



# **CCS Research Training Award for Postdoctoral Fellows (RTA-PDF-23)**

Canadian Cancer Society

Full Application Guide  
April 2023  
Version 1



Canadian  
Cancer  
Society

## Important dates:

Full application due date:  
August 14, 2023

Results announcement:  
December 2023

Anticipated funding start date:  
January 1, 2024

## To Apply:

Visit [EGrAMS](#) to access the application form.

Applications must be submitted online by 5:00 pm EDT/EST.

## Questions?

Contact CCS research staff at [research@cancer.ca](mailto:research@cancer.ca)

## Research Training Award for Postdoctoral Fellows Program Synopsis

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The purpose of this funding program is to support growth and innovation in the next generation of diverse cancer researchers across Canada at the Postdoctoral level. Our Research Training Awards seek to build inclusive capacity in cancer research and recognizing this, we support Black\* and Indigenous\* applicants to apply for this opportunity. This program will support individuals in conducting cancer related research while fostering long term connections with Canada's cancer research ecosystem through a combination of exposures to other disciplines, knowledge translation, engagement, and mentorship opportunities.

Recognizing the impact of systemic and structural racism and discrimination on trainees in the cancer research community, CCS and its partners endeavour to address racism and discrimination in multiple ways including equitable research policies and practices.

Click [here](#) for the full program description.



## Application Guide

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Three easy steps:

1. [Add signing authorities](#)
2. [Complete your application](#)
3. [Validate and submit your application](#)

Additional resources:

- Appendix A: [Troubleshooting](#)
  - [Host Institution field is empty or incorrect, and lookup button does not work](#)
  - [Delete an application](#)
  - [Budget error during validation](#)
- Appendix B: [Understanding the application interface](#)
- Appendix C: [Assign participants access to your application](#)
- Appendix D: [Update your profile](#)
- Appendix E: [Guidance document for RTA applicant referees](#)
- Other help documents for applicants including how to create a new user profile in EGrAMS and CV templates, <https://cancer.ca/en/research/for-researchers/funding-application/documentation-for-applicants> .



## STEP 1: Add signing authorities and references

All applications require sign-off by the Head of the Department and by the executive signing authority from the institution where your research will be undertaken. If funds are to be distributed by a **separate institution**, sign-off is also required from the executive signing authority for the finance institution. More details are found in the [signing authorities tipsheet](#).

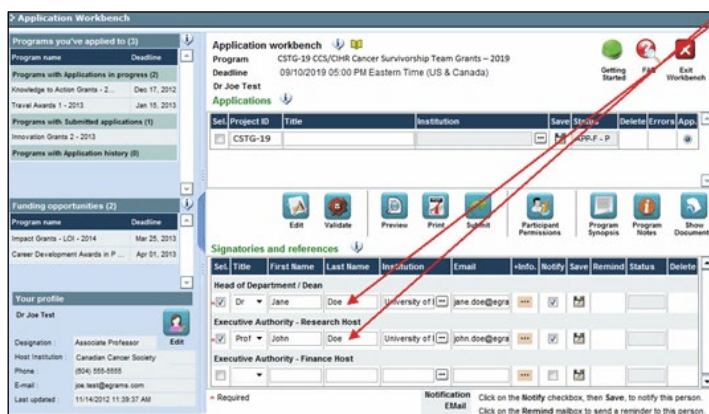
Provide the name and email address of your signing authorities and references to allow EGrAMS to generate an automated email containing a link to the relevant page of your application. The system will send the email when you click the **Notify** box (step 2).

### Create a PDF of your application:

Depending on your institution's policy regarding signing authorities, your Department Head or Dean may require you to provide them with a PDF of your completed application for their review before they indicate their approval. You can generate a PDF of your application at any time by going to the **Application workbench** and clicking:



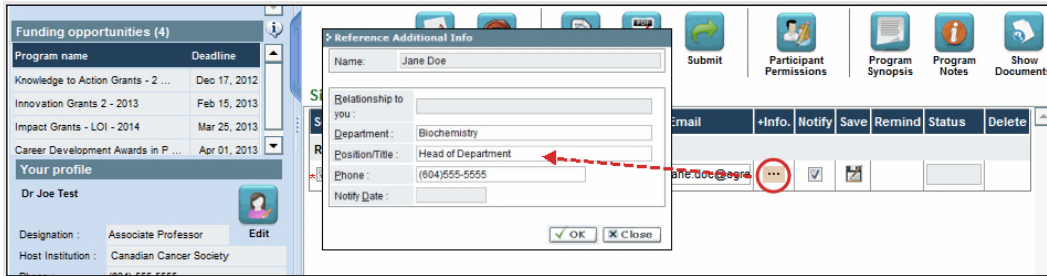
1. Ensure that **CCS Research Training Award for Postdoctoral Fellows – 2023** is selected in the Application workbench (RTA-PDF-23).
  - If not, click the program name on the left under Programs with Applications in progress
2. Complete the forms under the **Signatories and references** section by providing the titles, names, institutions and email addresses of your Head of Department/Dean, Executive Authority – Research Host and (if applicable) Executive Authority – Finance Host signatories.

A screenshot of the EGrAMS Application Workbench interface. The interface is divided into several sections. On the left, there are navigation menus for 'Programs you've applied to (3)', 'Funding opportunities (2)', and 'Your profile'. The main area is titled 'Application workbench' and shows details for a program named 'CSTG-19 CCS/DHR Cancer Survivorship Team Grants – 2019'. Below this, there is a table for 'Applications' with columns for Project ID, Title, Institution, Save, Status, Delete, Errors, and App. The 'Signatories and references' section is the primary focus, containing a table with columns for Sel, Title, First Name, Last Name, Institution, Email, +Info, Notify, Save, Remind, Status, and Delete. The table has three rows: 'Head of Department / Dean' with Jane Doe at the University of [redacted], 'Executive Authority - Research Host' with Prof John Doe at the University of [redacted], and 'Executive Authority - Finance Host'. Red arrows point from the 'Notify' and 'Remind' columns to the 'Notify' and 'Remind' checkboxes in the table. At the bottom, there are instructions for the 'Notification' and 'Email' checkboxes.

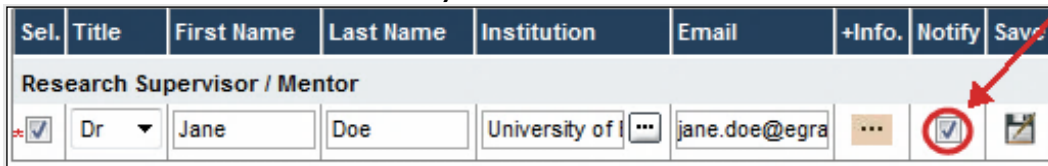
**Note:** manually enter 'not applicable' or 'other' in the institution section of EGrAMS for community member/ patient / caregiver references.



3. Click the **...** button under the **+Info** heading and complete the **Reference Additional Info** window for **Department, Position/Title** and **Phone**:



4. **IMPORTANT:** Ensure that the **Notify** checkbox is checked.



- When the Notify box is checked off, EGrAMS will send an automated email to your signatory as soon as you click **Save**.
- The email will contain a unique URL that will grant access to the relevant section of your application for each contact.

**Automated email delivery to your signing authorities:**

The email notification is sent out as soon as you click the **Save icon**. If you want to notify them at a later time, make sure that the **Notify** option is unchecked. When you are ready to notify them, follow these steps:

1. Return to the **Application workbench** screen.
2. Click the **Notify** button.
3. Click the **Save** icon.

5. Click to save your entry. An email containing a unique URL for access to the signing authority sections of your application will be sent out to your contacts immediately.



### Monitoring status / sending reminders:

To see if your contacts have completed the signing authority sections of your application by following these steps:

1. Return to the **Application workbench** screen.
2. Check the **Status** column. (It will display either “Pending”, “Work In Progress” or “Complete”.)



### Send a reminder email:


If your contacts have not yet completed their portion of your application, you can re-send the email notification by clicking on the button.

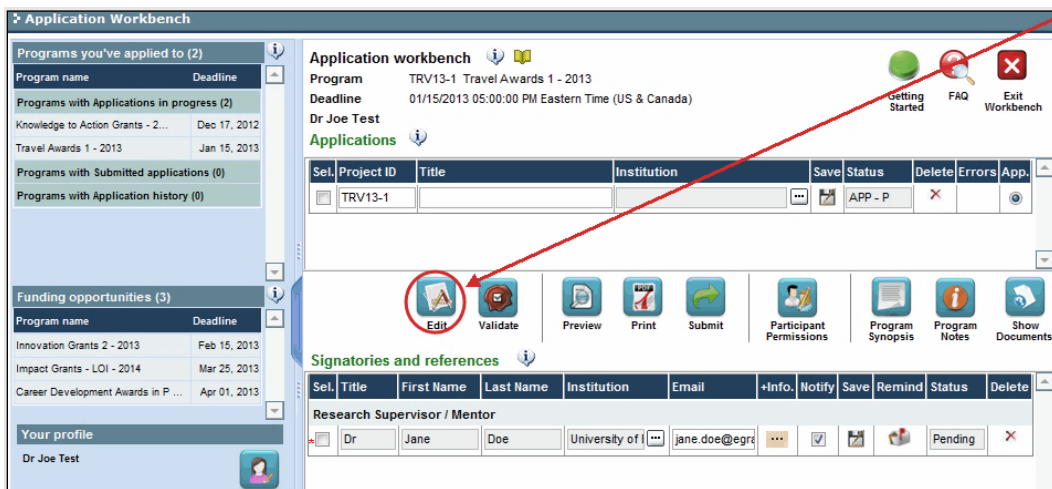


## STEP 2: Complete your application

### I. Access the application

1. Ensure that **CCS Research Training Award for Postdoctoral Fellows - 2023** is selected in the workbench (RTA-PDF-23).
  - if not, click the program name on the left under Programs with Applications in progress

2. Click the  button to access the application:



The screenshot shows the 'Application Workbench' interface. On the left, there are several panels: 'Programs you've applied to (2)', 'Programs with Applications in progress (2)', 'Programs with Submitted applications (0)', 'Programs with Application history (0)', 'Funding opportunities (3)', and 'Your profile'. The main area displays 'Application workbench' for program TRV13-1 Travel Awards 1 - 2013. Below this, there is a table of applications with columns for 'Sel.', 'Project ID', 'Title', 'Institution', 'Save', 'Status', 'Delete', 'Errors', and 'App.'. A red circle highlights the 'Edit' button in the bottom toolbar, and a red arrow points to it from the text above. Other buttons in the toolbar include 'Validate', 'Preview', 'Print', 'Submit', 'Participant Permissions', 'Program Synopsis', 'Program Notes', and 'Show Documents'. Below the toolbar, there is a 'Signatories and references' section with a table for 'Research Supervisor / Mentor' with columns for 'Sel.', 'Title', 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Institution', 'Email', '+Info', 'Notify', 'Save', 'Remind', 'Status', and 'Delete'.

3. Click on the background tab to begin.

### II. Enter details of your application

#### Understanding the application interface:

For assistance with the application interface (how to navigate through the application, interpret help files and instructions, save/validate your content, upload and attach supporting documentation, etc.) consult [Appendix B: Understanding the application interface](#).

#### Format for document attachments:

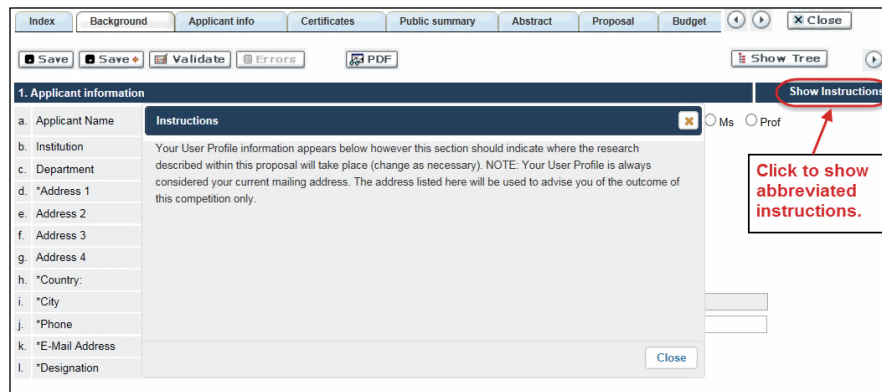
With the exception of appendices, document attachments (e.g. CVs, figures, tables and charts, etc.) **must be submitted in PDF format, and must not exceed 5 MB** in size. The system will reject documents that do not meet these standards.



### Access instructions within the application:

Abbreviated instructions for completion of each page of the application are provided within the application itself. Click 'Show Instructions' to access them.

These are not meant to be comprehensive – please consult this Application Guide, along with the funding program description, to complete your application:



The screenshot displays a web application interface with a navigation bar at the top containing tabs for 'Index', 'Background', 'Applicant info', 'Certificates', 'Public summary', 'Abstract', 'Proposal', and 'Budget'. Below the navigation bar are buttons for 'Save', 'Save +', 'Validate', 'Errors', and 'PDF'. A 'Show Tree' button is also visible. The main content area is titled '1. Applicant information' and features a 'Show Instructions' button highlighted with a red circle. A red arrow points from a text box containing the instruction 'Click to show abbreviated instructions.' to the 'Show Instructions' button. The form includes fields for 'Applicant Name', 'Institution', 'Department', and various address fields (\*Address 1 through \*Address 4), as well as fields for \*Country, \*City, \*Phone, \*E-Mail Address, and \*Designation. A 'Close' button is located at the bottom right of the form.





### III. Quick links to page-by-page instructions

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## BACKGROUND

### 1. Applicant information

The contents of this page will be pre-populated from your user profile.

### 2. Project information

**Project title:** The title entered when the application was created is indicated. Please avoid typing in ALL CAPS.

**Financial Institution:** If the institution responsible for administering grant funds is different from the institution hosting your research, use the  button to locate the financial institution.

**Project date:** The start date of this funding program is January 1, 2024. Postdoctoral Fellows can apply for a one- to three-year award. Indicate an end date of December 31, 2024, 2025, or 2026.

**Amount of funds requested:** This figure must match the total calculated budget for your application – the total calculated budget is viewable on the Budget Summary page within the Budget section.

#### Note:

- Funding will be available for up to **\$190k per award** over 3 years (max \$60k/yr plus \$10,000 for training)

The screenshot shows the '2. Project information' section of an application form. It includes fields for Project Title, Financial Institution, Project Start Date, End Date, and Amount of Funds Requested. Annotations with red boxes and arrows highlight specific instructions: 'If you've indicated No, use the ... lookup button to indicate the Financial Institution name' points to the 'No' radio button and the lookup button; 'Enter the total budget amount requested (must match the calculated amount in the Budget Summary)' points to the 'Amount of Funds Requested' field.

a. Project Title	Grant application
b. Is Financial Institution the same as the Research Institution?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
c. If No, provide Financial Institution name	<input type="button" value="..."/>
d. Project Start Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	2/1/2013
End Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	1/31/2018
e. Amount of Funds Requested	0.00
Project Cost	0.00

**Language:** Complete the entire application in one language only.


For applications submitted in French, please note that all review panels are conducted in English, and French language reviewers will be secured as required. Applicants submitting in French are required to provide the names of at least 5 impartial reviewers who are able to review in French and have the necessary expertise to critically evaluate the application.



### 3. Participants


#### Note:

- Each applicant can submit only **ONE** application in this competition.

**EGrAMS Login:** Add participants by first searching for their user profile using the  button. The form will be auto-populated from the data in their user profile. If they are not in the system, enter the required information into the form.

**Note:** You can give others (anyone with an EGrAMS profile) access to your application, and set their permissions according to their role. See [Appendix C](#) for instructions.

**Searching for users in the system:** In the lookup box, enter the full, correct email address associated with the participant's system profile:



UserName	Name	Agency	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	lmcdonald	Lindsay McDonald	Canadian Cancer Society Research Institute

1. Enter full, correct e-mail address
2. Click **Lookup**
3. Click checkbox to add user as a participant

Provide full addresses, including department name/affiliation, for each participant to ensure proper identification of conflicts of interest during the peer review process.

#### Financial Officer

Provide the name and email address of your institution's financial officer who would be responsible for the administration of this research grant, and to whom all correspondence about the accounting should be sent. Once the name is entered, the mailing address will auto-populate. (Note that this is a mandatory requirement; all applications must include a Financial Officer.)

#### Supervisor(s)

Enter the name(s) and contact information of your Supervisor(s) by first searching for their user profile (see above). Note that (primary) Supervisor's must hold an eligible academic position at a Canadian University.

Supervisor(s) must provide a CV, following the format and naming convention outlined in [Biographical sketch template \(academic participants\)](#). Do not exceed 5 pages per person.

Note: Financial Officers do not require a CV.



## APPLICANT INFO

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### 4. Applicant CV

Follow the format and naming convention outlined in [Biographical sketch template \(academic participants\)](#) Do not exceed 5 pages per person, collated into one PDF file.

**Naming convention:** Note that the file name will auto populate the Attachment Title, please use the following format: [lastname\_firstname-CV].

### 5. Justification for career interruptions

Briefly describe any career interruptions or delays that may have impacted your academic career and research productivity. For COVID-related interruptions, simply state COVID-19 and indicate 2020/03 – 2022/03 (24 months).

If not applicable, please indicate this in the form.

Your justification **should not exceed 1250 characters** (including spaces), or roughly one full page, single spaced. Note that the character count may be different when copying text from Word due to formatting.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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### 6. Additional information

This data helps us to understand the impact of our efforts to be more relevant to diverse applicants in our funding calls. This information is for administrative purposes only and will be hidden from reviewers.

## CERTIFICATES

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### 7a. Human embryonic stem cells involvement

Any applicant who proposes the creation or use of human embryonic stem cells, or proposes any research that would fall under the Federal Legislation or the CIHR Guidelines for Human Stem Cell Research, must clearly indicate this in this section. In the space provided, list the name of the institution(s) where human embryonic stem cell (hESC) work will take place. All relevant details related to the hESC work must be described in the proposal.



For additional guidance, see the [CCS stem cell policy statement](#).

## 7b. Status of SCOC approval for each institution

In the space provided, indicate the status of SCOC approval for each institution where hESC work will take place. A maximum of 1250 characters is permitted.

## PUBLIC SUMMARY

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### 8. Public Summary

Please provide a plain language summary (abstract) of your project that will be shared with our patient/survivor/caregiver reviewers and with our donors and other stakeholders. Note that this summary should be understandable by someone who does not have a scientific background and should not contain confidential information.

In your summary, please address the following questions:

- What is the goal/purpose of your project? What need does it address?
- What are you proposing to do?
- Why is this work important? How will it impact people affected by cancer?

Format:

- Limit the summary to 2150 characters (including spaces)
- The character count may be different when copying text from Word due to formatting – see [tips](#) for formatting text in the rich text editor.

## KEYWORDS

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### 9. Keywords

Provide up to a maximum of 10 specific keywords or descriptive terms that best describe the focus and approach of your project. Enter one keyword or term per line.

## EXPERIENCE STATEMENT

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### 10. Experience statement

Provide an experience statement to evaluate potential impact on cancer, answering the following 2 questions:

- Why am I the right candidate for this award?



- What do I envision as my (long-term) contribution to cancer research?

The experience statement should highlight lived experience, connection to or role in community, community engagement, volunteering with patients / healthcare, work experience and other meaningful experience and skills (such as life / knowledge journeys for Indigenous trainees).

If applicable, please describe any special circumstances including career obstacles and interruptions

The experience statement should be written in non-technical language, and **not exceed 6000 characters**, including spaces. Note that the character count may be different when copying text from Word due to formatting – see [tips](#) for formatting text in the rich text editor.

## PROPOSAL

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### 11. Proposal

Provide a detailed proposal including:

- Overall goal and aims of the research project,
- Supporting evidence/rationale,
- Guiding theoretical framework (if applicable), study design, methods,
- Evaluation/analysis (including assessment and mitigation of any potential barriers or risks),
- Knowledge sharing,
- Meaningful, integrated involvement of relevant stakeholders (i.e., patients, public, at-risk, underserved populations) is strongly encouraged.
- Briefly describe how patient/survivor/caregiver or other relevant stakeholders will be engaged in the research as partners and if applicable, as participants.
- Demonstration of accessibility, equity, diversity and inclusion principles in the proposal must be evident.
- Include a description of how sex and/or gender and/or dimensions of diversity/determinants of health and their intersectionalities have been factored into the study design.

While scholarly publications and presentations are considered important, knowledge sharing of the research findings in culturally and contextually relevant ways (outside of traditional academic conferences and publications) is preferred. Note that traditional academic conferences or publications alone will not be considered sufficient for knowledge sharing.

- Provide a list of references cited within the proposal. A standard reference style is recommended (e.g. first author, article title, journal title, date of publication, volume, issue, location (pagination)).



Format:

- Your proposal must not exceed **9,000 characters (including spaces) single spaced (not including references)**. For applications submitted in French, character count is increased to 10,800.
- Upload the proposal (including references) in EGrAMS as a single pdf not larger than 5MB
- Figures, tables, charts and their associated legends must NOT be embedded in the text. For information regarding accompanying figures, tables, charts and associated legends, [see section 12 – Tables, graphs, charts and associated legends](#).
- Abbreviations must be initially explained within the proposal. A list of abbreviations, if included, counts towards the character limit.

## 12. Tables, graphs, charts and associated legends

Assemble and appropriately label your figures, tables, visuals and key milestones into one PDF document, **not to exceed 1 page in length and 5 MB in size**.

Eligible figures, tables and charts can include graphs, diagrams displaying data or non-data schematics/flow diagrams as well as project timelines and key milestones. Tables should not include descriptions of how work will be carried out (e.g. research plan, etc.); these descriptions should be detailed in the appropriate sections of the application.

Legends must be limited to providing only the information necessary to understand the associated figure or table and must not be used as a means of circumventing the proposal's character limitations. Margin limitations do not apply. Font size should not be smaller than 10 point.

**Naming convention:** Note that the file name will auto populate the Attachment Title, please use the following format: [lastname\_firstname-figures].

### In-depth information: uploading documents as attachments

For detailed instructions on how to upload a document as an attachment to your application, consult [Appendix B: Uploading document attachments](#)

## 13. Sex, gender and diversity

### a. Sex, gender and diversity considerations

Recognizing the variable impacts of cancer on different populations and demographics within Canadian society, CCS expects that sex, gender and diversity dimensions (plus other intersectionalities (SGBA<sup>+</sup>)) will be factored into research design, analysis and dissemination of findings. Please provide a response for each question, and we urge that you consider and embed these dimensions into your proposal, when applicable.





- Is sex, as a biological variable, taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings?
- Is gender, as a socio-cultural factor, taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings?
- Are diversity considerations (e.g. conditions, expressions and experiences of different groups identified by age, education, sexual orientation, parental status/responsibility, immigration status, Indigenous status, religion, disability, language, race, place of origin, ethnicity, culture, socio-economic status and other attributes) taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings?

#### **b. Sex, gender and diversity considerations**

Describe how sex and/or gender and/or diversity dimensions (plus other intersectionalities (SGBA+)) will be considered in your research proposal. If you selected 'No' to any of the questions in section 14a, explain why sex and/or gender and/or diversity are not applicable in your research proposal.

Your response must not exceed **4200 characters, single spaced**. Note that the character count may be different when copying text from Word due to formatting - see tips for formatting text in the [rich text editor](#).

Resources:

[How to integrate sex and gender into research \(CIHR\)](#)

[Online Training Modules: Integrating Sex & Gender in Health Research \(CIHR\)](#)

#### **14. Disclosure of commercial or conflict of interest related to this application**

If any of the named applicants and their supervisors(s) have a financial or other material interest in any Company, Corporation or other commercial venture whose business activities are related to the subject matter of this grant application, the nature of that interest must be disclosed and a description of how conflict of interest (perceived or real), if any, will be managed must be provided. If there is any intellectual property which has been filed that is directly related to the technology or project, or materials or reagents used in the application, ownership and/or assignment must be disclosed and fully described.

Such interests include, but are not limited to: owning a substantial number of shares of the **Company** (e.g., 5% or greater); sitting on the Board or other Committees of the Company; having an appointment (full- or part-time) as an Officer or Staff member of the Company; acting as a Consultant or Advisor for the Company; having any contract for services with the Company; receiving remuneration of any kind from the Company, etc.

Please describe fully, in non-confidential terms, the nature of the relationship or material interest, the business activities of the Company in question, and how those activities relate, if at all, to the grant application. **Care should be taken to describe any perceived**



or real conflicts of interest in this case, and what steps have been or will be taken to minimize these conflicts.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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### 15. Cross-disciplinary training

Provide a description of the cross-disciplinary training to be undertaken, expected knowledge/expertise gained or outcomes, and potential barriers to learning. Note that cross-disciplinary training refers to learning in at least one field outside of their specific cancer research area (i.e., health sciences, social sciences, data science, natural sciences, engineering, etc.).

We encourage a broad definition of training that will benefit the trainee and the cancer research ecosystem including but not limited to: trainee exchanges, co-supervision of trainees, internships, reciprocal laboratory visits, workshops, courses, webinars, community-based or collaborative learning, and other innovative ways to train and learn. The duration and complexity of training is to be commensurate with the training level and the award term (i.e., more complex and involved training plans and opportunities for postdoctoral fellows than for PhDs and for Master's trainees, and for longer award terms). A training budget is provided, and use of the budget should be detailed.

Maximum of 3000 characters, including spaces for all levels. Note that the character count may be different when copying text from Word due to formatting - see tips for formatting text in the [rich text editor](#).

### 16. Proposed mentorship plan

Provide a proposed mentorship plan (applicant as mentee). Detail on the frequency and duration of mentoring, any potential barriers or risks, responsibilities of both the mentor and mentee, areas of focus and expected benefits (i.e., specific skills or opportunities gained) of each mentoring relationship should be provided.

We support the development of a mentoring network (more than one mentor for the trainee, in different skill areas, both within and outside academic settings). Innovative mentoring approaches are suggested, such as peer / reciprocal mentoring, mentoring outside of academia such as organizational (i.e., business leaders or other skill mentoring), community, cultural, patient / caregiver, or virtual mentoring. The duration and complexity of mentorship is to be commensurate with the training level and the award term (i.e., more complex and involved mentorship plans and opportunities for postdoctoral fellows than for PhDs and for Master's trainees, and for longer award terms).

Maximum of 3000 characters, including spaces for all levels. Note that the character count may be different when copying text from Word due to formatting - see tips for formatting text in the [rich text editor](#).



## 17. Mentor statements

Provide a short (1500 characters each, spaces included) statement of commitment / support from any potential mentors is **encouraged** for applicants (but committed mentors are not required for application). If submitting mentorship statement(s) (2 maximum; the mentor statement cannot come from the direct supervisor) with the application, the statement(s) should detail the mentor's responsibilities and expectations from their perspective, and commitment to the mentoring relationship.

Submit one PDF document per statement, **not to exceed 1 page in length**, 1500 characters each, spaces included, **and 5 MB in size**.

### 17.a. Career plans and leadership activities

Please detail leadership experiences and opportunities that would position the applicant to become a future leader in cancer research in Canada.

Your response must not exceed **3000 characters, single spaced**. Note that the character count may be different when copying text from Word due to formatting - see tips for formatting text in the [rich text editor](#).

## BUDGET

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### 18. Budget request

Requests for budgets up to 3 years will be considered. Applicants are asked to enter the amount requested for the grant year period. **Please note that the budget year reflects CCS's fiscal year (i.e. Year 1 is 2024, but corresponds to January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2024).**

The grant maximum limits for each grant is **\$190k per grant** over 1-3 years (max \$60k/yr plus \$ 10,000 training budget). The requested training budget should be included in year 1 of the award only, but will be available for reimbursement throughout the duration of the award. Details of the training budget should be included in the Professional Development Plan section of the application.

#### **\*Note\***

A reminder that individuals may not concurrently hold an award similar to the Research Training Award (RTA). This includes all awards where the stipend amount is worth at least 40% of the annual RTA amount. Similar applications may be submitted to other agencies, but awardees cannot hold both where the stipend amount of the other award is at least 40% of the RTA.



Other partial stipends may be held (equal to less than 40% of the RTA stipend), subject to agreement from each funder, and the RTA stipend would be reduced by the partial amount. In this case, applicants should request only the portion of funds they would be eligible to hold over the course of the award.

**Budget validation: “funds requested does not equal budget amount”**

Note that your final budget amount will be validated against the figure entered in [item 2: Project Information](#) for **Amount of Funds Requested**. Your final budget amount as entered into the system is viewable on the Budget Summary page, the last page of the Budget section/tab.

## 19. Budget summary

A summary of the budget requested is shown. Your final budget amount will be validated against the figure entered in [item 2: Project Information](#) for **Amount of Funds Requested**.

## OTHER FUNDING

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### 20. Other funding declaration

Complete the declaration information regarding eligibility for the CCS Research Training Awards as it pertains to other overlapping funding sources. Note that non-award (stipend) related salary is permitted.

## REVIEW PANEL

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### 21. Panel recommendation

Although CCS ultimately bears the responsibility for, and reserves the right to determine the panel most suitable to review the application, all applicants may offer suggestions as to which Panel might be the most appropriate to review the application.

### 22. Reviewer recommendation

Some applications are sent to other experts for additional review (external reviewers). Applicants must suggest the names of at least 3 (5 if submitting application in French) impartial reviewers who have the necessary expertise to critically evaluate the application



and with whom you do not collaborate. Note that these may be patient/survivor/caregiver reviewers or end-user/decision-maker reviewers in addition to scientific reviewers. This should be discussed with the trainee's supervisor(s).

### 23. Reviewer exclusions

Applicants may also suggest individuals they would prefer NOT be contacted as potential reviewers (panel members and/or external reviewers); specific details should be given as to the reason for exclusion. **Any exclusions you list will not be viewable to panel members.** This should be discussed with the trainee's supervisor(s).

## TRACKING

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### 24a. CCS Research Goals

Select the CCS Research Goal(s) that are relevant to your proposed research. This information is used for statistical/reporting purposes and will not be used as part of the scientific review of the application.

### 24b. Research focus

Select the research focus of the proposal. Responses are to be limited to the scope of the proposed research for the duration of the proposed term. This information is used for solely for statistical/reporting purposes and will not be used as part of the scientific review of the application. Select one research focus that best describes the project.

**Biomedical research** – Projects that rely on model systems or are basic/fundamental research. Includes understanding disease mechanisms or studying cell pathways in model systems or patient-derived cell lines. If any component of the project uses patient-derived tissue or involves human subjects, it should be coded as clinical research.

**Clinical research** – Projects that have a component that is clinical and/or involves human subjects. Includes companion clinical trials and correlative studies as well as psychosocial oncology research. Generally, involves humans or samples from humans. Includes testing drugs, biomarkers, or mechanism of action of drugs in patients, patient-derived tumours, or liquid biopsies.

**Health systems and health services research** - Research that assesses or attempts to solve barriers to care, treatment adherence, care utilization, overtreatment, health care transitions, national strategies/frameworks, clinical pathways/guidelines, ethics, patient decision aids, adverse drug reactions, treatment delays/wait times, access/equity, and/or health literacy.

**Social, cultural, environmental, and population health research** – Research that is population-level and unrelated to the health system. Includes research that investigates lifestyle, toxin exposures, diet, or population-based surveillance surveys (e.g., the



International Tobacco Control (ITC) survey, British Columbia Adolescent Substance Use Survey).

#### 24c. Clinical Trial

If your proposed research includes a clinical trial component, select the type of trial and provide the participant recruitment target. If your proposed research does not involve a clinical trial, select not applicable.

#### 24d. Relevant cancer population

Select the cancer population(s) the proposed research is focused on and will be relevant to. If your proposed research can be applied broadly to cancer patients, select “Not specific”. Be sure to check at least one item.

Note: Only select pediatric or AYA populations if the research is specific to these populations.

#### 24e. Underserved populations

Please indicate if your research project is focused on underserved populations.

Note: Only select an option if the research is specific to one or more of the identified populations.

#### 24f. Research subject

If your proposed research involves human subjects or patient tissues, select the research subject(s) that will be used in the study. You can select more than one option. If your proposed research does not involve human subjects or patient tissues, select “Not applicable”.

Note: Only select pediatric or AYA if the study population or patient tissue is specific to these populations.

#### 24g. Cancer site relevance

Select a maximum of four cancer sites where the research will be most relevant. Indicate the degree of relevance to the selected cancer site in terms of percentage (%). Only include cancer sites with at least 25% relevance; total should equal 100%.

The cancer site selected must reflect the site of the primary cancer. For example, if your research is focused on lung cancer that has metastasized to the brain, select lung as the relevant cancer site.

When a project does not focus on one or more specific cancer sites (e.g. applies broadly to cancer patients), select “Non-specific/All sites”.

Only use the **Details** description field to describe the site if you have selected **Other** as a site (i.e. Do not enter a ‘%’ sign with your percentage, only enter the number.



## 24h. Common Scientific Outline (CSO)

Select a maximum of 3 codes which best describe the research. Full details of the Common Scientific Outline can be found at the International Cancer Research Portfolio website (<https://www.icrpartnership.org/cso>).

## RELEASE FORM

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### 25. Release form

CCS depends on donor dollars to fund its grants. Applicants must declare their willingness to allow the CCS to provide minimal details of their grant to potential donors/partners. For successful investigators, the awardee must declare their understanding that the CCS will post competition results (PI Trainee, Supervisor(s), HI, title, value of grant, public summary) on the CCS website. Lay summaries of progress and impact of the research will be shared in our internal and external reports, including press releases, social media or other communications.

**IMPORTANT: executive authority sign-off**

Sections 26 and 27 (and 28, if relevant) are mandatory for submission of your application.

## HOD/DEAN

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### 26. Head of Department/Dean confirmation

Approval of this application by the Head of your research department must be completed for you to submit your application. If you are the Head of the Department, this section must be completed by the Dean. You must obtain confirmation that s/he has read and understands the [Host Institution/Canadian Cancer Society agreement](#). Signing authorities will be directed to our website's [policies and administration](#) pages before providing their confirmation online.

**Read only access for applicants:** This section can only be completed by the signing authority designated in [Step 1: Add signing authorities and references](#). You have read access and can thus monitor when/if the section is complete.

## RESEARCH HOST

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### 27. Executive authority of the host research institution



Approval of this application is to be completed by the executive authority of the Host Institution where the research will be conducted and must be completed for you to submit your application.

## FINANCE HOST

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### 28. Executive authority of the host finance institution

If the host institution administering funds is **different** from where the research will be conducted, this section must be completed for you to submit your application. It is to be completed by the executive authority of the host institution administering funds.

## REFERENCES

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### 29. References

Please indicate the name and email of your primary supervisor, and well as a community member/ patient / caregiver who will be submitting a letter of commitment/support on your behalf in the signatories and references section of the EGrAMS application workbench. Note that co-supervisors may submit a joint letter under the primary supervisor's name.

**Read only access for applicants:** This section can only be completed by the signing authority designated in [Step 1: Add signing authorities and references](#). You have read access and can thus monitor when/if the section is complete. Referees will be provided a guidance document detailing information required in the letter of reference, along with instructions on how to upload the letter in EGrAMS (see [Appendix E: Guidance Document for RTA Applicant Referees](#))

**Note:** manually enter 'not applicable' or 'other' in the institution section of EGrAMS for community member/ patient / caregiver references.

## POST-SUBMISSION PUBLICATIONS

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### 30. Post-submission publications

**Publication lists included in this section prior to submission will be removed.** Use this section to provide an update (in PDF format) to the status of your publications only **after** you've submitted your application. A copy of the manuscript is not necessary; email confirmation from the journal publisher is sufficient.

Your initial list of publications should be included as part of your CV, per [section 4 - Principal Investigator CV](#).





You can update (i.e. save over or re-upload) the document as often as you need to, up until the review panel meeting.

**Naming convention:** please use the following format: [lastname\_firstname\_publications\_yyyymmdd].

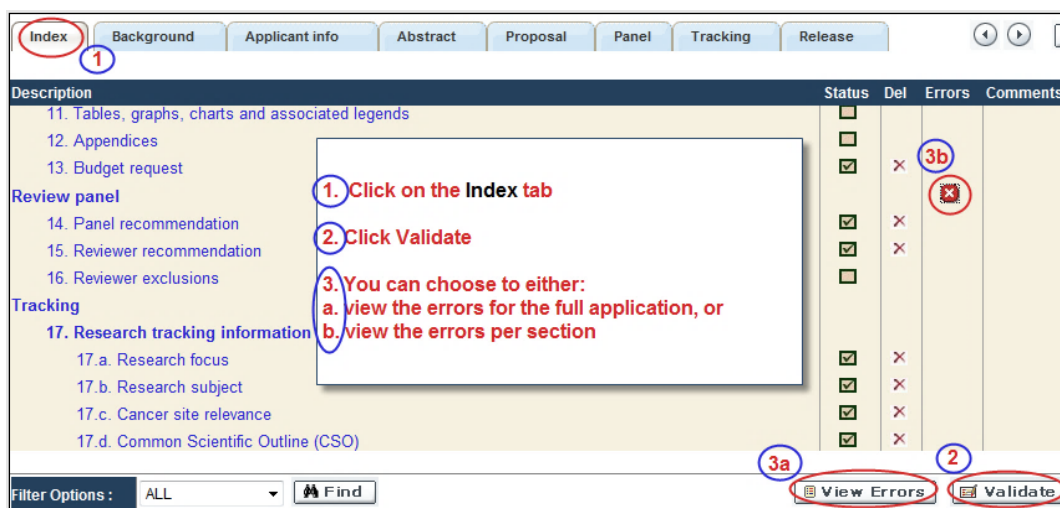


## STEP 3: Validate and submit your application

### I. Validation

Before you can submit your application, you must complete a validation process to identify any items left incomplete or filled out incorrectly. You can choose to either a) validate the full application, or b) validate one section at a time.

#### a) Validate the full application



#### b) Validate one section at a time

Must be conducted once for every section (e.g. Background, Applicant Info, Budget, etc.) of the application. Sections are identified as tabs in the banner across the top of the application.

Upon completion of all pages within a tab/section of the application, click the **Save** button. Next click the **Validate** button:

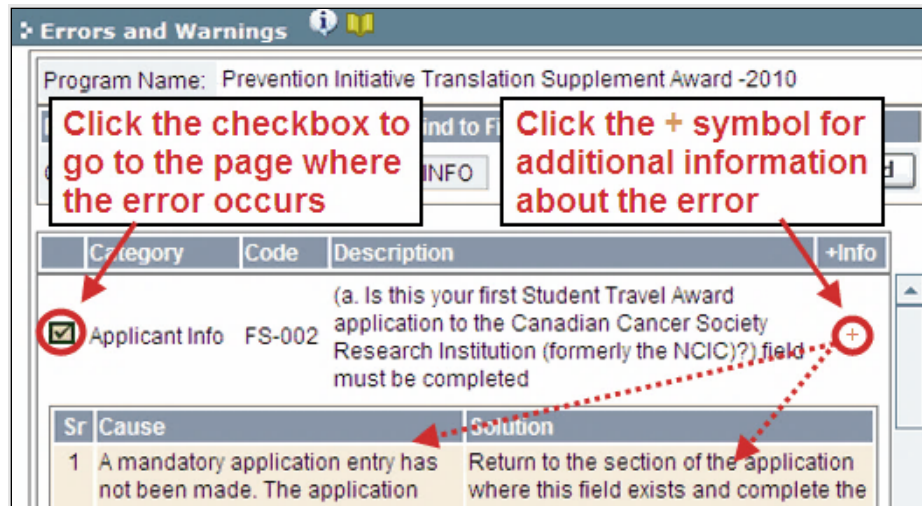


For both type a) and b) validation, follow the below instructions:

1. If errors are found, a dialogue box will open with details.
  - Click the + symbol under the +Info heading for information about the cause and solution of the error.

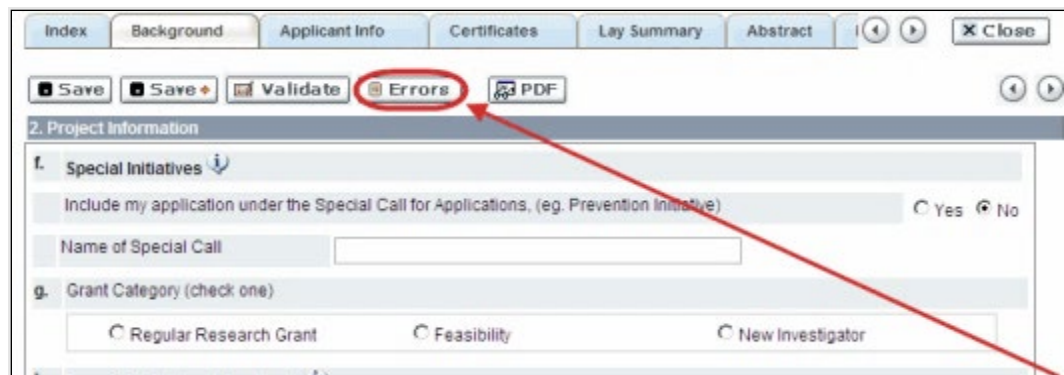


- Click the checkbox to the left of the error listing to be taken to the page where the error has occurred.



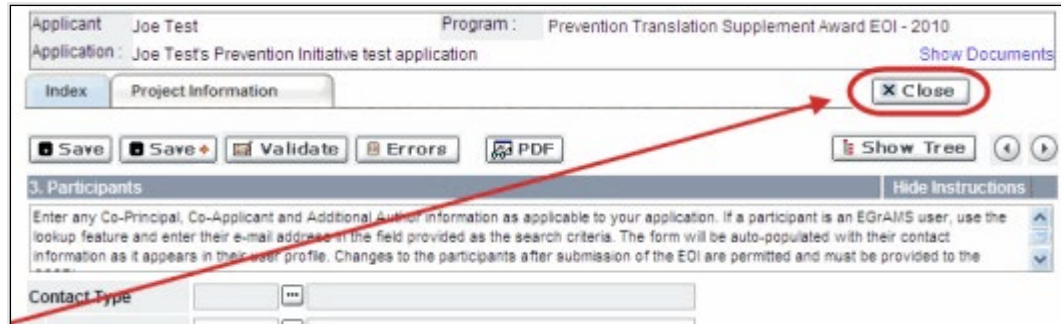
2. To view the dialogue box with the list of errors again, click the **Errors** button.

**Note:** The list of errors will not be updated to reflect any corrections you've made until you click **Save** and then **Validate** again.




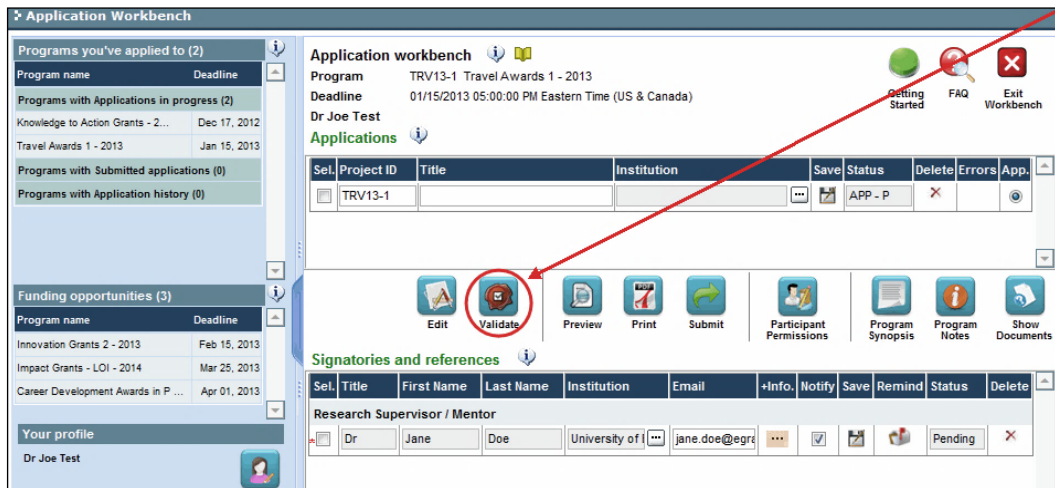
3. When all errors are resolved for every section, click the **Close** button to exit the application.




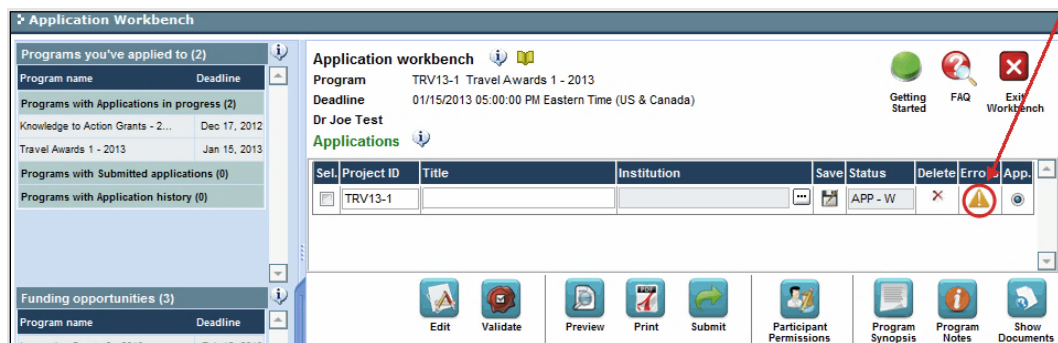


## II. Preview and submission


- From the **Application workbench**, click the  button to do a final validation of your application.





- If Errors are found, click the  button for information about the errors.



- Errors can be corrected through the  menu.

- To generate a PDF of your application, click the  button:



5. To preview your application in EGrAMS, click the  button:
  - Use the left side menu links to navigate to specific pages, or use the forward/backward arrows to view page by page.
  - Click the **Close** button to exit the preview screen.
  
6. Once you've validated all errors, click the  button.

### III. Confirmation

Once your application is submitted, a confirmation email will be sent to you by EGrAMS.



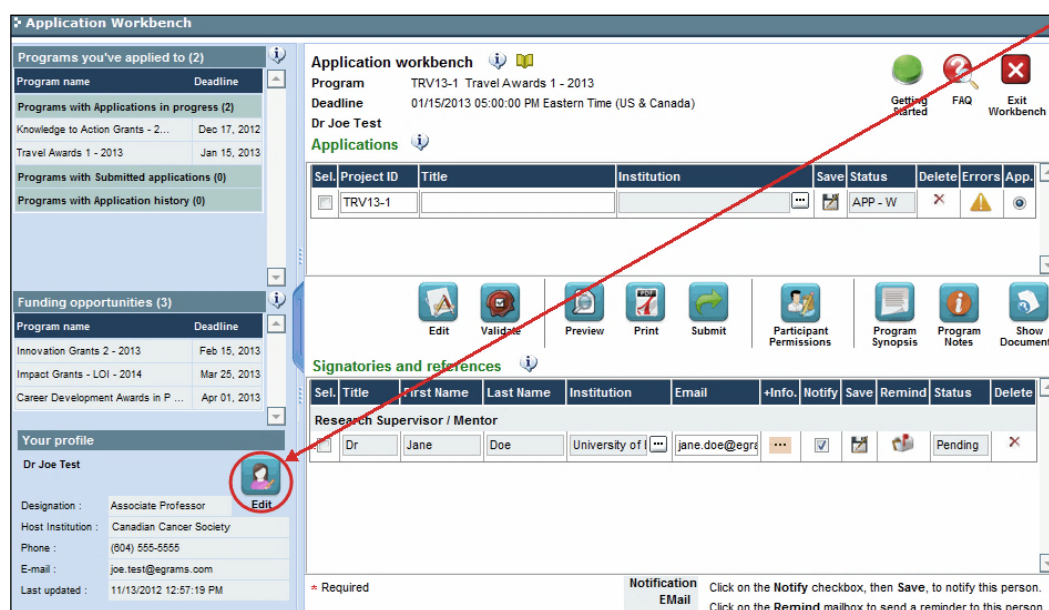
## APPENDIX A: Troubleshooting

- **Host Institution field is empty or incorrect, and lookup button does not work.**

**Problem:** I am creating my application. The  button in the Host Institution field does not open a lookup box.

**Solution:** The Host Institution field is auto-populated from information provided in your profile. You will need [to update this information](#) in your profile first, then log out of EGrAMS and log back in and create your application.


**To update your profile:** From the Application workbench, click the  button.



The screenshot shows the 'Application Workbench' interface. On the left sidebar, under 'Your profile', there is an 'Edit' button next to a profile picture icon. A red circle highlights this 'Edit' button, and a red arrow points from it to the 'Host Institution' field in the 'Applications' table. The 'Applications' table has columns for 'Project ID', 'Title', and 'Institution'. The first row shows 'TRV13-1' for Project ID, and the 'Institution' field is empty. In the top right corner of the application details area, there is a red 'X' button. Below the 'Applications' table, there is a 'Signatories and references' table with columns for 'Title', 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Institution', 'Email', '+Info', 'Notify', 'Save', 'Remind', 'Status', and 'Delete'. The first row shows 'Dr' as Title, 'Jane' as First Name, 'Doe' as Last Name, 'University of i' as Institution, and 'jane.doe@egrs' as Email. The 'Status' is 'Pending'. At the bottom right, there is a 'Notification EMail' section with instructions: 'Click on the Notify checkbox, then Save, to notify this person.' and 'Click on the Remind mailbox to send a reminder to this person.'

- **Delete an application**

**Problem:** I need to delete my application.

**Solution:** Go to the Application workbench, click the  button, click OK in the pop-up.



**Application Workbench**

Programs you've applied to (2)

Program name	Deadline
Knowledge to Action Grants - 2...	Dec 17, 2012
Travel Awards 1 - 2013	Jan 15, 2013

Programs with Applications in progress (2)

Programs with Submitted applications (0)

Programs with Application history (0)

Funding opportunities (3)

Program name	Deadline
Innovation Grants 2 - 2013	Feb 15, 2013
Impact Grants - LOI - 2014	Mar 25, 2013
Career Development Awards in P...	Apr 01, 2013

Your profile  
Dr Joe Test

**Application workbench**

Program TRV13-1 Travel Awards 1 - 2013  
Deadline 01/15/2013 05:00:00 PM Eastern Time (US & Canada)  
Dr Joe Test

Getting Started | FAQ | Exit Workbench

**Applications**

Sel.	Project ID	Title	Institution	Save	Status	Delete/Errors	App.
<input type="checkbox"/>	TRV13-1				APP - P		

Edit | Validate | Preview | Print | Submit | Participant Permissions | Program Synopsis | Program Notes | Show Documents

**Signatories and references**

Sel.	Title	First Name	Last Name	Institution	Email	+Info	Notify	Save	Remind	Status	Delete
<b>Research Supervisor / Mentor</b>											
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dr	Jane	Doe	University of	jane.doe@egr		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Pending	

- **Budget error during validation**

Application stage: [Step 3: Validate and submit your application](#)

**Problem:** When I validate my Budget section, I get an error that reads “Funds requested [or Project cost] does not equal budget amount”. What does it mean and how do I fix it?

**Solution:** [Section 2. Project Information](#) contains two fields under item (e) – Amount of Funds Requested and Project Cost. The values entered in these fields must match the values in your budget summary.



## APPENDIX B: The Application Interface

### I. Navigation

Use the tab banner and arrow buttons to navigate through your application:



1. **Tab banner** – You can access the different sections of the application by clicking on the tab at the top of each page.
2. **Current tab** – The current tab you are viewing is always highlighted in white.
3. **Show more tabs** – You can manipulate the tab banner to show hidden tabs by clicking the left and right arrows that sit to the right of the banner.
4. **Advance page by page through application** – Some sections (tabs) are consist of several pages of content. Click on the arrow buttons that sit below the Close button. When you reach the last page of a section, clicking the advance arrow will take you to the first page of the subsequent section.
5. **Index** – Clicking the Index tab will produce a map of the entire application, including check boxes to indicate where content has been entered and saved on a page.

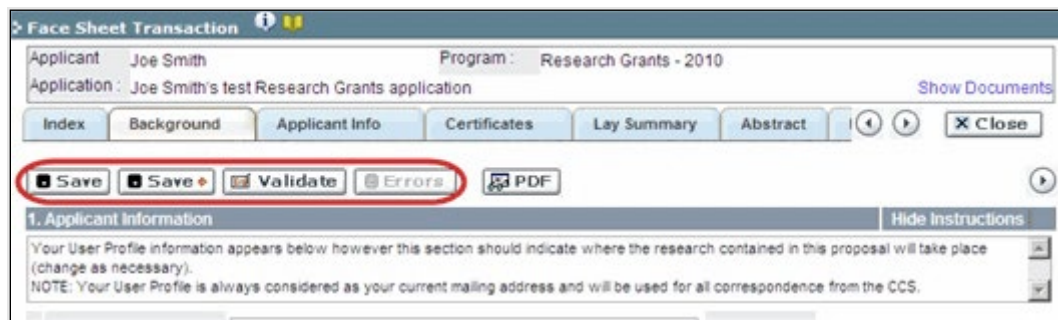




- Sections with an uploaded document will have a paperclip icon beside the checkbox. You can view the document by clicking the paperclip.
- Each line of the index is clickable and will take you straight to that page of the application.
- Note that errors will show up in the index until you re-validate the application.

## II. Save, Validate, Errors

The **Save**, **Save** ➔ (save, and move forward to next page), **Validate** and **Errors** buttons enable users to save their work and then check to make sure they have completed the questions properly.



### ▪ Save

While some sections of the application will be pre-populated with information derived from your user profile and elsewhere, the system will still expect you to save the information that has been pre-populated, the first time you view that page of the application.

If you try to advance to the next page without saving your work, the system will prompt you to do so.

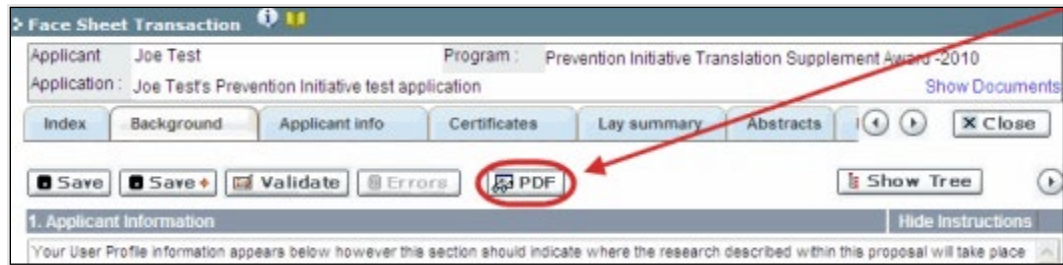
### ▪ Validate and check for errors


The validation process is a crucial step in completing your application successfully. For detailed instructions, consult [Step 3: Validate and submit your application](#).

## III. PDFs

Create a PDF of **the page you are currently visiting**, including any data you have entered into the form, by clicking the PDF button.



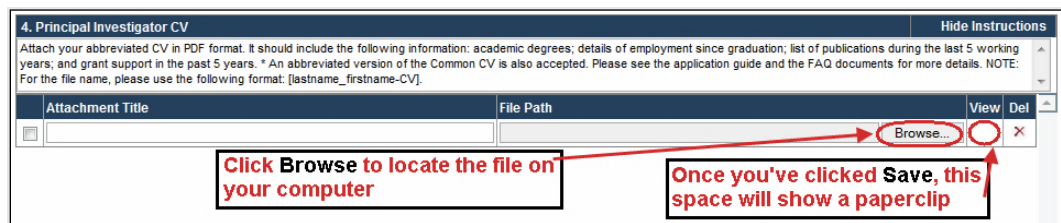


If you wish to create a PDF of your entire application, click the  button on the **Application workbench**.

Print

#### IV. Uploading document attachments

1. The system will automatically take the name of the document in the **Attachment Title** field.
2. Click **Browse** and locate the document on your computer.



3. Click **Save** to upload the document as an attachment to your application.
  - The **File Name** path will be cleared, and the paperclip icon will appear in the **View** column. You can click the paperclip to view the attachment.

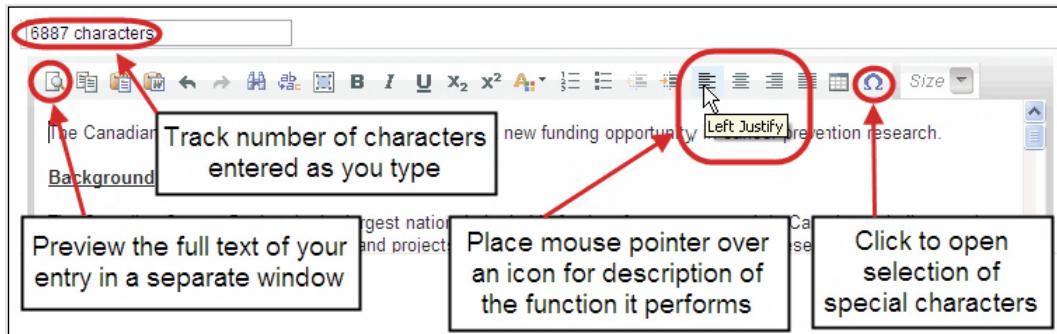
#### V. The rich text editor

**Copying and pasting formatted text:**

- You can copy and paste text formatted in a Word processor into the form; formatting will be preserved, including special characters inserted using Alt codes.
- The use of Symbol font in your application text is not supported in EGrAMS.
- Copying text from Word for Greek or French characters using this font will result in these special characters being lost (usually converted to some other letter).



You can format your text with the rich text editor within EGrAMS, in the same way you would format text in Microsoft Word.

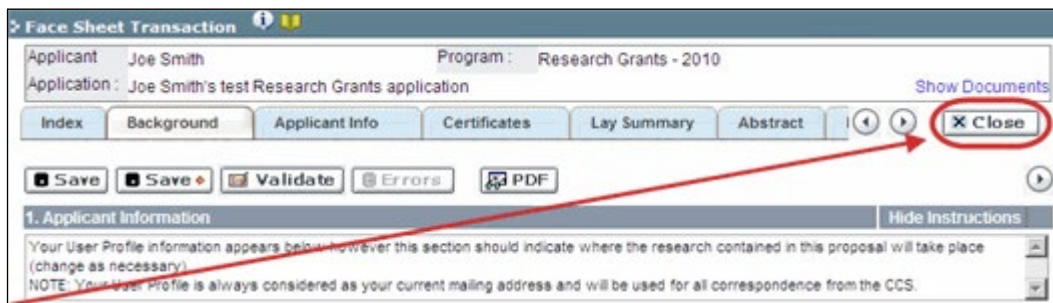


Use the rich text editor to:

- bold, italicize or underline your text
- format footnote markers with superscript
- track the number of characters used in an entry
  - character limitations for each entry are stated in the instructions posted on each page of the application, and/or in this guide
- enter special characters such as French or Greek letters
- include bulleted and/or numbered lists
- preview your text in a full screen window

## VI. Exit

To exit the application and access the **Application workbench** again, click the **Close** button.



## APPENDIX C: Assign participants access to your application

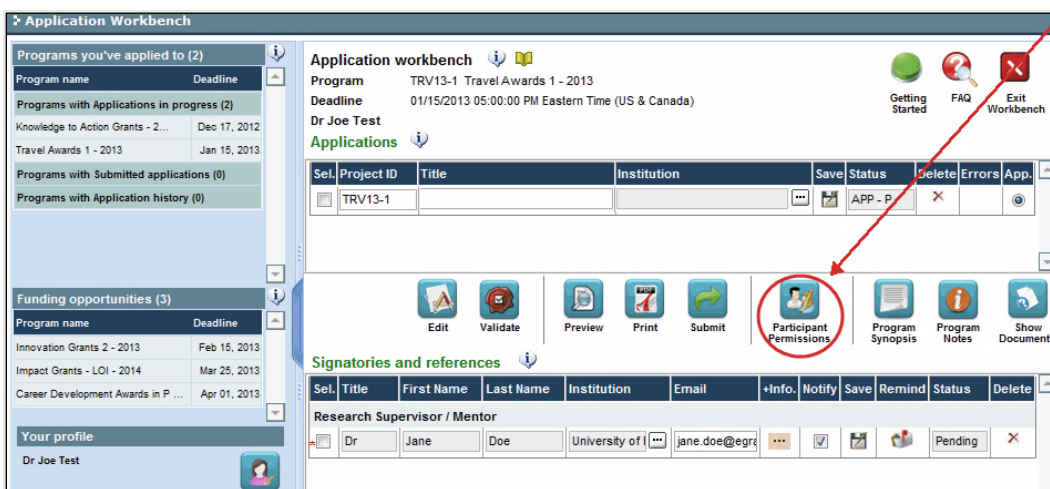
Follow the instructions below to give Co-PIs, Co-Applicants or Additional Authors access to your application, and set their permissions according to their role.

### Prerequisites for application access:

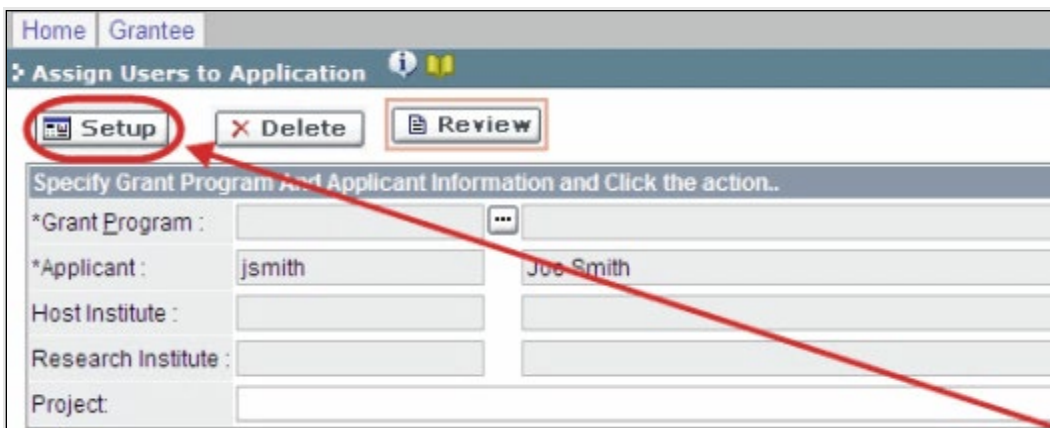
In order to complete this step, you must first ensure that your colleagues have active profiles within the system.





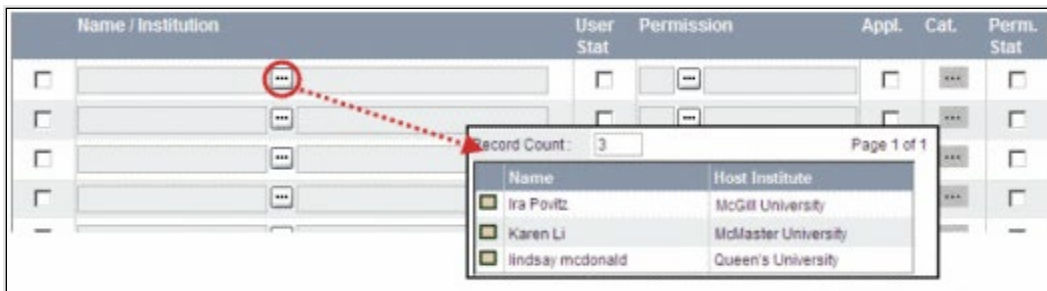
1. From the **Application workbench**, click the  button:




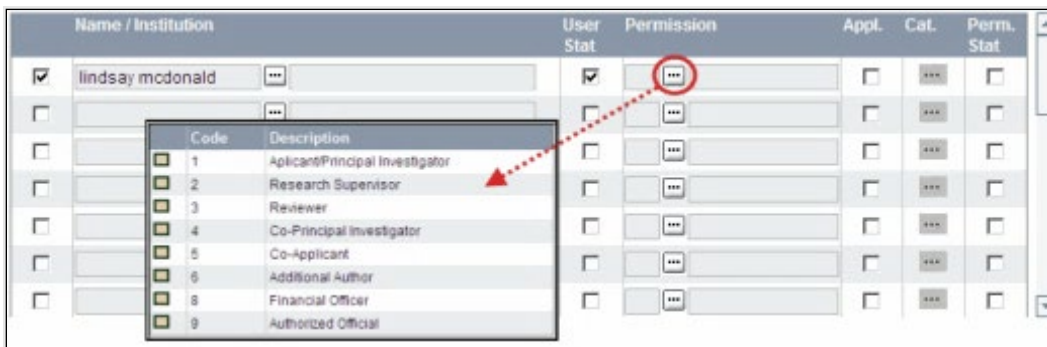
2. Click the **Setup** button:



- Use the  button to select your **Grant Program**. The rest of the fields will be auto-populated for you.
- Click **Find**.
- Use the  button to open the lookup box in the **Name/Institution** column.
  - All EGrAMS users you have entered on your application as [Participants](#) will be listed in the lookup box:




- For each participant, use the  button to open the lookup box in the **Permission** column and select the appropriate role:



- Click the checkbox in the **Appl.** column to activate the lookup box in the **Cat.** column (it will change from grey to orange):



- Use the  button to open the lookup box in the **Cat.** column and assign access permissions for each section of your application to the project team member.
  - Read** access means an applicant can view the content of that section but cannot make any changes to it.
  - Write** access means they are able to edit content in that section.
  - NA** means they will have no access to the content in that section.

**Section Category** Date: Jul-15-09

User Name: [ ]

Project: Joe Smith's test Research Grants application

Section	Section Description	Access
GEN	Background	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Read <input type="radio"/> Write <input type="radio"/> NA
BUS	Applicant Info	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Read <input type="radio"/> Write <input type="radio"/> NA
CERT	Certificates	<input type="radio"/> Read <input checked="" type="radio"/> Write <input type="radio"/> NA
SUM	Lay Summary	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Read <input type="radio"/> Write <input type="radio"/> NA
ABS	Abstract	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Read <input type="radio"/> Write <input type="radio"/> NA
PROP	Proposal	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Read <input type="radio"/> Write <input type="radio"/> NA

Buttons:

**This applicant has permission to edit (Write) the Certificates section, and permission to Read the other sections but make no changes to them**

Alternatively, **uncheck this box** to remove a participant's access to your application.

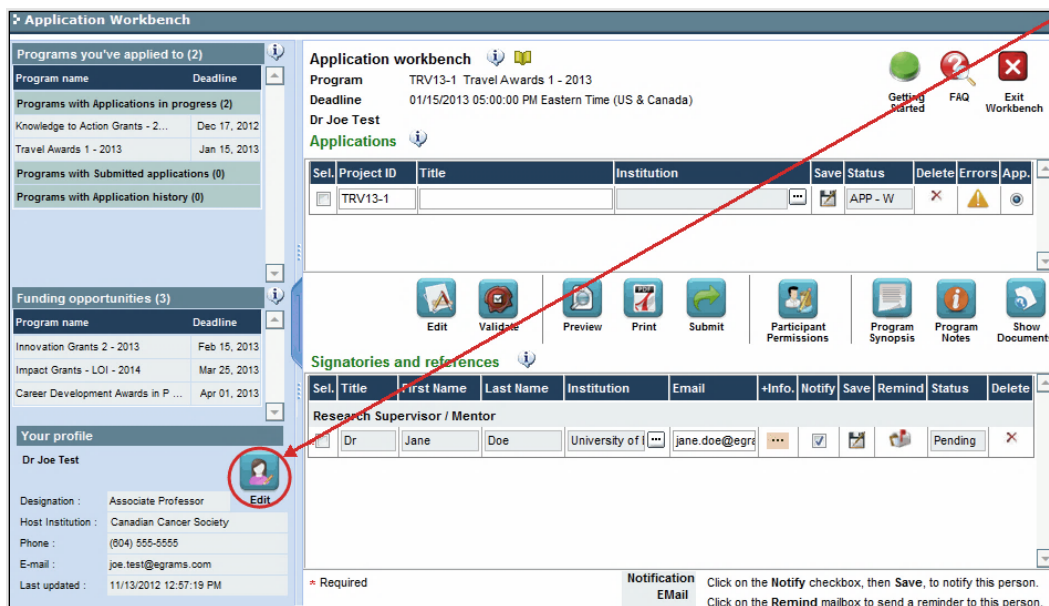
9. Click **OK** to save your entries.

Your colleagues will now be able to see and access your application when they log in to EGrAMS. Their access will be limited to the permissions and rights you have assigned to them.



## APPENDIX D: Update your profile

1. To update your profile, click the  button on the **Application workbench**.



**Application Workbench**

Programs you've applied to (2)

Program name	Deadline
Knowledge to Action Grants - 2...	Dec 17, 2012
Travel Awards 1 - 2013	Jan 15, 2013

Programs with Applications in progress (2)

Program name	Deadline
Innovation Grants 2 - 2013	Feb 15, 2013
Impact Grants - LOI - 2014	Mar 25, 2013
Career Development Awards in P...	Apr 01, 2013

Programs with Submitted applications (0)

Programs with Application history (0)

**Application workbench**

Program TRV13-1 Travel Awards 1 - 2013

Deadline 01/15/2013 05:00:00 PM Eastern Time (US & Canada)

Dr Joe Test

**Applications**

Sel.	Project ID	Title	Institution	Save	Status	Delete	Errors	App.
<input type="checkbox"/>	TRV13-1			...	APP - W	X	!	!

**Signatories and references**

Sel.	Title	First Name	Last Name	Institution	Email	+Info	Notify	Save	Remind	Status	Delete
<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Supervisor / Mentor	Dr	Jane	Doe	University of [...]	jane.doe@egrc	...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	!	Pending	X

**Your profile**

Dr Joe Test

Designation : Associate Professor

Host Institution : Canadian Cancer Society

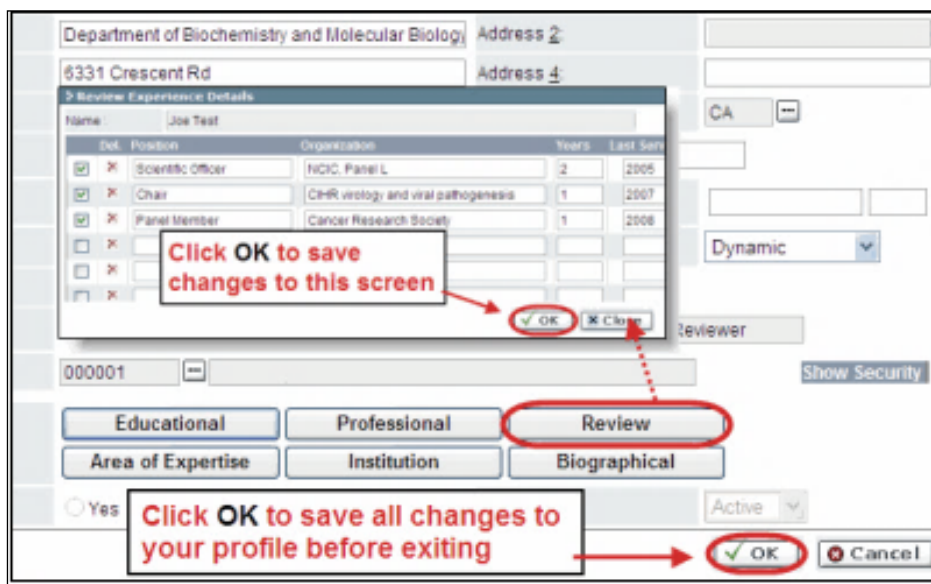
Phone : (604) 555-5555

E-mail : joe.test@egrams.com

Last updated : 11/13/2012 12:57:19 PM

**Notification EMail** Click on the Notify checkbox, then Save, to notify this person. Click on the Remind mailbox to send a reminder to this person.

2. Make changes as required. Consult [Interpreting Data Fields](#) for assistance.
3. Click **OK** at the bottom right corner of the screen to save your changes.



Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Address 2

6331 Crescent Rd Address 4

CA

**Review Experience Details**

Name: Joe Test

Def.	Position	Organization	Years	Last Seen
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Scientific Officer	NCIC, Panel L	2	2005
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chair	CIHR virology and viral pathogenesis	1	2007
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Panel Member	Cancer Research Society	1	2008
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				

Click OK to save changes to this screen

OK Close

000001

Dynamic

Reviewer

Show Security

Educational Professional **Review**

Area of Expertise Institution Biographical

Yes

Click OK to save all changes to your profile before exiting

Active

OK Cancel



**Saving changes to Additional Details screens:**


If you are updating the information contained in the Additional Details screens (e.g. Educational, Professional, Review, etc.), you must save the changes by clicking OK on both the Additional Details screen and then again on the main user profile page.

If you click OK on the former but not the latter, your changes will be lost.

**Interpreting the data fields:**

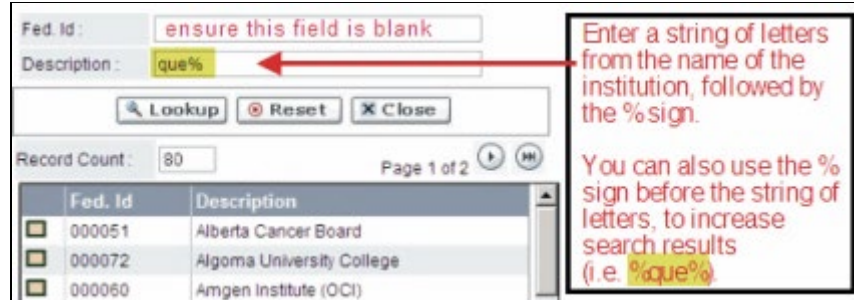
**Login Name:** Use your first initial and last name. If the system indicates this username already exists, try adding your middle initial or a number, i.e. JASmith or JSmith2

**Display Name:** This field will be auto-populated using the first initial from the First Name field and whatever you have entered in the Last Name field. However, you can change it if you wish.

**Institution:** Click on the  button, and select the name of your current research institution.

**\*\* If you do not see your institution listed in the dialogue box, contact egrams@cancer.ca. Include “EGrAMS institution set-up” in the subject line.**

To search for your institution: use the % sign as a wildcard in the Description field:



**Department:** Indicate your department or faculty/division (e.g. “Dept. of Immunology” or “Faculty of Nursing” where there is no department).

**Address Line 1-4:** Use these lines to indicate your street address. Indicate your campus, building, floor/room number, centre or laboratory as appropriate.

**Country:** Click on the  button for a list of country codes.

**City:** Enter your city.

**Province:** Click on the  button for a list of province codes.

**Postal Code:** Enter your entire postal code in the first box.



**Menu Style:** This category defaults to the “Dynamic” style. If you wish to change how EGrAMS displays menus along the top of your screen, you can change this field to “Drop Down List”.

**Designation:** This field is mandatory.

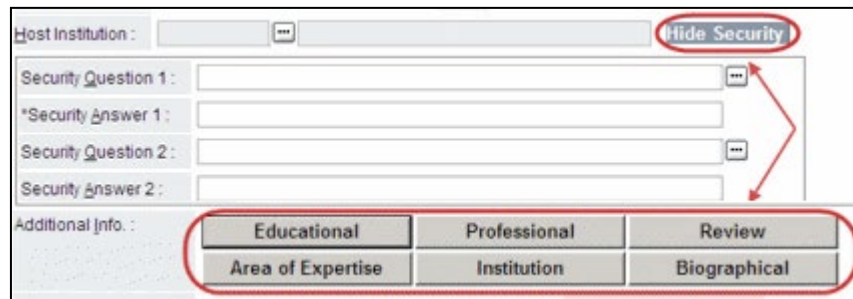
**Role:** Click on the  button, and select your role within the EGrAMS system:

- **Grantee** is a person applying for funding.
- **Reviewer** is a panel member who evaluates applications and awards funding.
- **Grantee/Reviewer** is a person who occupies both descriptions.

**Show Security:** Click on this button to expand the form, and add at least one **security question** in the event you forget your password.

To add a security question, click on the  button and choose from a list of questions, then enter your answer in the corresponding **security answer** field below.

Once completed, you can click the **Hide Security** button to display the Additional Info buttons below.



The screenshot shows a web form with the following elements:

- Host Institution:** A text input field with a dropdown arrow button.
- Hide Security:** A button circled in red, with a red arrow pointing to the Security Question fields.
- Security Question 1:** A text input field with a dropdown arrow button.
- \*Security Answer 1:** A text input field.
- Security Question 2:** A text input field with a dropdown arrow button.
- Security Answer 2:** A text input field.
- Additional Info:** A section containing six buttons arranged in a 2x3 grid:
  - Row 1: Educational, Professional, Review
  - Row 2: Area of Expertise, Institution, BiographicalThe entire grid is circled in red.



## APPENDIX E: Guidance document for CCS RTA applicant referees

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Applicants to the Canadian Cancer Society's [Research Trainee Award](#) competition require one letter of reference from the direct supervisor and a statement or video from a community member / patient / caregiver as part of their full application.

Letters must be received no later than **August 14, 2023** (5:00 p.m. Eastern) in order for the application to be considered. Please note that applicants cannot view reference letters attached to their submission.

The letter of reference must be 1-2 pages in length, in PDF format, presented on official letterhead, dated and signed. Referees are to include a brief description of their credentials as well as their professional relationship with the applicant.

The reference letter from the **supervisor** should detail the following:

- responsibilities of the supervisor (i.e., how the supervisor will foster growth)
- how the training environment is supportive of learning and success including equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) principles and practices applied by the supervisor and in the training environment
- any perceived barriers and mitigating strategies to the success of the applicant's project and program
- their overall assessment of the applicant's suitability for the award

The **statement / video from the community member / patient / caregiver** should be from an individual with insight into the trainee's connection to community or community role, or research (i.e., from the community they self-identify with; a patient partner on their research team or who is directly impacted, etc.). This is not a formal reference letter but an opportunity for someone outside of academia to describe the applicant. If submitting a statement in writing, it is expected to be approximately 1 page in length. If submitting a video, the link to the video should be placed into a PDF and the PDF uploaded.

The community member / patient / caregiver will be asked to answer the following questions in their statement:

- What is your role in community or connection to the applicant's research?
- What is the applicant's role in or connection to community? (If applicable)
- From your experience with the applicant, what potential impact do you think their research may have on patients, caregivers, or community?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?
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### Best Practices for Writing Letters of Reference

Multiple studies have revealed notable differences in the language used by referees in letters of recommendation depending on the subject's gender. For example, several research groups that compared letters written for male and female applicants found that those written for females were shorter and included 'communal' and 'grindstone' terminologies describing character (e.g. selfless, helpful, warm) and effort (e.g. tireless, diligent, committed), respectively. Conversely, letters written for males were generally longer, emphasized achievements and included 'standout' and 'agentic' descriptors associated with leadership and power (e.g. outstanding,



excellent, independent, daring, intelligent) <sup>1,2,3,6,8</sup>. Similarly, albeit less studied, several groups have reported that the subject's race can influence the choice of words and tone used by referees when drafting letters, with fewer agentic terminologies used when describing individuals belonging to minority groups, despite similar credentials with non-minority applicants <sup>1,4,5</sup>. Collectively, these studies attributed the differences observed to implicit biases that can positively and negatively affect an individual's perceptions, behaviours and decisions in an unconscious manner.

Implicit bias is the unconscious association of attributes and stereotypes to people based on characteristics such as race, age, education, ability/disability, religion, socioeconomic status, and appearance. These biases are developed over time through exposure to social norms and expectations. As previously reported<sup>9</sup>, the effects of unconscious bias can negatively impact an applicant's overall success in obtaining research funding and reinforce further inequities in academia. It is, therefore, imperative to recognize when opportunities for bias occur and be vigilant in minimizing them.

Below, we offer best practices and resources from various sources<sup>1-8</sup> for referees to carefully consider when drafting their letters of recommendation:

- Focus comments on the applicant's research skills and academic achievements rather than their interpersonal attributes. Address the points requested and exclude personal information not relevant to the application.
- Carefully consider the choice of words, tone and length of the letter and whether they would differ depending on the subject's demographics. Consider whether the same descriptors would be used for another applicant with equivalent credentials, but of a different demographic background.
- Refer to the applicant's formal title and surname rather than their first name.
- Avoid using language that could unintentionally raise doubt (e.g. hedges, ambiguous comments, faint praises, potentially negative language, and irrelevancies). Provide concrete examples, when applicable.

Additional resources:

- CIHR Unconscious Bias Training: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/lms/e/bias/>
- Harvard Implicit Association Test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- Gender bias calculator: <http://slowe.github.io/genderbias/>
- The University of Arizona Commission on the Status of Women: Avoiding gender bias in reference writing: [https://csw.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/avoiding\\_gender\\_bias\\_in\\_letter\\_of\\_reference\\_writing.pdf](https://csw.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/avoiding_gender_bias_in_letter_of_reference_writing.pdf)
- Earth Science Women's Network: Guide to avoid racial bias in reference letter writing: <https://eswnonline.org/guide-to-avoid-racial-bias-in-reference-letter-writing/>

References:

1. Akos, P. & Kretchmar, J. *Gender and Ethnic bias in Letters of Recommendation: Considerations for School Counselors*. Professional School Counseling. (2016).



2. Dutt, K., et al. *Gender differences in recommendation letters for postdoctoral fellowships in geoscience*. *Nature Geoscience*. (2016).
3. Filippou, P., et al. *The Presence of Gender Bias in Letters of Recommendations Written for Urology Applicants*. *Urology*. (2019).
4. Grimm, L., et al. *Gender and Racial Bias in Radiology Residency Letters of Recommendation*. *Journal of the American College of Radiology*. (2020).
5. Houser, G. & Lemmons, K. *Implicit bias in letters of recommendation for an undergraduate research internship*. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*. (2018).
6. Madera, J. et al. *Gender and letters of recommendation for academia: agentic and communal differences*. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. (2009).
7. Schmader, T. et al. *A Linguistic Comparison of Letters of Recommendation for Male and Female Chemistry and Biochemistry Job Applicants*. *Sex Roles*. (2007).
8. Trix, F. & Psenka, C. *Exploring the color of glass: Letters of recommendation for female and male medical faculty*. *Discourse & Society*. (2003).
9. Witteman, H. et al. *Are gender gaps due to evaluations of the applicant or the science? A natural experiment at a national funding agency*. *The Lancet*. (2019).

### Instructions on submitting letters of reference

Access the website link included in your email notification. This page will be displayed:

Applicant : Joe Test      Program : Emerging Scholar Awards - 2021  
 Application : Emerging Scholar Awards test application      [Show Documents](#)

Reference Letters

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45. \*Reference letter     

Attachment Title	File Name	View	Del
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joe_Smith_Jane_Doe_reference	<input type="button" value="Choose File"/> Joe_Smith_J...ference.pdf	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. Click **Choose File** to upload your letter.
2. In the **Attachment Title** field, provide a title for the letter you are uploading. Use the following naming convention: applicant-name\_your-name\_reference e.g. *joe-smith\_jane-doe\_reference*
3. Click the **Save** button

Best practice tip: Check that your letter has been uploaded.

To confirm that your letter has been successfully uploaded, click the paperclip:

45. \*Reference letter     

Attachment Title	File Name	View	Del
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joe_Smith_Jane_Doe_reference	<input type="button" value="Choose File"/> No file chosen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Troubleshooting tip: URL does not work.



If the website address included in your email is not taking you to the page shown in the illustration above, this may be due to the URL being broken into two lines in your email display. Ensure that you are copying the complete website link into your browser.

If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact [research@cancer.ca](mailto:research@cancer.ca).

