



QUICK TIPS

PREPARING A CPD RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPLICATION

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Quick tips:Preparing a CPD Research & Development Grant Application

Note: This Quick Tip is intended to help you prepare to apply for the CPD Research and Development Grant although many of these tips may be useful for applying for other grants. This quick tip does not replace a complete and careful reading of the application material posted on the CPD website: www.cpd.utoronto.ca/scholarship/grants

PREPARING TO APPLY

Start Early

Most successful grants have been thought about, discussed, and potentially even drafted well before the call for applications is published. Don't underestimate the importance of starting early – not just to develop your project and team, and conduct your literature review but to complete all of the administrative requirements.

Asking the Right Question

The CPD Research and Development grants are intended to support scholarship about the field of Continuing Professional Development and/or the courses that are accredited through CPD so it is important that your application is targeted towards CPD (as opposed to undergraduate students, postgraduate residents, fellows or clinical medicine). Slightly modified from the definition used by the World Federation for Medical Education (2015), we define CPD as the varied educational and developmental activities which licensed, practicing healthcare professionals undertake to maintain and enhance their knowledge, skills, performance and relationships in the provision of health care.

Project Scale is Important

These grants fund projects that must be launched, implemented and evaluated within a year. Many applications that the adjudication committee reviews are too large or too complex in scope for this timeline to be feasible. Scale it down. Ask an interesting and useful question. You might want to consider splitting up your project into multiple phases, with the application targeting just one phase.

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Know What's Out There

Spend some time seeing what other scholarship has already been published in your area. It is possible that you don't need to do all of the work yourself, and instead, cite other publications allowing you to query something different. The review committee will expect that you have done this preparation work for your project in the form of a literature review or needs assessment.

Budget Setting

The CPD Research and Development Grants offer project funding up to \$5000. While this amount can certainly go far in offering project support, applicants would be wise to really think what projects are feasible with this amount of money. For example, \$5000 may not be enough to develop a complex CPD web intervention, but may be enough to conduct a pilot testing phase. \$5000 may not be enough to conduct a study and support conference registration and travel costs to an international meeting. Funds are primarily intended to support small scale, phased, or seed research ideas.

Build a Team

Scholarship is not a solitary sport. Teams are important for research because they bring different types of expertise and perspectives together. Try to assemble a team that complements your project scope, area of study and your own expertise. For example, if you are planning a systematic review, you will want a librarian on your team. If you are planning numerical data analysis, you may want a statistician on your team. If you are planning an intervention aimed at a specific target audience, then ask someone in that target audience to join your team early on.

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WRITING YOUR APPLICATION

Members of the review committee will read multiple applications from across many areas of CPD but do not necessarily have an intimate knowledge of your exact area. When you are writing your application, think about readability and clarity. Projects that use up all their word count explaining the clinical area which the CPD intervention targets, or that miss describing a research methodology end up being unclear and difficult to fund. Explain your clinical area quickly and then move on to the rest.

Background and Rationale

The problem/gap/hook writing technique (Lingard, 2015) offers a helpful heuristic to quickly explain the rationale behind your proposed study. Identify what the problem is, what the gap in knowledge or thinking is that your project aims to fill, and then use a hook that describes why it is important that this gap be filled.

Write clearly, bearing in mind that while the reader is familiar with CPD and scholarship, they may not be familiar with your area of specialty. Avoid jargon or acronyms where possible.

Methodology

It is in this section where you justify your design, methodology and methods. You want the reader to understand why you made the choices you made, and why those choices will help answer your research questions or meet your study objectives. Keep it simple, though. Don't feel compelled to add methodologies that may be interesting but not relevant to your study. Make it easy for the reader to understand how your study will unfold, this helps the reviewer properly evaluate it and/or provide feedback.

Evaluation Plan

Here you will describe how your research project or innovation will be evaluated. If you are developing a new program, describe how you will assess its impact. If you are doing a research project please describe how you will assess its success in meeting its goals.

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Project Team and Feasibility

In this section we want to know if your assembled team is capable of meeting the expectations of your planned project and this is where you will detail the expected contribution of each team member.

As the PI, it is expected that you will be developing your own scholarly capacity so we expect that you will be engaged with the ongoing work of the project. For this reason, projects that are led in name only by the PI with the majority of the research project work being tasked to learners or an external researcher will not be funded.

Edit, and then Edit Some More

Once you have your first draft written, spend time editing. Ask colleagues and friends to read your application. If they don't understand it, spend time editing until they do. Give them lots of time so that you have time to implement their feedback prior to submission. We're happy to review applications as well if provided well in advance of the submission date. Please contact the CPD Scholarship team.

Provide Your References

Scholarship is about joining a conversation that is already in progress. From the beginning of your literature review, to the point of writing up your application, keep a list of citations and submit them with your application. It is important and useful for the review committee to know what scholarly conversations you're joining, which ideas you are working with and what other scholars are doing in the same area.

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SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

Re-read the Criteria

There is nothing worse than submitting a proposal only to find that you missed a crucial step and your submission is ineligible. What day and at what time is the submission due? Is it noon? Is it midnight? Is there a page limit? Is your budget at or less than the maximum amount, or does it include ineligible items? Do you need signatures? Do you need ethics? Do you have all of these pieces in place and ready for submission well before the submission deadline?

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Shiphra Ginsburg, MD, MEd, PhD, FRCPC

Academic Director, Continuing Professional Development
Professor, Department of Medicine,
Scientist, Wilson Centre for Research in Education

Morag Paton, MEd

Education Research Coordinator
Continuing Professional Development,
Post MD Education, Faculty of Medicine,
University of Toronto



**This quicktip is part of the quicktips for program implementation series.
Review all of the tips to help you create your best program.**

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

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