



# **Transformative Pathology Research Fellowship Award**

## **Applicant Guide**

**Version 2.3 – October 2015**

## 1. Objective

To increase the opportunities for training pathologists in the area of molecular diagnostic pathology in Ontario. Trainees will be located either at an Ontario hospital or at the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research (OICR), and their training program will be established in collaboration with the OICR Transformative Pathology Program.

## 2. Definitions

### **Host institution:**

Refers to the primary employment (university/hospital/research institute etc.) of an OICR Transformative Pathology Research Fellow. OICR will establish with the host institution a formal agreement detailing the terms and conditions governing the award.

### **OICR Transformative Pathology Research Fellowship Award:**

The OICR Transformative Pathology Research Fellowship Award has three (3) streams available to applicants:

1. Full Fellowship (three years)
2. Intermediate/CIP (Clinician Investigator Program) Fellowship (two years)
3. Introductory Fellowship (six months)

The Full Fellowship program is available for pathology residents and recently qualified pathologists to gain research exposure during the early stages of their career. Applicants may apply for this fellowship award prior to or soon after their certification. The Intermediate and Introductory streams are available to residents currently enrolled in a Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada certified program.

### **Fellow:**

OICR Transformative Pathology Research Fellows will be located at and receive their fellowship awards through host institutions. The maximum time allowed for clinical duties for fellows will be 20 per cent for the duration of the award.

### **Fellow supervisor:**

OICR Transformative Pathology Research Fellows will receive scientific and clinical supervision through their host institution. Additional oversight will be provided by the OICR Transformative Pathology Program Director.

### **Fellowship project:**

The research projects in molecular pathology funded by this award should support the OICR vision for training clinician scientists as future leaders in diagnostic medicine across Ontario.

Eligible projects will target some of the key objectives outlined in OICR's Strategic Plan and/or OICR's Translational Research Priorities as well as, if possible, align with the OICR Transformative Pathology Program's strategic objectives. OICR's Strategic Plan and Translational Research Priorities can be found at [www.oicr.on.ca](http://www.oicr.on.ca). Preference will be given to projects which develop or build upon unique expertise/opportunities existing in research centres across Ontario. Collaboration with other OICR Programs is encouraged.

### **Award:**

The award will consist of a contribution from OICR to research related expenses (all streams) and, if stream 1 is selected, the salary/benefits of the fellow.

## 3. Transformative pathology research fellowship award

### 3.1 Stream 1: Full Fellowship

#### **Background:**

This stream provides three years of funding for pathology residents and recently qualified pathologists to gain research exposure during the early stages of their career. Applicants may apply for this fellowship award prior to or soon after they receive their certification. Eligible projects will target some of the key objectives outlined in OICR's Strategic Plan and/or OICR's Transformative Pathology Program's strategic objectives. Preference will be given to projects which develop or build upon unique expertise/opportunities existing in research centres across Ontario. Engagement with other OICR Programs will be encouraged. This award intends to increase the opportunities for training pathologists in molecular diagnostic pathology research in Ontario.

Post-certification international medical graduates are encouraged to connect with an affiliated educational department to explore the option of receiving an educational license to incorporate supervised clinical activities into their Fellowships.

#### **OICR contribution:**

Support for Full Transformative Pathology Research Fellows will be administered through the host institution. Successful applicants will receive an annual award of \$100,000 if the fellowship is held prior to certification, including a maximum of \$70,000 per annum allocated for the fellow's annual stipend or salary while he/she does not hold a research clinician position. Successful board certified applicants holding a research clinician position will receive \$150,000 per annum including a maximum of \$110,000 for their annual compensation (stipend or salary and benefits).

There is no overhead included in the Transformative Pathology Fellowship Award, consistent with other national and international salary award programs.

#### **Host institution contribution:**

- No financial contribution to the Full Transformative Pathology Fellowship Award is required from the host institution, although supplementation of the research funding is encouraged; and
- Salary for all clinical service time (maximum 20 per cent) for an OICR Transformative Pathology Research Fellow must be covered by the host institution.

#### **Duration of support and evaluation process:**

The maximum period of support is three years for certified pathologists or pathology residents who have secured research clinician positions in an academic/research institution or a hospital in Ontario. Recipients will be formally evaluated periodically during the funding period. OICR will make every effort to coordinate this review with the evaluation process that may already be in place at the host institution.

#### **Applications and selection process:**

Applicants will be selected based on the following criteria: academic track record and qualifications, quality of research project and its relevance to transformative pathology, letters of reference, potential to become future leaders in cancer research, and research training environment. It is expected that the selected applicants will be competitive in all these areas.



Applications should be sent to the OICR Scientific Secretariat. Refer to section 6 for all details regarding the application process.

Applications will be evaluated by a panel of selected reviewers with expertise in Transformative Pathology and/or the subject area chosen by the applicant. Reviewers will prepare a written report. In addition, the applicant will be interviewed by the OICR Transformative Pathology Program Director.

Host institutions will be required to sign the application and provide a letter of support outlining their institutional commitment with respect to research space, intellectual environment and other research and funding-related support. The host institution will also have to provide evidence of a) support for any clinical salary, and b) a mentorship program, both at the clinical and at the scientific level.

Projects will be rated according to the following criteria:

- Scientific excellence of the proposed research plan, with a particular emphasis on the potential to translate findings into clinically relevant applications;
- Training and mentorship plan in place and demonstrated commitment of the host institution to support a training environment for research and professional development;
- Existing infrastructure support for the research objectives, either at the host institution or in clearly identified collaborative laboratories;
- Demonstrated alignment and synergy between the project goals and the host institution's potential to benefit strategically from engagement with the applicant (i.e., alignment with the host institution's strategic priorities);
- Commitment to protected research time for junior faculty members (at least 80%); and
- Fit with the OICR Transformative Pathology Program in terms of meaningful participation and contribution.

#### **Letters of reference:**

The applicant must secure at least two letters of reference, plus one from the intended research supervisor and one from a clinical supervisor or department chair. The research supervisor letter should indicate his/her commitment and willingness to mentor and guide the applicant in his/her research. Both the research and the clinical supervisor may be contacted as part of the selection process.

Applicants must also secure a letter of support from the host institution confirming that the institution supports the application.

#### **Terms and conditions for funding:**

Eligible candidates:

- Must hold a medical degree and be currently enrolled in a speciality education program in pathology in Ontario, or have recently completed a residency program in pathology; and/or
- Be currently certified by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in a field of speciality in pathology and have received an offer for a full-time faculty or equivalent position in an Ontario-based institution.

Candidates must also:

- Submit a specific research plan in pathology that supports cancer research;
- Demonstrate evidence of a formal commitment from a research supervisor or mentor who will guide the conduct of research; and



- During the term of the award, submit annually a short progress report to the OICR Scientific Secretariat.

In exceptional circumstances, applications from non-clinical candidates who show a clear development plan for a future career in diagnostic anatomical pathology will be considered.

Supervisors will oversee and support training/research activities as outlined in the research activity/training plan and foster scientific and professional integrity. They will be expected to notify OICR in writing immediately if they feel that the progress of the fellow under training is not satisfactory.

All fellows will attend at least two scientific conferences/meetings a year to share experience, foster collaboration among fellows and explore/develop opportunities for working across multiple projects where appropriate.

Awards may be discontinued before the end of the term if the supervisor or the fellow:

- Moves to another institution;
- Ceases to participate in the OICR Transformative Pathology Program;
- Creates a research program which is outside the scope of OICR's Strategic Plan and/or Translational Research Priorities;
- Fails to meet the requirements of the host institution for retention/promotion and/or is dismissed by the host institution;
- Fails to meet the time requirements committed to training;
- Does not maintain required certifications regarding Research Ethics Board (REB), biohazard/radioactivity safety/animal care (if relevant), or fails to comply with the Conflict of Interest policies of the host institution;
- Fails to submit an annual report; or
- Fails to improve participation or performance within a six-month period following written notice by OICR.

### **3.2 Intermediate/CIP Fellowship**

#### **Background:**

The Intermediate/CIP Fellowship operates concurrently with the Clinician Investigator Program (CIP) supported by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. This stream provides two years of funding for CIP trainees. Applicants should be in postgraduate years 3-5 to hold an Intermediate/CIP Transformative Pathology Fellowship. For additional information on the CIP program, including eligibility requirements and application details, please speak with your host institution, or visit the CIP page on the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada [website](#).

Prospective applicants to the Intermediate/CIP Fellowship stream should already be accepted into a CIP program at their host institution prior to applying to the Transformative Pathology Fellowship program. Fellows who complete the Intermediate/CIP Transformative Pathology Fellowship program will receive an advanced degree (MSc/PhD) and certification from the Royal College, as per the standard CIP process.

Eligible projects will target some of the key objectives outlined in OICR's Strategic Plan and/or OICR's Transformative Pathology Program's strategic objectives. Preference will be given to projects which develop or build upon unique expertise/opportunities existing in research centres across Ontario. Engagement with other OICR Programs will be encouraged. This award intends to increase the opportunities for training pathologists in molecular diagnostic pathology research in Ontario.

**OICR contribution:**

Support for Intermediate/CIP Transformative Pathology Research Fellows will be administered through the host institution. Successful applicants will receive research allowance support (up to \$40,000/year) to cover the costs of the Fellow's research project from OICR. Up to 5 Transformative Pathology Fellowships will be offered each year through the Intermediate/CIP stream.

There is no overhead included in the Transformative Pathology Fellowship Award, consistent with other national and international salary award programs.

**Host institution contribution:**

- No financial contribution to the Intermediate/CIP Transformative Pathology Fellowship Award is required from the host institution, although supplementation of the research funding is encouraged.
- Salary support for Intermediate/CIP Transformative Pathology Research Fellows is the responsibility of the host institution. Salary and/or stipend support is not an eligible expense under the Intermediate/CIP Transformative Pathology Research Fellowship.

**Duration of support and evaluation process:**

The maximum period of support is two years during PGY years 3-5. Recipients will be formally evaluated periodically during the funding period. OICR, the host institution, and the University (if applicable) will make every effort to coordinate this review with the evaluation process(es) that may already be in place for CIP trainees at the host institution.

**Applications and selection process:**

The application and selection process for the Intermediate/CIP Transformative Pathology Research Fellowship is the same as that outlined for the Full Fellowship (above). In addition, applicants to the Intermediate/CIP Fellowship will need to include in their application a brief list of courses that will be taken concurrently with the Intermediate/CIP Fellowship, and a description of the expected time commitment for these courses.

**Letters of reference:**

The applicant must secure at least two letters of reference, plus one from the intended research supervisor and one from a clinical supervisor or department chair. The research supervisor letter should indicate his/her commitment and willingness to mentor and guide the applicant in his/her research. Both the research and the clinical supervisor may be contacted as part of the selection process.

Applicants must also secure a letter of support from the host institution confirming that the institution supports the application.

**Terms and conditions for funding:**

The terms and conditions for funding for the Intermediate/CIP Transformative Pathology Research Fellowship are the same as those outlined above for the Full Fellowship.

In addition, it is expected that Intermediate/CIP Transformative Pathology Fellows will work full time on their proposed research project, with the exception of mandatory courses for degree completion.



### **3.3 Introductory Fellowship**

#### **Background:**

The OICR Introductory Transformative Pathology Fellowship offers a 6-month period of focused research that can be hosted at any academic/clinical institution during PGY years 3-5. The Introductory Fellowship provides an ideal opportunity for a research-interested fellow to undertake a short research project in connection with an established research laboratory in Ontario.

Eligible projects will target some of the key objectives outlined in OICR's Strategic Plan and/or OICR's Transformative Pathology Program's strategic objectives. Preference will be given to projects which develop or build upon unique expertise/opportunities existing in research centres across Ontario.

#### **OICR contribution:**

Support for Introductory Transformative Pathology Research Fellows will be administered through the host institution. Successful applicants will receive research allowance support (up to \$20,000/award) to cover the costs of the Fellow's research project. Up to 5 Transformative Pathology Fellows will be funded each year through the Introductory Fellow stream.

There is no overhead included in the Transformative Pathology Fellowship Award, consistent with other national and international salary award programs.

#### **Host institution contribution:**

- No financial contribution to the Transformative Pathology Fellowship Award is required from the host institution, although supplementation of the research funding is encouraged.
- Salary support for Introductory Transformative Pathology Research Fellows is the responsibility of the host institution. Salary and/or stipend support is not an eligible expense under the Intermediate/CIP Transformative Pathology Research Fellowship.

#### **Duration of support and evaluation process:**

The maximum period of support is 6 months during PGY years 3-5. Recipients will be required to submit a written report summarizing their activities at the end of the 6 month term. In addition, the research supervisor will need to complete an evaluation report summarizing the Fellow's progress.

#### **Applications and selection process:**

The application and selection process for the Introductory Transformative Pathology Research Fellowship is the same as that outlined for the Full Fellowship (above), with the following exceptions:

- A brief list of courses that will be taken concurrently with the Introductory Fellowship, and a description of the expected time commitment for these courses
- A clinical mentor is NOT required
- In addition to commitment letters from the institution and research supervisor, only ONE referee letter is required
- The Project Description should not exceed 3 pages
- The "Research Career Aspiration and Research Training Environment" document should be replaced with a one page rationale for undertaking the 6 month fellowship

#### **Letters of reference:**

The applicant must secure one letter of reference, plus one from the intended research supervisor. The research supervisor letter should indicate his/her commitment and





willingness to mentor and guide the applicant in his/her research. The research supervisor may be contacted as part of the selection process.

Applicants must also secure a letter of support from the host institution confirming that the institution supports the application.

**Terms and conditions for funding:**

The terms and conditions for funding for the Introductory Transformative Pathology Research Fellowship are the same as those outlined above for the Full Fellowship.

In addition, prospective applicants must first receive approval from their host institution (Program Director, Department Chair, etc.) prior to applying for an Introductory Fellowship. This support should be noted in the commitment letter from the institution, or as a separate document appended to the application.

It is expected that Introductory Transformative Pathology Fellows will work full time on their proposed research project, with the exception of mandatory courses for degree completion, or mandatory academic activities during residency.

## 4. Prolonged absences from work

All fellows will notify OICR of any illness or other cause necessitating absence from work exceeding three months, or resulting in reduced time devoted to the project by 25 per cent or greater from the level that was approved at the time of the award. Continuation of the fellowship during the absence will be at OICR's discretion. The OICR Scientific Secretariat and Transformative Pathology Program Director must approve any alternate arrangement proposed by the fellows/institution.

**Approval for a prolonged absence:**

The request for approval should include a justification for the changes to the research plan and any budget amendments resulting from the proposed change. If the arrangements proposed by the awardees are not acceptable to the OICR Scientific Secretariat and Transformative Pathology Program Director, the fellowship may be suspended or terminated.

**Maternity/parental leave:**

Up to a one year extension of the award term resulting from maternity/parental leave will be granted. Any extension longer than one year will require documentation explicitly describing the time away from research in months and years. OICR may request additional documentation to support his/her request to better establish a reasonable extension period, as a special case. Written notification must be sent to the OICR Scientific Secretariat for approval.

- **Benefits:** The policy of the host institution will determine the benefit eligibility, terms and duration for the investigator. The award payment will be restricted to the top-up portion (where applicable) of annual earnings plus benefits as per the host institution policy.

**NOTE:** Benefits are only eligible for Stream 1 Fellowships.

**Return from prolonged absence or maternity/parental leave:**

Upon conclusion of the maternity/parental leave or prolonged authorized absence, the awardee/host institution must send written confirmation to the OICR Scientific Secretariat so that the fully approved payment schedule can be reinstated.





## 5. Other terms and conditions of funding

The host institution will be responsible for disbursing the OICR funds for eligible expenses and for reporting to OICR. Annual statements will be requested from awardees and host institutions. Funding levels may be adjusted if there is a significant deviation from expectations.

Fellows will need to specify both time percentage and hours per week spent in clinic and in research, to be confirmed by the host institution.

Carryover of annual unspent funds is not be permitted. Excess funds at the end of the term must be returned to OICR.

OICR awards are not transferable to another Ontario institution, unless prior written approval is obtained from OICR.

The host institution will promote integrity in the conduct of research and clinical care, by maintaining and enforcing suitable policies and oversight procedures to address relevant issues as they apply to the proposed fellowship in the areas of conflict of interest in research; research ethics; informed consent; laboratory safety standards; animal care standards; ownership/maintenance of laboratory equipment and facilities; research and scholarship integrity; intellectual property; patents and commercialization.

Successful applicants to the OICR Transformative Pathology Fellowship program agree to acknowledge and credit the contribution of OICR and Ontario to the project/sub-projects in any promotional material, including, without limitation, scientific publications of whatever nature or kind, by setting out in any communication materials or publications referencing the project/sub-project the following statement: "This study was conducted with the support of the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research through funding provided by the Government of Ontario."

Fellows will be expected to follow the agreements between OICR and the host institution regarding the disclosure and management of Intellectual Property.

## 6. Application process

The applicant is required to submit one hard copy with all **original wet-ink signatures** (following the order listed below) *and* one electronic copy of the application no later than **5:00 p.m. EST on December 18, 2015**. The electronic copy of the application must be compiled as one document in either PDF or Word format and submitted to the OICR Scientific Secretariat at [tpfellowship@oicr.on.ca](mailto:tpfellowship@oicr.on.ca) by the requested deadline. Hard copies must be postmarked no later than the deadline date and should be mailed/submitted to:

Ontario Institute for Cancer Research  
Attention: Coordinator, Scientific Secretariat  
MaRS Centre  
661 University Avenue, Suite 510  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5G 0A3

Applicants must strictly adhere to the indicated page limits. Note that page limits **exclude** figures, tables, and references.

The complete application package must include the following documents:

- Form I: OICR Transformative Pathology Research Fellowship Award Application Information, which includes the following:
  - A.1: Applicant contact information (using form provided);
  - A.2: Host institution's contact information (using the form provided) signed by the host institution's signing authority
  - Institutional commitment letter;
  - B.1: Project description (maximum of five pages), which should include the following sections:
    - Specific aim;
    - Scientific background and clinical significance of the proposed research;
    - Preliminary data if available;
    - Methods, approach, significance and innovation; and
    - Expected translational outcome/potential impact on cancer research.
  - B.2: Description of the applicant's research career aspiration and research training environment (maximum of one page);
  - Submission Checklist
  - B.3: Budget details and justification (including salary support for Full Fellowship applicants)
- A brief list of courses and expected time commitment (Intermediate/CIP and Introductory Fellowship only)
- Curriculum vitae of applicant in Canadian Common CV (<https://ccv-cvc.ca/>) or other format which must include:
  - Academic background;
  - Work experience, appointments;
  - Distinctions/awards/credentials;
  - Grants currently held;
  - Grants held in the past 5 years; and
  - Publications in the past 5 years.
- Curriculum vitae of clinical and research supervisors in Canadian Common CV or other format as outlined above;
- Letter from a mentor committing to providing formal mentorship during the term of the award and describing these mentorship activities in detail; and
- Letters of reference, as required by the stream you are applying to, signed and each placed inside a sealed envelope. Alternatively, the referee can provide reference by an email sent directly to the OICR Scientific Secretariat ([tpfellowship@oicr.on.ca](mailto:tpfellowship@oicr.on.ca)) with the subject line: Reference for (Name of Applicant) – Transformative Pathology Research Fellowship Award.

Incomplete applications or applications received after the indicated deadline will be returned.

**Contact information:**

Please send all inquiries to [tpfellowship@oicr.on.ca](mailto:tpfellowship@oicr.on.ca).