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Canada

CIHR Peer Review Manual for New Investigator Salary Award Applications



CIHR IRSC

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SECTION I – Policy & Guiding Principles

1. Purpose of the Manual

On behalf of CIHR, we would like to thank you for agreeing to serve as a peer review committee member. The success of the peer review process is made possible by dedicated people like yourself who generously give of their time and expertise. Your efforts are greatly appreciated by CIHR and the scientific community.

The peer review process is described in detail in this manual and on CIHR's website (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/37790.html>). It is essential that committee members read and be familiar with this Manual and the Funding Opportunity for which you review. Concise information on the role of each committee member and their responsibilities is also available on the CIHR website: please refer to the Peer Review Committee Members Role page (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/44083.html>).

The purpose of this manual is to provide information on CIHR's objectives, governance and policies; to outline the roles and responsibilities of peer review committee members; and to define the policies and procedures for peer review of applications.

For detailed regulations concerning all aspects of CIHR funding programs, please refer to the Grants and Awards Guide (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/805.html>).

2. Peer Review at CIHR

The mandate of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) is as follows:

“To excel, according to internationally accepted standards of scientific excellence, in the creation of new knowledge and its translation into improved health for Canadians, more effective health services and products and a strengthened health care system.”

The purpose of peer review is to ensure excellence in the research funded by CIHR. The peer review system also provides accountability, not only to the Government of Canada and the Canadian taxpayer – the source of CIHR funding – but to the research community at large. Peer review is carried out by committees of experts that encompass all four pillars of health research (Biomedical, Clinical, Health Systems and Services, and Population and Public Health).

Peer review is overseen by CIHR's Science Council (SC), which governs all aspects of research-related decision making. SC provides scientific leadership and advice to Governing Council (GC) on health research and knowledge translation (KT) priorities and strategies, and recommends investment strategies in accordance with CIHR's 5-year Strategic Plan. The approval of funding opportunities for all research and knowledge translation initiatives is an integral part of SC's responsibilities.

For more information on the different types of Peer Review and meeting formats, please refer to Types of Review at CIHR (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/44135.html>)

3. Principles of Peer Review

3.1 Confidentiality

The Funding Organizations are subject to the Privacy Act and the Access to Information Act. These laws govern the collection, use and disclosure of information under the control of the federal government and certain federally funded organizations. Documentation submitted to the Funding Organizations by the Applicant may be provided to the Review Committee members, External Reviewers and Observers. The documentation may contain Personal Information and Confidential Commercial Information.

By law, Applicants have the right of access to the information provided by Review Committee members and External Reviewers about their applications. The names of External Reviewers must be kept confidential to ensure they can provide an impartial review of an application. Review Committee members' names can be released at the discretion of the Funding Organization. Written materials used in the Review Process are generally made available to Applicants when they are notified by the Funding-decision Authority of the funding opportunity results. A list of peer review committee members will be published on the CIHR website 60 days after the Science Council approves funding for a competition cycle.

3.2 Conflict of Interest

CIHR must make every effort to ensure not only that its decisions are fair and objective, but also that they are seen to be so. According to the Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy of the Federal Research Funding Organizations (COIC) (<http://www.science.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=90108244-1>), a Conflict of Interest means a conflict between a Participant's duties and responsibilities with regard to the Review Process, and a Participant's private, professional, business or public interests. There may be a real, perceived or potential conflict of interest when the Participant:

- i. would receive professional or personal benefit resulting from the funding opportunity or application being reviewed;
- ii. has a professional or personal relationship with an Applicant or the Applicant's institution;
- iii. has a direct or indirect financial interest in a funding opportunity or application being reviewed; or
- iv. is currently under investigation for an alleged breach of Funding Organization policies.

A conflict of interest may be deemed to exist or perceived as such when review committee members, external reviewers or observers:

- are a relative or close friend, or have a personal relationship with the applicants;
- are in a position to gain or lose financially/materially from the funding of the application;
- have had long-standing scientific or personal differences with the applicants;
- are currently affiliated with the applicants' institutions, organizations or companies—including research hospitals and research institutes;
- are closely professionally affiliated with the applicants, as a result of having in the last six years:

- frequent and regular interactions with the applicants in the course of their duties at their department, institution, organization or company;
- been a supervisor or a trainee of the applicants;
- collaborated, published or shared funding with the applicants, or have plans to do so in the immediate future; or,
- been employed by the institution, when an institution is the applicant; and/or
- feel for any reason unable to provide an impartial review of the application.

All committee members (Chair, Scientific Officer, reviewers, etc.) are subject to the same conflict of interest guidelines. CIHR staff and the Chair are responsible for resolving areas of uncertainty during the committee meeting.

All committee members must read and agree to abide by the CCIP policy prior to viewing any application information.

3.3 Fairness

Success of the peer review system is critically dependent upon the willingness and ability of all committee members to be fair and reasonable; to exercise rigorous scientific judgment; and to understand, and take into account in a balanced way, the particular context of each application. In programs where written reviews are required, these reviews are provided to the applicant without prior editing by CIHR staff, and CIHR does not take responsibility for their content. An applicant will not accept that your review is fair if it contains comments that could be construed as sarcastic, flippant, arrogant, or inappropriate in any way. Conversely, a constructive review, which includes helping the applicant by pointing out deficiencies that could be repaired in a resubmission, will help to convince a disappointed applicant that you provided a fair assessment of the proposal.

4. Policies Impacting Peer Review

Some policies may not apply to all salary award programs. Please contact your committee coordinator for more information.

4.1 International Collaborations & Global Health Research

As stated in the CIHR Act, one of the ways CIHR fulfills its mandate is by “pursuing opportunities and providing support for the participation of Canadian scientists in international collaborations and partnerships in health research.” As a result, CIHR accepts applications for research to be carried out in, or in collaboration with applicants based in, other countries. The international nature of the research should not be a factor in the scientific assessment of the proposal, beyond how it relates to the feasibility of the proposed research and the quality of the research question. Reviewers should also not be influenced by the funding obtained or requested for the international components when recommending a budget for the Canadian component(s). For detailed information on applying for funding with an international partnership component, please refer to the subsections titled Global Health Research (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/22630.html#F24>) and International Collaborations (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/22630.html#F28>) in the Grants and Awards Guide.

4.2 Knowledge Translation

Knowledge translation is integral to CIHR's mandate and falls into two main categories, *end of grant* KT and *integrated* KT. With both categories of knowledge translation, CIHR expects researchers to disseminate their findings and facilitate their translation into improved health, more effective products or services, and/or a strengthened healthcare system. Note that the costs of dissemination are eligible expenditures in all CIHR grants and research allowances.

For end of grant KT, many means of dissemination exist and the onus is on the researcher/trainee to select the most appropriate vehicle for the intended knowledge-user audience to ensure maximum impact. When the primary knowledge users are researchers, dissemination of results through the publication of articles in high quality and accessible journals is appropriate, although other strategies that increase awareness of the results and facilitate their application may also be appropriate. When knowledge-user audiences outside the research community should be informed of specific research findings, dissemination plans with more ambitious goals and comprehensive strategies are expected. With integrated KT, stakeholders or potential research knowledge users are engaged in the entire research process and the research is directed at producing solutions to issues or problems the stakeholders/knowledge users have identified. Please consult About Knowledge Translation (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/29418.html>) for more information.

4.3 Gender, Sex and Health Research

Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate the use of gender and sex-based analysis in applications. Gender and sex-based analysis is an approach to research which systematically inquires about biological (sex-based) and sociocultural (gender-based) differences between women and men, boys and girls, without presuming that any such differences exist. The purpose of this line of inquiry is to promote rigorous health research which expands understanding of health determinants in both sexes and results in improvements in health and health care. For more information on how peer reviewers can assess whether gender and/or sex are appropriately integrated into CIHR applicants' proposed research designs, please refer to Integrating Gender and Sex in Health Research: A Tool for CIHR Peer Reviewers (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/43216.html>).

4.4 Official Languages

Federal agencies are required to take positive measures to ensure the support and recognition of minority language communities in Canada. For CIHR, this means an obligation to promote health research in and for these communities. For further information, please refer to the CIHR Policy Statement on Official Languages (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/47951.html>). Research proposals in these areas should still be subject to the same rigorous peer review process as any other application.

4.5 Publications and Productivity

An important evaluation criterion in all funding programs is the excellence of the applicant(s). A key factor in assessing this criterion is the productivity of the applicant(s), as determined by the quality and impact of contributions to the field. When assessing the quality of publications, peer review committees should focus on the quality of a publication's content and NOT simply the number of publications nor the quality or impact factor of journals. In the case of multi-authored publications or other collaborative work, applicants are advised to describe their contribution and reviewers should assess the specific contribution of the applicant to the work.

CIHR funds researchers in many health-related areas, and the forms of research publications can vary greatly among disciplines. In addition to the more traditional peer-reviewed journals, health researchers also publish in books, monographs, memoirs or special papers, review articles, conference/symposia proceedings and abstracts, government publications, etc. Some fast-moving research fields, such as some areas of computing science, genetics or microelectronics, use special means to reach the target audience quickly. Communications, quick-print reports, letters and electronic distribution of pre-prints are important vehicles for disseminating research results. All such contributions should be treated equally when assessing quality and impact, and reviewers should not regard certain types as "second class" or "grey literature."

When assessing productivity, reviewers should also be sensitive to legitimate delays in research and dissemination of research results. Some circumstances make it impossible or undesirable for researchers to publish important results of their research prior to applying for CIHR support. For instance, the time required to complete a monograph may exceed the time available between consecutive applications, or the protection of intellectual property may require a delay in publication. Research productivity may also vary as a result of personal circumstances, such as pregnancy or early child care, administrative leave, disability, elder care, etc., whether or not a formal leave of absence is taken. Applicants are advised to clearly and fully describe any circumstances that affect the dissemination of research results in their application. Peer review committees must be sensitive to the impact of these circumstances on the level of productivity, while ensuring that the quality of the research remains competitive.

SECTION II – Peer Review

1. Peer Review Committee Members

Peer Review committee membership will vary depending on the type of peer review. In general, individual committee members are selected for their research excellence, as reflected by their ability to obtain continued extramural peer-reviewed funding, and for their breadth of knowledge and maturity of judgment. For more details, please refer to the Peer Review Membership Guidelines (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/4653.html>). Committees as a whole should also satisfy the need to cover the range of research areas for which the committee is responsible, to appropriately represent the Canadian health research community, to review in both official languages, and to allow for the logistics of conflict of interest and turnover of committee members. For more details, please refer to the Procedure for Selection of Peer Review Committee Members (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/4654.html>).

For further information on peer reviewers at CIHR, please consult the Peer Review Committee Members Role page (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/44083.html>)

Complete instructions for peer review committee members are available at the Instructions for Committee Members (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/39535.html>) page.

2. Peer Review Process

The prime responsibilities of a peer review committee are to evaluate applications submitted for a particular competition and to rank them in order of excellence using CIHR's rating scale. The evaluation of applications is finalized by a committee meeting to discuss and rate the applications, from which CIHR generates a rank-order priority list to make funding decisions.

2.1 Initializing the Review Process

All eligible applications received by the appropriate deadline date are entered into the competition. Applications must be complete at the time of submission; otherwise they are withdrawn from the competition.

CIHR staff review the applications for eligibility and compliance. Applications are assigned to one of the CIHR New Investigator peer review committees (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/41113.html>) with the mandate that most closely aligns with the applicant's training, credentials and area of research. Committee members will then be given access to the applications to declare conflicts of interest and indicate their level of expertise (if applicable). It is important to note that many candidates will likely be conducting research outside of the reviewer's research specialty. **Reviewers should keep in mind that they are to review the application with a generalist's perspective and assess the overall quality of the research proposed by the candidate.** However, should a reviewer feel that his/her level of comfort of reviewing an application is unacceptably low; he/she may identify their expertise as "Not Enough Expertise" in ResearchNet.

Chairs, Scientific Officers and/or CIHR staff will assign the applications to committee members. Efforts will be made to ensure a balanced workload, taking into consideration potential conflicts, language capabilities and areas of expertise. The final authority for the assignment of applications rests with CIHR. Any committee member who has a conflict of interest with an application (as defined in Section 3.2, above) must not take part in the evaluation of that application.

2.2 Evaluating the Applications

All applications submitted to a funding opportunity are treated equally for evaluation; the same criteria and funding cut-offs are applied to all. Reviewers evaluate applications in reference to the evaluation criteria listed in the funding opportunity details, which vary by program and by funding opportunity. The evaluation of applications is completed in two stages: an individual review of applications followed by a face to face review meeting to finalize the ranking.

2.2.1 Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation of the New Investigator Salary Award applications is based on the following three criteria:

1. Applicant Track Record
2. Research Plan
3. Environment and Support

These criteria should be weighted equally.

Here are the points to consider for each criterion:

1. Applicant Track Record

The candidate should demonstrate that they have already established a track-record of significant achievement that shows their commitment to research and the originality and impact of their research relative to their career stage. It should also demonstrate that the candidate is forging an international reputation for excellence in their fields and exceptional promise for the future.

Reviewers should consider the following in their evaluation of the candidate's track record:

- Assess the quality and diversity of the academic and research training received by the applicant. Are the candidate's prior training and research experience relevant and appropriate for this award?
- What awards or acknowledgements of academic and research achievement has the applicant received?
- What peer-reviewed grant funding has been obtained or applied for? Consider the applicant's role in obtaining multi-investigator grants and the numbers and categories of grants that support their research.
- Does the applicant demonstrate leadership in the field through knowledge translation activities (e.g. commercialization, clinical activities, public health activities, invited speaker or moderator, etc.), and contributions to research training, mentorship and supervisory activities, contributions to professional activities (e.g. peer review committee, review of scientific manuscripts, review of grant/award applications, graduate committees, departmental and extra-departmental administrative, etc.).
- Does the applicant have a good publication record in peer-reviewed journals? To what extent does the applicant appear to have contributed to the work published? Patents and other significant contributions should be considered. Consider publications or papers accepted for publications, demonstrated capacity to publishing as principal author without mentors, the quality of journals and the continuity of production since the start of the career. Please refer to the [Publications and Productivity](#) section of this guide.
- What research has been accomplished to date and has the applicant clearly demonstrated independence and originality? Significant contributions to team research should also be considered.

- Are the sponsor letters from three reputable individuals in the field, and do they show evidence that the candidate has the characteristics and skills that correlate with career research achievement?

The information required to review this criterion can be found in the following sections of the application:

- Common CV
- 5 year Research Plan to evaluate the applicant's role on other grants (if applicable)
- 3 letters of support (sponsors letters)

It should be noted that within their CCV, candidates were requested to only provide their contribution (e.g. publications) for the last 5 years.

Additional factors to be considered under each criterion may also be described in the funding opportunity details. Please contact the Program Delivery Coordinator if you need further guidance on how to apply the individual criteria. **All aspects of the applications listed above should be reviewed taking into consideration the career stage and discipline of the candidate.**

2. Research Plan

The candidate's research plan should cover the full duration of the salary award. A well prepared research plan should include details on the expected **goals and their rationale**, an explanation of how the goals are likely to be achieved (**methodology**), a rationalization as to where the research will be carried out (**environment and resources**), in collaboration with whom (**team and collaborators**) and finally details on the **timeframe**.

Reviewers should consider the following in their evaluation of the research plan:

- Is the research plan relevant to the candidate's research career objectives?
- Are the ideas put forward in the research plan innovative and/or original?
- Does the research plan have the potential of significantly advancing our understanding of the area?
- Is the proposed research feasible, given the resources and support available to the investigator?
- Has preliminary data been accumulated to support the 5 year research plan?
- Have strong research interactions and collaborations been established? What are the candidate's contributions to the proposed collaborations? Are the proposed collaboration of high quality and what level of impact could they have on the professional growth of the candidate?
- Will the quality and extent of proposed dissemination and outreach activities be within and/or beyond the academic community?
- Is the applicant's leadership role clearly outlined in his/her research plan? Does the research plan provide evidence of the applicant's leadership in the design and conduct of the proposed research? Leadership can be demonstrated through the applicant's engagement as a mentor, their ability to manage research, to contribute novel ideas to their research program, to

make decisions that are crucial to the success of the research program, to lead his/her research collaboratively, have excellent working relationships with those around him/her, etc.

- *For New Investigators, has the applicant demonstrated independence or shown promise to become independent from former supervisors?*

The information required to review this criterion can be found in the following sections of the application:

- 5 year Research Plan (references may be added to the Research proposal appendix)
- Summary of Progress
- Summary of Research Proposal (which is now in reference to the research plan)
- Letters of collaboration (if applicable)
- Common CV to evaluate the applicant's supervisory experience
- Common CV and Contribution Details (if applicable) to evaluate dissemination and outreach activities

Note: The Research Proposal and Research Proposal Appendix should be viewed as a reference to the 5 year Research Plan.

3. Environment and Support

It is imperative that the salary award application demonstrates a strong institutional/organizational commitment to the continued scientific development and productivity of the candidate. The application should reveal a clear commitment from the institution/organization to ensure that the majority of the candidate's efforts will be devoted directly to the research plan, detailed in the application, with the remaining efforts being devoted to an appropriate balance of teaching, administrative, and clinical responsibilities.

Reviewers should consider the following in their evaluation of the environment and support:

- What is (or will be) the applicant's position within the institution?
- What space, operating funds, infrastructure and/or other resources will be available to the candidate and are they adequate?
- Has the institution demonstrated a commitment to enable the candidate to devote full time to research and related duties by releasing the applicant from teaching, administration, clinical work and/or other responsibilities?
- Has the institution demonstrated support for the scientific development of the candidate and their independent research program?
- Does the institution or organization demonstrate leadership in the candidate's chosen field?
- Will the candidate receive adequate scientific and career guidance?

The information required to review this criterion can be found in the following sections of the application:

- Dean of Faculty/Research Director letter

- Appendix 2A (parts 1, 2 and 3) completed by the Head of Department

2.2.2 Relevance Review

The Relevance Review Process is used by strategic leads and/or partners to assess the alignment of an application with a specific research theme described in the funding opportunity (FO). As the name implies, the process is used when it is important for applications to be relevant to (or in alignment with) targeted research components of the FO. This review approach is generally reserved for strategic FOs and Priority Announcements (PAs).

2.2.3 Individual Review (Stage 1)

The objectives of the individual review of the peer review process are to:

- complete a comprehensive review of all the applications submitted to a competition;
- establish an initial rank-order of all the applications.

The individual review process ensures that all applicants benefit from the review process as they will receive the written reviews from the assigned reviewers. It also assists in identifying the most competitive applications to ultimately support the creation of an accurate rank-order list for the competition.

CIHR New Investigator peer review committee (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/41113.html>) will be co-chaired. The co-Chairs and/or CIHR staff will assign the applications to committee members. Efforts will be made to ensure a balanced workload, taking into consideration potential conflicts, language capabilities and areas of expertise. The final authority for the assignment of applications rests with CIHR. All applications will be assigned to three reviewers to ensure the reliability of the rankings.

Reviewers are encouraged to start by reading all of their assigned applications before starting the review. Each reviewer will be asked to categorize the applications by assigning each application to a bin, to provide a numerical rating for each application and to provide a written evaluation for each application assigned to them.

1. Binning

In order to help reviewers differentiate between highly promising applications and ensure that the full range of the scale is used, a binning system has been implemented. For this system to work effectively, it is essential that the full range within each bin be used. Reviewers will be required to assign a minimum of 25 percent of the applications assigned to them within each of the three following bins:

Binning Descriptor	Score
Excellent	4.2 - 4.9
Very Good	3.5 - 4.1
Not competitive	0 - 3.4

The remaining 25 percent will be distributed between the three bins as reviewers deem appropriate.

2. Rating

Reviewers must provide a numerical rating for the application. To ensure consistency, all reviewers must adhere to a common rating scale. Reviewers rate applications between 0.0 and 4.9 (in increments of 0.1, with 4.9 being the highest and 0 being the lowest); applications with a rating of 3.5 or higher are considered for funding. For additional information, please see Ranking and Rating Scale Meaning and Use (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/44001.html>).

3. Written Review

Reviewers are also required to provide a written review of each application assigned to them. To ensure that a reviewer’s time is used in the most efficient way, a structured review process is being used. For each above-mentioned criterion, reviewers will be asked to comment on the strengths and weaknesses only of that particular aspect of the applications. Reviewers may use bullets to note the strengths and weaknesses of each criterion, and should provide context and an explanation for their comments based on the content of the application (e.g., may refer to specific sections). While brevity is acceptable, bullets should express complete thoughts and the length should be sufficient enough to inform the reader.

The review should be clear and concise, using objective and non-inflammatory language, and include justification. Constructive advice to the applicant will allow him/her to improve the quality and efficiency of the proposed research. The applicant will receive the review as it is submitted by the reviewer. For this reason, please do not identify yourself in order to ensure the confidentiality of the review process.

Please refer to the template below to assist you in preparing your written reviews:

Evaluation criterion	
1. <i>Applicant Track Record</i>	Strengths • •
	Weaknesses • •
2. <i>Research Plan</i>	Strengths • •
	Weaknesses • •
3. <i>Environment and Support</i>	Strengths • •

	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
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Note: Reviewers are to consider each of the three review criteria above in the determination of their overall score.

As a final point, reviewers are required to complete the following tasks on ResearchNet:

- 1) categorize the applications into bins by providing a rating for each application reviewed;
- 2) provide structured written reviews.

2.2.4 Ranking of Applications

Applications will be ranked based on binning and score. The rank list of applications will be used to identify applications that will be recommended for funding as well as those that will be submitted for further review at the face-to-face committee meeting.

2.3 Finalizing the Evaluations

2.3.1 Face-to-face review (Stage 2)

The objective of the face-to-face review of the peer review process is to validate the rank list of applications.

Because of the rigorous streamlining that is completed following the first stage of the peer review process, peer reviewers of the second stage will have more time to judge and discriminate between potentially successful applications and ultimately, identify the most deserving applications to receive funding.

The committee’s co-Chairs from the stage 1 peer review process will be invited to participate as reviewers in the second stage of the review process. All reviewers will be given access to all application summaries to declare any conflicts of interest, and will be required to indicate their level of expertise for review of each application on ResearchNet. The Chair and Scientific Officer of the second stage review process, along with CIHR staff, will assign two reviewers and a reader to each application. The final authority for the assignment of applications rests with CIHR. The reviewers will have access to the reviews submitted in the first stage of the review process as well as the rank list. Any committee member who has a conflict of interest with an application (as defined in Section 3.2, above) must not take part in the discussion of that application. Reviewers are encouraged to read all of the submitted reviews from the first stage and conduct an overall assessment.

The Chair and CIHR staff are responsible for monitoring conflicts and for resolving areas of uncertainty.

At the committee meeting, the discussion of each application will proceed as follows:

- The first reviewer assigned to an application will summarize the reviews from the stage 1 review process and provide their own assessment of the application, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses;
- The second reviewer will concentrate on points of agreement or disagreement, and elaborate on points not addressed by the first reviewer;
- The reader will concentrate on points of agreement or disagreement, and elaborate on points not addressed by the first and second reviewers;
- The Chair leads the discussion of the application by all committee members;
- The Scientific Officer reads the SO notes, capturing the key elements of the discussion;
- The Chair seeks a consensus rating from the two reviewers and one reader assigned to the application;
- All committee members, including the two reviewers and the reader but excluding the Chair and Scientific Officer, cast individual confidential votes within +/- 0.5 of the consensus rating. The final rating to be assigned to the application will be the average of these confidential votes.

Once all applications have been reviewed, if the peer review committee feels that any application(s) has been treated inconsistently, re-review of one or a small number of applications is permitted. Any committee member with a conflict of interest must again leave the room. Following discussion, a consensus rating is determined by the two reviewers and the reader and voting proceeds as before. The committee may review the overall ranking of all applications at the end of the meeting.

2.3.2 End of Meeting Review

Once all the scores from the stage 2 face-to-face committee meeting have been received, a final rank-order priority list will be generated to make funding decisions.

3. Special Considerations

The budget and term for salary awards are predetermined. These are stated in the Funding Opportunity.

Any concerns in the following areas should be flagged for CIHR staff to address. Note that some issues listed below may not apply to all salary award programs. Please contact your committee coordinator for more information.

These issues are not to be considered as criteria for evaluation, except as they may impact on the scientific quality of the application. For detailed regulations concerning these issues, please refer to the Grants and Awards Guide (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/805.html>).

- 1) **Eligibility:** Reviewers should raise any concerns with respect to whether the Principal Applicant(s) and their affiliated institutions meet the criteria specified in the Funding Opportunity to receive CIHR funding.
- 2) **Ethics:** Responsibility for ensuring that all research meets ethical standards is delegated to the local institution by CIHR. Ethics forms are not required as part of the application. However, the reviewer may comment on specific issues, such as the use of human subjects, animals, human tissues or hazardous material, or research

that appears to involve Aboriginal people, if they feel they have not been adequately addressed.

- 3) **Human pluripotent stem cell research:** Applications involving the use of human stem cells and likely to be funded will also be reviewed by the Stem Cell Oversight Committee (SCOC). Applicants are instructed to check the relevant box in the section entitled “Certification Requirements”, but it is essential that this be verified by committee members.
- 4) **Section 56 of the federal Controlled Drugs and Substances Act:** All research proposals that are subject to Section 56 of the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* are required to have an exemption from Health Canada. Committee members should flag such applications to CIHR staff at the meeting who will follow up before funds are released, if the application is funded.

For more information please refer to the Pending Grants and Awards page in the Grants and Awards Guide (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/22631.html#2-A2>).

4. Funding Decision

Following peer review, CIHR staff generates a final rank list based on the committee recommendations, to be reviewed by CIHR’s Chief Scientific Officer (CSO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO). Applications will be funded from the top down in order of ranking as far as the budget will allow. The CSO and CFO consider the funding recommendation in light of criteria established by Science Council (SC) and submit their recommendations to SC for final approval. A list of successful applicants is posted on the Funding Decisions Notifications (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/196.html>) webpage as soon as it is available.

Once the SC has approved the list of applicants to be funded, all applicants are sent a Notice of Decision, indicating whether or not their application was approved. They will also receive a copy of all reviews, the Scientific Officer notes (if applicable) and an Offer of Award that details the budget, duration and conditions of funding.

Applications that have been flagged for special attention and followed up by CIHR staff are withheld as “pending”. The applicant will be notified if further information is required. The additional information may be discussed by CIHR staff and peer review committee members if necessary prior to a final decision regarding funding.

A list of successful applicants is posted on the [Funding Decisions Notifications](#) webpage as soon as it is available.