

# Stem Cell Network-MS Canada: Postdoctoral Fellowship in Regenerative Medicine for Multiple Sclerosis

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## A. General Information

Stem Cell Network-MS Canada: Postdoctoral Fellowship in Regenerative Medicine for Multiple Sclerosis	
Competition Launch Date	June 2023
Application Deadline	August 15, 2023, 17:00 ET
Award Notification Date	October 2023
Award Start Date	January 1, 2024 – March 1, 2024 (Award must be started on or before March 1, 2024)
Value	Up to \$100,000 CAD (\$50,000 per year for two years)
Contact	<a href="mailto:earnold@stemcellnetwork.ca">earnold@stemcellnetwork.ca</a> <a href="mailto:pamela.kanellis@mscanada.ca">pamela.kanellis@mscanada.ca</a>

### A.1 Objective

Through the Stem Cell Network-MS Canada: Postdoctoral Fellowship in Regenerative Medicine for Multiple Sclerosis, SCN and MS Canada are committing up to \$100,000 CAD to attract new qualified, promising post-doctoral scientists entering their professional career at the intersection of stem cells, regenerative medicine, and multiple sclerosis (MS).

### A.2 Application Submission Deadline

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that a completed application is submitted via ProposalCentral no later than August 15, 2023, 17:00 Eastern Time (EST). Any applications attempted or submitted after the deadline will NOT be accepted. There will be no appeal process for late submissions.

### A.3 Incomplete/Unacceptable Applications

All submissions are considered final. No alterations or changes will be accepted. Any incomplete applications, as noted in this guideline document, will not be admissible to the competition.

### A.4 Competition Results

Official notification of the competition outcomes will be sent to all applicants in October 2023, with a public announcement posted at a later date on the SCN and MS Canada websites.

### A.5 Non-Employee Status

The granting of an award is deemed to establish neither an employer-employee relationship nor a partnership between the funders and the recipients.



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## A.6 Communicating Research to the Public and Donors

Successful applicants need to be aware that the title of their research program and the lay summary could be placed into the public domain or included in the funders' publications without notification. Applicants are cautioned not to disclose information that could endanger a proprietary position in these sections.

As successful applicants are well-positioned to explain the role of research in reducing the burden of MS, they may be asked by SCN and MS Canada to communicate the importance of research to donors and the public, via interviews and meetings with donors. It is expected that during the Fellowship period, the PDF will engage in knowledge mobilization activities, including engaging with patient communities or attending SCN's Till and McCulloch Meetings, and be available to support either MS Canada or SCN in communication and outreach initiatives.

## A.7 Ethical Requirements

By signing and submitting applications to this competition, applicants undertake the responsibility to ensure any experimentation will be acceptable to the institution on ethical grounds and comply with the following guidelines and host institution research policies, as applicable:

- Tri-Council Policy Statement: [Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#)
- [Good Clinical Practice \(GCP\)](#)
- [Good Laboratory Practice \(GLP\)](#)
- In the case of laboratory animal experimentation, the guiding principles and standards that have been enunciated by the [Canadian Council on Animal Care](#)
- Guidelines and standards for biological and chemical hazards as outlined in the Public Health Agency/Canadian Food Inspection Agency's [Canadian Biosafety Standards and Guidelines](#).
- Any research involving human pluripotent stem cells must adhere to the [CIHR-ICRH Guidelines for Human Pluripotent Stem Cell Research](#).
- [TCPS2 \(2018\) – Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples of Canada](#)

## A.8 Sex- and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (SGBA+) & Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

The funders are committed to advancing SGBA+ and EDI towards enhancing the specificity, representativeness, rigour and transparency of research and sustaining positive change in the regenerative medicine and multiple sclerosis research ecosystems. The applicants are therefore encouraged to become familiar with the principles of SGBA+ and EDI, with the goal of integrating such principles, if applicable, into future research practice and design.

- [Government of Canada Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\)](#)



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- [Guide on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology](#)
- [CIHR Research Training Module: Sex and Gender Considerations](#)
- [Women's College Hospital Sex-Specific Analyses and Reporting in Clinical Trials](#)
- [TCPS2 \(2018\) – Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples of Canada](#)

### A.9 Patent Rights

The funders make no intellectual property (IP) claims on the outputs of the funded research, and acknowledge ownership lies with the institution receiving the funds, and the institution funded is free to divest it on its own terms. However, institutions of funded recipients are expected to have appropriate policies in place to protect the intellectual property of the outputs that arise from the funded research.

### A.10 Open Science and Open Access to Research Outputs Policy

All award recipients are required to make their research outputs and findings publicly available as soon as possible but no later than 12 months after project completion. To meet this requirement, applicants should become familiar with the guiding principles that enable sharing data, information, tools and resources, and that respect Indigenous data governance and sovereignty.

- [Open Science](#) is the practice of making scientific inputs, outputs and processes freely available to all with minimal restrictions. Open Science is enabled by people, technology, and infrastructure. It is practiced in full respect of privacy, security, ethical considerations, and appropriate intellectual property protection. To learn more about Open Science, applicants are encouraged to review the Federal Government's [Roadmap for Open Science](#).
- [FAIR: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable](#) are guiding principles to inform data management and stewardship of digital assets.
- [CARE \(Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility and Ethics\)](#) are guiding principles for Indigenous Data Governance.
- First Nations Principles of [OCAP® \(Ownership, Control, Access and Possession\)](#) guide how First Nations' data should be collected, protected, used and shared.
- [ClinicalTrials.gov](#) is a database of privately and publicly-funded clinical trials around the world.
- [PROSPERO](#) is an international prospective register of protocols.

Research outputs may include peer-reviewed journal publications, research data, and the results of clinical trials that will not be published in peer-reviewed journals. Research findings may be shared in ways that are culturally relevant and in formats that are functional, useful and practical to distinct needs of Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) communities. Indigenous Peoples share common

histories and concepts; however, each community has specific methods for knowledge synthesis, translation, and exchange. For Indigenous knowledge mobilization to be successful, [meaningful and culturally safe](#), engagement with Indigenous communities is encouraged as Indigenous communities are best positioned to guide researchers towards the co-development knowledge mobilization practices that work best for their communities.

### A.11 Research Integrity Policy

SCN and MS Canada follow the guidelines set out in the [Tri-Agency Policy Framework for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#). Any allegations of scientific misconduct, including such actions as fabrication, falsification, destruction of research records, plagiarism, redundant publications or self-plagiarism, invalid authorship, inadequate acknowledgement, or mismanagement of Conflict of Interest, must be submitted to SCN and MS Canada in writing and policies and procedures will be followed as set out in the Tri-Agency Policy Framework.

### A.12 Acknowledging Publications

SCN and MS Canada must be notified in advance of the publication date of any major publications arising from the funded research by email. Recipients must acknowledge the support of SCN and MS Canada in all scientific communications and press releases related to their award with the following wording:

“This work was supported by the Stem Cell Network-MS Canada: Postdoctoral Fellowship in Regenerative Medicine for Multiple Sclerosis jointly awarded by the Canadian Stem Cell Network and MS Canada.”

## B. Specific Program Information

### B.1 Eligibility

#### **Applicant**

This opportunity is open to applicants based in Canada or internationally. There are no citizenship requirements for this program. Applicants must be legally permitted to reside and work in Canada to take up the award. For international applicants, if a work permit is required, the successful candidate must seek an expedited process to obtain their permit and relocate no later than March 1, 2024, where possible. Neither SCN nor MS Canada will provide assistance with the immigration process for international applicants. To assure continued excellence and diversity among applicants and awardees, SCN and MS Canada welcome applications from all qualified individuals and encourage applications from persons with disabilities or members of minority groups underrepresented in the sciences.

This Fellowship is intended for those at a relatively early stage of their post-doctoral career. Ordinarily, the most recent doctoral degree (PhD, MD, DMD, DVM, or equivalent) will have been received no more than five years before the application is submitted. The doctoral degree (MD, DMD, DVM, PhD, or equivalent) must have been received at least two months prior to the commencement of the fellowship.

SCN and MS Canada are sensitive to personal and COVID-related matters that impact career trajectories. Applicants who have taken leave from their career (e.g. parenting of a child, childbirth, long-term care of a parent/spouse/child/dependent, personal health issues), or experienced a delay in their training due to COVID shutdowns that put them outside of the eligibility time frame for the award mechanism should feel free to reach out ahead of their application submission. SCN and MS Canada aim to be flexible and adjust these time frames if necessary and appropriate.

### **Location**

Individuals must take up their award with a Principal Investigator at a Canadian institution, both of which meet the [eligibility criteria](#) for Tri-Agency funding.

### **B.2 Tenure**

- The Fellowship term is two years (24 months).
- The recipient or supervisor will notify the funders of any causes (parental leave, medical leave, personal leave, vacation time, etc.) necessitating absence from work exceeding thirty successive days. Continuation of the award will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the funding partners. Relevant institutional policies will also apply.
- The term of the award will include reasonable holiday time according to the arrangement with the recipient's supervisor and institution.
- Recipients may engage in and receive remuneration for departmental activities (e.g., teaching) that contribute to their development as researchers. It is expected that these activities would not impinge upon the time dedicated to the proposed research project.

### **B.3 Award Amount**

The award is C\$50,000 per year, of which 100% will go towards stipend costs.

- This multi-year stipend may be used **ONLY** for salary support for the recipient. No part of this stipend is to be used to support other direct or indirect costs associated with any research programs or operating grants.
- SCN will also provide the Fellow with a registration fee and travel support to attend SCN's annual scientific meeting, the Till & McCulloch Meetings (TMM), at least once during the award

term. This is an additional, non-transferrable, value of up to \$3000.00. SCN will coordinate this support directly with the Fellow.

- The Fellow will be eligible to participate in the TMM abstract and poster competitions. The Fellow will also be eligible to apply for other training opportunities offered by SCN or MS Canada during the duration of the Fellowship, including technical skills, industry prep, clinical translation and EDI training.
- Neither SCN nor MS Canada will provide a cost of living supplement for the PDF during their fellowship, nor expenses related to relocation.
- Please contact SCN with specific inquiries about allowable costs.

#### **B.4 Multiple Personnel Awards**

In the event that the PDF secures another stipend award (e.g., a CIHR Fellowship), SCN and MS Canada must be immediately notified by the supervising principal investigator (“PI”) or PDF. SCN and MS Canada will then discuss on a case-by-case basis how to proceed; however, both SCN and MS Canada would each retain the right to terminate the fellowship award.

#### **B.5 Transfer of Award**

Personnel Awards may not be assigned or transferred to another individual under any circumstances. Recipients of Personnel Awards are not permitted to change supervisors, programs or institutions while receiving the award. If a PDF drops out of the program or moves to a new institution for any reason, they must notify SCN and MS Canada immediately, who will then jointly decide whether the remaining funds are returned to SCN and MS Canada.

#### **B.6 Award Termination**

If for any reason the work cannot be continued, the award will be closed. Any remaining funds will be frozen and cannot be reallocated to other uses. The remaining funds must then be returned to SCN/MS Canada.

#### **B.7 Eligible Research Areas**

Eligible projects research projects must utilize stem cells and/or regenerative medicine approaches for studying multiple sclerosis mechanisms or treatments.

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.





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## B.8 How to Apply

To start your application, create/login to your [ProposalCentral](#) account, click on the Grant Opportunities button at the top right-hand corner, and enter “Stem Cell Network” or “MS Canada” in the search box. You must apply to the program called “Stem Cell Network-MS Canada: Postdoctoral Fellowship in Regenerative Medicine for Multiple Sclerosis”.

Applicants must submit a full application to Stem Cell Network via SCN’s ProposalCentral application portal by the application deadline of August 15, 2023 at 17:00 EST. An application will consist of:

- Completed application form in ProposalCentral, which will include completion of a written section:
  - Applicant expertise (up to 3500 characters)
  - Research contributions and impacts (up to 3500 characters)
  - Training, mentorship, and career development plan (up to 5000 characters)
  - Research project title
  - Research proposal and justification (max one page)
  - Research project lay summary (max 1500 characters)
  - Impact Goal (select one)
    - Advance Treatment and Care: Research that aims to advance treatment and care for people affected by MS (e.g., symptom management; diagnosis; developing new treatments and understanding their mechanisms, understanding and evaluating interventions to address mental health, wellness/self-care, and rehabilitation in people living with MS; innovations in the provision of health services, clinical care practices and models of care; and advances in healthcare delivery/policy).
    - Enhance Well-being: Research that aims to understand how to enhance the well-being of people affected by MS within communities (e.g., understanding the social determinants of health; assessing the health economics/cost benefit analysis on MS interventions and support structures and systems; evaluation of community-based programs; and advances in health systems research/policy).
    - Understand and Halt Disease Progression: Research that aims to understand the etiology and mechanisms of MS, disease progression, progressive MS, and repair (e.g., myelin biology, neurobiology, neurophysiology, immunology, neuropathology, and imaging).
    - Prevent MS: Research that aims to prevent MS (e.g., identifying risk factors for disease, effective interventions for prevention, health economic/cost benefit analysis on prevention, and defining highest risk populations).
  - Priority Research Area (select one)
    - Cause and risk factors of MS
    - Cognition



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- Diagnosis
  - Life-modifying therapies
  - Progression/progressive MS
  - Repair/remyelination
- Canadian Common CV, in CIHR academic format.
- Up to three letters of support (minimum two, maximum three) must be submitted that assess the applicant's scientific abilities and contributions, as well as the potential of the applicant.

Applicants may apply in English or French. For technical assistance with the ProposalCentral portal, contact Customer Support at 800 875 2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada), +1 703 964 5840 (Direct Dial International) or by e-mail at [pcsupport@altum.com](mailto:pcsupport@altum.com).

### B.9 Application Attachments

Applicants must complete and submit all attachments listed below in the Upload CV and Research Proposal” section of the application form.

- Applicant Canadian Common CV, in CIHR Academic Format
- Proposed Supervisor Canadian Common CV, in CIHR Academic Format
- Research proposal: Please upload a single PDF document of your research proposal and references in section 7. A maximum of one page is allocated for the description of your research proposal. Applicants should detail the rationale, objective(s), methodological approach, timeline and significance/impact of their proposed research. No tables or figures are allowed. Please use 12-point Calibri or Times New Roman font, single-spaced format. Margins must be no less than ½”. There is no page limit for references that are directly relevant to the project proposal; please append the references at the end of the 1-page research proposal PDF file.

### B.10 Letters of Reference

Up to three letters of support (minimum two, maximum three) must be submitted that assess the applicant's scientific abilities and contributions, as well as the potential of the applicant. At least one letter of support should come from the prospective PDF supervisor to confirm their intent on hosting the PDF and outlining the benefits to their research program. Additional letter(s) of support should come from the individual(s) under whom the applicant has trained, who are familiar with the candidate's characteristics and abilities and/or who have had a good opportunity to assess their potential for research. The referees must upload their reference letters to ProposalCentral by the application deadline.

### B.11 Evaluation Criteria

The application components, noted below, will be reviewed by the Selection Committee, and an overall score for each applicant will be calculated. The relative weight of each component is detailed below.

Candidate expertise and CV (weighting: 15%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expertise related to the proposed research project</li> <li>• Recognitions, scholarships and awards</li> <li>• Employment history</li> <li>• Research funding history</li> <li>• Activities (supervisory, mentoring, community and volunteer, knowledge and technology transfer, international collaboration)</li> </ul>
Contributions and research impacts (weighting: 15%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of major research contributions</li> <li>• Presentations at conferences</li> <li>• Publications relevant to the areas of stem cells, regenerative medicine, and multiple sclerosis</li> </ul>
Training, mentorship, and career development plan (weighting: 25%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear role of applicant's advisory committee (supervisor and/or co-supervisors) in mentoring the applicant</li> <li>• Specific knowledge and skills that the supervisor expects the applicant will acquire</li> <li>• Alignment of academic training environment with the applicant's proposed research</li> <li>• Quality of resources, programs, technologies available for the applicant's research and training</li> <li>• Well-defined career goals</li> <li>• The candidate describes future plans to contribute to research in stem cells, regenerative medicine, and multiple sclerosis</li> <li>• Potential impact of fellowship in assisting the candidate in achieving their goals</li> </ul>
Research Proposal (weighting: 25%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity of proposed research</li> <li>• Hypothesis driven and sound rationale</li> <li>• Well-defined goals and objectives</li> <li>• Appropriate approaches and methodologies to answer the research questions</li> <li>• Realistic timelines for completing the proposed research</li> <li>• Impact of proposed research to regenerative medicine and/or multiple-sclerosis related knowledge, healthcare, health services or health outcomes</li> <li>• Clear research milestones over the course of the award</li> </ul>

Letter(s) of support (weighting: 20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong personal reference outlining the candidate's characteristics, track record and abilities that demonstrate their potential for carrying out a successful research project</li> <li>• Alignment of prospective PDF supervisor with the applicant's proposed research and clear benefits to the supervisor's research program as a whole</li> </ul>
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Awards will be granted in a top-down rank, according to the following grading scheme. The overall score for each applicant will be ranked from Outstanding (90-100%) to Good (70%). Overall scores of less than 70% are not eligible for funding.

### B.12 Selection Committee

Peer review of the applications will be performed by a joint committee composed of members from SCN's Training and Education Committee (TEC) and representatives appointed by MS Canada. All members must agree to respect the privacy, confidentiality and conflict of interest rules of the funders.

### B.13 Notification of Results and Award Commencement

All applicants will be notified of the results in October, 2023. The award is scheduled to start between January 1, 2024 and no later than March 1, 2024.

### B.14 Reporting: Financial, Progress and Final Reports

The recipient's institution is required to submit (a) an annual consolidated Financial Report for the reporting period for the recipient, (b) an annual Progress Report for the recipient, and c) a final report for the recipient. The annual Finance and Progress Reports are to be received by SCN and MS Canada no later than 30 days after the end of each funding year (e.g., if award start date is January 1, 2024, the Financial and Progress Reports would be due February 1, 2025). Satisfactory Financial and Progress Reports are required; the recipient can expect to receive communication from SCN and MS Canada within sixty business days if any issues of concern are identified with a submitted annual report. A Final Report must also be submitted by the institution to SCN and MS Canada no later than one month after completion/termination of the award (e.g., for awards ending December 31, 2025, the final report would be due January 30, 2026). Recipients will be sent links to the report templates within the first year of award funding.

### B.15 Contact Information

For any questions or concerns, the preferred form of communication is email.

Email: at [pamela.kanellis@mscanada.ca](mailto:pamela.kanellis@mscanada.ca); [earnold@stemcellnetwork.ca](mailto:earnold@stemcellnetwork.ca)

Website: <https://mscanada.ca/>; <https://www.stemcellnetwork.ca>

Please note these email accounts are only monitored from 9am-5pm EST, Monday to Friday.

## **B.16 About the Funders**

### **MS Canada**

MS Canada fosters meaningful connections both within the MS community, and between the MS community and research, programs, resources, and services. As of 2023, MS Canada amalgamates two previously known entities, the MS Society of Canada and the MS Scientific Research Foundation, continuing its work toward the same vision of a world free of multiple sclerosis. The MS community is at the centre of MS Canada. For 75 years we have been relentless in our fight, continuously funding research to expand the current MS knowledge base. We also advocate for people living with MS, asking the government to remove barriers and improve policies that impact their everyday lives. For more information visit [mscanada.ca](https://mscanada.ca).

### **Stem Cell Network**

The Stem Cell Network (SCN) is a Canadian not-for-profit that supports stem cell and regenerative medicine research; training the next generation of highly qualified personnel; and knowledge mobilization and transfer of stem cell and regenerative medicine research. From the lab to the clinic, SCN's goal is to power life-saving therapies and technologies through regenerative medicine research for the benefit of all. Created in 2001, with support from the Government of Canada, the Network has grown from a few dozen labs to more than 230 world-class research groups, supporting over 225 research projects and more than 25 clinical trials. Since its inception, over 20 biotech companies have been catalyzed or enhanced and more than 5,000 highly qualified personnel have been trained. In 2021, the Government of Canada demonstrated its continuing trust and support in SCN with an investment of \$45 million for the 2022–2025 period.