

Canadian Society of Surgical Oncology Research Fund

Terms of Reference

The Canadian Society of Surgical Oncology is pleased to announce the establishment of the CSSO Research Fund. This fund is specifically designed to support innovative research by new and emerging surgical oncology researchers, in order to increase their ability to secure competitive external funding.

One grant valued at \$20,000 will be provided per year to a member of the CSSO. Grant proposals covering all aspects of surgical oncology are eligible, including translational research, health services research, quality improvement, clinical trials, clinical epidemiology, surgical education, technology and innovation. Selection will take place through an internal review process, with an objective to provide constructive feedback that can be used to improve future grant applications.

Details concerning eligibility criteria and selection process are found below. For additional details, please contact ari.meguerditchian@mcgill.ca

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

Candidates must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Surgical oncology specialist (by post-graduate certification)
- active membership to the CSSO (with fully paid dues)
- in practice at a Canadian institution
- within first 5 years of primary appointment

****Surgical Oncology Fellows in their final year of training with a confirmed position in a Canadian institution are also eligible to apply.**

EXPENSES ELIGIBLE:

- Funds can be used for usual research expenses such as research personnel salary (e.g. research assistant, statistician, etc.), specialized services (transcription, student stipend), equipment and consumables (materials, analytic software).
- The CSSO funds cannot be used to replace host institutions' seed funding commitment towards junior faculty.
- The Principal Investigator and co-investigators cannot receive salary support or personal compensation from this fund.

- A maximum of \$2,000 may be budgeted for conference travel (Principal Investigator only) or publication fees.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

The following 7 items must be submitted in a single PDF document in the order below:

DOCUMENT	SPECIFICATIONS
1) Application form	Link to Application Form
2) Research grant proposal	<p><u>Length:</u> maximum 5 pages</p> <p><u>Format:</u> Single spaced, 2-inch margins, times new roman 12pt font, no appendices.</p> <p><u>Sections:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Background -Hypothesis -Objectives -Methods -Potential limitations -Potential impact and knowledge transfer plan -Team
3) Budget proposal	<p><u>Length:</u> 2 pages maximum</p> <p><u>Format:</u> all information placed in a table with the following headings: item, cost, details (justification, relevant weblinks, etc.)</p> <p><u>Sections:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -human resources (e.g. research personnel, translator, programmer) -IT (e.g. software, hardware) -consumables (e.g. blood sample vials, print outs) -medical devices / equipment -knowledge transfer -other
4) Letter of support from Department / Division Head	<p>Letter confirming that the PI is within 5 years of initial appointment and that appropriate resources are available to ensure the proposed project's success.</p> <p>For applicants who are graduating Surgical Oncology Fellows, the letter of support should confirm a position within a Canadian institution.</p>

5) Mentorship letter	Letter from senior researcher who will act as scientific mentor, detailing mentorship plan.
6) Curriculum Vitae	Abbreviated CV's (10 pages maximum per person) of PI, mentor and co-investigators covering most significant achievements of the past 5 years including grants and publications.
7) Checklist	See checklist Section at bottom of Application Form

APPLICATION EVALUATION:

The following evaluation grid will be used by reviewers.

CRITERIA 1: APPLICANT TRACK RECORD (12.5%):

Score	Description of Applicant
1/5	Modest or no track record in research.
2/5	Some first/second author publications, no research program developed yet.
3/5	Evidence of application for internal grants Senior author publications in preparation Good track record with first author publications
4/5	Internal grants/ early research awards received Evidence of application to granting agencies One senior author publication Emerging a research program
5/5	External grants/early research awards received More than one senior author publication Clear independent research program

CRITERIA 2: IMPORTANCE/NOVELTY OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION (25%):

Score	Description of Research Question
1/5	The importance of the research question is difficult to understand
2/5	The research question has merit, but the significance or novelty is not well articulated or defined, therefore, the impact is hard to discern
3/5	The research question is important but the proposed study replicates others or expected findings are simply incremental
4/5	The proposed study will provide valuable information to the field or the proposed methodology is novel but findings will not have broad impact
5/5	Very relevant research question of significant importance or highly innovative idea or methodology, the project would result in a high impact publication

CRITERIA 3: FEASIBILITY OR METHODOLOGICAL APPROPRIATENESS (25%):

Score	Description of Feasibility
1/5	The project is not feasible, evidence of expertise/infrastructure is lacking
2/5	There are some feasibility concerns that make the project risky
3/5	Feasibility is likely but not certain. The project may be too ambitious or depends on a key resource that is not confirmed or included
4/5	The PI/team appear to have the expertise but the track record for this team has not been clearly established
5/5	The PI and team have the required expertise and have a track record in similar projects

CRITERIA 4: IMPORTANCE OF THE PROJECT TO THE PI's RESEARCH PROGRAM (25%):

Score	Description of Project Relevance to the Program
1/5	No program is articulated or established
2/5	The program is broad and not well-defined or the project is not clearly linked to it. There is limited opportunity to build on the project

3/5	A program is emerging but this project does not have a clear future direction that would build towards the larger program. The potential to build on the results for future funding are not clear
4/5	A program is emerging and this project is an important element to build this program. The results could be used for future grant applications
5/5	A program has been established and this project fits with the program. The results of the project would be very valuable for a larger external grant application

CRITERIA 5: RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT (12.5%):

Score	Description of Research Environment
1/5	There is no evidence for local resources or external collaborations to facilitate the project
2/5	The local resources and/or external collaborations may be present but are not well described or sufficient
3/5	Local resources and/or external collaborations are good, but several elements appear to be lacking
4/5	Local resources and/or external collaborations are very good, but one element is lacking
5/5	Local resources and external collaborations are excellent

GRANT REVIEW PROCESS:

1. Committee members are named by the CSSO Director of Research based on expertise and scientific productivity track record;
2. Prior to review, conflicts of interest are identified and mitigated;
3. Proposals are assigned for review by the CSSO Director of Research. Each proposal is reviewed by 2 committee members, using the evaluation criteria set above;
4. At least one constructive (positive and/or negative) comment is required for the following areas:
 - a. Importance of the research question
 - b. Feasibility and methodology of the grant
 - c. Overall grantsmanship

5. Concerns about project overlap with other grants awarded to the applicant or questions regarding the applicant's eligibility should be included in the comments section. These will only be investigated for grants that are the top contenders;
6. The budget proposal of the selected grant will be validated for appropriateness by the CSSO Research Director;
7. The review committee will meet to discuss only the top third of grant applications and any cases with a significant discordance between reviewer scores. In addition, any grant that is requested to be reviewed by a reviewer will be discussed, regardless of whether the scores would triage it;
8. The top grants will be decided by consensus when possible or, if necessary, by vote. Each reviewer will have a single vote. Reviewers with a conflict are not permitted to vote. Ties can be decided by the CSSO Director of Research.

FUNDING DECISIONS:

Applicants will be informed of funding decisions by email within 3 months of the application deadline, once the Executive Committee of the CSSO has approved funding recommendations made by the Director of Research. A decision may include conditional approval pending revision recommendations made by the review committee. In that case, the applicant will be given one month to address the committee's recommendations. All applicants will receive a grant review that includes reviewer comments (edited as required by the Chair). The awardee will receive a certificate and award at the following CSSO spring meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Progress report: Awardees are required to produce a progress report one year after the start of the funding to be presented at the CSSO spring meeting.

Final reporting: Six months after the end of the project, the awardee must submit a final report with the following elements:

- 1) scientific report (maximum 10 pages double-spaced): abstract, introduction, methods, results, conclusions, practice implications. A publication-ready manuscript is an acceptable alternative to the scientific report.
- 2) lay language summary (1/2 page maximum) for communication purposes
- 3) 1-page final financial report with details of total expenditures, and unspent funds, if applicable
- 4) 1-page productivity summary detailing any grant proposal submitted, oral presentations, publications (and/or submissions) since receiving CSSO research funding.

The Principal Investigator will be invited to present his / her research findings at the CSSO spring meeting.

Visibility: Applicants / projects funded by the CSSO Research Fund may be featured on the CSSO webpage and other platforms (newsletter, social media, SMHF communications, etc.). A structured layperson abstract will be requested as needed. The Principal Investigator will be asked to review and approve content material prior to publication.

Acknowledgement: the CSSO Research Fund must be acknowledged in all oral presentations, publications or other research communications emanating from the project.