UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
RESEARCH SERVICES OFFICE

John R. Evans Leaders Fund (JELF) Application Review Checklist

PI: _____   **CS:** _____

CFI RES: _____   **CFI Project #** _____

DATE: _____

This Checklist is intended to work as a companion to the "*John R. Evans Leaders Fund Guidelines for completing a proposal (March 2021)*" (the "**Guide**"). The specific requirements as outlined in the Guide are included, along with tips and suggestions for proposal development and review. A link to the current Guide is found below, along with the current *Guidelines for JELF reviewers* and RSO's Analysis of JELF reviewers' comments:

- [JELF Guidelines for completing a proposal](#)
- [JELF Guidelines for reviewers](#)
- [Analysis of JELF reviewers' comments](#)

During proposal development on CAMS, the various sections as they will appear in the compiled proposal can be viewed by clicking 'View' under the *Display/Print* column in the main list of proposals in progress. At any point during proposal development, the user can click 'Run' under the *Validation* column to find out which sections are incomplete.

Note: Prior to completing the following modules, the applicant(s) will have filled out the CV section within the Researcher dashboard. The CV will be uploaded and available by clicking 'View' under the *Display/Print* column in the main list of proposals in progress.

☐ Make sure all the entries and sections in the CV are complete; the CFI sometimes returns a proposal to the institution for completion if anything in the CV is missing.

PROJECT MODULE

1. **Project Information** captures information about the project; the Project Leader fills in all fields online.

2. **Plain Language Summary (maximum 1,500 characters):** (*Project Leader completes online*) This summary will not be used in the review process. Should the project be funded, it may be used in the CFI's communications products and website.

The Plain Language Summary is, in essence, the abstract of the full proposal – it should include a discussion of:

- What is being researched
- How it is being done
- Why it is important

3.	**Researchers:** (*Project Leader fills in all fields online*)

Information associated with the candidates will be automatically retrieved once the username is entered and validated. Candidates will be notified of their requested participation and, if accepted, will receive read-only access to the project through their researcher dashboard. All candidates must agree to participate in order for the project to be submitted.

- Up to three researchers may be listed – they will either work collaboratively using the same requested infrastructure or will work independently while sharing the requested infrastructure. This distinction should be articulated clearly in the Assessment Criteria (see below).
- Additional candidates must have a CAMS account and must accept to participate in the project before the proposal can be submitted to the CFI.
- Candidates' CVs will be uploaded to CAMS. Candidates do not need to submit a Canadian Common CV (CCV).

4.	**Assessment criteria (maximum 15 pages):** (*Researcher uploads PDF*)

The exact distribution of pages among sections is the applicant's decision, up to the total page limits noted. Assessment Criteria must be addressed in the order in which they appear in the Guide.

Total CFI request ($)	Assessment criteria to address	Maximum number of pages
≤ $75,000	Research or Technology Development, Researchers, Infrastructure	10
> $75,000 to $800,000	All	15

CRITERION STANDARD #1: Research or Technology Development

Criterion Standard: *"The research or technology development activities are innovative, feasible and meet international standards."*

Applicants must:
- Describe the proposed research or technology development 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 and including references.

Things to look for in this section:

☐	A 'Background' section should be included and structured, generally, as:

1) What is the problem?
2) How have other groups addressed the problem in the past?
3) How does the research team propose to address the problem differently?
4) How will the requested infrastructure facilitate this?

☐ The research should be described in a manner that is understandable by non-experts but not simplified so much that it misses or loses important details. If the research is overly complex or contains detailed technical information, the PI should get a colleague(s) to review the text.

☐ If multiple researchers are listed on the proposal, a discussion of each of their roles in the overall project should be included. Describe how each researcher will make use of the infrastructure.

☐ A discussion of alignment of the research with institutional priority must be included – the PI should describe how the research addresses key areas of research investment as described in the [Strategic Research Plan Summary for CFI/CRC/CERC](#).

☐ A discussion of how the research (not the infrastructure) is innovative is **essential**; remember that unique/novel ≠ innovative.

☐ The CFI will need to be convinced that the research is feasible. Over-ambitious proposals, including numerous (e.g., typically >3) research projects, trying to tackle a 'big idea' (e.g., "I want to cure cancer"), having insufficient/inappropriate infrastructure, etc., will tilt the reviews negatively.

☐ A discussion of the research within an international context must be included – discuss similar research being done locally, nationally, and internationally; discuss how the proposed research complements or differs from similar research.

☐ Acknowledge any risks or potential pitfalls that may be encountered which would result in the research not proceeding as planned.

☐ What is the urgency of the research? Why should it be done now? What are the consequences of not being able to acquire the infrastructure to carry out the research?

☐ References should be included. Although there is no CFI-mandated format, the discussion of the research should be referenced enough to stand on its own; as stated in the *JELF Guidelines for reviewers*, "*It is incumbent upon the applicant to demonstrate in the proposal how the project satisfies each criterion and it should therefore be the sole information source upon which you base your review.*" A bibliography (again, no mandatory format) may be included, and font size can be reduced if space is an issue.

CRITERION STANDARD #2: Researchers

Criterion Standard: *"The researchers demonstrate excellence and leadership at a level appropriate for the stage of their career. The researchers have the expertise or relevant collaborations to conduct the research or technology development activities."*

Applicants must:
- Describe the researchers' track record, including scientific and technical expertise relevant to conduct the proposed activities.
- Describe the collaborators' and partners' contributions essential to the success of the proposed activities.

Things to look for in this section:

☐ Show clearly how the research team is particularly suited to carry out the proposed research. Do not regurgitate the researchers' CVs; rather, discuss the researchers' track record with respect to the proposed research.

☐ For the Project Leader, discuss their expertise and experience overseeing a research project as described in the proposal.

☐ For each researcher, a discussion of their expertise and experience with the infrastructure should be provided. If a researcher has limited experience with the infrastructure, it should be indicated how an experienced senior researcher on the team will assist the inexperienced one to develop their skills with the infrastructure.

☐ Collaborators: describe each collaborator's contributions essential to the success of the research – how will their research supplement the project? How will they benefit from the requested infrastructure? Collaborators can be local, national, and/or international, but they should be established collaborations (i.e., not hypothetical or future collaborations).

CRITERION STANDARD #3: Infrastructure

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

Applicants must:
- Describe each item and justify its need to conduct the proposed activities. For construction or renovation, provide a description of the space including its location, size and nature. Use the item number, quantity, cost and location found in the *Cost of individual items* table. Provide a cost breakdown for any grouping of items.
- Explain why existing infrastructure within the institution and the region cannot be used to conduct the proposed activities.

Things to look for in this section:

☐ Rolled-up lines should be listed with the same item number, name, and cost as in the CAMS Finance section. Each sub-item under rolled-up lines should be described individually, with cost listed.

☐ Describe what the equipment/technology does AND why it is necessary for the research. What features/specs does the infrastructure have that make it suitable for the research?

☐ Describe why items that are already available (locally/regionally) cannot be used (e.g., in heavy use, located in restricted facility, outdated, etc). The applicant(s) should be familiar with similar existing equipment but can use the following databases to identify existing infrastructure:
  ○ CFI Funded Projects (click on the "Download Database" link)
  ○ CFI Research Facilities Navigator
  ○ UofA Facilities & Centres
  ○ UofA FoMD Core Services & Equipment Resources

☐ If infrastructure builds on previous CFI investment (either the PI's own infrastructure or a colleague's), discuss (and include CFI#).

☐ Equipment vendor/make/model is typically not indicated; if it needs to be, include the following statement at the beginning of the Infrastructure section: *"When noted, equipment brand names and model numbers are listed as examples only and may change later following the University's competitive bid process."*

☐ If renovations are in the budget, provide a summary of the work to be done. On CAMS, a PDF containing a detailed cost breakdown, timeline, and floor plans must be uploaded.

CRITERION STANDARD #4: Institutional commitment and sustainability

Criterion Standard: "*The infrastructure is optimally used and sustainable through tangible and appropriate commitments over its useful life.*"

Applicants must:
- Present a management plan that addresses the optimal use (e.g. user access and level of use), and the operation and maintenance (O&M) of the infrastructure.
- Provide detailed information on O&M costs and revenue sources, including institutional commitment. Refer to the *Financial Resources for Operation and Maintenance* tables.

Things to look for in this section:

☐ Refer to the RSO's O&M Reference Guide for important things to be considered in this section.

☐ Discuss previous and current institutional commitment to the proposed research (do not repeat the above discussion of alignment to the SRP) – investments in personnel and infrastructure, provision of dedicated lab space and/or technical support, availability of supporting institutes/facilities (e.g., core facilities, databases/records, nanoFAB, etc.). If there has been previous investment by the CFI, describe, and include the CFI#.

☐ What makes the infrastructure sustainable? Discuss operating funds, institutional support, access to on-site and external technical support – all things that the institution can do to keep the infrastructure operational for its useful life.

☐ A clearly thought-out management plan should be included:
  - To whom will the infrastructure be made available (applicants only, other researchers, industrial/corporate users, etc.)?
  - How will the infrastructure be booked/reserved (physical log book, online form, etc.)?
  - Who will be responsible for managing access to infrastructure (PI, technician, postdoc, etc.), ensuring that the applicants and their research teams have priority access?
  - Who will be responsible for training others to use the infrastructure (PI, technician, postdoc, etc.)?
  - Who will be responsible for O&M of the infrastructure (PI, technician, postdoc, etc.)?

☐ What are the O&M costs associated with the infrastructure?
  - For each applicable category in the CAMS O&M table, describe what the need is and the estimated cost.

☐ What are the revenue sources that will be used to cover O&M costs?
- o Mention IOF and any other funding sources that will be used (not total amounts, just the portion that will be used for O&M)
- o If user fees will be charged, describe the user fee structure (who will pay what amount when).

☐ If appropriate, what funding sources will be used to ensure long-term (i.e., >5 years) sustainability of the infrastructure?

CRITERION STANDARD #5: **Benefits to Canadians:**

Criterion Standard: *"The research or technology development results will be transferred through appropriate pathways to potential end users and are likely to generate social, health, environmental and/or economic benefits to Canadians, including better training and improved skills for highly qualified personnel."*

Applicants must:
- Briefly describe potential socio-economic benefits, including better training and improved skills for highly qualified personnel.
- Delineate the knowledge mobilization plan and/or technology transfer pathways, including partnerships with end users.

Things to look for in this section:

☐ Discuss benefits to all potential end-users (academic researchers, clinicians, patients, industry, policy-makers, general public, etc.), with emphasis on socio-economic benefits to Canadians.

☐ Discuss benefits to HQP: how will infrastructure benefit training and improve skills and prospects for future careers? How will infrastructure enhance attraction and retention of HQP? How many HQP will be recruited and trained as a result of having the infrastructure?

☐ Describe knowledge mobilization plan (publications, seminars, news releases, policy, etc.).

☐ Recommended to discuss how Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) practices will be implemented and anticipated results or impact. For more information consult the UofA Strategic Plan for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity.

☐ If there is a potential for commercialization, describe technology transfer pathways (in almost all situations, UofA Technology Transfer Services should be indicated as the facilitating partner). Who will benefit from the technology transfer (industry, public, etc.)?

5. **Financial resources for operation and maintenance**

- The table should reflect what is discussed in the O&M costs and revenue section of the Institutional Commitment and Sustainability section of the Assessment Criteria.
- IOF falls under *Institutional contributions*.
- Yearly totals for costs and revenue should be equal.

6. **Attraction and retention of leading researchers**

- To be completed based on the researcher's date of appointment once it is received from UofA HR.

7. **Past/current CFI investments**

- To be completed as appropriate.

FINANCE MODULE

1. **Cost of individual items**

- Complete as per 'Summary' tab on CFI budget spreadsheet (i.e., rolled-up lines).
- Item description should match that given in the Infrastructure section of the Assessment Criteria.

2. **Floor plans (if applicable)**

- Upload PDF following rules given on CAMS (if no renos in project, don't upload anything).

3. **Contributions from eligible partners**

- At minimum, Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism should be listed as a partner and is the only partner that can be listed as 'Expected.'
- Vendor in-kind can be rolled up on one line as 'Various.'
- A blurb to the effect of, "*An application will be submitted to the Research Capacity Program within Alberta Economic Development, Trade and Tourism (EDTT) to secure the required matching funds for this project*" can be entered into the text box.

4. **Infrastructure utilization**

- 'Research/technology development and associated training' should be 100%
- A blurb to the effect of, "*The infrastructure will be used exclusively (100%) for research and associated training*" can be entered into the text box.

5. **Overview of project funding (read-only)**

- Make sure all the numbers are correct. If the proposal is requesting exactly 40% CFI funding, sometimes the rounding of numbers throws off the percentage – if this happens, go back and adjust a cash or in-kind value by $1 to get to 40%.

SUGGESTED REVIEWERS MODULE

Make sure that, at minimum, the following fields are as complete as possible:

- Name
- Institution/Organization
- Country
- Email
- Telephone
- Online CV or biography
- Area(s) of expertise (keywords)

It is the applicant's responsibility to make sure that there is no conflict of interest with any of the reviewers listed.

FORMATTING

- ☐ Page size: Letter (8½" x 11"), single-column
- ☐ Margins: minimum 1" all around
- ☐ Font: 12-point, black
- ☐ Line spacing: single
- ☐ Header: for each page, applicant institution at top left, CFI# at top right
- ☐ Footer: nothing (pages will be numbered automatically in CAMS)
- ☐ Upload PDF files only