Faculty Guide:

How to Include the University of Toronto's Institutional Strategic Research Plan (2024-2029) in Funding Applications

This guide provides tips and examples to help researchers place their work in the context of U of T's Institutional Strategic Research Plan 2024-2029. This is a requirement for applications to the Canada Foundation for Innovation John R. Evans Leaders Fund (CFI-JELF) and the Canada Research Chairs (CRC) programs. This document can also be useful for PIs seeking to communicate the significance and relevance of their programs of research to government, the private-sector, or public audiences.

How to refer to the ISRP in your funding proposal

1. **Familiarize yourself with the ISRP:** Review the strategic objectives (pages 9-14) and the research themes (pages 15-21) to identify alignments between this document and your proposed research. To make your application persuasive and specific, we recommend that you **focus on one or two research themes to discuss in your funding application.**

2. **Explain how the ISRP aligns with your research:** The examples below demonstrate how to communicate how your proposed research will help to achieve the goals and further the themes described in the ISRP. When applicable, please also reference the research strategies of your affiliated hospitals, research institutes, or other affiliated organizations. Ensure the explanation includes the use of detailed and concrete examples.

Sample text to illustrate how to effectively relate your research to the ISRP.

Reference the strategic objectives of the ISRP

Refer generally to the ISRP to demonstrate that your research aligns with its strategic objectives. Borrow language directly from the ISRP. For example:

> *At a broad level, U of T's most recent ISRP (2024-2029) is committed to research excellence and solving global grand challenges by supporting "curiosity-driven research" while building "strong foundations in fundamental, investigator-led research." The ISRP asserts that "U of T supports the convergence of disciplinary excellence, the securing of intellectual property and the disseminating of research findings–through teaching and publishing–to ensure that our discoveries reach those who need it most. Given that many research problems are complex and require the expertise of various disciplines, we continue to support opportunities for multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary engagement and research."*

Professor Malouf is a leading researcher in the area of antimicrobial resistance, a problem of both national and global importance. Her proposed interdisciplinary CRC research program is focused on developing effective interventions in the administration of antibiotics in hospital settings to reduce antimicrobial resistance. Her research program brings together researchers in medicine, nursing, engineering and social work and includes a detailed plan for knowledge dissemination and publication. Her work will have first-order implications in healthcare settings globally.

For large, collaborative, team-based and institutional grant applications, emphasize and describe, in concrete terms, the collaborative nature of your research. For example:

Professor Malouf's team actively collaborates with other academics, graduate students and public and private-sector organizations. The research program they are proposing involves close collaboration with the World Health Organization, the University Health Network in Toronto, and .... among others. The team will work closely with these partners to...

Reference specific themes in the ISRP

Describe how your research aligns with one or two of the ISRP's themes. Use the theme titles to refer to each relevant theme and describe the aspects of your research that align with each theme. Here are a few examples:

A. *The University of Toronto's ISRP identifies five key thematic research areas that engage the community and our partners in solving fundamental questions and finding solutions to some of the most pressing challenges that face humanity. As the ISRP explains, "identifying new approaches to solving problems is only possible with strong foundational research. The pursuit of fundamental disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge serves as a foundation for U of T's research strategy." Professor Lavoie's climate research fits within the theme of* ***Expanding our Fundamental Knowledge of Living Organisms and the Universe****. They propose to use numerical modeling methods combined with analysis of data from the World Ocean Database to predict changes in the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC). Professor Lavoie's work will deepen our knowledge of one of the earth's most prominent ocean currents. Variations in the AMOC, resulting from human-made changes to the environment will have a significant impact on the equilibrium of the earth's climate system...*

B. *Professor Yuan's digital humanities research is focused on developing preservation strategies for cultural software, digital media, and their developmental histories. His research aligns with the theme* ***Exploring Cultures and Communication*** *through the convergence of information technology with the humanities to design appropriate archival mechanisms that will facilitate the preservation and dissemination of these digital works...*

C. *Professor Sousa's research in population health equity aligns with the theme **Advancing Health and Well-being**. Their work is focused on improving health and access to healthcare in racialized communities. By identifying the clinical, social, and system-level factors that contribute to inequities in the healthcare system and access to care, their work will inform the design of evidence-based interventions to reduce and eliminate racial disparities in health...*

D. *Professor Samuel's research is focused on informing the development of data governance systems in smart city design. Her work aligns with two themes in the University of Toronto's ISRP: **Innovating Technology** and **Developing Community, Policy, Pedagogies, and Governance.** She is investigating how to optimize data governance systems to ensure innovation in the design of smart cities while limiting risk to individuals and communities. Her research is determining how data collection, management, ownership, and sharing platforms affect the safety, security and privacy of individuals and communities and how specific governance systems can effectively manage these risks. Professor Samuel's research will have a significant impact on the data-driven innovation that will contribute to urban sustainability.*