
SSHRC Program Architecture + Objectives of the Connection Program

- As you may know, SSHRC structures its funding opportunities under 3 “umbrella” programs: Insight, Talent, and Connection. Broadly speaking, the Insight Program supports research, the Talent Program supports student training, and the Connection Program supports knowledge mobilization. Connection Grants are just one of the funding opportunities offered within the Connection Program.
- An essential aspect in the evaluation of CG applications is their appropriateness to meet the objectives of the Connection Program. It is therefore very important to build a CG application with these objectives in mind. You can find them on the Connection Program page on our website (link provided at the end of this deck). In short, the objectives of the Connection Program are:
 - o the mobilization and dissemination of knowledge among researchers and between the campus and the larger community,
 - o increased accessibility to knowledge
 - o building relationships between the social sciences and humanities, and their end users
 - o building links between the creation of research and its actual use,
 - o and networking.
- There are a number of funding opportunities offered within the Connection Program and they complement activities funding through the Talent and Insight Programs
- It is important to remember that Connection Grants and the Connection Program are different things. The Connection Program offers multiple funding opportunities.
 - o Partnership Grants, Partnership Development Grants, and Partnership Engage Grants also respond to the objectives of the Connection Program, for example. However, they can include research activities which Connection Grants cannot.
- It is thus important to consult the objectives of the Connection Program and to keep them in mind while preparing your application.
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When we receive an application here at SSHRC, we perform a preliminary eligibility check, making sure that applicants are eligible to apply, that co-apps have the right affiliation, that the subject matter of the application is within the mandate of SSHRC, and so on.

The majority of eligibility issues that we encounter concern the differences between events and outreach activities, matching funds, and research.

Connection Grants

Connection Grants:

- Support events and outreach activities, and are intended for short-term, targeted knowledge mobilization initiatives over a maximum of 1 year.
- These events and activities are opportunities to exchange knowledge and to engage on social sciences and humanities issues, and they may also serve as a first step toward larger projects that could potentially be eligible for other funding opportunities.

There are two streams within the Connection Grants: **Events** and **Outreach Activities**, with different budget limits (\$7000 to \$25,000 for events, and \$7000 to \$50,000 or more with sufficient justification for outreach activities).

Events:

- Are short term activities that are usually completed in a week or less (for example a 2 day conference, 1 week workshop, etc.).
- For events, the essential part of knowledge dissemination takes place during that period of time.
- Longer-term activities, including the publication of proceedings or writing of reports, usually follow an event; however, as they are direct outcomes of the event, this would not in and of itself qualify the project to be considered an Outreach Activity.
 - o These follow-up activities respond to the evaluation criterion *the quality and significance of the research being mobilized*, and are considered an outcome of the event.

Outreach Activities:

- Are longer in duration than events, but still not longer than one year.
- Must engage the larger public in social sciences and humanities knowledge.
- Unlike an event, an outreach activity cannot simply be defined by the proceedings held at a particular location over the course of a few days.
- Outreach Activities must go beyond what is expected as part of normal events, and this must be reflected in the activity's budget, too.
 - o For example, if an Outreach Activity comprises an event and other outreach activities (such as a podcast or a speaker series), if the whole budget is to support only the event part of the project, the project may be considered an event in the eyes of SSHRC or the committee, and have its budget reduced accordingly.

Projects may be held in Canada or abroad. However, if a project is being held abroad, the applicant must explain the project's potential to mobilize Canadian research on an international level and why the project needs to be held outside Canada. Moreover, the project needs to be organized or co-organized by the applicant.

Matching Funds

Applications can be deemed ineligible if there are significant problems with the matching funds or the letters of support.

As you may know, SSHRC will not fund 100% of any Connection project. Applicants must show that they can leverage 50% of what they request from SSHRC from other sources.

- a common misconception is to think that the matching funds should be equal to what is asked from SSHRC – this is not the case
- for example, if you ask for \$10,000 from SSHRC, then you need to provide letters of support for \$5,000 – which is half of what you ask from SSHRC.
- These matching funds should take the form of cash or in-kind contribution from sponsoring organizations.
- both cash and in-kind are treated equally in terms of the adjudication process.
- These funds should come from sponsoring organizations, and not from individuals
- Any contribution from sponsoring organizations must be officially confirmed by letters of support from someone with financial signing authority for the organization. These organizations

could be universities, NGOs, private companies, departments, colleges, etc. The letter must include:

- the financial contributions of the organization – with the amounts clearly stated.
- a statement indicating that the organization has read the proposal and agrees to its role and level of participation as outlined;
- and a statement indicating that the organization is willing and able to complete activities assigned to it.
- Each letter of support must be in English or French; letters submitted in other languages are not taken into consideration in the calculation of matching funds, unless they are accompanied by a translation in either French or English
- If a letter of support does not meet these criteria, it may not be taken into consideration in the calculation of matching funds. Failure to meet the minimum matching funds requirements could render the application ineligible.
- **The Letters of Support need to be letters of financial support and not just letters of general support.**
- We sometimes see letters of general support from colleagues or partners, with no financial support mentioned; they also are not taken in consideration and they can overburden the committee with large applications for review

Some examples of eligible Matching Funds could be:

- Cost of space
- Internal grants
- Grants coming from other sources than the tri-agencies
 - For example, an applicant has a grant and wants to use it as matching funds for their Connection project. In this case, the letter should come from the organization that is financially responsible for managing those funds, usually the university.

Examples of ineligible Matching Funds:

- Any funds originating from the tri-agencies or (CFI) Canada Foundation for Innovation
- Registration fees
- Team member work-time: the time that the applicant, co-applicant or collaborator affiliated with a post-secondary institution puts in organizing the event or outreach activity
- Any individual contribution

Ineligible Connection Activities

Research

One of the most important notes to take from this presentation is that **CGs are not for conducting research**. If we find any research activities proposed in your application, it will affect the outcome of your grant.

- We often see applications with some research activities, such as data collection, field work, or literature review. These are not eligible activities under CGs, especially if such activities are linked to budget items
- If Program Officers or committee members find research related activities in a Connection grant, the result will be either a reduction of the budget items linked to research, a lowering of the feasibility

score, a lowering of the Challenge score, or a combination of these. In extreme cases, if the project's objective is found to be primarily to conduct research, the application may be failed.

The majority of Connection Grant proposals are based on projects where the research is already completed and is now at the dissemination phase. Basically, by the time we receive an application to the Connection Grants, the research should already have been conducted and concluded.

Stand-Alone Volumes

Stand-alone volumes are ineligible if they are the sole outcome of a Connection project – i.e. if the entire project is *just* a book project. This does not include published event proceedings that sometimes take the form of edited volumes. If ever you are in doubt, contact a Program Officer for clarification.

Association Activities

SSHRC will support Connection projects organized by associations, except for:

- Annual General Meetings or any other activity directly related to an Association's business meetings;
- Book launches or other similar report dissemination;
- Association receptions for the members and/or any activities normally paid for by the Association's operating fees

Again, if you are ever in doubt about the eligibility of a facet of your Connection Grant, please do not hesitate to contact a Program Officer.

Two Ways to Apply

There are two ways to apply for a Connection Grant.

- As an Individual: where the project director is the applicant
- As an Institution: where the institution is the applicant

There are very few differences between the two:

- For an individual application, the applicant is a project director who proposes a project and approaches the university to be the administrative organization.
- For an institutional application, the applicant is the institution which approaches someone to be the project director on an institutional project.
- If the project director of an individual CG changes institutions mid-grant, he or she may take the grant with him or her.
- If the project director on an institutional CG changes institutions mid-grant, the project stays with the institution unless the administering institution agrees to release the funds to the new institution.

Other than that, they are very similar:

- They have the same application form.
- They are both adjudicated by the same committee.
- There is no advantage to applying one way over the other

The option exists to allow you to select the format that best suits how your event or activity will be organized. Institutional grants also allow an institution to seize an opportunity, e.g., an institution taking the lead to organize an international conference taking place in Canada, etc.

Multiple Applications

The Connection Grants have some rules in regard to multiple applications that apply to Applicants and Project Directors only (not to co-applicants and not to collaborators):

- A person can apply only once per calendar year, as either Applicant on individual CG or Project Director on institutional CG.
- To be eligible to apply, you cannot have an active Connection grant.
 - o Active grants are any CGs that do not have an Achievement Report submitted.
 - o If you have an active CG and you want to apply for another one, you need to complete and submit an Achievement Report for the first one.
- You do not need to submit the Financial reporting forms for the first one in order to submit a second one.
- Connection Grants have a one year automatic extension. You do not need to make a formal request for this extension.
 - o However, an extended grant is an active grant
 - o Therefore, you need to conclude any extended CG in order to be able to reapply.

Finally (and this point applies to all SSHRC FOs):

- You cannot apply for any grant, including the CG, if you have any overdue research reports for any SSHRC grant.

It is worth repeating: All these apply to applicants and project directors only. There is no restriction on how many active CGs a co-applicant or collaborator can participate in.

When to Apply?

Connection Grants are offered 4 times per year. The deadlines are the first day of: February, May, August, and November.

Deadlines are pushed to account for weekends and federal (but not provincial) holidays. If there is a holiday in your province on the deadline day, make sure it is a **federal** holiday before deciding to take advantage of the holiday time; and please contact us whenever in doubt.

The next four deadlines will be: August 1st, November 1st, February 1st, and May 1st. The deadline on these days is **8:00PM EST**. After the deadline, the application form will be unavailable for 48 hours.

Results are announced at the end of each funding cycle, usually the end of the month after the deadline date (i.e.: September, for August 1st).

These deadlines and announcement dates play a very important role in your proposed projects:

- Your project's activities need to start after the announcement of results and your project's activities need to end one year after the announcement of results
- For example, if you have an event in June, you need to meet the February 1st deadline at the latest, because if you were to apply in May, the results wouldn't be available until June 30th, and some of your budget items or even your entire application could be declared ineligible.
- If any part of the project asks for funding before the announcement of results, those parts will not be funded. SSHRC will not accept retroactive budget items asked for in the grant. To use a similar example, if you applied in August for a Connection project in October, any budget items for activities in September (such as a student salary), would be declared ineligible and cut from your budget. This could also have serious repercussions on your feasibility score
- We understand, however, that some matching funds may be provided in advance of the submission of the application; such matching funds that have been provided before the start of the eligible grant period can still be considered eligible as long as the letter clearly demonstrates that they are targeted to the Connection project

The submission process has two stages:

- From the researcher to the institution – submit button
- From the institution to SSHRC – forward button
- For this reason, the university might have a different internal deadline. Please check what this deadline may be well in advance.

Remember!

When you click submit, this does not mean your application has been submitted to SSHRC. The Research Administrator needs to review and approve it and forward it to us.

Adjudication Process

The Connection Grants are reviewed by a multidisciplinary committee that comprises academics from the social sciences and humanities. We strive to assemble a gender-balanced committee of bilingual reviewers that are evenly distributed geographically across Canada. We also target committee members who have past experience in Connection type projects.

The applications are reviewed by two readers and then ranked according to their relative merit. During the adjudication meeting, the committee members discuss the applications and determine final ranking.

Once the committee has signed off on the final ranking of the proposals, SSHRC allocates available funds.

So, an important point to take from this is that:

- Your proposals should be written for a multidisciplinary audience, which means you should limit any disciplinary jargon and clearly explain your justifications.

The committee uses three evaluation criteria, each with their own sub-criteria, all listed on our website, to evaluate the proposals.

Basically, the committee members evaluate the challenge, the feasibility and the capability of your project.

- In the **Challenge Criterion**, the committee members are looking at “the what” of your project: what is the aim and the importance of your endeavour?
- In the **Feasibility Criterion**, the committee is evaluating “the how” of the project: how do you plan to achieve excellence? Is the budget well justified?
- And lastly, in the **Capability Criterion**, the committee is evaluating “the who” of the project: who is conducting and co-organizing the event, and do they have the expertise to succeed with the project as they have proposed it?

We cannot overstate how important it is to write your proposal with these criteria in mind – to make sure that you respond to each one of them. Printing these criteria and sub-criteria and using them as a checklist when completing your proposal is highly recommended.

Indigenous Research

In May 2015, SSHRC launched new initiatives to support and promote Indigenous research and talent development. Indigenous research [statement of principles](#) will serve to guide the implementation of SSHRC’s current and future activities.

A revised definition of [Indigenous Research](#) clarifies research “by and with” Indigenous Peoples and emphasizes and values the existing strengths, assets and knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples and communities. The [Guidelines for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research](#) are intended to assist committee members in interpreting SSHRC’s specific Challenge, Feasibility and Capability evaluation criteria in the context of Indigenous research.

These initiatives serve to recognize that Indigenous research —which includes a wide range of unique theoretical and methodological approaches—supports SSHRC’s commitment to scholarly excellence.

SSHRC is committed to upholding the statement of principles and all of the aspects outlined above on this slide. Committee members will receive guidance regarding the use of the principles and the merit review guidelines. SSHRC relies on a community of merit reviewers with experience and expertise in Indigenous research to judge the extent to which the guidelines may be applied to a particular research proposal.

Applicants can select Indigenous Research on the application forms to ensure appropriate assessment.

Special Initiative: Research Data Management Capacity Building Initiative

SSHRC is currently offering one special initiative as part of the Connection Grants funding opportunity: the Research Data Management Capacity Building Initiative.

Research Data Management Capacity Building Initiative

- This Special Initiative (SI) is offered as part of the Connection Grants competition, and is part of the Tri-Agencies' broader data management policy that includes:
 - 1. the 2016 Tri-Agency Statement of Principles on Digital Data Management
 - 2. The 2018 draft Tri-Agency Research Data Management Policy
- SSHRC, NSERC and CIHR have been consulting with the research community on issues related to data management policy for several years, with institutions, with organizations like CARA, and with scholarly associations. The consultations led to the development of a draft policy that was posted online for comment this summer. Consultation ended on September 31. The input from the community is strong, expressing a range of ideas and concerns about the draft policy. The feedback is currently being analyzed and the agencies will amend the draft policy as appropriate. The special call for targeted Connection Grants is meant to help the SSH research community engage with existing and emerging standards for data management as a feature of excellent research, and to ready itself for the anticipated tri-agency policy.
- Research Data Management Capacity Building Initiative applications are subject to the Connection Grants [evaluation criteria and scoring](#).
- In addition, as part of its assessment of the proposal's relevance to the [objectives of the Connection program](#), under the Connection Grants [Challenge criteria](#), the merit review committee will evaluate the degree to which applications respond to one or more of the following objectives:
 - develop and/or adopt data management standards, practices, tools and skills within and across disciplines and institutions, with a focus on the social sciences and humanities;
 - connect researchers or students with data management professionals and service providers (e.g., librarians, programmers, specialists in research ethics, etc.), and other stakeholders (e.g., research subjects and users) to increase knowledge of data management;
 - share and develop knowledge and skills relating to data collection and storage, metadata, preservation, retention, sharing, credit and citation;
 - share and develop knowledge and skills related to the responsible ownership, control, access and possession of data used or created in the context of [Indigenous research](#) (e.g., the application of [OCAP](#)[®] principles); and
 - through other activities, enable the social sciences and humanities research community to strengthen its ability to fulfill the roles and responsibilities indicated in the Tri-Agency Statement of Principles on Digital Data Management, and the requirements proposed in the draft tri-agency research data management policy.

Feedback

Applicants can expect to receive the feedback as described below. While we endeavor to return this feedback to applicants as quickly as possible, it is not guaranteed that it will be shared in advance of the deadline of the next Connection Grant competition.

Please note that files that were not discussed during the committee meeting due to the initial ranking of the file do not receive a feedback form.

Connection Grants

Scores	Yes.
Descriptors	Yes, if discussed.
Additional comments	Yes, if applicable.
Sextile category	Yes.
Ranking	Yes, if application falls in top four sextiles.
External reports	No; there are no External Assessors for Connection Grants

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between an Event and an Outreach Activity?

An event is a short term activity that is usually completed in a week or less (e.g., a two-day conference or a one-week workshop). In the case of Event Connection projects, the essential part of the knowledge mobilization takes place during this timeframe. Connection events can also serve as a first step toward more comprehensive and longer-term project that could be eligible for funding through other SSHRC funding opportunities. Knowledge mobilization activities that follow from an event (e.g., the publication of event proceedings) would not qualify your project to be an Outreach Activity. Instead, Outreach Activities take place over a longer period of time and can comprise a series of activities (e.g. a summer school, a travelling exhibition, the development of an interactive technology). An Outreach Activity cannot be defined by the proceedings held over a short term. If you are applying for a Connection Grant to support an Outreach Activity, make sure you check the Outreach Activity box on the application form.

Can my project be both an Event and an Outreach Activity?

Yes. Connection Grants can support projects that have both an Event portion and an Outreach Activity portion. In this case, you should indicate that your project is an Outreach Activity on the application form. Make sure that your budget reflects that it comprises both streams – if your budget is only to support the Event portion of your project, then the budget limit of \$25,000 will be applied to your project.

I submitted my application. Why has SSHRC not received it?

SSHRC grants have a two-stage submission process: from you to your institution, and from your institution to SSHRC. When you hit the “submit” button on your application, it is submitted to your institution. Your institution reviews the application, and then forwards it to SSHRC. Without this last step, the application process is not complete.

My Connection project is strictly an Outreach Activity – who should I include as a “Presenter”?

For Connection projects, “Presenters” are not only people who will give a presentation at an event. Presenters are defined by SSHRC as individuals who will make an active contribution to the project’s objectives and/or the production of concrete deliverables (e.g. preparing exhibition materials, producing a podcast). You can think of them as participants.

How many presenters should I include in my application?

Some projects might have hundreds of presenters. You should not overburden your application and the committee members by listing all of them. It is recommended that you submit a presenter page only for key presenters at your Event or participants of your Outreach Activity. These should include anyone for whom you are asking for SSHRC’s support. When appropriate, the list should also include students as well as established and emerging scholars.

Are recurrent annual events eligible for Connection Grant support?

Yes, recurrent annual events are eligible for Connection Grant support, but you must demonstrate how the event differs from what was previously funded (e.g. what new knowledge is being mobilized, what new methods are being used).

I have been invited to a conference abroad; can I apply for a Connection Grant to support my travel expenses?

No. Connection Grants are not travel grants. They are intended to support applicants and project directors who are running a knowledge mobilization event or activity. Connection funding can support applicants’ travel costs and other expenses if they are organizing an event or activity abroad. In this case, the applicant must demonstrate within the application why the event needs to be held outside Canada and its potential to mobilize Canadian research on an international stage.

Can students participate as co-applicants?

No. Students can only participate as collaborators. Moreover, if a student is a collaborator on the project team, they cannot be paid a stipend or a wage from the grant.

Can my application include bursaries to encourage increased student attendance?

No. Students must have an active role in your Connection project in order to be eligible for support.

How do I know if something is eligible for SSHRC support?

SSHRC grants are governed by the Tri-Agency Financial Administration Guide. If you are not sure whether something you are proposing would be eligible, please contact us. Funding opportunity eligibility rules will be considered alongside Tri-Agency Financial Administration rules – meaning that

eligible and non-eligible expenses specific to the Connection program prevails over eligible and non-eligible expenses outlined in the Guide.

What is my eligible grant period? Can I ask for funding outside of this period?

The eligible grant period is one year, starting on the grant start date. Any budget requests for before or after that period will be declared ineligible.

Can matching funds be applied to costs before the Connection Grant decision date?

Yes, cash or in-kind matching funds can be applied to costs before the competition deadline date. Any matching funds that have been provided before the start of the grant period can still be considered eligible as long as their supporting letter clearly demonstrates that they are targeted to your Connection project.

Would my project be penalized because I only have in-kind support?

No. SSHRC considers cash and in-kind support to be of equal value.

A colleague wrote a letter of support. Why has it not been considered towards the 50% matching funds criteria?

Letters of support must come from sponsoring organizations, not individuals. If support is coming from an individual's grant, the letter confirming as such needs to be provided by the organization that is financially responsible for the money. A professor from another university, for example, cannot write a letter of support; the letter needs to be provided by his or her department or university. Please see the SSHRC Guidelines for Cash and In-Kind Contributions for more information.

I just learned that my Connection Grant proposal was not successful. Can I resubmit for the next competition?

Individuals, as applicants or project directors, can only apply to the Connection Grants funding opportunity once per calendar year.

Helpful Links

[Connection Grants](#)

[Connection Program](#)

[Connection Grants – Individual, Application Instructions](#)

[Connection Grants – Institution, Application Instructions](#)

[Indigenous Research](#)

[Guidelines for Effective Research Training](#)

[Guidelines for Effective Knowledge Mobilization](#)

[Guidelines for Cash and In-Kind Contributions](#)

[Research Data Management Capacity Building Initiative](#)

[Connection Achievement report](#)

[Tri-Agency Financial Administration Guide](#)

Contact Us

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