

**Western University
Department of Surgery
Internal Research Fund for Clinical Academics
Guidelines**

The Department of Surgery holds an Internal Research Fund Grant competition once a year in the Fall. The amount of funding available is determined each year and will be communicated when the call for proposals is announced.

This document serves as the guidelines and requirements for awardees for the Department of Surgery Internal Research Fund (SIRF). The final approved budget will be at the discretion of the Research Committee.

Funding opportunities available:

- **Standard Grant Competition** for proposals with a budget of up to \$10,000. These grants are allocated by Research Node: Big Data/ICES; Quality Improvement; Patient Centered Research; Surgical Education; Fundamental Sciences and Surgical Innovation. These proposals should be able to be completed within approximately one year of fund allocation.
- **Large Grant Competition** (maximum 1 grant) for proposals with a budget of up to \$30,000. It is expected that proposals submitted to this competition may have a broader scope and may therefore require up to two years to complete.
- **EDID Grant Competition** (maximum 1 grant) for proposals with a focus on EDID, and a budget of up to \$10,000. Proposals to this opportunity should be able to be completed within approximately one year of fund allocation.

Grant to support CIHR Success (maximum 1 grant) for proposals designed to obtain pilot data to support a future application to the CIHR Operating Grant competition, with a budget of up to \$20,000. The successful applicant will be partnered with a Surgery member experienced with CIHR applications if the applicant themselves has not previously been awarded CIHR funding. It is acknowledged that proposals submitted to this competition may have a broader scope and may therefore require up to two years to complete. At the completion of the grant term, it is expected that the successful application will submit to CIHR for continuation of this program of research.

Eligibility of Principal Investigators

1. The principal applicant (Clinical Academics only) must have a full appointment in the Department of Surgery at the University of Western Ontario.
2. Priority for funding IRF's will be given to early career investigators. **An early career investigator is a researcher within five years** from the date of their first research-related appointment, minus eligible

days in research, where: a) research-related appointments are defined as those where the individual has the autonomy to conduct research independently; and b) all eligible leaves (e.g. maternity, parental, medical, bereavement) are credited as twice the amount of time taken, and professional leaves (e.g. training, sabbatical, administrative) are not credited.

3. Priority for funding IRFs will be given to proposals that align with the principles of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Decolonization (see attached document).
4. No more than one grant application can be submitted by each eligible principal investigator per competition. Grants submitted to one competition may be considered for another competition at the discretion of the Research Committee at the time of adjudication.
5. The principal applicant must be the lead scientist on the project.
6. The principal applicant **must be** a member of a Research Node.
7. No more than one SIRF grant can be held by each eligible principal investigator, at any given time. Prior to submitting a new application, the principal investigator must have submitted a final report as well as a budget reconciliation indicating that all funds have been utilized or returned from the previously successful SIRF and any RRG projects you have supervised (See #17 and #19 for more details).
8. A member of the Department of Surgery may be a co-investigator on more than one grant application but can only be the lead investigator on one grant application.

Eligible and Ineligible Types of Research/Applications

9. Applications for travel funds will not be considered.
10. Applications for additional funding for a proposal already funded by another agency will only be considered under exceptional circumstances. Disclosure of previously received funds is required, as well as justification for the need for additional funds to support the research program.
11. Applications for chart reviews will not be considered.
12. A maximum of 50% the award may be used for student/graduate tuition support.
13. The research activity clinical or basic, must be performed on site at the London Health Sciences Centre, St. Joseph's Health Care London, Western University, or at an affiliated institution.
14. Declined applications may be resubmitted, however must include a letter detailing how the reviewer comments from the previously declined application have been addressed in the revised submission.

Amount and Duration of Funding

15. All grants, except for the large grant competition and competition to support CIHR Success, will be awarded for a **one-year period** January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025. Other grants will be awarded for a **two-year period**, January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2026.
16. Principal Investigators may apply for an additional one-year extension by completing the web-based extension form located on the Department of Surgery website at the following link:
https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/surgery/research/internal_research_grants/irf_one_year_extension_form.html

Grant Recipient Requirements

- 17.** The funds being provided are to be spent only on the research proposal submitted. The Research Committee will not retroactively approve and change the allocation of funds to support a different project. If you are not able to complete the project that was submitted the funds must be returned to the Department of Surgery.
- 18. Budget Changes:** Changes to an approved Internal Research Grant must be itemized and processed through the Department of Surgery office. Requests to transfer charges from LHRI or Western grant account to the Internal Research Grant must meet documentation requirements for processing.
- 19. Final Reporting:** A final report on the funded Department of Surgery Internal Research Grants **must be submitted** by the Principal Investigator to the Department of Surgery Research & Graduate Program Coordinator at the conclusion of the research grant. The final report must include information on the outcome of the grants as well as confirmation on the spending of the funds (full expenditure of funding or completion of time allocated to the research grant) or where a request for an extension is made. The final report form can be located at:
https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/surgery/research/internal_research_grants/irf_end_of_study_reporting_form.html
- 20.** Awardees are expected to be prepared to present their data at the Annual Department of Surgery Research Day, at the completion of their work. Requests for presentation will be made directly by the Research Committee or Node Chairs.
- 21. Unspent Funds:** Once awarded, unspent funding shall not revert back to the Department except under the following circumstances:
 - a) The member fails to **activate the funding** within **three months** of the grant being awarded; (note a reminder email to activate the funds will be sent to the member one month before the time period has occurred). **The ROLA request for the funds must be submitted by April 30.**
 - b) the research grant remains inactive for one year;
 - c) the original end date of the grant is reached and the Members fail to contact the Department in order to request an extension and to explain the circumstances that warrant such an extension;
 - d) The member's appointment with the Department of Surgery is terminated or s/he withdraws from participation in the Department of Surgery Practice Plan.
- 22. Certifications:** When research involving human participants and/or animal subjects is indicated applications will be reviewed as to the scientific validity of the project. However, all funding for successful submissions will be encumbered until further evidence of approval by Western Research Ethics Board and/or the Western Animal User Subcommittee is received by the Department of Surgery.
- 23. Equipment:** Ownership of any equipment purchased through Internal Research Funds will be by the Department of Surgery, Western University.

Decision Process

24. All applications will be reviewed by the Department of Surgery Research Committee and will be discussed at a convened meeting of the committee so that a consensus funding decision will be reached for each application based on overall scientific merit and clinical relevance.
25. If the principal applicant is a member of the Department of Surgery Research Committee they **will be excused from reviewing and evaluating the grants received for the node they applied to**. If sufficient committee members are not able to review the grants received delegates from within each division will be arranged.