

4.5 Scientific Merit Review

Purpose

1. To establish the scientific merit review processes that will be used to ensure the research RNS supports is of the highest caliber and awarded impartially.

Definition

2. Scientific merit is the sound design and methodology of a research proposal, the evaluation of which is done by knowledgeable and objective experts.

Principles

3. All scientific merit review processes are based on principles of confidentiality, respect for diversity of viewpoints, fairness, and transparency.
4. Review teams may be chosen from among subject-matter experts, potential knowledge users, project partners, and those with lived experience in the field(s) of the research proposal.
5. Reviewers will adhere to published funding opportunity objectives and criteria.

Policy

6. RNS will only provide financial support to a research proposal that has been reviewed by subject matter experts. All merit reviews must include at least one reviewer who has knowledge of the methodology and is current with the state of scientific understanding of the field.
7. When RNS is considering a request for match funds, the reviews of the original funder, provided they included scientific merit, will be accepted as fulfilling this policy.
8. For Scotia Scholar Awards, RNS will accept the reviews of the host institutions.
9. Where appropriate, RNS may seek clarification from the applicant for funding on how they have addressed issues raised by the non-RNS reviewer.
10. The following forms of merit review may be used depending on the circumstance:
 - a. Peer review for the New Health Investigators grant and other opportunities that may lead to a national grant application
 - b. Review panels for challenges and competitions for which there is a prize
 - c. Subject-matter experts contracted by RNS for intentional research proposals
 - d. Research oversight or review committees to provide continuous oversight to long-term projects
11. Applicants will be provided with anonymized results of their scientific merit review, upon request.

Review and Approval History			
Date	Version	Activity	Notes
November 21, 2022	1.0	Board approval	Initial approval