



Frequently asked questions Research Tools and Instruments (RTI) grants program

Last update – June 2023

General information

1) Does the equipment funded by the RTI grant need to be used for NSERC-funded research?

Yes, NSERC will only accept requests for tools and instruments that form a comprehensive system intended to support NSERC-funded research in the natural sciences and engineering.

2) Can the equipment funded by the RTI grant be used for research that falls outside the natural sciences and engineering?

Yes, but the application must clearly document that the primary and majority use will be directed toward NSERC-funded research in the natural sciences and engineering. The assessment of your application will be based on the NSERC-funded research that will be supported by the requested funds.

3) Is there a limit on the number of co-applicants?

There is no limit on the number of co-applicants.

4) Can users who are neither applicants nor co-applicants be mentioned in an RTI grant application?

Users of the equipment who are neither applicants nor co-applicants may have their roles described in the proposal.

5) I am an adjunct professor at my local university but have a full-time job outside of academia. Can I apply to the RTI program?

An adjunct professor with a full-time position outside of academia cannot be the applicant for an RTI application. The adjunct professor may participate as a co-applicant. For more information refer to the [NSERC eligibility criteria for faculty](#).

6) I am applying for a comprehensive system with a net cost over \$25,000. However, the system has many components from different vendors, and some components cost as little as a few hundred dollars. Do I need to provide quotes for all of those components?

You do not need to provide quotes for items or systems from the same vendor that have a net cost of less than \$25,000. Please refer to the RTI [instructions](#) for more information.

7) Does the selection committee provide written feedback or comments to applicants after a competition?

Selection committees do not prepare written comments for RTI applications; therefore, applicants should not expect to receive feedback or comments on their application. Applicants are informed of their criteria scores, overall score and rank.

Use of funds

1) Does NSERC take into account fluctuations in currency exchange rates?

No, RTI funding will not be adjusted to account for any fluctuation in the currency exchange rate that may occur after applications are submitted. Applicants should seek other sources of funding to support rate fluctuation. All expenditures are to be submitted in Canadian dollars. Applicants are to follow the [program's instructions](#) for suppliers that do not provide quotes in Canadian dollars.

2) If the RTI program doesn't support laboratory infrastructure or provide funding that renders other equipment compliant with health and safety standards, how can I fund such costs?

For information on alternative funding, researchers can consult information related to the [Research Support Fund](#) and also contact the research grants office at their institutions.

3) What happens if I purchase or rent the equipment after the application deadline but before the outcome of the award is known?

Purchase or rental of equipment must occur after the RTI application deadline. Researchers may purchase or rent the equipment after the application has been submitted but before the outcome of their RTI application is known. However, in the instance that the application is not successful, researchers will be responsible for the funds committed and any financial agreement with the supplier. Researchers will also not be able to submit an application for the same equipment in the next year's competition as it would have been purchased before the application deadline for that competition.

4) How long do I have to buy the equipment once awarded?

RTI funds are awarded for one fiscal year and are expected to be spent in that fiscal year. This is consistent with the RTI selection criterion entitled "Need, urgency and suitability of equipment for the research programs." The RTI program is subject to an automatic one-year extension on the use of funds. For more information, refer to the section on extension period for the authority to use grant funds in the [Tri-agency guide on financial administration](#).