

Vice-President's Grants Committee

Rating Scale for Conference Travel

The following criteria are used by the Vice-President's Grants Committee when adjudicating applications for conference travel support under Memorial's internal Travel Grants Program in areas of social sciences and humanities research. This information is offered with a view to simplifying the application procedure and to improve the probability of success for individuals who best meet the criteria. It is important to note that current funding levels are sufficient to support only about one-half of all applicants (this may vary somewhat from year to year), and that some worthy applications are likely to be rejected for lack of funds.

Basic Approach

A 10 point rating scale is used, with a breakdown as follows:

Quality of conference	3 points
Record of scholar	3 points
Specific proposal	4 points

Fractional points may be awarded within each category but each rater would give a final rating to the nearest whole number.

Each committee member gives an independent rating and discrepancies of two or more points in the ratings are discussed at a committee meeting, with a view to narrowing the range. In the end, however, the aggregate rating across all committee members is used as a score for the proposal. The procedure is then to start with the highest score and work down the list, making appropriate budget adjustments where necessary, until funds have been exhausted. Financial constraints often require that limits on budget items may be imposed by the committee.

The basic principle in rating proposals is to establish criteria for an "ideal" submission, and to scale down from this by judging whether or not specific criteria have been met. These criteria are intended to apply to all submissions. Where necessary, however, distinctions are made between conferences in the social sciences, humanities and professional disciplines, in recognition of differences in adjudication procedures, conference formats and intended audiences.

Conference (3 points)

All of the following characteristics must be evident (the ideal conference)

- international scope
- evidence of competitive adjudication or clear indication of invited presentation based on reputation of applicant
- evidence of conference as a leading one in the discipline or sub-discipline
- publication of proceedings
- evidence of participation of leading scholars

Note that competitive adjudication is expected in larger conferences where a call for papers is issued. Publication of proceedings is likely to be more characteristic of smaller conferences, especially those in which participants are invited or selected on reputation.

3 points are awarded if the conference meets 4 of the 5 criteria (Note that use of whole numbers 0, 1, 2, 3 gives a four point scale here). Fewer points are given if the conference meets fewer criteria or if all criteria are judged to have been met to a less than ideal degree.

Record of Candidate (3 points)

- substantial national or international reputation or new scholar with considerable promise based on record to date
- clear program of research
- record of refereed publications
- record of publication from previously funded conferences if applicable

3 points are awarded if all of these criteria are met. Fewer points accrue if one or more criteria are not met or if all are met to a less than ideal degree. For this category the career stage of the applicant is an important consideration in judging the record.

Proposal (4 points)

- proposal clearly relates to a research program
- proposal is clear, coherent, logical and understandable to educated non-specialists
- research has significant theoretical and/or social significance which is clearly identified in the proposal
- research questions and/or hypotheses are clearly identified
- sound methodology (empirical or analytical) used in the research
- research is situated in the appropriate body of literature
- conclusions are appropriate to the questions and the methods used

The research on which the proposal is based should be substantially complete at the time of application (many conference organizers require this in any case).

To be awarded full 4 points, proposals must meet at least five of the above criteria to a high degree and all seven to an acceptable degree. Fewer points are based on meeting fewer of the criteria or in meeting all to a less than ideal degree.

Application Procedures

These selection criteria are offered for your information when preparing a travel grant application. Applicants should be aware that limits are placed on the length of submissions and on the volume of supporting material that can be included. It is suggested that a proposal consist of no more than two pages (single spaced, 11 point font, 1 inch margins), that the candidate's CV be in short form, focusing on recent research activities and publications relevant to the proposal at hand, and that a short statement (not more than one-half page) be given on the characteristics of the conference relevant to the above criteria.

Application forms are available on the web at www.mun.ca/research/funding/internalmenu2.html or by contacting the Office of Research at 737-8251.