



Awards Guide 2025-26

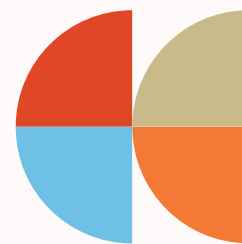


www.mcdowellfoundation.ca



mcdowell@stf.sk.ca

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INTRODUCTION

This guide outlines the purposes, policies, ethical guidelines, funding guidelines, and procedures governing special directed grants by the McDowell Foundation. It is intended as a complement to the Research Grant Application form that lays out the information required when applying for the main call for research grants.

Applicants are encouraged to seek assistance from the Foundation if they would like advice or information in the development of their applications. It is a goal of the Foundation to support teachers regardless of their experience in the design and implementation phases of research projects, as needed.

Additional assistance may be obtained by contacting the Foundation directly at the following address:

Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation for
Research into Teaching
2317 Arlington Avenue
Saskatoon, SK
S7J 2H8
1- 306-373-1660
mcdowell@stf.sk.ca
www.mcdowellfoundation.ca



THE APPLICATION

1.0 - ELIGIBILITY

1.1 Both individuals and organizations are eligible to apply.

1.2 Applicants are expected to carry out their research in the context of the publicly funded PreK-12 education system in Saskatchewan. This includes:

- Schools that are governed by an elected board and receive full per-pupil operating grants from the provincial government.
- Associate or alternate schools in Saskatchewan.
- Historical high schools in Saskatchewan.
- Schools operated by First Nations Bands with funding from the federal government.

1.4 Educators and non-educators are eligible to apply.

2.0 - APPLICATION PROCEDURES

2.1 Applications are available by contacting the Foundation at mcdowell@stf.sk.ca

2.2 First Draft Applications are due in early February, and will be reviewed by the Project Review Committee, which will provide feedback to the research teams.

2.3 Final applications are due in mid-April and will be reviewed and ranked by the Project Review Committee for funding purposes.

2.4 The Board of Directors will approve projects for funding based on recommendations from the Project Review Committee at its May Board meeting.

2.5 Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified by Foundation staff.

2.6 The Board will not accept applications received after the draft application deadline.



THE APPLICATION

3.0 - ASSESSING PROJECTS

3.1 Proposed research must ...

- Contribute to knowledge about teaching and learning.
- Focus on teaching and learning in the context of PreK-12 education.
- Apply to and is supportive of public education.
- Consider the dissemination and application of the research among teachers in Saskatchewan and elsewhere.
- Meet the Foundation's ethical guideline for research.
- Meet accepted academic standards for research.
- Respect the rights of all individuals and groups.

3.2 Preference will be given to projects that can be seen to:

- Provide direct benefit to teaching and learning in Saskatchewan and elsewhere.
- Affect positive change in teaching and learning.
- Involve teachers in a way that extends their ability and motivation as researchers.
- Encourage individuals and organizations to reflect on and identify important issues related to teaching and learning that require study and discussion.
- Create opportunities for dialogue for teaching and learning.
- Utilize innovative research methods and approaches.

All applications are reviewed by the Project Review Committee, which is made up of representatives from the teaching profession, the University of Saskatchewan, and the University of Regina.



FUNDING GUIDELINES

The Foundation continues to develop and review working guidelines that assist the Project Review Committee in interpreting its mandate and priorities in assessing applications for funding. These guidelines are intended to clarify for applicants the kinds of research expenses the Foundation will and will not fund and to provide a consistent basis for decision making. These guidelines are continually added to and refined as applications place new issues and possibilities before the Committee.

WHAT RESEARCH WILL BE FUNDED?

The Foundation does not fund research into teaching and learning intended solely for the improvement of instruction and related processes such as curriculum development, piloting of teaching methods and materials, and the evaluation of programs, methods, and materials. Research may be distinguished from these related processes even when they are present as part of the research by the presence of a clearly defined research question, systematic data gathering, the inclusion of a strong reflective component, and the articulation of findings related to the work for dissemination to others.

The Foundation's mandate emphasizes research as a contribution to knowledge about teaching and learning that can be disseminated to other teachers.

LENGTH AND FORMAT OF APPLICATIONS

The Project Review Committee requests that all applications follow the format laid out in the Research Grant Application form.

Descriptions and related material intended to provide information about the proposed project should respect the guidelines provided regarding length – a maximum of five double-spaced pages in 12-point type.

Excessively long applications may be rejected.



FUNDING GUIDELINES

NO FINANCIAL BENEFIT

As a charitable organization, the McDowell Foundation is not able to sponsor projects that have as their goal the development of a commercially viable product or program from which the researcher(s) may benefit financially.

COPYRIGHT

It is a condition of McDowell Foundation research grants that the Foundation must own the results of the research that it sponsors. Copyright on all research reports and other products created from the research must be assigned to the Foundation.

However, recognizing that it furthers the objectives of the Foundation to have the research findings disseminated as widely as possible to teachers and others, the Foundation gives researchers permission to use their work and share their research findings in as many forums as possible. In all presentations and publications of the research, researchers are required to give credit to the McDowell Foundation for its support of the work.

The Foundation does not own or attempt to copyright the data created from research projects. Copyright extends to the final report or alternative materials created in lieu of a final report that are submitted to the Foundation.

STRUCTURE AND TIMING OF GRANTS

McDowell Foundation grants are structured as an advance on research expenses. Applicants submit a proposed budget outlining their expected expenses as part of their application. Any grant monies that are unspent at the end of a project are returned to the Foundation.

Foundation grants will cover the costs of research activities for which expenses were incurred after the grant is awarded by the Board of Directors.



FUNDING GUIDELINES

AMOUNT AND NUMBER OF GRANTS

The McDowell Foundation awards an amount approved by the Board of Directors for that year. The total amount awarded and the number of awards depends upon the number, quality, duration, and costs of the applications received.

ORIGINALITY OF RESEARCH

The Committee will consider funding projects that replicate research done elsewhere provided they further the Foundation's objectives.

The maximum grant award for any one research project is \$20,000.

RESEARCH TOWARDS AN ACADEMIC DEGREE

The Foundation's research program is oriented primarily towards encouraging classroom teachers to take on the role of researcher in examining and improving teaching practice. It is recognized that degree-oriented research may involve classroom teachers in a way that furthers the purposes of the Foundation and provides the teaching profession with valuable research models and results.

Applications related to work towards an academic degree will, therefore, be considered on their merits. If applications are approved, there is an expectation that the research findings will be provided to the Foundation in a more practical form than a thesis or dissertation.

PUBLICATION OF RESEARCH

The McDowell Foundation cooperates with researchers in editing and publishing a written report and/or other reporting materials at the end of each research project. The Committee will not provide funds for desk-topping, printing, or graphic design. However, the Committee will provide funds for editing and writing support or for the production of alternatives to written final reports if the need is clearly outlined in the project and included in the budget.



ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

ITEMS FUNDED & NOT FUNDED

- The Project Review Committee is unlikely to recommend funding for items or services that may be considered the responsibility of schools or school divisions. The Foundation should not be regarded as an alternate source of funding for the learning program in schools.
- The Committee will not, as a rule, approve funding to cover a salary for those carrying out school-based research. Also, the Foundation recognizes that it would be inappropriate to provide salaries for individuals to be employed in carrying out a role within the school. Such employment would interfere with collective agreements, and the employment of all school personnel must remain the responsibility of school divisions.
- Researchers who apply for a grant from the Foundation may request money to personally pay for the services of assistants who will carry out functions within the research process, not educational functions within the school. The amount of money for research assistants should not signal that their role will overshadow or replace the role of the researcher(s) and any responsibilities to be assigned to a research assistant must be clearly outlined in the application.
- Researchers may request money to personally pay for services that assist them in carrying out the research. For example, transcription, expert advice on the development of survey instruments, editing, or video or website development.
- The Foundation will pay for substitute teacher costs to release teacher-researchers (including school-based administrators) for a given period of time in order to carry out research. The amount of this release time has been capped by the Foundation at 10 days per teacher or administrator.



ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

ITEMS FUNDED & NOT FUNDED

- Substitute teachers who apply for Foundation funding may request the equivalent of 10 release days in lieu of the sub time they may forfeit through their research commitments. However, they must recognize that this money will be taxable income to them.
- The committee is unlikely to approve funding for release time or fees of consultants who provide teaching and/or research advice as part of their job. It will, however, provide funds to cover any actual and reasonable travel expenses that consultants may incur in providing support to Foundation research projects.
- Representatives of community organizations and agencies may participate in a Foundation research project as part of the research team. The Foundation will provide funding to enable such participation at the same rate that release time is provided to teachers who are participating in the research.
- The Committee will not consider providing funds for researchers to attend conferences, bring in speakers, or participate in informal or formal training programs to obtain skills, professional development, and methodologies that may reasonably be assumed to already be in their possession if they are to carry out the proposed research.
- The Foundation does not fund honoraria or other gifts for research participants including students. The Foundation, however, will approve funding for cultural gifts provided to First Nations Elders and community members who support and/or participate in McDowell Foundation research projects.
- The Committee will consider covering some travel costs involved in a research project, as long as they do not relate to attendance at conferences or other individual professional development activities.



ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

ITEMS FUNDED & NOT FUNDED

- The Committee will consider funding the use of video production as a research or project dissemination tool. Researchers with permission release forms and appropriate ethical clearance may consider this.
- Consideration may be given to funding technology that is essential and integral to the research (limited amounts).

ITEMS ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING	ITEMS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software/Applications • Research assistance • Transcription services • Costs of meetings with participants (e.g., lunches, travel) • Rental/lease of needed equipment • Release time (10 days maximum) • Technical services • Travel to libraries, consultants, and other information sources • Copying, telephone, and mailing • Supplies, professional books, and/or teaching resources (limited amounts) • Cultural gifts and honoraria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of computers, camcorders, or other electronic equipment • Honoraria to project participants or in-service providers • Gifts or incentives given to students or other participants • Class trips or learning activities that are not an integral part of the research • Tuition fees for researchers enrolled in educational programs • Administrative costs and/or institutional costs of research • The cost of printing and binding theses • Attendance at classes, workshops or professional development • Salary for researchers on leave from employment.



ETHICAL GUIDELINES

ETHICS

Ethical guidelines are provided to support researchers in developing and implementing research projects that contribute to knowledge in teaching and learning while ensuring that both researchers and research participants are protected from foreseeable harm. The McDowell Foundation believes that the advancement of educational knowledge must not take place at the expense of individuals or the public and that research must be done in ways that are respectful, professional, and safe for all involved.

The McDowell Foundation has adopted a set of ethical guidelines that are outlined below. These guidelines have two purposes:

1. To assist researchers in developing research projects that are ethically sound and ensure students, teachers, or the public are in no way harmed by the research activities.
2. To assist researchers in expanding their knowledge of ethical research to ensure all research activities follow accepted ethical protocols.

All applications to the Foundation for funds to support research involving human subjects must meet the standards for ethical conduct outlined in the Foundation's ethical guidelines.

The Foundation recognizes that many of the projects it funds take place within contexts that may have guidelines with respect to research ethics. Foundation researchers are expected to understand all ethical processes and guidelines that apply to their projects and to have ethical approval for their projects by the applicable authorities (e.g., university ethics committee, board or director of education).

An indication that such approval has been acquired or is being sought should be part of an application for a McDowell Foundation grant, and funds will not be released until documentation outlining this approval is provided to the Foundation.



ETHICAL GUIDELINES

SOCIALLY JUST RESEARCH

In conducting research with individuals or groups with a religion, culture, disability, gender, or other identity that is not shared by the researcher, researchers must recognize the risk of misunderstanding, incomplete analysis, or even data appropriation. In such cases, a statement from the researcher recognizing potential power imbalances within the study and how they will work to create greater understanding will be expected as part of the application for funding. Researchers are also encouraged to include diversity and broad representation of participants within their research teams.

Special care must be taken to ensure that consent is informed and freely provided. For example, privacy and confidentiality are concepts that may be interpreted differently through various cultural lenses. Information must be given and consent received from the perspective of the research participants.

Information and materials should not be publicly exhibited, discussed, or published without participants' informed consent. Permission to publish materials through school division policy does not apply to McDowell research, and researchers must take care to ensure that they have permission to use information or materials as part of the research project.

Researchers are responsible to groups and individuals engaged in the research to represent and reflect the unique framework within which the individuals or groups operate, regardless of the values and customs of the researchers. An inclusive and respectful process and outcome is the expectation of the Foundation in all research projects.



ETHICAL GUIDELINES

HUMAN SUBJECTS

Ethical guidelines apply to all individuals who are a part of the research in any capacity, including leads, researchers, collaborators, other team members, and research participants. However, particular ethical protections are provided to “human subjects” or individuals who are a source of data in projects but not involved in designing, interpreting, or disseminating the information.

ADMINISTRATIVE OR INSTITUTIONAL APPROVAL

Research projects involving human subjects within the PreK-12 education system must be reviewed and approved by an appropriate authority within the educational jurisdiction(s) involved. Written approval from the director of education or other appropriate authority must be appended to the application for funding from the Foundation.

Written approval must also be sought and appended from the principals of schools used as research sites.

Where research involving human subjects is conducted in a group setting outside the PreK-12 education system, written approval must be obtained from an appropriate authority.

While administrative or institutional approval should not be advertised as an inducement to potential subjects, the researcher has the right to inform them of such approval.



ETHICAL GUIDELINES

PARTICIPANTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO...

- Know the precise nature and purpose of the research.
- Be aware of any potential risks or benefits when participating.
- Privacy and to assurance that information provided will be kept confidential.
- Refuse or withdraw from participation in the research.
- The accurate, respectful description of their cultural heritage and customs.
- The discreet use of personal information.

RISKS & BENEFITS

The researcher is responsible for designing and implementing research that avoids risks to participants or third parties as a result of conducting research or publishing the results.

The Foundation will support researchers in developing and implementing projects that are ethically sound. If risks can be foreseen but not forestalled, the research should not be undertaken. Researchers have no right to make changes in a person's behaviour or attitudes except during therapeutic research.

Risks to be considered and avoided may be ...

- Physical
- Psychological
- Social
- Interpersonal
- Proprietary
- Reputational
- Cultural



ETHICAL GUIDELINES

INFORMED CONSENT

Participants must be informed about the research in a way that respects their levels of comprehension and learning style.

Information about the research must describe its

- purpose
- usefulness
- expected benefits
- methodology
- effects
- potential risks, and
- possible alternatives.

Participants must understand that they can inquire about the research with an outside resource person and can withdraw at any time **up to publication**.

Participants must understand what degree of confidentiality will be maintained by the researchers. Informed consent should be obtained in writing. Where it is not practical or possible to obtain written consent, the procedures used to obtain verbal consent should be on record.

If research involves children and youth, consent should also be obtained from a parent or guardian. There must be no coercion, constraint, or undue inducement used to obtain consent from participants, particularly when they are children, youth, or other individuals or groups in a relationship where a power differential could operate to their disadvantage.

Sample consent forms may be obtained directly from the McDowell Foundation.



ETHICAL GUIDELINES

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- Any probing of private information must be carried out explicitly with informed consent.
- All information received by the researcher will be kept confidential and anonymous unless the researcher has explicitly stated otherwise and received the participant's agreement. The researcher will explain to participants the steps being taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.
- If confidentiality or anonymity cannot be guaranteed, participants must be made aware of the fact and its possible consequences.
- Steps should be taken to guard against unintentional disclosure of a participant's identity through association or a combination of information.
- The researcher is responsible for the effects of the research on third parties.
- The individual's right to confidentiality and anonymity extends to research involving institutional records.
- Publication of private materials is ethical only when it does not invade the privacy of living persons.
- Tapes and written records containing information from participants should be destroyed following the completion of the research as marked by the publication of the results. Any exceptions should be made explicitly with the agreement of the participants involved and the approval of the McDowell Foundation.



ETHICAL GUIDELINES

COPYRIGHT

Private papers, photographs, artistic works, and publications are protected by copyright, even when they are available in an archive, gallery, museum, or library. Researchers may not legally use documents or articles under copyright without permission from the author, heirs, or other holders of copyright ownership.

ADDITIONAL ETHICAL SUPPORTS

Should the Project Review Committee or the Board of Directors identify significant ethical risk in a grant application, they may require the research team to partner with an experienced researcher to ensure appropriate ethical support and oversight for the research prior to funding the project

When
Teachers
LEAD
Students
Succeed