MS | SP Canada

MS CANADA

**DISCOVERY RESEARCH GRANT
PROGRAM GUIDE**

Revised July 2025

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 MS CANADA

Established in 1948, MS Canada (MSC) is a charity dedicated to providing services to people affected by multiple sclerosis (MS) and funding the highest-quality research that seeks to understand the causes and disease mechanisms of MS and determine strategies to potentially prevent and treat MS. MSC is empowered to provide research funding in the form of grants and awards for researchers and trainees within lawfully established agencies or institutions to further its mission.

Our Vision: A world free of multiple sclerosis.
The Mission: To connect and empower the MS community to create positive change.

1.2 DISCOVERY RESEARCH GRANT

The Discovery Research Grant program is intended to support research that will help generate new scientific knowledge and improve the health and quality of life of people affected by MS.

The Discovery Research Grant supports investigator-initiated research proposals and there are no topic restrictions imposed, other than the required demonstration of relevance to MS. Proposals should address research questions in one or more of the impact goal areas identified in the MSC strategic plan:

- **Advance Treatment and Care:** Research that aims to advance treatment and care for people affected by MS (e.g. symptom management; diagnosis; developing new treatments and understanding their mechanisms, understanding and evaluating interventions to address mental health, wellness/self-care, and rehabilitation in people living with MS; innovations in the provision of health services, clinical care practices and models of care; and advances in healthcare delivery/policy).

- **Enhance Well-being:** Research that aims to understand how to enhance the well-being of people affected by MS within communities (e.g. understanding the social determinants of health; assessing the health economics/cost benefit analysis on MS interventions and support structures and systems; evaluation of community-based programs; and advances in health systems research/policy).

- **Understand and Halt Disease Progression:** Research that aims to understand the etiology and mechanisms of MS, disease progression, progressive MS, and repair (e.g., myelin biology, neurobiology, neurophysiology, immunology, neuropathology, and imaging).

- **Prevent MS:** Research that aims to prevent MS (e.g., identifying new risk factors for disease, understanding the mechanisms of risk factors leading to disease including interactions and timing, developing risk assessment and screening tools for MS, understanding preclinical/prodromal MS, identifying biomarkers from initial immune dysfunction to clinical presentation, developing effective interventions for modifiable lifestyle risk factors, health economic/cost benefit analysis on prevention, and defining highest risk populations).

For smaller studies that aim to test new ideas and interventions, or pioneer new approaches and avenues of research, please visit the Catalyst Research Grant page for more information.

1.3 ADMINISTRATION OF THE DISCOVERY RESEARCH GRANT

The administration of the Discovery Research Grant program is the responsibility and function of MSC's Research Department at the National Office.

2. COMPETITION AND GRANT INFORMATION

2.1 MSC COMPETITION SCHEDULE

The Discovery Research Grant competition is launched as part of the annual research and awards competition that also includes Catalyst Research Grants and endMS Personnel awards. MSC offers an annual research grants and awards competition which launches in July and closes on **October 2 at 4:00 PM Eastern time**. For full details visit the MS Canada website.

2.2 ELIGIBILITY

Principal Investigator (PI): The PI is listed as the primary applicant/contact and is responsible for overseeing the research conducted as part of the proposal. The PI must be considered eligible by their institution to apply for a research grant. The PI does not have to be a Canadian citizen, but must be conducting research in a Canadian institution which is recognized by the Tri-Council Agencies. The PI is autonomous regarding their research activities, has a faculty appointment that allows the individual to pursue the proposed research, and is equipped to supervise trainees and publish research activities. There can be only one (1) PI per grant application who will assume scientific and administrative oversight for the study.

Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI): The Co-PI is an individual who shares responsibility for the direction of the proposed research project with the PI and meets the eligibility criteria of a PI. There are no restrictions as to the number of Co-PIs per application.

Co-Applicant: The Co-Applicant contributes to the progress of the research and conducts components of the project under the leadership of the PI. The contribution of the Co-Applicant must be clearly outlined. A Co-Applicant must have an appointment in a university department, but no specific rank is required. A postdoctoral fellow can be a co-applicant but must be in the same university department as the PI (or Co PI).

Collaborator: A Collaborator is an individual external to the research team whose role is to provide a specific service to support and advance the proposed research (e.g. access to equipment, training in a specialized technique, statistical analysis, etc.). Collaborators are required to provide a letter of collaboration which outlines their role on the project. Collaborators can be recruited from international institutions only if their role fills an unmet need that is not available in Canada.

Institution: Institutions are the official recipients of grants made for the support of specific research by the PI. MSC only accepts applications from a Canadian institution which is recognized by the Tri-Council

Agencies.

Concurrent Grant Submissions: The PI may concurrently submit a maximum of one (1) new Catalyst Research Grant application and one (1) Discovery Research Grant application per competition. The PI can hold a maximum of two (2) Discovery Research Grants and one (1) Catalyst Research Grant at any one time. Data and outcomes that will be derived from the Catalyst Research Grant should not overlap with those from a Discovery Research Grant, but the topics can be related.

2.3 TERM AND FUNDING

Term of Funding: MSC supports Discovery Research Grants for up to three (3) years.

Amount of Funding: Discovery Research Grants are expected to be within a range of ~$50,000-$100,000 per year. Budgets may not exceed a maximum value of $300,000.

Submitted applications must include aims that align with the scope and budget of the Discovery program to be considered for funding.

2.4 RESUBMISSION AND RENEWAL

Renewal Grants: Support beyond the maximum term of funding for a Discovery Research Grant (i.e. 3 years) will require submission of a new grant application that will be subject to review in direct competition with other new grant applications.

Resubmissions: Applications that were unsuccessful in their previous submission to the MSC Discovery Research Grant competition are considered resubmissions. Resubmitting an application is permitted. An application is considered to be a resubmission if the overall research plan (hypothesis and aims) are similar to what was outlined in the initial or subsequent submissions. MSC may choose to reclassify a new application as a resubmission if it is very similar to a previous application from the PI. Resubmissions will be assessed according to the review criteria for a new application and must include a "response to the previous review" demonstrating substantive modification to the proposal addressing the reviewers' comments. A Discovery Research Grant application can only be re-submitted twice, for a total of three submissions.

2.5 PARTNERSHIP FUNDING

MSC reserves the right to establish funding partnerships with relevant provincial and federal funding agencies for any or all of its funding opportunities. Applicants will be notified in a timely manner of partnership terms and conditions.

The ratios for matching the partner's financial contribution (in cash and, if applicable, in-kind) will vary depending on the funding opportunity. The letter of agreement or amendment to the agreement will specify the amounts to be contributed by both MSC and the partner. Please visit MS Canada's website for information on available partnership funding.

3. REVIEW AND RESULTS

3.1 REVIEW PROCESS

3.1.1. INDEPENDENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

Applications submitted to the Discovery Research Grant competition are reviewed by members of an independent review committee selected by MSC. The overarching principles inherent in the allocation of MSC funds are excellence, equity of opportunity, impact and due diligence in the use of MSC funding.

MSC engages the scientific and clinical communities as well as the public in the review process. Individuals affected by MS who serve on the review committee are called community representatives. Involvement of community representatives ensures transparency of the review process and effective communication with public stakeholders. The committee includes a Chair, an established researcher in the MS scientific community who oversees the entire process and presides over the review meetings to guide the committee to a consensus rating. The committee also includes a scientific officer (SO), who is a senior MS researcher tasked with taking detailed notes throughout the review process.

Scientific reviewers assess the scientific merit, feasibility, novelty, and the human and research impact of each application. Community representatives review the plain language summary of each application. Final scores from both the scientific and community representative reviewers will be considered in making final funding decisions. If the plain language summary of an approved grant is deemed to be unsatisfactory by a community representative, the applicant will be notified of conditional approval of their grant, and funding of the grant is subject to the receipt and approval of a revised plain language summary.

3.1.2. EVALUATION AND STREAMLINING OF APPLICATIONS

Once all applications are submitted, MSC, in collaboration with the committee Chair assign applications to reviewers based on their expertise. Each application is reviewed by two scientific reviewers – referred to as the primary reviewer and secondary reviewer – and one community representative based on the following review criteria:

Review Criteria for Scientific Reviewers

A. **Research approach**: clarity of research questions, completeness of literature review and relevance to study design /research plan, clarity of rationale for the research approach and methodology with sufficient preliminary data, appropriateness of research design and methods, including the consideration of sex and/or gender and principles of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA), and feasibility of research approach.
B. **Originality of the proposal:** potential for creation of new knowledge and originality of the proposed research.
C. **Impact of research**: research proposal addresses a significant need or gap in MS research, potential for a significant contribution to the improvement of the quality of life of people with MS, plan for research dissemination and exchange.
D. **Investigator(s):** qualifications of applicant(s), expertise and experience in the proposed area of research, scientific contributions, ability to disseminate

research findings, and appropriateness of the team of applicants.

E. **Resources and environment:** availability and accessibility of personnel, facilities and infrastructure required to conduct the research, suitability of the environment to conduct the proposed research and for the training of personnel.

F. **Budget**: realistic in terms of aims, methodology and anticipated timelines; all items must be justified and comply with MSC Policies.

Review Criteria for Community Representatives

Community representatives review the plain language summary of each Discovery Research Grant application. They provide an enthusiasm rating and comments based on the following:

- Relevance to critical needs and challenges faced by people affected by MS.
- Capacity for the project to yield outcomes that will impact the health and quality of life of people affected by MS.
- Comprehension/accessibility of the plain language summary.

For guidance on how to write the plain language summary of your application, see Writing for a Non-Scientific Audience.

Scoring and Streamlining Applications

The scientific reviewers and community representatives assign a preliminary score or enthusiasm rating respectively for each application they assess based on the charts below. The Chair and Scientific Officer (SO) do not assign preliminary scores. The scientific scores provide MSC and committee Chair with an indication of the quality of the proposals submitted. They also serve as benchmarks for determining which applications will be discussed at the review meeting. Any application that receives a score below 3.5 from **both** the primary and secondary scientific reviewer, or a suitable cut-off score as determined by MSC in discussion with the review committee Chair, might not be discussed at the review meeting. The community representative's enthusiasm rating provides an indication of the proposal's relevance and potential impact to people affected by MS.

Scientific Scoring Chart

Descriptor	Range	Definition
Outstanding	4.5 – 4.9	The application excels in most or all relevant aspects. Any shortcomings are minimal. *If an application is innovative, fills an important critical gap in knowledge, has very few flaws, and the investigators are well poised to perform the research and have a very productive track record.*
Excellent	4.0 – 4.4	The application excels in many relevant aspects and reasonably addresses all others. Certain improvements are possible.

		If an application is very interesting, makes important advances, the team is excellent, but there are some minor limitations that need to be addressed, or a clear description of impact is missing.
Good	3.5 – 3.9	The application excels in some relevant aspects and reasonably addresses all others. Some improvements are necessary. *If an application is compelling, but has limited scope or impact, and/or raised some concerns about the feasibility and/or team; or in other words, the grant has strengths but needs work.*
Fair	3.0 – 3.4	The application broadly addresses relevant aspects. Major revisions are required. *If an application has merits but also has many limitations. Will not be funded.*
Poor	0.0 – 2.9	The application fails to provide convincing information and/or has serious inherent flaws or gaps. *If an application has significant flaws and is not ready to be funded. Will not be funded.*

Community Representative Overall Enthusiasm Level Chart

Overall Enthusiasm Level	Definition
High (3)	Highly relevant with potential to impact health and quality of life for people affected by MS; there is high enthusiasm for this project.
High/Medium (2.5)	High to moderate relevance with potential to impact health and quality of life for people affected by MS; there is high to medium enthusiasm for this project.
Medium (2)	Moderate relevance with potential to impact health and quality of life for people affected by MS; there is medium enthusiasm for this project.
Medium/Low (1.5)	Moderate to low relevance with unclear potential for impact on health and quality of life for people affected by MS; there is medium to low enthusiasm for this project.
Low (1)	Low relevance and impact on health and quality of life for people affected by MS. Based on the plain language summary, the proposed research is not addressing a critical need or challenge relevant to MS; there is low enthusiasm for this project.

Community Representatives will also assess the plain language summary of the application based on comprehension and accessibility. They will provide a rating (i.e., high, medium, low) and feedback that

will allow applicants to potentially improve the plain language summary of their application and better articulate the impact and relevance of the proposed research.

3.1.3. REVIEW AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Once the primary and secondary scientific reviewers as well as the community representatives evaluate the applications, the review committee meets to engage in an open discussion about the applications. For each application, the primary, secondary, and community representative reviewers discuss their comments and raise any issues that should be deliberated by the committee. The committee Chair then asks for a consensus score (a score that the two scientific reviewers can agree upon based on the discussion), after which each scientific committee member (except for the Chair and Scientific Officer) votes within 0.5 points above or below the scientific consensus score. The committee Chair will re-engage the community representative and confirm if their enthusiasm level has changed as a result of the discussion. Community representatives will then participate in the voting process by entering their overall enthusiasm level following the discussion.

Once all of the scores are tallied, the committee discusses appropriate potential cut-off scores for funding depending on the distribution of scores from both the scientific and community representative reviewers, which will be considered together. All applications recommended for funding must meet the scientific cut-off score to be considered fundable. Committee members who were identified as having a conflict of interest with a particular application are not included in the discussion and scoring of the application.

3.1.4. FINAL APPROVAL

A recommendation for funding is discussed with MSC's Medical Advisory Committee (MAC) – comprised of researchers and clinicians who provide strategic input and advice on scientific and medical matters that impact MSC and its stakeholders. The MAC assesses the review committee's recommendation through a wider lens of emerging trends in research and the strategic priorities of MSC, and provides their input and advice to MSC's Board of Directors that approves final funding decisions.

3.2 COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS

All applicants will be notified by MSC regarding the funding status of their applications regardless of the outcome and will be provided reviewer comments, both the scientific and non-scientific evaluations of their application, which are anonymized.

For **successful applications only**, MSC will post limited information on the website (i.e. name of the applicants, department, institution, term, amount of award, project title, and a plain language summary of the research proposal). MSC does not publish or otherwise disclose details related to unsuccessful applications.

4. ONLINE APPLICATION PROCEDURE

MSC uses an online research grants and awards management system called **ProposalCentral** which enables researchers to submit and review applications. ProposalCentral can be accessed through the following website: https://proposalcentral.com.

Interested applicants **must create a profile on ProposalCentral** through which they can complete the application process. Important things to note:

- If you have already created a profile and forgot your login information, click on the "Forgot Your Password?" link. If you have any difficulties registering, logging in, or creating your application, contact ProposalCentral customer support at: 800-875-2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada) or by email at pcsupport@altum.com. See the ProposalCentral FAQ for additional information.

- For new applicants, ensure that you complete your Professional and Institutional Profiles before starting an application. **Completion of the following sections in your Professional Profile is required: Contact Information, Degrees, Personal Data, and Account Information.**

- Applicants are required to connect their ORCiD identifier, a persistent and unique digital identifier, to the ProposalCentral profile. ORCiD will connect your iD with your professional information (e.g., grants, publications, funding, etc.). If you don't have an ORCiD, you can easily create one in a few minutes.

- Please review the MSC Discovery Research Grant Policies prior to submitting an application. If you have any questions regarding eligibility, please contact ms.grants@mscanada.ca

- Please ensure that your contact information (institution, address, phone number, and e-mail) are **correct** and **up to date**. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the submitted application contains all required components.

- **Applications that are incomplete, do not adhere to the format and assigned page limits, or are submitted after the deadline may be disqualified from the competition.**

- MSC accepts applications in French. French applications may be translated into English to align with reviewer expertise. If you intend to submit your application in French, please contact ms.grants@mscanada.ca.

DISCOVERY RESEARCH GRANT

To start your application, login to your ProposalCentral account, click on the Grant Opportunities button at the top right-hand corner, and enter "MS Canada" in the search box. You must apply to the program called "Discovery Research Grant".

Below is a list of required information and documents as part of the Discovery Research Grant application. Satisfactory completion and submission of all documents is required for consideration in the competition.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all guidelines are followed and the submitted application

contains all required components. **Failure to submit all required documents will result in an incomplete application and will be disqualified from the competition**.

4.1 FIELDS TO BE COMPLETED IN PROPOSALCENTRAL

1. **TITLE PAGE**

   This section contains the following fields that must be completed in ProposalCentral.

   - **Project Title:** Enter a **scientific title** for your research project. Ensure that the title accurately and concisely captures the overall objective of your research project.

   - **Sub-program:** Select the most appropriate stream for your research project:

     - **Biomedical Research:** Research that uncovers the biological, pathological, and mechanistic aspects of MS, and provides fundamental knowledge about the development, progression, prevention and treatment of MS disease. Studies can involve *in vitro*, animal, and/or human models.

     - **Clinical & Population Health:** Research with the goal of improving diagnosis, treatment, health outcomes, and/or quality of life of people with MS. This stream would include clinical research, population health research, health services research, and other research that builds on our knowledge and understanding of the complex, biological, social, cultural and environmental interactions that influence the health and well-being of individuals and populations.

   - **Eligibility Quiz:** Applicants must successfully pass the Eligibility Quiz for the application to be considered. False information will result in an application being disqualified.

   - **Resubmission Questions:** Indicate if the research proposal has been submitted to previous Discovery Research Grant competitions (include the date, application title and ID of the previous submission). A Discovery Research Grant application can only be re-submitted twice, for a total of three submissions.

2. **DOWNLOAD TEMPLATES & INSTRUCTIONS**

   The Discovery Research Grant Policies, Program Guidelines, FAQ, and all application templates can be downloaded. See Section 4.2 for instructions on how to complete and upload the templates provided (i.e., Research Proposal; Plain Language Summary; Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) in Research; Figures; References; Research Timeline; Addressing Reviewers' Recommendations; Primary Applicant and Key Personnel CV; and Required Signatures).

3. **APPLICANT INFORMATION**

   - Enter your name, institution, program details, and contact information directly into ProposalCentral. Some information may be pre-populated from your profile; please update the information as required.

- Please indicate your career stage (early, mid, senior career researcher) as defined by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

4. INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY

Complete the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) questionnaire. Some information may be pre-populated from your profile; please update the information as required.

Please note that your information will only be seen by authorized MSC staff. Chairs, Scientific Officers, and review committee members will NOT be able to see this information. The data collected will only be used in aggregated form in order to protect the identity of individuals. This data is important to evaluate and understand equity and diversity in our programs.

Your privacy is important to us, and MS Canada complies with applicable Canadian federal and provincial privacy laws. Our full privacy policy may be found here.

5. INSTITUTION

Enter the details of your primary institution (where funding will be received). Some information may be pre-populated from your profile; please update the information as required.

6. KEY PERSONNEL

Enter the e-mail address of Co-Principal Investigator(s), Co-Applicant(s) and Collaborator(s) (if applicable), and use the pop-up box to enter their name and professional affiliation. Please ensure that all information is correct and up to date. Consult the Eligibility section above and the MSC Discovery Research Grant Policies for personnel definitions.

7. PROJECT INFORMATION

This section contains the following fields that must be completed in ProposalCentral. Ensure that all character limits are adhered to; additional characters will be removed.

- **Scientific Summary:** Provide a brief summary of the proposed research project. Maximum 300 words or equivalent character count. Please note that the Scientific Summary will be sent to potential scientific reviewers to identify conflict of interest and levels of expertise, therefore, ensure that the summary is a clear representation of the research project being proposed.

- **Impact Goal Areas:** Select which MSC impact goal area best represents your research project:

  - **Advance Treatment and Care:** Research that aims to advance treatment and care for people affected by MS (e.g. symptom management; diagnosis; developing new treatments and understanding their mechanisms; understanding and evaluating interventions to address mental health, wellness/self-care, and rehabilitation in people living with MS; innovations in the provision of health services, clinical care practices and models of care; and advances in healthcare delivery/policy).

- o **Enhance Well-being:** Research that aims to understand how to enhance the well-being of people affected by MS within communities (e.g. understanding the social determinants of health; assessing the health economics/cost benefit analysis on MS interventions and support structures and systems; evaluation of community-based programs; and advances in health systems research/policy).

- o **Understand and Halt Disease Progression:** Research that aims to understand the etiology and mechanisms of MS, disease progression, progressive MS, and neuroprotection/repair (e.g., myelin biology, neurobiology, neurophysiology, immunology, neuropathology, and imaging).

- o **Prevent MS:** Research that aims to prevent MS (e.g., identifying new risk factors for disease, understanding the mechanisms of risk factors leading to disease including interactions and timing, developing risk assessment and screening tools for MS, understanding preclinical/prodromal MS, identifying biomarkers from initial immune dysfunction to clinical presentation, developing effective interventions for modifiable lifestyle risk factors, health economic/cost benefit analysis on prevention, and defining highest risk populations).

- **Priority Areas:** Select a research priority area that best represents your research project (e.g. Cause and risk factors of MS; Cognition and mental health; Diagnosis; Life-modifying therapies; Progression/progressive MS; Repair/remyelination).

8. **BUDGET PERIOD DETAIL**

Enter the budget per year for a maximum of 3 years (i.e. Period 1-3). The maximum amount that can be requested over the grant term is $300,000. If the timeline for the project is longer than 3 years, there must be an appropriate justification provided. Consult the Policies for all eligible expenditures.

9. **BUDGET SUMMARY AND JUSTIFICATION**

Use this section to provide a justification for the proposed budget.

- Details and justification of all budget items relative to the proposed research are required.
- In the **Appendix**, applicants may include electronic copies of quotations and other information useful to the reviewers.
- MSC does not fund indirect costs. Consult the Policies for all eligible expenditures.
- If the research proposal is a clinical trial, MSC will consider a term longer than 3 years if appropriately justified; however, the amount requested must be $300,000 for the full grant term.

4.2 UPLOADS

The documents that may be uploaded for this application are listed below. Note that some uploads will have templates available in ProposalCentral (see below). **Do NOT upload any password protected,**

secured or encrypted documents as they will not upload properly to your application.

Required Uploads	Template Availability	Required	Page Limit
A. Plain Language Summary	Yes	Yes	1
B. Research Proposal	Yes	Yes	10
C. Figures	Yes	No	5
D. References	Yes	Yes	N/A
E. Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) in Research	Yes	Yes	1
F. Research Timeline	Yes	Yes	N/A
G. Addressing Reviewers' Recommendations (for resubmissions only)	Yes	Resubmission only	2
H. CV (for Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator(s), and Co-Applicant(s))	Yes	Yes	8 per CV
I. Relevant Publications	No	No	3 full publications and/or manuscripts
J. Required Signatures	Yes	Yes	N/A
K. Appendix • Letters of Collaboration	No	No	N/A

Formatting Instructions: Single spaced; font style and size must be Times New Roman 12 points; margins must be no less than ½"; pages in excess of the limit will not be reviewed. **All uploads must contain relevant headers within the documents; e.g. Research Proposal, Figures, References, etc.**

A. Plain Language Summary:

- In non-scientific, everyday language, provide a summary of the proposed research and describe why it is important and relevant to people affected by MS. One (1) page maximum.
- This section will be reviewed by the non-scientific reviewers on the review committee, referred to as Community Representatives. Community Representative reviews will be considered in making final funding decisions. Failure to meet the criteria of a satisfactory plain language summary as determined by the Community Representatives will result in the applicant resubmitting this section for approval.
- The content from this section will also be used to develop our 'Research Studies We Fund' page. This information may be shared with various stakeholders – including people living with MS, MSC staff, volunteers, and donors – to describe the value of the research supported through our programs.
- For guidance on how to write a plain language summary for your application, see Writing for a Non-Scientific Audience.

Please address the following questions in your plain language summary:

- o What are the goals of the proposed research study and how will it address key gaps in the MS field and/or the needs of people affected by MS?
- o How will you conduct the proposed research study? For research involving human participants, please describe the participation requirements (i.e., frequency, timing, and length of visits; collection of biological samples; imaging scans; clinical measures).
- o What are the anticipated outcomes of the proposed research?
- o How will the outcomes of the proposed research impact or benefit people affected by MS?

B. Research Proposal

- Provide a clear, concise description of your proposed activities in the Research Proposal. The Research Proposal should stand alone (i.e. it should contain all of the information required to support your research plan and should contain a self-contained, complete description of your project).
- Ten (10) pages maximum. Any content beyond ten (10) pages will be removed from the application and will not be reviewed.

In the Research Proposal, you should include:

- A description of the objective(s), central research questions/hypotheses and scientific aims of the project.
- The rationale for the project and its relevance to MS (review of previous work done in this area and data generated, referencing relevant scientific literature).
- Expected outcomes and impact (what knowledge will be obtained, will there be improvements to health and quality of life for people affected by MS, and will the work impact the field of MS).
- Explanation of the study design, methods, data collection and analyses, discussion/interpretation of results, anticipated challenges, etc. Where possible, include justifications for methodology, for example intervention and follow-up timelines, sample size, inclusion of individuals of a specific age, use of specific assay or outcomes measure, etc.
- Justification of qualifications of the lead investigator(s) and collaborators (if any), including description of relevant experience and skills, productivity in terms of publications and knowledge translation, collaboration experience, etc.
- Description of what the study team members will contribute to the project (description of roles, responsibilities, delegation and governance).

Other Considerations:

- Discovery Research Grant applications will be evaluated against the review criteria described below.
- Justification of the team structure; your team should have the necessary expertise
- Address potential project limitations
- Provide strong budget justification

C. **Figures:** Where possible, include key tables, charts, figures, or photographs in the body of the research proposal. It is not mandatory to upload figures to the proposal – if there is a need for additional tables, charts, figures, etc. there is a 5-page limit.

D. **References:** Cite relevant references mentioned in the proposal. There is no page limit. Upload of references to the proposal is mandatory.

E. **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) in Research**: MSC is committed to ensuring that the research we fund leads to equitable care and outcomes for everyone affected by MS. Use the provided template on ProposalCentral to describe how inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) are integrated into the project's research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, or dissemination of findings. One (1) page maximum.

For guidance on how to integrate IDEA into your research, please consult the resources from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) – here.

F. **Research Timeline:** Provide the expected timeline to achieve the aims of your project. If the grant is awarded, this timeline will be used to follow-up on the progress of the research in the annual progress report.

G. **Addressing Reviewers' Recommendations (for resubmissions only):**

*   A Discovery Research Grant (or Operating Grant) application that was **unsuccessful in the previous competition** is considered a resubmission. A grant application can only be submitted a total of three times (1 original submission and 2 resubmissions).
*   State how the reviewers' concerns (both scientific and non-scientific), as outlined in the written critiques from the previous competition, have been addressed in the current application. **The previous reviewers' comments will be provided to the review committee to ensure that the concerns have been addressed.**
*   Two (2) pages maximum.

H. **CV:** The applicant is required to upload the CV of the Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator(s) and Co-Applicant(s). MSC requires CVs to be submitted using the template provided on ProposalCentral. Eight (8) page maximum per CV.

For instructions on how to complete the CV template, please see here.

I. **Relevant Publications:**

*   Up to three (3) full publications and/or manuscripts may be uploaded. Publications or manuscripts exceeding this limit will be removed from the application.
*   Please upload the relevant publications in the order that you would like them to appear. These can be publications authored by the team or others most relevant to the proposal.
*   Any additional manuscripts that have been accepted for publication after the Discovery Research Grant submission deadline must be submitted by e-mail to ms.grants@mscanada.ca by **December 4, 2025**.

J. **Required Signatures:** Signatures from the Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator (if applicable), Head of Department and Dean of Faculty or Institution are required. Electronic signatures will be accepted. A template is provided in ProposalCentral (see Section 2).

K. **Appendix:** Additional relevant documents such as letters of collaboration, letters of support, quotes to support the budget notes, survey questionnaires, etc. may be uploaded in the Appendix.

4.3 REVIEW AND SUBMISSION

Please review the application in full before submitting. Select "Validate" to check for any missing required information or files. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the submitted application is complete, contains all required components, and adheres to the format and page or character limits assigned. **Changes cannot be made to an application once it is submitted.** Select "Submit" to complete the submission. **You will receive a confirmation email of your submission**.

5.   QUESTIONS, ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

For questions related to site technical support, contact ProposalCentral customer support at: 800-875-2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada) or by email at pcsupport@altum.com. Hours of operation are Monday – Friday between 9:00 to 16:00 ET.

For all inquiries related to Discovery Research Grant competition, please direct questions to ms.grants@mscanada.ca. Hours of operation for MSC's administrative support are Monday - Friday from 9:00 to 16:00 ET.