



PROGRAM DETAILS

International Fellowships: 2018

Background

The Weston Brain Institute (the “Institute”) supports high-risk, high-reward translational research projects that accelerate the development of therapeutics for neurodegenerative diseases of aging. These diseases, such as Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s, are some of the most undertreated diseases and are placing an increasing burden on society. If ignored, the social and economic costs to manage these diseases will rise significantly within a generation. Meeting this challenge requires pioneering approaches to accelerating novel treatments and collaborating with international partners.

The Institute is pleased to announce the new **International Fellowships: Canada 2018 program**. The goal of this program is to accelerate the careers of top Canadian PhD students by providing funding to conduct research in the labs of leading scientists. This will enable awardees to build international collaborations with world class labs, conduct influential neuroscience research on neurodegenerative diseases of aging, and bring enhanced research capabilities back to Canada. This fellowship will enrich the careers of awardees, preparing them to obtain more prestigious postdoctoral positions, and increasing their competitiveness for future positions as leaders in neuroscience in Canada.

Section 1 Scope

The International Fellowships program provides support for Canadian PhD students to travel to world-renowned labs and conduct translational research in neurodegenerative diseases of aging. The program offers up to \$60,000 per year (\$5,000 per month, prorated as needed) per awardee.

Please note the Weston Brain Institute does not fund basic (also known as fundamental) research. We only fund translational research.

Applicants can apply for a total travel period of up to 12 months, which may be comprised of one single trip or multiple back-and-forth trips depending on the needs of the research project. (e.g. one x 12 month trip to Oxford University, one x 4 month trip to Stanford University, or two x 6 months trips over 18 months to King’s College London). Funds can only be used for periods of travel away from your home institution and must not be used for periods of time that you are in your home city.

In order to be eligible, applicants must:

- Be willing to conduct translational research on neurodegenerative disease(s) of aging while studying abroad in a world class laboratory.
 - Translational research is defined as, “applied research towards developing therapeutics for the prevention and/or treatment of human disease” (see Institute definitions below).
- Be registered as a full-time PhD student at a Canadian institution.
- Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident in Canada.
- Plan to reside in Canada long term.
- Plan to continue a career in brain diseases of aging.

The Weston Brain Institute welcomes any inquiries concerning this program announcement. Please contact the Institute at neuro@weston.ca or +1 (416) 935-4056.

The Institute is flexible with the travel arrangements required for the program and encourages applicants to contact us with any questions regarding the program. Applicants are also encouraged to reach out to determine whether a potential project is in scope before reaching out to a potential host supervisor.

Section 2 Funding specifications

Funds available per project:

- Up to \$60,000 per awardee for up to 12 months (prorated as needed, at \$5,000 per month).
- Funds will be granted only for direct costs that are appropriate and justifiable for the travel proposed. The funds will cover the cost of travel (flights, housing, etc.) including the student's stipend while abroad.

Any grant provided by the Institute pursuant to this Program will be directed to the institution and not to any individual.

Conditional funding and milestones: Awardees are asked to report on pre-determined milestones and providing specific deliverables, including submission of an interim report mid-way through their time abroad. Funding is subject to the following conditions:

- Adherence to the awardee's home institution *Student Code of Conduct*
- Remaining at the host institution for the allocated amount of time
 - If less time is spent at the host institution than proposed, the remaining prorated money must be returned to the Weston Brain Institute
- Executing the research project as proposed
 - If there are delays or changes to the project, the awardee must notify the Weston Brain Institute.

Section 3 Application process

Applications are submitted through the Institute's [online grants management system](#). Please have your referees submit their letters of reference directly to the Institute by email at neuro@weston.ca.

Completed applications will include the following:

- Completed and signed application
 - Includes a description of the research project to be conducted abroad and why you should be selected for this fellowship
- CV
- Transcripts from all attended universities (certified photocopies permitted)
- Letter of support from current (PhD) supervisor
- Letter of support from receiving/host supervisor
 - Letter of support can be sent to neuro@weston.ca

Applications will be reviewed by a scientific review committee. Top scoring applicants will be invited for an interview to select the awardees. The interview can be in person or via videoconference.

For awarded applicants, the grant agreement must be completed within a reasonable amount of time (3 months of notification of selection; otherwise the Institute reserves the right to cancel the grant

Applications must plan to start traveling no later than September 30th, 2019.

Section 4 Review criteria

Project

- **Scope:** How closely does the project relate to Weston Brain Institute's mandate of accelerating the development of therapeutics for neurodegenerative diseases of aging?
- **Experimental approach:** Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the aims of the project? Is the student learning new techniques or gaining access to resources in the host lab that they wouldn't have learned or had access to otherwise?
- **Impact:** If successful, will the project accelerate the development of therapeutics for neurodegenerative diseases of aging? How much impact will the anticipated outcome have on Canada and Canadians?

Candidate

- Does the student have a strong record of academic achievement, as measured by transcripts and CV, including publication record, presentations and awards?
- Does the student provide evidence of his/her ability to become a top-tier researcher in his/her field?
- How will this fellowship advance your career?
- Does the student show evidence of leadership ability both within and outside the lab?
- Quality of host lab: is this a world-renowned research environment for the proposed project?
- How strong is the letter of support from the host supervisor?
- Does the applicant demonstrate their ability to represent and advance Canada's international reputation for academic excellence and collaboration in the field of neuroscience?

Section 5 Eligibility of applicants

As the program aims to support trainees who will return to work and live in Canada in the long-term, only current PhD students at Canadian universities who are Canadian citizens or residents are eligible.

Applicants must have the permission of their PhD supervisor and graduate department to apply for this award.

Previous awardees of the Weston Brain Institute International Fellowships in Neuroscience at U of T are not eligible for this award.

Section 6 Reports and assessments

Awardees are required to complete a series of reports outlining the impact that the Fellowship had on their research and future career aspirations.

Four reports are required:

1. Interim Report half-way through the travel period
 - Written report
2. Final Report upon return to Canada
 - Written report
 - Presentation to Weston Brain Institute and Board
 - Video message completed before you leave the host lab for the final time: approximately two minutes in length, covering the impact the fellowship has had on your research and career, and a personal reflection of the value of the program
3. Post-travel report two years upon completing Fellowship
 - Follow-up report
4. Post-travel report upon completing your degree
 - Follow-up report

Written reports can be submitted through the online grants management system. A template will be provided one month before the report is due. The written reports will include details of the research progress, academic achievements, academic relationships built abroad and the impact of the award on your research and career.

Section 7 Confidentiality

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 grant 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 8 General information

Applicants should carefully discuss the Program announcement and the terms of this document with their supervisor and graduate department at their institution before submitting an application. The submission of an application does not bind either the Institute or the Applicants by any commitment to provide or receive funding, respectively. Successful Applicants will be required to agree to terms

substantially similar to those contained in this document and the Institute reserves the right to alter, delete or add additional terms in the grant agreement between the successful Applicants and the Institute.

The Institute reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications at its discretion and to negotiate the terms of the specific grant agreement with Applicants. The Institute, at its sole discretion, may change the timeline of the application process.

Applicants may wish to consider study at elite institutions in the UK, such University College London, University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, or King's College London. If candidates are applying with a host lab not focused on translational research for neurodegenerative diseases of aging, they are encouraged to seek a co-supervisor in the field.

Awardees must follow their respective University protocols and procedures in regards to international travel.

Important things to know about the Institute:

- **Our application process is interactive.** You may receive feedback on your applications and, if necessary, be asked to make modifications.
- **We provide more than funding.** Our grantees may also benefit from things like the expert advice from our scientific advisors, industry exposure, networking, and international collaboration opportunities.

Section 9 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 requires that researchers and collaborators agree on any material IP issues prior to submission of an application.

Publication and Sharing Policy

The Institute expects results of funded research to be published as rapidly as possible in open access scientific literature or other forms of publication that are readily available to the general public and/or research community. 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. 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 9 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 as 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 encourages sharing of data and making raw data publicly available where possible.

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.

Appendix A

Institute definitions:

A full list of our definitions is available on our [website](#).

- **Neurodegenerative diseases of aging:**
 - Alzheimer’s disease
 - Frontotemporal dementia
 - Mild cognitive impairment
 - Parkinson’s disease
 - Progressive supranuclear palsy
 - Dementia with Lewy bodies
 - Multiple system atrophy
 - Vascular contributions to the above
 - Prodromes to the above

- **Translational research:** Applied research towards developing therapeutics for the prevention and/or treatment of human disease. Basic/discovery research, including but not limited to understanding disease mechanisms and discovering genes implicated in disease, is not in scope.
- **Therapeutic:** Pharmacological approaches (including small molecules, biologics, cell therapies and vaccines, including drug repositioning and repurposing), medical devices, surgical interventions, or magnetic or electrical brain stimulation. Complementary approaches such as exercise, acupuncture, music, dietary and nutritional supplements are not considered therapeutics. Therapeutics can be for symptomatic relief, disease modification, or prevention.
- **Tool:** An item that accelerates translational development of therapeutics, e.g., animal model, imaging techniques or reagents, biomarkers, and diagnostics.
 - Tools must have direct impact on the translational development of therapeutics.
 - Any value the tools contribute to basic research will not be taken into consideration.
 - Projects covering only the discovery/identification of a tool are out of scope.
 - For biomarkers:
 - Biomarkers must be being developed for human disease diagnosis, prognosis, for patient stratification to clinical trials or to predict response to therapies (surrogate for a clinical endpoint).
 - An identified biomarker is defined by the Institute as one that meets the following 4 conditions:
 1. Specific item(s) or signature to be measured can be defined;
 2. In what it will be detected (e.g., which tissue/fluid), using what assay, and for what disease, can be clearly stated;
 3. Specific item(s) (or signature) to be measured has been shown to be detectable in humans or human-derived samples/data in the tissue/fluid to be tested;
 4. Compelling data exists to justify moving to validation (as defined by the Institute).
 - Biomarker validation is defined by the Institute as:
 - Testing a previously identified biomarker in a sufficient number of

appropriate, comparable, well-characterized human subjects/samples/data to determine whether it is a sensitive and/or accurate biomarker.

- For cognitive assessment tools,
 - If developing a cognitive assessment tool or clinical assessment instrument, the tool must be being tested in patients with a relevant disease.
 - Requires discussion of why the new assessment would be better than existing ones.