Student Scholar and Research Scholar Awards, 2021

The Canadian Open Neuroscience Platform (CONP) has a mission to create and implement a national platform for the 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 Scholar Program rationale

The CONP is pleased to announce the 2021 edition of its scholarship program to support highly-qualified personnel (HQP) in conducting 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 different organisms or two or more data modalities
- building an open-science publishing or communication tool for the global dissemination of high-dimensional sequencing of 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.

Wherever possible, Scholars supported by the CONP are expected to publish their work in traditional journals, as well as disseminate their work via non-traditional open-science platforms relevant to their specific project, whether this be a programming workspace, arXixv, bioRxiv, a blog, or another format.

Funding level, term length, and benefits

Scholarships are to be held at institutions across Canada by applicants of all nationalities currently based at a Canadian institution, which includes international applicants within Canada and permanent residents of Canada. The CONP will contribute either $6250 (graduate) or $12 500 (post-graduate) towards the stipend of each scholar for a period of 6 months and this amount will be matched by either a CONP partner institution or a similar provider of non-federal/non-provincial funds for **a total of $12 500 for 6 months (graduate) or $25 000 for 6 months (post-graduate)**. In the case where matching funds are provided by non-federal/non-provincial sources, applicants must provide a signed letter as proof of availability of these funds from the supporting organization. Statutory benefits will be paid by the host institution. All awards are eligible for a top-up from their supervisor or graduate unit.

Applicant eligibility

Candidates must hold or be currently pursuing an advanced degree, such as a Ph.D., M.Sc., Pharm.D., or J.D. and be carrying out their research in - or collaborating with - a CONP-affiliated facility. Furthermore:

1) The applicant will have received their advanced degree no more than five years prior to the start date of this scholarship.
2) The applicant's appointment must involve full-time research and scholarship.
3) The applicant must be enrolled in either a graduate or post-graduate training program (proof of trainee status is required and, therefore, university staff may not apply).

Although all Scholars will have a home institution/facility under the supervision of one or two designated faculty mentors, CONP Scholars are expected to engage in substantial knowledge exchange across the CONP network. Such activities may include contributions to the open neuroscience platform (data, code, analytical tools), open communications/publications platform, giving presentations, lectures, or tutorials, and the development of novel CONP policies and training resources.

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

HOW TO APPLY

Important Dates

Program Launch	December 23, 2020
Application Deadline	January 31, 2021
Results Announcement	Week of March 22, 2021
Award Start	As early as week of March 29, 2021 and no later than April 19, 2021

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
● Availability and accessibility of relevant data or resources
● The quality of the advisor's and/or collaborator's training environment
● Relevant interactions with the CONP community
● How the deliverables of the project will contribute to the CONP community
● How the project objectives will be realized
● How your results will be disseminated in a way that supports Open Neuroscience.

The application should 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 conforms to all requirements and is received before the deadline. Those received in another format, exceeding the page limit, incomplete, or late, will be ineligible.

The research proposal (maximum two pages, including references)
Summarize the research to be undertaken during the award. Emphasize its novel aspects, its feasibility, and its potential impact on open neuroscience in terms of concepts, paradigms, or theories advancing open science. Describe how the project builds on your previous training and how it will provide you with the skills required to pursue your career ambitions. Explain the relative contribution that you, your supervisors, and other potential collaborators made to the development of the project.

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)**? Provide evidence of research creativity, productivity and quality, including major scholarly achievements and other distinctions.

- Elaborate on the results and impact of past work on this proposal as well as in research.

- Include any other information that could persuade the reviewers of your exceptional potential.

- If the applicant is continuing post-doctoral 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 of significant benefit to their career development.

Applicant's CV
A CV must be provided as part of the online application. A Canadian Common CV (CCV) is an example of an acceptable format, though it is not an application requirement.

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 1) the primary advisor must hold a full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty position at the Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor level and 2) the majority of the research activities will take place at the primary institution. Advisors may sponsor multiple applications, but their unit or laboratory may normally receive only one award per annual competition. Each advisor must provide *a Biosketch in the NIH format*. The primary advisor should submit a letter of support that justifies the novelty and innovative nature of the project, includes a statement of commitment to the professional development of the applicant, and details the space, facilities, and personnel support available to them. The secondary advisor(s) may submit a letter of reference indicating their specific role in the project. Please note that 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 the number of trainees that have trained with the supervisor, and at what level (summer/undergraduate, M.Sc., Ph.D., PDF, J.D., M.D., etc.) during the last five years.

- Training Plan: explain how the supervisor will acquire sufficient operating funds to sustain the candidate's project through to the end of the CONP scholarship term.

- Outline the opportunities the candidate will have during their training for enrichment through interdisciplinary or inter-sectoral collaboration.

- Outline how the supervisor's mentorship method and research environment will contribute to the success of the trainee and the proposed project.

- Most significant contributions to research: list five of the primary supervisor's 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 so that reviewers can more easily access them.

- 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.

- When submitting to the Application website (link obtained upon candidate registration), 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 the CONP to share the information about me contained in this application with actual or potential funding partners, under a confidentiality agreement".

References and reference letters

The names, phone numbers, institutional and email addresses of one (in the case of graduate applicants) or two individuals (in the case of post-graduate applicants), *excluding the primary supervisor(s)*, who have agreed to provide reference letters are required. These individuals must provide one-page reference letters in support of the applicant showing they are familiar with the applicant's achievements as a scholar and researcher and the qualities that underlie their potential in the field of open science. At least one letter should be from a previous research supervisor, unless an explanation is provided as to why not. 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 or skill to which the proposed project experience would add.

Certification Requirements

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

- *If your research involves humans*, you must provide your institution's administration with appropriate certification. All projects involving human data or biological samples (body parts, products, tissues, cells, or genetic material from a living or dead person) or administrative, scientific, or descriptive data from human subjects require the approval of the research ethics board of the principal applicant's institution or a research ethics board recognized by this institution. The recruitment of human participants is also strictly subject to approval from a research ethics board.
- *If your research involves the use of animals, animal products, or tissues*, you must provide your institution with certification from the animal care committee of the institution at which the experimental procedures will be carried out in accordance with the principles outlined in the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) guide.

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 are 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 letters from external referees, must be received by CONP by 11:59 PM (Eastern Standard Time) on the 31st of January, 2021. Applicants will be notified of the result by Email.

MATCHING FUNDS

<u>CONP-Partners</u>
Matching contributions towards CONP Scholars are available from these organizations:

The University of Calgary Hotchkiss Brain Institute
University of British Columbia-Djavad Mowahfigian Centre for Brain Health
Western University
McGill University
Laval University

<u>Non-CONP Partners</u>
Applicants able to secure a matching contribution from non-federal and non-provincial sources may also apply. Applicants 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 for a competition in which their trainees are participating. The Review Panel will provide a merit score for each full application and recommend those receiving a sufficiently high score to the CONP.

Assessment Criteria
- Achievements and activities of the candidate (30%): The track record of the candidate will be assessed based on previous awards, scholarships, publications, presentations, and other scholarly output.
- 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, such as the release of open software, open publications that may not have traditional review processes, public teaching and outreach activities, blogs, etc.
- Potential impact (25%): The proposed activities will be assessed for impact on concepts, paradigms, or theories advancing the field of Open Neuroscience. Referees will also specifically address the capability of the candidate to succeed in a project that will contribute to the CONP community and the enhancement of HQP training.
- Project feasibility in the proposed environment (15%): This describes the quality of the training environment, 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 the CONP in descending order of merit until the available Scholar funds are exhausted or all recommended candidates have received an award. The 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 or declined within 15 working days of the date of offer or the award will be cancelled and potentially offered to the next fundable applicant.

- Successful applicants must begin their award within 1 month of the date of offer. For HQP who do not yet hold an advanced degree, awards will only begin after proof is provided that the recipient has completed all the requirements of the graduate-level program, including oral thesis examination.

- Awards may not be transferred to other scholars at the same institution but may be transferred to another institution for the same scholar for the purpose of completing the proposed work, depending upon availability of matched funds.

- All CONP Scholars must acknowledge the support of the CONP in all presentations and publications. Successful applicants will be required to return a concrete solution, tool, or resource that is likely to benefit other researchers in neuroscience. They will also be asked to contribute to local training activities and the development of CONP training resources, as well as complete a short progress report at the end of their award describing their contribution to the CONP.

- An applicant can submit a single application per competition. Provided the applicant meets the eligibility requirements, there is no limit to the number of competitions to which they can apply.

Other Details
It is the responsibility of the awardee to notify the CONP of any change in status or institution.

For Further Information
- For any other information about this competition and its application process, please contact us at scholarships@conp.ca.

- The CONP will acknowledge receipt of the full application within two working days. Please contact us at scholarships@conp.ca if you do not receive acknowledgement.

- For more information about the CONP, please visit http://www.conp.ca/.