

Pathology Grant Application Practicum (PGAP)

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Class time and place: Virtual/zoom, Mondays (dates below), 8:30-10:30 am

PGFAP OVERVIEW

This workshop-based practicum covers a variety of topics in the domain of preparation and evaluation of competitive grant proposals within the context of a practicum wherein two collaborative seed grants of \$15,000 will be awarded. Each two-hour hybrid session will cover critical aspects of generating a competitive research grant proposal. Sessions are tailored for early career faculty, clinical faculty who are new to research, and senior trainees in a transitional role. Using didactic and interactive methods, workshop participants will have a choice to experience either applicant or reviewer roles within the workshop. The overall objective is to provide critical core skills training PALM faculty and trainees that complements their program-specific objectives and facilitates synergy among PALM academics and clinicians. Attendance will be capped at 50 participants for the 2025 cycle.

PGAP OBJECTIVES

1. To provide early career faculty, clinical faculty new to research, faculty new to Canada, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and medical residents and fellows with an unprecedented experience in all aspects of writing a competitive research grant proposal. This includes developing a workplan, preparation of the grant application, the review process, and accountability to the program.
2. Several key educational metrics will be generated including:
 - a. Understanding the grant application and review processes.
 - b. To follow success of participants in future career success including graduate students (better comprehensive proposals) and postdoctoral fellows (job offers, grant success).
 - c. To determine how this program contributes to full grant applications among PALM members.
3. To facilitate novel collaborative research programs between PALM academic and clinical investigators with minimal burden on faculty, which could develop into projects competitive for additional academic or industry support. The investment PALM makes in supporting seed money could be offset in future years if these pilot projects develop into successful major grant-funded programs.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:
 - a. Discuss theoretical and practical considerations regarding novelty and innovation, workplan development, budget preparation, supporting documentation, knowledge transfer, and the internal and external review process.
 - b. Through mentored activities, demonstrate their competence in all aspects of applying for science funding.

PGAP FORMAT

Concept and Principles:

PALM and potential external sponsors provide support for one-year seed projects at \$15,000 each. In 2026, we will offer 2 seed grants at \$15,000 for a 1 year performance period. Postdoctoral fellows are particularly encouraged to apply and will have the same status as faculty. Participants will conceive of a novel experiment and develop a workplan with guidance from workshop instructors, classmates, and where applicable, their respective supervisors.

Workshop structure:

Class discussion and in-class activities

This four-month workshop will be structured to mentor participants through the entire grant application process. This will include discussions on strategies for the new investigator to demonstrate novelty and innovation, identifying and working with a collaborator, an overview of the grant review process, considerations on basic, clinical and translational research, knowledge transfer, industry sponsorship, budget preparation, confidentiality and conflict of interest.

Partway through the workshop, participants will choose either an applicant or reviewer role. Ideally there will be a balance of participants who submit and those who will be available as reviewers. If the applicant:reviewer ratio is too high, letters of intent (LOIs) will be reviewed and a shortlist of candidates will be invited to submit a full application. If the applicant:reviewer ratio is too low, example research proposals will be solicited from faculty as examples for participants to review.

Participants are expected to prepare discussion questions prior to class based on the broad topic in the class schedule. Participants will be encouraged to submit the questions to the instructors and all class members at least 24h before class so that both instructors and classmates can consider and prepare responses.

Research Proposal Review

Within four weeks, participants will elect to commit to submitting a grant proposal or acting primarily in the role of reviewer. The research proposal must demonstrate novelty and innovation among at least two participants that are affiliated with PALM. Guidelines for formatting and preparation will be distributed. The proposal will include:

1. Rationale, objective and hypothesis of proposed research
2. Literature review

3. Summary of specific aims
4. Research plan and methodology
5. Statement of novelty, innovation, significance of proposed research
6. Budget
7. CVs for primary applicants
8. Supporting documents (letters from supervisors, appended manuscripts, quotations, etc)

Participants will be expected to act as peer-reviewers for classmates' applications and will also be expected to participate in a mock review of 2 complete CIHR applications from Pathology Faculty. These sessions will allow all workshop participants to gain experience in reviewing grants. Internal review feedback will be circulated to the applicants. Participants who serve on the formal PGAP review panel will be expected to provide a written review, submitted no later than 72 prior to the review process. A formal confidential review, structured as a panel meeting will take place. Workshop participants will serve as Primary reviewer, backed up by an experience PALM faculty secondary reviewer. Reviewers will be identified by classmates who are not in conflict with the application. At the review panel, other workshop participants will serve in the roles as Chair, Scientific Officer and Readers. Review guidelines that follow CIHR criteria for Concept and Feasibility will be distributed and will include:

1. Relevance, novelty and significance of proposed research
2. Quality and feasibility of collaborative workplan
3. Qualifications and experience of applicant
4. Budget, supporting documents
5. Knowledge exchange
6. Overall assessment

2026 WORKSHOP SCHEDULE; 9 interactive sessions with 18h contact time

Jan 5	Outline, purpose, spirit of course
Jan 12	Pitch your research 1: 5 min presentations.
Jan 19	Pitch your research 2: 5 min presentations. Discuss synergies and identify ah-hah moments.
Jan 26	How to construct a grant proposal; lay and scientific summaries, research proposal, budget, biosketches and letters of support. We will include considerations on innovation and novelty for the New Investigator, basic, clinical and translational research, knowledge transfer, industry involvement, and statistics. Guidelines for full application will be distributed.
Feb 2	Explanation various roles to play in the review process including chair, scientific officer, panel member, internal reviewer, staff. Distribute faculty proposals for mock review.
Feb 9	Mock review of 2 faculty CIHR grant applications.

Feb 23	Draft PGAP proposal feedback (for those committed to submitting a proposal)
(Mar 9	Draft PGAP proposal feedback (for those committed to submitting a proposal))
Apr 13	Full applications due and distributed to PGAP reviewers (no formal class)
Apr 20	Discussion: Panel meeting logistics, conflict of interest, confidentiality
May 4-8	REVIEW PANEL MEETING, process reviews
May 22	Announcement of grant winners, distribution of feedback survey

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences.

A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University's policies and procedures, may be found in the Academic Calendar at <http://calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree+3,54,111,0>.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Coordinator Contact Information:

Dr. Cheryl Wellington
Djavad Mowafaghian Centre for Brain Health
Tel: 604-827-3769
Email: cheryl.wellington@ubc.ca

Office hours: By appointment

Class meeting time and location: Zoom (recorded)

Additional Resource Readings:

Guidebook for New Principal Investigators, CIHR
<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/27491.html>

Grant writing: a 12 step program

http://www.ninds.nih.gov/funding/NLD_SfN_Oct_2005.pdf

Accommodations for students with disabilities:

UBC is committed to providing access for students with disabilities while maintaining academic standards. Because the provision of academic accommodations can be complex, students who self-identify with a disability and provide a letter from the Center for Accessibility will be offered appropriate accommodations through confidential discussion with the course coordinator.