## Alberta MS Collaboration Clinical and Research Postdoctoral Fellowship Competition

Program Guidelines

# Program Description

Campus Alberta Neuroscience (CAN) offers the PDF Program to enrich the experience of neuroscience and mental health trainees through increased collaboration, skill transfer and mentorship across campuses. We aim to attract the best and brightest new scholars to Alberta, providing them with professional training opportunities and ensuring successful research career trajectories in neuroscience or mental health related fields.

Our one or two year fellowship offers a unique training opportunity in a multi-institutional collaborative research program across CAN’s affiliated institutions: University of Alberta, University of Calgary, and University of Lethbridge. Recipients of the CAN PDF award will typically carry out their research activities at two of CAN’s affiliated institutions. The individual will engage in research and training activities at their home institution, while also maintaining significant collaboration and connection to their partner institution.

## Partnered Award: Alberta MS Collaboration Clinical and Research Postdoctoral Fellowship Competition

The [Alberta Multiple Sclerosis Collaboration](http://www.albertaneuro.ca/research-themes/#_ms) (Alberta MS Collaboration) is accepting clinical and research proposals from **Alberta-based trainees focused on multiple sclerosis in the area of neuro-protection and repair.**

The Alberta MS Collaboration is intended to provide societal and economic benefit for the province, accelerate health innovation from bench to bedside, and ultimately improve the lives of Albertans living with MS. This multi-stakeholder initiative supports innovation in MS research and translation in Alberta through industry, government, community and academic partnerships. The Collaboration’s goal is to support innovative and transformative research in MS that stimulates discovery in Alberta with a focus on reducing the incidence of MS, elevating knowledge on all aspects of MS, increasing the efficiency and efficacy of treatment and improving quality of life for those living with MS.

The Collaboration’s current partners include the Alberta MS Network, Campus Alberta Neuroscience, Alberta Economic Development and Trade, Alberta Health, the MS Society of Canada, and Sanofi Genzyme Canada. Funding for the current postdoctoral fellowcompetition was provided by Sanofi Genzyme Canada.

## Eligibility Criteria

**Clinical PDF:**

* Applicants in a neuroscience or mental health discipline pursuing an MS clinical fellowship at an affiliated institution **and** within 2 years (24 months) of completion of their Doctoral degree. Applicants should be FRCPC eligible.
* Clinical postdoctoral fellows are encouraged, but not required, to have a multi-institutional collaborative placement. In the case of a multi-institutional placement, joint supervision by two faculty members, from two different CAN affiliated institutions (University of Alberta, University of Calgary, University of Lethbridge), who both hold full-time continuing faculty appointments and are members of the CAN database, the CANdex.
  + For placements that are not multi-institutional, supervision by a single faculty member, who holds a full-time continuing faculty appointment and is a member of the CAN database, the CANdex is required
  + CANdex membership details are available [here](http://www.albertaneuro.ca/about-us/#_candex)
* Supervisors may sponsor one PDF Program recipient per academic year
* Faculty members may not supervise or co-supervise more than one CAN PDF recipient simultaneously

**Research PDF:**

* Applicants in a neuroscience or mental health discipline pursuing an MS research fellowship at an Alberta institution **and** within 2 years (24 months) of completion of their Doctoral degree
* Research postdoctoral fellows are encouraged, but not required, to have a multi-institutional collaborative placement. In the case of a multi-institutional placement, joint supervision by two faculty members, from two different CAN affiliated institutions (University of Alberta, University of Calgary, University of Lethbridge), who both hold full-time continuing faculty appointments and are members of the CAN database, the CANdex.
  + For placements that are not multi-institutional, supervision by a single faculty member, who holds a full-time continuing faculty appointment and is a member of the CAN database, the CANdex is required
  + CANdex membership details are available [here](http://www.albertaneuro.ca/about-us/#_candex)
* Supervisors may sponsor one PDF Program recipient per academic year
* Faculty members may not supervise or co-supervise more than one CAN PDF recipient simultaneously

## Terms and Value

**Clinical PDF:**

* Alberta MS Collaboration will provide fellowship support valued at $60,000 (excluding benefits) per annum for up to two years (24 months)
* Primary supervisor must cover all additional costs (extended health benefits, WCB etc.) required by the home institution
* Administrative, HR and/or Appointment policies and procedures will follow the guidelines and regulations of the successful applicant’s home institution
* Alberta MS Collaboration will provide a Collaboration Allowance of $5,000 per annum for multi-institutional, collaborative placements (reimbursement based on [University of Calgary guidelines](https://www.ucalgary.ca/finance/files/finance/travelexpensereimbursementhandbook.pdf)). These funds will normally be directed towards extended collaborative visits to the partner institution, but may also be directed towards attending conferences or symposia held in Alberta and participation in other networking and collaborative events. In the event that a fellowship is not multi-institutional, a Collaboration Allowance will not be provided.
* Funding is allocated annually, with a maximum possible support term of two years. Renewal of the award following the first year of funding is contingent on review of research progress, evidence of application for available external funding (e.g. Tri-Council, Alberta Innovates-Health Solutions (AIHS), etc.) and participation in training activities
* A clinical PDF may not hold both a qualifying external peer-reviewed fellowship (e.g. Tri-Council, AIHS) and a CAN award at the same time. If the individual accepts an external award, they must decline the Alberta MS Collaboration award. It is the responsibility of the Supervisor and/or Postdoctoral Fellow to inform Alberta MS Collaboration if they receive another external award
* Payment of Alberta MS Collaboration PDF Awards are contingent upon receipt of an official letter of offer from the home institution for a minimum two-year Postdoctoral appointment

**Research PDF:**

* Alberta MS Collaboration will provide fellowship support valued at $37,000 (excluding benefits) per annum for up to two years (24 months)
* Primary supervisor must provide matching fellowship support to a total minimum stipend of $45,000 per annum (or the minimum set by the home institution if greater than $45,000) and to cover all additional costs (extended health benefits, WCB etc.) required by the home institution
* Administrative, HR and/or Appointment policies and procedures will follow the guidelines and regulations of the successful applicant’s home institution
* Alberta MS Collaboration will provide a Collaboration Allowance of $8,000 per annum for multi-institutional, collaborative placements (reimbursement based on [University of Calgary guidelines](https://www.ucalgary.ca/finance/files/finance/travelexpensereimbursementhandbook.pdf)). These funds will normally be directed towards extended collaborative visits to the partner institution, but may also be directed towards attending conferences or symposia held in Alberta and participation in other networking and collaborative events. In the event that a fellowship is not multi-institutional, a Collaboration Allowance will not be provided.
* Funding is allocated annually, with a maximum possible support term of two years. Renewal of the award following the first year of funding is contingent on review of research progress, evidence of application for available external funding (e.g. Tri-Council, Alberta Innovates-Health Solutions (AIHS), etc.) and participation in training activities
* A research PDF may hold both a qualifying external peer-reviewed fellowship (e.g. Tri-Council, AIHS) and a Alberta MS Collaboration award at the same time. If the individual accepts an external award, the CAN award will be provided as an incentive (secondary to the external award), with a value of $20,000 per annum to a maximum combined award value of $60,000 per annum (or the maximum allowed by the other agency if less than $60,000 per annum). Alberta MS Collaboration PDF recipients who receive external rewards will also continue to be guaranteed their collaboration allowance. It is the responsibility of the Supervisor and/or Postdoctoral Fellow to inform the Alberta MS Collaboration if they receive another external award
* Payment of Alberta MS Collaboration PDF Awards are contingent upon receipt of an official letter of offer from the home institution for a minimum two-year Postdoctoral appointment

**Timeline**

**Commencement of Award**

September 1, 2018

**Application Deadline**

May 15, 2018

**PDF Program Announcement**

February 1, 2018

**Notification of Decision**

June 29, 2018

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**How to Apply**

Complete applications for the Alberta MS Collaboration PDF Program must be received electronically by 4:00pm MST on May 15, 2018. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

**Note**: CAN members with whom you are interested in training should be contacted directly. Members of the Neuroscience and Mental Health Institute (NMHI), Hotchkiss Brain Institute (HBI), and Canadian Centre for Behavioural Neuroscience (CCBN) are considered members of CAN. Potential academic supervisors in neuroscience or mental health disciplines in Alberta who are not members of these organizations may apply for CAN membership [here](http://www.albertaneuro.ca/about-us/#_candex).

A complete application consists of:

* Postdoctoral Fellow Program Application Form
* Applicant’s CV
* Supervisor and co-Supervisor biosketch (maximum 2 pages) including relevant current funding and publications (last 5 years)
* A letter of recommendation from the applicant’s Doctoral degree supervisor **and** from a second referee who can provide meaningful commentary on the applicant’s research and other abilities. Referees must forward their letters directly to the Alberta MS Collaboration (Clint Westgard, [chwestga@ucalgary.ca](mailto:chwestga@ucalgary.ca)), with the subject line “Alberta MS Collaboration PDF Program Letter of Recommendation – [Applicant Name]”
  + If the applicant’s Doctoral degree supervisor is unable to provide a letter of recommendation, a recommendation from another member of the applicant’s supervisory committee would be acceptable, provided that the Alberta MS Collaboration receives a signed letter from the applicant’s Graduate Program that details the reason for exclusion of the supervisor’s recommendation

The Postdoctoral Fellow Program Application Form requires a description of:

The proposed research plan, including the research question/hypothesis, objectives, methodological approach, and expected outcomes. Research plans should be focused on the area of neuro-protection and repair in MS.

How the proposed research plan will be achieved through multi-institutional collaboration

Please note that applicants are encouraged, but not required to have a multi-institutional collaborative placement.

How the proposed research plan will make significant contributions to the Supervisor and co-Supervisor’s neuroscience or mental health programs

The applicant’s planned career trajectory and how it will benefit from multi-institutional training

The complete application package, including all necessary components described above, must be submitted electronically as a single .pdf file by 4:00pm MST on May 15, 2018 to [chwestga@ucalgary.ca](mailto:chwestga@ucalgary.ca) with the subject line **PDF Program Application 2018 -** **Alberta MS Collaboration – [applicant name]**

## Adjudication

* Applications will be reviewed and ranked by an independent committee of MS experts from institutions outside the province of Alberta.
* The members of the review committee will be selected by an independent outside of Alberta chair, appointed by the Alberta MS Collaboration Steering Committee co-chairs.
* The review committee will report its rankings to the Steering Committee for the final determination of the awards.

## Adjudication Criteria

Applications will be evaluated on excellence in all of the following criteria:

* Satisfaction of eligibility criteria
* Quality of Postdoctoral Fellow’s CV
* Quality of Supervisor and Co-supervisor biosketches
* Contribution to Supervisors’ neuroscience or mental health programs and the collaboration
* Appropriate and informative letters of recommendation
* Adequacy of funding in host laboratory
* Priority given to applicants entering their first Postdoctoral appointment

## Administration of Award

* Applicants and proposed supervisors will be notified of the decision in writing by June 29, 2018
* All decisions are final and cannot be appealed
* Payment is dependent upon compliance with program guidelines and final deliverables

## Reporting Requirements

* Successful applicants are expected to acknowledge the Alberta MS Collaboration in any research activity, including abstracts and publications, and in the dissemination of information, including conference proceedings and seminar announcements, resulting from this award
* A Renewal Report Form must be submitted to Alberta MS Collaboration (Clint Westgard, [chwestga@ucalgary.ca](mailto:chwestga@ucalgary.ca)) at least six weeks prior to the start of the renewal year. The Alberta MS Collaboration Steering Committee will make all renewal decisions. PDF recipients may be recommended for full or partial second year renewals

## Questions

If you are interested in applying to this program and require further information, please contact Clint Westgard at (403) 829-4905 or [chwestga@ucalgary.ca](mailto:chwestga@ucalgary.ca)