

# UBC Division of Cardiology Pilot Project Research Grant

## Terms of Reference (February 2017)

### Purpose:

The UBC Division of Cardiology has created an internal mechanism for generation of research funds. These funds are to be allocated on the basis of merit. The overriding purpose of this internal funding mechanism is to facilitate early career research productivity of successfully recruited faculty as an aid to developing competitiveness for external awards from peer review agencies. However, all members at any stage of career development are eligible to apply for funds. Projects of limited long-term scope, not intended to provide the basis for external peer-reviewed grant applications, will not generally be considered.

### Expenditures:

The funds are expendable for research in either clinical or basic cardiovascular fields for projects that might generate pilot data for larger, external grant applications. As such, the funding is intended to provide “seed” money and not funding for established or expansive programs. The funds are not intended to provide the applicant with protected time or personal salary support but an evaluation of protected time will form a part of the assessment process to ensure that the award is likely to be well utilized and that the project is likely to come to fruition. Items pertaining to supplies, support of research staff, academic fees to access materials/databases, other operational costs of research (including publication costs), equipment, technical support, or consultation can be considered. Travel and accommodation will not be considered.

### Application and Allocation:

There will be two annual application deadlines with awards made effective January or July. Application deadlines are November 1<sup>st</sup> end of business for January funding, and May 1<sup>st</sup> end of business for July funding.

Three months prior to the application deadline applicants are required to send a brief Letter of Intent (LOI) to the Research Director indicating an application is in the pipeline (Feb 1<sup>st</sup> end of business for May deadline and August 1<sup>st</sup> end of business for November deadline). LOI must indicate long-term external grant submission plans.

Applications are to be submitted on a formal, application form which can be downloaded from the UBC Cardiology Website

<http://www.ubccardio.com/research/capp-pilot-project/>

Applications will be reviewed by the UBC Division of Cardiology Research Review Committee and ad hoc reviewers as well. The process will be coordinated and chaired by the Director of Research.

## Eligibility

1. A recipient must be a member or a prospective member of the UBC Division of Cardiology and participating or if being recruited, committed to participate in the Cardiology Academic Practice Plan. The emphasis will be on early career individuals to enable creation of a research program. But all Division members will be eligible for pilot project support based on alignment with Division priorities, the researcher's vision and program and the scientific quality of the pilot project.
2. If an award is made to a new division member, the funds will be made available only once the individual is on site.
3. The principal applicant may, if appropriate, have an existing senior member of the UBC Division of Cardiology or other established investigator as a collaborator but with clear justification and with clear indication of the applicant's primary role in creation and execution of the project.
4. Only one such award can be held at any one time.
5. Repeated applications can be made for new projects fulfilling eligibility as outlined above.
6. Applications for extension of a project idea previously funded through this mechanism will be considered if the applicant can justify that further additional funding and time would align with the purposes outlined above (eg need for somewhat more pilot data where currently available pilot data is promising but not sufficient for external peer review grant application, etc). Such applications will be considered to be extensions of the original project and will not be considered for periods of time longer than 1 year.
7. Projects falling outside of these parameters in terms of purpose, scope, funding and duration limits may be considered on a case by case basis. Such applications should not be made and will not be accepted without prior discussion with the Director of Research.

Proposals should be made with the understanding that the project will require:

1. Maximum award: \$30k per year.
2. Maximum duration: 2 years.
3. Extensions:
  - a. Maximum award: \$10k
  - b. Maximum duration: 1 year

## Responsibilities

As described above, funding for this research is from your colleagues. It is the responsibility of the successful applicant to provide appropriate stewardship of the funds in pursuit of the stated research goals and to alert the Research Director expeditiously if problems are arising with the execution of the proposal. In addition, formal progress reports will be required and must be approved before release of second year funding. A full, final report will be required at the completion of funding. Finally, in order to showcase to your colleagues what has been achieved with their support, you are to give a clinically-oriented Grand Rounds after your project is completed. The rounds should be targeted to the typical diversity of attendees. Within your broad subject matter discussion, you will briefly include what you have contributed or achieved to advance the field or topic through the CAPP Pilot Project funding.

## General Comments

It takes longer than you may realize to create a research proposal and, to this end, we have provided a sample timeline on the last page in this document. It is also available separately on the UBC Cardiology website.

There are no absolute rules that will guarantee success but several issues should be weighed. You need to see your grant proposal through the eyes of its reviewer:

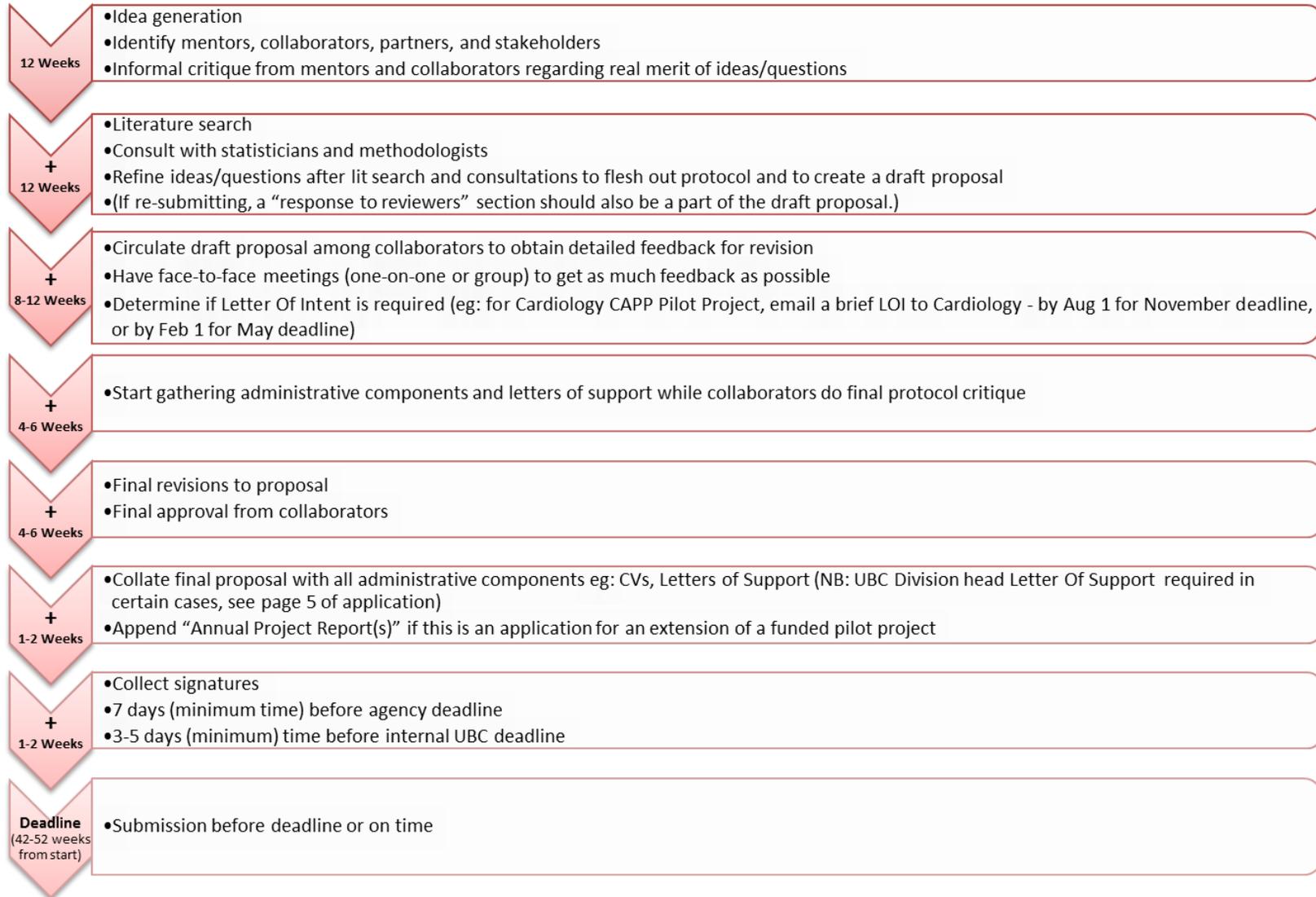
- Only good to excellent proposals will be funded. In general, established investigators will need to demonstrate ideas of special excellence to be funded as Principal Investigators of these projects and may be denied funding even when more junior members with less exceptional but good proposals may be funded. Established investigators should consider acting as a mentor to a more junior member of the Division who would act as Principal Investigator of the CAPP Pilot Project.
- Reviewers need to understand the scope of the project and evaluate whether the project fits the objectives of the grant program.
- The abstract or summary must sell the grant so that there is enthusiasm for the reviewer to read the body intently and with a positive attitude.
- The proposal should appeal to the reviewers and induce a level of interest and enthusiasm that matches the writer's. If you are not enthusiastic about the project, it is unlikely reviewers will feel otherwise.

- Mistakes that reviewers frequently encounter include a dense academic writing style, wordiness and the inclusion of tedious and unnecessary information. Applicants often use small fonts and reduced margins to include as much information as possible. However, the inclusion of too much and unnecessary information, makes it difficult for reviewers to recognize exciting and innovative ideas. It is therefore important to write your proposal in a clear and concise manner.
- Proposals that appear to be "cut and paste" jobs, with inconsistent formatting and multiple writing styles or without regard to the actual official form creates a negative impression of the care and commitment of the proponent. It may also make it difficult for reviewers to understand the proposal and to feel that the proposal can be compared adequately to other proposals that adhere to the stated guidelines and Terms of Reference. In addition, reviewers will get the impression that the applicant does not take grant writing seriously. If you don't take your research seriously, why should the reviewers? It is therefore important to ensure that each section logically follows from the previous, that the writing style is consistent throughout your proposal and that the format is as requested.
- Errors in spelling and grammar are frequently encountered by reviewers. They will become annoyed and irritated when the writing is sloppy and the document hasn't been proofread.
- The aims and hypothesis section is the most important section in a grant application. Information provided here should enable reviewers to understand the proposal's objectives. In addition, after reading these sections, reviewers should be able to understand why you want to achieve these specific goals. However, most applicants fail to convincingly argue the relevance of their research goals. Make sure that you have conveyed answers to the following questions in your write-up: a) What is the scientific relevance of your work? b) To what extent will your research expand our knowledge?
- The objectives should be clear, realistic and achievable within the duration of the project and any budgetary limitations. Applicants, however, often include aims that are either general in nature or too ambitious and unrealistic.
- Do not go beyond stated budgetary limits. Doing so almost invariably evokes two responses, both negative: this person has not paid attention to instructions and may not be a careful researcher OR this person has made a proposal that is not feasible within the

stated limits of funding and therefore it should be given a low score. Avoid these mistakes.

- Reviewers need to feel confident that an applicant is capable of successfully performing the proposed project and achieving the project's objectives. However, applicants often fail to provide evidence of their knowledge and expertise within their research field. It is important to include preliminary results in your proposal to demonstrate your expertise. This may well be impossible for a pilot proposal competition but if there is any preliminary effort or data, showcase it.
- Make sure your own papers of relevance to the field are made known to the reviewers and ensure that your CV is up to date, comprehensive and in a standard, readable format.
- Make sure that the proposed research strategy is not vague and unfocused. To the reviewers, this gives the impression that the applicant isn't qualified to perform the research project. It is therefore essential to ensure that the scientific background of your project is sound and your approach is well thought-out, feasible and complete. Seek advice from content experts in the area of research you wish to pursue.
- Do not take rejection personally. Address critiques in a constructive and non-defensive fashion. This will ensure an improved score with a resubmission.

## SAMPLE TIMELINE FOR OPTIMAL DEVELOPMENT OF A RESEARCH PROPOSAL



**TOTAL TIME 42-52 WEEKS**