Writing your knowledge mobilization plan for SSHRC Insight Grants: Components, recommendations and resources

SSHRC’s Insight program supports building knowledge and understanding about people, societies and the world through research excellence.

The knowledge mobilization objective in this grant is to increase the flow of research knowledge, to and from academic and non-academic audiences, with the potential to lead to intellectual, cultural, social and economic influence, benefit and impact.

What is knowledge mobilization?

Knowledge mobilization (KM) = getting the right information to the right people in the right format at the right time

SSHRC’s definition = specific activities and plans that facilitate the multidirectional flow and exchange of research knowledge

Mobilizing knowledge involves:

- Sharing research findings using appropriate means that reach beyond the research community
- More than just ‘pushing out’ knowledge – KM includes a two-way exchange of ideas
- Communicating research with the academic community: this is still important and in some cases might be your main audience (in some disciplines this is especially true)

Why do knowledge mobilization?

Creating and carrying out a clear and effective KM strategy increases the impact of research on and beyond the campus through enhanced accessibility and interaction. KM objectives include:

- Facilitating connections among diverse stakeholders and supporting collaboration through event and networking strategies e.g. building or tapping existing networks and/or communities of practice, targeted community presentations, conferences, workshops, etc.
- Increasing awareness of empirical evidence on a topic e.g. public engagement strategies such as presentations, media interviews and articles, as well as academic approaches, including literature reviews, research reports and conceptual papers
- Changing systems and behaviour through such mechanisms as education or policy influence e.g. curriculum development, writing advocacy materials, policy briefs etc.
- Increasing engagement with research content through translation and multi-media strategies e.g. data visualization, videos, interactive presentations, e-bulletins, arts-based initiatives etc.

The knowledge mobilization plan

SSHRC evaluates the ways in which researchers plan to effectively disseminate knowledge and ensure knowledge exchange and engagement takes place within and/or beyond the research community.

i. Preparing a knowledge mobilization plan

- Consider who is interested in your research and where they would go to find the outcomes
- Your plan will be unique to your research and involve what is both appropriate and innovative to your project goals
- Develop your KM objectives at the outset of your research, versus as an added feature
Consider the evaluation criteria related to your KM plan: proposed impact of your research within and beyond the research community; your plan for effective knowledge dissemination, knowledge exchange and engagement; the proposed timelines and budget (KM is measured in the feasibility section of your grant: demonstrate how you will achieve project outcomes)

SSHRC does not offer templates but they do offer guidelines: see Appendix A

ii. Plan components (general)

- Identify your audience(s) and where they are located geographically (if applicable)
  - Academic: other researchers, students, etc.
  - Non-academic: policy-makers, business leaders, community groups, educators, media, practitioners, decision-makers, general public
  - International, national, provincial/regional, and/or local stakeholders
- List knowledge mobilization activities/tools for appropriately engaging the audience(s) identified – describe them in detail and why they were chosen (e.g. how they meet the needs of the targeted audiences, how audiences will access and/or use what is planned, how, and if, audiences/stakeholders have been involved in determining the KM plan)
- Provide a timeline/schedule for KM activities – integrated or end-of-project?
- Briefly include the markers and targets for measuring impact of the KM
- Budget – may be included in your KM summary or separately (it is critical to include associated expenses and budget for KM activities indicated somewhere in your application), e.g. catering, room rental, per diems, travel, graphic design, website design & maintenance, video production costs, printing etc.)

Writing the plan – advice and tips

- Build on existing partnerships and experiences of your project team
- Demonstrate some of the groundwork you have already accomplished to increase accessibility and engagement with the research knowledge, e.g. contact with existing networks and alliances, communications with academic journals, conference names and dates at which you will present
- Avoid over promising and only include what you know you can do
- Economize by using partners, in-kind contributions, and free/inexpensive resources
- Consider piggy-backing on other events/activities (i.e. IdeaFest, University 101, department lecture series, TEDx, UVic Speakers’ Bureau)
- If appropriate consider open access (OA) journals and UVic’s OA repository as SSHRC prefers publication of research results
- If planning to publish a book with a Canadian publisher, consider applying to the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences’ Awards to Scholarly Publications Program - www.ideas-idees.ca/aspp

Knowledge mobilization resources

- UVic Research Partnerships and Knowledge Mobilization Unit: www.uvic.ca/research/partner/index.php
- UVic Speakers Bureau: www.uvic.ca/communications/speakersbureau/
- UVic Libraries Scholarly Communications: library.uvic.ca/scholcomm/index.html
- UVicSpace (open access publishing): dspace.library.uvic.ca:8443/
- Directory of Open Access Journals: www.doaj.org/
- UVic Journal Publishing Service (Open Journals Systems): journals.uvic.ca/

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