

Program Guidelines: CONP Student Scholar Program



Competition: Student Scholar Program, Winter 2018
Date: October 9, 2018

The mission of the Canadian Open Neuroscience Platform (CONP) is to create a strong trans-Canada community capable of implementing a national platform for open sharing of neuroscience research data. This platform brings together many of Canada's leading basic and clinical neuroscientists, informaticians and science policy experts in an interactive network of collaborations in brain research, interdisciplinary student training, international partnership, clinical translation and open publishing.

OVERVIEW

CONP Student Scholar Program

Our Student Scholar program will support and create a new network of highly-qualified personnel who are currently pursuing an advanced degree (e.g. PhD, MS, PharmD, or JD) in order to undertake - for a period of up to one year a specific collaborative project that is directly related to building platforms, resources, datasets, analytics or disseminating neuroscience results that will contribute to the advancement of open neuroscience. Examples of potential projects include:

- a database linking key results across organisms or two or more data modalities;
- building an open science publishing or communication tool for the global dissemination of high dimensional sequencing or gene expression data;
- novel approaches to standardizing large-scale data;
- engaging multiple CONP stakeholders in an open data framework to foster the identification and timely advancement of early-stage clinical targets with therapeutic potential in neurological disorders.

Scholars supported by CONP will be encouraged to publish their work in traditional journals, as well as disseminate their work via non-traditional open science platforms relevant for their specific project, whether this be a programming workspace, arXiv, bioRxiv, a blog, or another format.

Funding Level, Term Length and Benefits

Scholarships are to be held at institutions across Canada by applicants currently based at a Canadian institution; which includes international applicants within Canada and permanent residents of Canada. Special consideration can be given to Canadian individuals who are co-supervised in a project based partly in Canada and the country of a collaborator PI. CONP will contribute \$12,500 towards the stipend of each scholar for a period of one year which will be matched by either a CONP partner institution (see "CONP Student Scholar Program") or a similar provider of matching funds for a total of \$25,000/year. These awards are not normally renewable, but awardees may apply more than once as described in the section entitled "Post-award Processes". All awards are eligible for a top-up from their supervisor or graduate unit in order to satisfy minimum stipend requirements or the respective research centre's suggested stipend.

Applicant Eligibility

The competition is open to individuals performing their research in – or collaborating with - a CONP-affiliated facility. Eligible Scholars are defined as follows: (1) The individual has completed coursework and is actively engaged in a research project (2) the scholar award will support full-time research and scholarship; (3) although all Scholars will have a home institution and home facility under the supervision of designated faculty mentors, CONP Scholars are expected to engage in substantial knowledge exchange in our CONP network. Such activities may include contributions to the open neuroscience platform (data, code, analytical tools), open communications platform, and the development of novel CONP policies and training resources.

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Externally funded students

The Applicant cannot concurrently hold a scholarship from another Canadian federal or provincial funding agency and a CONP award, with the exception of a Mitacs Accelerate award.

HOW TO APPLY

Register to the Competition

To register to the competition, each applicant needs to complete the online registration form available on the CONP website (<https://conp.ca>) by entering their information and that of their supervisor and co-supervisor. After submitting the form, each person will receive an email containing a link to upload their respective required documents.

Important Dates

Program Launch	October 9, 2018
Application Deadline	November 30, 2018
Results Announcement	December 17, 2018
Award Start	As early as January 15, 2019; no later than March 15, 2019

Research Proposal Eligibility

A 2-page research proposal must be provided with the application, proposing a specific project that enhances or facilitates open neuroscience. The proposal should clearly describe the following:

- The goal(s) of the project
- Relevant external interactions with the CONP community
- How the deliverables of the project will assist the CONP community
- How the proposed outcomes may be realized in the future.
- How your results will be disseminated in a way that supports Open Neuroscience
- Availability and accessibility of relevant data or resources
- The quality of the advisor's and/or collaborator's training environment

The Application will need to be formatted using 12-point Arial or Georgia font, single-spaced, on a letter-size page with 1" minimum margins. Use of a condensed font and spacing is not permitted. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure the submission is acceptable and received before the deadline. Those received in another format, exceeding the page limitation, incomplete, or late, will be ineligible.

I. **The Research Proposal** (maximum two pages, including references).

Using the criteria above, summarize the research to be undertaken during the award. Emphasize its novel aspects and feasibility, and its potential impact on open neuroscience in one or more areas: the concepts, paradigms, or theories advancing open science. Describe how the project builds on your former training, and how it will provide you with the skills required to achieve your career ambitions. Explain the relative contribution that you and your supervisors, or others, made to the development of the project.

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II. **Applicant's Statement** (maximum 500 words)

What do you think Open Science is? Please provide a short answer of your favourite example of this.

- What are you planning to do (**now and future**)? **How will this award enhance your training?** Provide the best possible evidence of the research creativity, productivity and quality to include major scholarly achievements, and other distinctions.
- Elaborate on the results and impact of past work on this proposal as well as in the field of research.
- Include any other information that could persuade the reviewers of your exceptional potential.

III. **Applicant's CV**

The Applicant must upload the most recent version of their CV through the online application portal.

Advisor(s) Guidelines

Working with multiple advisors and/or collaborators from non-partner institutions, industry partners, or a foundation is a core component of CONP training. Applicants must be supervised by a minimum of two advisors, where the primary advisor must hold an eligible academic appointment (full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty at the Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor level) with a significant project component at the sponsoring University. Advisors may sponsor multiple applications but their unit or laboratory may normally receive only one (1) award per annual competition. Each advisor must provide either a Canadian Common CV or a *Biosketch in the NIH format* <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>. Note that any other format in common use for funding purposes is also accepted. A (single) letter of support should be submitted by the primary advisor whereas secondary advisor(s) should submit a letter indicating their specific role in the project. The letter of support should justify the novelty and innovative nature of the project, as well as include a statement of commitment to the professional development of the applicant and detail the space, facilities and personnel support available to them. Please note that the letter provided by the secondary advisor may also serve as a letter of reference (see the *Reference and reference letter* section for more information). CONP funds may NOT be transferred to non-partner institutions, industrial partners, or foundations.

Advisor's Statement (to be completed by the primary supervisor; maximum 2 pages)

- Past contributions to HQP training. List trainees that have trained with the supervisor, and at what level (summer/undergraduate, MSc, PhD, PDF, JD, MD, etc.) during the last five years.
- Training Plan. Explain how the supervisor will acquire sufficient operating funding to sustain the candidate's project through to the end of the awarded funding term.
- Outline the opportunities that the candidate will have during the training for enrichment through interdisciplinary or inter-sectoral collaboration.
- Outline how the supervisor mentorship method and research environment will ensure the success of the trainee and the proposed project.
- Most significant contributions to research. List five supervisor publications that are considered the most significant (3 must have been published in the last 5 years). Each item should be annotated with a brief reason for the selection. Include a DOI, URL or PMID where applicable.
- Additional Information on Contributions. Include other activities or information to help the Review Committee evaluate your contributions to and impact on open science, open neuroscience and data science, including interdisciplinary work.

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- The supervisor must 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 the CONP immediately if (s) he terminates training or otherwise experiences a significant interruption. I permit CONP to share the information about me contained in this application with actual or potential funding partners, under a confidentiality agreement”.

Reference and Reference Letter

The name, phone number, institutional and email address of one individual, **excluding the primary supervisors**, who has agreed to provide a reference letter must be provided to complete the application package. This individual must be familiar with the applicant achievements as a scholar and researcher and the qualities that underlie their potential in the field of open science. The most relevant letters explain the nature of the interaction between the candidate and the referee, and provide specific examples of situations where the applicant demonstrated creativity, initiative, collaboration, and other qualities predictive of a successful scholar. They may also mention areas of knowledge, skill, or aptitude where the applicant would benefit from further training.

Certification Requirements

CONP applicants and award holders must comply with Canadian research ethics requirements and legislation for the conduct of research.

Limiting Unconscious Bias

Biases may manifest themselves in several ways and could be based on a school of thought, fundamental versus applied or translational research, areas of research or approaches (including emerging ones), size or reputation of a participating institution, age, language, personal factors or gender of the applicant.

Referees are cautioned against any judgment of an application based on such factors, and asked to constantly guard against the possibility of implicit bias influencing their assessment or the review of the application by the selection committee.

Please refer to these [tips](#) to reinforce standards of fairness, respect and equity. For additional information, please consult the [NSERC Guide for Applicants: Considering equity, diversity and inclusion in your application](#).

The completed application package, including the letters from the primary supervisor, co-supervisor and the external referee (if applicable), must be received by CONP by 11:59 pm (Eastern Standard Time) on the day of the application deadline. The application deadline for 2018 is December 1. Applications submitted after this deadline will not be accepted. Applicants will be notified by Email of the successful submission of their fellowship proposal.

CONP STUDENT SCHOLAR PROGRAM

CONP-Partners

Matching contributions towards CONP Studentships are available from the organizations indicated below. Note that CONP Scholar awards must be held at supporting CONP institutions and/or within designated provinces. Current CONP partner organizations include: The University of Calgary Hotchkiss Brain Institute, The Ontario Brain Institute, Baycrest, Western University, University of Toronto, McGill University

Non-CONP Partners

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Applicants who are able to secure a matching contribution from non-CONP pre-approved sources may also apply. If awarded, mentors must provide a signed letter as proof of availability of matching funds from the supporting organization.

APPLICATION REVIEW

Applications will be reviewed by a Review Panel including Canadian and international experts. The CONP and the Chair of the Review Panel will work to ensure conflicts of interest are resolved; and past, present, and proposed supervisors will not review applications in the competition in which their trainees are participating. The Review Panel will provide a merit score for each full application, and recommend to CONP those applications that have received a sufficiently high merit score to deserve funding.

Assessment Criteria

- Achievements and activities of candidate (30%). The track record of the candidate will be assessed based on previous awards and scholarships, publications and presentations.
- The originality and feasibility of the deliverable(s) and their contribution to the CONP community (30%). In contrast to federal or provincial fellowship competitions, more emphasis will be placed on contributions to open science, whether these be through blogs, release of open software, open publications that may not be reviewed contexts, public teaching and outreach activities, etc.
- Referees' assessment of the potential impact of the proposed activities (25%) on one or more areas related to open neurosciences such as: concepts, paradigms, or theories advancing the field of Open Neuroscience. Referees will also specifically address the capabilities of the candidate to succeed in a project that will give back to the CONP community and enhancement of HQP training.
- Can the proposed project be successfully undertaken in the proposed environment? The quality of the training environment (15%) including the supervisor's previous record of trainee supervision and research productivity, and opportunities for interdisciplinary or cross-sectoral enrichment (such as working in collaboration with industry, health professionals, community organizations, or governmental agencies).

AWARD PROCESSES

Awards will be conditionally approved by CONP in descending order of merit until the available Scholar funds at partner institutions are exhausted or all recommended candidates have received an award, whichever occurs first. CONP will notify all candidates of the outcome of the competition by Email. Should a successful applicant withdraw for any reason, the conditional award will revert to the next most meritorious applicant recommended for an award.

Post-award Processes

- The Notice of Award must be accepted within 15 working days of the date of offer or the award will be cancelled and potentially offered to the next fundable applicant.
- Successful CONP Scholars may apply again. If so, they need to state why the existing project requires extension. Normally, substantial new elements should be introduced into the proposal for an extension to be awarded.
- All CONP Scholars should acknowledge the support of CONP in all presentations and publications. Successful applicants will be required to return a concrete solution, tool or resource that is likely to be of benefit to other researchers in neuroscience. They will also be asked to contribute to local training

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activities, and complete a short progress report at the end of the year describing their contribution to CONP.

- An applicant can submit a single application per program call (competition). Provided the applicant meets the eligibility requirements, there is no limit to number of competitions to which an applicant can submit an application.

Other Details

It is the responsibility of the awarded trainee to notify CONP 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 prorated 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%.

For Further Information

- For any other information or questions about this competition and application process, please contact: scholarships@CONP.ca
- CONP will acknowledge receipt of the full application within two working days. Please contact scholarships@conp.ca if you do not receive acknowledgement.
- About CONP: <http://www.conp.ca>.