



## **Guidelines for completing a JELF Request to Apply (RTA)**

The purpose of this document is to guide researchers as they complete the online CFI JELF Request to Apply (RTA) form and to provide information about what is required to develop a successful CFI JELF application. It is a tool to be used to ensure that all of the necessary information has been considered and collected before moving into the consultations required during the full proposal development phase.

**For any questions regarding the RTA process or JELF proposal development, please contact Gareth Corry ([gcorry@ualberta.ca](mailto:gcorry@ualberta.ca); 780-492-8032).**

### **Message from the Office of the Vice President (Research and Innovation)**

The Office of the Vice President (Research and Innovation) strongly encourages the creation of shared research spaces, the use of communal equipment, and the adoption of core facilities whenever possible. ALL applications for funding of new research infrastructure should seek to establish shared research resources or to add new capabilities to existing core facilities. Such applications will be given a higher priority in adjudication decisions involving the Office of the Vice President (Research and Innovation) over applications involving single-users or those with more limited potential for shared use.

### **I. JELF program information**

The JELF provides funding to eligible institutions to acquire research infrastructure in order to increase the capacity of Canadian researchers to undertake world-class research and technology development.

The CFI provides funding up to a maximum of 40% of the total eligible costs of the infrastructure projects it supports. The remainder must be provided by other eligible partners.

- Maximum Total Project Cost: \$2,000,000 (\$800,000 CFI request)
- Minimum Total Project Cost: \$187,500 (\$75,001 CFI request)\*

\*Projects in the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts are not subject to the lower limit.

Projects that do not meet the eligibility requirements of the JELF program will not be considered. For more information about the JELF program, please visit the following:

- [CFI JELF webpage](#)
- [RSO JELF webpage](#)

### **II. JELF RTA process**

#### **Applicants are strongly encouraged to:**

- a. Connect with your Faculty Research Office (whether you are PI or co-PI) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE to find out about the internal review and selection processes. You will need your Faculty to confirm support for your proposal, so it is in your best interest to involve them in the discussion early in the development process.

If you are contemplating a proposal that involves more than one Faculty and/or may include a request from the Strategic Priorities allocation stream (see below), please ensure that all Faculties are involved in the strategic discussions.



- b. Review key CFI documents:
- [CFI Guidelines for completing a JELF proposal](#) (March 2021)
  - [CFI Policy and program guide](#)
  - [CFI Guidelines for JELF reviewers](#)

### III. Allocation categories

Please review the three allocation categories below, and select the most appropriate stream(s) for your proposal. If more than one stream is selected, ensure that collaborative discussions are initiated as soon as possible with the collaborating PI(s) as well as with the appropriate Faculty administration. The Faculty contacts are noted below.

#### **1. Faculty-Managed streams**

##### *Eligibility:*

Proposals that are expected to benefit a single Faculty, or smaller cross-Faculty collaborative projects and which are not suitable for the Strategic Priorities stream (see below) should be submitted to the appropriate Faculty-Managed stream(s). Allocation may be provided by more than one Faculty to a single project. Researchers from the following Faculties may request allocation from the Faculty-Managed streams:

- Faculty of Agricultural, Life & Environmental Sciences (ALES)
- Faculty of Engineering (ENG)
- Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry (FoMD)
- Faculty of Science (SCI)

**BEFORE YOU START:** For information on internal Faculty procedures and to obtain Faculty approval, please contact the following individuals:

- ALES: Marina Offengenden ([offengen@ualberta.ca](mailto:offengen@ualberta.ca)) or Chris Kazala ([ekazala@ualberta.ca](mailto:ekazala@ualberta.ca))
- ENG: Anastasia Elias ([aelias@ualberta.ca](mailto:aelias@ualberta.ca))
- FoMD: Colleen Sunderland ([fomdanalyst@ualberta.ca](mailto:fomdanalyst@ualberta.ca))
- SCI: Paul Myers ([sciadr@ualberta.ca](mailto:sciadr@ualberta.ca)) or Betty Peavey ([betty.peavey@ualberta.ca](mailto:betty.peavey@ualberta.ca))

##### *Review process:*

Completed RTAs will be shared with the appropriate Faculties shortly after the RTA submission deadline. Each Faculty will then review the RTAs it is involved in, and PIs will be advised of the results within two weeks of the RTA submission deadline. Although researchers should have connected with their Faculty well before the RTA submission deadline, there could still be surprises, for example, if a co-PI is added at a late stage in development of an RTA on a proposal led by another Faculty, or if the applicant has made changes to the equipment request since the Faculty's internal review.

#### **2. Other Faculties (Centrally-Managed stream)**

##### *Eligibility:*



Proposals with lead PIs from any Faculty that does not have a Faculty-Managed allocation can be submitted through the Other Faculties stream. Projects that are expected to benefit a single Faculty or a small research collaboration involving more than one Faculty are appropriate for the Other Faculties stream.

Projects involving researchers from the Other Faculties, as well as one or more of ALES, ENG, FoMD, or SCI may collaborate on a single project, and allocations may be combined from appropriate allocation streams.

**BEFORE YOU START:** Please connect with your Associate Dean (Research) for information on the internal procedures in place for project review and selection in your Faculty. Since this is a Centrally-Managed stream, you must obtain a Faculty letter of support and space allocation prior to the RTA submission deadline.

*Review Process:*

RTA submissions will be reviewed and approved by the RSO. The information provided in Faculty letter(s) of support will be considered carefully; however, final decisions regarding allocation from the Other Faculties stream are made at the discretion of the VPRI.

### **3. Strategic Priorities (Centrally-Managed stream)**

*Eligibility:*

- Researchers from any Faculty may apply under the Strategic Priorities stream. Allocation must also be committed from all involved Faculties in the Faculty-Managed streams.
- Projects must involve researchers from more than one Faculty, but inclusion of researchers from more than one Faculty does not automatically qualify a project for the Strategic Priorities stream.
- Projects must be collaborative, benefiting a broad group of researchers. Demonstration of existing collaborative relationships between participants will strengthen the request.
- Projects are interdisciplinary. The nature and necessity of the interdisciplinary approach must be apparent in the request, with a clear description of how the different methodologies or perspectives will be applied in order to achieve a result that could not be achieved without the interdisciplinary approach.
- Projects must be aligned with an area of institutional strength and strategic importance. This includes, but is not limited to, alignment with Signature Areas.
- A plan must be in place to ensure that the cross-Faculty collaboration will proceed as described. What this looks like will be unique for each project but may involve existing core facility structure, steering committees, participation in research groups, etc.

**BEFORE YOU START:** Ensure that discussions have been initiated between the collaborating PIs as well as their Faculty contacts for the CFI programs, as a strong letter of support and a commitment of a portion of the Faculty-Managed allocation must be provided in the RTA.

*Allocation Commitments:*

Each Faculty involved in the request must demonstrate support for the project through commitment of a portion of its Faculty-Managed JELF allocation to the project. The CFI contribution to the project will normally be divided equitably between the Central Allocation and the allocation of each of the Faculties involved, meaning that the Strategic Priorities allocation commitment will normally be proportional to the number of Faculties involved.

*Example:* A project involving two Faculties that will benefit users across campus: one-third of the total JELF allocation would come from the Strategic Priorities allocation, with the remaining allocation being split between the two Faculties. The Faculties may negotiate the amounts to be contributed from their respective allocations.



Faculty letters of support and space allocation letter **MUST BE INCLUDED** with the RTA submission, as Faculty support is a key aspect considered by the VPRI office in its review and selection process.

*Review Process:*

RTA submissions will be reviewed and approved by the RSO. The information provided in Faculty letters of support will be considered carefully; however, final decisions regarding allocation for the Strategic Priorities stream are made at the discretion of the VPRI.

## **IV. RTA development**

Please refer to the following information when completing the sections of the RTA form:

### **1. Project and applicant details**

Up to three researchers may be listed on the proposal. The applicants may either:

- a) work collaboratively using the same requested infrastructure, or
- b) work independently while sharing the requested infrastructure.

In the latter scenario, a justification for the infrastructure must be articulated for each researcher. This doesn't necessarily mean that all of the equipment must be used equally by all of the PIs, but there must be a clear theme that ties the infrastructure and the collaborating researchers together.

The researchers listed in the proposal must be:

- Recognized leaders or have demonstrated the potential for excellence in the proposed research field(s);
- Engaged in or embarking upon research or technology development activities that are innovative, feasible and meet international standards; and,
- Current Faculty members with full-time academic appointments or candidates that the University is in the process of recruiting to full-time academic positions.

Researchers who have previously been supported by the CFI are eligible to apply again.

### **2. Faculty letter of support**

A Faculty letter of support and space allocation must be provided with the RTA. A letter of support must be provided for each Faculty involved in the project.

The Faculty letter of support should be specific to the project, including:

- Highlighting strengths of the proposal.
- Identifying potential benefits that the project could bring to the Faculty and the institution.
- Allocation Commitment: The Faculty-Managed allocation amount being committed to the project must be specified.
- Outlining any financial support that the Faculty or Department is providing to the project outside of the eligible infrastructure costs. For example, if the Faculty will cover the salary of a technician to operate the equipment, or if the Department will cover renovation costs outside of the CFI project, this should be noted, as it demonstrates the commitment of the Faculty/Department to the project.



For Strategic Priorities stream submissions, the Faculty letter of support should also include details such as:

- Justification for submission of the proposal under the Strategic Priorities stream.
- Description of the benefits of the multi-Faculty collaboration.
- Description of the structure or plan that is in place (or will be developed) between the Faculties involved to ensure that the infrastructure will be shared as intended.
- Allocation Commitment: The Faculty-Managed allocation amount being committed to the project must be specified.

### 3. Space allocation confirmation

If a project requires infrastructure to be placed or installed in UofA space, whether or not the space has already been allocated to the PI, the Faculty/Faculties must include in its letter(s) of support confirmation that the space may be used for the purpose outlined in the proposal. In the case of infrastructure being housed in non-Faculty controlled space, a letter must be provided from the appropriate campus unit confirming that the space may be used for the purpose outlined in the proposal. The confirmation must include:

- The location (building and room number) of the space that has been allocated for the project.
- That the signatory has the authority to confirm allocation of the space.
- In the event that the space is managed by a Faculty other than the Faculty of the UofA lead PI, confirmation of space allocation from the Faculty in charge of the space must be included.
- That, to the signatory's knowledge, the allocated space is appropriate for the proposed project. \*In terms of space allocation, UofA Facilities & Operations would like to ensure that this letter is also signed by the Faculty (Space) Rep, Department Chair and/or Dean, in addition to Research office sign off.

### 4. Research or Technology Development Summary

The Research or Technology Development Summary should clearly present the merits and excellence of the proposed project. Sufficient information should be provided to enable reviewers to evaluate the proposal in accordance with the CFI program requirements.

Maximum length: 3 pages, 12-point font

The CFI assessment criterion standard for the Research or Technology Development section is (taken from the *CFI JELF Guidelines for completing a proposal*):

*The research or technology development activities are innovative, feasible and meet international standards*

- *Describe the proposed research or technology activities conducted in an area of institutional priority*
- *Demonstrate the innovativeness and feasibility of the proposed activities by positioning them within the international context, describing the proposed approach.*

RTA reviewers will be looking for the following:

- Clear, concise summary of the research or technology development plan being proposed.
- Direct information regarding why the proposed research is innovative.
- Demonstration that there is a well-developed plan that can be implemented if funded.
- Information on the state of the field internationally and how the proposed research fits in. Additionally, interdisciplinary projects will be strengthened by addressing:
  - What is the nature of the interdisciplinary approach being taken?
  - Why is an interdisciplinary approach needed?



- How will the different perspectives and methodologies, be applied or integrated to benefit the research project?

For more information about the CFI JELF proposal requirements and expectations, please refer to the [CFI Guidelines for completing a JELF proposal](#). If your project is selected to move forward, the full proposal will be developed in accordance with this document.

The CFI shares its [Guidelines for JELF reviewers](#), which provides information about the CFI review process and the criteria that the reviewers will be evaluating.

The [RSO JELF web page](#) contains information for researchers intending to submit an RTA or JELF proposal.

## 5. Infrastructure Request Justification

Although the CFI provides funding for research equipment, the merit review process centers around the research or technology development plan. Therefore, the equipment request must clearly show the necessity of the requested infrastructure in the context of the research plan presented.

Maximum length: 2 pages, 12-point font

The relevant excerpt from the CFI assessment criterion standard for the Infrastructure section is (taken from the *CFI JELF Guidelines for completing a proposal*):

*The infrastructure is necessary and appropriate to conduct the research or technology development activities.*

- *Describe each item and justify its need to conduct the proposed activities.*

RTA reviewers will be looking for the following:

- A description of each infrastructure item: what is it, and what does it do?
- Why is this equipment necessary to carry out the proposed research?

In addition, please consider:

- Do you anticipate that the equipment would be used 100% of the time for your research project? If not, are there collaborators or other users who could be brought into the proposal?
- Could the infrastructure be placed in a core facility or made available to other users? Why or why not?

## 6. Relationship to existing projects and infrastructure

The CFI wants to see that institutions are considering each proposal in the broader context of the portfolio of projects that the CFI has already funded. Please discuss with your colleagues and Department and Faculty research administration offices to answer these questions to the best of your ability. If your RTA is approved to proceed for further development, RSO will provide further assistance to help you find this information for inclusion in your proposal.

## 7. Alignment with provincial research outcomes

JELF applicants will also submit a separate proposal to the Alberta Ministry of Jobs, Economy, and Innovation (JEI) to request matching funds for the CFI award. The Research Capacity Program (RCP) of Alberta JEI provides up to 40% of total project costs as a match to the project. Current RCP Guidelines can be found [here](#).



In this proposal, the applicant must describe how the proposed infrastructure will advance provincial research and commercialization priorities as listed in the [Alberta Technology and Innovation Strategy \(ATIS\)](#).

## **8. Equipment and Budget Details**

We acknowledge that the CFI submission deadline seems to be a long time from the time of RTA submission, and the time to start purchasing even further down the road. However, the CFI expects budget details to be realistic, and any variances from the approved budget that may occur will need to be justified throughout the lifetime of the project. During proposal review, if CFI reviewers determine that an estimated cost for an item is too high/inflated, they may reduce the award amount. Conversely, if the requested amount is too low and the actual cost is higher than the approved budget amount, it will be the responsibility of the PI to bring an additional source of funds to the project to cover the shortfall. The CFI will not increase the award amount and may not allow removal of other budget lines to account for a missed or under-estimated cost.

It is therefore important to ensure that the estimated costs put forward at this stage are complete, reasonable, and substantiated by recent quotations. RSO and UofA Facilities and Operations (F&O) will work with you to further develop and validate the budget and equipment requirements as part of the full proposal development process prior to submission.

Extended warranties should be included in the equipment budget, except in specific circumstances where it may be more cost-effective to repair the infrastructure on an as-needed basis. If you determine that extended warranty is not necessary, you will be asked to justify this during the development of your proposal. If the justification is not satisfactory, a source of funds outside of the CFI will need to be identified to cover the extended warranty.

Since this is an early stage in the development of your project, it is understood and anticipated that further development of your budget and equipment list may occur. However, if you are unable to come up with a working list of the equipment you need, it may be that your project is not yet ready to proceed to the full proposal stage. Also, please note that, if major changes to your equipment list occur after your RTA has been approved for full proposal development, your JELF proposal may be deferred to a later CFI intake if it is determined that the proposed changes would require significant changes to the F&O estimate.

Information to be collected for the Equipment and Budget Details section:

1. Informational quotation for equipment items

You may use the [Request for Quotation](#) form as you work with your potential vendors.

NOTE: Quotations obtained will not be submitted to the CFI with the proposal; they are for internal use for budget development only at this stage.

2. Technical specifications - Equipment Data Sheet (to be uploaded in the F&O section).

3. Intended location (to be specified in the F&O section and confirmed in the Faculty letter of support).

### CFI In-kind Contributions

It is important to understand and communicate that vendors are NOT REQUIRED to provide any discounts. To be eligible, the vendor must offer the in-kind contributions voluntarily.



The CFI has provided a [document](#) with further information about in-kind contributions, including a sample of information that can be provided to vendors when requesting these contributions.

More information about eligible in-kind contributions and types of discounts can be found [here](#).

## Equipment Budget

A template spreadsheet must be used to develop the RTA budget. To use the spreadsheet, download a copy, and name according to the naming convention "PI Last Name\_JELF Budget." Please follow the instructions at the top of the spreadsheet; this will ensure that the budget is as accurate as possible at this stage of the process. Once you have completed the template, upload it to the RTA form.

## Operation and maintenance of CFI-funded infrastructure

The CFI provides support for operation and maintenance (O&M) of CFI-funded infrastructure through the Infrastructure Operating Fund (IOF). This funding is additional to the capital equipment request. The amount of funding provided through the IOF is often insufficient to support the full O&M costs. The responsibility for covering O&M costs above the amount available through the IOF is a shared responsibility of the project team, Department, Faculty, and institution. If your RTA is selected for further development, you will be required to develop an O&M plan as part of the full JELF proposal.

Although the RTA does not require a discussion of O&M plans, researchers are encouraged to review the institutional [O&M Plan](#) as they develop their RTA so that they are aware of the O&M requirements for the equipment being requested and so that a plan can be developed to ensure that the infrastructure is supported adequately throughout its useful life.

## Facilities & Operations: Concept Plan

At this stage in the JELF proposal development process, we do not ask researchers to try to estimate potential renovation costs. Rather, we ask that the space proposed to house the equipment is identified and committed, and that clear information about the equipment that will be requested be collected. This will allow F&O to review and estimate the cost of any space modifications that will be required to effectively use the equipment.

A contingency factor of 5% of total project cost is included in the RTA budget to account for potential renovation costs. Since F&O is not typically engaged at this stage to assess scope of work or provide an estimate, a renovation line is not included in the RTA budget. The contingency factor is included so that researchers who are approved to move forward to full proposal development have some cushion for renovation costs, if deemed necessary during the proposal development stage. If renovations are not required after F&O's final assessment, any amount from the approved JELF allocation used to cover the 5% contingency will not be included in the CFI request.

If you are concerned that your project may require significant renovation, or if you have any questions about the F&O concept plan section, please contact Alex Hatch, Project Administrative Coordinator ([alex.hatch@ualberta.ca](mailto:alex.hatch@ualberta.ca); 780-248-1008) to discuss.

**If you have any questions about the RTA process or JELF proposal development, please contact Gareth Corry ([gcorry@ualberta.ca](mailto:gcorry@ualberta.ca); 780-492-8032).**