

Post-secondary Student Mental Health Grant

Questions and Answers

NOTE: If any of the responses to questions below contradicts the *Post-secondary Student Mental Health Grant Funding Guidelines*, the Funding Guidelines prevail.

Timelines and Administration

Question 1: Tell me more about the September 15 deadline. What happens if we get our application submitted to Advanced Education after that date?

- The application template notes that institutions submitting applications after September 15 may be subject to a prorated reduction to their Phase I funding.
- For clarity, this statement does not refer to the annual funding amount for Years 1-3 that was communicated by the Minister in his August 2 letter. It refers instead to the amount of funding that will be provided to the institution in its first grant term, a period of more than one year.
- Even though no institution had a grant in place by August 1, 2017, we prorated each of your Phase I allocations according to an August 1 start and a March 31, 2019 finish (20 months). You can confirm this amount by taking your annual grant allocation, dividing by 12 to get your monthly allocation, then multiplying by 20.
- If a grant isn't executed until 3-4 months after this time, your Phase I grant amount should be smaller than a 20-month allocation. This is not a penalty; your annual funding allocation is being used over fewer months.
- Any reductions will be prorated based on the number of half-months past September 15 that the application is received. For example, a complete and signed application received on October 3 may be subject to a grant reduction of 0.5 of a month.

Question 2: The cover page says to expect up to 8 weeks from the submission of an application to the execution of a grant. Can we start on our projects in the meantime (i.e., before our grant is paid to us)?

- Yes, but you take two risks by doing so: First, with any government grant there is always a small risk that the program could be terminated before any funds are paid. Second, there is a risk that planned activities in your application could be denied at the application review stage.

Question 3: When will Advanced Education release reporting templates?

- We aim to release templates for progress and final reports early in 2018.

Question 4: There doesn't seem to be anything in the guidelines that would preclude an institution from submitting more than one application for this grant, as long as the institution doesn't exceed its overall allocation. Was this omission on purpose?

- We expect institutions to submit one application for this grant program.
- Applications should be developed through broad engagement across the campus and should reflect a whole-campus approach to mental health promotion.

Changes to Plans

Question 5: We plan to use our grant to develop a mental health strategy and begin implementation. We don't know what activities to show for implementation.

- Development of a mental health strategy is an excellent use of funds (for those institutions that do not yet have one).
- When filling out your grant application, please make your best guess as to the activities you will undertake as a result of your strategy.

- If your strategy results in changes to your plans that are more significant than a < 15% funding adjustment from one category to another, please submit those in writing to Advanced Education. Changes must remain consistent with the Funding Guidelines.
- Upon a successful review of your plans, in all likelihood we will develop and execute an amending grant agreement with you.

Community and Stakeholder Involvement

Question 6: How much consultation do we need to undertake prior to submitting our application? The timing isn't good for accessing our students and other stakeholders prior to September 15.

- We understand the timelines may not be conducive to undertaking sufficient stakeholder engagement prior to submitting your application.
- Nevertheless, it is important that a broad base of stakeholders is involved in both the design and implementation of strategies.
- Given the short timelines, an acceptable compromise would be that you do your best to engage broadly with the amount of time given, and that you indicate your plans to engage more broadly following submission.
- Refer to Section 4.6 of the Funding Guidelines for instructions relating changing your plans after they are approved by Advanced Education.

Question 7: Can student survey data (e.g., NCHA, Healthy Minds) count towards student engagement?

- Survey data can be used effectively for understanding the current state (needs, strengths, and gaps). It should be referenced when you are filling in Section A of the application template.
- Survey data does not replace targeted engagement (which has the added objective of informing plans).
- If you recently engaged your students and other stakeholders in developing comprehensive campus mental health strategies, those engagements may be referenced in your application. Use your judgment as to whether past engagements were consistent with the objectives of the current grant.

Question 8: We've never done the NCHA on our campus, but we have a pretty good sense of our students and their needs. Will that work for Section A?

- It's a good start. We do expect institutions to engage with their students/communities to get a current sense of the needs, gaps, and assets.
- You may also want to refer to the attached *Postsecondary Mental Health in Alberta: A comparison of Alberta's National College Health Assessment data from 2013 and 2016*, which has been generously shared by Mount Royal University.

Question 9: Do all programs/services funded under the grant need to take place on campus, or can we do activities in the community?

- Activities may take place within the surrounding community as long as the institution's students remain the primary beneficiaries of the funding.
- We would not expect to see a significant amount of funding being spent on off-campus initiatives, so if you feel this is in the best interests of your students please include a strong rationale in your application.

Regional Post-secondary Mental Health Coordinating Committees

Question 10: Does every post-secondary institution need to “establish” a regional post-secondary mental health coordinating committee?

- Not every institution is expected to establish a committee (i.e., we do not want 26 separate committees). But every institution should be involved in the establishment of a committee and should play an active role. Some institutions will play a lead role.
- Leadership can be determined collectively by the regional post-secondary institutions.
- While roles will differ, all post-secondary institutions should bring an understanding of their unique student demographics, local needs, assets, and challenges, and should play a lead role in inviting their own local/regional stakeholders to the table.
- Regional committees will be a longstanding feature of post-secondary mental health in Alberta and will provide a forum to explore gaps and undertake collaborative planning, transitioning, and implementation.

Question 11: Are the five previously funded universities expected to take the lead in establishing regional post-secondary mental health coordinating committees?

- While the five previously funded universities are expected to show leadership and act as a resource for others when needed, they may not always be the best positioned to establish the committee.
- Post-secondary institutions should self-organize to determine leadership, processes, and boundaries.

Question 12: If a post-secondary institution is in a small region by itself, can it join another region?

- Yes. Boundaries provided in the funding guidelines are meant to be a starting point only. Actual boundaries should be determined by regional partners.
- Advanced Education has not established criteria for regional boundaries. Post-secondary institutions should be looking to establish regions that are large enough to capture the typical student transitions from the K-12 system and include most types of partners for clinical/nonclinical referrals, while being small enough that partners share common experiences related to their place in Alberta.
- Consideration should also be made to resourcing for provincial-level partners such as Alberta Health Services.

Question 13: How are we expected to report on the status of our regional committee? (per section 5.2.3 in the Guidelines)

- Details regarding the status report will be provided when the progress report and final report templates are released (see Question 3 above).
- Only one status report is needed per committee (i.e., each post-secondary institution participating in the committee isn't expected to submit a separate status report).

Clinical and Non-clinical mental health services

Question 14: What is the purpose of A2 in the application template? Is it ok if this section is empty?

- This question is asked for information-collection purposes; to help Advanced Education and Health collectively establish a baseline for services on campus.
- If no clinical mental health services are being provided by the institution, this section can be left empty.

Question 15: How can I better understand the difference between clinical and non-clinical mental health services? Can I use my grant to pay the salary of counsellors?

- This is a common question, so a standalone resource has been created to help post-secondary institutions differentiate between allowable (non-clinical) services and non-allowable (clinical) services. See attached.

Question 16: I understand why clinical services shouldn't be provided by the post-secondary institution, but what do we do for students who cannot access the clinical services they need in the community?

- We hope that through the regional committees, common needs will be identified and pre-existing mechanisms for delivering clinical care (e.g., primary care, Alberta Health Services) will adapt over time to meet identified needs.
- The distinction between clinical and non-clinical care is not so rigid as to keep a post-secondary institution from providing critical short-term intervention supports if those are appropriate (see attached)

Question 17: Do Registered Nurses count as clinical services for the purposes of the table in Section A2?

- This section asks about the delivery of clinical "mental health" services. If you have RNs on staff who are providing these services (see attached clinical/non-clinical document), please include them in this section.

Information to include

Question 18: A lot of services are available on campus from AHS and other providers. Should we note those in the application?

- The purpose of the application is to identify activities that will be funded through your new mental health grant.
- If activities are taking place on campus through other funding mechanisms or partnerships, and as a result you aren't requesting funding for a specific category, it is sufficient to check the box(es) in Section C of the application noting that initiatives are being supported through other means.
- Please add notes regarding other existing services to your response in A1.

Question 19: Section C of the application requests staffing information. Should we include the names of staff or other personal information?

- No, personal information should not be included in your application. Please only include non-personally identifying information.
- If personally-identifying information is included in your application, that application will be returned with the request to resubmit the application without the inclusion of personal information.

Budget

Question 20: I understand we are limited to allocating up to 15% of our grant to administrative overhead. How is this defined? Does that mean staffing can only make up 15% of my total grant?

- In the most general sense, administrative overhead includes initiatives that allow the post-secondary institution to operate programming, but do not directly impact students. Examples might include administrative, financial, and legal services staff involved in administering the grant, as well as shared costs like telephones, utilities, and rent.
- Section 6.1.2 of the funding guidelines also notes grant/program administration in the same paragraph. For clarity, the salary of a program administrator is not subject to the 15% "administrative overhead" restriction. A program administrator's role may include engaging your campus community in strategy development or launching new awareness or stigma reduction campaigns on campus.

- The budget template does not explicitly give you an opportunity to identify how much of your grant will be allocated to administrative overhead. Please note this dollar amount on your application.
- As per the guidelines, if you feel there is a good reason to allocate more than 15% to this category, please make your case within your application.

Question 21: The budget template (Section E) asks for information on other related revenue. How should we calculate this?

- In order for Advanced Education to receive information in this subsection that is as consistent and meaningful as possible, additional interpretation is required.
- A zero is an acceptable entry in any of the four subcategories in this area.
- The following criteria was suggested by a few institutions; please use it when filling out this subsection.
 - Donations: Specific to Wellness Services/Student Mental Health.
 - Other Grants: Specific to Wellness Services/Student Mental Health (e.g., Alberta Blue Cross, Bell)
 - Institutional Financial Contributions: Include any financial draw from the institution for areas that report to Wellness Services and support student mental health (e.g., Health Services, Health Promotion/Healthy Campus, Counselling). We recognize it would be challenging in most cases to report financial contributions for other areas.