



Chronic Pain Centre of Excellence for Canadian Veterans: Research Administration Guide

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Part 1: About the CPCoE

The Chronic Pain Centre of Excellence for Canadian Veterans (CPCoE) was established to support research and help improve the well-being of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Veterans and their families living with chronic pain. Funded by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), the independent, charitable organization was designed and launched by McMaster University and Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation (HHSC) on April 1, 2020.

Background

The VAC Life After Service Studies (LASS), conducted in coordination between VAC, the Department of National Defence (DND), and Statistics Canada, were designed to enhance understanding of the transition from military to civilian life and ultimately improve the health and well-being of Veterans in Canada. Amongst other findings, the LASS 2016 survey found that **Veterans in the sample group were twice as likely to have chronic pain compared to the Canadian population¹**. These findings led to the establishment of the CPCoE to help address the challenges posed by chronic pain for Veterans. Subsequent iterations of the LASS have identified growing self-reported rates of chronic pain amongst Canadian Veterans².

Operations

The CPCoE works as a research centre to improve the understanding of Veteran-specific chronic pain and how best to manage it. Research priorities and aims are established by Veterans. The findings and recommendations of the ensuing evidence are mobilized to help Veterans and their families manage their pain and improve their well-being.

Process

The CPCoE develops its funding opportunities through a priority setting process adapted from the [James Lind Alliance](#). This priority setting model ensures that all research undertaken by the CPCoE is informed by Veterans living with chronic pain, and their family members.

The process begins with the CPCoE soliciting issues of relevance from Veterans, their families, healthcare professionals, researchers, and other stakeholders. The submitted issues are then examined against the current evidence landscape, including previous research enabled by the CPCoE³, to establish research uncertainties. These uncertainties are then prioritized by the CPCoE's Advisory Council for Veterans (ACV) in a priority setting meeting.

The resulting priorities are developed into funding opportunities featured in the CPCoE's annual funding competition. Applications are adjudicated by the CPCoE's Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), which is composed of Canadian and international experts in Veterans' health research. The CPCoE then contracts funding to awarded recipients.

¹ VanTil LD, Sweet J, Poirier A, McKinnon K, Sudom K, Dursun S, Pedlar D. Well-Being of Canadian Regular Force Veterans, Findings from LASS 2016 Survey. Charlottetown (PE): Veterans Affairs Canada Research Directorate, Technical Report: June 23, 2017.

² Sweet J, Poirier A, Pound T, Van Til LD, Well-Being of Canadian Regular Force Veterans, Findings from LASS 2019 Survey. Charlottetown PE: Veterans Affairs Canada. Research Directorate Technical Report, 09 Oct 2020.

³ Qureshi, A.R., Mankanjuola, O., Neumark, S., Garas, A., Wang, L. & Busse, J. W. (2022). Research Priorities Among Canadian Military Veterans Living with Chronic Pain: A Cross-Sectional Survey. *Military Medicine*, doi: 10.1093/milmed/usac309.



Part 2: Funding Guidelines for Researchers

2a: Application Administration

Eligibility

The following eligibility criteria must be met to submit an application for research funding ("application") to the CPCoE:

- The proposed research must aim to improve the lives of Canadian Veterans, and their families, living with chronic pain;
- The Principal Applicant (PA) must be affiliated with a postsecondary institution with an academic appointment and be able to hold research funds at said institution that continues until the conclusion of the funding period;
- The PA must have successfully completed a course in Sex and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (SGBA+) from a recognized institution (e.g., [Government of Canada](#)) and include a certificate of completion when submitting their application;
- The PA must have successfully completed "[Patient Engagement Training Course: A How-to-Guide for Patient Engagement in Research](#)" Modules 1-4 provided by the [Canadian Institute of Health Research \(CIHR\) Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis \(IMHA\)](#) and include a certificate of completion when submitting their application;
- Other criteria as necessary, as specified in the funding opportunity.

Ineligible/Incomplete Applications

It is the PA's responsibility to ensure that their application is eligible and complete before the submission deadline. All submissions are considered final, and no changes will be permitted after the submission deadline. Submissions that are late, or submitted via other means, will not be considered. Incomplete or ineligible applications will not be considered. There will be no appeal process.

Multiple Applications

PAs may submit only one (1) application per competition. PAs who have submitted an application can be Co-Applicants or Collaborators on other applications within the same competition.

Adjudication

All applications are reviewed and rated independently by the CPCoE's SAB. Upon the SAB's review, the highest rated applications meeting the stated objectives in the request for proposals will be funded. Additional applications will be considered based on the quality of the application and their relevance to the objectives of the competition. All other Applicants will be withdrawn from the competition. Funds will be distributed to successful Applicants via Project Service Agreements.

The Rating Scale used by the SAB can be reviewed [here](#).

Notification

The CPCoE aims to reach decision-making and notification within approximately 90 days of the submission deadline. All applicants will receive notification decisions by email from the CPCoE. Awarded recipients' names, institutions, and/or project details will be shared on the CPCoE's website.



Veteran Engagement

At the core of the CPCoE's research is the principle of Veteran engagement. In addition to including Veterans as participants who voluntarily elect to participate in research activities, such as surveys, interviews, and trials, **the CPCoE strongly encourages researchers to engage Veteran Partners.**

Veteran Partners are key members of the research team involved in meaningful and active collaboration to shape and execute research from the onset of projects. This can include tasks such as priority setting, co-design of research, conducting research, and knowledge mobilization.⁴

The aim of this engagement is to ensure that Veterans and researchers have a common understanding of the process, needs, and requirements of both parties. The CPCoE has established recommendations for Veteran partnership in research, as follows:

Veteran Partner Roles

- Provide insights about living with chronic pain that may validate or change the direction of the research you wish to explore (for example, exploring outcomes that are important to patients);
- Provide feedback and insight grounded in lived experience into tools and resources that you are developing/wish to develop;
- Participate in regular research team meetings to provide feedback or insight on the project;
- Speak to trainees about the importance of being able to communicate their research to people from all backgrounds;
- Co-design, review, and comment on forms;
- Co-build, review, and comment on research protocols to identify potential hurdles or enablers for research participants;
- Co-develop questionnaires or interview guides for participants in the research;
- Review and participate in discussions about the analysis and interpretation of research outcomes;
- Assist with knowledge mobilization to key audiences, in particular with CAF Veterans and their families.

Researcher Roles

- Involve Veteran Partners in a meaningful and engaging way in all aspects of their project. This includes, but is not limited to: developing research questions, project design, recruitment, data collection, analysis of findings, and mobilizing of findings to Veteran networks and peer groups;
- Provide Veteran Partners with education and training on subject matter and methods, where applicable, to ensure they can contribute meaningfully and efficiently;
- Cultivate a safe, equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment for Veteran Partners to express their unique contributions;
- Acknowledge Veteran Partners as authors or co-authors of publications and presentations when applicable;

⁴ The term *knowledge mobilization* can be used interchangeably with *knowledge translation* (KT) to refer to a set of activities relating to the production and use of research results.



- Provide honoraria for Veteran Partners as per '[Honoraria of Veteran Partners](#)' section;
- Contact CPCoE with any questions and/or concerns regarding Veteran Partners.

Expectations of Researchers

- Maintain respect for Veterans' experiences, knowledge, and the vulnerability that engagement may bring;
- Schedule meetings at times that work for Veterans;
- Be open and willing to consider Veteran feedback at all stages of research;
- Have a collaborative, non-judgemental spirit;
- Be committed to work with and learn from Veterans;
- Communicate research terms in plain language wherever possible;
- Be understanding that sometimes Veterans may not be able to participate fully due to unforeseen health and/or personal life circumstances;
- Manage differences of opinion and conflict in a respectful manner.

Requirements

- At the time of application:
 - PAs are required to complete, "[Patient Engagement Training Course: A How-to-Guide for Patient Engagement in Research](#)" Modules 1-4 provided by the [Canadian Institute of Health Research \(CIHR\) Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis \(IMHA\)](#) and include a certificate of completion when submitting their application.
 - PAs without previous experience engaging Veterans as partners in research are strongly encouraged to apply for funding opportunities. All applicants are encouraged to reach out directly to Veteran organizations and other networks to identify Veteran Partner candidates and build a well-defined Veteran Partner strategy in advance of submitting an application for research funding. Applications without a clear Veteran Partner strategy are likely to be considered uncompetitive.
 - **When Veterans and family members partner in research, the CPCoE requires that they be offered [honoraria](#) for their time and contribution.** Veteran Partner honoraria must be included in proposed budgets when submitting an application for research funding.
 - *Note: some Veterans and their family members may choose not to receive honoraria.*
- At project completion:
 - Principal Investigators (PIs) are required to share findings in the form of a lay summary with research participants who declare they would like to be informed of the results.
 - This will require any survey, questionnaire, or focus group participation documentation to include optional declaration of the participant to be informed of the research results.



Sex and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (SGBA+)

The CPCoE promotes the benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) as a source of wealth, excellence, and innovation in research. The CPCoE recognizes the growing need to address Sex and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (SGBA+) issues in the conduct of research. Integrating SGBA+ considerations allows researchers to better understand the diversity of the populations their research applies to, making findings more inclusive and impactful.

Requirements

- At the time of application:
 - PAs must have successfully completed a course in Sex and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (SGBA+) from a recognized institution (e.g., [Government of Canada](#)) and include a certificate of completion when submitting their application;
 - PAs must explain how the research project will address Sex and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (SGBA+) considerations, including, but not limited to: factors of: i) sex, ii) gender, iii) age, iv) disability, v) geography, vi) culture, vii) income, viii) sexual orientation, ix) education, x) race, xi) ethnicity and/or xii) religion. Applications without a clear SGBA+ strategy are likely to be considered uncompetitive.



Knowledge Mobilization

The CPCoE is committed to shortening the cycle of research-to-impact to improve the lives of Veterans living with chronic pain, and their families. The practice of Knowledge Mobilization (KM) is important to maximize the impact of research.

The CPCoE promotes an integrated approach to KM where planning begins early in the research planning process. The CPCoE collaborates with funded researchers to execute their KM strategies to ensure research findings are accessible to, and understandable for, targeted knowledge users.

Requirements

- At the time of application:
 - PAs are encouraged to build a well-defined KM strategy in advance of submitting an application for research funding. Applications without a clear KM strategy are likely to be considered uncompetitive.
 - Knowledge Mobilization activities must be included in proposed budgets when submitting an application for research funding.



2b: Project Management

Distribution of Funding

The CPCoE distributes its research funding via Project Services Agreements, in which institutions (“Providers”) conduct research activities for the CPCoE. The CPCoE does not issue grants.

Indirect Costs

As a Qualifying Not-for-profit Organization and Charity, the CPCoE strongly discourages institutional overhead wherever possible. Where institutional overhead is necessary, PAs must include it their budget. Additional funds will not be provided for institutional overhead.

Orientation

The CPCoE requires all PIs to attend a virtual orientation after execution of their Project Services Agreement. This orientation provides PAs with more information about the CPCoE and its contracting requirements.

Monitoring

The CPCoE has incorporated regular reporting into all research projects to monitor progress and provide assistance to PIs, as needed. Please refer to the [Reporting section](#) of this document for further information.

Publication

The CPCoE expects that all publications resulting from this research will be published in peer-reviewed, open access journals. PAs must include open access publishing fees in their budget. Additional funds will not be provided for open access fees.



Veteran Engagement

Requirements

- Throughout the project:
 - Honoraria are the responsibility of the PI;
 - The CPCoE requires Veteran Partners to receive, at minimum, the following Standardized honoraria (all values in Canadian dollars):
 - Every hour: \$50.00
 - Half day (4 hours): \$200.00
 - Full day (8 hours): \$400.00
 - Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) requires that if an individual receives payments or income of \$500 or more in a calendar year from an institution, the institution must issue a T4A slip to that individual for the purposes of reporting it as income. In cases where payments to one or more individuals will be \$500 or more in the calendar year, the Principal Investigator commits, from their institution in writing, to obtain from and provide to Financial Services at the Institution, the name, mailing address and Social Insurance Number of each individual.



Sex and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (SGBA+)

Requirements

- Following the CPCoE Orientation:
 - PIs are required to meet virtually with an SGBA+ expert from the CPCoE's SAB to complete the CPCoE SGBA+ Checklist.
- At project completion:
 - PIs are required to meet virtually with an SGBA+ expert from the CPCoE's SAB to complete the CPCoE SGBA+ Checklist again.

For further information on SGBA+, please see this [resource](#) from the Women's College Research Institute.



Knowledge Mobilization

Requirements

- Following the CPCoE Orientation:
 - PIs are required to meet virtually with the CPCoE's KM team to review and further develop a KM plan specific to the project.
- Minimum expectations at project completion:
 - Produce a 1-2 page plain language (lay) summary. For help with how to write a lay summary, please see [this resource](#) developed by the Canadian Institute for Military Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR).
 - Produce 1-2 knowledge products, in addition to publications and conference presentations/posters, tailored for and co-created with relevant knowledge user groups. Examples of knowledge products can include: evidence briefs, infographics, videos, webinars, workshops, etc. More examples can be found by reviewing ['Menu' of KM Strategies & Products](#).
 - Researchers are encouraged to plan for how Veteran/family Partners, or members of other Knowledge User groups, will be involved in KM planning and/or product development, as identified above.



Communications

The objective of communications at the CPCoE is to increase awareness of its research and support the mobilization of research findings into practice. Some of the groups that the CPCoE communicates with include but are not limited to: Veterans and families, researchers, interdisciplinary pain management centres, healthcare providers, VAC, policy makers, and the Canadian public.

Requirements

Official Languages

- The CPCoE must provide oral and written communications related to all research projects in both of Canada's official languages, English and French. This requires PIs to:
 - Ensure participants can participate in the official language of their choice. This applies to all aspects of research projects, including surveys, interviews, and/or validated tools used.
 - This requires PIs to include any translation costs related to project participation and resulting KM products in their budgets. Additional funds will not be provided for translation.

Acknowledgement

- PIs must acknowledge all those who have contributed to their research, including the Government of Canada and the CPCoE. Researchers must ensure the following is included on all material:
 - The "Canada" wordmark and acknowledgement text, "Funded by the Government of Canada," in accordance with the [Government of Canada's Guide on the Public Acknowledgement of Financial Support](#)⁵; and,
 - The CPCoE logo.

Branding Guidelines

All communications material follows Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act ([AODA](#)) [guidelines](#).

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⁵ Government of Canada (2020, June 19). *Guide on the public acknowledgement of financial support - Canadian Heritage*. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/acknowledgement-financial-support.html#a2>



Reporting

The CPCoE has incorporated regular reporting into all research projects to monitor progress and provide assistance, as needed.

Requirements

For all research projects, there will be **3 types of check-in from the CPCoE:**

- **3 Months:** Administrative check-in to monitor progress. Can be completed by email, or if needed, a follow-up virtual meeting can be scheduled.
- **Every 6 Months:** *6-Month Report* required every six months until the expiration of the Project Services Agreement (or until the *Final Report*, whichever comes first). From the date of CPCoE's request, PIs have 14 days to complete and return this report.
- **Project Completion:** *Final Report* required at the conclusion of the project. From the expiry date of the Project Services Agreement, PIs have 60 days to complete and return this report.

The CPCoE may also request reports at other points in time throughout research projects. From the date that the CPCoE requests an update, PIs must provide the CPCoE with a written report addressing the requested information within fourteen (14) business days.

Support

Throughout the duration of the project, the CPCoE can provide additional support, as needed. For example:

- Style and branding consultation;
- Infographics and messaging for recruitment;
- E-mail recruitment campaigns;
- Social media recruitment campaigns (free and paid options);
- Connections to translation services.

Please [contact](#) the CPCoE for further information on these supports.



Part 3: Funding Guidelines for Students

About Student Funding

The CPCoE has created Capacity Building Initiatives (CBIs) to support research in fields related to Veterans' chronic pain. The CBIs were created to support individual students completing research at the Master's or Doctoral level at Canadian post-secondary institutions. The aim of the CBI program is to support and increase the number of researchers whose research is relevant to Veterans living with chronic pain. This investment in evidence generation will help to deepen the field of research and provide critical support to the next generation of researchers.

A founding member of the CPCoE's Advisory Council for Veterans, François Dupéré, passed away on 20 January 2021. François was an inspiration as a Veteran and as a human being. To preserve his legacy as an advocate for resiliency within the Veterans' community, CPCoE established a specific CBI in his honour to fund the work of a new Francophone Master's student on a yearly basis. This initiative will contribute to the valuable research on chronic pain and ensure François' legacy will positively impact generations to come.

3a: Application Administration

Eligibility

Graduate students must meet the following eligibility criteria to submit a CBI Application ("application"):

- Propose supervised research in chronic pain with a focus on Canadian Armed Forces Veterans that is relevant to the CPCoE Vision and Mission;
- Be registered in a thesis-based Master's or Doctoral (Ph.D.) program at a recognized Canadian university;
- Demonstrate high academic achievement;
- Other criteria as necessary, as specified in the CBI opportunity.

Ineligible/Incomplete Applications

It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that their application is eligible and complete before submission. All submissions are considered final, and no changes will be permitted after submission deadline. Incomplete or ineligible applications will not be considered. There will be no appeal process.

Multiple Applications

Applicants may only submit one (1) application.

Submission Deadlines

It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that their application is submitted by the indicated deadline. Submissions that are late, or submitted via other means, will not be considered. There will be no appeal process.



Adjudication

All applications are adjudicated by independent adjudicators assigned by the CPCoE. All Applicants will be notified of the results of the adjudication.

Notification

The CPCoE aims to reach decision-making and notification within 90 days of submission. Awarded recipients' names, institutions, and/or project details will be shared on the CPCoE's website.

3b: Project Management

Distribution of Funding

The CPCoE awards its CBI funding to recipients via a confirmation letter. Funds are distributed to recipients' academic institutions. Provided all Terms and Conditions are satisfactorily met, funds are disbursed to recipients' accounts in three equal installments throughout the year—September, January, and May. Exact disbursement dates will depend on each institution's payment schedule.

Conditions of Funding

Continuation of CBI funding is contingent on the following, as verifiable by supervisors of awarded recipients:

- Maintaining all academic program requirements;
- Maintaining appropriate research progress and completion within identified deliverables and timelines;
- Upholding Responsible Conduct of Research, as described later in this document.

If awarded recipients withdraw, change to part-time status, change programs, change research topics or supervisors, or fail to complete a term, they may become ineligible for CBI funding. CBI recipients are required to notify the CPCoE should any of these changes occur.

Publication

The CPCoE expects that all major findings resulting from this funding by the CPCoE will result in publication in a peer-reviewed, open access journal. Applicants must include open access publishing fees in their budget. Additional funds will not be provided for open access fees.

Monitoring

The CPCoE will monitor the progress of its awarded recipients via annual reporting (prior to the final installment of funding each year).

The CPCoE may request other updates from time to time during the term of the CBI. From the date that the CPCoE requests an update, awarded recipients and their supervisors must provide the CPCoE with a written report addressing the requested information within fourteen (14) business days.



Part 4: Responsible Conduct of Research

Ethics

Researchers⁶ must ensure that all research projects involving humans or animals are reviewed by a Research Ethics Board. Researchers must indicate to the CPCoE whether such approval will be necessary, and whether it has been requested or received. If ethics approval has been requested or obtained, written confirmation must be provided to the CPCoE. Funding is contingent upon ethics approval, or written confirmation of exemption from ethics review.

Integrity

The following information has been adapted from the external resources of the [Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct Of Research \(2016\)](#)⁷

Researchers must conduct research honestly, accountably, openly, and fairly. This includes, but is not limited to, following all applicable institutional policies and/or professional standards, as well as abiding by applicable laws and regulations.

Researchers are responsible for complying with the following:

Rigour

Researchers must uphold scholarly and scientific rigour in proposing and conducting research; in recording, analyzing, and interpreting data; and in reporting and publishing research findings.

Records

Researchers must keep complete and accurate records of data (including charts and graphs), methodologies and findings in accordance with the Project Services Agreement or CBI Confirmation Letter, all applicable institutional policies and/or professional standards, as well as applicable laws and regulations to allow verification of the stated work.

Referencing

Researchers must properly reference all information and, where applicable, obtain permission for the use of all published and unpublished work. This includes, but is not limited to, theories, concepts, data, source material, methodologies, findings, graphs, and images.

Authorship

For all works conceptual or material, Researchers must acknowledge, with obtained consent, all those who have made a substantial contribution to, and who accept responsibility for, the contents of the stated research.

⁶ "Researchers" in Part 4 refers to Principal Applicants, Principal Investigators, CBI Recipients, CBI Supervisors, and any other individual conducting research through CPCoE funding.

⁷ Government of Canada (2020, September 18). *Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research (2016)*. Retrieved from <https://rcr.ethics.gc.ca/eng/framework-cadre.html#a2>



Conflict(s) of Interest

Researchers must notify the CPCoE of any real, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest pertaining to their research using the CPCoE Declaration of Interests form. A conflict of interest is defined as, *“An activity or situation that places an individual in a real, potential, or perceived conflict between the duties or responsibilities related to research, and personal, institutional or other interests. These interests include, but are not limited to, business, commercial or financial interests pertaining to the individual, their family members, friends, or their former, current or prospective professional associates”* (Government of Canada, 2020).

Misconduct

All allegations of misconduct must be submitted to the CPCoE in writing. The CPCoE will respond to allegations of misconduct in the following manner:

- Any allegation of scientific misconduct will be reviewed by the CPCoE to determine whether an investigation is warranted.
- Upon conclusion of the investigation, the Researcher will be required to submit a written report to the CPCoE. This report must include findings and/or future actions that will be undertaken by the Researcher as a result of the confirmed misconduct.
- The CPCoE reserves the right to apply sanctions against individuals who have been accused of misconduct. These sanctions may include written warnings and/or prohibitions from applying to the CPCoE indefinitely.
- The CPCoE will make every effort to keep the identity of the person(s) reporting misconduct confidential, but it may be necessary to share their identity as part of the investigation.

Part 5: Contact Information

- General Inbox: research@vcp-vdc.ca
- Chelsea White, Senior Manager of Research and Veteran Engagement
 - Email: white@vcp-vdc.ca
 - Phone: 1-833-644-HOPE ext. 2007
- Douglas Rust, Research Coordinator
 - Email: rust@vcp-vdc.ca
 - Phone: 1-833-644-HOPE ext. 2009

Please connect with Douglas Rust for assistance, and/or to obtain copies of any documents mentioned in this Research Administration Guide.