Application Guidelines.

Eligibility.

Research team members.

Nominated Principal Investigator (PI): responsible for the design and oversight of the entire research project, and whose name and contact information will be used in communications concerning the application.

Co-Principal Investigator (co-PI): shares the above responsibilities with the nominated PI.

Co-Investigator: has a significant role in part of the project, but not responsible for the design or oversight of the overall project.

Collaborators: individuals who provide a relatively limited contribution to the project [e.g. access to a required resource, consultation on a part of the project, etc.]. This role can include knowledge users, decision-maker partners, patient/citizen partners, or other relevant interested parties. Collaborators should be referred to in the proposal, and may be documented with an appended letter, but need not be listed as applicants.

Restriction to faculty members within the Faculty of Medicine.
PIs and co-PIs must be a full or part-time faculty members within the Faculty of Medicine (includes jointly appointed faculty, but not cross appointed faculty). Unspent funds will be returned to the MRF if the nominated PI is no longer a full or part-time member of the Faculty of Medicine (unless responsibilities are transferred). Co-investigators and collaborators from outside the Faculty of Medicine are welcome. However, as the objective of this grants program is to aid the development of research programs within the MUN Faculty of Medicine, the role of external investigators and related budget expenditures should be clearly addressed within the research proposal.

Restriction on the number of applications per applicant. Submissions are limited to one application per competition for PI or co-PI. There is no limit on the number of applications on which an individual may be listed as a co-Investigator or collaborator.

Restriction on applications by previous awardees. Recipients of an MRF Grant or Cox Award in the previous 2 years are not eligible to apply as PI or co-PI for an MRF grant or Cox award in the current competition (e.g. PI's and co-PI's who were successful in 2020 are not eligible to apply in 2021 or 2022). Please note that these rules do not apply to previous recipients of EpilepsyNL, Ovarian Cancer, or the Dean's Collaborative Clinical non-Clinical Research Grants i.e. previous receipt of an EpilepsyNL grant does not affect the eligibility to apply for an MRF grant or Cox Award, and receipt of an MRF grant or Cox Award will not affect the ability to apply for a future Epilepsy-NL grant.

Matching funds and leveraged funding. The MRF welcomes the use of its grants to leverage funding from other agencies, or as matching funds that may be required by other granting agencies. However, the manner in which overlapping budgets and/or

research objectives of the two grants will be divided should be outlined within the MRF application. As noted below, the MRF wishes to avoid duplication of funding of research budget items (see **Overlapping grant applications**, below). Please consult the MRF Research Manager (rgsresearchmanager@mun.ca) if further information or clarification is required.

Overlapping grant applications. To avoid duplicate funding of budget items, an MRF award will not be made if there is significant overlap with projects funded by other agencies unless the appropriate separation of the two budgets and/or sets of research objectives was delineated within the MRF application: see **Matching funds and leveraged funding**, above). It is expected that unspent funds will be returned to the MRF if other funding for the project is received. Note that this does not apply to grants that address additional objectives, or that cover additional costs for a project (e.g. the funding of a student to be added to the project). Please consult the MRF Research Manager (rgsresearchmanager@mun.ca) if further information or clarification is required.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism (EDI-AR). The MRF is committed to EDI-AR in the research enterprise. Increasing EDI-AR in the health research ecosystem is a priority for this fund and we require a clear commitment to and integration of EDI-AR-related evidence in the research proposal, published/creative work, and research team and personnel composition (this includes the applicant, collaborators, and highly qualified personnel). To ensure EDI-AR priorities are accounted for at all levels, representation from equity-deserving groups will be included to the best of our ability with respect to Board membership, review committees, and grant awardees. Many online resources are available to provide guidance such as those made available by Tri-Council, including CIHR and SSHRC, and we strongly encourage applicants to refer to these recommendations when preparing their applications for consideration.

Use of Generative AI. Applicants remain responsible for the accuracy, originality, appropriate citation, and confidentiality of all application content, including content developed with the assistance of generative artificial intelligence. The use of AI tools must not compromise the confidentiality of research participants, collaborators, reviewers, or other confidential information contained in the application.

Reporting outcomes from awarded funds. Recipients will be required to complete an MRF Grant Outcomes Reporting Form to help the MRF document the impact of the funds they distribute. Reports are normally expected to be received within 3 years of the research account being opened. To be eligible for the current competition, a recipient of past MRF funding should have an MRF Grant Outcomes Reporting Form on file. To confirm the submission of a report, please contact the Research Manager (rgsresearchmanager@mun.ca), Research and Graduate Studies, Faculty of Medicine, suite 2M409A, Health Sciences Centre.

Application Procedure.

Applications are to be submitted electronically as an email attachment to MRFgrants@mun.ca, as a single PDF file.

An acknowledgment email will be sent to the Nominated Principal Applicant within one week following the competition deadline to confirm that the complete application package was successfully received. Please contact the MRF Research Manager (rgsresearchmanager@mun.ca) if this acknowledgement email is not received.

Application Content.

The following pages should be compiled as a single PDF file

The 6 page MRF Application Form consists of:

- **Page 1 --- Cover Page.** This page requests basic information and the signatures of the Nominated PI, Co-PIs, and the corresponding Associate Dean or Clinical Chair of the Principal Investigator's division/discipline. Signatures are not required from other co-investigators.

  A scanned copy of the signed cover page may be included in the PDF file. Alternatively, a hardcopy of the signed cover page may be delivered to the Faculty of Medicine's Office of Research and Graduate Studies (suite 2M409A, Health Sciences Centre) separately from the electronically submitted application file. Both documents need to be submitted by the deadline date.

- **Page 2 --- Checklist of all application components.**

- **Page 3 --- Investigator Information.** This page requests contact information for the Principal Investigator, co-PIs, and all co-investigators. For team grants involving more than a total of four investigators, additional pages must be appended
  (Appendix 7).
- **Page 4 --- One-page Summary of Research Proposal**. The Summary Page is arguably the most important page of an application to any funding agency, including the MRF. All MRF Review Committee members will participate in the scoring of the application, and Review Committee members other than the primary and secondary reviewers are likely to rely heavily on the Summary Page. Please also note that the members of the MRF Review Committee come from very diverse backgrounds. The key point of the one-page summary should be made using language that is clear and relatively non-technical (readily understood by researchers without expertise in the specific field).

  An ideal Summary Page should contain clearly labeled sections that provide the

following information:

i) Background
ii) Main objectives and questions and/or hypotheses to be addressed
iii) Research Plan, including key features of the approach/methodology employed
iv) Significance of the Proposed Work. This section may address how the proposed project fits within the applicant's long-term research plan, any aspects of the proposal that are innovative or otherwise remarkable, and any notable issues of feasibility or expertise.

- **Page 5 --- Budget Summary.**

Application appendices include the following:

- **Appendix 1 --- Budget Justification – 2 page limit (required).** Please explain and/or justify specific operating costs, services, equipment, salary of research personnel, fellows and students, travel, etc.
    - Budgeted travel must be for data collection in the field or for presenting results at conferences. Travel amounts beyond $3,000 must constitute a critical component of the research plan and be well justified in the application.
    - To be eligible for the $30,000 budget associated with the Cox Award (awarded to the top ranked application), please give a brief indication of how the additional $10,000 would be spent if the award were received.
    - **Patient and Citizen Partner Engagement:** For projects involving patient or citizen partners, applicants are encouraged to follow current **NL SUPPORT** and **CIHR** guidance on meaningful engagement, including appropriate recognition and appreciation of patient partner contributions.

- **Appendix 2 --- CIHR formatted Common CV of the nominated Principal Investigator (required).** A Common CV is <u>not necessary</u> for co-PIs, co-investigators, or collaborators. If co-PIs, co-investigators, and/or collaborators have special qualifications that are critical to the application, this should be established within the body of the research proposal.

- **Appendix 3 --- Research proposal – 3 page limit (required).** Single spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins. This section should contain the following:
    <u>i)</u> <u>Introduction and background information</u> that explains the proposed work's rationale, its relation to previous work done by the investigators and/or others.
    <u>ii)</u> <u>Main objectives and/or questions and/or hypotheses</u> to be addressed.
    <u>iii)</u> <u>Research plan</u>, including research design, proposed methods of data

gathering, analysis, and interpretation. Issues of expertise and feasibility should also be addressed.

iv) Potential limitations of the research plan, and how they will be dealt with.

v) Significance of the proposal and its outcome: Why is it important that the study be undertaken? Are there any novel, original, or innovative aspects of the proposal? What is the anticipated impact on advancing knowledge or health care delivery? How will the funding help advance the applicant's research program (e.g. attract external funding etc.)?

- ***Level of Detail in Research Proposal*.** Please keep in mind that the MRF Review Committee includes representatives from across the Faculty of Medicine that range widely in their backgrounds, expertise, and expectations (as is also true for review committees of CIHR and other funding agencies), and that all MRF Review Committee members will contribute to the scoring of the proposal. External reviewers may also be consulted for their opinion on an application. Therefore, the one page Summary and the Research Proposal should be written with a balanced level of detail so that the plan and significance of the research project can be generally understood by virtually any researcher within the medical field, while also providing details that would likely be expected by experts.

- **Appendix 4 --- Research Proposal Supplementary Pages (optional).** Supplementary pages may be appended to provide supporting information for the research proposal. There is no page limit, however, only materials that are relevant and specifically cited in the research proposal should be included. This may include:
    - a list of cited references
    - figures
    - tables
    - surveys, questionnaires
    - letter of support or collaboration, etc.
    - a description of relevance in the case of special competitions (e.g. Epilepsy NL Research Grant).

  Please note that while these supplementary materials will be made available for Reviewers to examine at their discretion, they are not required to examine the Supplementary Pages or include them in their evaluation and scoring. Therefore, materials necessary to understand the most fundamental aspects of the research plan should be provided within the 3 pages of the Research Proposal, not within the supplement.

- **Appendix 5 --- Information on other funding (required).** Please provide a maximum of one page for each source of funding that is currently held or applied for by the PI, co-PIs and co-investigators (but not collaborators with a minor role in the overall project) including:
    - the project title and funding agency

- the amount of funds awarded
- the starting and ending dates of the period of funding
- a brief description/summary of the project
- a description of the overlap of its subject matter (concept, objectives, aims) and budget with the current application, if any

As described earlier in these guidelines, to avoid duplicate funding of research budget items, an MRF award will not be made (or unspent funds must be returned to the MRF) if there is significant overlap with projects funded by other agencies unless the appropriate separation of the two budgets and/or sets of research objectives was delineated within the MRF application (see above sections on **Matching funds and leveraged funding** and **Overlapping Grant Applications**).

- **Appendix 6 --- Role of individual investigators and/or collaborators (optional).** One page may be used in case of research teams composed of more than 4 investigators to clarify the role and/or responsibilities of each investigator. This appendix is optional, as the roles and responsibilities of each investigator may also be made evident within the research proposal.

- **Appendix 7 --- Additional Contact Information (required if applicable).** In cases in which there are more than 4 investigators, the contact information of the additional investigators will not fit on page 3 of the Application form and can be provided here.

- **Appendix 8 --- Response to previous reviews- 1 page limit (optional**). This optional one page appendix may be used to provide a response to concerns raised in earlier reviews of the same (or a highly related) application.

Reviewing.

Applications are reviewed by the MRF Review Committee. The Terms of Reference for the Review Committee are available online (Review Committee Terms) as are the MRF Review Committee Instructions/Guidelines (MRF Review Committee Instructions).

Awarding of Funds.

The Dean of Medicine will announce the outcome of applications in letters addressed to the Nominated PIs, and will arrange for the Finance Office to establish accounts for the awardees. Approvals (e.g. ethics for animal or human investigation, biosafety, radiation control) are not required at time of application; however, funds will not be released into the account until the applicable ethics and other required approvals are in place. It is normally expected that clearance approvals will be in place and research accounts opened within one year of notification of the award. Exceptions to this time frame will be considered by the MRF Board on a case by case basis. Grant accounts will normally expire three years from the date of opening. Extensions beyond this period will require

the permission of the MRF Board in advance of the account's expiration date.

Reporting outcomes from MRF grants.

To assist the MRF in documenting the impact of its funding programs, funding recipients will be asked to fill out a brief report form concerning the outcomes of their research within three years of receiving the funding (MRF Grant Outcomes Reporting Form). The MRF reserves the right to request additional details regarding the research project's progress and/or the disposition of the awarded funds. Reporting on completed MRF grants will be required to be eligible to apply for subsequent grants competitions administered by the MRF.

Acknowledgment.

The grantee will acknowledge the support of the Memorial University of Newfoundland's Medical Research Foundation in any publication or other work arising from the funded project.

Further Information.

Questions and feedback should be directed to the RGS Research Manager (email to: rgsresearchmanager@mun.ca) within the Research and Graduate Studies Office (suite 2M409A, Faculty of Medicine, tel: 864-6295).