

GLOSSARY OF RESEARCH TERMS

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

A narrative explanation of each component of the budget to “justify” the cost in terms of the proposed work and outcome.

CASH CONTRIBUTION

In many instances, a granting agency requires that an external partner provides a cash contribution to support the direct costs of the research project. While these may vary in size, cash contributions are typically 25-50% of the costs. Cash contributions may be paid directly to the college or the funder (who then allocates the grant money to the college).

COMMERCIALIZATION

The process of introducing a new or improved product, process, or production method into the commercial market.

DELIVERABLE

A tangible or intangible good or service developed as a result of a project. The intent is often to deliver this good or service to a partner.

FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)

This is a common term used as part of a grant application process. FTE refers to the number of hours required to be considered a Full Time employee. For example, if two Research Assistants work 10 hours/week, that is considered to be a .50 FTE, or 20 hours of a 40-hour work week. FTE can also be used to refer to the number of employees on staff.

FUNDING RATIO

An informal way of referring to the ratio of grant cash to partner cash. Common breakdowns include 25%/75%, 30%/70%, and 50%/50%.

GRANT

An award, usually financial, given by one entity (such as a company, foundation, or government) to another entity (such as an institution or an individual) to facilitate a goal.

HIGHLY-QUALIFIED PERSONNEL (HQP)

Most grants will want to know how your project will help enhance the knowledge, skills, and experience gained by students and college staff. The people imparting the skills are generally known as HQP.

INDUSTRY SECTOR

Typically refers to an area of business. Some grants require the applicant to specify the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code.

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION

A non-financial contribution provided by a partner organization, the college, or a researcher. It generally takes the form of cash-equivalent goods or services and can include time contributed to the college.

LETTER OF INTENT (LOI)

A short proposal that informs a funding agency that you will be submitting a full application for funding. Some funding agencies will evaluate LOIs before allowing you to move to the next application stage. Some applied research offices may also ask you to submit an internal LOI before you apply for external funding, especially if the funding agency allows for only a limited number of applications from each college.

NOTICE OF INTENT (NOI)

A short proposal that informs a funding agency that you will be submitting a full application for funding. Unlike a Letter of Intent, a Notice of Intent (NOI) is typically not evaluated.

OVERHEAD/ADMINISTRATION

Ongoing expenses not directly attributed to the research project work. Every college and/or research office will have a percentage of the project cost that will be used to calculate overhead costs such as the cost of grant application support, project reporting, invoicing, finance, operations, etc. Most grants and funding programs will set a max percentage or dollar figure for overhead.

PARTNER

The public, private sector, or community organization that is driving the need for the research project and whose staff/owner will actively collaborate with the college and researchers on the project. In most situations, there is a contractual agreement between the college and the external partner to stipulate roles and responsibilities of the participants, ownership of Intellectual Property, etc.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

The leader of a research team who is responsible for leading the research and directing the actions and executing of the research team. Sometimes referred to as the "Research Lead".

PROJECT PLAN

This is a description of all stages of the project, broken down week by week or month by month. It is commonly prepared during the grant application process and factors in management of resources, partner communications, and risk management.

RESEARCH CONTRACT

An agreement to perform research for a sponsor under specified conditions in exchange for payment of direct and indirect costs.

RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

A committee which is affiliated with the college, but which operates independently to ensure that a research study that uses human or animal participants adheres to ethical guidelines and ensures that the rights of study participants are protected.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

A document or set of documents that is submitted to an organization with the intent of securing funding for a research project.

RESEARCH QUESTION

A question that the research project aims to answer. In the case of applied research, the question is usually linked to a specific concrete partner objective, such as "Can this new packaging increase the shelf life of our product?"

SCOPE

Refers to the combined objectives and requirements needed to complete a project. Accurately defining the scope of a project and determining what is “in scope” or “out of scope” will help keep the project on track in terms of cost and time.

SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMES)

These are businesses whose personnel numbers fall below certain limits (often 5-500 employees).

SPONSOR

An individual, company, institution, or organization which takes responsibility for the initiation, management, and/or financing of a research project. Also referred to as “funder” or the “funding body/organization”.

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS (SMES)

The same SME acronym used for businesses can also be used to refer to subject matter experts. SME is a broad term which can refer to project researchers, technicians, external experts and more.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDS

The process of using two or more grants to fund research projects. Some grants have a process in place that will allow combining grants such as MITACS + NSERC. Some funders may refer to it as joint or complementary funding.