
PROGRAM GUIDE: POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS IN HEALTH INNOVATION 2+1

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Background

Alberta Innovates plays an important role in cultivating a healthy, sustainable and prosperous future for Albertans. Strengthening the ability of the province to develop, mobilize, and retain research and innovation (R&I) talent is one key approach for accomplishing this.

The Postdoctoral Fellowships in Health Innovation 2+1 (PFHI 2+1) program is intended to generate R&I talent that will drive growth and competitiveness in the following areas of strategic importance:

Emerging and Strategic Opportunities: remaining at the forefront of health R&I is becoming increasingly more dependent on the ability to identify trends with high impact potential, and leverage a convergence of emerging technologies, platforms, and real-world data sources. Projects that build capacity in the use of leading-edge technologies (e.g., Artificial Intelligence) and real-world data sources are a good fit for this priority area. So too are projects that better position talent to identify and respond to emerging trends that are of high relevance to Alberta.

Health System Transformation: expectations regarding the *who, how, and what* of health research are shifting to include more projects carried out in collaboration with patients, industry, health care professionals, and community partners. At the same time, demographic trends are heightening the need to improve health system sustainability by enabling the development of patient-focused clinical solutions, leveraging digital and data-enabled technologies to improve the coordination and accessibility of care, and empowering patients and providers to better manage care. Our future R&I leaders need skill and experience navigating these approaches, challenges, and opportunities.

Health Innovation & Technology Acceleration: while not all discoveries have a clear path to adoption and use, research can be approached in ways that increase the potential for uptake, such as by considering marketplace need, industry pull, technology partnerships, scale-up requirements, and the types of evidence needed to mobilize support for further development. Increasing the availability of talent that can accelerate the development of innovations - particularly related to the Internet of Medical Things, xR, wearables, personalized health, and health economics – is of high priority.

Program Details

PFHI 2+1 combines a Training Stipend (“the Stipend”) with mentorship and career development opportunities to *better position emerging talent for high-impact careers in Alberta’s health R&I ecosystem*. Up to 24 months of Stipend support is available for eligible Trainees.

Those awarded a PFHI 2+1 Fellowship may apply for an additional 12 months of Stipend support in the future to gain valuable experience and additional skills beyond those acquired through direct research training. PFHI 2+1 Fellowship awardees with an interest in this additional year of support (the “+1 Option”) are encouraged to connect with Alberta Innovates for more details.

Time Commitment

To hold a PFHI 2+1 fellowship, one must engage full-time in postdoctoral project activities. This is defined as not allocating more than 200 hours per year to other work or training activities.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Eligibility

(a) Trainee Eligibility Criteria

To qualify for funding all Trainees must:

- Have completed a PhD at the time of award implementation;
- Have accepted or currently hold a postdoctoral appointment at one of the following Post-Secondary Institutions: University of Alberta, University of Calgary, University of Lethbridge (the “Applicant” or collectively the “Applicants”).
- Have been shortlisted for this competition by the Post-Secondary Institution at which the postdoctoral appointment is located; and
- Not already hold a major award that provides a stipend for postdoctoral studies.

(b) Project Eligibility Criteria: To qualify for funding proposed projects must:

- involve health-related R&I activities;
- be performed at an Applicant's location; and
- submit to other criteria that Alberta Innovates may develop from time to time.

Program Objectives and Performance Measurement

Alberta Innovates' Postdoctoral Fellowships in Health Innovation 2+1 are designed to deliver meaningful return on investment to the Province by serving as a catalyst for the growth of R&I leaders in the health sector in Alberta.

Over the life of a Project, Alberta Innovates employs an active project management philosophy, regularly monitoring performance and supporting the Trainee to reach their objectives. Funding is tied to outcomes and achievement of results.

Once Projects are completed, Alberta Innovates continues to monitor performance for five (5) years to accurately evaluate the economic, social and environmental benefits realized for the province.

All Investment Agreements outline performance indicators tracked over the course of the Project and the responsibilities of the Trainee and the Applicant to report on outcomes subsequent to the completion of the Project.

Alberta Innovates has a common set of performance metrics it monitors, both at the individual Project level and for the aggregate Program. These are highlighted on the next page.

Objectives and Performance Metrics



APPLICANT OBJECTIVES

- Build talent/capacity in areas of strategic importance to Alberta
- Complement traditional scholarly training with the development of skills and networks that will help Trainees identify and secure relevant career opportunities in the health R&I ecosystem
- Increase the competitiveness of Alberta as a R&I talent development destination



PROJECT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Each Trainee will develop research Project and career development goals and metrics in collaboration with their supervisor and mentors. Suggested performance indicators include:

- # of publications
- # of awards & recognitions
- # of collaborations

SHORT TERM



ALBERTA OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen Alberta's performance in the innovation-driven economy
- Accelerate health & wellness innovation

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- # of publications & patents in strategic focus areas
- # projects in strategic focus areas
- # of collaborations supporting health system transformation
- # of collaborations supporting Health Innovation & Technology Acceleration

LONG TERM

How Funding Works

(a) Project Funding

Funded trainees must implement their award by March 1, 2021 to be eligible for the full-term. Alberta Innovates' Investment is disbursed as follows:

Postgraduate Fellowships: \$55,000* per annum for up to two years. Fellowship holders may also apply for an additional year of Stipend support (at the same rate of \$55,000 per annum) to gain valuable experience and skills beyond those acquired through direct research training.

*Stipends may be subject to the Income Tax Act and Regulations of the Government of Canada.

Pro Tip: If you secure a Fellowship, don't wait until the end of your two-year term to think about the +1 Option to further explore career development in Alberta.

As an R&I catalyst and convener, Alberta Innovates is here to help broker connections and relevant opportunities.

b) Restrictions

The PFHI 2+1 program targets competitive Trainees who have not received another major funding award for their postdoctoral studies.

While Alberta Innovates encourages Trainees to apply for and accept awards from other national or international agencies, these awards cannot be held simultaneously with PFHI 2+1. An alternative "incentive payment" is not available.

(c) Eligible and ineligible expenses

The Stipend Award is to be used exclusively to pay the Trainee and the Trainee may use it without restriction.

(d) Leaves, Suspension and Terminations

Alberta Innovates can accommodate leaves under certain circumstances. This includes paid parental leaves of up to six months. Unpaid leaves of no more than one year may also be approved.

Funding will cease under the following circumstances:

- When the Trainee is no longer able to engage in full-time research activities.
- If the terms and conditions of the award are not met, or if there is evidence of unsatisfactory progress.
- When another major funding award is accepted for postdoctoral studies.



STEP 1

Application

Eligible universities (Applicants) have until December 11, 2020, to provide Alberta Innovates with a shortlist of Trainees who applied to other major postdoctoral fellowship competitions and received a competitive score but did not make the funding cut-off.

Shortlisted Trainees have until January 5, 2021, to submit required materials to Alberta Innovates via a portal (a link will be provided).



STEP 2

Evaluation & Agreement Execution

Each Application will be evaluated & successful Trainees notified of next steps.

Anticipated announcement of results: February 2021.



STEP 3

Project Management

Annual Progress Reports are provided to Alberta Innovates. A Final Report will also be required from the Trainee at the end of the award.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Alberta Innovates will leverage internal staff and external expert reviewers to evaluate the Applications submitted. Given that shortlisted Applications will have already been vetted for scientific excellence and strength of the Trainee, Alberta Innovates' review will focus on relevance of the project plan for building capacity in one or more of the strategic focus areas identified on page one of this Program Guide.

Alberta Innovates retains the sole right to determine the evaluation process and does not disclose the names of its external reviewers to ensure their objectivity and impartiality. All external parties are subject to both confidentiality and conflict of interest policies set by Alberta Innovates.

Refer to the 2020/2021 *Postgraduate Fellowships in Health Innovation 2+1* Application form for more detail on the criteria by which Applications will be assessed.

The assessment criteria and all investment decisions are at the sole discretion of Alberta Innovates.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This Program Guide is intended as a high-level overview of the PFHI 2+1 Program. It provides interested Trainees and Applicants with a roadmap of what to expect over the lifecycle of PFHI2+1 Fellowship, from the announcement of the program, through the Application stage, during the Project and post-completion. Should you have any questions about this guide or what is expected, please contact Alberta Innovates. Please be aware Alberta Innovates may modify this guide from time to time in keeping with any changes to the program.

Alberta Innovates will only correspond in writing and provide copies of the Application to the person named in the Application form as the one authorized to speak for the Applicant.

Once we have evaluated and approved an Application for funding, Alberta Innovates will require the Applicant to sign our standard form Investment Agreement. Alberta Innovates will not provide any funding until the Investment Agreement has been signed by all Parties.

Alberta Innovates will only fund Applicants who have satisfied all eligibility criteria. Meeting the eligibility criteria does not guarantee access to funding, and all funding decisions will be made by Alberta Innovates at its sole discretion.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)

Alberta Innovates believes the Research and Innovation ecosystem is stronger and more sustainable when it is broadly reflective of the overall diversity of our community and therefore embraces the principles of Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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