ABUSE-FREE SPORT RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM

GUIDELINES

1) INTRODUCTION

On July 6, 2021, the Government of Canada announced that the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada ("SDRCC") had been selected to establish and deliver an independent safe sport mechanism, in order to oversee the implementation of the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport ("UCCMS") for federally-funded sport organizations. On June 20, 2022, the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner ("OSIC") launched its first phase of operations and Canada's new independent safe sport mechanism became Abuse-Free Sport.

As part of this new mandate, the SDRCC is launching the Abuse-Free Sport Research Grant Program ("Program"). The overall objective is to invest in safe sport research to maintain and increase the understanding of the behaviours that need to be reinforced or prevented, and to evaluate the impact of the Abuse-Free Sport program and initiatives. This will improve the development of effective policies, processes and practices, enhancing the sport experience for all.

2) RESEARCH PRIORITIES

During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, some Canadian researchers were targeted, based on their expertise, to conduct knowledge syntheses on ten (10) safe sport themes. These themes were deemed relevant by a working group composed of experts. On October 15, 2022, an Abuse-Free Sport Research Symposium was held with the goals of portraying the current state of safe sport knowledge in Canada and identifying future research priorities. While specific research priorities may evolve over time, there are overarching priorities that have been identified.

a) Methodological Approaches

The Program will prioritize research proposals that:

- Apply an intersectional lens in order to engage ALL sport participants and to understand marginalized groups when it comes to their experience with safe sport;
- Have an interdisciplinary approach to draw knowledge from other disciplines and fields, and adapt it to the sport context; and
- Have an overall approach that is collaborative through all levels of sport, using participatory/intervention researches in order to develop a meaningful impact on the sport community in Canada.

b) Themes

During the 2022 Research Symposium, participants have identified a few gaps in safe sport research, mainly due to a lack of publications or lack of existing data. In the short term, the following research themes were highlighted as needing more attention are the:

- Development of standardized measurement tools (e.g., using common terminology and research questions);
- Prevalence of maltreatment in sport at the community level;
- Inclusion of various sport participants (e.g., athletes, officials, administrators, coaches, etc.);

- Evaluation of victim/survivor support programs and other safe sport initiatives; and
- Best practices to foster a safe culture for all sports, at all levels.

c) Evaluation of Abuse-Free Sport Program

The Abuse-Free Sport program launched its operations in June 2022, with the aim of preventing and addressing maltreatment in sport and influencing a positive culture shift within the Canadian sport system. During this initial year, the following elements of the program were either established or expanded to serve the objectives of the Abuse-Free Sport program.

Research proposals evaluating these Abuse-Free Sport initiatives will be prioritized:

- Complaint Management Process / Sport Environment Assessments;
- Support Services;
- Education Accreditation Program / Education Library;
- Research Grant Program;
- Webinar Series;
- Abuse-Free Sport Helpline;
- Safeguarding Tribunal.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the proposed projected aligns with the SDRCC's research priorities.

3) APPLICATION PROCESS

This follows a two-stage process. Following a call for proposals, interested applicants will have to submit an expression of interest. Once the Research Application Review Panel (see section 4) has accepted an applicant's expression of interest, **only invited applicants will be asked to submit a full proposal.**

a) Expression of Interest

i) All research grant applications must be preceded by an expression of interest to determine whether the SDRCC's present interests and available funds permit consideration of a full proposal. The expression of interest should be submitted through the online application form and should include the following information:

(1) Name and contact information of principal investigator;
(2) Affiliated post-secondary institution;
(3) Qualifications and responsibilities of the person(s) engaged in the research;
(4) Subject under study and description of the context;
(5) Hypothesis(es), if relevant;
(6) Preliminary or pilot findings, if available;
(7) Research design and ethics approval (how ethics approval will be obtained);
(8) Estimate of funding needs; and
(9) Plan for dissemination of findings.

b) Full Proposal

  i) Proposals must be a maximum of 10 double-spaced pages (with standard 11 or 12-point font size and 1-inch margins), excluding references, supporting tables and figures, and appendices. Within the 10 pages, applicants must substantively answer the following questions:

  (1) What is the subject under study and why is it important?
  (2) What does the literature (across disciplines) say about this subject and what unique contribution(s) does this study make?
  (3) What is the research framework, methodology and justification?
  (4) What are the principal hypotheses or research questions that will be examined?
  (5) What kinds of data will be used in the study and how will the data be acquired? Please include how ethics will be handled;
  (6) How will the data be analyzed to inform the questions under study: what analysis methods, analytic models, or interpretive strategies will be used?
  (7) What is the project work-plan? The work-plan should specify the timeline and important milestones and goals during the course of the project;
  (8) How will the results be disseminated? The dissemination plan should be extensively detailed and should state how it is going to influence theory and practice; and

  (9) Budget justification: explain and clarify the requested budget.

4) REVIEW PROCESS

  a) Research Application Review Panel

  i) The review process involves the evaluation of applications by a group of reviewers who have (individually or collectively) the required experience and expertise to assess the quality, the potential impact of the proposed research, and the research-related activities, within the context of the funding opportunity objectives.
  ii) Reviewers selected to serve on the review panel are overseen by the SDRCC. This panel is comprised of a group of individuals with relevant expertise and has oversight responsibility for the entire Program review process.
  iii) The Research Application Review Panel is comprised of individuals free from conflicts of interest and will be not admissible to the Program. The following situations are considered conflicts of interest (but not limited to):
  (1) Co-authoring publications with at least one of the researchers in the past three (3) years;
  (2) Being colleagues within the same section/department or similar organizational unit in the past three (3) years;
  (3) Supervising/having supervised the doctoral work of the researcher(s) or being supervised/having been supervised by the researcher(s);
  (4) Receiving professional or personal benefits resulting from the review;
  (5) Having a personal relationship (e.g., family, close friend) with the researcher(s); or

(6) Having a direct or indirect financial interest in the application being reviewed.

b) Evaluation Process

The group of reviewers will evaluate each application by discussing, rating, and commenting on the following criteria of the proposal:

i) *Significance of the Project (20%)*: Reviewers will evaluate the centrality of safe sport in the research, the importance of the topic to its field, and the quality of the research question(s) and/or direction of inquiry;

ii) *Connection to Research and Theory (10%)*: Reviewers will evaluate the adequacy of the description of how other researchers have treated the same topic and how well the proposal responds to prior work and theory;

iii) *Excellence of Researcher(s) (5%)*: Reviewers will evaluate the qualifications and relevant research experience of the individual(s) to be either conducting or supervising the conduct of the research;

iv) *Research Design (15%)*: Reviewers will evaluate the overall quality, sophistication, and appropriateness of the research design, as well as its alignment with the research question(s) and/or conceptual framing;

v) *Research Ethics Approval (10%)*: Reviewers will evaluate whether the research meets expected ethical standards, including an attention to trauma-informed practices, to ensure the protection and welfare of study participants;

vi) *Dissemination of Results (20%):* Reviewers will evaluate the researcher's plan to make results widely available and easily accessible to Canadians, to ensure maximum impact on the ground;

vii) *Budget and Timeline (5%):* Reviewers will evaluate the adequacy of the budget and timeline; and

viii) *Alignment with the Research Priorities (15%):* Reviewers will evaluate to what extent the project advances research priorities outlined in section 2.

5) GRANT INFORMATION

a) Projects will be funded on an annual basis. It is expected that funds will be spent in the 12 months after being granted. There is no automatic extension for the use of funds.

b) Projects may be funded for up to three (3) consecutive years. Continuation of research funding beyond the first year of the three-year grant period is subject to the availability of funds and to satisfactory performance of the initiative, which is assessed by the SDRCC through progress reports from grant recipients.

c) All research initiatives are expected to be self-sustaining by the end of the third year.

6) PROGRESS REPORTS

A progress report is required no later than six (6) months after the research start date and should be provided every subsequent six (6) months until the research end date.

a) Progress reports are to be submitted through an online form provided by the SDRCC and must clearly and concisely answer the following questions:

i)   Is the project on track to meet its objectives? Has the scope changed?
ii) What activities were supported by the research during the reporting period? Were they all part of the original project plan?
iii) Has the approach or the methodology changed? Is the project still on time for completion on or before the grant expiry date?
iv) Are there important research findings and outputs coming out of the project?
v)   What are the activities planned for the next period and until the end of the project?
vi) Will the project finish on budget?

7) FINAL RESEARCH REPORT

a) A final research report is to be submitted to the SDRCC at the end of the allocated funding period. It is recommended that researchers use a 11- or 12-point font size and 1-inch margins. The use of visuals or interactive multimedia is welcome in the reports. Researchers are free to use their preferred citation format. The final report should follow the Final Report Outline guidelines.

b) The SDRCC will own the final report submitted by the researchers, with the right of the SDRCC to reproduce, translate and publish such report with proper recognition of the author(s). Researchers are the sole proprietary of all data collected during the accomplishment of their mandate, with full rights to publish their findings.

8) ADMISSIBLE AND NON-ADMISSIBLE EXPENSES

a) Admissible expenses, but not limited to:
   i)   Research related costs;
   ii)   Research supplies;
   iii) Equipment/computers;
   iv)   Student, post-doctoral fellow and independent contractor honorarium;
   v)   Reference materials;
   vi)   Printing/copying;
   vii) Travel directly related to research;
   viii) Workshop and presentation costs, including travels and equipment;
   ix)   Trip cancellation insurance;
   x)   Meals, accommodation and transportation related to travel; and
   xi)   Visa fees.

b) Non-admissible expenses:

   i)   Non-research related expenses;
   ii)   Expenses which are recoverable from a third party;
   iii) Late payment fees or interest on credit cards or overdraft interest charges;
   iv)   Parking, traffic or other fines and penalties; and
   v)   Furniture and furnishings.

9) KEY DATES

a) Call for proposals launch date: Tuesday of the second week of October

b) Submission of expression of interest: Monday of the third week of November
c) Announcement of invited projects: Friday of the first week of December
d) Deadline for submission of full proposal: Monday of the third week of February
e) Review process: Month of March
f) Announcement of successful grant applicants: March 20th
g) Submission of progress report
   i) First progress report is due six (6) months following announcement of successful grant applicants. Progress report should be submitted every six (6) months afterwards.
h) Submission of final report
   i) Annual grants: April 1st of the year following announcement of successful grant applicants.
   ii) Multiyear grants: April 1st of the second- or third-year following announcement of successful applicants.

10) CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, contact us.