**Research Program Planning**

Whether you are a novice or experienced researcher, being able to articulate your research program and plans/interests is important. Not only does it help you lay out your time for your own planning, it is a useful (and sometimes required) tool to discuss your research with senior leadership (e.g. for time release, research space/staff etc). If you can’t succinctly describe what you are doing and want to do, and the impact and benefit it will have, then it will be challenging to convince others to support your endeavour, regardless of how innovative and/or impactful it might be.

Everyone has their own approach. That’s why a few different examples of ways to capture key information have been included. The first two templates for articulating your research program (logic Model and narrative formats) create ‘snapshots’ of a research program. There are many different examples of this kind of ‘snapshot’ out there, so find one that works for you, best captures your research program and provides the information KPU leadership, sponsors and funders will also want/need to know before supporting your research program. The third template is a research program planning spreadsheet, and is a more comprehensive planning document, including worksheets on: keywords brainstorming, current resource commitments, an overarching plan, and a timeline with current and potential funding. Note that the ‘outline a plan’ worksheet (all or parts of it) can also be formatted into a ‘snapshot’ document.

**Considerations:**

*Planning budgets/resources for projects*

* How much time do you have for research (e.g., what are your teaching and administration commitments?)
* What resources do you - the Department – the Faculty – the Institution - have to support your research?
  + Space – offices, labs
  + People - time release for you; administrative or financial support re: research management

*Working with Faculty/School and Institutional leaderships*

* Developing a strong, positive, mutually beneficial working relationship in regards to your research is critical to building a sustainable research program
  + Involving them in the conversation upfront vs after the fact (once you have funding and need things)
  + Being innovative in integrating with curriculum/learning experiences for students

*Strategic partnerships and collaborations*

* Research – combination of leading, co-leading and co-investigating as a way of building your research capital and experience
* Industry/community
  + Team members – collaborative research teams
  + Collaborators/supporters (e.g., sites, populations, resources)
* Funding
  + Leveraging funds (e.g., matching, contributions, In-kind sources)

*Student learning*

Experiential learning is a cornerstone of KPU’s academic mandate. Applied research is a fantastic opportunity to provide these experiences, support your projects, and align with KPU mandate.

**Research program planning tools**

Articulating your Research Program: Logic Model and Narrative format templates

These ‘snapshot’ types of documents are often used to capture the key aspects of your program in a briefer format than a full strategic research plan. They are very useful for describing your program’s goals, activities and potential impact for institutional leadership, sponsors/donors, and community/industry partners.

Though most commonly used as above, they also can be used to assist you with program planning. Some people find it easier to outline their plans in these shorter document and then build it into a larger, more detailed research plan, as described below. Both approaches work; choose the one that fits best with you/your team.

Strategic Research Program Planning Spreadsheet

You may find the various worksheets more or less useful, depending on many factors, including your experience in creating such a plan, or your preference for other tools you have used in the past. This document’s main purpose is as a tool to assist researchers in articulating their proposed research program versus to share with others. However, the ‘outline a plan’ worksheet can be formatted into a research program plan for sharing with internal collaborators and leadership and/or external stakeholders.

*Worksheet: Brainstorm key concepts*

Identifying key words that describe various aspects of your current research (e.g. populations, settings) as well as the direction in which you would like to take your program. This activity can be useful if you are relatively new to research, or if this is your first time engaging in research program planning, and/or articulating your current and future research program.

*Worksheet: List current commitments*

Another initial step in go-forward planning, if not already done, is to articulate and capture your current commitments in terms of research projects and other activities. This worksheet is meant to be a one-page snapshot of current commitments - each project/task, timeframe for funding/project, time commitment, and remaining deliverables. A key purpose of this worksheet is to identify where you and your staff/students’ time is dedicated, as you need to identify if and when there is time for additional projects. The timelines and deliverables of any current commitments that continue forward into the ‘planning period’ also get carried forward to the last worksheet.

*Worksheet: Outline a Plan*

This is often built on a 5-year timeline but could be shorter/longer depending on your program and at what stage you are in developing/establishing your program. This includes the overarching vision/goal of the program as well as key objectives or strategic priorities, followed by current and future projects, outcomes, impacts, collaborations, etc. This is also where the links to actual and potential experiential learning opportunities are articulated, which is a critical aspect of any KPU research program plan.

*Worksheet: Timeline for Plan and funding (current and potential)*

Start by plotting your current and future projects (e.g., applied for) over the period, including when possible, times of high involvement. Plotted under this are projected timelines for new projects, identified in the overarching plan.

The second part of this worksheet is to plot potential funding opportunities below the 5-year plan. As applying for project funding must be done well in advance (e.g. 1-2 years) to keep your program active, these applications must be included in the 5-year planning timeline.