

Equine Guelph Research Competition Announcement: Fall 2025

This is the annual announcement of the Equine Guelph Research Competition, for one or two year projects beginning in 2026. Proposal submission is in two stages with a Letter of Intent (LOI) and a Full-Proposal stage.

The following deadlines will apply for this year's competition:

- Friday, October 10th: LOI due
- Monday, November 3: Full proposal due
- Mid-December: Announcement of competition results, save for any funding withheld for the OMAFA competition.

These deadlines have been chosen for the following reasons; 1) announcing the results in December will allow faculty to leverage the funds through summer student and graduate student stipends 2) faculty will be able to submit and have AUPs approved before the Spring semester

The LOI is to facilitate peer-reviewer recruitment and solicit industry support letters for any Grayson Jockey Club grants. Note: **only faculty who submit a LOI are eligible for submitting a full proposal to the EG competition.**

Information on the EG research Committee assessment criteria and peer-reviewer rubric are included below.

Our funding partners have indicated that the following research avenues are considered as priorities:

Ontario Racing:

Horse racing industry priorities include (in alphabetical order):

- Early embryonic death
- Exercise-induced gastrointestinal syndrome
- High GGT syndrome
- Impacts of climate change on racehorses, i.e., heat, wildfire smoke, etc.
- Kissing spine disease
- Palmar/Plantar osteochondral disease
- Standardbred racetrack surfaces, with respect to establishing proven standards for safe surfaces, methods of evaluating surfaces, etc.
- Tying up

HBPA:

- Kissing Spine
- Breathing throat issues
- Bleeding causes
- Treatments - suspensory tendons.

Estate of Donna Moore Research Fund:

- Research projects focusing on health and welfare that may not be rated highly from the "racing industry priorities scale" will be considered if the focus is on "welfare", including nutrition, genetics, behaviour/training and other related equine welfare issues.

Stage 1: Letter of Intent (LOI). Deadline – Friday, October 10, 2025 (11.59 pm).

- Submit the following information to email address: egcomp@uoguelph.ca
[CC: houlahan@uoguelph.ca](mailto:houlahan@uoguelph.ca)
 - Scientific Abstract, see below for detailed format
 - Lay Abstract
 - Minimum 3 suitable content specialist peer-reviewers with their full name, affiliations, address, phone number and email address. An external peer reviewer is defined as an expert in the field relevant to the proposal that is not at the University of Guelph, nor has been an academic supervisor, recent student, or recent collaborator of the primary investigators on the proposal.
 - If justified, list of peer-reviewers NOT to contact with justification
- Detailed Scientific Abstract guidelines (Max. 3500 characters including spaces)
 1. Title
 2. Rationale: description of the problem and the need for the research being proposed.
 3. Hypothesis/Objectives
 4. Experimental Design and Methods
 5. Preliminary Data
 6. Expected Results
 7. Potential Impact for Equine Health
- Format document as follows:
 - 2 cm margins
 - Legible font, size 12 preferred
 - Submit as **PDF file**

Stage 2: Full Proposal. Deadline – Monday, November 3, 2025 (11.59 pm).

- *Submit the following information to email address: egcomp@uoguelph.ca*
- **CC: houlahan@uoguelph.ca**
 - *One merged PDF file of the following documents:*
 1. Complete proposal PDF including budget with attachment of negotiated costs of facilities (HSC, RSS) where appropriate, and project milestones
 2. Curriculum Vitae (CV) and funding support of all PI and Co-Investigators see below for details.

Documents relevant to ethical review (AUP or IACUC documents) can be pending at the time of Full Proposal submission but will need approval before funds are released to successful applicants.

NOTE: A total of approximately \$270,000 is available for this competition, and to support OMAFA Tier I applications. Cash support of successful OMAFA grant will be subtracted from the available funds and the remaining funds will be allocated according to the ranking within the EG competition. **Please indicate in your email submission if you also intend on submitting an OMAFA proposal, and if so, please include your OMAFA proposal's budget.**

Schedule of Dates: Fall 2025 competition

<u>Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
September 19th, 2025	Call for Equine Research Proposals
October 10th, 2025	LOI deadline. PDF submission to egcomp@uoguelph.ca ; cc houlahan@uoguelph.ca
November 3rd, 2025	Full proposal. PDF submission to egcomp@uoguelph.ca ; cc houlahan@uoguelph.ca
December 2025	Announcement of results

CV and funding support detailed guidelines

- **CV** (two-page limit per individual): For each principal investigator and co-investigator, provide the following information:
 1. Name
 2. Position/role on this project
 3. Current position (title, name, and address of institution)
 4. Education/training (degrees, institution, year of graduation, field of study)
 5. Previous positions and honors (include membership on any advisory committees)
 6. Selected peer-reviewed publications (include titles, all authors, and complete reference)
- **Current and pending support** (no page limit): Other financial support for principal investigator and co-investigators. Please include all financial support (e.g., federal, nonfederal, commercial, institutional) currently available in support of the investigator's research program. Overlap, whether scientific, budgetary or commitment of an individual's effort greater than 100 percent, is not permitted. Current and Pending Support format:
 1. Project Number: If applicable, include a code, grant ID or other identifier for the project.
 2. Source: Identify the agency, institution, foundation or other organization providing support.
 3. Title
 4. Summary: Provide a brief statement of the overall objectives of the project, subproject or subcontract.
 5. Annual Costs: In the case of an active project, provide the current year's budget. For a pending project, provide the proposed budget for the entire project.
 6. Overlap: Summarize any potential overlap with the proposed project regarding the science, budget or committed effort.

EG Research Committee Terms of Reference sections relevant to the review and funding process of new proposals. These are what the EG Research Committee will look at:

5.3.7

Review Meeting of whole Committee to review new Proposals, Final and Annual Reports and make recommendations. This is a meeting of the whole Committee including Resource and Temporary members. The review processes are as follows:

- Final Reports are evaluated for completeness, and whether the outcomes stated in the Proposal have been met. All Voting members vote, with a majority necessary for approval.
- Annual Reports are evaluated on the achievement of milestones stated in the Proposal. All Voting members vote, with a majority necessary for approval. Approved Reports receive funding for the next year.
- Research Proposals are evaluated by the Voting members. There are three criteria for assessing each Proposal:
 - (1) its relevance to the priorities identified by each industry and OMAFRA, or to the current state of the equine industry,
 - (2) the quality of the science as evaluated by the external peer reviewers, and
 - (3) that the researcher and research team have appropriate qualifications, expertise to conduct the research, and have been productive under prior funding, as documented in a resume submitted with the Proposal.

All Voting members score all Proposals on these criteria and a ranking is generated from the combined scores. Recommendations for funding are made based on the ranking of each Proposal and its relevance to each Funding Agency's interests and priorities. There is no voting in this procedure.

The final recommendation for funding by any given Funding Agency is at the discretion of the representatives of that Agency.

A preliminary budget of the distribution of funding among continuing projects and successful Proposals is determined during the course of the meeting, and checked after the meeting.

5.3.8.

Approval of recommendations by Funding Agencies. Within 1 week of the meeting, the preliminary budget for the distribution of funding is communicated to the Industry co-Chair, Voting and Administrative resource members. This is the responsibility of University co-chair, assisted by staff of the Administrative resource member. The Voting members have the responsibility of taking the preliminary budget to their

respective Agencies for approval. Approval of the Funding Agencies is reported back to the University co-Chair, who initiates the process for transfer and releasing funds.

Funding Agencies may reject the recommendations for funding specific projects. In this case the amounts recommended for allocation are not included in the research budget of Equine Guelph, and are not transferred to Equine Guelph or to the relevant projects.

Equine Guelph Research Committee

Peer Reviewer Rubric

The following rubric is intended to assist Peer Reviewers for the Equine Guelph Research Committee in assigning a score to a submitted research proposal. We ask that your comments and scores be kept strictly confidential, and only shared with the Equine Guelph administrator. This Peer Review will be shared with the Principal Investigator; however, the identity of the Peer Reviewer will be kept anonymous.

Project Title:

Primary Investigator:

1. Novelty, Potential Impact, and Methodology:			
0-1	2-3	4-5	SCORE out of 5:
There are serious concerns with the project's novelty . Significant revision is necessary before a future resubmission.	There are minor concerns with the project's novelty, or contribution to the scientific body of work. Researcher should address these concerns or consider submitting this again in the future with revisions.	Proposal clearly describes a novel research approach . This research would greatly contribute to, or build upon, the scientific overall body of work.	Comments: Enter your comments here.
Research into this field is unlikely to provide tangible benefits in either the short or long term for the health and welfare of equines.	This research project would likely provide modest dividends in short or long term towards the health and welfare of equines.	This research project could be of significant and immediate benefit to the health and welfare of equines . Addresses a critical issue; utilizes latest technological developments; builds upon recent ground-breaking research.	Comments: Enter your comments here.
Design and Methodology are insufficiently detailed or inappropriate for the stated purpose of the research. Or, research in this area utilizing similar methodologies has been completed and has not yielded useful results.	Design and Methodology are outlined, but not clear enough to fully describe the process. More detail is necessary to clarify.	Design and methodology are both logical and scientifically sound . Methods are clearly outlined, including potential barriers/risks.	Comments: Enter your comments here.

2. Budget/Timeline			
0-1	2-3	4-5	SCORE out of 5:
There are serious concerns with the project's budget . Budget is insufficiently justified and/or disproportionate or unclear. Significant revision is necessary before a future submission.	There are minor concerns with the project's budget. Budget may be reasonable but lacks detail and may require clarification or revision.	The proposal's budget is appropriate and reasonable for such a study. Budget is detailed and well-justified and has reasonable scope.	Comments: Enter your comments here.
There are serious concerns with the project's timeframe . Timeframe seems unrealistic or not explained. Significant revision is necessary before a future submission can be submitted.	There are minor concerns with the project's timeframe . Timeframe may be reasonable but lacks detail and requires further explanation. Milestones are identified but may require clarification or revision.	The proposal's timelines and milestones are appropriate and reasonable for such a study. Timeline is clearly laid out, is realistic, detailed, well-justified and has reasonable scope. Milestones are clearly identified for the duration of the project and	Comments: Enter your comments here.

OVERALL SCORE /25: **0.00**

20-25: Proposal is of a high or exceptional quality. The proposal has strong scientific merit, and the budget/timeline are reasonable for the project's scope. Funding is strongly recommended.

12-19: Project is of a moderate quality, and/or there are minor concerns with scientific merit, budget, or scope. Funding may be recommended, provided concerns are addressed.

Less than 12: There are major concerns with the proposal's scientific merit, budget or scope. Funding is not recommended at this time. Researcher is encouraged to seriously consider peer-review and committee feedback on the project before resubmitting to a future competition.