



Program Details

Weston Brain Institute Postdoctoral Scholars at Oxford

Neurodegenerative diseases of aging are among the least understood and most undertreated diseases. As the world's population ages, diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's are placing a large and increasing burden on society. If ignored, the costs to manage these diseases will rise ten-fold within a generation and the burden on patients and families will rise similarly.

The Weston Brain Institute (the "Institute") aims to accelerate the development of therapeutics for neurodegenerative diseases of aging. To achieve this, the Institute addresses gaps and inefficiencies in the funding market by supporting high-risk, high-reward translational research projects independent of commercial potential, while leveraging world-class business and scientific expertise to build a fast and flexible granting process.

Section 1 About the award

The Weston Brain Institute Postdoctoral Scholars program supports top-tier postdoctoral scholars by providing international training to encourage development of the next generation of leading Canadian neuroscientists. Candidates should apply with a host lab and potential supervisor at the University of Oxford. Awardees will have postdoctoral positions at the University of Oxford and affiliation with Merton College.

Section 2 Eligibility criteria

Applicants must be normally resident in Canada and must plan to return to live and work in Canada long-term upon completion of their award. The goal of the program is to provide researchers international training to contribute to translational research in neurodegenerative disease of aging in Canada, and postdoctoral scholars should plan to build their careers in Canada.

Applicants must have demonstrated outstanding scientific contributions and have potential to be competitive for faculty positions in Canada following this postdoctoral position at Oxford. In general, applicants will be current postdoctoral fellows applying for a subsequent postdoctoral position to prepare themselves to obtain a faculty position in Canada upon their return. Clinicians looking to complete a research position are eligible, but may not practice concurrently during their time at Oxford. Current PhD students searching for their first postdoctoral position who would like to apply should contact the Institute to discuss their eligibility.

Projects must meet two conditions to be eligible:

1. Be translational research that helps accelerate the development of therapeutics for neurodegenerative diseases of aging
2. Be the development of a therapeutic and/or tool

The Institute defines **neurodegenerative diseases of aging** to include Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, dementia with Lewy bodies, frontotemporal dementia, multiple system atrophy, progressive supranuclear palsy, vascular contributions to the listed diseases (not stroke-mediated vascular disease), and prodromes to the listed diseases (e.g., mild cognitive impairment as prodromal to Alzheimer's disease; REM sleep behavior disorder as prodromal to Parkinson's disease).

Proposed projects may relate to any disease(s) but must have impact on the diseases above and will be adjudicated based on their potential impact on these diseases.

The Institute only supports translational research and defines **translational research** to be applied research towards developing therapeutics for the prevention and/or treatment of human disease. For example, for small molecule drug development, this includes target validation to Phase II clinical trials. The Institute does not fund basic research.

The Institute defines a **therapeutic** to be a pharmacological approach (including small molecules, biologics, cell therapies and vaccines, including drug repositioning and repurposing), medical device, surgical intervention, or magnetic or electrical brain stimulation. Therapeutics can be for symptomatic relief, disease modification, or prevention. Complementary approaches such as exercise, acupuncture, music, dietary and nutritional supplements are not considered therapeutics. Identification of novel therapeutics is in scope (e.g., high throughput compound screens); however, identification of novel therapeutic targets, including genes implicated in disease, is not in scope.

The Institute defines a **tool** to be an item that accelerates development of therapeutics, e.g., imaging techniques or reagents, biomarkers, and diagnostics. Tools must have direct impact on accelerating the translational development of therapeutics for neurodegenerative diseases of aging. Any value the tools contribute to basic research will not be taken into consideration.

Section 3 Funding specifications

The Institute can support up to two postdoctoral scholars at a time, each for a 2-year term.

Awardees will receive a salary of up to 44,000 GBP per year, a total of 57,000 GBP including benefits, with the 2nd year of funding contingent on successful completion of milestones in the 1st year of funding.

The funds cannot be used for overhead costs. Below is a list of departments that allow postdoctoral scholars to join without paying overhead costs. Positions in other departments that do not require payment of overhead costs are also eligible.

- Clinical Neuroscience: <http://www.ndcn.ox.ac.uk/>
- Physiology, Anatomy & Genetics: <http://www.dpag.ox.ac.uk/>
- Experimental Psychology : <http://www.psy.ox.ac.uk/>
- Pharmacology: <http://www.pharm.ox.ac.uk/>
- Psychiatry: <http://www.psych.ox.ac.uk/>

This award cannot be held concurrently with another salary award.

Section 4 Application process

Applications to this program are accepted on a rolling basis. Before reaching out to a host supervisor at Oxford or starting an application, please contact Rachel Reeve by email at rachel.reeve@weston.ca or phone at +1 416-965-5656 to confirm your eligibility and that your proposed project is in scope.

As the Institute is able to fund a maximum of two postdoctoral researchers at a time, the program will be open until the positions are filled, and will re-open once positions are close to becoming available again (approximately 1 year later).

Applicants submit an Application through the Institute's online grants management system (<https://weston.smartsimple.ca/welcome/neuroscience>).

Letters of reference are to be submitted directly to the Institute from each referee.

Section 5 Selection criteria

Awardees will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Proposed work in the Institute's area of focus, translational research to accelerate the development of therapeutics for neurodegenerative diseases of aging
- Excellent track record as an independent researcher
- Potential to become a future leader in the Canadian neuroscience landscape
- Strong leadership demonstrated both within and outside the lab
- Potential impact of the proposed work
- Fit with the research at the University of Oxford

Section 6 Confidentiality and use of information

The Institute treats all applications and associated research information (collectively, the "Confidential Information") in confidence using reasonable care in protecting such Confidential Information from disclosure to third parties who do not participate in the application review process and Institute assessments. All Confidential Information will be used by the Institute and its scientific review committee for the purposes of reviews and assessments, and will be shared

only in accordance with the sharing policy as set out herein. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Confidential Information shall not include any information that:

- a) was generally known to the public prior to the effective date of this Program announcement;
- b) becomes generally known to the public through no unlawful or unauthorized act by any recipient of Confidential Information; or
- c) was independently developed by the Institute or its scientific review committee without reference to the Confidential Information.

If the Institute or any of its scientific review committee members is requested to disclose Confidential Information pursuant to a legal or governmental proceeding, the Institute shall give the Applicant or other owner(s) of such Confidential Information notice of such disclosure request as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Section 7 Other

Liability and Indemnity

Each Applicant pursuant to this Program acknowledges and agrees in responding to the Program announcement that the Applicant shall have no claim against the Institute, and its respective representatives, related companies or affiliates, should such Program response be unsuccessful for any reason. Each Applicant hereby remises and releases the Institute, its representatives and affiliates, from any cause of action, complaint, or claim in connection with the RFA process and its outcome.

The Institute's role in grants awarded pursuant to this Program is that of a funder. The Institute is not the sponsor of funded projects. As such, the Institute will not assume any liability associated with funded projects and each Applicant who is ultimately awarded a grant pursuant to this Program releases the Institute from any and all liability with respect thereto and further indemnifies the Institute, and its respective representatives and affiliates, from any claim or loss whatsoever associated with the applicable grant.

Intellectual Property Policy and Intellectual Property Agreements among Collaborators

The Institute acknowledges that any intellectual property ("IP") that arises from research funded through this Program, including discoveries, is not the property of the Institute.

The Institute does require that researchers and collaborators agree on any material IP issues prior to submission of a Proposal.

Publication and Sharing Policy

The Institute expects results of funded research to be published as rapidly as possible in the open access scientific literature or other forms of publication that are readily available to the research community, unless such publication will jeopardize the Applicant's right to secure

patents or copyrights necessary to protect the Applicant's ownership. Such publication should be consistent with high standards of scientific excellence and rigor, and provide sufficient detail so the research community can benefit from the findings from or in connection with the funded project.

A lay person abstract of the research proposal must be submitted prior to funding. A lay person abstract of the research results must also be submitted no later than 2 months from the date of grant expiration. These abstracts may be made available to the public by the Institute. Any presentation, releases, papers, interviews, publication or other forms of communication dealing with the awarded project or the results from the awarded project must acknowledge the funding provided by the Institute, in a manner proportionate to the contribution of the Institute. Any other use of the Institute's intellectual property, including its name, logo or trademark requires prior written permission of the Institute.

All tools or reagents (i) funded by and (ii) that result from funded projects should be made readily available to the research community either freely or at reasonable prices within 3 months of study completion. If sharing of such tools or reagents will jeopardize the Applicant's right to secure patents or copyrights necessary to protect the Applicant's ownership, then they should be made available as soon these rights have been secured. The Institute may let the public know of these tools or reagents so other researchers know they are available.

The Institute requires any clinical trial awarded under any of its funding programs be registered with clinicaltrials.gov, [PD Trials.org](http://PD_Trials.org), or other appropriate public registry.