UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
DIVISION OF CARDIOLOGY
CARDIOVASCULAR EXCELLENCE IN ACTION

Providence Health Care
How you want to be treated.

Vancouver Coastal Health
Promoting wellness. Ensuring care.

UBC Division of Cardiology Academic Practice Plan (CAPP)
Pilot Project Research Grant

Terms of Reference (September, 2023)

Purpose

The UBC Division of Cardiology has an internal fund allocation system, primarily aimed at stimulating early-career research productivity for newly recruited faculty. The overarching purpose of this internal funding system is to enhance investigators' chances of obtaining external awards through peer review agencies. However, all members, regardless of career stage, can apply for these funds. Projects with limited long-term scope, not intended for external grant applications, are typically not prioritized.

Expenditures

The allocated funds are intended for research in the clinical or basic cardiovascular fields, specifically for projects that can generate pilot data to support larger external grant applications. These funds serve as "seed" money; however, the funds are not intended for established or extensive programs. The funds are not intended for the applicant's personal salary support. However, the assessment process will consider the applicant's protected time to ensure the award is well-utilized and the project has a high likelihood of success.

Allowable expenditures include supplies, research staff support, academic fees for material, like database access, operational research costs, including publication fees, equipment, technical support, and consultation. However, expenses related to travel and accommodation will not be considered.

Application and Allocation

Submission deadlines are effective twice a year, on June 1st and December 1st. The competition will be announced 3 months prior to each submission deadline (March 1st and September 1st respectively). Applicants must submit a brief (maximum 1 page, any format) Letter Of Intent (LOI) to the Research Director and the Research Manager 2 months prior to the submission deadline (April 1st and October 1st respectively). The LOI must indicate the long-term external grant submission plans which are anticipated from a successful CAPP pilot application. A maximum of two grants will be awarded in any given competition (i.e., maximum 4 pilot grant wards annually).

Announcement	LoI	Full-Application	Award letter	Funding start
September 1	October 1	December 1	February 1	February 1
March 1	April 1	June 1	August 1	August 1

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 members of the UBC Division of Cardiology Research Committee and when needed by external reviewers. 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.

2. The emphasis will be on early career investigators to enable initiating a research program. However, 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.
3. If an award is made to a new division member, the funds will be made available only once the individual has commenced their role on site within the Division.
4. 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.
5. Only one such award can be held at any one time.
6. Repeated applications can be made for new projects fulfilling eligibility as outlined above.
7. Applications for extensions of project ideas that were previously funded through the CAPP system will be considered; however, the applicant must provide a clear rationale for why additional funding and time would be required. Requirements for additional funding must be in line with the purposes outlined in the section "expenditures". This may include a need for more pilot data, especially when the existing pilot data is promising but insufficient related to the requirements for external peer-reviewed grant applications. These extension applications will be treated as continuations of the original project and will not be considered for time periods exceeding one year.
8. Projects falling outside of these criteria 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 arise with the execution of the proposal.

Formal progress reports are mandatory and must be approved before the release of second year funding. A comprehensive final report is required upon the completion of the funding period. 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 intended audience. In your discussion about the subject matter, briefly mention the contributions or achievements you've made to progress the field using the CAPP Pilot Project funding.

General Comments

Writing a research proposal can be time-consuming. A sample timeline is provided on the last page and can also be found on the UBC Cardiology website.

While no definitive rules ensure success, it's important to consider factors, such as innovativeness and feasibility. Review your grant proposal from the perspective of its reviewer.

- Only good to excellent proposals will receive funding. Established investigators, as Principal Investigators, must demonstrate exceptional ideas to secure funding. These projects might be unfunded based on the competition cycle and the participation of junior members with good but potentially less exceptional proposals.
- Established senior investigators should participate as Collaborating Investigators, Co-Investigators, or mentors to junior Division members who will serve as Principal Investigators for the CAPP Pilot Project. If the senior investigator is mentioned as a Collaborating Investigator or Co-Investigator as stated earlier, the junior investigator must explain the rationale for this and convey clearly the junior investigators primary role in creation and execution of the project.
- Reviewers need to understand the scope of the project and evaluate whether the project fits the objectives of the grant program.
- The abstract must entice curiosity and enthusiasm in the reviewer to read the body of the proposal attentively.
- The proposal should appeal to the reviewers and induce a level of interest and enthusiasm that matches the writer's. If you lack enthusiasm for the project, reviewers are unlikely to feel differently.
- 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, and to pay attention to formatting.
- Proposals resembling "cut and paste" jobs with inconsistent formatting and varied writing styles, or not adhering to the official form, convey a lack of care and commitment from the applicant. This could also hinder reviewers from understanding the proposal and making a comparison between the proposal and others that adhere to the guidelines and Terms of Reference. Additionally, reviewers will get the impression that the applicant does not take grant writing seriously. If your research isn't approached seriously, reviewers might question why they should take it seriously. Therefore, ensure logical progression between sections, maintain consistent writing style, and adhere to the requested format.
- 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 are 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 stated 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 budgetary constraints. 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.
- Highlight your relevant papers for reviewers and ensure your CV is updated and in UBC format, comprehensive, and presented in a clear, standard format.
- Ensure your proposed research strategy is specific and focused. A proposal that lacks focus and specificity can leave the impression among reviewers that the applicant lacks the qualifications to carry out the research project. Validate your project's scientific basis, ensure a well-considered, feasible approach, and seek advice from content experts in your research area.
- Do not take rejection personally. Embrace feedback positively and address critiques in a constructive and non-defensive fashion. This will ensure an improved score with a resubmission.