

Graduate Fellowship Program Guidelines

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

I. GENERAL INFORMATION AND PRIORITIES

Canadian Blood Services manages the national supply of blood, blood products and stem cells, and related services for all provinces and territories (excluding Quebec). Canadian Blood Services also operates an integrated, pan-Canadian service delivery model that includes leading an interprovincial system for organ donation and transplantation. Through our Centre for Innovation, Canadian Blood Services facilitates the creation, translation, and application of new knowledge to support a safe, effective, and responsive system of blood and related biologics for Canada.

The Centre for Innovation training programs attract, train and retain professionals to the field of transfusion science and medicine. The training programs address skill gaps relevant to these areas. The trained professionals will 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 \$25,000 per annum, with an additional travel allowance of \$1000 per year of support. Students may be supported for a maximum of four years, with a requirement for successful renewal at year two.

The proposed project 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). At this time, applications focusing predominantly on therapies that do not involve blood products will only be considered if a persuasive case is made that the research addresses one of the research priorities stated above.

II. ELIGIBILITY

- Applicants must not hold another 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. While priority will be given to applicants enrolled in a PhD Program, applications from applicants enrolled in an MSc Program will be considered, in particular if, at the applicant's institution, it is not possible to register directly in the PhD stream. **Applicants registered solely for a Master's degree will not be considered.**
- The program is open to both 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 prepared to host the successful applicant in their laboratory for the duration of the training (2-4 years).

III. PROCESS

- 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 (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.
- 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 applications judged to have equal merit with respect to the above criteria, but differing only in the proposed supervisor's relationship to Canadian Blood Services, priority will be given to applicants supervised by Canadian Blood Services scientific or medical staff holding academic appointments.
- Successful applications may be considered for a Mitacs Accelerate internship with Canadian Blood Services as the partner. Applicants will be contacted directly by the Centre for Innovation to coordinate a Mitacs Accelerate submission.
- Canadian Blood Services will inform applicants and their academic 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.

IV. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE AWARD

Supervisor Responsibility

The primary supervisor must agree to provide adequate research facilities and to administer the award in accordance with the terms laid down by Canadian Blood Services. Accountability of funds is the responsibility of the primary supervisor.

Start Date

The Graduate Fellowship should begin within six (6) months of the notification of award.

Duration of 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.

Conditions of Funding

Awardees must contact Canadian Blood Services as soon as possible if their eligibility changes at any point during tenure of the award, as it may render them ineligible to receive funding. Awardees must notify Canadian Blood Services in writing by email (see Section VI). The stipend and travel allowances will, in such circumstances, be prorated.

Should Canadian Blood Services funding levels not be available or are decreased due to unforeseen circumstances, Canadian Blood Services reserves the right to reduce, defer or cancel funding of awards received through this funding opportunity.

Stipend

The maximum amount awarded for a single award is up to \$25,000 CDN per year for up to four (4) years.

Travel Allowance

A travel allowance of \$4,000 (\$2,000 for the initial two year award and \$2,000 for the two year renewal period) over the four year award is provided to pay for travel to scientific meetings. These funds are to be used in consultation with the primary supervisor. **Access to these funds must be requested in writing by the awardee through a travel request form (to be provided by Canadian Blood Services) in advance of the proposed travel.** Payment will be reimbursed only upon submission of a Canadian Blood Services travel expense claim form and a conference report after the travel has occurred.

Taxation

Canadian Blood Services Graduate Fellowship Program awardees are responsible for any and all taxes and any other statutory payments or assessments that are payable. Award holders will be issued T4A slips by Canadian Blood Services.

Income from Other Sources

Graduate Fellowship Program awardees are required to devote themselves full time to the research objectives proposed in the application. 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 Canadian Blood Services Graduate Fellowship Program recipient requires the prior approval of Canadian Blood Services. Revisions must be submitted to Canadian Blood Services (see Section VI).

Transfers

An awardee 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 newly proposed supervisor indicating acceptance, AND
2. a letter from the primary supervisor under whom the award was originally tenable, indicating that they have been informed of the proposed transfer.

Report

A final progress report is due within one (1) month of the award end date. The progress report template will be provided to awardees in the months leading up to the end date of the award.

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.

V. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF AWARD FUNDS

Financial administration of Canadian Blood Services Graduate Fellowship funds will be through the Canadian Blood Services Centre for Innovation at Head Office.

Disbursement of Stipend and/or Travel Allowance

1. Each Canadian Blood Services Graduate Fellowship is assigned a unique number representing the trust account maintained for it by the Canadian Blood Services Centre for Innovation. For financial reporting purposes, this number is treated as a separate Cost Centre. Canadian Blood Services Financial Services transfers the approved funds as revenue to each Cost Centre, from which stipend and travel expenses are charged. Financial reports on each Cost Centre are prepared by the Canadian Blood Services Centre for Innovation from data supplied by Canadian Blood Services Financial Services.
2. Expenditures from each Graduate Fellowship must be authorized by the awardee and the primary supervisor.
3. In no case should the total disbursement exceed the funds available for each Canadian Blood Services Graduate Fellowship (i.e., the amount of the current year's grant plus any remaining portion of a previous year's grant). Expenditures exceeding the award will be neither assumed nor reimbursed by Canadian Blood Services.

VI. Contact and Enquiries

Enquiries should be addressed to the Centre for Innovation at centreforinnovation@blood.ca or by phone at (613) 739-2496.