UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

Guide to Using the U of T Institutional Strategic Research Plan 2018–2023

Placing Research Projects in Strategic Context

U of T investigators are often asked to articulate how their work corresponds to the strategic research priorities of the institution, whether for major funding applications to Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) or Canada Research Chairs (CRC) programs, or in communicating the significance and context of their work to academic, government, private-sector, or public audiences. To help investigators place their work in the context of U of T's Institutional Strategic Research Plan (ISRP), we have provided some examples and suggested wording using the ISRP's themes and sub-themes (see list below).

As an example, CFI application forms typically request the following:

INTEGRATION WITH THE STRATEGIC RESEARCH PLAN

"…describe how the requested infrastructure will aid in the attraction or retention of excellent researchers to advance the university's strategic research objectives."

When asked to describe how your work relates to U of T's strategic research plan, we recommend investigators incorporate language like this in their response:

> "My research is well-aligned with the strategic research objectives of the University of Toronto. In particular, my work relates directly to the **priorities of X** (insert your **academic unit name**) and/or **the theme Y, sub-theme Z** (choose one or more **ISRP themes/sub-themes** from the list below) in the Institutional Strategic Research Plan."

EXAMPLE 1

A professor in the Department of Chemistry is applying for CFI funding to establish "an advanced catalysis and synthesis platform to facilitate the creation of custom molecules for the study of supramolecular chemistry, organometallic chemistry, and reaction mechanism elucidation." When responding to the CFI on her question about the integration of her work with the ISRP, she may write:

> "My research is well-aligned with the strategic research objectives of the University of Toronto. In particular, my work is in the area of Chemistry relates directly to the theme ***DISCOVER: Our Understanding of Humanity and the Universe***, sub-theme ***Enriching Fundamental Research*** in the Institutional Strategic Research Plan."

EXAMPLE 2

A professor in the Department of English and Drama at UTM is applying for CFI funding to develop "a multimedia conferencing centre to facilitate an international collaboration on research into global narrative structures." When responding to the CFI on his question about the integration of his work with the ISRP, he may write:

> "My research is well-aligned with the strategic research objectives of the University of Toronto. In particular, my work is in the area of English and Drama at UTM and relates directly to the theme ***ENGAGE: Language, Culture, Art, Values***, sub-theme ***Communicating in the Digital Era*** in the Institutional Strategic Research Plan."

EXAMPLE 3

A professor in the Department of Cell and Systems Biology is applying for CFI funding to develop "a platform for high-resolution and live cell imaging in plant development under conditions of a changing climate in southern Ontario." When responding to the CFI on his question about the integration of his work with the ISRP, he may write:

> "My research is well-aligned with the strategic research objectives of the University of Toronto. In particular, my work is in the area of Cell and Systems Biology and relates directly to theme *SUSTAIN: Societies, the Environment and Natural Resources*, sub-theme *Global Climate Change*, as well as to the theme *DISCOVER: Our Understanding of Humanity and Universe*, sub-theme *Planet Earth and the Cosmos* in the Institutional Strategic Research Plan."

EXAMPLE 4

A professor in the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work is applying for CFI funding to develop "a digital storytelling and multimedia lab on health and human rights, with a focus on HIV." When responding to the CFI on her question about the integration of her work with the ISRP, she may write:

> "My research is well-aligned with the strategic research objectives of the University of Toronto. In particular, my work in Social Work relates directly to the theme *PROMOTE: Healthy People, Healthy Communities, and a Healthy World*, sub-theme *Global Health, Public Health and Health Systems*, as well as to the theme *BUILD: Community and Livable Societies*, sub-theme *Human Rights and Diversity* in the Institutional Strategic Research Plan."

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to situating their research within the context of the ISRP, investigators should provide specific details of their proposal and how it contributes to the priorities and objectives of their unit or divisional Academic Plans, such as, for example, the training of highly qualified personnel or the development of multidisciplinary research clusters in priority areas. The Research Services Office can provide additional advice on how to incorporate these considerations into their funding applications. Investigators may also wish to refer to *Towards 2030*, the University of Toronto's long-term planning framework.

List of ISRP Themes and Sub-themes

DISCOVER: Our Understanding of Humanity and the Universe

Examples of sub-themes*:*
- Enriching Fundamental Knowledge
- Mind, Brain, and the Human
- Planet Earth and the Cosmos
- Origins of Human Diversity

SUSTAIN: Societies, the Environment and Natural Resources

Examples of sub-themes:
- Global Climate Change
- Sustainable Societies
- Sustainable Energy and Cleantech

PROMOTE: Healthy People, Healthy Communities and a Healthy World

Examples of sub-themes:
- Human Development and Health Through the Lifespan
- Molecular Medicine and The Biology of Disease
- Global Health, Public Health and Health Systems

ENGAGE: Language, Culture, Art, Values

Examples of sub-themes:
- Communicating in the Digital Era
- Values in Personal and Public Life
- Art, Design and Performance

ADVANCE: Governance, Diversity, and Social Justice

Examples of sub-themes:
- The Knowledge Economy and the Global Village
- Peace, Conflict, Inclusiveness, Justice
- Law, Ethics, and the Digital Interface

INNOVATE: Technologies for the Future

Examples of sub-themes:
- Data, Analytics, Computation and Artificial Intelligence
- Simulation and Imaging
- Robotics, Autonomous Technologies and Advanced Manufacturing

BUILD: Community and Livable Societies

Examples of sub-themes:
- Liveable Cities
- Human Rights and Diversity
- Migration, Internationalization, Multiculturalism and Identity