

DMSS Student Innovation and Research Award

1. Background

DMSS has been in a financially comfortable place for a few years, generating a surplus each year. Our goal as a student society is to judiciously create and allocate an annual budget in a meaningful way to meet students' demands or to improve student life. Currently, there is an unmet need at Dal Med for research funding that is not related to RIM, and this is a great opportunity for DMSS to support student research and help reduce barriers.

2. Proposal

Development of an application process wherein students can apply on an ongoing basis. The selection committee (see below) will evaluate applications on an ongoing basis and decide on the number and amount of grants to be distributed for that application cycle. This funding is not meant to cover all research costs but rather to help reduce out-of-pocket costs. The students will access this funding by requesting reimbursement from the VP Finance as usual.

2.1. Application Criteria

- Applicant must be a member of the DMSS;
- Research project is not a part of the RIM program;
- Applicant must actively be looking for other means of funding.

2.2. Committee

The selection committee will comprise of 6 representative members to provide expertise input aligned with their portfolios:

1. Past-President: *Chair*. Provides institutional guidance with knowledge of DMSS documents.
2. VP Med Ed: *Vice-Chair*. Coordinates resources provided by the DMSS and UGME.
3. VP NB: *Advisor*. Coordinates NB applications and resources specific to NB.
4. DMJ Editor-in-Chief: *Advisor*. Evaluates the scientific quality of the application.
5. Student Diversity and Inclusion Committee Representative: *Advisor*. Provides a critical lens to ensure that our processes are aligned with the DMSS Equity Statement.
6. Appointed member: *Advisor*. Appointed from the general student body based on strong research background.

2.3. Timeline

The selection committee will meet on the first week of October, December, February, April, and June. Each application cycle will start 2 months prior and thus span 2 months (e.g. The October cycle will run August 1st-October 1st). This creates 5 opportunities in the academic year to grant funding for projects that are organized throughout the year. Each application cycle will start anew, and previous applications will not be automatically carried over; however, students will be encouraged to continue applying.

2.4. Resources

The primary purpose of this committee is to provide financial support, and a secondary goal is to promote strong student research. With all applications, the selection committee will provide feedback and relevant details that were taken into consideration. With declined applications in particular, the selection committee will develop constructive comments to improve the application for the next cycle. The committee will also provide additional resources and other potential funding streams where appropriate.

2.5. Accountability

The selection committee will be accountable to the DMSS. The Past-President must create a bi-monthly report following an application cycle to present at the DMSS meeting.

2.6. Scope of funding

The funding decisions will be up to the discretion of the selection committee. The committee may decide to spend all of the allocated amount for a given application cycle or not, in which case the outstanding sum will be carried over to the next application cycle. The committee will take into consideration the benefits and costs to funding certain aspects of student research, such as data analysis, publication costs, conferences, etc.

3. Conflict of Interest

All applications will be stripped of identifiers without compromising the quality of the application by the Chair of DMSS prior to the committee meeting. Applications will be objectively evaluated by committee members before the bi-monthly review, at which point members will declare conflict of interest.

Committee members will be required to disclose any existing or potential conflict of interest promptly. These members may provide input on the applications in question but must recuse themselves from the decision-making. The selection committee will operate in line with the internal Student Innovation and Research Award Conflict of Interest Policy and the broader Dalhousie University's Conflict of Interest Policy.