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**Natural Sciences
Committee on Research
General Policies**
Revised August 2006

Purpose

The purpose of the Natural Sciences Research Committee is to aid in the development of a community of faculty and students that participates actively in research and scholarship in the natural sciences. The Committee supports research at Trent within the context of a liberal arts and science university. This includes support of faculty starting new research programs, those with modest research programs and faculty with established programs.

Program Overview

The Committee considers applications for Operating Grants two competitions. A standard application form is used in all instances. All application forms are available from the Research Website (<http://www.trentu.ca/research/>), under Forms.

Eligibility

Applications can be made by full-time faculty members and professional librarians of Trent University whose research interests fall within the purview of NSERC. **Faculty must hold a minimum 3 year academic appointment in order to apply for internal funding.** Part-time, visiting, and conjunct faculty are not eligible but may be eligible to apply as co-investigators with full-time faculty. In some cases, conjunct faculty may apply as principal investigators but such eligibility must be confirmed, in writing, by the Dean's office, prior to the submission of an application.

Amounts of Operating Grants

The University has made available funds which are enough to finance, at most, modest research projects. Consequently, awards in excess of \$4,000 are not normally made and the Committee must frequently trim requests they otherwise would like to fund fully. For regulations concerning personally funded and sabbatical research grants, please refer to the appropriate sections below.

Allocation and Use of Grant Funds

The Committee does not allocate operating funds for travel between Peterborough and the location of a sabbatical leave, or to fund the completion of an applicant's graduate degree. Also, grants will not be made retroactively for expenses already incurred or for equipment purchased prior to the approval of a research project by the Committee.

The Committee accepts and operates under the current guidelines of NSERC regarding eligible budget items. Thus, research grants may be used only for the direct costs of research, including the purchase of equipment and supplies; the employment of assistants, including graduate students; computing; some clerical costs; travel; international conference travel, etc. Applicants for travel grants to international conferences must be persons who will play an active

role in the conference by presenting a paper, presiding over a session, or acting as a discussant.

To facilitate post-auditing, grantees having more than one research account are required to use the account set up by an award from the Committee exclusively for expenditures arising from the project approved by it. Books, equipment and other materials purchased under awards become the property of the University, and are to be made available for general use after their utilization in the research.

Procedures

Deadlines for funding requests normally occur in November and March. Announcements are made six weeks in advance of the deadline and no consideration will be given to applications received after the deadline date. [Deadlines for research proposals which fall under the jurisdiction of more than one committee are indicated below.] Application forms require detailed information about the proposed work, the categories of expenditure, other attempts at securing financial support, names of consultants familiar with the research area, personal data and reports on any outstanding grants.

Research proposals which fall under the jurisdiction of more than one committee may be designated as such by the applicant. The applicant may choose to have the proposal evaluated for funding by both the Natural Sciences and SSHRC Committees on Research. In such cases, applicants must nonetheless designate one committee as the "primary" committee. The deadline for such applications is one week prior to the regular deadline. Before the application is considered by the "primary" committee it will be circulated to the members of the "secondary" committee for preliminary comment. These comments will be taken into account by the "primary" committee in its deliberations. After the "primary" committee has decided on the level of funding it will provide, the "secondary" committee will decide on its level of support.

Applications are distributed among members of the Committee, along with any supporting materials, and decisions are made at closed meetings of the Committee. Applicants receive written notice of the Committee's decision. While information submitted in support of applications is held in confidence, awards are announced to the University community. There is no mechanism for appeal. Applicants who are not successful are welcome to discuss their applications with the Chair of the Committee should they require input beyond that provided in their letter from the Committee.

When submitting a research proposal, the original form including an attached CV, must reach the Office of Research by the published deadline.

Evaluating Grant Applications

Applications will be evaluated on the basis of the quality of the project, past scholarly activity of the applicant, and need for funds. Regarding the need for funds, the Committee recognizes that need is more acute in some instances than others. Instances include new faculty (1-3 years) who have recently begun their research careers and scholarly activity; faculty who can demonstrate that funding of the proposed research will initiate a new and innovative research direction (i.e., "seed" money) with the aim of eventually attracting external funding; faculty who have recently lost external sources of funding and require short-term support; and faculty with modest research programs for which external support is unavailable. "Seed money" requests, rather than continuing support of the same project, are encouraged.

It is recognized that the Natural Sciences Research Committee may not have the expertise to evaluate all the theoretical merits and/or technical aspects of a project. When there is doubt about some aspect of a project that cannot be resolved within the Committee, consultants may be contacted for comment, or the applicant may be interviewed by the Committee. The Committee reserves the right to contact consultants other than those named by the applicant. In cases where external consultation has been sought, the committee's final consideration of the proposal may be delayed beyond the normal announcement date. The applicant will be informed of such a delay, and the committee's decision will be made following completion of the consultation process.

Research Accounts

The University Finance Office manages research accounts, but any request to depart substantially from the types of expenditure anticipated in the successful application must be approved by the Chair of the Natural Sciences Research Committee. The sorts of deviations which occur routinely in the normal course of research need not be noted, but notice of large shifts among categories of expenditure should be provided. It is University policy that by signing a research application the recipient of a research grant has accepted responsibility for any over expenditures incurred.

The Committee will routinely receive, for incorporation in the research file established for each eligible person who has dealings with the Committee, a copy of the annual financial statement on the research accounts they authorize. Accounts which appear to be inactive for a twelve month period may be questioned as to whether the research is still in progress. If the project is completed, or if the researcher has left the University, the funds will be returned to the Natural Sciences Research Committee. In the case of faculty in their final year of an appointment, all claims against a research account must be submitted within four months following their last day of employment.

Report Requirements

Within eighteen months of an award or at the time of a new application, whichever comes first, award holders are required to submit a brief report on the research carried out. The content of this report will be taken into consideration in any future funding application before the Committee. Publication based on research may be a sufficient report. The reports will be included in the research files and are subject to audit.

Ethical Requirements

Integrity in Research All applicants should be familiar with the Tri-Council Policy statement on "Integrity in Research and Scholarship". (Appended)

Human Research "Human research" is taken to cover all research conducted with human subjects or affecting the privacy of particular human beings. All research conducted under the auspices of Trent University (by faculty, staff or students) that involves human subjects, whether funded or unfunded, requires approval in advance from the university's Human Research Committee which ensures that procedures to be used in the research comply with appropriate ethical guidelines (Trent University Policy on Research with Human Subjects, 1991). Of particular concern to the Committee are those research projects where there is potential for physical or psychological injury, or for embarrassment, inconvenience, or harassment of subjects. All projects involving human research, or potentially liable to affect the privacy and/or physical and emotional condition of human beings, must be sent simultaneously

to the Committee on Human Research for approval. The Natural Sciences Research Committee will not fund applications until approval is granted.

Animal Research Proposals which involve research on animals must be accompanied by the appropriate CCAC form signed by the Chair of the Animal Care Committee (ACC). Faculty should submit their Animal Care Protocols by the appropriate ACC deadline (first Monday of each month) in order to ensure sufficient time for ACC approval.

Biohazardous/Radioactive Materials Proposals which involve radiation or biohazardous materials must be submitted for review to, and be approved by, the Health and Safety Committee.

Nature Areas Applicants who intend to conduct research involving Trent Nature Areas require approval from the Nature Areas Committee.

The forms relevant to each of the above are available from the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.
