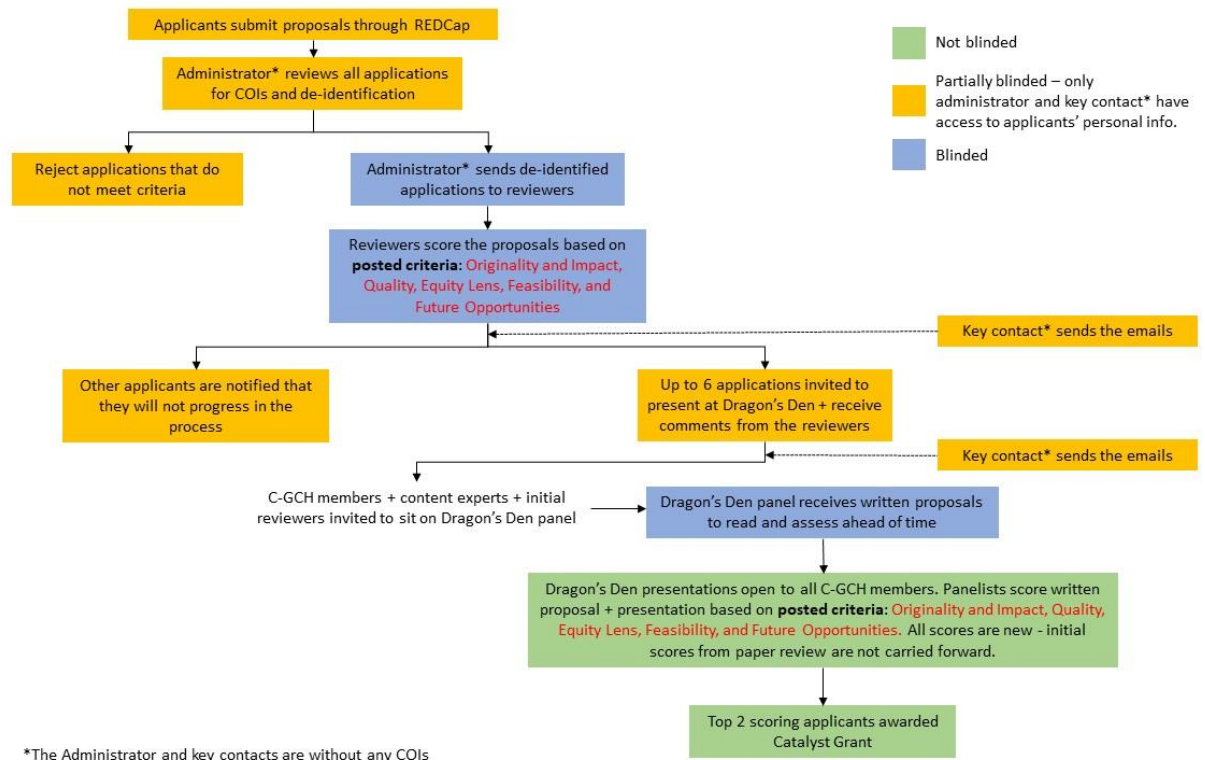


1. What is the process for reviewing and awarding the Catalyst Grant?



2. Is it possible to use external reviewers?

In the past, the C-GCH has attempted to use external reviewers for the blinded first review; however, we did not receive rigorous nor timely scores/responses. Using reviewers from within the C-GCH community ensures that those involved are committed to providing rigorous reviews that lead to the selection of a successful project.

Additionally, we also look to engage a C-GCH alumni in both the blinded first review and the Dragon’s Den, where appropriate and feasible. When creating the Dragon’s Den panel, we will continue to seek additional content area experts from the broader SickKids and University of Toronto community.

Further, as we will continue to use internal reviewers, we are committed to ensuring that they have no direct conflicts of interest (as defined by CIHR) with any proposals they are reviewing. If a conflict is identified, an alternate reviewer will be selected.

3. Who is eligible? Are applications from external applicants encouraged?

Anyone is eligible! While the Principal Applicant on the Catalyst Grant must be a staff member, fellow, or student at SickKids, external applicants are encouraged to use this opportunity to leverage existing collaborations, establish new partnerships, or in some cases, rekindle relationships with former collaborators within the SickKids community. If you want to apply but are not directly affiliated with the C-GCH or SickKids, we encourage you to identify and reach

out to internal collaborators through the [Centre](#) and [SickKids](#) websites. For research projects, a PI will also need to be identified. We encourage you to collaborate early on in the process, so that all co-applicants are involved in the design of the proposal. Please see the 2025 [Catalyst Grant Guidelines](#) for further details.

Co-applicants from external organizations are welcome and encouraged.

4. How is the integrity and independence of the process ensured?

There are numerous ways we ensure the integrity and independence of the process:

- **The first round of review is completely blinded.** All possibly identifiable information is removed by the designated administrator prior to disseminating the proposals to the reviewers. The reviewers are asked to skim each proposal and identify any conflicts of interest that may have been missed by the administrator. If a conflict of interest is identified, the reviewer will not review that particular grant application.
- **Bias is minimized at every step.** All reviewers and Dragon's Den panelists are required to read materials to identify conflicts of interest published by CIHR and the Government of Canada in order to reduce bias as much as possible. They also make an attestation that they will aim to eliminate their bias (sub-conscious and conscious) throughout the process.
- **Standardized scoring criteria are used throughout the process.** There are five areas that are used for adjudication both during the first round of blinded review and the Dragon's Den. Details on each of these criteria are available to all applicants prior to submitting the application. Please refer to the Appendix in the 2025 Catalyst Grant Guidelines for more information.
- **Standard operating procedure (SOP) was established and is followed each year.** A Catalyst Grant SOP is followed every year. In 2019, an evaluation of the Catalyst Grant process was carried out, and this has continued annually. All changes made based on that evaluation, and subsequent annual evaluations, will be updated in the SOP as needed.

5. What is the purpose of the Dragon's Den?

The Dragon's Den is a critical part of the selection process. It offers not only the opportunity to present the application in a different modality (i.e., in the format of a presentation, as opposed to a written proposal), but also allows for the panel and C-GCH members to ask questions which can serve to deepen the understanding of the application. The format of the presentation is at the discretion of the applicant; however, most applicants use this presentation to pitch their project afresh. Applicants presenting at the Dragon's Den should be prepared to respond to a range of questions and demonstrate the robustness of the application.

The application scoring process is restarted at this stage based on the individual scores assigned by panel members, although the same 5 scoring criteria is used. All panel members will have reviewed the written applications in advance. (See Question 1 for more information on the full selection process).

The Dragon's Den also offers a unique professional development opportunity, particularly for junior applicants, and supports C-GCH engagement.

6. Where can I find the scoring criteria?

The scoring criteria can be found in the [2025 Catalyst Grant Guidelines](#) . Please refer to the Appendix for a full description of the criteria.

7. Are there any requirements for awardees?

Requirements are clearly specified in the call for applications and updated in the [Catalyst Grant Guidelines](#).

The requirement that remains consistent year after year is that at least one grant will be awarded to a junior applicant. This ensures equal opportunity for junior applicants and fosters growth and leadership for the next generation of researchers. In the past we have had scenarios where both of the awardees have been junior applicants which speaks to the consistent high quality of submissions from junior applicants.

8. I have a question not answered here. Who can I contact?

For more information, eligibility and application details, click [here](#).

Should you have any questions regarding the 2025 Catalyst Grant, please contact: global.catalyst@sickkids.ca.