

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH GRANTS AND AWARDS

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Introduction

This document is meant to provide potential applicants and their host institution with information related to the Alberta Cancer Foundation funding. As new programs and other funding opportunities develop, this document will be updated and maintained on the Alberta Cancer Foundation web site.

Terms and conditions for research grants and awards

Please see the above document for the complete terms and conditions for research grants and awards.

Definitions

Translational Research

- Can involve the translation of scientific discovery and technological advancements to the treatment or prevention of cancer in humans
- Can be directed towards a tangible application to improve understanding, prevention, diagnosis or treatment of cancer
- Can test ideas generated clinically in a basic research setting to define mechanisms and prove hypotheses
- May use patients, patient material, patient data, simulated patient data or model systems with direct clinical relevance and/or application

Funding programs

Training Awards – General Guidelines

Funding

- Stipend support is provided to exceptional individuals wishing to pursue training in medical or health research.
- Stipend payments are made through the trainees' university and are subject to income tax.

Benefits

- The Alberta Cancer Foundation does not provide additional funds for health-care benefits.

Supplemental Income

- In the event an individual is offered both an Alberta Cancer Foundation Training Award and an external award, the Alberta Cancer Foundation will provide a supplement to the external award up to the value of the Alberta Cancer Foundation award. If another granting agency offers a supplement to an Alberta Cancer Foundation award, the trainee may accept the supplement.

Substitution

- Supervisors may not substitute candidates for any Alberta Cancer Foundation Training Awards.

Alberta Cancer Foundation Summer Studentship Award

Funding Criteria

1. The competition is limited to students who are registered in an undergraduate training program and who will be under the supervision of members of the Scientific or Medical Staff of Alberta Health Services or an Alberta University during the period of the award. Candidates must be one of the following:
 - exceptional high school students with records of participation in the healthcare system, and a clear interest in pursuing a health research career providing they present evidence of registration in or application to an undergraduate program
 - registered in an undergraduate degree program in a medical or health related field
 - students who are completing their final year of undergraduate training are eligible providing they present evidence of application to graduate or medical school
 - registered in a medical degree program (some of these students will already hold an undergraduate or graduate degree).
2. A maximum of two (2) Summer Studentship applications per sponsor per competition is allowed.
3. The term of the award is a two (2) to four (4) month congruent period (May 1 to August 31).
4. The award provides stipend support in the amount of \$1,300 per month for up to four (4) months and will be prorated for shorter periods.
5. Renewable upon re-application in regular competitions.
6. The David C. Stokes Summer Studentship in Brain Tumour Research will be awarded to the top ranked application in this competition that has identified their area of cancer research as brain tumour. This award will reside within the Clark H. Smith Brain Tumour Centre at the University of Calgary.

Review Criteria

Proposals for Alberta Cancer Foundation Summer Studentships will be reviewed by the Alberta Cancer Foundation Training Award Review Committee. Each application is reviewed by all committee members. All applications are reviewed using the following criteria:

1. Candidate's Performance and Experience: Candidate's academic performance as outlined in his/her transcripts and two letters of reference outlining the strength and relevant experience of the candidate.
2. Research Project
 - a) Relevance to cancer.
 - b) Project Design: immediate objective; methods employed; estimated timeline; and expected outcomes.
 - c) Summary of supporting evidence and preliminary data.

3. Project's Support Structure
 - a) Supervisor's publication productivity.
 - b) Research Environment: description of research facilities, equipment and support systems which are in place for the project.
 - c) Project Budget: approved budget that supports the project.

Alberta Cancer Foundation Graduate Studentship Award

Funding Criteria

1. Proof of registration in a full time graduate program in Alberta is required.
2. For students registered in a masters or Ph.D. degree program, two years of funding will be approved for successful new applicants. With evidence of Ph.D. program registration, students may re-apply in the regular competition for an additional two year award. Re-application is subject to the same level of review as the original application.
3. All candidates must have a sponsor who has a faculty appointment with an Alberta institution. Please note that a maximum of two (2) applications per sponsor per competition is allowed.
4. The Alberta Cancer Foundation Graduate Studentship Award provides a stipend in the amount of \$20,000 per annum.
5. The top rated Graduate Studentship in the competition will be offered the Cyril M. Kay Graduate Studentship which includes, in addition to the stipend, a research allowance in the amount of \$1,500.
6. In the event a student is offered multiple awards, the student is encouraged to accept the non-Alberta Cancer Foundation award. The Alberta Cancer Foundation will provide a supplement to the external award up to the value of the Alberta Cancer Foundation award.

Review Criteria

Proposals for this funding program will be reviewed by the Alberta Cancer Foundation Training Award Review Committee. Each application is reviewed by all committee members. All applications are reviewed on the following criteria:

1. Performance: Candidate's Publication Records, Grades, and Awards
 - a) Publications/abstracts will be evaluated on the rate of productivity and quality of journal.
 - b) Candidate's transcripts will be evaluated for academic performance.
2. Research Project
 - a) Relevance to cancer.
 - b) Project Design: immediate objective; methods employed; estimated timeline; and expected outcomes/future plans.
 - c) Project Budget: approved budget that supports the project.
 - d) Summary of supporting project and preliminary data.

3. Project's Support Structure
 - a) Sponsor's publication productivity.
 - b) Laboratory Environment: location and description of designated space; shared facility and equipment availability.
4. Candidate Support
 - a) Reference letters will be evaluated on the evidence of strengths of the candidate.

Alberta Cancer Foundation Cancer Research Fellowship Award

Funding Criteria

1. Candidates must hold a Ph.D. or M.D. degree. Individuals wishing to undertake post-doctoral research training in the same research environment (e.g. same department, sponsor or co-sponsor) in which they received their Ph.D. are NOT eligible for an award.
2. All candidates must have a sponsor who has a faculty appointment with an Alberta institution. Please note that a maximum of two (2) applications per sponsor per competition is allowed.
3. Alberta Cancer Foundation Post-doctoral Fellowships and Clinical Fellowships will be awarded for a two year term upon initial approval. Fellows are eligible to apply for one (1) additional year of funding through reapplication which will be subject to the same level of review as the original application, for a maximum of three (3) years funding.
4. The Alberta Cancer Foundation Cancer Research Fellowship Award provides stipend support as follows:
 - a) For any candidate with a doctoral degree (M.D., Ph.D.) and less than 3 full years' experience at the time of implementation of their award, the stipend will be \$35,000 per annum.
 - b) For candidates with a doctorate and 3 to 5 years' experience at the time of implementation of their award, the stipend level will be \$40,000 per year.
 - c) For the candidate with an M.D. and between 5 and 7 years' post-doctoral experience, the stipend will be set at \$45,000 per year.

Please note that support will not normally be provided beyond 6 years post receipt of the Ph.D. degree, or beyond 8 years for M.D., D.D.S., D.V.M., or D. Pharm. degrees.

5. The Roche Fellowship in Translational Research will be offered to the top ranked applicant with a translational research focus.
6. On a rotating basis, the Dr. Mervin Laskin Research Fellowship, Bures T. Laskin Fellowship and the Hutchinson Fellowship will be offered.
7. In the event a fellow is offered multiple awards, the fellow is encouraged to accept the non-Alberta Cancer Foundation award. The Alberta Cancer Foundation will provide a supplement to the external award up to the value of the Alberta Cancer Foundation award.

Review Criteria

Proposals from this funding program will be reviewed by the Alberta Cancer Foundation Training Award Review Committee. Each application is reviewed by all committee members. All applications are reviewed on the following criteria:

1. Performance: Candidate's Publication Records, Grades, and Awards
 - a) Publications will be evaluated on the rate of productivity and quality of journal
 - b) Candidate's transcripts will be evaluated for academic performance.
2. Research Project
 - a) Relevance to cancer.
 - b) Project Design: immediate objective; methods employed; estimated timeline; and expected outcomes/future plans.
 - c) Project Budget: approved budget that supports the project.
 - d) Summary of supporting project and preliminary data.
3. Project's Support Structure
 - a) Sponsor's publication productivity.
 - b) Laboratory Environment: location and description of designated space; shared facility and equipment availability.
4. Candidate Support
 - a) Reference letters will be evaluated on the evidence of strengths of the candidate.

Bridge, Pilot and Limited Term Project Grants

Funding Criteria

1. Researchers may only hold one (1) Alberta Cancer Foundation or ACRI Bridge/Pilot/Limited Term grant at a time. In the event that alternate funding is received, the ACF award will be reduced where duplicate budgets exist. Duplicate funding for the same project is not allowed and must be declared.
2. Applicants must hold an academic appointment at an Alberta university.
3. The total value of the grant will not exceed \$50,000 and is non-renewable.
4. Funding categories include:

Bridge Grants:	Interim support for an existing project for which funding has been lost and further funding is being sought. It is not the intent of this funding to supplement existing grants, nor to cover expenditures or shortfalls. Term: A period not to exceed 1 year (12 months).
Pilot Project Grants:	Provides support for projects whose objective is to generate data regarding feasibility of a larger study (e.g. assessment of instrument or accrual) or whose objective is to obtain preliminary data that would support a larger or more in depth study.

Term: A period not to exceed 2 years (24 months).

Limited Term Grants: This category includes studies which do not qualify as true pilot projects but which investigate important and novel questions relevant to the problem of cancer and which can be addressed in a limited period of time. It is not a requirement that these studies lead to further research.

Term: A period not to exceed 2 years (24 months).

Review Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by the Alberta Cancer Foundation Research Funding Committee. Each application is reviewed by a minimum of two (2) internal peer review committee members and up to three external peer reviewers where required to ensure appropriate expertise coverage. The committee will consider the following criteria:

1. Relevance to Cancer

The proposed research has direct relevance to cancer research.

2. Assessment of Scientific Merit

- a) Hypothesis is clearly stated, rests on sufficient evidence, warrants testing and the presented design will adequately test it.
- b) Strengths and weaknesses of the proposal and its significance with regard to current knowledge in the field and the relevance to cancer are provided.
- c) Clear and concise description of the proposal's objectives, aims and the approach(s) to be used are provided.
- d) Objectives/aims of the study are realistic.
- e) Project will likely produce new and useful information.
- f) Investigator(s) clearly outlines the significant results that might be obtained.

3. Background Information and Literature on the Proposed Study

- a) Current knowledge relative to proposed research, relevant preliminary data and results bearing on the study by this study's investigator(s) or other investigators has been detailed.
- b) There is a logical flow from background research to proposed study.
- c) Background information and literature provided is detailed, relevant, well organized and presented concisely.
- d) Recent pertinent research literature has been sighted.

4. Project Design

Overall design of study addresses stated objectives, endpoints, summary of how the endpoints will be met and a description of statistical analysis. The project design should capture the following:

- a) Experimental procedure is specified (example: collection and or analysis of data, scientific research, demonstration with evaluation, preliminary development).
- b) Relationship and connection between the individual components are adequately justified.
- c) Proposed methodology suits the stated objectives and is adequate.
- d) Type of data sighted is specified (physical, biological, socio-economic, etc.).

- e) Sample sizes are adequate in terms of numbers, types of case, disease entities, behavioral habits, etc.
 - f) Sampling procedures are adequately described.
 - g) Measuring instruments are well known or clearly described.
 - h) Appropriate statistical methods of analysis have been included.
 - i) Proposed timeframe is adequate to perform the study.
 - j) Knowledge dissemination plan if appropriate has been provided.
5. Research Personnel
- Investigator(s):
- a) Discuss the background, competence, and productivity of the investigator(s).
 - b) Protected research time is available.
 - c) In the case of new investigator(s) discuss potential.
- Collaborator(s):
- a) Proposed study has adequate contributions from collaborating research experts.
- Support Research Personnel:
- a) Stated support personnel's skills are adequate for the proposed work.
 - b) Detailed roles and adequate time have been provided.
6. Resources and Environment
- Facility and equipment are adequate for the proposed study.
7. Budget
- a) Proposed budget reflects the true costs of the research and is within eligible limits and items.
 - b) Full justification for all line items has been provided.
 - c) Evaluate the budget in terms of its relationship with current funding available to the applicant.
 - d) Assess potential overlap in funding. Provide suggested budget changes.
8. Resubmission
- If the proposal is a resubmission from a previously declined AHS-ACB/ACRI proposal, the applicant has fully addressed the reviewers' comments/issues.

Research Equipment Grants

Funding Criteria

1. Eligibility
Applicants must hold an academic appointment. Applicants may hold more than one ACF Research Equipment grant in a given year but subsequent applications for the same year will be considered at a lower priority.
2. Funding
A maximum of \$10,000 per application will be considered. This includes a maximum of \$1,000 for renovations required to install the equipment.

Review Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by the Alberta Cancer Foundation Research Funding Committee. Each application is reviewed by a minimum of two (2) peer review committee members using the following criteria:

1. **Relevance to Cancer**
Proposed research equipment use has a direct relevance to cancer research.
2. **Assessment of Scientific Merit**
Evidence that the use of the proposed equipment supports multi-user requirements and/or is used for innovative and scientifically meritorious projects.
3. **Background Information and Literature on the Research Equipment**
 - a) Current knowledge relative to the proposed research equipment, relevant preliminary data and results bearing on the use of the equipment by this study's investigator(s) or other investigators has been detailed.
 - b) Background information and literature provided is detailed, relevant, well organized and presented concisely.
4. **Research Equipment Use**
Proposed use of the research equipment is clearly defined.
5. **Research Personnel**
Investigator(s):
 - a) Background, competency, and productivity of the investigator(s) are adequate.
Collaborations:
 - a) There is evidence of collaboration with the potential users of the equipment.
Support Research Personnel:
 - a) Stated support research personnel's skills are adequate to operate the proposed research equipment.
6. **Resources and Environment**
 - a) Letters of acknowledgement and support from the Host Institution for the housing, maintaining and servicing requirements of the proposed research equipment have been provided.
 - b) Equipment maintenance has been investigated and considered.
7. **Budget**
Applicant has provided three (3) equipment price quotations where possible.
8. **Resubmission**
If the proposal is a resubmission from a previously declined ACRI proposal, the applicant has fully addressed the reviewers' comments/issues.

FUNDING REQUESTS

Eligible Requests

All budgets for funding requests must accurately reflect true costs and be accompanied by justification for all items requested.

Salaries: Graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, research associates, technical and professional assistants are among those eligible to receive salary support from a grant. All multiple year salary requests should consider increments. Justification for salary requests must include position title and FTE. Please note that funding for stipend support of graduate students or postdoctoral fellows must show evidence that funding support for the trainee has been sought from other agencies.

Employee Benefits: Benefit coverage for grant salaried employees will be governed by their employer's policies.

Supplies: Defined as consumable laboratory supplies, purchase of animals and general office supplies.

Travel: Travel will be permitted only where it is an essential part of the study (e.g. to collect epidemiologic data or instructional workshops that pertain specifically to the proposal research work). Requests for funding to cover conference, symposium, meeting or presentation attendance will not be approved.

Equipment: Requests for the purchase of equipment integral to the research proposed will be considered.

All equipment and material purchased or collected with Alberta Cancer Foundation grant funding belongs to the Institution and not the individual Grantee. As owner, the Institution is responsible for ensuring that the equipment is used to support the research program of the Grantee and Co-Grantees for the grant term. Decisions on the use and management of the equipment should be made between the Institution and the Grantee or user group. Within the grant term, the Alberta Cancer Foundation must be notified if there is any change to the item(s) use or ownership and reserves the right to approve any changes.

The Grantee must adhere to the host Institution's policies and procedures on ownership and control of assets.

It is the expectation that the equipment will be made available to other faculty members and students for their research when not in use by the Grantee. The Institution may charge fees to these other users to recover direct costs incurred.

Funding for service contracts and/or maintenance will only be considered when applied for in conjunction with a new equipment request to the Alberta Cancer Foundation.

If Alberta Cancer Foundation funded equipment is sold after the grant term has ended, proceeds from the sale belong to the Institution and must be used for research-related purposes.

Other: The following are also allowed as part of the research project request:

- Publication Costs including article processing fees (APFs).
- Purchased Services including consultation fees, computing services, pathology reviews, sequencing, animal care, x-ray services, imaging charges and patient reimbursement for parking relating to study participation, etc.

No other items will be accepted unless the items are integral to the proposal research project and are fully supported by justification for the requirement.

Ineligible Requests

The following items are ineligible for funding:

Incurred Expenses: Funding will not be provided for expenses incurred prior to the implementation of a grant.

Overhead: No overhead or indirect cost fees may be applied for or charged against an Alberta Cancer Foundation grant or award.

Equipment: Alberta Cancer Foundation Guidelines for Research Grants & Awards – 28 February 2010 11

- Insurance for equipment must not be charged to Alberta Cancer Foundation grants. It is the Institution's responsibility to insure all funded equipment and assets;
- funding for service contracts, etc. for equipment that has already been purchased.

Salaries:

- Principal Investigators, Co-Principal Investigators, and Co-Applicants who are not research associates or trainees;
- any person holding an academic rank equivalent to Lecturer, Assistant Professor, or higher cannot be considered to be a professional assistant or research associate, and therefore may not be paid from a Alberta Cancer Foundation grant;
- employees of the federal or provincial governments and investigators based outside of Canada;
- academic fees;
- funding requests for secretarial support.

Travel: Travel expenses for conferences, symposiums, meetings or presentations.

Other:

- legal and patent fees;
- membership fees;
- any unexplained or unjustified items.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

All applications must be received by the Alberta Cancer Foundation Grants and Awards office by no later than 4:30 pm on the competition deadline date. In the event that the submission deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, submissions will be accepted the next business day by 4:30 pm.

Alberta Cancer Foundation
Grants and Awards
710, 10123 – 99 Street
Edmonton, AB T5J 3H1

Submissions from outside the Edmonton region will be accepted by courier the following business day as long as the application is sent by courier, as noted on the package, by the deadline date.

PEER REVIEW

All applications are reviewed for scientific merit by experts in the specific field of cancer research using set review and rating criteria. Competition-based applications are reviewed by a minimum of two internal peer review committee members. Up to three external peer reviewers may be engaged to ensure adequate expertise coverage.

Grant and award review committees

Alberta Cancer Foundation Grant and Award Review Committees are comprised cancer experts.

All Alberta Cancer Foundation review committee members adhere to the Alberta Health Services Conflict of Interest bylaw.

Review Committee	Competitions Reviewed
Alberta Cancer Foundation Training Award Committee	Summer Studentship Awards Graduate Studentship Awards Cancer Research Fellowship Awards
Alberta Cancer Foundation Research Funding Committee	Bridge, Pilot & Ltd. Term Project Grants Research Equipment Grants

NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

Competition results will normally be available two to three months after the competition deadline date. Notification letters, accompanied by anonymous reviewer comments (where applicable), are sent to all applicants. Lists of approved grants and awards will be posted on the funding section of the Alberta Cancer Foundation website www.albertacancer.ca.

REPORTING

Progress reports for multi-year grants and awards, as well as, final reports for all grants and awards are required. These reports must include a financial statement of expenditures from the host institution.

Report forms can be found on the Alberta Cancer Foundation web site at www.albertacancer.ca under the heading of 'Funding'.

Reports must be received prior to subsequent installments of funding being released.