

Fonds de recherche du Québec

Nature et Technologies Santé Société et Culture



Common General Rules

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PREFACE

On July 1, 2011, the *Act to abolish the Ministère des Services gouvernementaux and to implement the Government's 2010-2014 Action Plan to Reduce and Control Expenditures by abolishing or restructuring certain bodies and certain funds* took effect, signalling, among other things, the restructuring of Québec's research funding agencies. Grouped together under the banner "Fonds de recherche du Québec" (FRQ) and under the leadership of the Chief scientist, the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Nature et technologies (FRQNT), the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Santé (FRQS) and the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et culture (FRQSC) continue to pursue their mission to promote and financially support research, knowledge dissemination and training of students and postdoctoral fellows in Québec in their respective fields.

This restructuring principally aimed to ensure strong management regarding the support and promotion of Québec research and to foster and enhance synergies and partnerships between different research sectors in order to meet the major challenges facing Québec in the 21st century, in particular by promoting the development of intersectoral funding initiatives. The restructuring had the additional goal of improving administrative efficiency in accordance with best practices in governance and the principles of sustainable development. The Common General Rules reflect the will for close collaboration between the three Fonds in every aspect of their mission.

These rules aim to ensure consistency with the values put forward by the Fonds in their strategic plan. As such, they:

- respect academic freedom;
- promote the protection of intellectual property, for the benefit of the community;
- ensure the integrity of the evaluation processes so that funding decisions are made with rigor and fairness;
- emphasize the protection of personal and confidential information received by the Fonds in accordance with the *Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information* (CQLR, c. A-2.1) hereinafter the Act respecting Access;
- reaffirm the importance of ethics in research;
- present the terms under which the public funds are to be awarded and managed with the highest standards of rigor and transparency and in accordance with the laws and standards in force;
- specify the conditions allowing access, dissemination and valorization of the outcomes of research funded by the Fonds.

Scope and Interpretation

These revised rules are effective as of July 1, 2021, following their adoption by the Boards of Directors of the three Fonds de recherche du Québec. They apply to all programs offered during fiscal year 2021-2022 and to the administration of funding already underway, with the exception of eligibility requirements (Section 2), which

continue to be governed by the rules in effect during the year the funding application was submitted. It is the responsibility of funding holders, managing institutions and institutions of higher learning (with regard to training awards) to take note of any changes that are made to the Common General Rules, and to adjust the management of their award accordingly.

Individual program rules provide further specifications and information that supplement the Common General Rules. Applicants must therefore read both documents. Should these specifications contradict or differ from the Common General Rules, the program rules prevail over the Common General Rules.

The Common General Rules are intended for researchers, students, postdoctoral fellows, research personnel and managing institutions. **However, specific conditions may apply to only one of these groups. In such cases, the following graphic symbols identify the group for which the section or passage is intended.**



Rules intended for researchers



Rules intended for students and postdoctoral fellows

In the event of a discrepancy between the French and English versions of the Common General Rules, the French version shall prevail.

DEFINITIONS

Applicant: A person who has prepared or submitted a notice or letter of intent or a funding application under one of the programs of the FRQ.

Career award: Funding in the form of a salary awarded following evaluation by a committee of experts and designed to facilitate the recruitment of qualified researchers and clinical researchers seeking to begin or continue a career in research.

Competition: A process whereby the Fonds calls on members of a program's target group to submit a funding application and, where applicable, a notice or letter of intent. The process begins with the publication of the program rules on one of the Fonds websites and ends after the Fonds has processed the applications, had them evaluated by a committee of experts or peers and has made a decision regarding funding.

Field: Field of research covered by the Fonds concerned, within which the funding application must fall. There are ten [FRONT](#) fields, twelve [FRQS](#) fields and thirteen [FRQSC](#) fields.

Electronic portfolio: Portal allowing applicants and funding holder to carry out transactions with the Fonds.

Final report: A form used by the funding holder to report on the activities and impacts associated with the funding.

Financial report: A form used by the managing institution to report on the expenses related to the funding.

FRQnet: computer platform common to the three Fonds de recherche du Québec offering secure restricted access to authorized individuals. This transactional website allows different categories of users to enter and access data relevant to the role they play throughout the application, application evaluation or funding management process.

Funding: Funding awarded by the FRQ. In the present document, the term funding is used to designate training awards, career awards and grants.

Funding holder: A person who has been awarded a grant or an award by the Fonds de recherche du Québec.

Grant: Funding awarded following evaluation by a committee of experts for the purpose of supporting the direct costs associated with research projects, groups or infrastructures.

Indirect costs of research: Costs incurred by institutions to support research. These cover the institution's general expenditures that are indirectly related to the realization of research projects. (Also known by the French acronym FIR.)

Intersectorality: A research and collaboration process that brings together researchers from disciplines or research practices from at least two sectors to work on

a research topic, problem, issue, method or question, in order to shed new light on common or shared issues.

Managing institution (or Institution recognized by the FRQ to manage funding): A Québec university, college, health network institution, or government institution with a research mission that, after being recognized by the FRQ according to established criteria, receives and administers funding from one of the Fonds and, in so doing, acts as a trustee in managing the funds. The managing institution is the employing institution of a funding holder unless otherwise specified in the program rules.

Postsecondary institution: A university or college-level institution that grants graduate diplomas and was established under the legislation in force in Québec or, in the case of an institution outside Québec, that has been recognized by the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec for the purposes of funding.

Program: A funding measure with fixed objectives that is managed, either in whole or in part, by the Fonds. On an administrative level, a program is defined by a set of rules, terms and conditions, evaluation criteria for funding applications, and a set of funding scales and limits.

Program rules: Rules governing a particular program, available on the website of the Fonds concerned.

Progress report: A form used by funding holders to report on the progress of their work during the funding period.

Québec organization: An organization carrying out activities in Québec related to the proposed funding and able to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Fonds de recherche du Québec concerned, that it has the capacity to exploit the results of the research in Québec.

Research infrastructure: A grouping of facilities and equipment, services and expertise required by a community for the conduct of research, that optimizes resource use and produces an environment conducive to conducting and sustaining research (e.g.: FRQS centres) or that is aimed at organizing a set of research activities within the framework of a research program, a developmental initiative or a major installation (e.g.: FRQNT or FRQSC strategic clusters).

Research institution: An institution with a mandate to conduct research, qualified research personnel and research facilities, and known for its research activities.

Research program: A set of integrated scientific activities based on a common research theme.

Research project: Scientific activities of a specific duration whose start and end dates usually correspond to the grant period.

Scientific report: A form used by the funding holder to report on the scientific results at the end of the funding period for the purpose of dissemination to third parties (partners, public distribution, etc.).

Sector: A set of disciplinary fields specific to a sector as defined in the Fonds classification of university research, namely natural sciences and engineering (FRQNT), health sciences (FRQS), and social sciences and humanities, arts and literature (FRQSC).

Status and roles: See the following section.

Training award: Funding awarded following evaluation by a committee of experts to enable individuals to begin or continue research training sanctioned by a diploma or other academic recognition.

DEFINITIONS – STATUS AND ROLES

Research status

Status characterizing a person's professional situation and qualifications to determine their admissibility for a FRQ program, either as a principal investigator or as a co-investigator. There are six possible research statuses:

➤ ***Statuses applicable to grants and career awards***

(1) University researcher

Person who:

- a) receives a salary:
 - i) as a regular professor or a contracted professor, in a university recognized by the FRQ to manage funding,
 - ii) as a full-time researcher, with a PhD., in an institution recognized by the FRQ to manage funding that is a CIUSSS, a CISSS or a university-affiliated public institution within the health and social services network;

AND

- b) is affiliated with a Québec university in which he/she is qualified to act as the sole supervisor of graduate students¹ and independently lead research projects.

The following also qualify for university researcher status:

- *Individuals at the beginning of their career who meet criterion a) and are awaiting qualification for criterion (b) from their institution;*

¹ *An individual is qualified to act as the sole supervisor when relevant authorities in the university with which he/she is affiliated authorize him/her to co-supervise graduate students and also act as the sole supervisor of students working on a master's or doctoral thesis project. This accreditation should be interpreted as recognition by the university of the individual's autonomy in this regard.*

- *Individuals who are retired from a recognized institution who no longer meet criterion a) and who continue to pursue research or supervision activities in the institution, from which they have obtained a formal commitment.*

(2) Clinical university researcher

Persons who:

- a) receive a salary for a full-time or part-time position at an institution recognized by the FRQ to manage funding; **AND**
- b) are affiliated with a Québec university in which they are qualified to act as the sole supervisor of graduate students¹ and independently lead research projects; **AND**
- c) hold a professional degree in human health, followed by at least two years (or the equivalent) of research training; **AND**
- d) hold a valid license to practice in Québec.

The following also qualify for clinical university researcher status:

- *Individuals at the beginning of their career who meet criteria a) and c) and are awaiting qualification for criterion (b) from their institution;*
- *Individuals who are retired from a recognized institution who no longer meet criterion a) and who continue to pursue research or supervision activities in the institution, from which they have obtained a formal commitment.*

(3) College researcher

Person who has a PhD and who is employed in the equivalent of a full-time position in the college-level institutions recognized by the FRQ to manage funding and/or in the Québec college centres for technology transfer (CCTT). Individual program rules may include more specific criteria.

College researchers must also possess the professional autonomy required to supervise research projects and hold:

- i) a position as a college-level institution professor, **OR**
- ii) a position as a CCTT researcher, **OR**
- iii) a position in a college-level institution in which at least 75% of their time is dedicated to research activities.

(4) Other research statuses

Persons who cannot claim statuses 1 to 3 defined in this section.

Status 4 includes the following five categories:

a) Researcher in a government institution recognized by the FRQ

Person who:

- i) receives a salary as a regular researcher in a government institution recognized by the FRQ to manage funding; **AND**
- ii) has a PhD.

b) Researcher in a government-sector organization not recognized by the FRQ or in the private sector

Person employed by a Québec organization other than a post-secondary institution who holds a full-time research position and whose contribution to the project or program lies in his/her research or research-creation expertise on the theme in question.

c) Practitioner

Person whose contribution to the project or program lies in his/her practical skills and knowledge rather than on research or research-creation expertise. A practitioner is employed by a Québec organization. The practitioner's skills and knowledge, other than artistic or literary, may be of various types, including professional, technical or practical.

d) Artist

Person whose contribution to the project lies in his/her skills in creating or interpreting works, which are recognized by the artist's peers and are used in a professional context. Artists are self-employed and reside in Québec, or work for a Québec organization.

e) Individual contributor

Person residing in Québec who is contributing to the project or program on an individual basis. Individual contributors' involvement must not relate to an organization from which they receive remuneration and in which they carry out activities related to the project or program. Their skills and knowledge, other than artistic or literary, may be of various types, including professional, technical, practical or personal.

➤ ***Statuses applicable to training awards***

(1) Student

Person in one of the following situations:

- is enrolled in a college-level or university undergraduate program; **OR**
- is enrolled in a university graduate program and seeking to earn a qualification that involves research activities supervised by a *university researcher*, a *clinical university researcher* or a researcher outside Québec who possesses equivalent qualifications, affiliation and autonomy.

(2) Postdoctoral fellow

Person who holds a PhD or equivalent and who is carrying out a research internship on a full-time basis and for a specific period of time under the supervision of a *university researcher*, *clinical university researcher* or individuals who possess equivalent qualifications and autonomy.

Roles in the application

Category defining the level of participation and the responsibilities of individuals jointly taking part in a research project or infrastructure. There are four roles:

(1) Principal investigator

Person who acts as scientific director of the project or research program for which funding is requested. Principal investigators have administrative responsibility for the application, including correspondence with the Fonds, and financial responsibility for the award or grant. The following individuals are eligible to act as principal investigators: *university researchers, clinical university researchers* and, when expressly authorized under specific program rules, *college researchers*. Programs rules may include more stringent requirements.

Note that retired researchers are not eligible for the role of principal investigator, unless this is specifically permitted in the program rules.

(2) Co-investigator

Person who is part of a funding application and whose CV or elements thereof are required and considered in the scientific review process. Co-investigators make a significant contribution or provide specific expertise to the project or research program for which funding is requested.

Co-investigators may be delegated to manage part of the funds through an inter-institutional transfer in FRQnet if they have the status of university researcher, clinical university researcher or college researcher working in a managing institution recognized by the FRQ. In all other cases, they can be reimbursed for expenses incurred for participation in the funded research on submission of invoices. Substantial management of the project cannot be entrusted to a Status 4 co-investigator or a sub-contractor.

(3) Collaborator

Person reported by the principal investigator to provide a specific expertise to the project or research program for which funding is requested. Collaborators do not provide their CV and may not be delegated to manage part of the funds.

(4) Research infrastructure user

Person who uses the material or digital infrastructure of the research that is the subject of the funding application. Research infrastructure users do not contribute to the research project or program.

SECTION 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Mandate of the Chief Scientist

The Chief scientist of Québec chairs the three Boards of Directors and coordinates efforts on issues that are common to the three Fonds, as well as intersectoral research activities. He works to enhance Québec's position and influence in Canada and internationally. He is also in charge of consolidating and integrating the administrative activities (management of human, material, financial and information resources) of the three Fonds de recherche du Québec in collaboration with their respective Scientific Direction.

1.2 Mandates of the Three Fonds de recherche du Québec

Under the *Act respecting the Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie* (CQLR, c. M-15.1.0.1), hereinafter called the MESRST Act, the three Fonds de recherche du Québec report to the Ministre de l'Économie et de l'Innovation. The scientific director oversees the proper functioning of the Fonds and its activities.

The Fonds de recherche du Québec have the following mandates:

Fonds de recherche du Québec – Nature et technologies

- To promote and provide financial support for research in the fields of natural sciences, mathematical sciences and engineering.
- To promote and provide financial support for the dissemination of scientific knowledge in fields of research relating to natural sciences, mathematical sciences and engineering.
- To promote and provide financial support for the training of researchers through excellence scholarships for graduate students and to persons who engage in postdoctoral research, through professional development scholarships to persons who wish to re-enter the research community, and through grants that allow the teaching duties of college-level professors engaging in research activities to be reduced.
- To create any necessary partnerships, in particular with universities, colleges, and industry, and the government departments and public and private bodies concerned.

Fonds de recherche du Québec – Santé

- To promote and provide financial support for all areas of research in the field of health, including basic, clinical and epidemiological research, research in the field of public health and research in the field of health services.
- To promote and provide financial support for the dissemination of scientific knowledge in fields of health research.
- To promote and provide financial support for the training of researchers through excellence scholarships to graduate students and to persons who engage in postdoctoral research, through professional development scholarships to persons who wish to re-enter the research community, and through grants that allow the teaching duties of college-level professors engaging in research activities to be reduced.
- To create any necessary partnership, in particular with universities, colleges and health care institutions, and the government departments and public and private bodies concerned.

Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et culture

- To promote and provide financial support for the development of research in the fields of social and human sciences and the field of education, management, arts and letters.
- To promote and provide financial support for the dissemination of knowledge in fields of research relating to social and human sciences and to education, management, arts and letters.
- To promote and provide financial support for the training of researchers through excellence scholarships to graduate and students and to persons who engage in postdoctoral research, and through professional development scholarships to persons who wish to re-enter the research community and through grants that allow the teaching duties of college-level professors engaging in research activities to be reduced.
- To create any necessary partnership, in particular with universities, colleges and cultural institutions, and the government departments and public and private bodies concerned.

Boards of Directors

Each Fonds is administered by its own Board of Directors. In accordance with the MESRST Act, the Board of Directors is the superior authority of the Fonds and has full power to decide on all matters deemed relevant to fulfilling its mandate. Each Board of Directors is supported by five standing committees: a program committee, a governance and human resources committee, an audit committee, an ethics and scientific integrity committee, and an intersectoral student committee, which is common to the three Fonds de recherche du Québec.

1.3 Support for Public Research

Funding awarded by the Fonds represents government investments for which the Fonds are accountable. As such, each Fonds has the duty and obligation to protect the public interest, especially regarding management and use of the funds it receives from the Government of Québec.

Whether basic or applied, the Fonds do not directly fund research in the private sector.

1.4 Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The Fonds de recherche du Québec wish to contribute to supporting a research ecosystem based on equity, diversity and inclusion. Measures have been put in place to strengthen the integration of these principles. Funding holders are also encouraged to consider them in the context of their research activities. For more information, see our [statements on equity, diversity and inclusion](#).

1.5 Complaints Procedure

Complaints relating to services rendered are received and treated in accordance with the *Declaration of Services to the Public*, adopted by each of the Fonds. Complaints relating to responsible research conduct will be dealt with in accordance with this Policy, as set forth in the Fonds de recherche du Québec [Policy for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#).

1.6 Confidentiality and Protection of Personal Information

In carrying out the activities related to the fulfilment of their mandate, The Fonds must collect information of a personal and confidential nature from applicants and funding holders, and from all individuals involved in the evaluation of funding applications and the administration of grants and awards.

The Fonds are subject to the *Act respecting access* and give highest priority to protecting the privacy of personal and confidential information in their possession (for example, funding applications, evaluation reports), in whatever form (digital, paper,

etc.). Any personal information obtained by the Fonds is treated in strictest confidence and is disclosed only in accordance with the Act respecting access, the *Statement Regarding the Protection of Personal and Confidential Information in Applicant and Funding Holder Files*, hereafter the Statement, or by court order. Funding application forms and other forms used to collect personal and confidential information provide details regarding the processing of such information.

It should be noted that the processing of applications, the management of funding and the handling of cases of breach of responsible research conduct require certain information to be shared between the Fonds de recherche du Québec. Fonds staff members or persons requiring access to this information within the framework of the activities of the Fonds, in particular those who are part of the evaluation process, are required to sign a written privacy agreement, as are all financial partners of any given Fonds program where appropriate.

All persons have the right to access their own personal information held by the Fonds, and may request correction of any personal information that is inexact, incomplete or ambiguous or whose collection, communication or conservation is not authorized by the *Act respecting access*. Requests for information on access procedures, the protection of personal information and the rights of recourse stipulated in the *Act respecting access* will be forwarded to the person responsible for the *Act respecting access* at the Fonds.

1.7 Liability of the Fonds

The Fonds make all reasonable efforts to ensure optimal service. They cannot be held liable for any direct or indirect damage resulting from their handling of applications for funding. Furthermore, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the Fonds are not liable for any direct or indirect damage resulting from the disclosure of personal or confidential information that was not authorized by the Fonds.

SECTION 2. ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING

All applicants must meet the following general eligibility requirements in addition to the specific conditions mentioned in the program rules.

2.1 Citizenship and Domicile

Funded by the government of Québec, the FRQ has a mandate to support individuals studying, working or living in Québec who are interested in contributing to the development of research. It is therefore important that applicants and funding holders hold certain characteristics and a legal status in order to meet the following requirements throughout the term of their funding.

RE

To be eligible to apply for a grant, the principal investigator must be employed by a managing institution at the time of submitting the application, unless otherwise indicated in the program rules. Every year of funding, the managing institution must confirm that it continues to employ the principal investigator on an ongoing basis (including the maintenance of appropriate visas, if applicable).

RE

For career awards, the eligibility requirements are described in the program rules.

ST

To be eligible to apply for a **master's or doctoral** training award, the applicant must have been enrolled at a Québec university on a full-time basis (or equivalent) for 2 of the 3 semesters prior to the competition deadline (not including the semester of the competition), OR have a Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ) card that is valid at the competition deadline or proof of application for a RAMQ card and that the card will be valid at the competition deadline.

ST

To be eligible to apply for a **postdoctoral** training award, the applicant must provide proof that he/she has been living in Québec for six of the seven months prior to the competition deadline OR have a Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ) card that is valid at the competition deadline or proof of application for a RAMQ card and that the validity of the card will cover the competition deadline.

ST

To use a training award outside Québec, the applicant must have a valid RAMQ card or proof of application for a RAMQ card and that the validity of the card will cover the competition deadline AND be a Canadian citizen at the time of application.

ST

Individuals who do not have a valid RAMQ card or proof of application for a RAMQ card and that the validity of the card will cover the competition deadline, or who are not Canadian citizens at the time of application, must pursue their studies in Québec. Their continuous physical presence in Québec is required throughout the duration of funding, apart from break periods listed in the university calendar.

ST

The university must provide confirmation of enrolment at the beginning of each semester in order for a master's or doctoral training award holder to be eligible for the instalment. In the case of a postdoctoral award, the award holder's supervisor must provide an attendance certificate each year.

ST

Award holders who are enrolled in a master's or doctoral program outside Québec must request official proof of enrolment from their university at the beginning of each semester and send it to the Fonds.

ST

Certain training award programs intended for international students and international postdoctoral fellows exempt award holders from these requirements. Details are provided in the program rules.

2.2 Status Conferring the Right to Apply for Funding

The different research statuses are presented in the Definitions section of this document.

RE

A person applying for a career award or grant as an investigator, or applying for a grant as a co-investigator, must have one of the statuses that confer eligibility under the program rules.

A person applying for funding cannot simultaneously hold an eligible status for training awards and an eligible status for grants and career awards.

ST

Only applicants with student or postdoctoral fellow status at the time of the award may apply for a training award.

2.3 Other Conditions

In accordance with the *Policy for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, a person declared ineligible to apply for or hold funding from the Fonds or any other public funding agency for reasons of breach of responsible research conduct cannot apply for funding until his/her eligibility has been re-established.

SECTION 3. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Only the points common to all Fonds programs are presented in this section. Please refer to the rules of individual programs for further details.

3.1 Selecting the Appropriate Fonds

Grant, career award and training award applications are submitted to one of the Fonds on the basis of the field and topic of research.

Applicants are responsible for sending their application to the appropriate Fonds by referring to the lists of research fields of the three Fonds ([FRQNT](#); [FRQS](#); [FRQSC](#)). If in doubt, it is the applicant's responsibility to contact the Fonds concerned for further information. In the case of intersectoral funding initiatives, a managing Fonds is designated to receive the funding application.

RE

Researchers may receive funding from more than one Fonds provided that the funding is for different research topics.

RE

Researchers may be members of more than one major funded research infrastructure. The program rules define the terms and conditions for belonging to more than one infrastructure. For the purposes of this section, the following are considered to be major infrastructures: Research Centres and Institutes (FRQS), Strategic Clusters (FRQSC and FRQNT) and IU-CAU Infrastructures (FRQSC).

In the interest of ensuring sound management of public funds, the Fonds share information among themselves concerning the submitted applications, for example, to avoid double funding.

ST

Students and postdoctoral fellows may hold a training award from only one Fonds.

3.2 Instructions for Completing and Submitting an Application

All funding applications must be made using the appropriate application form, which is available on the website of the Fonds to which the application is being submitted. Application forms and attached documents must be completed and transmitted within the prescribed deadlines and in accordance with any specific program requirements. Any application that does not comply with these requirements will be deemed ineligible.

All pages that exceed the maximum limit will be removed from the application submitted for evaluation. Any document not required by the program rules will also be removed from the application.

It is possible to attach a digital object identifier (DOI) to each bibliographic references. Applicants may also include hyperlinks to web pages in the application, as bibliographic

references, when appropriate. These web pages may also be listed in the bibliography. However, the funding application itself must not rely in whole or in part on external online content, even if it is available to evaluation committee members.

Some programs require the submission of specific documents in addition to the funding application form. The documents to be submitted are identified in the program rules. All necessary documents must be attached to the application in FRQnet, the FRQ transaction portal. The complete application must be received by the appropriate Fonds by the competition deadline. For documents that must be delivered by mail, by messenger service or by email, the official postmark, dated messenger receipt or date of reception of the email serve as proof that the document was sent on time.

No document transmitted after the deadline will be submitted to the evaluation committee, unless authorized by the program rules.

3.3 Applicant's Responsibility

Applicants bear full responsibility for their application and must ensure that it is complete and meets all requirements of the desired program.

Applicants need to be familiar with the program rules and their requirements. For more information, they should contact their institution or the program manager at the appropriate Fonds.

Applicants are advised to prepare their application well in advance to ensure that it is approved by the institution, where applicable, and submitted before the deadline, given the large number of applications and requests received by the Fonds at the end of the competition period.

3.4 Verification of Applications

Unless otherwise indicated, applications are submitted through the FRQnet electronic portfolio. The Fonds reserves the right to verify any documents submitted with the application. This may include asking for a certified copy or to see an original document to confirm its authenticity. In case of doubt, the Fonds may contact the authority that issued the document (for example, the university that awarded a diploma). Applicants must cooperate with all requests for verification without delay; failure to do so may result in the application being deemed ineligible.

3.5 False or Misleading Information

The Fonds presume the good faith of the declaration provided in funding applications or in any other document submitted at any time during the funding cycle, from the initial funding application to the final report. Applicants and funding holders must be transparent and provide accurate and precise information. They must be conscientious about advising the Fonds of any changes in their situation, where applicable.

Under the *Act Respecting the Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie* (CQLR, c. M-15.1.0.1), any individual who submits an application containing false or misleading information to obtain or procure funding is committing an offence, is liable to a fine and could be barred from receiving funding for a period of up to five years. Where a legal person commits such an offence, every director or representative of that legal person who was aware of the offence may be liable to a fine. Furthermore, such a declaration constitutes a breach of responsible research conduct, as set forth in the Fonds de recherche du Québec *Policy for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, and may be subject to sanctions in accordance with this policy.

The Fonds reserve the right to take immediate measures to stop the use of public funds obtained through false or misleading information, and to take legal action to recover fraudulently obtained funds and claim compensation for damages caused where appropriate.

3.6 Language of Application and Attachments

It is preferable that the funding application be written in French, but it can also be written in English. However, the project title and summary for public dissemination (if applicable) must imperatively be provided in French.

3.7 Acknowledgement of Receipt

For funding applications submitted through the FRQnet electronic portfolio, acknowledgement of receipt takes the form of an automatic message that appears on the applicant's screen confirming successful transmission of the application to the Fonds. In addition, on the "My forms" page, the status of the submitted application will be "Submitted to the Fonds".

An acknowledgement of receipt will be sent for all non-electronic applications.

In a second step, all applicants will receive an email from the Fonds confirming the eligibility or ineligibility of their application.

3.8 Ineligible Application

An applicant whose application is deemed ineligible will be informed of the reasons for this decision, which is final and cannot be appealed.

SECTION 4. EVALUATION PROCESS AND FUNDING DECISIONS

The Fonds receive funding applications, check the eligibility of those applications and submit them for evaluation by committees established for this purpose. The evaluation committees recommend for funding the most deserving applications.

Certain programs require the presentation of a letter or notice of intent before submission of the funding application. The specific conditions relating to the evaluation of these letters or notices of intent are described in the program rules.

4.1 Composition and Role of Evaluation Committees

Funding applications undergo scientific evaluation by evaluation committees composed of members from relevant research fields. Evaluation committee members are known for their research skills and their knowledge of the research topics, methodologies and disciplinary basis of the applications under evaluation. They are aware of the potential influence of bias in the peer review process.

In some cases, the evaluation committees may need to consult outside experts. The evaluation committee members and outside experts may come from Québec, Canada or abroad.

The committee members examine applications in light of the evaluation criteria described in the program rules. They also consider whether the budget projections are appropriate for the proposed scientific activities and rank the applications in order of merit.

Committees may meet in person, by telephone conference call or by video conference. Committee members base their evaluation solely on the content of the submitted application and must not, under any circumstances, share any information not included in the application.

For further details concerning the composition and role of evaluation committees, refer to the internal rules for the application of the *Policy for the Responsible Conduct of Research to the research support activities* (available only in French; [FRQNT](#); [FRQS](#); [FRQSC](#)).

4.2 Conflict of Interest Management

The Fonds require their evaluation committee members to meet the highest standards of integrity, impartiality and confidentiality in carrying out their duties. All persons attending an evaluation session are subject to conflict of interest rules. Any breach of these standards constitutes a breach of responsible research conduct and may be subject to sanctions by the Fonds.

Committee members must show great transparency in disclosing any interests that may influence, or appear to influence, their decisions. Upon nomination, evaluation committee members sign a Declaration of Interest, and must thereon stay vigilant to identify any real, potential or apparent conflict of interest that may arise during the evaluation process.

A conflict of interest can emerge from the presence of a tension between the duties or responsibilities of a person taking part in the evaluation process and his/her personal, professional, institutional or financial interests. The impartiality of the members could be compromised if their judgement or decisions may be influenced by conflicting interests. For example, there may be a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest when a person taking part in the evaluation process is in one of the following situations:

- a) the person stands to gain a personal benefit (or suffer a personal disadvantage) of a professional, institutional, financial or other nature, resulting from the conduct of a research support activity undertaken by the Fonds²;
- b) an immediate family member (spouse, child or parent) or person of special interest stands to gain a personal benefit (or suffer a personal disadvantage) of a professional, institutional, financial or other nature, resulting from the conduct of a research support activity undertaken by the Fonds;
- c) a friend, extended family member or others with whom the person has a close relationship stands to gain a personal benefit (or suffer a personal disadvantage) of a professional, institutional, financial or other nature, resulting from the conduct of a research support activity undertaken by the Fonds;
- d) the person maintains a recent or significant professional relationship that could create a favorable or negative bias (conflictual relationship) with another person who stands to gain a personal benefit (or suffer a personal disadvantage) of a professional, institutional, financial or other nature, resulting from the conduct of a research support activity undertaken by the Fonds;
- e) the person has an institutional, organizational or business relationship, or a disciplinary affiliation, that could bias the conduct of a research support activity undertaken by the Fonds or its outcome;
- f) any other situation that suggests a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.

Conflict of interest management measures are taken to ensure the integrity and impartiality of the evaluation process, as specified in the *internal rules for the application of the Policy for the Responsible Conduct of Research to research support activities* (available only in French: *Règles internes pour l'application de la politique*

² Applicable to any person subject to the Rules: Fonds employees, evaluation committee members, scientific advisers, consultants and Fonds partners.

sur la conduite responsable en recherche aux activités en soutien à la recherche) of each Fonds de recherche.

Using the Declarations of Interest signed by evaluation committee members, the Fonds makes every effort to avoid placing evaluators in a conflict of interest situation. Any conflict of interest that comes to light during the application evaluation process must be disclosed by the committee member in question as quickly as possible. Despite this, if an evaluator declares a conflict of interest during the committee session, the committee chair asks the evaluator to refrain from taking part in deliberations concerning the evaluation of the application and to refrain from all comment on the application in question while the applications are being ranked in order of merit. A committee chair who is in a conflict of interest is replaced by an interim chair during the evaluation of the application in question.

For further information concerning the conditions governing conflict of interest in the recruitment of evaluation committee members, please refer to the internal rules for the application of the *Policy for the Responsible Conduct of Research* to research support activities of each Fonds (see the *Ethics* section on the website of each Fonds).

4.3 Integrity of the Evaluation Process

At no time may applicants or their institutional authorities make contact with evaluation committee members, unless such contact is specified as part of the evaluation process. Similarly, evaluation committee members must not make contact with applicants, unless such contact is specifically indicated in the evaluation process. The identities of evaluation committee members are kept confidential to avoid any attempt at collusion. The Fonds reserve the right to withdraw an application from competition if there is any inappropriate intervention, lobby, undue influence or collusion during the evaluation process, as stipulated in the *Policy for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

4.4 Evaluation Committee Recommendations

The evaluation committee produces a final ranking of the applications in order of merit, according to the criteria defined in the program rules. Fonds staff and members of their Boards of Directors do not intervene in the scientific evaluation process.

For some programs for which a mid-term evaluation or visit is required, the committees in charge of these operations may make recommendations regarding the continuation of funding.

The evaluation committee report is final and cannot be appealed. It cannot be modified by the Fonds, except to withdraw applications in the event of ineligibility or breach of responsible research conduct.

4.5 Funding Decisions

The Boards of Directors allocate funding according to the organization's priorities and the available budget. During this decision-making process, the Board of Directors does not know the applications ranking or the identities of the persons who could be funded. Furthermore, any member of the Board of Directors who is likely to have a conflict of interest shall withdraw from the deliberations, as laid out in the *Règlement de régie interne* adopted by the Boards of Directors.

Funding is awarded in accordance with the ranking determined by the evaluation committees, based on the envelopes allocated by the Board of Directors. The initial funding and the commitment to continue funding in subsequent years are subject to decisions made by the Boards of Directors of the Fonds according to strategic priorities and the annual budgetary appropriations voted by the Québec National Assembly. If need be, the Board of Directors may review, modify or cancel funding without notice.

All funding decisions of the Boards of Directors of the Fonds are final and cannot be appealed.

SECTION 5. FUNDING AND CONDITIONS

5.1 Publication of Results

The Fonds inform every applicant of the acceptance or refusal of their funding application by means of a notice in their electronic portfolio or by email if the application was not submitted through FRQnet.

Information regarding *funding offers*, including funding holder names and their institutions, is published on the website of each Fonds concerned and on the website of the Chief scientist in the case of intersectoral initiatives.

At the end of the fiscal year, a final list of the funding awarded and funding-related information is made public.

Further information regarding protection and confidentiality of personal information can be found in Section 1.5 of these Rules.

5.2 Condition for funding

Individuals must have an account in good standing with the Fonds to be eligible to submit a funding application or receive funding, whatever their role in the application. This includes having provided any requested reports and having returned or paid any money owed to a Fonds. The determination of whether or not an account is in good standing is at the sole discretion of the Fonds. An account that is not in good standing with one Fonds is considered not to be in good standing with the other Fonds.

5.3 Acceptance or Refusal of the Funding offer

Applicants who are offered funding are required to indicate their acceptance or refusal within 30 calendar days after the notice is posted to their electronic portfolio – or sent by email where specified in the program rules.

Any applicant who fails to meet this requirement within the prescribed time is deemed to have refused the funding offer.

5.4 Responsible Conduct of Research

In accepting funding from the Fonds de recherche du Québec, applicants, funding holders, their research teams and their institutions, as well as their research personnel and fund managers, agree to adopt a responsible conduct of research. It is the responsibility of the managing institutions to develop a regulatory research framework allowing the implementation of the provisions laid out in the Fonds *Policy for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, in complete compliance with the principles and requirements set forth therein.

In particular, institutions must be able to receive and manage allegations of breach of responsible conduct of research in accordance with at least the minimum requirements of the Fonds. This includes the requirement to communicate information to the Fonds concerning an allegation, the investigation process and the final report when the allegation involves a research activity made possible through funding provided by the Fonds. Applicants, funding holders, their research team as well as research staff accept that such information will be communicated to the Fonds de recherche du Québec.

The Fonds reserve the right to impose sanctions in the event of a substantiated breach of responsible research conduct or to take immediate measures in a situation requiring quick intervention (for example, to stop the inappropriate use of public funds). The same applies when a funding holder is declared ineligible to receive funding from a public research funding agency. Public funding of research is a privilege that can be suspended, withdrawn or rendered inaccessible in the event of breach of responsible conduct of research. The Fonds de recherche du Québec *Policy for the Responsible Conduct of Research* describes Fonds requirements with regard to scientific integrity, and the procedure for addressing allegations of breach of responsible conduct. Furthermore, in the interest of sound management of public funds, information regarding sanctions imposed by the FRQ against an applicant or funding holder will be shared between the three Fonds de recherche du Québec.

5.5 Research Ethics and Conformity

Funding holders and managing institutions must demonstrate the highest standards of research ethics and scientific integrity.

All research projects involving human beings, including biological material (body parts, products, tissues, cells or genetic material from a human body, of a living or dead person) or administrative, scientific or descriptive data from human beings, usually require the approval of the research ethics board of the institution under whose authority or auspices the project is conducted (or a research ethics board recognized by that institution).

RE

In the case of **grants**, the managing institution is responsible for obtaining all necessary ethics approvals.

Since any managing institution administering a grant has signed a commitment to the FRQ regarding the obtaining of ethics approvals, the managing institution is responsible for ensuring that its research ethics board (or a research ethics board designated by it) has approved any research project before any activities requiring such approval take place. Managing institutions may disburse the amounts they deem appropriate for preliminary work that does not require ethics approval. However, they will need to put controls in place to ensure that no activities requiring ethics approval begin before obtaining research ethics board approval.

For auditing purposes, the managing institution must provide the FRQ, upon request, with all information necessary to ensure compliance with the requirements about obtaining ethics approvals.

Where the grant does not include the conduct of a research project that requires ethics approval (for example, certain "center", "network" or "cluster" grants), managing institutions may disburse the entire grant after ensuring that no ethics approval is required.

ST

In the case of **career and training awards**, the FRQ do not ask for proof that ethics approvals have been obtained prior to disbursing funding. For monitoring purposes, award recipients must provide, upon request by the FRQ, all information necessary to demonstrate compliance with the requirements about obtaining ethics approvals. Career and training award recipients must comply with applicable laws, policies, and standards regarding ethics review, including the requirements of the institutions under whose auspices the research project is conducted. In addition, all FRQS training award recipients whose activities include research involving humans must complete basic research ethics training.

For any research project involving human beings, applicants must consider the possibility of including gender- or sex-based comparative analysis or analysis relating to vulnerable populations (such as incapable adults or minors) in their studies. This consideration is intended to promote fairness and equity in research participation, both in its development and its implementation as well as in the analysis of the results. As a general rule, the FRQ expect every research project involving humans to provide inclusive analyses that take human diversity into account. Certain types of research require gender- or sex-based analysis, for example when participants are prospectively assigned to one or more interventions. Whether or not projects include such analyses, this must be justified directly in the funding application.

Likewise, every project involving animals or animal parts, products or tissues requires the approval of the animal care committee of the principal applicant's institution. The decisions of this committee must comply with the standards and guidelines of the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) and the institution where animal research is carried out must be certified by the CCAC. These projects may require sex-based analysis. Whether or not projects include such analyses, this must be justified directly in the funding application.

Furthermore, when preparing their funding application, applicants must indicate any potential environmental impacts of the proposed research. When the environmental risk level of a project is greater than minimal, the applicant must provide proportionate mitigation measures to minimize these impacts, should funding be awarded. This is particularly essential when the environmental impacts could have serious or significant consequences (for example, in terms of duration or repercussions). The funding holder and the host institution are responsible for ensuring that the project is carried out in a responsible manner and in accordance with environment standards in effect. To do so,

they must obtain any necessary permits, licences and authorizations before starting the project.

5.6 Intellectual Property

The Fonds provide financial support through public funding, and any new knowledge, technology and services resulting from these investments are subject to Québec's *Action Plan for Managing Intellectual Property in Universities and Institutions of the Health and Social Service Network* (MRST, 2002³). FRQ funding holders must formally agree to this action plan. Consequently, the Fonds release any claim to patents and royalties, turning them over to the public institutions where the research is carried out, in accordance with the agreements made between the institutions and their researchers where applicable. It is up to the institutions to claim on the public's behalf a share of the benefits of the research activities funded by the Fonds. Whatever arrangements are in place with other partners with regard to intellectual property, the institution and the funding holder must at least be able to use the knowledge acquired for research and teaching purposes.

Moreover, the Fonds do not fund research whose results must remain secret. Research funded in whole or in part by the Fonds cannot be subject to a confidentiality agreement that would preclude the dissemination of the results (subject to a reasonable delay to secure intellectual property rights, such as a patent). For example, intellectual property issues must not prevent or unduly delay the thesis defence. Funding holders must agree to publish the results of their research and to acknowledge support received from the Fonds.

5.7 Protection of Academic Freedom

The Fonds emphasize the importance of protecting academic freedom in the conduct of all research funded through their programs.

Academic freedom is part of the rights and freedoms of researchers and implies the right to carry out research without undue influence aimed at directing the achievement of the research or the publication of results⁴. Indeed, UNESCO recognizes that "[...] open communication of the results, hypotheses and opinions —as suggested by the phrase 'academic freedom'— lies at the very heart of the scientific process, and provides the strongest guarantee of accuracy and objectivity of scientific results"⁵, and recommends that scientific research be carried out in a spirit of intellectual freedom that protects researchers from undue influences on their independent judgement.

³ Ministère de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie (MESRST since 2011), 2002, Available in French only: Plan d'action en gestion de propriété intellectuelle dans les universités et les établissements du réseau de la santé et des services sociaux.

http://www.frqs.gouv.qc.ca/documents/10191/186007/Plan_action_gestion_PI_2002.pdf/

⁴ Inspired by UNESCO, 1997, Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13144&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

⁵ UNESCO, 2017, Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers, preamble: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=49455&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

Complete academic freedom requires that research be carried out in compliance with professional responsibilities and collegiality in addition to the principles of intellectual, scientific and ethic rigour that should apply.

Academic freedom includes “the right, without constriction by prescribed doctrine, to freedom of teaching and discussion, freedom in carrying out research and disseminating and publishing the results thereof, freedom to express freely their opinion about the institution or system in which they work, freedom from institutional censorship and freedom to participate in professional or representative academic bodies”⁶. All researchers must have the right to conduct research activities, within the framework of best research practices, without discrimination of any kind and without fear of repression by the state, the employer, or any other source. Institutions that host research activities funded by the Fonds must adhere to these fundamental research values.

5.8 Open Access to Research Output

The Fonds are committed to fostering the widest possible access to the outcomes of the research they fund. They would like this practice to be implanted in every research environment and intend to promote this principle through all means at their disposal, including the websites of the three Fonds.

To that end, the FRQ adopted the *Fonds de recherche du Québec Open Access Policy for the Dissemination of Research* in April 2019. Under this policy, all persons whose research activities are made possible by FRQ funding (researchers and students) are required to deposit their scientific publications in an institutional or disciplinary repository no later than 12 months after initial publication. To learn more, please refer to the Policy.

5.9 Acknowledgement of Funding Received

Funding holders must, in all reports, publications and papers arising from the funded research, acknowledge the funding received from the Fonds concerned and indicate the corresponding award or grant number.

In the case of a research infrastructure, funding holders must mention, during their scientific activities and on their website where applicable, the name of the Fonds that awarded the funding. Where the funding is obtained under a funding agreement between the Fonds and one or more partners, the partners must also be mentioned, unless otherwise stipulated.

Funding holders are solely responsible for the content of their work. The recognition of the financial support of the Fonds in a production resulting from research funded by the Fonds does not constitute an endorsement of the content on the part of the Fonds.

⁶ UNESCO, 1997, *op. cit.*

SECTION 6. ADMINISTRATION OF FUNDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

6.1 Amount and Duration of Funding

The duration and amount of funding varies according to program.

The Fonds cannot provide funding over the amount requested in the funding application or indicated in the program rules.

ST

The conditions relating to the value of training awards, eligibility periods and the duration of funding are specified in the program rules for the year of application. Funding may cover a maximum period of up to 18 semesters (6 at the master's level and 12 at the doctoral level), whether said funding is obtained from the FRQ, a recognized granting agency or a foundation that offers awards on a merit basis.

6.2 Funding Manager

RE

The Fonds entrusts the administration of grant funding and allocations for indirect costs of research (FIR) to managing institutions recognized by the FRQ, and a list of these institutions is made public. In accepting this responsibility, managing institutions agree to ensure compliance with the Common General Rules, individual program rules and any contractual agreements entered into with the Fonds. The managing institution must administer the funding as the property of others.

The managing institution is the employing institution of the funding holder, unless otherwise specified in the program rules. The managing institution must advise the Fonds of any change to its affiliation with the funding holder during the term of the grant.

The managing institution is responsible for disbursing to the funding holder the full amount allocated to research activities by the Fonds, while verifying the eligibility of all expenses claimed. The amount covering indirect costs of research (FIR) that accompanies the funding is kept by the managing institution and applies only to the funded research projects.

If the managing institution changes during the grant period, the new institution must be a recognized managing institution and must undertake to assume responsibility for administering the grant. The new institution becomes accountable for the grant as of the date on which the Fonds authorizes the transfer, or other date as determined by the Fonds and the new institution.

An equipment grant may not be transferred between institutions, including any unexpended funding remaining at the end of the funding term. However, any equipment thus acquired must remain at the disposal of the project for which the grant was awarded.

The managing institution disburses payments in accordance with expense rules set herein and produces annual financial reports. These must be sent to the Fonds within three months after the end of their fiscal year of March 31, i.e. by June 30, or in accordance with the terms specified at the time of the funding. Financial reports must be submitted on the proper form, signed by the funding holder and the managing institution's designated administrator, using the FRQnet electronic portfolio. In the case of a research centre or network, reports must be signed by the research director and the managing institution's designated administrator.

The Fonds provides the managing institution with a copy of all administrative correspondence with funding holders.

ST

Award holders are responsible for managing their award. Funding must be used for the purpose for which it was awarded and thereby contribute to the research training of the funding holder.

6.3 Fiscal Year

Funding is made on an annual basis, normally from April 1 to March 31. Occasionally, funding may be awarded for other periods, which are specified at the time of the funding or in the program rules.

6.4 Maintaining Eligibility and Subsequent Instalments

RE

Funding holders and the institutions involved must comply with all eligibility requirements in effect at the time of submission of the funding application, for the entire duration of the grant. The Fonds must be informed, as soon as possible, of any changes that could impact their eligibility.

RE

To receive subsequent grant instalments, at the end of every fiscal year, the person responsible for the grant must complete a request for instalment in the FRQnet electronic portfolio, where applicable.

ST

Training award holders must claim their next instalment or request its deferral in accordance with the dates indicated in the program rules and provide, where applicable, information with regard to the maintenance of their enrollment status throughout the term of the award.

ST

If this is not done within the prescribed time, the Fonds concerned may cancel an instalment or terminate the training award.

6.5 Changes during Funding Period

RE

Any major changes made during the funding period to the conditions listed in the initial application must be reported in the FRQnet electronic portfolio and an email must be sent to the program manager at the Fonds concerned, justifying the changes. Such

changes may involve research orientation; the composition of a research group, network, team, centre or journal; a loss of expertise related to staff turnover; significant changes to expenses by category, etc. The Fonds will analyze the changes and decide whether to continue funding or, in some cases, reduce, suspend, terminate funding or request repayment of amounts already paid.

ST

To make any changes to the conditions of a training award or research project, the award holder must first send a request to the Fonds concerned using the form provided for that purpose in the electronic portfolio. In the interest of fairness, prior to authorizing any change, the Fonds must ensure that such a change does not affect the result of the evaluation of the application or its eligibility for the training award program. The training award will be continued as long as the changes do not affect its eligibility requirements. For further details concerning instalment deferral, suspension of awards and authorized changes, refer to the program rules.

6.6 Termination of Activities

RE

Should activities cease during a grant, career award or training award funding period, the funding holder must immediately notify the Fonds concerned via email. The reasons for termination must be indicated and will be analyzed by the Fonds. Failure to promptly notify the Fonds may result in ineligibility to apply for future funding, and the Fonds may require repayment of amounts already paid.

ST

For training award holders, the specific conditions relating to project changes, end of a study program, suspension or discontinuation from studies are specified in the program rules.

RE

6.7 Departure of the Grant Holder

Grant holders who leave their employing institution or Québec, for more than three months or permanently, must give prior notice by email to the Fonds concerned, record it in the FRQnet electronic portfolio, and provide the Fonds with complete information on their replacement including confirmation of this information from the managing institution. If the Fonds considers that the information does not provide sufficient justification or judges that the departure jeopardizes the successful continuation of the research activities to be carried out under the grant, it will take appropriate measures based on the nature of the information provided. The Fonds may decide to continue instalments or, in some cases, reduce, suspend or terminate funding. This section does not apply in the case of a sabbatical leave.

RE

6.8 Property Acquired using Public Funds

In relation to section 6.7, at the termination of a research project, the managing institution must put all research resources acquired using public funding at the disposal of Québec's scientific community, taking into account the useful lifespan of such resources. Should it occur that the managing institution has entered into agreements

with other institutions regarding the conduct of research activities, they must determine together the share of the property to be kept by each institution. The Fonds that provided the funding must be advised of any such agreements.

More specifically, upon departure of the person responsible for a data or biological material bank created through funding provided by one Fonds, the institution hosting the bank retains trusteeship of the bank on behalf of the research community, unless an arrangement to the contrary exists between the researchers and the Québec institution(s). The Fonds concerned must be advised of any such agreement and the consent form signed by the participants must allow for this possibility.

Research tools such as books and small equipment purchased directly out of Fonds funding for the benefit of a research network, group or centre must remain at the disposal of the scientific community for which they were acquired, even in the event of the departure of the researcher who is in charge of them or a change of managing institution. The managing institution must assume sound management of the resources for the benefit of Québec's scientific community.

Resources of great monetary or scientific heritage value that have been funded at one time or another by the Fonds may not be relocated outside Québec by the researcher or a research group or institution without consulting the Fonds.

RE

6.9 Transfer of Funds between Institutions, in the Case of a Grant

During a fiscal year, it is permitted to transfer funds—including indirect costs of research or FIR— between Québec institutions. In such cases, the funding holder, along with the managing institution, remains solidary accountable to the Fonds for use of the funding. Specific details regarding the transfer of FIR are provided in section 8.2 of this document. A financial report must be produced by the recipient institution in accordance with the instructions in section 6.2, "Funding Manager". This report must be approved by the managing institution.

The signing of a transfer of funds agreement prior to the transfer is strongly recommended, to provide the managing institution and the funding holder with the necessary authority to demand proper financial reporting from the institutions and individuals to whom the funds are transferred. All parties who receive a portion of FRQ funding (via the managing institution) are required to fully cooperate with procedures to ensure scientific and financial accountability with regard to the use of the funds. All uses of the funds, both in and outside of the managing institution, must comply with the requirements of the Common General Rules and be for the benefit of the research proposal for which the funding was granted.

If a managing institution purchases goods or contracts the services of another institution, whether or not the latter is recognized by the FRQ as a managing institution, this does not constitute a transfer between institutions.

6.10 Residual Balance, Unexpended Funds and Overpayments

RE

Balances remaining at the end of one budget year may be carried over to the next year for the duration of the funding. The balance remaining at the end of the funding period may also be carried over to complete research activities for which the funding was granted, for a maximum period of one year. In this event, justifications must be provided in the financial report submitted in June following the final payment. At the end of this additional period, any residual funds must be returned to the Fonds.

RE

At the end of the funding period, including the additional year if applicable, no unexpended funds may be carried over if this funding is conditionally linked to another funding whose funding period has ended.

ST

A Master's training award holder may use the unused balance of the award to begin a Doctoral program. For further details, see the program rules of the award.

If the funding holder no longer meets eligibility requirements, the Fonds will come to an agreement with the funding holder and the institution concerned as to the recovery of any overpayments made from the moment when the funding holder became ineligible.

Any disbursements made as a result of a technical error on the part of the Fonds are recovered following agreement between the funding holder and the managing institution, taking into account any harm caused where applicable. Similarly, the funding holder and the managing institution must advise the Fonds of any errors that occur.

The Fonds are not responsible for expenses or commitments by the institution that exceed grant funds applied to the account of the funding holder for current and prior fiscal periods. The managing institution is solely responsible of these commitments.

6.11 Audits

The Fonds may carry out an audit of managing institutions or career or training award holders at any time in order to ensure proper management of the funding and compliance of expenditures with the program rules. All must cooperate with any such audit process if requested to do so, in the interest of ensuring the appropriate use of funding.

RE

All grants must be recorded to the accounts held by the managing institution, which also keeps original supporting documents on file enabling their authentication (in the case of technology-based originals, in accordance with CQLR, c. 1.1, *Act to establish a legal framework for information technology*), for a minimum of five years following the end of the funding period. Upon request by one of the Fonds, the managing institution must submit to the audit in compliance with the *Financial Administration Act* (CQLR, c. A-6.001), and must provide access to accounting records and supporting documents.

Should the audit reveal non-compliance with the program rules or the Common General Rules, or should the institution fail to justify its expenses by providing the appropriate supporting documents, the Fonds may suspend, reduce or terminate funding and recover any amounts already paid, when applicable.

6.12 Concurrent Funding

A funding holder may obtain only one grant or award within one program, unless otherwise indicated in the program rules, in any given fiscal year.

Holding concurrent funding for the same activities within a single research project or program is not permitted, either for the funding holder or for co-investigators. Funding holders must inform the Fonds if this situation should arise. The Fonds may perform verifications in this regard.

Where two separate research proposals are involved, but the project description gives reason to believe that there is some overlap, the applicant may accept funding, but must show that the research proposal submitted to the Fonds involves different activities.

Applicants who have sought and obtained equal or greater funding from another organization for the same research proposal must decline the offer of funding from the Fonds de recherche du Québec, as soon as it is offered. If the other offer of funding is of a lower value, the conditions governing concurrent funding are set out in the program rules.

ST

In the case of training awards and internships, the conditions governing concurrent funding are stipulated in the program rules.

ST

The Fonds encourage internships as part of student training. For information regarding concurrent funding or the deferral of award instalments, award holders should refer to the program rules.

6.13 Parental Leave

RE

Grant holders who interrupt their research work to take maternity leave or parental leave for a birth or adoption may request an extension of the funding period, without any additional amount, for the leave period stipulated in the Act respecting labour standards (as it applies to their situation) and authorized by the managing institution. This extension period cannot be divided. If the managing institution offers a longer leave, the extension can, at the discretion of the Fonds, be as long as the leave granted by the institution in accordance with its current policies.

RE

To request a funding period extension, grant holders must provide the Fonds concerned with a document from the managing institution attesting to the authorized leave duration or a medical certificate confirming their situation. The Fonds reserve

the right to verify the situation of the person concerned. At the end of the leave, the funding holders must inform the Fonds within the first week of resuming work.

RE

In the case of a research infrastructure, funding holders must make provisions for an adequate replacement during their absence by a regular member of the infrastructure. The grant cannot be extended. The persons must also provide the Fonds with complete information on their replacement including confirmation from the managing institution.

RE

Career award holders are entitled to take maternity or parental leave. The award may be deferred for a maximum of two years. The deferral period cannot be divided. The career award holders must advise the Fonds in writing of their intention to take maternity or parental leave.

ST

Training award holders are entitled to an award deferral of up to 12 months for the birth or adoption of a child. The instalment deferral period cannot be divided. Award payments corresponding to each semester of the parental leave are deferred to the end of the funding period.

ST

Parental leave does not apply to preventive withdrawal. It may begin during the semester the birth or adoption is expected and must end no later than one year after the birth or arrival of the child. If parental leave begins during a semester following the child's birth, it must still end no later than one year after the birth or arrival of the child.

ST

Training award holders must advise the Fonds concerned of their intention to take parental leave and provide supporting documents in the form of a letter from the postsecondary institution confirming the suspension of the study project or program and the authorized suspension duration, or a medical certificate confirming the applicable situation (birth, adoption, interruption of pregnancy after 19 weeks). The Fonds reserve the right to verify the situation of the student or postdoctoral fellow. Upon resuming their studies, training award holders must provide the Fonds with proof of enrolment.

ST

Furthermore, during the authorized suspension of studies for the birth or adoption of a child, a training award holder may request an award supplement for parental leave for a period of six consecutive months. Only students who have already begun at least one semester as an training award holder are eligible for this supplement.

ST

The Fonds reserve the right to refuse any leave requests that contain insufficient justification or that do not comply with the conditions set out in these rules and individual program rules.

6.14 Medical Leave and Other Types of Leave Provided under the Act *Respecting Labour Standards*

RE

Grant holders who interrupt their research work to take sick leave or other types of leave stipulated in the *Act respecting labour standards* (CQLR, c. N-1.1) may request

an extension of the funding period, without any additional amount, for the leave period applicable to their situation and authorized by the managing institution. This extension period cannot be divided. If the managing institution offers a longer leave, the extension may, at the discretion of the Fonds, be as long as the leave granted by the institution in accordance with its current policies.

RE

To request a funding period extension, grant holders must provide the Fonds concerned with a medical certificate confirming their situation or a document from the grant managing institution attesting to the authorized leave duration. The Fonds reserve the right to verify the situation of the person concerned. At the end of the leave, the funding holder must inform the Fonds within the first week of resuming work.

RE

In the case of a research infrastructure, funding holders must ensure that provisions are made for an adequate replacement during their absence by a regular member of the infrastructure. The grant cannot be extended. The persons must also provide the Fonds with complete information on their replacement including confirmation from the managing institution.

RE

Career award holders who interrupt their research work to take sick leave or other types of leave stipulated in the *Act Respecting Labour Standards* are entitled to a deferral of their award. The deferral period cannot be divided. Career award holders must advise the FRQ in writing of their intention to defer the award.

ST

Training award holders who interrupt their research work to take sick leave or other types of leave stipulated in the *Act Respecting Labour Standards* can request an instalment deferral and the extension of their funding period, for as long as the university authorizes the suspension or interruption of studies. The Fonds reserves the right to re-evaluate the file.

ST

To request an award deferral, training award holders must complete and transmit a request (indicating the duration and reason for leave) and provide supporting documents in the form of a medical certificate confirming the applicable situation or a letter from the postsecondary institution confirming the suspension of the study project or program and the authorized suspension duration. The Fonds reserve the right to verify the situation of the student or postdoctoral fellow. Upon resuming their studies, training award holders must provide the Fonds with proof of enrolment.

RE

6.15 Leave without Pay

A funding holder under the *Research Support for New Academics* program or the *Research-Creation Support for New Academics* program who wishes to take an unpaid leave of absence may defer the award for a maximum of one extra year. Funding holders must:

- demonstrate that the leave of absence will not jeopardize the success of the research project;
- provide, by email, supporting documentation indicating the nature and length of the planned leave;
- transmit a supporting letter from their institution to the Fonds program officer concerned, confirming continuation of the employment relationship.

Leave without pay is considered an exception. The Fonds reserves the right to refuse any request.

This extension applies to research project funding holders. During the leave of absence, the Fonds could authorize expenses to “safeguard” the conduct of the research activities. These are incremental expenses that protect the ability to complete the work in progress upon return to work, such as the cost of secure cloud storage for the research data already collected at the time of the leave. Secondary expenses such as the purchase of books are excluded. The same applies to substantial expenses that would mean that, upon return to work, there would be no money left to carry out the research activity, unless the funding holder can conclusively demonstrate that he or she will pursue the research project during the extension period without funding from the Fonds.

In the case of a research infrastructure, the persons responsible must provide the Fonds with complete information on their replacement including confirmation from the managing institution.

RE

6.16 Research Sabbatical Leave for Career Award Holders

Career award holders may take a research sabbatical leave to take part in a training program or in activities that will advance their research program. The conditions are specified in the program rules.

SECTION 7. REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Funding holders must account for the financial, scientific and ethical use of appropriations made available to them within the deadlines prescribed by the Fonds.

RE

7.1 Financial Reports (Grants)

Financial reports for grants, including indirect costs of research (FIR) where applicable, must be completed at the times prescribed by the Fonds in the program rules, as indicated in section 6.2.

Financial reports must be prepared using the appropriate form and must be signed by the principal investigator or, in the case of a research centre or network (FRQS), by the research director and the managing institution's designated administrator.

On request, institutions must be able to provide financial reports and any supporting documents including:

- a list of personnel remunerated using grant: name, category, amount of compensation and length of employment in each case;
- a list of social benefits provided;
- a list of equipment, materials, supplies and diverse items purchased and the price of each item;
- a list of travel and accommodation expenses, specifying the nature of each cost;
- a list of conventions, meetings and symposia for which expenses were paid, and proof of participation in each activity.

7.2 Follow-up Reports

In this section, “follow-up reports” refers to progress reports, final reports and scientific reports.

RE

For all research projects, the grant holder or career award holder must prepare and submit one or more reports at the times specified by the Fonds in the program rules. Unless otherwise indicated in the program rules, all reports must be completed during the time in which the appropriate form is available in the FRQnet electronic portfolio, in the “Follow up on my funding” section.

RE

The final report must be submitted to the Fonds concerned by the date specified by the latter. If a final report is not submitted within the prescribed time, the funding holders may not receive new funding from any of the three Fonds or may have their payments suspended until the situation has been remedied. Any specific conditions or requirements with regard to the production or submission of the final report are specified in the program rules.

RE

The final report may be written in English or French. If written in English, it must be accompanied by a title and abstract in French. The conditions governing the submission of the report are set out in the program rules.

ST

Training or internship award holders must submit their reports to the Fonds that provided the award. The conditions relating to the submission of reports are described in the program rules. The final report is due at the time indicated in the “Follow up on my funding” section of the FRQnet electronic portfolio. The final report due date may change if the award end date changes. Future funding under a different program is contingent upon receipt of the final report.

7.3 Research Benefits and Valorization

Funding for research provided by the Fonds comes from public funds. For that reason, research outcomes—whether in the form of knowledge, products or services— must be disseminated and new knowledge must be transferred for the benefit of Québec society as a whole. Subject to certain conditions (e.g. reasonable delays for obtaining patents), researchers must have the freedom to publish their outcomes. Institutions and funding holders have primary responsibility for the valorization of their research.

SECTION 8. ELIGIBLE AND NON-ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Obtaining public funds is a privilege given on the basis of excellence, and with this privilege comes the responsibility of properly managing the funds. It is the responsibility of grant holders and their managing institution, as well as training or career award holders, to ensure sound management of the funds they receive, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and the rules set forth by the Fonds in this document and in all other documents referred to herein.

Any expenses that are not on the list of eligible expenses provided in these Common General Rules are considered non-eligible unless authorized in the program rules. For questions relating to eligibility of expenses, funding holders should contact their institution's research office or the program manager at the Fonds concerned.

Any use of funding in a manner not in accordance with the Common General Rules or the program rules constitutes a breach of responsible research conduct (See the Fonds de recherche du Québec *Policy for the Responsible Conduct of Research* Québec in the *Ethics* section on the website of each Fonds). Sums used to pay non-eligible expenses must be reimbursed to the Fonds and the poor management of public funds may be subject to additional sanctions.

RE

8.1 General Principles

The Fonds adhere to the principles of sound management of public funds in determining eligibility of expenses. They require all expenses to be directly attributable to and necessary for the execution of the activities specified in the grant application, and permitted under the program rules. The Fonds are committed to ensuring that no expense should serve to provide personal gain for funding holders or their family or be used for a purpose that is not directly related to the funded research activities. Public funds need to be tightly and wisely managed.

Even if the grant amount is lower than the need expressed in the application, funding holders must respect the framework set up for each program. Changes may be accepted by the Fonds provided that the person responsible for the grant requests prior authorization via email with appropriate supporting documentation.

With the exception of awards intended for studies outside of Québec, funding is delivered in Québec. Reimbursement for services that are not available in Québec may exceptionally be eligible following prior authorization by the Fonds concerned.

RE

8.2 Indirect Costs of Research

Indirect costs of research (known by the French acronym FIR) are the indirect costs incurred by universities to support research. They cover the institution's general expenditures that are indirectly related to the implementation of research projects.

Non-university institutions recognized by the FRQ to manage funding must cover these general expenditures.

Since 2014-2015, the Fonds are provided with a budget for the funding of the FIR exclusively for projects supported by the Fonds. In the case of research supported by a partnership between the Fonds and one of more partners, only the Fonds share of project funding is taken into consideration in calculating the FIR paid by the Fonds. Each of the other partners assumes its share of the FIR, either through the Fonds or directly to the institution. When funds are transferred between institutions, for example under a grant, the managing institution is responsible for transferring the amounts associated to the FIR.

The amounts paid by the Fonds for FIR are used to cover expenses related to the management and administration of the institution's research activities, including expenditures that fall within the following categories:

- Research facilities
- Research resources
- Regulatory requirements and accreditation
- Intellectual property and institutional communications.

ST

8.3 Funding for Training Award Holders

Training awards are intended only to support study or research programs, in accordance with the conditions set forth in the program rules. The financial conditions of each training award, including conditions relating to concurrent funding, paid work, etc., are specified in the program rules.

RE

8.4 Compensation, Training and Professional Fees

Funding must not be used to pay salaries or salary supplements to persons whose salaries are paid out of the regular budget of a government-funded institution such as a university, a college, a government department or its institutions, or any other government agency.

Eligible Expenses

- Compensation and social benefits, where applicable, of personnel (research professionals and associates, project coordinators, clinical research personnel, research technicians, clerical staff, researchers with no institutional affiliation, information professionals, research assistants), are allowed, as per the managing institution's pay scales. In this regard, the Fonds recommends that the length of contracts offered to employees correspond to the duration of the funding obtained.
- Awards, award supplements, and salary for college, undergraduate and graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

- Fees for professional artists, consultants, invited speakers and expert advisors as per the financial guidelines used by the managing institution. In the case of a consultant outside Québec, this cannot exceed 10% of the grant or the maximum amount specified in the program rules.
- Professional fees for website development and maintenance, provided they are justified and related to the grant or the award.
- Training and upgrading for personnel required to use specialized equipment or facilities.
- Sums or compensation paid to research participants that have been approved by the ethics committee.
- The cost of ethics review performed outside Québec, if the review performed in Québec is not recognized outside Québec (where research activities are taking place).

Non-Eligible Expenses

- Compensation of principal investigators, co-investigators or regular members, except in the case of research centre grants (FRQS).
- Compensation of persons whose salaries are paid out of the regular budget of a government-funded institution such as a university, a college, a government department or its institutions, or any other government agency (unless authorized in the program rules).
- Tuition fees.
- Professional corporation and association dues and practice licence fees.
- Severance pay.
- Consulting fees between colleagues at a postsecondary institution or health network institution.
- Salaries of students and postdoctoral fellows registered in institutions outside Québec.
- Costs associated with releasing the funding holder from teaching or clinical activities to carry out research or coordination activities, unless authorized in the program rules.
- Any part of the salaries or social benefits of persons whose university status renders them eligible for Fonds funding.
- Administrative salaries, except when specified in the program rules.
- Staff bonuses and rewards.
- Paid union leave.
- Supplementary employment insurance benefits for maternity leave.
- Professional fees for researchers outside Québec.

8.5 Travel and Subsistence Costs (as per the Financial Guidelines of the Managing Institution)

Eligible Expenses

- Cost of land travel up to the equivalent of economy airfare at the lowest rate available and subsistence costs necessary for the execution of activities related to the grant or the award, which may include carbon offsetting. These costs are only covered for principal investigators, co-investigators, their research personnel, students and postdoctoral fellows under their direction, their collaborators, and research participants where applicable.
- Travel cancellation insurance, seat reservation fees, first checked bag fees.
- Travel health insurance premiums for research personnel who do not receive any such benefits from their organization and/or other sources.
- Entry visa fees (for grant holder or research personnel) if necessary for the research being undertaken.
- The amount of \$230 for the employer compliance fee paid to Citizenship and Immigration Canada under the International Mobility Program (fee for hiring foreign nationals).
- Participation in seminars, science conferences, symposia or workshops, provided the objectives are in line with the grant research objectives, or that the person responsible for the grant or one of the researchers presents a paper or is otherwise actively involved in the event (e.g. chairperson, roundtable participant, facilitator). Proof of participation must be attached to the claim for expenses.
- Meal costs associated with holding seminars, science conferences, symposia or workshops related to the funded research or in the context of activities to facilitate the conduct of the research, subject to prior authorization by the FRQ and compliance with the per diem amount of the managing institution or the Government of Québec⁷.
- Caregiver costs for persons with a dependent adult or child (as defined by the Québec taxation system and, more specifically, single parents, nursing mothers, persons with an elderly or disabled dependent, etc.) due to short-term travel undertaken for scientific activities (maximum of \$1,000 per year per grant).

Non-Eligible Expenses

- Costs incurred by students, postdoctoral fellows or researchers for selection interviews.
- Researchers' travel expenses during a sabbatical or unpaid leave.
- Meal costs that are a part of regular interactions with colleagues (e.g. staff meetings).
- Meal costs that exceed the per diem amount of the managing institution or the Government of Québec⁸.
- Commuting between home and workplace or between two workplaces.

⁷ <http://www4.gouv.qc.ca/fr/Portail/citoyens/programme-service/Pages/Info.aspx?sqctype=sujet&sqcid=2129>

⁸ Id.

- Moving expenses, laboratory relocation and transport of personal goods.
- Airline fare for travel in first class or business class.
- Costs associated with passports and immigration, vaccines and medications, insurance and visas.
- Costs unrelated to project safety and security for work in the field or the laboratory (purchase or rental of protective equipment, routine vaccinations and medications).

RE

8.6 Material, Equipment and Resources

Eligible Expenses

- Materials and supplies directly related to research activities, and transportation expenses where applicable.
- Purchase of animals for research purposes.
- Purchase or leasing of research equipment directly related to research activities. Note that researchers must ensure that any equipment purchased is the most energy-efficient on the market.
- Works necessary for carrying out the research activities.
- Research equipment maintenance, transportation and repair, and extended equipment warranties.
- Project safety and security for work in the field or laboratory (purchase or rental of protective equipment, essential vaccinations and medications).
- Secure disposal of waste.
- Computers, tablets, modems, routers, emerging technology and other hardware and/or specialized software required for the research being undertaken and not normally provided by the institution, with adequate justification.
- Data banks (access or purchase).
- Monthly plan fees for electronic devices when being used for research purposes (e.g. data collection) and/or for personnel safety reasons only.

The FRQ support sustainable development. The reuse of equipment and the purchase of used material are therefore permitted, where appropriate.

Non-Eligible Expenses

- Indirect research costs (see list in section 8.2), except where permitted by the program rules.
- Acquisitions for an institution library.
- Purchase, leasing, repair or maintenance of office furniture, furnishings and equipment, e.g. fax machines, filing cabinets and shelves.
- Insurance premiums for equipment and vehicles used for the research.

RE

8.7 Common Research Platforms or Infrastructures

The Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI) and a number of other funding organizations have contributed to the installation of common research platforms, some

of which are in the research centres and laboratories of researchers funded by the Fonds.

These common research infrastructures are a favoured means of supporting cutting-edge research that contributes significantly to enhancing the competitiveness of Québec researchers. However, these platforms, often consisting of specialized equipment or a specific combination of equipment and resources, not only mean high purchase costs but also hefty operating and maintenance costs.

RE

8.8 Telecommunication Costs

Eligible Expenses

- Monthly charges for the use of the Internet at the institution, only when this service is required for the purpose of the research being undertaken and not normally provided by the institution free of charge, subject to appropriate justification.
- Cellular phones, smartphones or other electronic devices when they are necessary for the research being undertaken (e.g. for data collection) and/or for personnel safety reasons with adequate justification.
- Video conferencing costs.

Non-Eligible Expenses

- Monthly connection or rental costs of telephones.
- Connection or installation of lines (telephone or other links).
- Voice mail services fees.
- Computer and other information services provided to all members of an institution.

RE

8.9 Dissemination and Knowledge Transfer Costs

Eligible Expenses

- Website development and maintenance related to the grant or the award.
- Activities for knowledge transfer (e.g. organization of seminars, study days, symposia or training sessions) and dissemination to the general public (media relations, video production, social media, general public activities, production of popularized content).
- Translation of research articles and reports.
- Open access publishing in accordance with Fonds requirements (see the [*Fonds de recherche du Québec Open Access Policy for the Dissemination of Research*](#)).
- Reproduction and dissemination of funded research.

Non-Eligible Expenses

- Costs associated with the protection of intellectual property (patents or licences), technology transfer activities or commercial development.

- Printing or reproduction of books.

RE

8.10 Other Non-Eligible Expenses

- Financial contributions that are not directly related to the execution of funded research activities.
- The transfer of funds to any other account not related to the grant or the award.
- Costs associated with the submission of a grant renewal application.
- Hospitality-related expenses (e.g. benefit evenings).
- Entertainment and gifts.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Education-related costs such as thesis preparation, tuition and course fees.
- Professional training or development, such as computer or language courses.
- Preparation of teaching materials.
- Costs associated with regulatory compliance, including ethics review carried out in Québec, biohazard or radiation safety, environmental assessments and provincial or municipal regulations or by-laws (covered by the indirect research costs or FIR).
- Monthly parking fees for vehicles, unless specifically required for work in the field.
- Exempted or refundable sales tax.
- Costs of regular clothing.
- Banking fees.

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