



**Stem Cell
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Questions & Answers: SCN Stipend Top-Up

What is the 'SCN Stipend Top-Up'?

On September 12, 2023, the Stem Cell Network announced that it will provide a one-time Stipend Top-Up for Master's, Doctoral students and Post-Doctoral Fellows actively working on SCN-funded projects and clinical trials for the 2022-2025 funding period.

What exactly is a stipend? How is a stipend defined?

A stipend is a form of compensation paid to help cover basic costs while trainees receive career training.

How much is the SCN Stipend Top-Up?

Master's and Doctoral students, and Post-Doctoral Fellows actively working on SCN-funded projects and clinical trials will receive a one-time top-up to their stipends in the amounts of \$4.5K, \$8K and \$12K respectively. In total SCN will allocate \$1 Million to trainees across Canada.

Who is the Stipend Top-Up for? And how does SCN define "a trainee" in this case?

For the Stipend Top-Up, trainees are defined as Master's and Doctoral students, and Post-Doctoral Fellows actively working on SCN-funded projects and clinical trials for the 2022-2025 funding period.



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I'm a trainee in the Network. How do I know if I qualify for the Stipend Top-Up?

All Principal Investigators (PIs) on active SCN-funded projects and clinical trials for the 2022-2025 funding period were notified via email on September 12, 2023 of the Stipend Top-Up and the trainees who qualify on their projects. As a starting point, trainees should speak with their PIs. If further clarification is needed, PIs can contact Shannon Sethuram, Vice President of Corporate Services at ssethuram@stemcellnetwork.ca.

Does the amount I'm getting align with the percentage of time I work on the SCN research project?

Yes. If a trainee is working 50% or more on an SCN-funded project or clinical trial, they will be eligible for *the full value* of the Stipend Top-Up. If they are working less than 50%, they will receive *half the value* of the Stipend Top-Up.

How do I access the Stipend Top-Up? When will I be able to receive the additional funds?

Principal Investigators must first complete the necessary paperwork and return it to SCN by the deadline of October 13, 2023. SCN will then issue the Stipend Top-Up funds directly to the institution. Once the forms have been submitted to SCN and validated, SCN will release the funds to the relevant institution. It is up to the respective institution to release the funding to trainees in a timely manner.



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I am not currently working on an SCN project, am I still eligible?

No. Only trainees – Master’s and Doctoral students and Post-Doctoral Fellows – actively working and listed on SCN-funded projects and clinical trials for the 2022–2025 funding period qualify for the SCN Stipend Top-Up.

As a trainee, do I need to fill out an application to receive the funds?

It is the responsibility of PIs to ensure the completion of paperwork, including the Acceptance of Stipend Top-Up Form. This form must be signed by trainees who are eligible for the one-time Stipend Top-Up.

PIs must complete the necessary paperwork and return it to SCN by the deadline of October 13, 2023. SCN will then issue the Stipend Top-Up funds directly to the institution.

I am a Research Associate or Technician working on an SCN-funded project. Am I eligible for this top-up?

Unfortunately, Research Associates and Technicians are not eligible for the SCN Stipend Top-Up as their salaries are governed by other agreements.

Is this a salary increase?

No, this is not a salary increase. Rather, this is a one-time Stipend Top-Up for Master’s and Doctoral students, and Post-Doctoral Fellows actively working on SCN-funded projects and clinical trials for the 2022–2025 funding period.

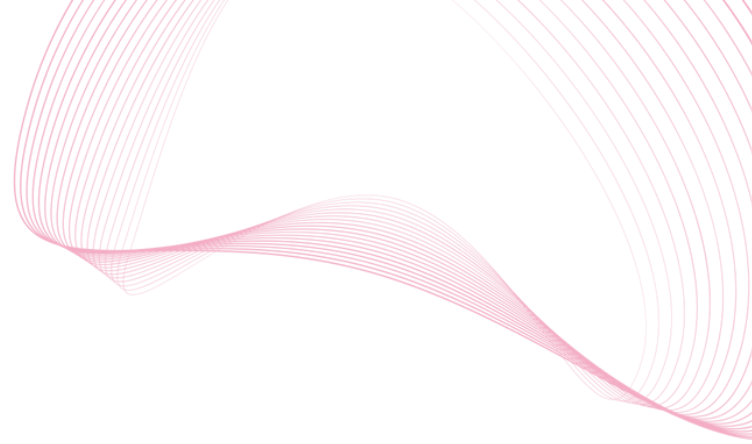


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Will I be taxed on this Stipend Top-Up?

Yes, this Stipend Top-Up is considered taxable income, but it is not a salary increase. If you have questions, speak with the finance office at your institution.

Can I decline the Stipend Top-Up if it affects other benefits I might be getting?

Yes. SCN understands that acceptance of the Stipend Top-Up may affect tax brackets and/or social support benefits trainees may be receiving. If you have questions, speak with the finance office at your institution or with a financial advisor.

Can trainees expect stipends on SCN projects to be topped up or increased on a go-forward basis? Will SCN offer these top-ups again in the future?

This is a one-time Stipend Top-Up for Master's and Doctoral students and Post-Doctoral Fellows actively working on SCN-funded projects and clinical trials for the 2022-2025 funding period. When designing its future funding competitions (2025 onward), SCN will take into consideration the compensation paid to trainees on SCN-funded projects.

Where did the extra funding come from?

The Stem Cell Network recognizes the significant economic pressures trainees face during their graduate and post-doctoral studies, and this has been of concern for some time. SCN is pleased that through various savings and careful budgeting we are now able to offer this important assistance.



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Additional Questions?

Shannon Sethuram

Vice President, Corporate Services

ssethuram@stemcellnetwork.ca

Media queries?

Samantha Rae Ayoub

Vice President, Communications & Knowledge Mobilization

srae@stemcellnetwork.ca