet after the competition. Carefully avoid language that might be construed as sarcastic, flippant, arrogant, or inappropriate in any way. Cover both strengths and weaknesses, particularly those that could be realistically addressed by the applicant.

Send Reviews and Rating to CIHR via ResearchNet

Please respect the deadline provided by CIHR by submitting your reviews and ratings via ResearchNet by the date specified via correspondance with CIHR staff responsible for the Master's Awards program.

Be Prepared for a Re-Review Request from CIHR

When all scores are received, CIHR will calculate an average for each application. CIHR will then identify applications which are at risk of an unfair decision because of a wide spread between the two reviewers' ratings. In such cases, CIHR will ask both reviewers to reconsider their initial assessment and resubmit scores. Usually this second review will reduce the gap between scores to an acceptable size. If it does not, CIHR will obtain a third review.

Just in case you are asked to do a re-review, keep the applications and your working notes on file until competition results have been announced.

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Annex 1: Criteria

Overview of the Three Selection Criteria for CIHR Master's Awards

The raw scores that you submit via ResearchNet for each criterion on the 0 to 4.9 scale will be weighted automatically by CIHR in the calculation of an overall score.

The Three Criteria and their Weights in the Overall Score:

Criterion	Weights for each criterion	
Achievements and Activities of the Candidate		
Research Experience and Achievement	15 %	**40 %**
Academic Performance	25 %	
Characteristics and Abilities of the Candidate		
Critical thinking Independence Perseverance Originality Organizational skills Interest in discovery Communication skills	40 %	**40 %**
The Research Training Environment		
Training program for the candidate	20 %	**20 %**
	100%	**100%**

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Annex 2: Rating Scales and Notes to Reviewers

Variable Assessed	Information Source	Rating Scale	Notes to Reviewers
Achievements and Activities of the Candidate			
			Assess the research activity and achievements of the candidate relative to your expectations of someone with their academic experience.

Research Experience and Achievement Review information on the candidate's research experience (summer research projects, research honours and awards, etc.) and achievements such as conferences, presentations, research prizes or publications.	Common CV completed by the candidate and Sponsors' Assessments	4.5 - 4.9 outstanding 4.0 - 4.4 excellent 3.5 - 3.9 very good 3.0 - 3.4 good 2.0 - 2.9 average 1.0 - 1.9 below average 0 not acceptable	Consider: • extent of previous involvement in research; • complexity of research accomplished; • attendance at research conferences; • presentation of results at conferences or other meetings; • importance of results; • research honours or awards; • the extent of publication; • and the scientific impact of the journals involved. In considering the candidate's input to any publication, take into account the number of co-authors and the prominence of the candidate's name on the list of authors.
Academic performance Review undergraduate academic transcripts and, if available, graduate transcripts	Academic transcripts of the candidate	4.5 - 4.9 outstanding 4.0 - 4.4 excellent 3.5 - 3.9 very good 3.0 - 3.4 good 2.0 - 2.9 average 1.0 - 1.9 below average 0 not acceptable	Consider: • Type of program and courses pursued • Course load • Grades obtained • Relative standing (if available) • Overall average • Trend (give credit for a steadily improving or consistently good performance)
Characteristics and Abilities of the Candidate			
Critical thinking Independence Perseverance Originality Organizational skills Interest in discovery Communication skills	Sponsors' Assessments	4.5 - 4.9 outstanding 4.0 - 4.4 excellent 3.5 - 3.9 very good 3.0 - 3.4 good 2.0 - 2.9 average 1.0 - 1.9 below average 0 not acceptable	Assess the extent to which the box scores and narratives provided by the sponsors are consistent and provide a score based on your overall impression.
The Research Training Environment			

| Training program for the candidate

Review the candidate's training expectations and proposed master's research program, including project and planned non-research activities. | Training module completed by the candidate | 4.5 - 4.9 outstanding

4.0 - 4.4 excellent
3.5 - 3.9 very good
3.0 - 3.4 good
2.0 - 2.9 average
1.0 - 1.9 below average
0 not acceptable | The candidate's proposed research may be outside your research specialty. From a non-specialist's perspective, assess the intellectual challenge and excitement of the research in which the candidate will be involved.

Consider the extent to which the training program appears to fit with the candidate's training expectations. |

** Please note that only applications rated 3.5 or higher are eligible for CIHR funding. The range 3.0 to 3.4 should be used for applications which, while rated as good, are not considered to be a high priority for CIHR funding. Please note that applications rated 3.0 to 3.4 are not eligible for CIHR funds, including those from partnership programs.

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Annex 3: Examples of Electronic Forms Available via ResearchNet

- Form for Reporting Special Issues with an Application [PDF (84.9 KB) | PDF fillable (147 KB) | Help]

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Important Notices