

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

### General information

- 1) Are universities provided with a quota for the number of applications that can be submitted to NSERC?**

The university quotas have been removed and the RTI competition is open to all eligible Canadian university researchers.

- 2) Are there limits on the number of applications a researcher can submit?**

Researchers will be able to participate on one application per competition, either as an applicant or a co-applicant but not both.

- 3) How are RTI applications evaluated?**

Applications in the RTI competition are evaluated using three weighted selection criteria. Please consult the [Research Tools and Instruments peer review manual](#) for more information.

- 4) 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.

- 5) 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.

- 6) What is a co-applicant? Is there a limit on the number of co-applicants?**

Co-applicants are major users of the equipment (those who frequently use the equipment). There is no limit on the number of co-applicants. Please also refer to the [NSERC eligibility criteria for faculty](#).



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**7) Can users who are neither applicants nor co-applicants be part of an RTI grant application?**

Users of the equipment who are neither applicants nor co-applicants may have their roles described in the proposal. No further information is required of them.

**8) What do co-applicants need to submit?**

Each co-applicant will receive an invitation email from the applicant through the research portal. Invitees must complete an eligibility profile and upload their Canadian Common CV (CCV) in the research portal. In addition, each co-applicant must indicate the number of hours per month that will be devoted to the use of the equipment.

**9) 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](#).

**10) If the equipment vendor offers a discount, would this discount need to be documented with a letter of support?**

If the vendor discount is shown in the quote, no additional letter is required.

**11) 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.

**12) 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) What is a cash contribution?

A cash contribution is financial support provided by another source of funding such as university, industry or other sources (e.g., NSERC Discovery Grant, Strategic Partnerships Grants, Collaborative Research and Development grants, etc.). A vendor discount is not a cash contribution.

### 2) 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.

### 3) 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.

### 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](#).