



Brain Canada and NeuroDevNet

Developmental Neurosciences Research Training Awards Request for Applications

Brain health is one of the most pressing health challenges facing Canadians. Surpassing cancer and cardiovascular disease in their magnitude and impact, disorders of the brain account for 13% of the global disease burden. In one out of six children, brain disorders take the form of a neurodisability with life-long implications. Advances in neurodevelopmental disorder research are leading to an understanding of the etiology of these disabilities, better diagnostics and screening, therapeutic interventions, and improved frontline care and social support services. In order to advance our understanding of all aspects of these disorders, Brain Canada, NeuroDevNet, and Research Institutes across Canada are joining together to support and enhance the training of talented young scientists conducting research focused on these key aspects of developmental neurosciences under the direction of leading Canadian researchers.

NeuroDevNet and Brain Canada (through the Canada Brain Research Fund) are pleased to announce a competition for studentships in developmental neurosciences valued at up to \$30,000 per year for a maximum funding term of two years, and postdoctoral fellowships valued at up to \$50,000 per year for a maximum funding term of two years. All awards include an additional \$5,000 per year career development supplement. In addition, all awardees will be required to attend the NeuroDevNet Annual Brain Development Conference as well as training courses and workshops organized through the NeuroDevNet Training Program.

About the Canada Brain Research Fund

Brain Canada is a national non-profit organization that enables and supports excellent, innovative, paradigm-changing brain research in Canada. For more than one decade, Brain Canada has made the case for the brain as a single, complex system with commonalities across the range of neurological disorders, mental illnesses and addictions, brain and spinal cord injuries. Looking at the brain as one system has underscored the need for increased collaboration across disciplines and institutions, and a smarter way to invest in brain research that is focused on outcomes that will benefit patients and families.

The Canada Brain Research Fund is a public-private partnership designed to encourage Canadians to increase their support of brain research, and maximize the impact and efficiency of those investments. Brain Canada has committed to raising \$100 million from private and non-governmental sources, which will be matched by government on a 1:1 basis. The Fund was announced in federal budget 2011, which proposed to “allocate up to \$100 million to establish the Canada Brain Research Fund, which will support the very best Canadian neuroscience, fostering collaborative research and accelerating the pace of discovery, in order to improve the health and quality of life of Canadians who suffer from brain disorders.”

About NeuroDevNet

NeuroDevNet is a national multi- and trans-disciplinary network dedicated to bringing hope to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Cerebral Palsy (CP), Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and related neurodisabilities, as well as to their families and caregivers. NeuroDevNet is funded by the Networks of Centres of Excellence of Canada program and has a focus on integrated, team-based research initiatives in the developmental neurosciences related to cause, early diagnosis, and interventions. Engaging families, clinicians, other stakeholders and partners both nationally and internationally, NeuroDevNet leverages and enhances the talents of new and seasoned researchers to translate research findings into effective therapies and changes in policy and practice.

A specific objective of the Network’s training program is the promotion of a national strategy to increase capacity in developmental neurosciences. Through a trans-Canadian network of institutional and organizational partners, NeuroDevNet supports the training of graduate students and fellows, and fosters the development of internships and practica. that will help launch the next generation of researchers, child health advocates and service providers, through mechanisms including funding, focused training opportunities, courses, workshops and symposia.

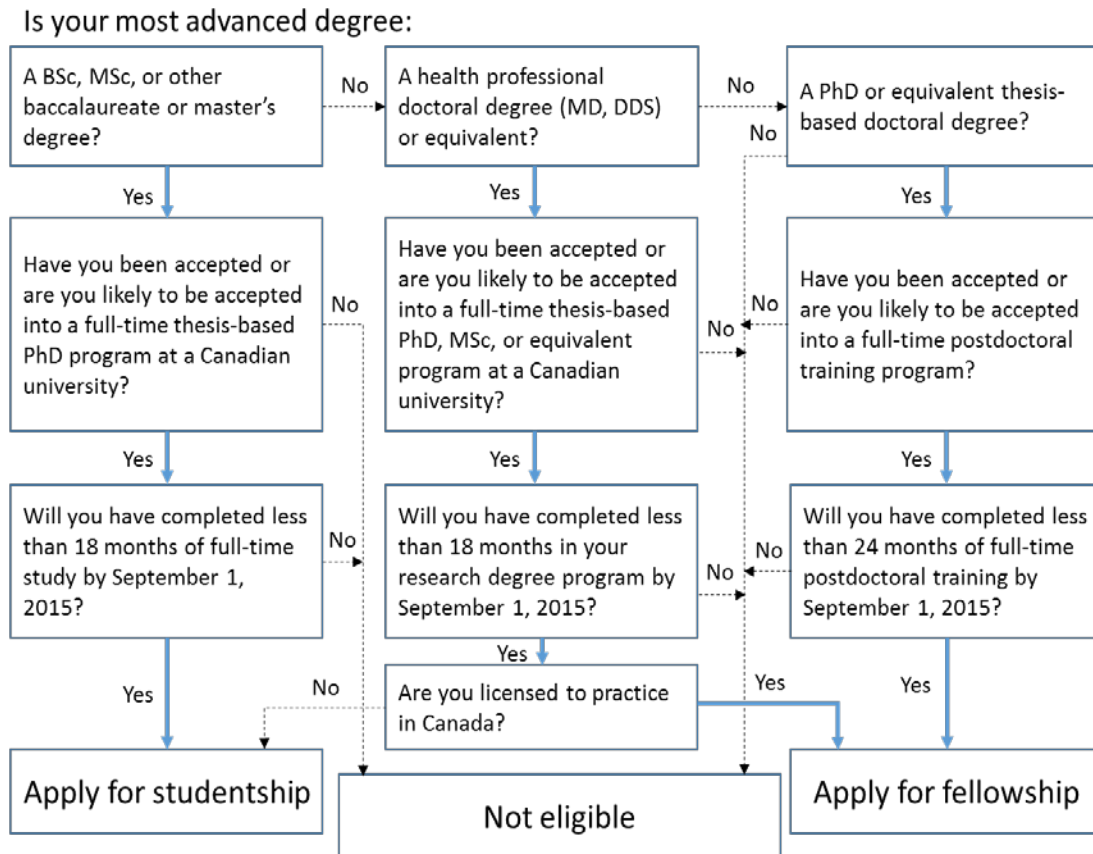
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Scope

The awards will be made to outstanding doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows undertaking a program of research training that incorporates original research into **the origins, early detection and effective treatment of disorders of brain development**. This research will further our understanding of normal brain development as well as disorders of the developing brain when disrupted by genetic, environmental or acquired injury, and ultimately lead to new strategies for prevention and mitigation through early intervention. This support for excellence in doctoral student and postdoctoral fellow training will contribute considerably to building Canadian capacity and leadership in translational research and therapeutic approaches to neurodevelopmental disorders.

Eligibility

Citizens of any nation may apply; however, training must be undertaken at a participating institution located within Canada. Please follow the decision tree below to determine your eligibility to apply for an award.



Additional Conditions

Other funding:	May hold another salary award if the combined annual amount does not exceed \$40,000 (student) or \$60,000 (post-doctoral fellow)
Supervisor:	Permitted by employer to supervise research trainees, and eligible to receive funding from the granting councils.
Training location:	A research institution that is a member of the developmental neurosciences training program, located in Canada, eligible to receive funding from the granting councils ^{1,2} .

1 Short visits to industrial, governmental, and international research institutions are permitted to enhance the training experience, upon approval by the supervisor.

2 If candidates are continuing postdoctoral training in the same department or under the direction of the same supervisor as for their doctoral studies, they should provide explanation of how the training is substantially different and is of significant benefit to their career development.

The Career Development Supplement

An amount of \$5,000 per annum is available to each award holder for the purpose of career development. The parameters of the career development supplement include, but not limited to attending the NeuroDevNet Annual Brain Development Conference as well as training courses and workshops organized through the NeuroDevNet Training Program. The award holder may also use these funds for any purpose related to the exploration of career options, or the acquisition of additional skills and research experience. Examples include: short-term visits to another training and work setting, including opportunities in the private sector, industry, government, NGOs, or internationally; attending conferences and meetings to present research results and build personal networks; taking training courses or summer schools to pursue specific interests germane to their intended career path.

Engagement in Training Program Activities

The Training and Educational arm of this Fellowship Program, hosted by the NeuroDevNet Training Program, is aimed to provide value added career and training opportunities for all successful awardees. The principal emphasis of the NeuroDevNet Research Training Program is to develop cross-disciplinary and collaborative skill sets for the next generation of scientists, clinicians, and health service professionals. A cross-disciplinary approach will help provide young researchers with the diverse vocabulary and experience to interact with the neurodevelopmental disorders research community. For more information see: <http://www.neurodevnet.ca/training>. A full description of the training opportunities will be provided by NeuroDevNet to all successful awardees.

Adjudication criteria

The review panel will adjudicate applications based on the following criteria:

1. The candidate's **potential for future contributions** to the area of research, based on an assessment of research productivity and quality, and letters of reference.
2. The **originality and feasibility** of the planned program of research, and its **potential impact** on one or more of: the concepts, paradigms, or theories advancing the field of research; the health and well-being of Canadians; the Canadian economy – all relative to developmental neurosciences.
3. The **quality of the training environment**, including the supervisor's previous record of trainee supervision and research productivity, and opportunities for interdisciplinary or intersectoral enrichment (such as working in collaboration with industry, health professionals, community organizations, or governmental agencies).

Application process

- A. The institutions will solicit the doctoral and post-doctoral trainees eligible to apply to the Initiative and determine those applicants that will submit applications to the competition.
- B. The institutions will provide a letter to Brain Canada confirming the number of doctoral scholarships and post-doctoral fellowships they are able to support for this Initiative.
- C. All applications must be submitted using the Brain Canada electronic grant management

system (https://braincanada.smartsimple.ca/s_Login.jsp). The deadline for applications is applicant **16:00 EST July 15, 2015**.

Applicants should contact Brain Canada (programs@braincanada) with enquiries about the application process.

Application Components:

1. Project Summary:

- Project Title
- Project Start and End Dates
- Award Type (doctoral scholarship or post-doctoral fellowship)
- Institution providing match funding for this application
- Institution and department where research training will take place
- Name and job title of supervisor
- Keywords and keywords freeform (up to ten)

2. **The Research Proposal.** Summarize the research project (maximum two page document, including references) to be undertaken during the award. Emphasize its novel aspects and feasibility, and its potential impact on developmental neurosciences in one or more area: the concepts, paradigms, or theories advancing the field of research; the health and well-being of Canadians; the Canadian economy. Describe how the project builds on your former training, and how it will provide you with the research skills required to achieve your research ambitions. Explain the relative contribution that you and your supervisor, or others, made to the development of the project.

3. **All about you.** Provide the best possible evidence of your research creativity, productivity and quality to include a description of your major research achievements and other research distinctions. Include a statement that elaborates on the results and impact of your past work on the present proposal as well as in your field of research and career path. Additionally, include any other information that you believe would persuade the reviewers of your exceptional research potential (maximum 500 words).

4. **Applicant's CV.** An abbreviated CV with Publication List (recommended format CCV Vanier-Banting Academic CV, preview printed as a PDF)

5. Supervisor's Statement, to be completed by your supervisor

- List the number of trainees that have been under your supervision, and at what level (summer/undergraduate, MSc, PhD, PDF, etc.), from 2010 to the present.
- From this group of trainees, select **up to five** and list their accomplishments arising from their training under your supervision. Please restrict your commentary to

accomplishments that are a matter of public record, such as publications, prizes, awards, and other distinctions.

- Explain how you will acquire sufficient operating funding to sustain the candidate's research project through to the end of the awarded funding term.
- Outline the opportunities that the candidate will have while under your supervision for enrichment through interdisciplinary or intersectoral collaboration.
- Outline how your mentorship method will ensure the success of the trainee and the proposed project.
- List five of your publications that you consider most significant (three must have been published in 2010 or later). Each item should be annotated with a brief reason for the selection. Include a DOI, URL or PMID where applicable so that reviewers can more easily access them.
- Click "I Agree" for the following statement "I agree to supervise [name of candidate] for the duration of the award if the application is successful, and I will advise Brain Canada immediately if (s) he terminates research training or otherwise experiences a significant interruption. I permit Brain Canada to share the information about me contained in this application with actual or potential funding partners, under a confidentiality agreement".

6. **References.** List the names, phone numbers, institutional and email addresses of three individuals who have agreed to provide references (see "Reference Letters" below).

7. **Signature:**

- Click "I Agree" for the following statement "I certify that I am eligible to apply for this award, and I allow Brain Canada to share my application with actual and potential funding partners, under a confidentiality agreement", with signature, typed name, and date
- Signature of the

Application Format

For all pages of the application, use 12 point Arial or Georgia font, single-spaced, on a letter-size page with 1" minimum margins. It is the sole responsibility of the applicants to ensure their submission is acceptable and received before the deadline. Those applications received in any other format, exceeding the page limits, incomplete, or late, will be rejected. Brain Canada will acknowledge receipt of applications by email within one working day.

Reference letters

Three individuals, ***excluding your intended supervisor***, familiar with your achievements as a scholar and researcher, must provide one-page reference letters on your behalf. At least one letter should be from a previous research supervisor, if applicable. The most relevant letters explain the nature of the interaction between the candidate and the referee, and provide

specific examples of situations where the candidate demonstrated creativity, initiative, collaboration, and other qualities predictive of a successful researcher. They also mention areas of knowledge, skill, or attitude where the candidate would benefit from further training. Reference letters must be received by Brain Canada on or before the deadline for applications of **16:00 EST July 15, 2015**.

Transcripts from previous academic programs are not required.

Timetable

Request for Applications:	May 15, 2015
Deadline for Receipt of Applications	July 15, 2015
Review Process	September, 2015
Notification of Award:	September, 2015
Funding begins (earliest date):	October 1, 2015
End date of award (maximum two year funding term)	September 30, 2017 (subject to satisfactory annual review)

Review and selection process.

Applications will be reviewed by a Training Award Selection Panel of Canadian and international experts in the relevant fields. The Panel will not include those who are current or proposed supervisors of the candidates. Past supervisors will not participate in the review of applications from their former trainees. Initial reviews of each candidate will be performed independently by two members of the Panel. If there is a large discrepancy between the two initial reviews, a third member will also review the application. Applications that are considered uncompetitive by two reviewers will be declined at this stage. The entire Panel will meet by teleconference to consider all remaining applications in competition.

The panel will provide the Brain Canada Board of Directors with the names and merit scores of those candidates recommended for the studentship and fellowship awards by the review panel. Awards will be conditionally approved by the Board in descending order of merit until the available funding from the partner(s), plus the matching Canada Brain Research Fund contribution, is exhausted, or all recommended candidates have received an award, whichever occurs first.

Brain Canada will notify all candidates of the outcome of the competition. Should a successful candidate withdraw for any reason, the conditional award will revert to the next most meritorious candidate recommended for an award.

Awards will be provided in trust to the supervisor's institution to disburse to the award recipient as a stipend. Brain Canada does not pay institutional overhead on its grants or awards, and any tax liability generated by the award is the responsibility of the recipient. Up to 10% of a postdoctoral award may be used to pay the employee's contribution to compulsory benefits, if this is institutional policy for postdoctoral fellows. Brain Canada does not claim any rights to intellectual property developed through research supported by its grants or awards.

Reporting

In order to demonstrate to its funding partners and Canadians generally that they are obtaining value from Brain Canada grants and awards, Brain Canada will require a brief annual progress report from recipients of training awards outlining their progress and achievements. Progress reports will be reviewed by members from both Brain Canada and the NeuroDevNet Research Training Committees, with continued funding based upon a satisfactory review. Should Brain Canada deem any portion of the progress report unsatisfactory, they are entitled to discuss the progress with the trainee and supervisor and, may cancel or postpone further funding, if deemed necessary.

Trainees must contact Brain Canada and NeuroDevNet in advance of the publication, release or public presentation of research results obtained by a trainee receiving a Brain Canada-NeuroDevNet award, so that a press release or other publicity can be prepared. Embargoes will be strictly respected. Acknowledgment of Brain Canada, NeuroDevNet and partner funding must accompany all publication, release or presentation of such research results.

Other award terms

Brain Canada training awards are intended to support full-time research and related study. However, trainees may devote up to 10% of the working week for complementary paid or unpaid activities such as teaching or consulting, and health professionals licensed to practice in Canada may engage in clinical work ***related to their research*** for up to 25% of the working week.

It is the responsibility of the awarded trainee to notify Brain Canada of any change in status or change in Institution. Trainees may apply for a leave of absence (e.g. maternity leave), or temporary conversion to a part-time award, for personal reasons. If approved, the award will be temporarily suspended or pro-rated during this period, and the duration extended accordingly. For example, an individual who requests conversion of an award to half-time for six months will have the stipend reduced by 50% for six months and extended for three months at 100%.

A trainee who accepts another salary award and will exceed the income limits shown in the eligibility table (p. 3) must notify Brain Canada immediately. Brain Canada will reduce its award so that the combined amount does not exceed the limit.

For further Information:

About Brain Canada and the Canada Brain Research Fund: <http://braincanada.ca/>

About NeuroDevNet: <http://www.neurodevnet.ca> .

About this competition: programs@braincanada.ca