



SHARCNET Research Support Programmes: Fellowships & Dedicated Resources

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Where do I find the on-line application form(s)?

The web-based application forms are available on the SHARCNET website at: https://www.sharcnet.ca/my/resource_applications/. Users must have a SHARCNET webportal account in order to access the forms.

For more information on the respective programmes, SHARCNET's policies and guidelines can be found at: <https://www.sharcnet.ca/my/documents/index/Policies>

2. Who can apply for fellowships and dedicated resources?

Only full-time faculty at SHARCNET partner institutions eligible for funding may apply for Fellowships.

Applications for dedicated resources are open to all faculty (PI) applicants with a valid SHARCNET account.

NOTE: SHARCNET users must have an account in good standing. This good standing includes up-to-date reporting of outcomes of any previous SHARCNET award (Fellowship, Dedicated Resources etc.). Previous reports will form part of the adjudication process.

3. Can researchers submit a joint application?

A joint application can be submitted, but a single PI would need to be named in the applicant section and the award would be made to this person specifically. The details of the co-applicant should be included in section 5a). A second CV can also be attached, to support the application.

4. What is considered an eligible Fellowship match?

Examples of eligible matching funds are:

- NSERC funds (e.g., Discovery Grant, CRDG) paid to a student or postdoc (or from any other grant from a federal agency).*
- Ontario government grants (e.g. ERA, MMO)*
- Teaching assistance support of graduate students may be eligible. Please consult the Research Office at your local institution or the **SHARCNET** office to determine if this is the case.*
- University scholarships paid to graduate students.*
- Funds provided by a private sector research partner, if intellectual property rights are retained by the university researcher.*

- *Faculty start-up grants.*
- *Institutional operating funds (i.e. a Dean or Chair can contribute funding from her/his departmental budgets).*

Ineligible sources include:

- *Non-university-source fellowships or scholarships (e.g. NSERC, OGS, OGSST) that are paid directly to a student or postdoc.*
- *Payments for contract research where the resulting intellectual property is owned by a private firm.*

Applicants should clearly state the source of matching funds, so that SHARCNET can determine if the match is eligible or not. If you are unsure about the eligibility or otherwise of your proposed matching funds you should contact the SHARCNET office.

5. What if I am already paying for a student that is awarded a Fellowship?

You may apply for support for personnel who are already working for you. If you have already contributed to their salary and benefits from eligible matching sources, some of this money may be matched, if the expenditure falls within the Fellowship funding period. You can check this by contacting the SHARCNET office.

6. What is the success rate of Fellowship applications for the various categories?

This is dependent on the number of applications and the amount of funding available, but based on previous rounds, the undergraduate success rate is ~50-60%, the graduate success rate is ~25-30%, the postdoc success rate is ~10-15%, and visitors ~30%. Success rates tend to be inversely relational to the amount of SHARCNET funding requested.

7. Does submitting multiple applications increase, or hinder, my chances of success?

Faculty may submit multiple applications in a single Round. However, the applicant must clearly state if the applications are related. If they are unrelated, each application will be assessed separately. In this regard, submitting multiple applications does not have a bearing on success rate.

If they are related, the applicant must indicate if the project can be implemented successfully in the event that not all of the applications are funded or approved. The applicant should prioritize each request according to their importance to the project. Multiple related applications will only be supported in exceptional cases, when a compelling case exists that an excellent project cannot proceed without multiple sources of support from SHARCNET.

In some circumstances related applications may be made for both fellowship support and dedicated resources. These must be made as separate applications, but the relationship should be noted. Bear in mind, however, that coupling such applications may not be realistic since the timescale for hiring personnel may be more than six months, whereas the time for using dedicated resources will be at most six months from the time of the award.

Each application must be made separately and must be self contained (i.e. multiple requests cannot be combined into a single application form).

8. When do I need to consult with a SHARCNET HPC Consultant for Dedicated Resources?

All applicants must, at **least two weeks prior to submission**, consult with one of the SHARCNET HPC Consultants to: a) determine the appropriate resource/system and amount of that resource to be requested; and b) to work with the staff member to demonstrate that the resources will, if awarded, be used efficiently. The intent of this consultation is for you to leverage the staff member's expertise to improve your application and to ensure that the use of our shared – and scarce – resources is optimized. This consultation must be used to iron out any technical issues concerning the applications including: which system will be most effective; whether or not the code is efficient and scales well on that system; how many iterations should be stored and computed; etc., etc. By the time the application is submitted the project should be ready to run with no further technical issues to be resolved. Applications for which such uncertainties remain will be at a serious disadvantage, particularly for Small DR.

9. What is the difference between Small and Large DR?

The Dedicated Resources Programme was revised in the Fall 2009, and now encompasses two streams with different deadlines and resource thresholds. The “Small DR” stream is new and will be run as a pilot to assess its utility. The previous Dedicated Resources Programme becomes “Large DR”. Refer to the following table:

Resource	Resource Threshold	
	Small DR	Large DR
Dedicated CPU time ¹	1% – 5% of system	> 5% of system
Dedicated storage	More than 15TB for more than 6 months	
Deadlines ²	15 th Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec	September, March
Allocation window	3 months	6 months
Project attributes	Urgent, high-priority	Substantial, Grand-Challenge

¹ Thresholds are the fraction of the cpu hours available on any system in a six month period. Thus 1% of a 1000 core system would be $0.01 \times 1000 \times 24 \times 183 \approx 40,000$ cpu-hours.

² Deadlines for Large DR will be announced in the calls for applications. The precise dates may vary from those shown.

Successful applicants should note that failure to expend the full allocation as a result of congestion at the end of an allocation period will not be grounds for extending an award. There will be no carry-over of time, so spend your allocation early!

10. How are decisions made and when will the results be announced?

For Fellowships and Large DR, recommendations for awards are made by the Resource Allocation Committee (RAC). Applications will also be sent out for peer review. In making recommendations, the RAC will take into account how well the application satisfies the selection criteria detailed earlier as well as the reviewers' reports. The RAC consists of at least one full-time faculty member from each of at least six partner universities. A faculty member from the other partners (college and institute) may

also be contributed to the RAC, if the other partners so choose. RAC recommendations are sent to the SHARCNET Board of Directors for final approval.

For Small DR, applications are assessed and ranked by a committee consisting of 3 senior SHARCNET PIs, 3 technical staff and chaired by the Scientific Director. The need for quick turnaround precludes external review. Since the committee needs to be small in order to judge applications on a short timescale, applicants must be acutely aware that they are writing for scientifically literate non-specialists. The committee ranking will be used by the Scientific Director together with knowledge of current resource allocations and system availability to determine which applications can be awarded.

The membership of the Committees is detailed at: <http://www.sharcnet.ca/my/about/committees> .

11. When and how are Fellowship funds dispersed?

Successful applicants are sent a “post-award acceptance form” which details the terms and conditions of the SHARCNET Fellowship award. This must be signed off by the applicant and the institutional Research Office. Once this is returned to SHARCNET, an initial advance is sent to the applicant (depending on the start date of the grant and the hiring status of the incumbent). Awardees will provide SHARCNET with a copy of the appointment contract of any personnel to be supported by SHARCNET funds. Payments are made via a research account which is established at the awardee’s home institution, against which eligible expenses are to be charged. The respective Research Offices are responsible for submitting financial reports to SHARCNET on a quarterly basis, which details the SHARCNET and matching funds expenditures.

12. What sort of reporting requirements are there and how is the reporting used?

All awardees are required to submit a one-page report describing the research accomplished. This report is due annually on the anniversary date for commencing expenditure of the award; or immediately at the end of the support period, for periods of less than one year. This is done through the SHARCNET webportal.

Awardees are expected to acknowledge SHARCNET support in journal publications or presentations describing their research. Suggested wording for this acknowledgement may be found at <https://www.sharcnet.ca/my/profile/publications> .

NOTE: Information from these reports, along with publication data, is reported to our funding agencies as part of SHARCNET’s regular and required reporting obligations. Information may also be highlighted in promotional material, including the SHARCNET newsletter, posters, brochures, and/or website.

13. How do I get feedback on an application?

Upon request, applicants will be provided with brief comments on their applications that will summarise the reasons for the committee's recommendation and may include the external reviewers' reports and specific comments from the report of the SHARCNET HPC consultant.

14. What happens if I get a Fellowship award, but now some of the items have slightly changed (i.e. I would like to spread the award over two students)? Can small changes be accommodated and who do I speak to?

SHARCNET expects the award conditions to be as outlined in the Fellowships Post-Award Acceptance Form. However, situations do arise which require special consideration. Such requests are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. If something has changed, a formal request needs to be submitted to the SHARCNET Office for review and approval (phone 519-661-4000 or email research-support@sharcnet.ca). So long as the change is relatively minor and the research goals are not adversely impacted, such requests are usually viewed favourably.