Academic Research Fund (ARF)
Scoring Rubric

Although the ARF program (merit review rubric) primarily emulates the criteria SSHRC uses, the ARF program does receive applications from all disciplinary areas, therefore, the rubric aims to blend the best pieces of Tri-Agency evaluation into an AU specific evaluation schema.

1. Challenge – The Aim and Importance of the Endeavour

a) Originality, significance, and expected contribution to knowledge.

b) Appropriateness of the literature review.

c) Appropriateness of the methods and/or theoretical approach, framework.

d) Quality of training and mentoring to be provided to students, emerging scholars and other highly qualified personnel, and opportunities for them to contribute.

e) Excellence in research design is evident, where principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion have been considered throughout project development.

f) Potential for the project results to have influence and impact within and/or beyond the social sciences and humanities community.

50% weighting for all Scholars

2. Feasibility – The Plan to Achieve Excellence

a) Appropriateness of the proposed timeline and probability that the objectives will be met.

b) Expertise of applicant and team (if applicable) in relation to the proposed research.

c) Appropriateness of the requested budget and justification of proposed costs, including other financial and/or in-kind contributions (if applicable).

d) Quality and appropriateness of knowledge mobilization plans, including for effective dissemination, exchange, and engagement with stakeholders within and/or beyond the research community where applicable.

e) Appropriateness of the strategies for conducting the activities proposed.

30% weighting for all Scholars

3. Capability – The Expertise to Succeed

a) Quality, quantity, and significance of past experience and published and/or creative outputs of the applicant and any co-applicants, relative to their roles in the project and their respective stages of career.

b) Evidence of other knowledge mobilization activities and impacts.

c) Evidence of contributions to the development of talent.

d) Equity in research practice is evident, including the promotion of diversity in team composition and trainee recruitment; fostering an equitable, inclusive, and accessible research work environment; and highlighting diversity and equity in mentoring, training, and access to development opportunities.

e) Potential of applicant/co-applicant to make future contributions.

20% weighting for all Scholars

To ensure consistency, rank the ARF/SSHRC Explore grant applications using the following rating scale:

DESCRIPTOR	Point Value	DEFINTION
Excellent	1	The application excels in most or all relevant aspects. Any shortcomings are minimal.
Good	0.5	The application excels in many relevant aspects, and reasonably addresses all others. Certain improvements are possible.
Unsatisfactory	0	The application fails to provide convincing information and/or has serious inherent flaws or gaps. Major revisions are required.

INSTRUCTIONS: Using the criteria outlined above to complete the RUBRIC:
1. Score each section within the RUBRIC.
2. Provide an overall score for the application, taking the weightings of each section into account. Please do not change the overall score as it will be used to generate a preliminary ranking.
3. Provide qualitative comments and/or feedback in the "overall recommendations" and "strengths and weaknesses" section of the RUBRIC to help guide committee discussion (and to help the grantee with future funding applications).

Resources - Related to equity, diversity, and inclusion in research grant applications (provided by the Tri-Agencies)

Guide to Addressing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Considerations in Partnership Grant Applications (SSHRC)

NSERC guide on integrating equity, diversity and inclusion considerations in research

Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research (NFRF)

ADMIN USE ONLY	
File No.	27543
ARF Applicant:	John Smith
Project Title:	This is a test
Is AU Ethics Required? Yes or No	Yes (Confirmation of AU Ethics Certification is required prior to release of ARF funds) - AU Ethics File No. 27132 is pending approval
ARC Primary Reader:	Jane Doe

Academic Research Fund (ARF)
Scoring Rubric

Challenge (50%) - Aim and importance of the endeavor	Excellent (1 point)	Good (0.5 points)	Unsatisfactory (0 points)	Points
a) Originality, significance, and expected contribution to knowledge. Proposal's relevance to the objectives of the funding opportunity.	**Strong** description of the research; proposal **clearly** presents a small-scale, **novel** research, creative, or pilot project prior to the submission of an application for external funding.	An **adequate** description of the research is provided; proposal presents an **appropriate** small-scale, **original** research, creative, or pilot project prior to the submission of an application for external funding.	An **insufficient** description of the research is enclosed; the small-scale research, creative, or pilot project is **inadequately described**, and objectives are **unclear**.	0.5
b) Appropriateness of the literature review.	**Succinct** literature review that **clearly situates** the research within the relevant theoretical and/or methodological contexts in the applicant's field of study, using **highly appropriate** sources (books, journals, electronic sources, etc.) presented using a **consistent** style guide throughout.	An **adequate** literature review that **situates** the research within the relevant theoretical and/or methodological contexts in the applicant's field of study, using **mostly appropriate** sources (books, journals, electronic sources, etc.) presented using a **consistent** style guide throughout.	An insufficient review that does not situate the research within the relevant theoretical and/or methodological contexts in the applicant's field of study. A style guide is absent or inconsistently applied.	0.5
c) Appropriateness of the methods and/or theoretical approach or framework.	An **accurate and thorough** description of the methods and/or theoretical approach or methodology. As appropriate, the conceptual framework is **clearly defined** and linked with the topic studied. Methods are **clearly defined and highly appropriate.**	A **sufficient** description of the methods and/or theoretical approach or methodology. As appropriate, the conceptual framework is **defined and linked** with the topic studied. Methods are **defined and appropriate**.	Methods and/or theoretical approach or methodology are **not clearly described and/or appropriate**. Fit between the research approach and topic of study is **insufficiently** addressed.	0.5
d) Quality of training and mentoring to be provided to students, emerging scholars and other highly qualified personnel, and opportunities for them to contribute.	Training philosophy and plan are of the **highest quality: highly appropriate, clearly defined,** and expected to produce **top quality** results in terms of the overall approach and specific duties for trainees.	Training philosophy and plan are **defined, feasible,** and expected to produce **quality** results in terms of the overall approach and specific duties for trainees.	Training philosophy and plan are **not appropriate** and are **unclear** in terms of the overall approach and specific duties for trainees.	0.5
e) Excellence in research design is evident, where principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion have been considered throughout project development.	EDI has been **meaningfully considered** throughout the research design and process (e.g., research questions, study design, methodology, SGBA+ analysis completed etc.). Strategies to mitigate bias within research design **are detailed.**	EDI has been **considered** throughout the research design and process (e.g., research questions, study design, methodology, SGBA+ analysis completed etc.). Strategies to mitigate bias within research design are **outlined and integrated (or partially integrated)**.	EDI has **not been considered** throughout the research design and process (e.g., research questions, study design, methodology, SGBA+ analysis completed etc.). Strategies to mitigate bias within research design have **not been outlined and/or integrated**.	0.5
f) Potential for the project results to have influence and impact within and/or beyond the research community.	The proposal **clearly and specifically** articulates the potential for impact and/or innovation within and/or beyond the research community.	The proposal includes an **adequate** description of the potential for impact and/or innovation within and/or beyond the research community.	Description of the potential for impact and/or innovation within and/or beyond the research community **lacks clarity**. Importance of the work is **not clear.**	1
CHALLENGE - TOTAL POINTS (Max 6 points)				4

Feasibility (30%) - The plan to achieve excellence	Excellent (1 point)	Good (0.5 points)	Unsatisfactory (0 points)	Points
a) Appropriateness of the proposed timeline and probability that the objectives will be met.	Long- and short-term objectives **clearly described** and broken down into specific activities, according to priority, sequencing, and feasibility.	Long- and short-term objectives are **described** and broken down into specific activities, in most cases according to priority, sequencing and feasibility criteria.	Limited evidence of objectives broken down into specific activities which are not entirely rigorous, and unlikely to be attainable.	0.5

	Excellent	Good	Unsatisfactory	Points
b) Expertise of applicant and/or team in relation to the proposed research.	Proposed project team is **diverse** (if applicable) and includes an explanation of **relevant expertise** related to the proposed project. Roles and responsibilities of all team members are **clearly defined.**	Proposed project team **is diverse** and includes **at least some** disciplinary expertise **relevant** to the proposal.	Project team is **relatively homogeneous** with **no clear evidence** of relevant expertise.	0.5
c) Appropriateness of the requested budget and justification of proposed costs, including other financial and/or in-kind contributions (if applicable).	**Excellent** evidence of appropriateness of budget, detailed justification of proposed costs, including other financial and/or in-kind contributions (if applicable).	**Good evidence** of appropriateness of budget, **clear justification** of proposed costs, including other financial and/or in- kind contributions (if applicable).	**Minimal evidence** of appropriateness of budget, **limited justification** of proposed costs, including other financial and/or in- kind contributions (if applicable).	0
d) Quality and appropriateness of knowledge mobilization plans, including for effective dissemination, exchange, and engagement with stakeholders within and/or beyond the research community where applicable.	**High quality** knowledge mobilization plans are outlined: **highly** effective dissemination, exchange, engagement with stakeholders **within and beyond** the research community.	An **appropriate, defined** knowledge mobilization plan is outlined: **good** effective dissemination, exchange, engagement with stakeholders **within and/or beyond** the research community.	**Minimal evidence** of a defined knowledge mobilization plan is presented**: little** effective dissemination, exchange, engagement with stakeholders **within and/or beyond** the research community.	0
FEASIBILITY - TOTAL POINTS (Max 4 points)				**1**
Capability (20%) - The expertise to succeed	**Excellent (1 point)**	**Good (0.5 points)**	**Unsatisfactory (0 points)**	**Points**
a) Quality, quantity, and significance of past experience and published and/or creative outputs of the applicant and any co-applicants, relative to their roles in the project and their respective stages of career.	**Clearly articulated** quality, quantity, and significance of experience and published and/or creative outputs of the applicant and any co-applicants, relative to their roles in the project and to the stage of their career.	The quality, quantity, and significance of experience and published and/or creative outputs of the applicant and any co-applicants **are articulated**, relative to their roles in the project and to the stage of their career.	The quality, quantity, and significance of experience and published and/or creative outputs of the applicant and any co- applicants **are not articulated**, relative to their roles in the project and to the stage of their career.	1
b) Evidence of other knowledge mobilization activities and impacts.	**Strong evidence** of past knowledge mobilization activities and impacts is provided.	**Evidence of** past knowledge mobilization activities and impacts is provided.	**Minimal evidence** of past knowledge mobilization activities, and impacts is provided.	0.5
c) Evidence of contributions to the development of talent.	**Significant** past contributions to the development of training and mentoring of students (at all/any levels), postdoctoral researchers and other highly qualified personnel.	Past contributions to the development of training and mentoring of students (at all/any levels), postdoctoral researchers and other highly qualified personnel **are evident**.	Past contributions to the development of training and mentoring of students (at all/any levels), postdoctoral researchers and other highly qualified personnel **are not evident**.	0.5
d) Equity in research practice is evident, including the promotion of diversity in team composition and trainee recruitment; fostering an equitable, inclusive, and accessible research work environment; and highlighting diversity and equity in mentoring, training, and access to development opportunities.	Specific actions to support the recruitment of a diverse group of HQP and development of an inclusive research training environment **are clearly defined.**	Specific actions to support the recruitment of a diverse group of HQP and development of an inclusive research training environment **are defined**.	Specific actions to support the recruitment of a diverse group of HQP and development of an inclusive research training environment **are not appropriate or not defined.**	0.5
e) Potential of applicant/co-applicant to make future contributions.	Impact and importance of the work is **clearly evident and influential**, with **measurable** outcomes/contributions.	Impact and importance of the work is **evident** with **some defined** outcomes/contributions.	Impact and importance of the work is **not clearly evident** and outcomes/contributions are **unclear**.	0.5
CAPABILITIY - TOTAL POINTS (Max 5 Points)				**3**
Total Unweighted Score (Max 15 Points)				**8**

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES	
(MAX 150 words) In the space to the right, the reviewer will provide overall recommendations for the application. This can include comments on total requested funding, discuss at meeting, budget reductions, or funded if funds available, do not fund etc. Please provide a brief justification for any recommendations.	Strengths xxxxxx. Weaknesses xxxxx.

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS	
(MAX 150 words) In the space to the right, the reviewer will provide overall recommendations for the application. This can include comments on total requested funding, discuss at meeting, budget reductions, or funded if funds available, do not fund etc. Please provide a brief justification for any recommendations.	Overall recommendations (e.g., conditional approval) pending confirmation of AU Ethics Certification, revised budget form, xxxxx,etc.