

Graduate Fellowship Program Guidelines

These guidelines (the “Guidelines”) describe the requirements for the Canadian Blood Services Graduate Fellowship Program (GFP). The terms and conditions of the Guidelines may be altered without notice. Applicants should always refer to the latest edition of the Guidelines.

I. General Program Information and Priorities

Canadian Blood Services is a not-for-profit charitable organization. Regulated by Health Canada as a biologics manufacturer and primarily funded by the provincial and territorial ministries of health, Canadian Blood Services operates with a national scope, infrastructure and governance that makes it unique within Canadian healthcare. In the domain of blood, plasma and stem cells, we provide services for patients on behalf of all provincial and territorial governments except Quebec. The national transplant registry for interprovincial organ sharing and related programs reaches into all provinces and territories, as a biological lifeline for Canadians. Through our research, development and education activities, we facilitate the creation, translation, and application of new knowledge to support a safe, effective, and responsive system of blood and related biologics for Canada.

Canadian Blood Services’ training programs contribute to building a community of experts that will ensure the relevance and safety of the blood system and transplantation system for now and the years to come.

The Graduate Fellowship Program provides stipends, on a competitive basis, to highly qualified applicants to initiate or continue graduate training in Canada in the field of blood transfusion and transplantation science. The maximum value of each Fellowship is \$35,000 per annum, with \$30,000 as a mandatory minimum stipend for the awardee and \$5,000 for flexible research expenses which could be allocated towards consumables for the project, eligible travel expenses or additional stipend for the awardee. Trainees may be supported for a maximum of four years, with a requirement for renewal at year two.

Proposed projects for the Graduate Fellowship Program must be aligned with one or more of the research priorities identified below. Proposals that are not relevant to any of these priorities will not be considered for funding.

Research Priorities:

- Promoting appropriate blood product utilization
- Ensuring an adequate blood product supply
- Minimizing the adverse effects of blood product transfusion
- Optimizing blood product quality

- Replacing or improving blood products through new therapies or technologies.

Blood product is defined as a therapeutic product derived from donation of blood or of stem cells capable of producing blood cells after transplantation. Blood products include red blood cell and platelet concentrates, plasma and plasma derivatives (including plasma protein products), and hematopoietic stem cells (including those derived from cord blood). Applications focusing predominantly on therapies that do not involve blood products will only be considered if a convincing case is made that the research addresses one of the research priorities stated above.

II. Eligibility

- Applicants must not hold another competitive stipend award at the same time as the Canadian Blood Services Graduate Fellowship.
- Applicants must be engaged in full-time training in research in a graduate program at a Canadian university leading to a Ph.D. or combined health professional Ph.D. program.
- Priority will be given to applicants enrolled in a Ph.D. program. However, applications from trainees enrolled in a Master's program will be considered, if, at their institution, it is not possible to register directly in the Ph.D. stream and they intend to transfer to the Ph.D. program. If the GFP Fellowship application is successful, the awardee must transfer to a Ph.D. program, or defend their Master's thesis and be free to graduate, prior to starting their Fellowship.
- The Fellowship is open to Canadians and citizens of other countries.
- Applicants must be enrolled in a training program that includes actual involvement in research and not only courses in research methods.
- Applicants' proposed research must be relevant to one or more of the research priorities described in Section I of these Guidelines.
- The proposed primary academic supervisor must be affiliated with a Canadian academic institution and be prepared to host the successful applicant in their research group for the duration of the training (2-4 years).

III. Application Process and Evaluation

- Complete the Canadian Blood Services Graduate Fellowship Program Application Form and prepare the supporting documents for the Application Package as per Instructions in the Application Form.
- The Application Package (Application Form and supporting documents) must be submitted by the competition deadline as per Instructions in the Application Form. **No applications, updates, or additional materials will be accepted after the deadline date.**

- The duly received Graduate Fellowship Program Application Package constitutes an agreement to adhere to the conditions governing the fellowship.
- Canadian Blood Services will acknowledge receipt of the application. **It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure the Application Package has been received by Canadian Blood Services.** Please contact Canadian Blood Services if your Application Package is not acknowledged (see Section VI).
- Canadian Blood Services will convene a peer review committee to review applications and make funding recommendations. In assessing the applications, the following criteria are considered:
 1. Project relevance to Canadian Blood Services and to the research priorities listed in Section I of these guidelines;
 2. Applicant's qualifications (i.e., academic and training qualifications, research experience and ability, and career goals);
 3. Merit of the research proposal (i.e., scientific excellence and project plan); and
 4. Research and training environment.
- In the case of an application judged to have no relevance to Canadian Blood Services and to the Program research priorities, it will be deemed not fundable.
- In the case of applications judged to have equal merit, priority will be first given to applicants supervised by a supervisor that does not currently supervise a trainee receiving a Canadian Blood Services Graduate Fellowship and second given to applicants supervised by Canadian Blood Services staff.
- The peer review committee will submit their recommendations for funding to the Canadian Blood Services' executive responsible for competitive funding programs for final approval.
- Successful applications may be considered for a Mitacs Accelerate internship with Canadian Blood Services as the partner. Applicants will be contacted to coordinate a Mitacs Accelerate submission.
- Canadian Blood Services will inform applicants and their supervisor of the competition outcomes within four (4) months of the submission deadline.
- The funding decisions will be made public on Canadian Blood Services' website.
- Successful applicants will be provided an Acceptance of Fellowship form to be signed and completed by the applicant, their supervisor, and the academic institution at which the training will take place. Following the return of the completed Acceptance of Fellowship form, applicants will be provided with a Transfer of Funds Agreement to facilitate the funds transferring to the academic institution (if applicable).



IV. General Terms and Conditions of the Award

These Guidelines, including the terms and conditions of the Award, may be altered by Canadian Blood Services without notice. Awardees, their supervisors, and their institutions shall comply with the latest edition of the Guidelines.

AWARDEE, SUPERVISOR, AND INSTITUTION RESPONSIBILITY

The primary supervisor and institution must agree to provide adequate research facilities and to administer the award in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Award as per the Guidelines.

The Awardee, supervisor(s), and institution will comply with all applicable laws and policies pertaining to privacy and confidentiality in dealing with information and records related to the project.

START DATE

The Graduate Fellowship should begin within six (6) months of April 1, 2023.

DURATION OF THE AWARD

The duration of a Canadian Blood Services Graduate Fellowship is a minimum of two (2) years and a maximum of four (4) years, with a requirement for successful renewal at two (2) years to extend to the maximum of four (4) years. Awardees will be required to submit a renewal application for consideration by the review committee. Renewal application forms will be provided to awardees in the months leading up to the renewal date.

AWARD

Canadian Blood Services revised its Graduate Fellowship Program for the 2022 Competition. Revisions led to an adjustment in the value and nature of the Award as per the following:

- For Fellowships starting on or after April 1 2023 (2022 competition awardees), the award has a maximum value of \$35,000 CDN per year for up to four (4) years.

The \$35,000 annual award breaks down as follows:

- \$30,000 annually as a mandatory minimum stipend
 - \$5,000 for flexible research expenses. Expenses may be allocated towards consumables for the project, eligible travel or additional stipend for the awardee (see Use of Funds - Research Expenses below).
- For Fellowships that have started prior to April 1 2023 (2021 and previous competition awardees), the award has a maximum value of \$26,000 CDN per year for the first two



years prior to renewal and \$35,000 CDN per year for the last two years after successful renewal.

The \$26,000 annual award for the first two years breaks down as follows:

- \$25,000 annually as a mandatory minimum stipend
- \$1,000 for eligible travel (i.e., travel to collaborating research laboratories or to research conferences for the purpose of presenting project results with the primary supervisor's approval).

The \$35,000 annual award for the last two years breaks down as follows:

- \$30,000 annually as a mandatory minimum stipend
- \$5,000 for flexible research expenses. Expenses may be allocated towards consumables for the project, eligible travel or additional stipend for the Awardee (see Use of Funds - Research Expenses below).

USE OF FUNDS - RESEARCH EXPENSES

The funds for research expenses may be used, with the primary supervisor's approval, for the purchase of materials, supplies, and services required for the execution of the Awardee's research project; for the Awardee's travel to collaborating research laboratories or to research conferences for the purpose of presenting project results, and/or for additional stipend for the Awardee. Equipment purchased using these funds, including computers, is not the personal property of the Awardee, but belongs to Canadian Blood Services and must be returned at the end of the Graduate Fellowship.

Any unspent funds remaining at the end of the Fellowship must be returned to Canadian Blood Services (see Section V for more details).

INTERRUPTION OF AWARD

Canadian Blood Services may provide up to 12 (twelve) months of paid parental leave, at full salary, to recipients of this Award. Access to paid parental leave must be requested in writing to Canadian Blood Services two months in advance of the start of leave. Approval of paid parental leave is subject to the availability of funds. Interruptions for this purpose must be taken within six months following the birth or adoption of the child(ren). Contact Canadian Blood Services (Section VI) to obtain the form to request a parental leave.

Additional interruptions of Award may be allowed depending on the rules and regulations of the institution at which the research is taking place.

TAXATION

Graduate Fellowship recipients are responsible for any and all taxes and any other statutory payments or assessments that are payable.

CONDITIONS OF FUNDING

Graduate Fellowship recipients must immediately notify Canadian Blood Services (see Section VI) if their eligibility changes at any point during the tenure of the Fellowship, as it may render them ineligible to receive funding. The Fellowship will, in such circumstances, be prorated.

The Awardee and supervisor must ensure that any research project involving humans includes a research protocol that is consistent with the principles set out in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* and that appropriate records are maintained. The Awardee and supervisor will provide such records to Canadian Blood Services upon request.

Funding for Canadian Blood Services, including for the Graduate Fellowship Program, is provided by the federal government (Health Canada) and the provincial and territorial ministries of health. Should Canadian Blood Services funding levels become unavailable or are decreased due to unforeseen circumstances, Canadian Blood Services reserves the right to reduce, defer or cancel funding of Graduate Fellowships received through this funding opportunity.

Canadian Blood Services supports only the direct costs of research. No funding is to be used for indirect costs (e.g., institutional overhead).

INCOME FROM OTHER SOURCES

Graduate Fellowship Program awardees are required to devote themselves full time to the objectives of their Fellowship. They are not permitted to receive remuneration for any work other than activities which contribute to their development as scientists, and which are approved by their primary supervisor. Notwithstanding, such activities should not occupy more than 20% of working time.

REVISION TO RESEARCH PLAN AND RESEARCH LOCATION

Any change in the research plans or in the location of tenure of the Graduate Fellowship recipient requires the prior approval of Canadian Blood Services. Revisions must be submitted to Canadian Blood Services by email (see Section VI).

CHANGE OF SUPERVISOR(S)

A Graduate Fellowship recipient may request permission to transfer to a new supervisor by writing to Canadian Blood Services (see Section VI) and by arranging to have the following submitted:

1. A letter from the proposed supervisor indicating acceptances, AND
2. A letter from the primary academic supervisor under whom the award was originally tenable, indicating that they have been informed of the proposed transfer.

The proposed new primary supervisor must meet the Graduate Fellowship Program eligibility criteria (see Section II).

REPORT

A final progress report is due within one (1) month of the Graduate Fellowship end date. Additional progress reports may be requested during the tenure of the Graduate Fellowship. The progress report template will be provided.

DISSEMINATION AND PUBLICATIONS

Any publications, reports or public presentations resulting from work conducted during the tenure of a Canadian Blood Services Graduate Fellowship must acknowledge the support of Canadian Blood Services. Detailed instructions on acknowledging support from the Graduate Fellowship Program will be provided.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Where appropriate, the Awardee, supervisor, and institution should deliver its services, programs, projects, or activities in both official languages.

RECORDS

The Awardee and its institution must keep all records, information, databases, reports, financial information, costs and expenditures, and all other documentation related to the project for a period of six (6) years from the end of the Period of Award.

Canadian Blood Services and/or its funders shall have the right to: (i) monitor and review project through site visits or other means, and (ii) conduct inspections of financial records or audit the Awardee, institution, and Project Team, to confirm compliance with these Guidelines and the appropriate use of funds. Canadian Blood Services shall have the right to share copies of reviews, evaluations, and audit reports with its funders.

The Auditor General of Canada also reserves the right to conduct an inquiry into the Project Team's use of funds. The Awardee, Institution, and Project Team shall cooperate with Canadian Blood Services, its funders and/or the Auditor General of Canada and his/her representatives or agents in connection with such a review, audit, or inquiry, and shall grant access to its documents, records and premises as required for purposes of any such review, audit or inquiry. The results of an inquiry by the Auditor General of Canada may be reported to Parliament in a report of the Auditor General.



V. Financial Administration of Award Funds

The Canadian Blood Services' competitive funding programs' Secretariat will instruct Canadian Blood Services' Finance Services to transfer the approved funds to the Awardee's institution. The institution will pay Fellowship recipients on its own payment schedule, subject to the terms of a transfer of funds agreement completed by the Awardee and its institution. The supervisor and institution are responsible for administering the funds according to the Guidelines and for financial reporting on expenditures using Form 300 or equivalent to Canadian Blood Services.

The supervisor is expected to exercise appropriate stewardship over the financial resources entrusted to them from Canadian Blood Services. In no circumstances shall the total disbursement exceed the funds available for the award. Expenditures exceeding the award will be neither assumed nor reimbursed by Canadian Blood Services. The Awardee, supervisor, and institution will return to Canadian Blood Services any funds to which it is not entitled, including payments made in error and paid costs that are not eligible for reimbursement.

In the event that the Fellowship is terminated early, or there are unspent funds at the end of the Period of Award, the remaining funds must be returned to Canadian Blood Services. The trainee may be eligible to carry-forward limited funds to undertake travel to present Fellowship research findings after the end of the Period of Award. The carry-forward must be approved by Canadian Blood Services prior to the end of the Period of Award. Requests for carry-forward must be submitted in writing to Canadian Blood Services a minimum of two months prior to the end of the Period of Award.

VI. Contact and Enquiries

Enquires should be addressed to the centreforinnovation@blood.ca.