

## **MSSOC OPERATING RESEARCH GRANTS: POLICIES and PROCEDURES**

REVISED JULY 2011

The primary aim of the MS Society of Canada (MSSOC) is to stimulate and support research in multiple sclerosis (MS). The MSSOC welcomes applications that are fundamental as well as applied studies, non-clinical or clinical in nature, including projects in patient management, care and rehabilitation. In order to carry this out, the MSSOC welcomes applications for funds from researchers with studies related to MS which may serve in any way to advance the mission of the MSSOC

There are two streams of research, biomedical and clinical and population health. All MSSOC grant applications are reviewed by either the Biomedical Research Review Committee or Clinical and Population Health Research Review Committee, and additionally, are externally reviewed.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

**Principal Applicant:** It is expected that the person indicated as the Principal Applicant in an application for a grant is the one who is personally and actively responsible for the conduct of the research and who is considered eligible by his or her institution to apply for a research grant. The Principal Applicant need not be a Canadian citizen but must be conducting research in a Canadian institution. The Principal Applicant is autonomous regarding their research activities, has an academic or research appointment which allows the individual to pursue the proposed research project, to engage in independent research activities for the entire duration of the funding and is to supervise trainees and to publish research activities.

- A **Principal Applicant** is defined by the MSSOC as an individual who is responsible for the direction of the proposed research project and is the main contact person for the grant.
- A **Co-Principal Applicant** is defined as an individual who shares responsibility for the direction of the proposed research project with the Principal Applicant and meets the eligibility criteria of a Principal Applicant.
- A **Co-Applicant** is defined as an individual who contributes to the proposed research project.
- A **Collaborator** is defined as an individual whose role in the proposed research project is to provide a specific service (e.g., access to equipment, training in a specialized technique, statistical analysis etc.).

**Institution:** Institutions are the official recipients of grants made for the support of specific research by the Principal Applicant.

## **PREPARATION AND REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS**

**Application Procedure:** The MSSOC has converted to a Web-based apply online facility for the submission of research grant applications. This facility can be accessed through the MSSOC's website: <https://www.mscanadagrants.ca>. All Applicants for regular research grants are required to use the website for the completion of their proposal. All components of the application must be submitted through the online system. No hard copies of any documentation will be accepted.

**Deadline:** The deadline for research grant applications is October 1<sup>st</sup>. Incomplete applications, or applications that are submitted after the deadline, will not be accepted.

**NOTE: For the 2011 deadline, because October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 falls on a Saturday, the 2011 application deadline will be MONDAY OCTOBER 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 23:59 EDT.**

**Term:** The MSSOC supports operating grants for terms of one to three years.

**Amount:** The maximum amount that may be requested for this grant is \$100,000 per year.

## **CONDITIONS OF RESEARCH GRANT AWARD**

**Notification:** The Principal Investigator will be advised of the duration and amount of the grant awarded. A fully executed letter of agreement must be returned to the MSSOC in order for the funds to be released. Payment of the grant will be remitted as stated in the letter of agreement and Accounting Procedures. Payment of subsequent quarters is dependent upon a) receipt, review, and approval by the MSSOC of the semi-annual financial reports and b) receipt, review and approval by the MSSOC of annual research progress reports.

**Renewal Grants:** Grants are not renewed automatically. Support beyond the term originally approved is dependent upon submission and approval of a renewal application for a new grant.

**Unspent Funds:** Budgets in applications for grants are estimates of the funds required to perform the research indicated, unexpended funds may be carried over to the next year of the approved funding term.

If a renewal grant is approved for support, remaining funds from the previous grant may be carried over to the renewal grant, however, the carry over of funds must be approved by the MSSOC following review of the Final Financial Report. The Final Financial Report must be submitted within 30 days of the funding term or the MSSOC may withhold future payments on the renewal grant. The MSSOC reserves the right to not allow carry over of the funds from the previous grant if the residual funds are determined by the MSSOC to be excessive.

Unexpended funds remaining at the termination of the grant must be returned to the MSSOC within 6 months if renewal support is not awarded.

**No Cost Extension of Award:** An extension of the term of a grant without additional funds may be approved when requested and justified in writing. Extensions of term will be for either 6 or 12 months and may only be requested once for any given grant. A request for an extension must include: (1) the amount of money to be carried into the extension period; (2) a statement of why the funds were not used in the original grant period; (3) a statement of how the funds will be used during the extension; (4) an official up-to-date financial report. A request for an extension must be made at least 90 days before the termination date of a grant.

**Transfer of a Research Grant Award:** The MSSOC retains the right to transfer a grant from one institution to another (only if the institution is Canadian), along with the transfer of the Principal Investigator, upon the Principal Investigator's written request. For the approval of such a transfer, the MSSOC requires a letter of acknowledgment signed by the new institution. For research involving human subjects and/or animals, written approval from the new institution's Institutional Review Board and/or the Animal Care and Use Committee must be received prior to initiation of payment. In addition, the original institution must submit an acceptable report of expenditures and return all unexpended funds to the MSSOC before a final transfer can be made. No interruption of financial support should be involved if the request to transfer the grant is received by the MSSOC at least 90 days prior to the anticipated date of transfer and the financial report is submitted from the old institution prior to the transfer date.

**Change of Principal Investigator:** In most cases, a grant terminates when the Principal Investigator becomes unable to continue supervision of the research. However, within 30 days after such an occurrence, the original institution may request that the grant be continued with the responsibility transferred to a new Principal Investigator until the grant can be terminated appropriately or until a new, complete application can be submitted by the new Principal Investigator. Such changes cannot be effected without prior approval in writing by the MSSOC.

**Termination of Research Grant Award:** A research grant award may be terminated before the end of the project: (1) if the Principal Investigator requests, in writing, that the award be terminated; (2) if the Principal Investigator is unable to carry out the research at the original institution; (3) if the sponsoring institution requests in writing that the award be terminated because of the awardee's termination of his/her academic appointment; (4) if the Principal Investigator fails to notify the MSSOC of any change in his/her affiliation with the department or institution on record at the time the award was made; (5) if the Principal Investigator changes any aspect of the award from that which was originally approved by the MSSOC, including significant changes in the specific aims of the research studies, without prior notification and approval by the MSSOC; (6) when annual reports of progress are not received from the Principal Investigator by March 1<sup>st</sup> of every year of each award anniversary year; (7) if the Principal Investigator is found by an

institutional investigation to have committed scientific misconduct or fraud; or (8) by action of the Board of Directors of the MSSOC.

### **GENERAL CATEGORIES OF EXPENDITURES**

Investigators may request funds for the following categories of expenditure: salaries for professional and non-professional personnel, patient costs, permanent equipment (\$5,000 or less), consumable supplies and travel. The grant budget cannot include indirect costs.

**Personnel:** All personnel paid from grant funds shall be in accordance with the prevailing policies of the grantee institution. However, budgets for multi-year studies cannot include cost-of-living or similar salary increases for personnel working on the project. Requested salaries are not to be used to replace salaries or portions of salaries already assured by institutional or other funds. Grant funds may not be used for, purchasing, accounting, financial record keeping, laundry or student and tuition costs. Postdoctoral Fellows and students cannot be included on an operating grant.

**Postdoctoral and Student Training Support:** The MSSOC does not allow the salaries of Postdoctoral Fellows and graduate students to be paid through the operating grant. Postdoctoral Fellows and graduate students are encouraged to apply to the MSSOC's Postdoctoral Fellowship and Studentship awards.

**Professional Support:** The MSSOC will not pay salaries of the Principal Investigators, Co-Investigators, Collaborators and Faculty members. Investigators are not considered employees of the MSSOC but rather of the institution where the research is conducted. The research grant is to be administered in accordance with the prevailing policies of the sponsoring institution, including vacations, sick leaves, holidays, etc.

**Technical and Non-professional support:** Salaries for technical and non-professional personnel may be requested in proportion to the time they will spend on the research directly supported by the grant.

**Equipment and Supplies:** The MSSOC allows a maximum request of \$5000.00 per grant for scientific equipment. The cost of installing equipment purchased with funds of the grant is not allowed unless such funds were requested in the application and specifically approved in the budget of the grant awarded.

Office equipment, personal computers, office supplies, books and journals may not be purchased with grant funds unless included in the application and specifically approved in the budget of the grant awarded.

Consumable supplies may include any type of laboratory supplies, including purchase and maintenance of experimental animals.

**Travel:** Expenses for domestic or foreign travel related to the successful performance of the research may be charged to a grant only when included in the application and within

the amount specifically approved in the grant. Travel expenses whenever charged to grant funds shall be in accordance with grantee institutional Policies and Procedures.

**Other:** Any other expenditure directly related to the cost of conducting the proposed research may be requested in the application for a grant but must be properly justified. However, construction or renovation costs are not permissible expenditures under any circumstances.

**Reallocation of Funds:** Transfers between and among categories of the budget approved in the grant may be made as follows: (1) transfers between personnel and consumable supplies categories may be made at the discretion of the grantee institution, but (2) no transfers may be made without prior approval in writing by the MSSOC for equipment, travel, or other items not specifically identified in the approved budget. Unless prior approval in writing has been obtained from the MSSOC, expenditures are likely to be disallowed for items not specifically included in the budget of the grant awarded.

### **ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES**

**Semi-Annual Financial Reports:** the MSSOC will release the Funds in quarterly instalments, with the first and second quarterly instalments of the Funds to the Institution on April 1<sup>st</sup> and July 1<sup>st</sup> respectively. In order for the MSSOC to release future Funds, the Award Recipient and the Institution must submit a financial report indicating that 75% or more of the Funds released to date have been expended. If so, the next two quarterly instalments of Funds will be authorized and released. The semi-annual financial reports are to be submitted at least 2 weeks before the end of every 6 month cycle (October 1<sup>st</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup>). Financial statements that do not demonstrate that 75% or more of the Funds have been spent will result in the MSSOC withholding payment of additional Funds until 75% of the released Funds have been shown to be expended. Future quarterly payments will continue to be contingent upon receiving confirmation that at least 75% of Funds previously provided have been spent. If it is determined that the Funds are not expended or properly expended, the MSSOC has the right to withhold Funds until further notice or terminate this Agreement with no further obligation to provide Funds. Forms will be provided.

**Final Financial Reports:** A full account of all expenses incurred over the entire lifecycle of a research project is due within 90 days of the termination of the grant. Unexpended funds remaining as of the termination date of the grant must be returned to the MSSOC, if renewal support is not awarded. If renewal support is awarded, please see Unspent Funds. Grantees agree to return to the MSSOC remaining funds within six months following the termination date. Forms will be provided.

The MSSOC may from time to time, at its sole discretion and expense, retain the services of professional auditors to conduct an audit to review the propriety of reported financial expenditures in the context of a particular grant.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS**

**Annual Research Progress Report:** An annual research progress report is due March 31<sup>st</sup> of every year. The report must include a written description of progress made, referring to the hypothesis and aims proposed in the original application. Compliance with this policy is necessary for ongoing funding of your research project. A template for the annual research progress report will be provided.

**Final Research Report:** A final report of the progress is due within 90 days of the termination of your grant. This report must include documentation of all milestones achieved during the entire cycle with reference to the initial hypothesis and aims of the research project. A template for the final research report will be provided.

## **PUBLICATIONS AND COMMUNICATION**

**Publications:** The MSSOC expects that the results of research will be published in appropriate journals. The responsibility for publications lies with the Principal Investigator. The results of any work supported by a grant from the MSSOC must be acknowledged in all dissemination materials (e.g., publications, scientific exhibits, scientific presentations, press releases, etc.) The following acknowledgment or its equivalent should be used: “This investigation was supported (in part) by a grant(s) from the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada.” As soon as a manuscript is accepted for publication, it is expected that the grantee will inform the MSSOC’s Research Department ([msresearchgrants@mssociety.ca](mailto:msresearchgrants@mssociety.ca)) with the name of the journal, title of article and expected date of publication.

**Media and Communications:** The MSSOC expects that if a grantee’s host institution and/or publisher is preparing a press release or other media announcement related to an MSSOC funded grant, the institution and/or publisher and the researcher shall contact and inform the MSSOC’s Research Department in advance ([msresearchgrants@mssociety.ca](mailto:msresearchgrants@mssociety.ca)). Failure to do so may result in suspension of the subsequent payments.

**Knowledge Translation:** To help increase stakeholder awareness of the research funded by the MSSOC, the grantees may expect the MSSOC to call upon them during the term of the grant to summarize research related activities to a lay audience or the media. It is also expected that the grantee participate in public awareness events that promote awareness the MSSOC’s research program.