

NBIF Appeals Process

As previously described in our application review process, NBIF does not conduct peer or technical reviews of applications but does assess a given application against the evaluation criteria for the fund and the potential for impact that any given proposal may have. We also take substantial guidance on process and best practices in research administration from the Tri-Council funding agencies and with that in mind, you will find many similarities with their policy on appeals as what we have described below:

Policy

Decisions not to fund an application can be appealed only where there is evidence of an error in NBIF's review process. Appeals can be submitted only by the applicant named in the application.

Errors are departures from NBIF's written policies, notably those described in our Research Administration Guidelines, for example:

- a conflict of interest was undeclared or unaddressed within the review process;
- NBIF staff failed to provide the review committee with required information; or
- the review committee's decision to not recommend an award is based on a conclusion that is contrary to information provided by the applicant in the application.

NBIF will not accept appeals based on:

- decisions pertaining to applicant, subject matter or program eligibility;
- a difference in scholarly opinion between adjudication committee members and/or external assessors;
- disagreement over the interpretation or analysis of facts by adjudication committee members and/or external assessors;
- the contents of an external assessment, unless it contains unprofessional, discriminatory or biased comments from which the adjudication committee did not distance itself;
- the number of external assessments;
- the composition of a review committee; or
- the amount awarded.

Decisions on appeals are final.

Programs eligible for appeal include all those round-based programs and continuous intake programs, however the Graduate Scholarship program is excluded.

Procedure:

- Applicants seeking further information about the review of their application are strongly encouraged to first communicate with the appropriate NBIF Program Manager. If the applicant wishes to pursue an appeal after initial discussion with staff and has the necessary evidence of an error as outlined above, the applicant can submit a formal letter of appeal.
- Applicants submit a request for an appeal in a dated letter, signed by both themselves (applicant) and the signing authority of their respective institutional research administration office.

- Appeal letter must be received via email to researchservices@nbif.ca within 30 days of the date appearing on the official Notice of Decision.
- The appeal should be based on a compelling demonstration that an error occurred in the review process.
- Appeal letters must be no more than two pages.
- Applicants cannot submit with their appeal supporting documents that were not included in the original application.
- Director of Research determines if there are grounds for appeal as they are not involved in the original management or review of the application.
- Director of Research will notify applicant the request for appeal has been received and will assess whether or not there is grounds.
 - If there are no grounds for the appeal, the Director of Research will notify the applicant of this finding and the case is closed.
 - If there are grounds for an appeal, the Director of Research will assess the impact of the error on the scoring of the application and advise of any change of scoring which would have changed the ranking of said application in the ranked list of application used in the alignment meeting by reviewers.
 - If the application would have moved into a position that was parallel in scoring to other funded files and would have likely been funded, the Director of Research will authorize an out-of-cycle award (in the case of round based funds) or authorize the funding of the application (if the dollar value of the request is within their purview to authorize, otherwise they will see authorization from either the CEO or Board of Directors).
 - The applicant will be notified by the Director of Research and a standard Notice of Decision will be produced.
 - NBIF will conduct this process within 30 days of receipt of the request for an appeal.