



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Issued By
Parkinson Canada

CLINICIAN SCIENTIST RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM (2024 – 2026 Cycle)

Release Date:	September 15, 2023
Application Deadline (date of receipt):	December 5, 2023 (11:59 pm EST)
Application Notice of Decision:	March 2024
Funding Start Date:	July 1 2024
Duration of Award:	2 years

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Important Changes to the 2024-2026 Competition

1. Change to the Name and Eligibility for the Fellowship
 - The Clinical Research Fellowship has been re-named the *Clinician Scientist Research Fellowship*. Starting this year, the competition will also be open to applicants who are undergoing medical residency training. This program is designated for applicants who are actively pursuing research related to Parkinson's Disease while concurrently undergoing clinical training in neurology or neurosurgery (either as a medical resident or clinical fellow). The award will be at two values: \$50,000/year for medical residents and \$75,000/year for clinical fellows.

2. Research Priority Area: Canadian Open Parkinson Network (C-OPN)
 - For this research cycle only, Parkinson Canada has earmarked up to \$200,000 of the Annual Research Competition budget for projects submitted to the competition that use data from the C-OPN Database, Registry and/or Biobank. More details are provided below.
3. Addition of a New Impact Statement
 - All applications will now include an Impact Statement. This is a description of how this project will move the field forward and contribute to new scientific knowledge in Parkinson's, how it aligns with the Research Themes of Parkinson Canada, how findings from the project will impact the lives of people with Parkinson's.
4. Addition of a Patient Involvement Statement
 - Applications will also include a description of how people affected by Parkinson's will be involved in the project, if applicable. This can include recruitment for clinical, population health or qualitative studies, and/or how individuals may be involved in study design and knowledge translation or dissemination considerations.
5. Introduction of Weighted Scoring Criteria
 - To standardize the scoring criteria used by the Scientific Reviewers, we are introducing new weighted scoring criteria to evaluate applicants based on their: Candidate (40%), Project (40%), and Research & Training Environment (20%).
6. Lived Experience Reviewers
 - Lived experience expert reviewers will review the following sections from submitted applications: 1) the non-scientific summary, 2) the impact statement and 3) the patient involvement statement.

BACKGROUND

Parkinson Canada believes that leadership in programs of care for those with Parkinson's disease is best assumed by medical neurologists or neurosurgeons with special experience, both in the critical management of Parkinson's and in its research. This leadership entails a capacity to work with the various agencies and disciplines involved in the care of individuals with Parkinson's to facilitate the development of better treatments for those with Parkinson's. Relative to the current needs of Canadians with Parkinson's, there is currently a shortage of leaders involved in Parkinson's service and research programs in Canada. Parkinson Canada believes this leadership shortage has the potential to worsen in the next few years.

Parkinson Canada is pleased, therefore, to offer its Clinician Scientist Research Fellowship Program (the "Program") as a strategic initiative to encourage promising young medical professionals to become future leaders in the field of Parkinson's Disease therapeutic management and research. Parkinson Canada intends to provide awards in the amount of \$50,000 or 75,000 per year over a two-year term to outstanding neurologists or neurosurgeons who meet the eligibility criteria of the Program and who have been approved by its Scientific Advisory Council (the "Advisory Council"). Funds awarded under the Program are to be used to cover salary, benefits, and expenses for research fellowships in Parkinson's-related areas.

Through this initiative, Parkinson Canada invites fellowship applications from applicants committed to conducting significant biomedical or clinical research in areas relevant to the cure, cause, prevention, improved treatment and/or understanding of Parkinson's disease, while concurrently undergoing clinical training. This initiative is consistent with, and reflects, Parkinson Canada's commitment to support innovation and renewal in the national Parkinson's research field and to foster international leadership potential in this area.

The Program is available to individuals who possess a doctoral qualification (MD) in medicine. Funding for post MD research fellowships (without clinical training) may be made available through the postdoctoral research fellowship program, to provide support for applicants whose primary focus is

research and are not pursuing clinical training/practice. Applicants seeking support for further clinical fellowship training (without a significant research component) should apply to Parkinson Canada's Clinical Movement Disorders Fellowship.

RESEARCH THEMES OF PARKINSON CANADA

Parkinson Canada provides funding to support research projects that are aligned with the identified research themes which have the highest potential impact for the health and well-being of people with Parkinson's. Applications are encouraged to focus on novel and innovative research in the following areas:

- 1) **Symptomatic Treatments:** treatments that ease outward symptoms of Parkinson's (e.g., medications for tremors).
- 2) **Disease Modifying Therapies & Treatments:** treatments that target the underlying mechanisms of Parkinson's to interfere with disease progression.
- 3) **Prevention:** interventions aimed at reducing the risk or severity of Parkinson's Disease.
- 4) **Diagnosis & Progression:** understanding predictors of Parkinson's for earlier diagnosis and intervention (e.g. biomarkers).
- 5) **Causes of Parkinson's (and related symptoms):** understanding the physiological processes that lead to Parkinson's and its symptoms (ex. alpha-synuclein aggregation).
- 6) **Living Well with Parkinson's:** improving the quality of life (QoL) of people living with Parkinson's and understanding the barriers to positive QoL.

FUNDS AVAILABLE

The Program offers awards in the amount of either \$50,000 or \$75,000 per year over a two-year term to exceptional eligible applicants who have been approved for funding by the Advisory Council.

Clinical Training Level	Award Value
Medical Residency in Neurology/Neurosurgery	\$50,000/year
Clinical Fellowship	\$75,000/year

RESEARCH PRIORITY AREA: CANADIAN OPEN PARKINSON NETWORK (C-OPN)

For this year's competition, Parkinson Canada has earmarked up to \$200,000 from the overall competition budget for meritorious projects (open to all active competitions) that make strong use of the datasets and resources from the **Canadian Open Parkinson Network (C-OPN)**. To date, C-OPN has enrolled over >1500 Parkinson's patients from participating sites across Canada. From these participants, rich datasets (demographic, epidemiological and clinical information) and biological samples (DNA, PBMC and Serum) have been collected for further testing (additional information can be found online <http://copn-rpco.ca/research> or by email: national.manager@copn-rpco.ca). Applications will be submitted to the general research competition and will follow the same timeline, evaluation procedure, and general policy guidelines.

PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

Partnership funding programs are available for this trainee award program. For more information on the available partnership programs, including funding amounts, award durations, and additional application procedures, please visit <http://www.parkinson.ca/apply-for-funding/>.

ELIGIBILITY

Parkinson Canada wishes to support training excellence and development of the wide scope of Parkinson's research in Canada. Applications will be accepted from applicants who meet the eligibility criteria established by Parkinson Canada as summarized in this Request for Applications and who are currently training at the following organizations (an "Approved Institution"):

- Canadian Medical College or Canadian post-secondary institutions and their affiliated institutions including hospitals and research institutes; or
- Other organizations, as determined by the Research Policy Committee of the Board of Directors of Parkinson Canada in consultation with the Advisory Council, provided that the applicant's research or research-related activities fall within the mandate of Parkinson Canada.
- **Candidates for the Parkinson Canada/FRSQ funding opportunity must submit applications to both FRQS and to Parkinson Canada** and must indicate that this has been done. Research supported under this Program must be carried out at a university or affiliated institutions including hospitals and research institutes, within the Province of Quebec.

Applicants must hold a doctoral degree (MD) in medicine, must be graduates of and must have completed training at a university recognized by Parkinson Canada. Applicants must also be in pursuit of either: a) residency specialty training in either clinical neurology or neurosurgery or b) advanced clinical fellowship training related to the diagnosis or treatment of Parkinson's Disease.

An applicant's proposed training program should provide training in the diagnosis and treatment of neurological conditions (residents) or direct experience in the diagnosis and treatment of Parkinson's Disease (clinical fellows). In addition, the applicant's proposed training program should include a significant time commitment (at least 20% time commitment) towards research of Parkinson's Disease.

International applicants are encouraged to apply; however, priority will be given to Canadian citizens and/or applicants intending to remain in or relocate to Canada to continue his or her career following completion of the two-year term of the fellowship.

Applicants must be eligible for postgraduate medical training (residents) or licensed to practice in Canada (clinical fellows).

Eligibility Table for Trainee Awards

Program	Degree Held	Research Being Pursued	Clinical Training Level	Award Value & Term
Graduate Student Award	BSc	Yes	NA	\$20,000/year - 2 years
Postdoctoral Research Fellowship	PhD (or MD)	Yes	NA	\$45,000/year - 2 years
Clinician Scientist Research Fellowship	MD	Yes	Residency (Neurology or Neurosurgery)	\$50,000/year - 2 years
	MD	Yes	Clinical Fellowship	\$75,000/year - 2 years
Clinical Movement Disorder Fellowship	MD	NA	Movement Disorder Clinical Fellowship	\$75,000/year - 1 year

Those currently funded by Parkinson Canada or with pending final reports from a Parkinson Canada grant or award are not eligible to apply.

LOCATION OF TRAINING & SUPERVISION

Awards granted under this Program shall be held in trust by the Approved Institution at which the proposed supervisor of the successful applicant (an "Approved Supervisor") holds a faculty appointment.

An Approved Supervisor should be an individual who is a leader in the development of a Parkinson's program, actively directing research in the field of Parkinson's disease. An Approved Supervisor must be able to provide the successful applicant with a strong training environment in an academic health sciences centre with a well-established Parkinson's program in movement disorders. Other training locations may be considered by the Advisory Council, provided that the facility is an Approved Institution and the clinical research or clinical research-related activities fall within the mandate of the Program.

Applicants proposing to train at an Approved Institution located outside Canada will be considered to be eligible to participate in the Program, provided that he or she is committed to returning to Canada to pursue his or her career following completion of the two-year term of the Program. Submission of an application under these conditions is deemed to be a binding pledge, and successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with Parkinson Canada to this effect.

REVIEW CRITERIA

The principal consideration used to evaluate applications is research excellence potential. There are, however, a variety of additional criteria that may be considered by the Advisory Council in the evaluation process. Each of the criteria listed below will be considered in assigning the overall ranking of the application, weighting them as indicated for each application. Note that the application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have major scientific or social impact and thus deserving of a high priority score. For example, an investigator may propose to carry out important work that by its nature is not innovative but is essential to expand knowledge and understanding of Parkinson's disease in a given field.

- **CANDIDATE - 40%**
 - Academic Record
 - Honours & Awards
 - Research Experience
 - Letters of Reference/Support
 - Publications

- **PROJECT - 40%**
 - Project Novelty (10%)
 - Project Feasibility (10%)
 - Opportunity to Learn (10%)
 - Impact of Project and Relevance to Parkinson's Disease (10%)

- **SUPERVISOR/ENVIRONMENT - 20%**
 - Supervisor's Research Track Record
 - Training environment

In addition to the above criteria all applications will also be reviewed with respect to the following:

- Does the applicant show promise of significantly advancing biomedical or clinical research in the area of Parkinson's disease? Is the applicant appropriately trained and well suited to enter into this work? Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience level of the applicant? Is this project relevant to pursuing a greater understanding of Parkinson's for the applicant?
- Is the research work that the applicant will be involved in of high quality? Are the applicant's conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses of the proposed project/area of study adequately developed, well integrated, and appropriate? Does it contribute to Canada's leadership

potential in Parkinson's knowledge in that field? Where does this work position itself in relation to world knowledge of Parkinson's at this time?

- Is the project or project supervisor positioned to build significantly on the existing strengths of the individual researcher? Does the work stretch the experience and professional knowledge of the applicant?
- Is the scientific environment in which the work will be done likely to contribute to the applicant's learning? Is there evidence of institutional support of the training program?
- The adequacy of the proposed protection of humans, animals, or of the environment, to the extent that they may be adversely affected by the project proposed in the application. The Advisory Council will also examine the provisions for the protection of human subjects (if any) and the safety of the research environment.

Where a trainee and supervisor are submitting an application to the same competition, trainees submitting their own proposal (not identical to the proposal submitted by their supervisor) will be given priority ranking.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This Request for Applications made by Parkinson Canada is subject to the terms and conditions (the "Terms and Conditions") contained in Parkinson Canada Research Program Application Guidelines (the "Guidelines"), which the applicant shall be deemed to have accepted upon submission to Parkinson Canada of an application to participate in the Program. Failure to comply with the Terms and Conditions may result, in addition to any other remedies Parkinson Canada may have at law, in termination of the Program and exclusion of the applicant from future grant and fellowship award competitions.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND TERMS OF FUNDING

All successful applicants shall comply with the reporting obligations outlined in the Guidelines.

Parkinson Canada requires fellowship recipients to submit Annual and Final Progress Reports. The advance of the portion of the award to be made in the second year of the term of the Program is conditional upon submission of an **Annual Progress Report** to Parkinson Canada in substance and form satisfactory to the Advisory Council at **the end of the first year** of the term of the Program. The report shall be submitted to research@parkinson.ca no later than the one-year anniversary date of the start of the Program. Progress report guidelines and instructions will be provided by Parkinson Canada in advance of the report deadline.

A **Final Progress Report** detailing the results of the successful applicant's progress, in substance and form satisfactory to the Advisory Council, shall be submitted to research@parkinson.ca no later than **three months after** the termination of the two-year term of the Program.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Applications are submitted online through the Parkinson Canada online application system called SMApply. It can be accessed through the following link which is also available on the Parkinson Canada website at <https://parkinsoncan.smapply.io/>. **The deadline to submit applications is December 5, 2023 (11:59 pm EST). Applications received after this time will not be considered and will be disqualified from the competition. There will be no exceptions.**

Applications for Clinician Scientist Research Fellowship include the following:

Important note on document formatting: When preparing your application, all application documents to be uploaded must have page margins of **1 inch minimum (2.54 cm)** and use **12-point font** (Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri). **Failing to follow these instructions may negatively impact the evaluation of your application and could lead to it being withdrawn.**

1. **Personal Statement** from the applicant expressing his/her interest in the field of Parkinson's, and his/her career goals and evidence of the applicant's commitment to Parkinson's disease. This statement should include the relevance of proposed training to the applicant's future career (2 pages max).
2. **Project Summary:** Please state in **500 words or less** the scientific question being asked, the methods you will use to address it, and the expected outcome. (*To save space, you do not need to include basic information such as the description of Parkinson's disease*)
3. **Non-Scientific Summary:** Please state in **500 words or less** a plain language summary of the project to be reviewed by people affected by Parkinson's who will serve as Lived Experience Expert reviewers. The summary should include a description of the issue the research project is addressing, methods the researcher has chosen to address this problem, and expected finding.
4. **Impact Statement:** Please state in **500 words or less** a plain language description of how this project aligns with the Research Themes of Parkinson Canada (outlined above), how the findings from this project will impact the lives of people with Parkinson's, and how this project will push forward the Parkinson's Research field. This section will be reviewed by people affected by Parkinson's who will serve as Lived Experience Expert Reviewers.
5. **Patient Involvement Statement:** Please state in **150 words or less** how people affected by Parkinson's will be involved in the project, how they will be recruited if applicable, and how they may be involved in informing study design and knowledge translation or dissemination considerations.
6. **Project Narrative: (3 pages max)** including:
 - **Background** of proposed studies and **hypothesis** to be tested.
 - **Specific aims** of the research
 - **Methods** and experimental details.
 - If the project will use **C-OPN**, and would like to be considered for the Research Priority Funding please provide adequate description.
 - The 3-page maximum applies only to the project narrative and does not include supporting documentation described below.
7. **Relevant Support Materials**
 - Literature references
 - Photographs, tables, figures
 - Letters of collaboration
 - Relevant published work (max 3 publications)
8. **Biographical information** of the applicant to be provided by completing the Parkinson Canada Biographical Sketch Form (for trainees), including a summary of:
 - **Education & Degrees**
 - **Positions & Honours** – previous positions (including current), list of honours, awards, and positions on any committees.
 - **Publications** – where the applicant has participated as a co-author, first-author, etc. (describe the contribution of the applicant for each publication). Includes scientific papers, book chapters, etc.
 - **Other Contributions** – posters, oral presentations, commercialization activities and intellectual property.
 - **Funding** – list all current, pending, and completed funding support.
 - Maximum 4 pages
9. **Official transcripts** of the applicant's complete academic record to date, including degrees and specialty certifications. Foreign transcripts **MUST** be accompanied by a certified English or French interpretation and a clear explanation of the grading system.

10. **Assessment Forms** of Candidate for a Fellowship completed by **two (2) sponsors/referees**, accompanied by **statements of support** (500 words max) from each such sponsor. Sponsors should be recent supervisors from the program in which the applicant's specialty training was taken and should include the director of the program in which the applicant's neurology or neurosurgery training was received.
11. **Signature of an authorized signing official** of the applicant's host institution.

In addition to the foregoing, the applicant should arrange for his or her proposed supervisor to prepare the following information:

1. **Supervisor's biographical information:** using the Parkinson Canada biographical sketch form (for Principal Investigators)
2. **Letter of support** from the proposed supervisor (max 1 page)
3. **Description** of where research will be conducted and the resources available there (maximum 500 words)

Applications may be submitted in either English or French, and French-speaking reviewers will be made available for any applications that are submitted in French. French-speaking applicants may also ask to have any application guides and materials translated into French.. For more information please contact research@parkinson.ca.

All applications must be submitted via our online application system (SMAApply - <https://parkinsoncan.smapply.io/>). Please retain copies of all application documents in case there are any issues accessing application files.

Any applications in violation of these guidelines are subject to disqualification at the discretion of the Advisory Council.

Important note on document formatting: When preparing your application, all application documents to be uploaded must have page margins of **1 inch minimum (2.54 cm)** and use **12-point font** (Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri). Failing to follow these instructions may negatively impact the evaluation of your application and could lead to it being disqualified.

Incomplete applications or applications received later than **December 5, 2023 (11:59 pm EST)** will not be considered **under any circumstances**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE REFER TO:

The Parkinson Canada Research Program Application Guidelines Manual is available from the Parkinson Canada web site at www.parkinson.ca.

OR CONTACT:

Ko Currie, Research Funding and Partnerships Manager
Email: ko.currie@parkinson.ca