



Interdisciplinary Research Groups (IRG) Application Guide

1. Purpose of Interdisciplinary Research Groups (IRGs)

Interdisciplinary Research Groups (IRGs) are a core mechanism through which the Royal Society of Canada College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists (the College) enables collaborative, cross-disciplinary engagement on issues of national and societal importance. IRGs are designed to catalyze dialogue, synthesis, and policy-relevant scholarship that extends beyond disciplinary boundaries and individual research programs.

IRGs are **not research grants** and should not be framed as such. Rather, they are College-recognized communities of practice that leverage the College's convening power, intellectual networks, and policy-facing platforms to advance emerging ideas, national conversations, and collective outputs.

2. Alignment with the College mandate

IRGs should align with the College's mandate to:

- Bring fresh, interdisciplinary perspectives to pressing national and global challenges of relevance to the Canadian Society
- Foster collaboration across disciplines, sectors, and career stages
- Strengthen the connection between scholarship, public discourse, and policy
- Support inclusive, forward-looking, and socially responsive research cultures

Successful IRGs typically address issues that are:

- Cross-cutting and not owned by a single discipline
- Relevant to Canadian society, policy, or public institutions
- Well-suited to synthesis, dialogue, or agenda-setting activities
- Likely to benefit from the College's national reach and credibility

3. Who can apply

- IRGs must be led by one or more members of the College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists.
- Co-leadership is encouraged, particularly across disciplines or institutions.
- Initial membership should include a **critical mass** of committed College Members (normally at least three), with a clear plan to recruit additional members following approval, with a clear interdisciplinary make up.
- Participation by Fellows of the Royal Society of Canada, non-College experts, practitioners, policymakers, and community partners is encouraged where appropriate.

4. Scope, scale, and duration

- IRGs are normally approved for a **fixed term of 2–3 years**.
- IRGs should have a clearly articulated focus and set of objectives appropriate to this timeframe.
- Activities may include workshops, dialogues, symposia, white papers, policy briefs, webinars, or other knowledge mobilization outputs.
- IRGs should be ambitious but realistic in scope, recognizing that the College provides coordination and in-kind support rather than direct funding.

5. What the College provides

The College does **not** provide direct financial support to IRGs. However, subject to approval and capacity, the College may offer in-kind support, including:

- Access to College and Society networks for recruitment and outreach
- Visibility through the College and RSC websites and communication channels
- Logistical and organizational support for IRG-related sessions at College or RSC events
- Support for webinars, dialogues, or public-facing events
- Facilitation and endorsement of official RSC outputs such as white papers or policy briefs
- Letters of support for external funding applications where appropriate.

The precise nature of support will depend on the IRG's objectives, scale, and alignment with RSC College priorities.

6. External funding

IRGs that require significant operational resources (e.g., staff, large events, surveys, or research-intensive activities) are expected to seek **external funding**. The College may act as a partner or endorser in such applications but is not a funding body.

Applicants should clearly distinguish between:

- Activities enabled primarily through College engagement and in-kind support
- Activities contingent on external funding

7. Review and approval process

- IRG proposals are reviewed by College Council.
- Council assesses alignment with the College mandate, clarity of purpose, interdisciplinary value, feasibility, and evidence of member engagement.
- Proposals may be approved as submitted, approved with revisions, or returned for further development.
- Expedited review may be considered in exceptional, time-sensitive cases.

8. Reporting expectations

Approved IRGs are expected to submit brief progress reports (normally annually) using the College's IRG reporting template. Reporting is intended to support learning, continuity, and institutional memory rather than evaluation.