



Program Guidelines

SCN will provide up to \$300,000 for early-career researchers (within the first five years of an initial academic appointment) to develop a research program with a regenerative medicine focus.

Timeline:

- Letter of Intent submissions open on Wednesday, September 1, 2021.
- Letter of Intent submission deadline is Wednesday, September 22, 2021, at 11:59 p.m. Pacific.
- Full application submission will be opened to eligible LOI submitters on Friday, September 24, 2021.
- Full application submission deadline is Wednesday, December 1, 2021, at 11:59 p.m. Pacific.

The Letter of Intent and full application must be submitted using the ProposalCentral online submission platform.

Upon successful submission of an LOI and/or full application, a confirmation message will appear on the screen within ProposalCentral and a confirmation email from pcsupport@altum.com will be sent to the applicant. Add pcsupport@altum.com to the safe senders list to ensure receipt of submission confirmation.

If a confirmation email is NOT received from ProposalCentral within 48 hours of submission it is the responsibility of the lead applicant to contact SCN and ensure that the application package has been received by SCN.

Funding is dependent on the completion of SCN's 2022-25 contribution agreement with the Government of Canada.

About the Stem Cell Network:

Celebrating 20 years, the Stem Cell Network (SCN) is a national non-profit that supports stem cell and regenerative medicine research, training the next generation of highly qualified personnel, and delivering outreach activities across Canada. SCN's goal is to advance science from the lab to the clinic for the benefit of Canadians. SCN has been supported by the Government of Canada since inception in 2001. This strategic funding, valued at \$118M, has benefitted approximately 200 world-class research groups and 4,100 trainees and has catalyzed 24 clinical trials. Powering research for better health.

The Early Career Researcher Jump Start Awards Program:

SCN is pleased to invite proposals under the Early Career Researcher (ECR) Jump Start Awards Program. Funding through this program will support early-career researchers (i.e. researchers within the first five years of an initial academic appointment) from the fields of health, bio-engineering and social sciences who are seeking to establish a regenerative medicine research program. To be eligible for funding, proposed research projects must have a regenerative medicine focus and the potential to move along a translational pathway.

Research activities can include but are not limited to: development of new regenerative medicine models; expression and epigenetic studies to understand behavior of stem and progenitor cells for health or disease; generation of unique datasets; proof-of-principle experiments; identification and characterization of compounds/drugs that target stem cell fate and function with the aim to develop novel therapeutic approaches. In addition, projects that have a bio- or tissue-engineering focus and are relevant to regenerative medicine are in-scope for this program.

For ECRs wishing to pursue research related to the ethical, legal and social implications of regenerative medicine, work may include but is not limited to: regulatory modernization; legal and policy challenges of emerging technologies; ethical governance; market access pathways; reimbursement; health system adoption; patient knowledge and engagement; privacy; data collection and usage; public education or awareness for consumers.

Early Career Researcher Jump Start Awards are for up to \$300,000 each for 34 months (award term is April 1, 2022 to January 31, 2025). Full applications will require a strategic plan and a budget justification that corresponds with the plan. In addition, a separate detailed budget for the requested SCN funding is required. Partnerships with companies/industry, not-for-profit organizations, foundations, charities, research institutions/hospitals/universities, and government bodies are a valuable component of project proposals. Partnerships and leveraged funding (in-kind and/or cash) will increase the application's ranking. In addition, applications that include collaborations with other Canadian-based investigators and have multidisciplinary expertise will

also be ranked more highly. Those applications that are reflective of EDI considerations through hiring/team composition, training and scientific methodologies will also be given a higher ranking.

Eligible applications will be reviewed through an expert peer review process, comprised mainly of international reviewers. Projects will then be considered for strategic fit with SCN's mandate by the [Research Management Committee](#) (RMC), and funding decisions will be taken by the Board based on RMC recommendations. Successful applicants will provide the SCN office with project reports as requested and will be regularly monitored by SCN's RMC to ensure appropriate progress is being made.

Specific Criteria:

- Applicants must be early career researchers (ECRs) from the health, bio-engineering and social sciences who are within the first 5 years (60 months) of an initial academic appointment. Please note that SCN follows Tri-Council guidelines regarding ECR status, which currently provide a COVID-19 pandemic related [one-year extension](#) to applicants who held ECR status as of March 1, 2020, or who secured their first academic appointment after this date.
- Projects can focus on developmental or high-risk, innovative regenerative medicine research that has the potential to be translated in the coming years. Please note: applications must clearly articulate a translational pathway for the research.
- Projects can also focus on the policy, regulatory or ethical issues relevant to regenerative medicine research.
- Innovative research activities can include but are not limited to: development of new regenerative medicine models; expression and epigenetic studies to understand behavior of stem and progenitor cells for health or disease; generation of unique datasets; proof-of-principle experiments; identification and characterization of compounds/drugs that target stem cell fate and function with the aim to develop novel therapeutic approaches. In addition, projects that have a bio- or tissue-engineering focus and are relevant to regenerative medicine are in-scope for this program.

General Requirements:

- Projects must be relevant to regenerative medicine and be translational in nature; regenerative medicine is the branch of medicine that develops methods to regrow, repair or replace damaged or diseased cells, organs or tissues. Regenerative medicine includes the generation and use of therapeutic stem cells, tissue engineering, and the production of artificial organs. *Research applications that are focused on cancer must be regenerative in nature and/or use stem cells for addressing the proposed problem.*

- Projects must demonstrate research excellence, innovation and the potential for translation. International collaboration is also encouraged to strengthen the research activity and potential global impact.
- Projects should integrate sex and gender considerations into the research, when appropriate.
- Projects should include an explanation of how an inclusive and diverse culture will be fostered and maintained within the team.
- Project milestones and deliverables must be realistic and reasonable based on the supporting budget.
- An education plan that ensures the development and training of highly qualified personnel (HQP; i.e. a graduate student, post-doc, research associate, and/or technician) must be submitted with funding applications.
- Projects must include a knowledge translation plan and describe how the research will be made accessible to knowledge users outside of academia. Please note it is expected that the [Tri-Council Open Access Policy](#) will be followed to ensure research results are made publicly accessible.
- Projects must include a data management plan, if relevant. The [Tri-Agency Research Data Management Policy](#) should be used as a guide for developing this plan.
- Each project must be distinct from any other application(s) submitted to SCN to avoid 'double dipping' across SCN's research funding programs.
- An applicant is limited to act as Lead Investigator on only one LOI submission and project application per program.
- Investigators requesting funds from SCN must be based at a Tri-Council eligible institution and must themselves be eligible to receive Tri-Council funding.
- In order to receive funding, successful applicants must execute a standard SCN Agreement, and take on all of the associated rights and obligations. These obligations include the requirement to provide SCN office with project reports as requested, and recognition of SCN as a funder.

Submission process for the Early Career Researcher Jump Start Awards program:

A Letter of Intent (LOI) submission is mandatory for this program. LOIs will be used to identify peer review requirements, gauge the level of interest in SCN's programs, and ensure projects fall within SCN's regenerative medicine mandate. Eligible LOIs will be invited to submit a full application on Friday, September 24, 2021.

LOI and full application-related questions should be addressed to Rebecca Cadwalader (rcadwalader@stemcellnetwork.ca) or Jon Draper (jdraper@stemcellnetwork.ca).