

Ontario Centres of Excellence: Voucher for Innovation and Productivity (VIP) Program Changes

Sponsor

Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE)

Program

Voucher for Innovation and Productivity (VIP)

Description

As communicated in the January 31st, 2019 **Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE)** Research Bulletin, the Voucher for Innovation and Productivity (VIP) program is being updated in response to stakeholder feedback, to streamline processes and ensure alignment with program and provincial priorities. The updates will include the following:

- Enhanced flexibility for applicants to apply for any funding amount between \$20,000 and \$150,000, for durations of six months to two years (i.e. one new “combined” VIP program). Industry partners must match the OCE contribution at least 1:1 in cash; at least half of the required match must be spent at the institution and the remainder may be spent at the company.
- Updated criteria for industry partners (minimum five full-time equivalent employees in Ontario) and projects (focus on short- to mid-term commercial outcomes, i.e. within three years of completion)
- Pre-application eligibility check and project data verification at project initiation, to prevent ineligible projects from proceeding through the application process. Once initiated, applications will be open for development and submission for six months only.
- Updated application questions for increased clarity on program objectives
- Joint participation by the researcher and industry partner in the development and submission of the application
- Simplified budget table, and reduced duplication of team information, within the application
- Eliminated requirement to provide Schedule D (Intellectual Property Terms) for inclusion in the funding agreement
- Minimized revision of submitted applications prior to external review; approved applications to be reviewed and only eligible expenses in the budget will be funded
- Final submission of applications to be done by the research office, enabling research offices to review the project and plan and allocate resources

- Funding agreement to be signed only after project approval
- All cash collection from the industry partner to be managed by the institution, allowing for increased visibility to payment and project activation status
- Updated payment and reporting processes: 25% advance payment to be released upon activation, with subsequent payments based on optional quarterly reimbursement requests. Mandatory reports required only annually (for projects >12 months) and at project end. Metrics to be included within annual and final reports to eliminate need for separate annual metrics surveys.
- Common overhead rates across the program (10% of direct research costs)

To accommodate these significant updates, the VIP program will re-open for application intake by early June 2019.

Additionally, OCE continues to work with NSERC to align with their updated programs. It is anticipated that joint applications to the updated VIP Program in partnership with NSERC's new program for industry-university collaborative research will open during the upcoming fiscal year once all processes are in place.

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