



## Reviewers Resource

Canadian Cancer Society

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Version 1



Canadian  
Cancer  
Society

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# 1. The Funders

## The Canadian Cancer Society (CCS)

The Canadian Cancer Society is the only national charity that supports Canadians with all cancers in communities across the country.

Our vision is to champion world leading outcomes in cancer prevention, treatment and support. We fund ground-breaking research, provide trusted information about cancer, offer programs and services to help people with cancer and their families cope, and advocate to governments for important social change to make healthy living easier.

CCS has been funding cancer research since 1947 and is today the largest national charitable funder of cancer research in Canada. In 2022, we invested almost \$50.1 million in cancer research and innovation programs from coast to coast. Through our research, we aim to reduce the burden of cancer by better preventing, detecting, and treating the disease so that fewer people will get cancer and more people with cancer can live longer, fuller lives.

In 2023, CCS Research launched a new strategy. With our guiding principles and unique position in the Canadian cancer research ecosystem, we aim to transform research to have maximum impact. To do this, we will enable more research, faster – making measurable progress toward 4 long-term goals.

- Goal 1 : Prevent – reduce risk so fewer people in Canada will develop cancer
- Goal 2: Detect – fewer people will be diagnosed with Stage 3 or Stage 4 cancer
- Goal 3: Care – people with cancer will live longer and with improved quality of life during and after treatment
- Goal 4: Champion – equitable and timely access to innovative and affordable high quality care for more people in Canada

We are a collective of people united by the same goals. Our collective includes people with cancer, their families, friends and healthcare teams, donors, scientists, advocates, CCS staff and volunteers. We couldn't do what we do, including funding game-changing cancer research, without all of these committed individuals and partner organizations. Together, we are a force-for-life in the face of cancer.

For more information on CCS and the support system we offer, visit <https://cancer.ca/en/>.

For more information on research funding opportunities, visit <https://cancer.ca/en/research/for-researchers/funding-opportunities>.

## 2. Patient, Survivor and Caregiver Engagement in Reviews

From 1996 to 2018, CCS conducted a Community Representative program to demonstrate accountability for our research funding decisions. This program engaged volunteers from across the country who were connected to CCS in some way (staff, board members, long-time volunteers) to participate in the peer review process as lay members of the panel. Feedback from Community Representatives was captured during the review panel meeting and shared with applicants along with reviewer comments after funding decisions were made.

One of CCS's key approaches in our [Research Strategy](#) is systematic and meaningful patient engagement throughout research and research funding. Patients, survivors, thrivers, and caregivers (collectively called 'patients' here) ensure that we are funding the most promising cancer research that is relevant to and will impact the lives of people affected by and at risk of cancer.

We expanded our Community Representative program in 2019, now termed the [Patient/Survivor/Caregiver Reviewer Program](#), to meaningfully engage people with lived experience of cancer in reviewing research and contributing to research funding decisions.

People with lived experience of cancer bring with them expertise of the cancer journey as a patient, survivor, or a caregiver of an individual with cancer. PSC reviewers are also not expected to speak for all people affected by cancer but are asked to represent the views of the larger patient population based on their experience and should consider all applications equally regardless of their specific cancer interest. Compensation is provided to patient partners based on CCS' [Patient Partner Compensation Policy](#).



**The review process starts with recruiting reviewers.** CCS research staff, funding partners, ACOR and/or previous Chairs may identify potential panel Chairs. After recruitment of Chairs for a panel, CCS Research staff work closely with the Chairs to identify highly qualified scientists, PSC reviewers, and (if applicable) end-users to participate on the panel as expert reviewers. Recruiting all the members of the panels can take several months.

Panel members are then polled to indicate their expertise on (and conflicts with) each application. For most research competitions, 3-4 reviewers are assigned to review each application in depth. External reviewers might also be required to provide a written report and participate in the panel discussion when expertise on the panel is limited.

**Conflicts of interest** are declared prior to reviewer assignment to ensure that you are not connected to the applicants on a grant you're assigned to review. This is to reduce potential bias in your assessment. Key members of the research team will be listed in EGrAMS for your review. If a research team member is known to you in certain ways, you may be in conflict with this individual and the grant application. If you have any questions about potential conflicts during the declaration process, please contact CCS research staff for clarification. Examples of conflicts of interest:

- you have collaborated or worked closely with a listed research team member in the past
- you (or your family member) are or have been a patient/ study participant of a listed research team member
- you are friends or family of a participant on the research team

**Unconscious bias** is the unknowing or unintentional association of attributes and stereotypes to people based on characteristics such as race, age, education, ability or disability, religion, socioeconomic status and appearance. It has been well-documented that the effects of unconscious bias can negatively impact an applicant's overall success in obtaining research funding and reinforce further inequities in academia. CCS, as described in our [Research Inclusive Excellence Action plan](#), is committed to addressing and mitigating the effects of unconscious bias in our research programs as well as in our expert review process. All panel members are required to complete the [CIHR Unconscious Bias Training Module](#). The interactive module addresses gender biases in peer review, as well as biases related to language, culture, age and institution.

**Involvement of CCS mission staff** on a research grant does not represent endorsement of an application by CCS as an organization, nor should it unduly influence a reviewer's assessment of the application (either positively or negatively). Reviewers should take care to consider potential bias in the review of applications involving CCS employees and take steps to mitigate this being aware of the potential for bias in this situation – ask yourself whether you are inclined to pre-judge the application based on whether or not a CCS employee is involved; apply the criteria consistently to all applications to which you have been assigned; revisit your review and preliminary score to ensure that bias is absent from your evaluation.

**You must have access to a computer** during the panel meeting to access the applications, reviews and to enter your scores in EGrAMS. We strongly encourage you to turn on your video when possible for a more engaging meeting, but encourage breaks when needed to help with Zoom fatigue. If you choose to print any part of an application, please ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

**Applications that are less competitive** (i.e., those that received scores of less than 3.5 by the assigned reviewers) will be identified for triage (no discussion). The scores of the assigned reviewers will be recorded in EGrAMS (with no other panel members scoring). This requires full agreement from the panel that the application will not be discussed. An applicant whose application has been triaged will receive the reviewer reports and will be provided with a scoring range (both Research Rating and Relevance and Potential Impact scores) for their application but will not receive a Scientific Officer report.

## 4. Resources

### Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:

- How to integrate sex and gender into research (CIHR) ([EN](#) / [FR](#))
- Assessing sex and gender in peer review (video) (CIHR) ([EN only](#))
- Key considerations for the appropriate integration of sex and gender in research (CIHR) ([EN](#) / [FR](#))
- Sex and gender training modules (CIHR) ([EN](#) / [FR](#))
- EDI in the research environment (CIHR) ([EN](#) / [FR](#))
- Fulfilling Lives: A Trauma-Informed Social Research Practical Guide ([EN](#) only)
- Patient Engagement Training for Researchers and Patient Partners online modules (CIHR) ([EN](#) / [FR](#))
- CIHR's definition of Indigenous Health Research and Meaningful and Culturally Safe Health Research ([EN/FR](#))
- Resources for engaging patients (CTO) ([EN](#) / [FR](#))

### Data Governance:

- First Nations Principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) ([EN](#) / [FR](#))
- CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance ([EN only](#))

### Compensation:

- Patient Partner Compensation Policy and Procedures (CCS) ([EN](#) / [FR](#))
- Patient Partner Compensation Guidelines (CIHR) ([EN](#) / [FR](#))

### Glossaries and Knowledge:

- Understanding research ([EN](#) / [FR](#))
- Scientific glossary for research review (CCS) ([EN only](#))
- Cancer information glossary (CCS) ([EN](#) / [FR](#))
- Cancer information (CCS) ([EN](#) / [FR](#))

# Appendix 1. Tipsheet: EGrAMS

## How to:

- [access/activate](#) your EGrAMS account
- [access](#) applications for review
- [navigate](#) through an application
- access and complete a [report](#)

## Accessing or activating your EGrAMS account the first time

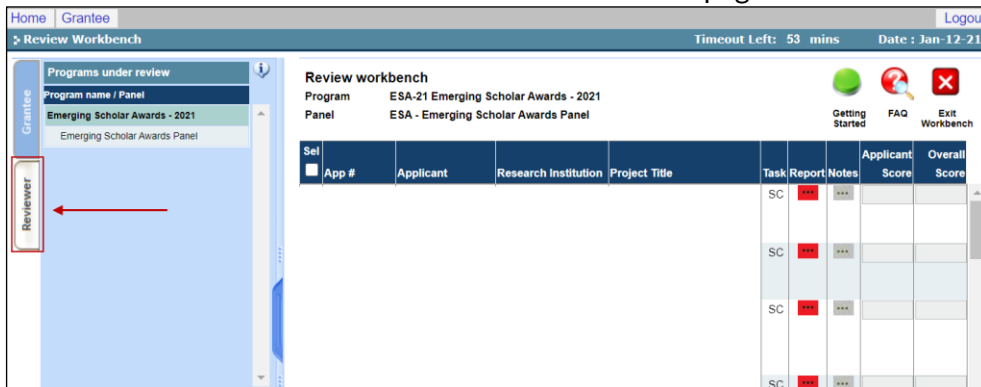
1. Go to <https://applyforfunds.cancer.ca>
2. Use the 'EGrAMS Forgot Password' option from the login page.
3. Enter the User Name we have assigned to you --- e.g. « JDoe » --- and press the Enter key.
4. Enter your 6 digit PIN (or other answer/s) --- e.g « 999999 » --- in the Security Answer 1 field.
5. Enter your new password in each of the two fields provided.
6. Press OK.

## Accessing applications for review in [EGrAMS](#)

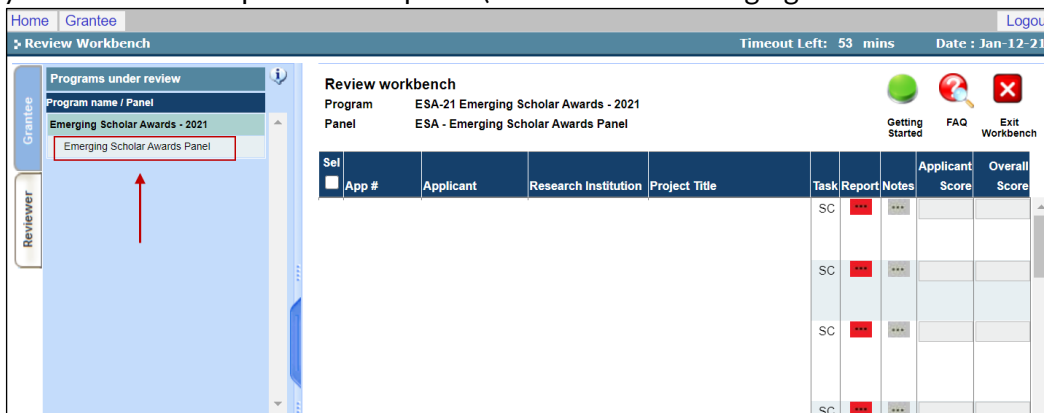
For Grantee/Reviewer, follow steps 1-4 outlined below.

For Reviewer, follow steps 2-4 outlined below.

Click on the Reviewer tab on the left-hand side of this page:



Click on the panel name in the “Programs under review” pane on the left-hand side of the page – select your research competition and panel (seen below as Emerging Scholar Awards Panel):

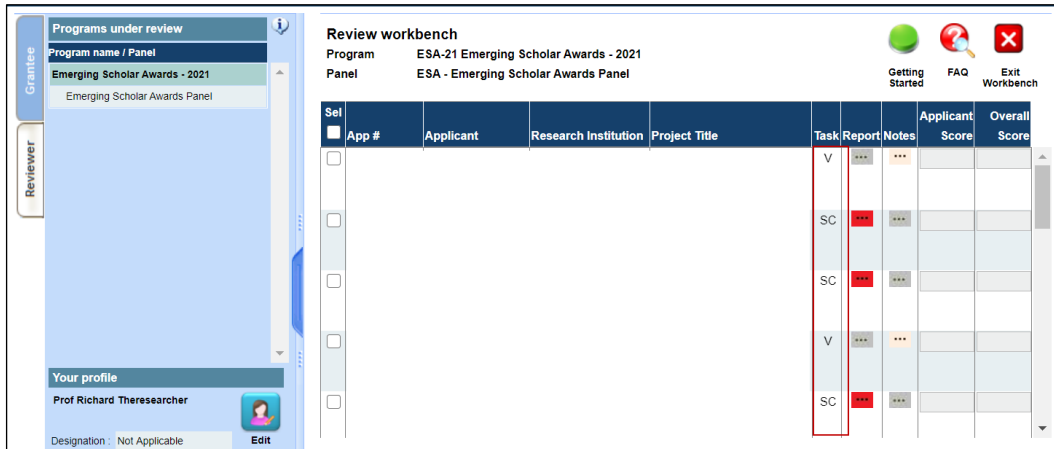




**Applications are sorted by Task using the following codes:**

**SC / P / S / T / E:** patient/survivor/caregiver, primarily scientific, secondary scientific, tertiary, external scientific reviewer assignments - these applications are assigned to you for review. You are asked to read the application and submit a written report containing your preliminary scores.

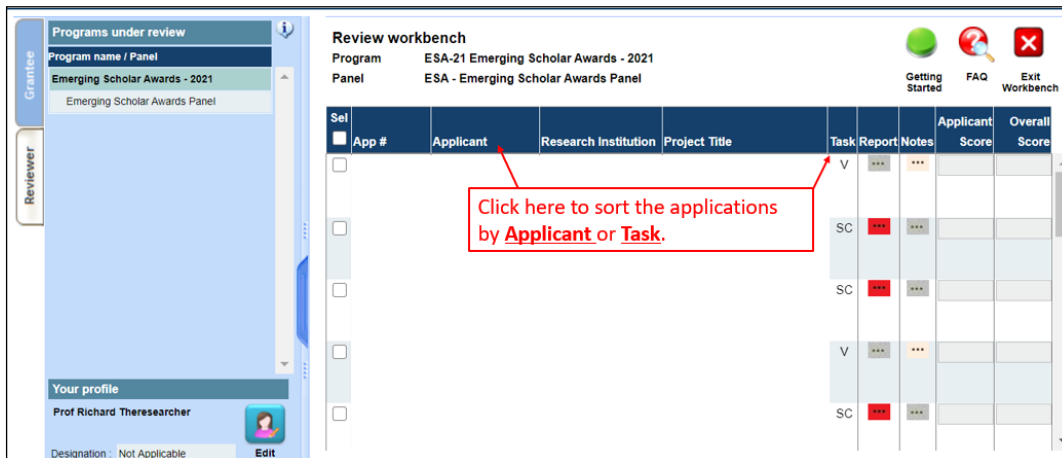
**V:** view only access – these applications are available to you to read/skim through. You are not required to submit a written report.




**Note:**

Applications you have declared conflicts with will not appear in the list.

You can sort the applications by Applicant Name or Task by clicking on the respective column headers.



To access an application online, click the Project Title. To download an application to PDF, select the application(s) by clicking on the box under the Sel column, and click the  button:

App #	Applicant	Research Institution	Project Title	Task	Report	Notes	Overall Score
<input type="checkbox"/> 702677	Bauswell, Lourdes	Queen's University	Improve knowledge and develop new treatments	P	...	...	
<input type="checkbox"/> 702684	Rau...	of Windsor	Improved treatment	P	...	...	
<input type="checkbox"/> 702686	Bres...	University	Early detection of cancer	S	...	...	
<input type="checkbox"/> 702680	Edm...	for Disease	Cancer prevention research	R	...	...	
<input type="checkbox"/> 702678	Begin, Laurena	Lawson Research Institute (London)	New genes involved in	V	...	...	
<input type="checkbox"/> 702679	Branin, Gianna	Alberta Children's Hospital					
<input type="checkbox"/> 702681	Kramarczyk, Queenie	University of Saskatchewan	cancer				
<input type="checkbox"/> 702682	Marcille, Huey	Edmonton General	Immunotherapy research	V	...	...	

Max Score: 5.00 Priority: 0.00 Fundable:

Download Applications Print Reports Save Scores

Click on the Project Title to access the application

To download multiple applications at once, select the application(s) and then click the button

### Navigating through the application online

Review the application page-by-page by using the forward and backward arrows:

Face Sheet Review

Applicant: [ ] Program: Travel Awards 1 - 2013

Project Title: Project Title

Stage - RVW / W Page 1

1. Applicant Information

Advance one page at a time

Jump to specific pages in the application by using the application index tree:

Section Application Review

Applicant: Joe Test Program: Research Grants

Stage-RVWW

14. Scientific Abstract

- Background
- Applicant Info
- Certificates
- Lay Summary
- Abstract
  - Scientific Abstract
  - Keywords/Technical T
- Proposal
- Budget
  - Budget Request
  - Budget Summary
- Other Funding
- Review Panel

Grey highlighting indicates current page

Click the + symbol to expand list of pages within a section

Click a page link to go straight to that page

If you prefer, you can generate to view or download a PDF of the application to print for hard-copy review. If PDFs are printed or saved, please ensure confidentiality of all applications:

- Select only the pages you need as the whole application, including appendices, will be printed unless you specify otherwise (this could be several hundred pages).



**Troubleshooting tip: PDF generation**

If your system is not producing a new window with a PDF of the application, ensure your browser's pop-up blocker is either turned off, or set to allow pop-ups from this site.

**Writing reports / notes**

To access the reporting template, click the Report column for the application(s) you are assigned. Reports you have yet to complete are indicated in red (and labelled as SC). Once you submit your reports, the box will change to orange.

Sel	App #	Applicant	Research Institution	Project Title	Task	Report	Notes	Applicant Score	Overall Score
<input type="checkbox"/>					SC	...	...		
<input type="checkbox"/>					SC	...	...		
<input type="checkbox"/>					SC	...	...		

1. Provide your feedback for each section:



The screenshot shows a web-based review form. At the top, under the heading "Scores :", there are two input fields: "Scientific Merit :" and "Relevance & Potential Impact :". Below this is a section titled "Patient/Survivor/Caregiver Reviewer Report". It contains two text entry areas. The first is for "Research Strategy strengths and weaknesses (refer to the PSC Reviewer Orientation Manual for additional guidance). This section will be shared with the applicant as part of the report.\*". The second is for "Team Composition & Environment strengths and weaknesses (refer to PSC Reviewer Orientation Manual for additional guidance). This section will be shared with the applicant as part of the report.\*".

2. You will also provide your preliminary scores before exiting.

- The scores you enter as part of your report are preliminary. You can change them during the meeting after discussion ensues.

This is a second screenshot of the same review form interface, showing the "Scores :" section with "Scientific Merit :" and "Relevance & Potential Impact :" input fields, and the "Patient/Survivor/Caregiver Reviewer Report" section with text entry areas for research strategy and team composition feedback.

**Save vs. Submit buttons**

If you are unable to finish writing your report in one session, click the  button to **save** your work and return to this screen later. When you are finished writing your report, click the  button to submit your work. Please note that you can edit your reports after the meeting.

**Scores :**


Scientific Merit :       Relevance & Potential Impact :


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**Patient/Survivor/Caregiver Reviewer Report**


Research Strategy strengths and weaknesses (refer to the PSC Reviewer Orientation Manual for additional guidance). This section will be shared with the applicant as part of the report.\*

Team Composition & Environment strengths and weaknesses (refer to PSC Reviewer Orientation Manual for additional guidance). This section will be shared with the applicant as part of the report.\*


  
 Save Draft




  
 Print Report

  
 Submit Report

  
 Exit

**WARNING: Clicking “Submit Report”**

Once you click , you will no longer be able to add to or edit the comments of your report.

3. If Errors are found, click the  button for information about the errors.
4. To generate a PDF of your report, click the  button. If PDFs are printed or saved, please ensure confidentiality of all applications
5. Once you've validated all errors, click the  button.

**Scores :**

Scientific Merit :

Relevance & Potential Impact :

**Patient/Survivor/Caregiver Reviewer Report**

**Research Strategy strengths and weaknesses (refer to the PSC Reviewer Orientation Manual for additional guidance). This section will be shared with the applicant as part of the report.\***

**Team Composition & Environment strengths and weaknesses (refer to PSC Reviewer Orientation Manual for additional guidance). This section will be shared with the applicant as part of the report.\***



Save Draft



Print Report



View Errors



Submit Report



Exit

## Appendix 2. Frequently Asked Questions

### ***Why can't I access the applications and the reports?***

A preview of the applications and the report template are generated in a pop-up window. Please ensure pop-ups are enabled for the site before clicking on the Project Title to access the application or clicking on the icon in the Report column to access the report template.

### ***How can I download the applications?***

Select the application that you want to download by checking the associated box under the 'Sel' column. To select all applications at once, click on the box in the 'Sel' column header. After you've made your selection, click on the 'Download Applications' icon found at the bottom of the review workbench window. This will generate a zip file containing a PDF of each selected application.

### ***Why does the application download time out?***

Depending on the number of applications and the number of pages in each application, the download might take longer than usual, or it might time out. Try selecting fewer applications by narrowing the selection down to the applications that you have been assigned to review.

### ***How can I tell which applications I'm assigned to review?***

To easily identify the applications assigned to you to review, click on the 'task' header and the list of applications will be sorted according to task. The assignments are organized according to the following:

- **'SC' (survivor/caregiver); 'P' (primary scientific); 'S' (secondary scientific); 'T' (tertiary scientific) reviewer assignments** You are asked to submit a written report and preliminary scores.
- **'V' stands for View only.** You have access to these applications but are not assigned as a reviewer (not required to submit a written report).

### ***How can I tell if all of my reviewer assignments are completed?***

If you have outstanding reports to complete, the box next to that application under the Reports column will be red. If you have submitted your report, the box will be orange. Orange icons will also be displayed where there are reports submitted for the applications you are not assigned to review.

### ***Can I add notes to applications where I am not assigned?***

Yes, you can use the icon under the Notes column to add notes for applications where no report is due - for example, if you have view only access. These notes are not viewable by other panel members and will not be provided to the applicants.

### ***I made an error when I submitted my review. Can I edit my report/scores?***

Please email Morgane Morabito (morgane.morabito@cancer.ca) with changes you would like to make to your report prior to the panel meeting. Edits can also be made to reviewer reports following the panel meeting. It might also be helpful to draft your report in a Word document first prior to entering your comments in EGrAMS.

## Appendix 3. Panel Meeting Overview Infographic



# PANEL MEETING OVERVIEW



Canadian Cancer Society / Société canadienne du cancer



## STEP 1

Before the meeting, reviewers review and score each proposal they are assigned to. Proposals are then organized for the panel meeting based on factors such as scoring and conflicts of interest. Some proposals will be triaged, meaning only reviewer reports are sent to these applicants and the proposal is not discussed further.

PC CCS

### PANEL MEMBERS

PC Panel Chair

SR Scientific Reviewer

PSC Patient, Survivor & Caregiver Reviewer

SO Scientific Officer

CCS Canadian Cancer Society Staff

ER End-User/Decision Maker Reviewer

OB Observer

\*Note: Observers do not actively participate in the panel

## STEP 2

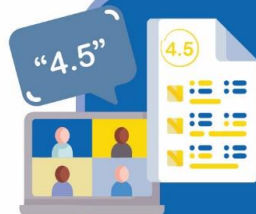
At the start of the meeting, the panel Chair, reviewers, and other participants are introduced. The Chair announces the research proposals for review. Reviewers can ask to discuss proposals that have been triaged and these are added to the meeting discussion.

PC SR PSC SO CCS ER

## STEP 3

Time to review research proposals! Each proposal being discussed is introduced by the Chair and reviewers with a conflict of interest specific to that proposal are asked to leave the room. In virtual meetings, they are placed into a virtual waiting room.


PC SR PSC ER



## STEP 4

The Scientific Officer and reviewers assigned to the proposal are announced, and reviewers give their initial score. Reviewers use a standardized rating scale to score proposals on different criteria with a total score out of 5. For example, criteria may include: potential impact on cancer, or scientific merit.


SR PSC SO ER



**STEP 5**

The primary reviewer provides a 30-second summary of the research proposal being discussed.


SR



**STEP 6**

Reviewers then each provide their assessment. For instance, the PSC Reviewer may provide their review of the proposal followed by the Scientific Reviewers and in some cases End-User/Decision-Maker Reviewers.

SR PSC ER



**STEP 7**

The research proposal is open for general discussion. This is a chance for reviewers not assigned to the proposal to weigh in with comments.


SR PSC ER



**STEP 8**

After the discussion, the Scientific Officer reviews their notes with everyone to make sure the discussion is captured accurately.


SO



**STEP 9**

The Chair asks reviewers assigned to the proposal to provide a final score. A reviewer may increase, decrease, or keep their original score depending on the discussion. The final scores are used to calculate an average and a range that the rest of the reviewers use as guidance when scoring the proposal. All reviewers score.

PC SR PSC ER



**STEP 10**

After proposal discussion and final scoring, budget is discussed for proposals with an average score >3.5. When this is completed, those with conflicts of interest return to the room and the Chair announces the next proposal for review. Steps 3 - 10 are then repeated!

PC

## Appendix 4. Research Review Process Infographic



5

Reviewers consider the incorporation of equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout the research proposal.

Reviewers attend a panel meeting to collectively discuss and review research proposals and rank them for funding. A Scientific Officer records the discussion and a Chair helps direct the entire panel meeting.

6



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Ahead of the panel meeting, proposals that are less competitive are identified for triage, meaning only reviewer reports are sent to these applicants and the proposal is not discussed further.

At the panel meeting, the rest of the proposals are discussed and scored. (For more on how research proposals are discussed and scored, see the Panel Meeting Infographic.)

8



9

Reviewers rank order proposals to indicate "Priority" and "Fundable" funding lines. The Chair of the panel review meeting collates all these rankings and presents the information to the Advisory Council on Research, who make recommendations on how many and which proposals to fund.