



GUIDE FOR AWARD RECIPIENTS

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Overview

The Guide for Award Recipients (the “**Guide**”) outlines the conditions of funding and responsibilities of those who receive research awards from Research Nova Scotia (RNS). Accepting an offer of funding confirms that the recipient has read, understood, and agreed to all the requirements for holding RNS funds specified in Research Project Agreements (RPAs) and explained in detail here.

Note: certain clauses of the Guide may not apply to recipients of Focused Research Investments (FRI). If there is a discrepancy between the Guide and the agreement specific to an FRI, or the Partnership Charter between the recipient and RNS, the terms of the agreement and/or Charter will take precedence.

RNS Terminology

- **Award:** Funds granted by RNS for the purpose of research aligning with RNS’s mandate and distributed according to a fully executed Research Project Agreement.
- **Expression of Interest (EOI):** A ‘pitch’ to RNS detailing the intended outcome(s) of and capacity to deliver a proposed research project.
- **Holdback:** Funding that is temporarily withheld by RNS until the specified payment conditions detailed in the Research Project Agreement and payment schedule are satisfied. Typically, this will be a percentage of the total funding amount.
- **Host organization:** The institution or organization which holds the awarded research funds and supports the recipient, and with whom they are affiliated during the research project.
- **Leave of Absence (LOA):** A period of time when the recipient is approved to be absent from their work duties (e.g., parental leave, sabbatical, illness leave, etc.).
- **No-cost extension:** An extension to the project funding period beyond the original chosen end date as indicated in the Research Project Agreement with no change to the funds committed.
- **Payment schedule:** A document specifying the scheduled payment dates and amounts to be paid by RNS to the recipient. This document will also contain details regarding reporting requirements and the conditions of funding release.
- **Recipient:** The individual or individuals named on the application and Research Project Agreement who will be leading the research project, and to whom funds have been awarded.
- **Research Project Agreement (RPA):** The legal document issued by RNS and accepted by the recipient and/or the recipient’s institution (if required) that outlines the terms of the award along with any agreed upon requirements and conditions of funding.

Collaborative Research Agreements (CRAs) are specific RPAs developed for Focused Research Investments. In this document, RPA will refer to both.

Communicating with RNS

RNS uses email to contact award recipients. As such, it is the responsibility of each recipient to ensure that RNS has current contact information at all times.

To change the email address listed on a Research Project Agreement (RPA), please contact helpdesk@researchnhs.ca.

Accepting or Declining a Funding Offer

The recipient must accept their award by the date indicated in the RPA or the offer will be rescinded. To accept an offer, the recipient should follow the method described in the RPA.

Start Date

The recipient must choose and submit a project start date that occurs within one year of the date on which RNS issued the RPA. Any projects not started by this date will be terminated by RNS.

Changes After Award Acceptance

To request changes to the terms of an award after accepting the RPA, please contact RNS at info@researchnhs.ca after reviewing the following information.

Eligibility

A recipient must continue to meet all eligibility criteria outlined in the guidelines for the relevant funding opportunity and advise RNS promptly of any major changes regarding their eligibility during the funding period. RNS will determine the impact of the change and whether to continue funding. Failure to notify RNS of any major eligibility changes may impact future payments or consideration for further awards.

Start Date

If a recipient requires a change to their start date after they have confirmed it with RNS, they must contact info@researchnhs.ca to request the amendment. Any chosen start date must be within one year of the date on which RNS issued the RPA.

Project

Any change to the following project details must be reported to RNS before it may be implemented:

- Recipient
- Team members
- Budget spending
- Research objectives
- Other significant deviations from the original award application.

Changes must be **approved in writing** by RNS in advance of implementation. Changes that are not approved before being implemented **may have an impact on future payment** for that award.

Note: for Focused Research Investments, the procedure for reporting changes to project details will be included in the Partnership Charter with the recipient.

Conditions of Funding

The recipient and host organization are required to respond in a timely manner to any requests from RNS regarding verification of their compliance with the conditions of their award.

Once the recipient has met all the specified conditions, funding will be made available for the first payment period as detailed in the payment schedule. Funding for the continuation of an award beyond the first payment period will be contingent upon the following:

- Submission of all required reports as detailed in the RPA and payment schedule.
- RNS's satisfaction with reports detailing research-related activities with evidence of progress toward the research objectives outlined in the original application.
- Research account balances must be below the amount specified on the payment schedule before an additional payment is made.
- Fulfilment of all other conditions noted in the RPA and payment schedule (e.g., other funder agreements, proof of purchase).

Conditional Funding Offers

If there are conditions that must be met prior to RNS making a final funding decision on an application for funding, a recipient may be issued an offer letter in lieu of an RPA. This letter will detail the conditions under which funding may be available; all conditions specified in this letter must be addressed before funding is confirmed.

For conditions arising out of concerns relating to science and/or methodology, responses may be forwarded to the original reviewers for feedback and final recommendation. RNS staff will determine if conditions relating to administrative concerns have been addressed satisfactorily.

Ethics

Where a recipient is required to submit proof of research ethics board approval as a condition of funding, payment will be released (provided all other criteria are met) upon receipt of one of the following:

- Approval from the relevant research ethics board(s) and/or other applicable ethics review bodies
- Written confirmation from the relevant research ethics board(s) indicating that ethics approval is not required
- A release of funds agreement from the host organization to authorize the payment of a portion of the award to cover activities not requiring ethics approval

The recipient should refer to their host organization's internal policies and processes for ethical conduct and ethical reviews.

Conditions related to research ethics must be met within one year of RNS issuing the RPA. If conditions are not met, the RPA will expire, and funding will no longer be available.

If the funding period extends past the expiry date of ethics approval, the recipient must provide RNS with an updated ethics approval at least 30 days before the current approval's expiry date. If ethics approval is more than 30 days out of date, the file will be placed on administrative hold; **no payments will be issued** until an updated ethics approval is received.

Progress and Final Reports

Any recipient of a multi-year award is required to submit progress reports as defined in the payment schedule. All recipients are required to submit a final report within 30 days of their project's end date.

Subsequent funding and release of the award holdback is contingent upon a satisfactory review of submitted reports detailing research activities and outcomes. If a report is incomplete, shows insufficient progress toward research objectives, or is not received by its due date, the file will be placed on administrative hold; **no payments will be issued** until a complete report is received. A recipient with outstanding reports is ineligible to apply for future RNS awards.

Progress and final report templates are available on the [RNS website](#).

For match and joint funding awards, the recipient must submit a copy of all progress and final reports required by the other funding agency to RNS within four weeks of submission to the other funding agency.

Financial Statements

The host organization must submit an annual financial statement for each project funded by RNS by May 1 for the previous fiscal year (April 1-March 31). The recipient may contact their

host organization's financial services department to obtain a copy of the account statement for their records.

Other Funder Agreements and/or Notice of Award

Where RNS is working with another funding agency (e.g. the Canada Foundation for Innovation, Mitacs, Genome Canada) to provide match or joint funding, the recipient must submit to RNS a copy of the signed agreement with that funding agency before payment is released.

Proof of Purchase

For projects where there will be a single purchase of equipment, infrastructure, or renovations of \$150,000 or more, RNS requires proof of purchase (e.g., a copy of the purchase order) from the host organization prior to release of funds. Payment will not be issued more than 60 days in advance of the procurement.

Payment of Award Funds

The first payment of research funds will be scheduled for release approximately one week before the confirmed start date of an award, assuming the recipient has accepted the RPA and met all conditions of funding.

The recipient will be notified that the payment has been issued to the host organization and both the recipient and the host organization will receive a payment schedule. Once received by the host organization, funds will be available for use as agreed during the designated funding period.

Any questions about administrative processes required by the host organization should be directed to the host organization's research office and/or finance department.

Research Security

The federal government has requested that provinces take complementary measures to identify, assess, and mitigate national security risks to Canada's research ecosystem. The Province of Nova Scotia has agreed to take such measures, to ensure a coordinated response.

Research Nova Scotia complies with the Government of Canada's National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships and Sensitive Technologies Research and Affiliations of Concern (STRAC) policy. This policy includes the prohibition on the use of provincial research funds for any research initiative that includes research collaborations in sensitive research areas with military, national defense, or state security research institutes of foreign state actors that pose a risk to Canada's national security.

The recipient of RNS awards must periodically review as to whether their project aims to advance any newly-described sensitive technology research area and re-examine their

institutional affiliations for newly added affiliations of concern and submit attestation of compliance with this policy to RNS on an agreed upon schedule.

RNS may suspend all payments for the award at any time if the project, researchers, or the partners involved in the project pose an imminent risk to national security or if the project, researchers, or the partners involved in the project violate Canadian criminal sanctions and/or applicable law.

Information on sensitive technology areas and institutional affiliations of concern are maintained and updated by the Government of Canada and outlined on their website [here](#).

Use of Award Funds

RNS funds must be used effectively, efficiently, and ethically and be applied only to costs directly associated with the award, as outlined in the application approved for funding, the RPA, and in accordance with the requirements as stated in this Guide and [RNS policy](#).

To be eligible for RNS funding, the expense must be essential for the purpose for which the funds were awarded. ‘Essential’ is defined as an expense that is necessary, indispensable or unavoidable with no alternative if the research is to proceed.

RNS will assess expenditures in the proposed budget, including those that are accepted under the eligibility rules of the host organization, and determine eligibility based on alignment with its mandate. Expenses for construction, renovation and equipment will be individually assessed.

In coordination with the host organization, the recipient must submit a request to RNS for any exceptions to RNS policies and/or the eligible and ineligible expenses outlined in the award application requirements. RNS will consider each request on a case-by-case basis.

Equipment

Unless otherwise stipulated by RNS at the time of the award offer, any equipment purchased with RNS funds will become the property of the host organization and may not be transferred or otherwise dealt with for a period of five years from the award offer date, except with the written permission of that organization and RNS.

Alignment with Host Organization Policies

Costs related to human resources, procurement and travel must align with the policies of the host organization. When discrepancies or exceptions arise, RNS will defer to the policies of the host organization. The recipient’s host organization may withhold approval of an expenditure if it contravenes organizational or RNS policies.

Budget Variance

Any deviation from the original budget requires written approval from RNS. Changes should be requested by contacting RNS at info@researchhns.ca (see [Changes After Award Acceptance](#)). All variances between approved and actual budgets must be outlined in progress and final reports.

For Focused Research Investments, individual agreements on funding variances will be worked out in creation of payment schedules.

Funding Period

The award funding period is the time between the start and end dates outlined in the recipient's payment schedule. All spending must be incurred before the end of the funding period. RNS is not responsible for expenditures outside the funding period or in excess of the funds it has agreed to provide as indicated in the RPA. The recipient may be eligible to apply for a [no-cost extension](#).

Match Funding

When RNS provides matching funds as a secondary funder, RNS will accept the reporting schedule and parameters of the primary funder if the primary funder is the organization that established the funding opportunity and criteria, and to whom the recipient first applied.

RNS will assess expenditures in the proposed budget, including those that are accepted under the eligibility rules of the primary funder, and decide their eligibility based on alignment with the purpose and mandate of RNS.

Duplicate Funding

RNS does not provide funding for projects already funded by another agency, unless the recipient can clearly demonstrate that there is no duplication or overlap in the allocation of RNS and external funds.

Unused Funds

All unused funds in excess of \$50 must be returned to RNS at the end of the award funding period specified in the RPA or at the end of the research project, whichever is earlier. If a recipient becomes ineligible under the terms of the RPA or breaches the RPA conditions, the remaining funds that were not contributed to the research project will also be returned to RNS upon request.

Extensions and Transfers

Extensions

A recipient may apply for a [no-cost extension](#) of their award end date using the extension request form on the [RNS website](#). The extension cannot exceed one year in total, including any delays throughout the grant period (which may also include time to obtain ethics approval).

The recipient must request an extension at least 30 days in advance of the project's established end date. The extension request must include information on work achieved to date, the reason an extension is required, and a plan for completing the project within the requested timeline.

A second extension will be considered in exceptional circumstances only.

When RNS has matched funding awarded by the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the Tri-Agencies or health charities, it will honour no-cost extensions granted by those funders. The recipient must notify RNS in writing when such an extension has been granted.

Award Transfers

An award is issued for work to be undertaken by the designated recipient at a specified host organization in Nova Scotia. In exceptional circumstances, the recipient may request to transfer an award to another eligible project lead and/or a different eligible host organization.

To be approved for an award transfer, the recipient must send an email to the RNS [Director, Research Support](#) at least 30 days in advance of the anticipated transfer date. The recipient must indicate the reason for the transfer request and the amount of the remaining funds available for transfer. If a transfer to another eligible organization is requested, a financial statement must be provided from the original host organization, and both organizations must provide written consent for the transfer and receipt of funds.

Leave of Absence

A recipient who wishes to suspend their award while on a leave approved by the host organization must apply for a leave from RNS. The request must explain the provisions that will be made for either the suspension or continuation of the award and, if applicable, for the supervision of project staff. Proof of approval from the host organization for parental leaves, sabbatical/administrative leaves, medical leaves, and family medical leaves must accompany the request to RNS. Leave of absence approval is considered on a case-by-case basis. The recipient should apply for a leave of absence using the [extension request form](#).

Leaves of absence will only be considered for the recipient; **leaves of absence for research project staff are not eligible.**

Disclosure of Information

The recipient consents to the information provided in their application and submitted reports being disseminated within RNS and/or with host organization representatives for the purpose of payment, monitoring, evaluation of the award, and other administrative purposes.

The researcher(s) name and affiliation(s), project title, plain language summary, funding amount, total cost of the project, key words, jobs and training opportunities created, research impact, and other partner funding details may be made available on RNS's website, and in reports, documents, and other disclosures to government, partners, stakeholders and/or the public.

Evaluation

The recipient agrees to participate in evaluation for the purposes of planning, accountability and the assessment of impact of RNS funding. The recipient will be contacted by a representative of RNS to conduct an end-of-project evaluation.

Audit

Officials or appointees of RNS may inspect the premises, laboratory, products, equipment, or other assets as they relate to the Project and may examine their accounting records, books, or files and/or computer readable data held by the host organization upon reasonable written notice.

Acknowledgment of RNS

The recipient must acknowledge the support provided by RNS in any presentation, publication, public messages, or media coverage about the funded research during the term of the project and at any time the results of this work are referenced. Acknowledgment of RNS support should include RNS's logo, where appropriate. High-resolution versions of the RNS logo can be obtained by contacting the [RNS Marketing & Communications Officer](#).

Repeated failure to acknowledge RNS will be considered a breach of conditions and may impact continued funding of the award and the recipient's eligibility to apply for future RNS funding.

Breach of Conditions

If a recipient is found to be in breach of the conditions outlined in this Guide or does not maintain eligibility for the award, RNS reserves the right to **withhold or terminate funding, and/or deem the recipient ineligible to apply for future RNS funding opportunities**. If funding is terminated, RNS will invoice the host organization for the return of unused funds.