

Best practices for awardees of the CIRMMT student award for research projects

Congratulations on embarking the interdisciplinarity path!

Although this endeavor will bring you multiple and varied new exciting experiences that will be beneficial for your career in research and creation, we want to make you aware that interdisciplinarity is not always as easy as it seems. We have therefore prepared some recommendations to facilitate your journey.

As for any new adventure, multi-disciplinary projects will bring challenges, positive ones and less positive ones. For example, working with others from very different disciplines may bring new perspectives that you had not thought about but also, they may raise some issues. Although some of the following recommendations may seem obvious and may be taken for granted, discussing these points in advance should facilitate your collaborative work:

Before applying with co-applicants, **all students** who are applying for a group project should:

- inform themselves of award requirements
- discuss an equitable distribution of tasks
- agree that the benefits for all applicants are as equal as possible
- discuss each applicant's expected work load and how this will be managed through the project
- discuss which tasks are who's responsibility

For this CIRMMT award, students usually work mostly alone/with their group members. However, the **supervisor(s)** they note on the application should be available to provide guidance and help whenever necessary. Therefore, before the award application is submitted, students should discuss with their supervisors to see if they are ready to provide a supervisory role for the project that may include:

- provide guidance and prompt feedback when work is submitted, or guidance is requested
- meet with their students when requested
- uphold and transmit the highest professional standards of research and scholarship
- clarify expectations regarding collaborative work, authorship, publication and conference presentations
- provide guidance for conflict resolution strategies in multidisciplinary contexts, if the need arises.

Once the application has been successfully awarded, all students who are part of a group project should:

- work within the requirements of the award and the necessary deadlines
- ensure that the agreed upon work load and responsibilities are maintained, or redistributed as necessary
- communicate regularly with their team members
- communicate with their supervisor(s) when necessary
- talk through problems first with their team members, including issues regarding expected/allocated work load and professional skills. If issues are difficult to resolve, talk to the project supervisors.
- engage with the supervisors as necessary to try and resolve any conflicts.

The above points are partially based on the [McGill Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies guidelines](#) on [Responsibilities of Academic Units](#). These responsibilities are somewhat broad for this specific award, but provide a useful guide.

If working conditions become unbearable, however, the group should discuss this with the CIRMMT Director as a final resort. If necessary, the group will be released from any obligations, with no repercussions except that the final 20% of the award will not be paid out to any member of the group.

For additional reading on practical recommendations for collaborators, feel free to view these suggested links:

- *The London School of Economics & Political Science:* [“What can interdisciplinary collaborations learn from the science of team science?”](#)
- *American Psychological Association:* [“Interdisciplinary research collaborations”](#)
- *Integration & Application Network:* [“How to improve interdisciplinary collaborations: lessons learned from scientists studying team science”](#)
- *Science Magazine:* [“Building successful collaborations”](#)