

Merit indicators

Applied Research and Development (ARD) grants

Research plan	Excellent	Very strong	Strong	Satisfactory	Limited	Insufficient
Clarity of the research objectives and expected results, appropriateness of the research plan and methodology, including integration of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the research process where relevant, and clarity and suitability of the budget	The research objectives and expected results are clearly defined and comprehensive. The planned activities and methodology are clear, well-developed, supported by literature, and highly appropriate for the defined timeframe. EDI is clearly embedded in and strengthens relevant areas of the research process. The project’s risks are identified and mitigated. All expenditures are well justified and detailed, and the budget is appropriate for the planned activities.	The research objectives and expected results are clearly defined. The planned activities and methodology are detailed, clear, supported by literature and appropriate for the defined timeframe. Where relevant, EDI is integrated into the research process. The project’s risks are identified. Expenditures are well justified and detailed, and the budget is appropriate for the planned activities.	The research objectives and expected results are clearly defined. The planned activities and methodology are detailed, clear, supported by literature and appropriate for the defined timeframe. Where relevant, EDI is included in the research process. Expenditures are adequately justified and detailed, and the budget is appropriate for the planned activities.	The research objectives and expected results are adequately defined. The planned activities and methodology are clear and appropriate for the defined timeframe. Where relevant, EDI is included in the research process, such as identifying underrepresented groups impacted and how this will be taken into account. Expenditures are adequately justified, and the budget is acceptable for the planned activities.	The research objectives and expected results are adequately defined. The planned activities and methodology are not clear or appropriate for the defined timeframe. EDI in the research process is limited or lacking when it would have been relevant. There are expenditures that are partially justified; it is not clear if the budget is suitable.	The research objectives and expected results are not adequately defined. The planned activities and methodology are not clear or appropriate for the defined timeframe. EDI in the research process is lacking when it would have been relevant. Some expenditures are not justified. The budget is not acceptable.
Innovativeness of the proposed research and its potential to lead to advancements or new knowledge	The project will overcome important knowledge gaps or contribute to a significant innovation or breakthrough.	The project addresses important knowledge gaps through the generation of impactful new knowledge.	The project applies knowledge in an innovative way and generates new knowledge.	The project applies knowledge in an innovative way or generates new knowledge.	The proposal does not demonstrate how knowledge will be applied in an innovative way. It does not generate new knowledge.	The project falls under activities not supported by Applied Research and Development (ARD) grants.

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Partnerships and impact	Excellent	Very strong	Strong	Satisfactory	Limited	Insufficient
Partner organizations’ roles in defining the project, the value of their involvement in the project and any other in-kind contributions, and their capacity to translate, mobilize and/or apply the research results within a reasonable timeframe	The project, where relevant, brings together a highly synergistic combination of researchers and partners to achieve a greater impact. All partner organizations have clear roles and are integrally engaged in the project. Their involvement and any other in-kind contributions are highly valuable, consistent with the scope of the project and the size of the funding request. The partner organizations’ activities are highly relevant to the project. The partner organizations demonstrate full capacity to translate, mobilize and/or apply the research results to achieve the intended outcomes in the stated timeline.	The project, where relevant, brings together a complementary combination of researchers and partners to achieve a greater impact. All partner organizations have clear roles and are highly engaged in the project. Their involvement and any other in-kind contributions are valuable, consistent with the scope of the project and the size of the funding request. The partner organizations’ activities are relevant to the project. The partner organizations demonstrate strong capacity to translate, mobilize and/or apply the research results to achieve the intended outcomes in the stated timeline.	All partner organizations have clear roles. They are actively engaged in the project, and their involvement and any other in-kind contributions are appropriate for the scope of the project and the size of the funding request. The partner organizations’ activities are related to the project. The partner organizations demonstrate appropriate capacity to translate, mobilize and/or apply the research results to achieve the intended outcomes in the stated timeline.	All partner organizations have clear roles. They are actively engaged in the project, and their involvement and any other in-kind contributions are adequate for the scope of the project and the size of the funding request. The partner organizations’ activities are related to the project. The partner organizations demonstrate adequate capacity to translate, mobilize and/or apply the research results to achieve the intended outcomes in the stated timeline.	The partner organizations have described roles but are insufficiently engaged, or their contributions are not appropriate to the project. The relevance of the partner organizations’ activities to the project is clear. The partner organizations’ capacity to translate, mobilize and/or apply the research results to achieve the intended outcomes in the stated timeline is not convincingly demonstrated.	Partner organizations do not have clear roles. The partners are insufficiently engaged in the project. The partners’ contributions are not appropriate to the project. The relevance of the partner organizations’ activities to the project is not clear. The partner organizations’ capacity to translate, mobilize and/or apply the research results to achieve the intended outcomes in the stated timeline is not convincingly demonstrated.
Significance of the outcomes and the economic, environmental, health and/or social benefits for partner organization(s) and Canada	The project will lead to extremely important new or improved products, processes, policies, procedures, service delivery, technologies, methodologies and applications. Its outcomes will produce the highest impact and benefits for the partner organization(s) and Canada.	The project will lead to very important new or improved products, processes, policies, procedures, service delivery, technologies, methodologies and applications. Its outcomes will substantially benefit the partner organization(s) and Canada.	The project outcomes (e.g., products, processes, policies, procedures, service delivery, technologies, methodologies, applications) address the partner’s needs and have several benefits to Canada.	The project outcomes (e.g., products, processes, policies, procedures, service delivery, technologies, methodologies, applications) address the partner’s needs and have some benefits to Canada.	The project outcomes (e.g., products, processes, policies, procedures, service delivery, technologies, methodologies, applications) address the partner’s needs but have limited benefits to Canada.	The proposal does not convincingly demonstrate how the project outcomes (e.g., products, processes, policies, procedures, service delivery, technologies, methodologies, applications) will benefit the partner organizations and Canada.

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Team	Excellent	Very strong	Strong	Satisfactory	Limited	Insufficient
Appropriateness of the experience and expertise of the principal investigator and the research team (post-secondary institutions and partner organizations) for carrying out the planned research activities, managing the project and providing training	The research team has exceptional levels of relevant and complementary expertise and experience needed to successfully conduct the research. The team has very strong capabilities to successfully manage the project and provide student training, with significant experience in comparable-scale projects. For multi-institution applications, synergy between teams from the participating institutions is detailed and well described.	The research team has a high level of relevant expertise and experience needed to successfully conduct the research. The team has very strong capabilities to successfully manage the project and provide student training and has conducted a comparable-scale project in the past. For multi-institution applications, synergy between teams from the participating institutions is detailed and well described.	The research team has appropriate, relevant expertise and experience to conduct the research. The team has strong capabilities to appropriately manage the project and provide student training. For multi-institution applications, synergy between teams from the participating institutions is well described.	The research team has sufficient expertise and experience to conduct the research, appropriately manage the project, and provide student training. For multi-institution applications, synergy between teams from the participating institutions is described.	The application does not adequately demonstrate that the research team has sufficient expertise and experience to conduct the research. OR The application does not adequately demonstrate that the team has sufficient capabilities to manage the project or provide relevant student training. For multi-institution applications, synergy between teams from the participating institutions is partially described.	The application does not adequately demonstrate that the research team has sufficient expertise and experience to conduct the research, manage the project or provide student training. For multi-institution applications, synergy between teams from the participating institutions is not described.
Identification of at least one concrete practice to ensure that equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is intentionally and proactively considered in recruiting, selecting, and/or integrating personnel into the research team	Several specific and concrete practices to advance EDI in the consideration of the research team are well described, and the proposal includes more than two of the suggested elements.	At least one specific and concrete practice to advance EDI in the consideration of the research team is well described, and the proposal includes more than one of the suggested elements.	At least one specific and concrete practice to advance EDI in the consideration of the research team is well described, and the proposal includes one of the suggested elements.	At least one specific and concrete practice (what will be done and how it will be implemented) to advance equity, diversity and inclusion in the consideration of the research team is adequately described.	At least one concrete practice (what will be done and how it will be implemented) to advance equity, diversity and inclusion in the consideration of the research team is not adequately described.	Specific and concrete practices to advance equity, diversity and inclusion in the consideration of the research team are not described.

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Training	Excellent	Very strong	Strong	Satisfactory	Limited	Insufficient
Training plan and enriched experiences for college students and other trainees to develop relevant research and professional skills	The training plan is exemplary, comprehensive and includes valuable learning experiences with the partners beyond a traditional college environment (examples). An appropriate number of college students and trainees will develop high-quality, transferable research and professional skills that will best prepare them for success in their future careers.	The training plan is clearly described and includes valuable learning experiences with the partners beyond a traditional college environment (examples). An appropriate number of college students and trainees will develop good-quality, transferable research and professional skills that will better prepare them for their future careers.	The training plan is clearly described and includes several enriching experiences outside of the traditional college environment (examples). An appropriate number of college students and trainees will develop relevant research and professional skills.	The training plan is clearly described and includes at least one enriching experience outside of the traditional college environment (examples). An appropriate number of college students and trainees will develop relevant research and professional skills.	The training plan is clearly described but does not include enriching experiences outside of the traditional college environment (examples). An appropriate number of college students and trainees may develop research and professional skills.	The training plan is not clearly described or does not include sufficient learning experiences. Opportunities to develop relevant research and professional skills are not sufficiently described. There is inadequate indication that an appropriate number of college students and trainees will develop research and professional skills.
Identification of at least one concrete practice that will promote the participation of a diverse group of students and other trainees, including those from underrepresented groups, as well as promote an equitable, inclusive and accessible training environment	Several specific and concrete practices to advance EDI in the training environment are well described, and the proposal includes more than two of the suggested elements.	At least one specific and concrete practice to advance EDI in the training environment is well described, and the proposal includes more than one of the suggested elements.	At least one specific and concrete practice to advance EDI in the training environment is well described, and the proposal includes one of the suggested elements.	At least one specific and concrete practice (what will be done and how it will be implemented) to advance equity, diversity and inclusion in the training environment is adequately described.	At least one concrete practice (what will be done and how it will be implemented) to advance equity, diversity and inclusion in the training environment is not adequately described.	Specific and concrete practices to advance equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the training environment are not described.

Examples of enriching experiences outside of the traditional college environment:

- 1. Direct interaction with the partner organizations
- 2. Attendance at conferences outside the college
- 3. Outreach or knowledge mobilization activities
- 4. Experience in multidisciplinary research environments
- 5. Experience in college-university collaborations
- 6. Site or field visits

Suggested elements to strengthen the consideration of EDI in the research team and/or the training environment:

- 1. Identification of challenges or barriers faced by underrepresented groups within the project’s team or training environment, and a description of the practice’s suitability to address the challenge
- 2. Description of the appropriateness of the practice related to the context of the research, the research team or training environment, or the institution
- 3. Description of methods to monitor and/or adapt the practice based on indicators of success
- 4. Inclusion of multiple practices that consider different aspects of EDI for the research team (e.g., recruitment, selection, fostering an inclusive environment, professional development) or for students and trainees (e.g., training philosophy, recruitment, training environment, development opportunities)