

Spinal Cord Injury

Innovation and Translation Postdoctoral Fellow Competition Program Guidelines

Program Description

The Alberta Paraplegic Foundation and Campus Alberta Neuroscience (CAN) are offering a postdoctoral fellow competition to support innovative and translational research in the field of spinal cord injury in Alberta.

**Please note: We recognize the uncertainty of the current global situation and will adapt as necessary. In the event that the global pandemic should persist, the time to undertake research and reporting will be extended from the day that research resumes.*

Desired Outcomes

This opportunity is designed to create a positive impact in spinal cord research in Alberta, including to:

- Support the development and recruitment of high-quality personnel in Alberta
- Accelerate innovation in the field of spinal cord injury
- Support spinal cord injury researchers and stakeholders to generate provincial research collaborations
- Support translational research in the field of spinal cord injury and, where possible, encourage multidisciplinary partnerships.

Competition Requirements:

- Research plans must involve **provincial collaboration** either across two or more campuses or include non-academic collaborators from different municipalities. Justification of provincial collaboration must be made clear in the application.
- Projects must align with the **translational** focus outcome. An explanation on how the research project has a translational focus must be made clear in the application.
 - Incorporating a translational focus in research can take many forms. The goal of this competition is to ensure movement of information between the different levels of research is considered in the research project, which may happen in a variety of ways. Translation may not be fully reached within the timeframe of this award but should be incorporated in the research plan.
 - For example, a focus on translation can involve ensuring the clinical relevance of preclinical research (e.g., clinically feasible time window of administering a therapy, incorporating expertise that account for logistical considerations of what may occur in a clinical setting) and may involve plans for collaboration with clinical scientists.
 - Another example may be the involvement of an implementation scientist or an industry in a research project.
- Applicants must have **guaranteed matched funding** from another partner of a minimum for \$25,000 for stipend support.

- This partner may be from industry, universities, community or not for profit groups, clinical groups, etc.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicant:

- Must be in a neuroscience or mental health related discipline pursuing a spinal cord injury research fellowship at an Alberta institution
- Must be supervised by a neuroscience research member of CAN
- Housed within the University of Lethbridge, University of Calgary, or University of Alberta
- Faculty members may not supervise or co-supervise more than one recipient for this award simultaneously

Partner Organization or Company:

- Must provide matched funding
 - A signed letter guaranteeing matched funding of a minimum \$25,000 for the applicant's stipend is required
- It is encouraged that they are actively engaged in the project if it supports the translational focus (e.g., provide input or expertise in the project when appropriate) but is not a requirement

Terms and Value

- Funding of \$25,000 CAD
 - This will be matched by the applicant's funding partner at a minimum of \$25,000.
 - Funding for one-year stipend. However, if applicants are interested in further leveraging this funding to apply for a Mitacs Fellowship this funding can be extended to a two-year term dependent on success of the Mitacs application.
- Annual reporting will include:
 1. An annual report on project and partnership progress
 2. A final report within 60 days after the end date. Template will be provided.

How to Apply

Complete applications for the Spinal Cord Injury Innovation and Translation Postdoctoral Fellowship Program must be received electronically by **4:00pm MST on June 1st, 2020**. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

Note: CAN members with whom you are interested in training with should be contacted directly. Members of the Neuroscience and Mental Health Institute, Hotchkiss Brain Institute and Canadian Centre for Behavioural Neuroscience are considered members of CAN. Potential academic supervisors in neuroscience and mental health discipline in Alberta who are not members of these organizations may apply for CAN membership [here](#).

A complete application consists of:

- Completed Spinal Cord Injury Innovation and Translation Fellowship Application form*
- Applicant's CV. Please save a copy of your and add to the application at the end of the form to include in the submission email. The CV must have details on the following:
 - Education

- Research Interests and Experience
- Professional Experience and Teaching
- Scholarships, Grants and Awards
- Additional Training and Certification
- Publications
- Conference Presentations and Abstracts
- Patents
- Invited Talks
- Biosketch(es)* of the supervisor (and co-supervisor if applicable).
- A signed letter from the partner organization guaranteeing matched funding
- Letters of recommendation:
 - A letter of recommendation from the applicant's Doctoral degree supervisor. 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 applicant's Graduate Program sends a signed letter to Campus Alberta Neuroscience that details the reason for the exclusion of the supervisor's recommendation.
 - A letter from a second referee who can provide meaningful commentary on the applicant's research and other abilities.
 - Referees must forward their letters directly to Campus Alberta Neuroscience (abneuro@ucalgary.ca) with the subject line "Alberta SCI Innovation and Translation PDF Program Letter of Recommendation – [Applicant's Name]"

*Application form and biosketch template can be found on the [Campus Alberta Neuroscience](#) website.

The Spinal Cord Injury Innovation and Translation Fellowship Application requires a description of:

- The proposed research plan, including the objectives, approach, and expected outcomes. Research plans should clearly state how it aligns with the desired outcomes of this competition (e.g., translation and provincial collaborations of SCI research in Alberta).
- How the proposed plan will be achieved
- How the proposed plan will make significant contributions to Albertans and the supervisor's research program.
- How applicants will benefit from provincial collaborative research.

The complete application package, including all necessary components described above and in the application form, must be submitted electronically as a single .pdf file, except the letters of recommendation which will be submitted separately. Please have all components of the application submitted by **4:00pm MST on June 1, 2020** to abneuro@ucalgary.ca with the subject line [Spinal Cord Injury Innovation and Translation Fellowship Application 2020 – \[applicant name\]](#)

Adjudication

- The Review Committee will review and rank all applications. Decisions will be based on satisfying the eligibility and adjudication criteria and the potential for the fellowship project to create positive impacts in the spinal cord injury field.
- The Review Committee will provide comments for the applicant and a recommendation for funding to CAN.

Adjudication Criteria

- Satisfaction of eligibility criteria
- Merit of the postdoctoral fellow including quality of applicant's CV
- Quality of Supervisor (and co-supervisor) biosketch(es)
- Appropriate and informative letters of recommendation
- Reasonable timeline and links between the project activities and the project objectives
- Contribution of the project to translational spinal cord injury research in Alberta. Will this bring new, relevant knowledge to the field and enhance translational research in Alberta?
- Collaboration throughout the province. Does the team of the applicant, supervisor and collaborators have a clear collaborative approach, as well as an interdisciplinary and/or cross-institutional component?
- Potential for success. Are the overall scope, methodology and analyses appropriate and feasible to accomplish the specific aims of the study?
- The idea, challenge or opportunity is well understood

Administration of Award

- Applicants will be notified of the decision in writing by Campus Alberta Neuroscience.
- Final decision will be made by July 20, 2020.
- All decisions are final and cannot be appealed.
- Funding is available for up to 4 applicants.
- Payment is dependent on compliance with program guidelines and final deliverables.
- Applicants interested in further leveraging this funding with a [Mitacs fellowship](#) will need to contact Campus Alberta Neuroscience to ensure proper administration of the funding.
 - It is recommended applicants do their due diligence prior to notice of decision for this award.

Reporting Requirements and Deliverables

- Successful applicants will be required to submit a progress report to CAN annually if a two-year term is granted.
- All applicants must submit a final report within 60 days after the end of their funding term.

A template for final reporting will be sent to applicants and will include:

- If the project achieved the intended results and what research activity was produced (e.g., publications, conference proceedings, etc.)
- How were the outcomes of this competition met
- What was learned and impact on applicant's career trajectory
- Next steps

Questions

If you are interested in applying to this program and require further information, please contact Shannon Wowk at abneuro@ucalgary.ca.