Job Description

Job Title:	Director, Grants and Proposal Development
Department:	Research and International
Reports To:	Associate Vice President, Research Grants and Infrastructure
Jobs Reporting:	Senior Managers; Award Officer, University Research; Research Coordinator
Salary Grade:	USG 16
Effective Date:	November 2025

Primary Purpose

Reporting directly to the Associate Vice-President, Research Grants and Infrastructure, the Director, Grants and Proposal Development (GPD) brings the highest standards of professionalism and dedication to a suite of institutional, national and internationally significant research funding mechanisms. The incumbent has administrative responsibility for a portfolio that includes proposal development and grant management for all peer reviewed research grants encompassing a wide range of Canadian and international government funding agencies and not-for-profit sponsors; the role is also responsible for managing the prestigious awards portfolio. The Director will provide direction and implement strategies to support the foundational pillars of the university's mission to advance research funding.

The Director is responsible for ensuring that workflow and internal systems meet faculty, university and sponsor requirements in an ever-changing funding environment. Canadian Tri-Agency (NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR) activities are of vital importance. Not only do these agencies fund research directly but they drive other factors: partnership programs to attract industry funding; set quotas for certain programs (Canada Foundation for Innovation, Canada Research Chairs, equipment grants, undergraduate research awards, and some graduate awards); and determine the Research Support Fund allocation. The Director will be responsible for a significant portfolio of sponsors, setting strategic priorities within the unit and supervising professional staff.

Key Accountabilities

Leadership & Strategic Direction

- Provides leadership, supervision, mentoring, training, and guidance to the grants and proposal development team and the prestigious awards teams.
- Anticipates and responds to emerging research trends and technologies to ensure the institution's research agenda is aligned with external sponsor directions and announcements, thereby driving future competitive advantages.
- Drives strategic direction by working collaboratively with the Associate Vice-President, Research Grants and Infrastructure and Vice President, Research and International, and participate in setting institutional long-term strategies to position the institution to capitalize on some of the larger, strategic programs (e.g. Canada Excellence Research Chairs and Canada First Research Excellence Fund etc.) and prestigious awards (e.g. Royal Society of Canada).
- Leads the development and implementation of innovative tools, processes, and performance metrics that strengthen operational efficiency and inform evidence-based decision-making.

Program Growth & Sponsor Development

- Drives growth in the sponsor sector by targeting large-scale programs at the provincial, federal and international levels (e.g., NSERC CREATEs, SSHRC Partnership Grants, NFRF-Transformation Grants, Horizon Europe and various prestigious research awards), to demonstrate growing institutional strength and impact in a given area, with an overall goal of fostering a supportive environment for successful applications and strategic direction.
- Cultivates and strengthens long-term relationships with key funding agencies, foundations, and not-for-profit sponsors to enhance institutional visibility, trust, and collaboration opportunities.
- Provides strategic and administrative support to the principal Canadian funding programs for investigator-initiated research, such as NSERC Discovery Grants, SSHRC Insight Grants, and CIHR Program grants, among others.

Operational Excellence & Compliance

- Offers editorial support, budget planning, and strategic advice to enhance the competitiveness of research proposals.
- Oversees the non-financial administration of awarded funds, ensuring that proposal budgets are accurately planned and funds are appropriately allocated.
- Ensures all progress reports meet the precise requirements set by funding agencies.
- Oversees and refines internal workflows and systems to meet faculty, university, and sponsor requirements across pre- and non-financial post-award management phases.
- Oversees the development and ongoing revision of Standard Operating Procedures relating to the portfolio, ensuring efficiency, consistency, and compliance with university policies and sponsor regulations, as needed.
- Responds to sponsor-driven changes or new requirements by collaborating with cross-campus teams, such as the Secretariat, Advancement, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs, Provost Office, and Faculty-based Research Offices, to implement new institutional policies and practices.
- Provides outreach, training, and communication to faculty and staff regarding new sponsor policies and institutional procedures.
- Provides regular training sessions to streamline operations for optimal performance and continuous growth of staff within the team.

Outreach & Opportunity Promotion

- Conducts proactive outreach to faculty and external parties, through workshops, training sessions, and targeted communications, to promote research funding and increase awareness of sponsor programs.
- Participates in various internal and external committees, boards, and advisory groups, such as the Research Operation Council, Research centres/institute advisory committees, VPRI Directors' Working group, U15 Research directors' group, Tri-Agency External Change Agent Network.
- Builds and maintains relationships with researchers, senior administrators, external research administrative colleagues and sponsor personnel, enabling collaboration in such activities as the development of best practices, creating tools to enhance grant quality and sponsor compliance, and shaping research policy.
- Provides strategic and operational support to the Associate Vice President, Grants and Infrastructure and Vice-President, University Research & International in achieving the research goals and objectives of the university's strategic plan.
- Monitors and analyzes the university's research funding performance relative to other U15 and comprehensive universities.
- Provides data, analysis, and insight on funding trends to inform institutional strategy and reporting.
- Acts as the bridge between the institution and granting agencies, in collaboration with the Director, Research Agreements and Contracts.

- Supports development of project-specific budgets and anticipates financial needs in collaboration with the Associate Vice-President, Research Grants and Infrastructure.

Team Coordination & Conflict Resolution

- Ensures that assignment and coordination of tasks within the GPD team is balanced and maximizes available expertise, via cross-training, to support faculty applications and grants and awards management.
- Mediates and resolves issues when conflict escalates between parties, within and external to the Office of the Vice-President, Research and International.
- Explores strategies for managing the transformation of research processes, including staff training in new technologies and the adoption of agile administrative practices.

Portfolio Management: Pre-Award & Post-Award

- Manages strategic grant-writing support and development, eligibility advice and compliance, coordination of electronic submissions, budgeting, and sponsor-specific expertise.
- Leverages extensive knowledge of sponsor protocols, university policies, financial management, human resources, indirect cost recovery, legal provisions (e.g., liability, payment terms, licensing, IP, student participation, cybersecurity protocols), procurement, and exchange rates, to minimize risk exposure and ensures compliance obligations are met.
- Ensures compliance with research regulations and manages active grants—key portfolio-level tasks for pre- and post-award research administrators.
- Engages agencies and not-for-profit sponsors through liaison activities and supports faculty via outreach events to provide guidance and facilitate effective grant administration.

Required Qualifications

Education

- Master's degree in a relevant field preferred. Consideration may be given to candidates with a Bachelor's degree and a minimum of 7–10 years of progressively responsible leadership experience in research administration within a research-intensive environment.

Experience

- Minimum of 10 years of experience in pre-award and post-award research administration, grant proposal review, and funding agency relations, with a strong understanding of Tri-Agency (NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR) and Institutional grant programs and policies, as well as foundation, NGO, public sector and international funding mechanisms.
- Demonstrated leadership experience developing and coaching high-performing teams, and fostering professional growth.

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Comprehensive knowledge of Canadian and international research funding programs, policies, and compliance frameworks (e.g., Tri-Agency, TIPS, Horizon Europe, NIH).
- Extensive knowledge of Canadian research administration policies and practices, including ability to translate policy into operational procedures and ensure compliance with all institutional and sponsor requirements.
- Working knowledge of financial management principles, budgeting methodologies, and cost-recovery mechanisms for research projects.
- Familiarity with risk management, research integrity, equity, diversity, and inclusion principles in the research context.
- Strong analytical capabilities, accurate data interpretation, and ability to integrate complex report data.
- Effective project and time management with keen attention to detail and problem-solving aptitude.

- Exceptional written and oral communication abilities, with proven capacity to collaborate with faculty, administrators, students, and external agencies.
- Strong leadership, coaching, and team development skills that foster collaboration, engagement, and professional growth.
- Demonstrated ability to manage a high volume of complex work under pressure, balancing strategic and operational responsibilities.
- Demonstrated ability to interpret and apply institutional and sponsor policies to ensure compliance and minimize risk.
- Demonstrated ability to think strategically, anticipate emerging trends, and position the institution to respond effectively to evolving research landscapes.

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Internally interacts with Deans, Associate Deans, Research, Graduate Studies Office; Director, Research Security; Works closely with Office of the Vice-President, Research and International personnel; Director, Research Agreements and Contracts; Office of Development staff, Research Finance. Externally interacts with external sponsor staff, government officials, and U15 research administration peers to exchange information, negotiate terms, and influence research funding policy.
- **Level of Responsibility:** Oversees pre- and post-award activity for all competition (non-industry) funding opportunities: Tri-Agency, TIPS, foreign funding agencies including Horizon Europe and NIH, public sector (e.g., National, International, Provincial, Municipal governments), NGOs, and foundations. Responsible for ensuring that applications, and awards, are compliant with sponsor protocols, institutional policies, and legal/regulatory requirements.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** Authorized to approve and execute grant proposals per Signing Policy and Registry related to Office of the Vice-President, Research and International standard operating procedures.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands**:Work involves prolonged computer use, along with intense concentration and attention to detail in a busy environment (phone, email, urgent deadlines). Sensory and physical demands can escalate during peak periods, such as during major grant competitions and fiscal yearend.
- **Working Environment:** Operates in a professional office environment with minimum physical risk, but can be psychologically demanding. The workload includes multiple concurrent deadlines, interactions with emotional or stressed stakeholders, high-stakes concerns from faculty and sponsors, and periods of peak activity that may require occasional work outside standard business hours.

**All employees of the University are expected to follow University and departmental health and safety policy, procedures and work practices at all times. Employees are also responsible for the completion of all health and safety training, as assigned. Employees with staff supervision and/or management responsibilities will ensure that assigned staff abide by the above, and actively identify, assess and correct health and safety hazards, as required.*