FUNDING GUIDELINES

PSI Research Trainee Award

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OVERVIEW

The PSI Foundation was established in 1970 by the physicians of Ontario with the original capital of Physicians Services Incorporated, the doctor-sponsored prepaid medical care plan. The Foundation was established with the mission of improving the “health of Ontarians.” Physicians from across Ontario remain involved as members of the Foundation’s House of Delegates as well as part of the governing board of directors for the Foundation.

PSI’s granting interests are in two areas: education of practising physicians and health research with an emphasis on research relevant to patient care.

This document serves as the funding guidelines for the PSI Research Trainee Award funding program offered by PSI.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact us at 416.226.6323 or by email at psif@psifoundation.org to discuss any questions you may have about submitting an application for funding.

Follow us on X (Twitter) @PSIFoundation, Bluesky @psifoundation.bsky.social, and check our website at www.psifoundation.org for the latest news and updates, such as updated forms and policy revisions.

PURPOSE OF THE AWARD

The primary aim of this award is to provide highly qualified candidates with clinically applicable research training opportunities and support to increase research capacity in Ontario and enable the next generation of physician-researchers.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS FUNDING OPPORTUNITY IS NOT AN ADDITIONAL PSI OPERATING GRANT.

FUNDING EXCLUSIONS

Listed below are the items and areas which will not be accepted for consideration by the Foundation:

- Research in the areas of cancer, heart and stroke, and pharmaceutical drug development studies. PSI will not accept nor fund applications associated with the screening, diagnosis, prevention, survivorship, or any phase of the illness of cancer and cardiac research.
- Training and research at institutions outside the province of Ontario.

ELIGIBILITY OF CANDIDATE

ELIGIBLE CANDIDATE

The candidate for the award must be:

- An M.D. licensed by College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) in a Ph.D or Master's program (thesis-based graduate program with a research component) at an Ontario university

OR

- A trainee in a combined M.D./Ph.D or Master's program (thesis-based graduate program with a research component) at an Ontario university

OR

- A trainee in the Clinician Investigator Program (CIP) at an Ontario university

To be eligible for this award, the funding recipient must be continuously enrolled in a Ph.D or Master's program (thesis-based graduate program with a research component) for the full duration of the PSI funding period.

The PSI Research Trainee Award recipient is able to apply to PSI's operating grant.

INELIGIBLE CANDIDATE

Applications will not be considered from the following Principal Investigators:

- Individuals who do not hold an M.D. licensed by CPSO — unless enrolled in a combined M.D./Ph.D or Master's program (thesis-based graduate program with a research component) as listed above.
- Individuals based outside of Ontario

REAPPLYING TO THIS PROGRAM

Applicants who were unsuccessful in previous competitions may resubmit their application one time only and must include a letter detailing how the external reviewer comments to the previously declined application have been responded to in the revised submission.

PSI's Grants Committee expects resubmitted applications to be enhanced based on the feedback from the external peer review process and/or Grants Committee's comments.

APPLICATION POLICY & REQUIREMENTS

MENTOR

PSI values the role of mentorship in supporting the success of the applicant during this fellowship.

Prior to submitting the application, the applicant must have identified and secured agreement from a mentor. Such mentors must hold an academic appointment at one of Ontario's six medical universities, hold a medical license in the province of Ontario, and have a proven track record of clinically relevant research and mentorship experience.

SPONSORING INSTITUTION

All applications must have a sponsoring institution which is registered with Revenue Canada as carrying on charitable activities.

Eligible institutions must:

- Be located in the Province of Ontario
- Be a registered charity
- Have its own, independent research ethics board*
- Be eligible to hold Canadian Institute of Health Research grants. The list can be found at http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/36374.html.

The sponsoring institution must provide the necessary infrastructure for the research project: including, but not limited to, accounting and reporting of grant funds, as well as ensuring the research is carried out according to the institution's policies and procedures and accepted research standards in Canada. In addition, the institution must assure that REB approvals, clinical trials registrations, and Health Canada approvals are acquired as needed before the research takes place.

*For institutions who do not have an internal REB, they may access an existing REB at another institution.

AMOUNT AND DURATION

A maximum of $30,000 per year for two (2) years is available.

USE OF FUNDING

The award funds may be divided into four (4) categories:

1. A salary for the candidate
2. Allowance for fringe benefits, including tuition reimbursement and professional travel
3. Research expenses: Up to a maximum of 25% of the total funds of the award may be allocated towards research expenses
4. Mentor-directed funds: This budget item allows the mentor a maximum of $5,000 per year to direct funds to support the candidate

Budget items may not be used outside of Ontario.
PSI funds cannot be used for expenses pre-dating the date of funding approval.

The proposed budget involving research expenses must include a detailed budget narrative within the application (including quantities and rates/prices) to explain how amounts were determined. A detailed breakdown and justification of costs is required for projects involving the Institute of Clinical and Evaluative Studies (ICES), specifically the number of hours an analyst is dedicating to a project and their hourly rate.

FUNDING CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed on the following:

- Applicant's past academic career and achievements
- Training plan: the training that will be undertaken during the duration of the award
- Research plan: the scientific merit and clinical relevance of the research to be completed during the duration of the award
- Mentor: the strength and commitment of the mentor
- Institutional support: PSI's internal review committee will evaluate support provided by the sponsoring institution, demonstrated by the letter of support.

APPLICATION PROCESS

HOW TO APPLY

Please note that applicants are required to submit their applications directly to PSI.

All requests for funding must be submitted by using PSI's online application system (https://psifoundation.smartsimple.ca/). Instruction manual on how to register and use the system is available on our website at https://www.psifoundation.org/funding-programs/tips-and-resources/. Please refer to the online application form for specific information in regards to documents required, page limits, signatures, etc. for the proposal.

To be eligible for consideration, applications must contain all requested information in full. PSI is unable to consider incomplete applications.

Please do not upload scanned documents to the online system, with the exception of letters of support with signatures and the completed signature page

Please note: all applications received by the Foundation through the online system are acknowledged automatically. You will receive a second notification of acceptance within a few weeks.

Applications submitted will be reviewed for completeness and eligibility. PSI will notify you through the online grants management system if we require clarification or additional information. Failure to respond in a timely manner may result in your application's review being delayed or your application being declined.

Once completeness and eligibility are confirmed the application will be sent for external peer review by experts in the research training and focus area.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE & APPLICATION TIMELINE

The PSI Foundation no longer has deadlines. You may submit an application at any time.

PSI's internal review committee will consider your application at its next meeting following the peer review process. You will generally receive a decision within 6 months. With increasing difficulty in obtaining external peer reviewers, a decision could take longer than six months as we strive to ensure adequate review of every application.

EXTERNAL PEER REVIEW PROCESS

Applicants are asked to suggest potential reviewers with appropriate expertise to assess their proposal.

PEER REVIEWER LOCATION

Each suggested reviewer should be from a different hospital/academic institution. Reviewers can be from anywhere in the world as long as they can complete the review in English.

EXCLUDED INDIVIDUALS

Suggested reviewers must not have a potential, real or perceived conflict of interest in reviewing the proposal. As such, applicants must not suggest the following as potential expert peer reviewers:

- A person who currently has an academic/clinical appointment at the trainee's institution
- A person who has a family/personal relationship with the trainee and/or mentor

- A person who is in a position to gain or lose financially or materially from the funding of this application
- A person with whom the trainee has regular interactions within their department, institution, organization, or other
- A person who has within the last 5 years:
  - Been a supervisor of the trainee
  - Has collaborated or published with the trainee, or intends to in the near future

OTHER INFORMATION

Your application will be reviewed by the PSI Grants Committee once the peer review process is completed. In cases where PSI has difficulty obtaining sufficient peer reviews, applicants will be asked to suggest additional potential reviewers.

The external peer review process represents the most time-sensitive aspect of the application review process, so we ask that you take care to suggest appropriate peer reviewers to increase the likelihood of avoiding unnecessary delays in reviewing your application.

DECISION PROCESS

The Grants Committee will review the full applications and external reviews prior to their meeting. At the Grants Committee meeting each application will be discussed and a consensus funding decision will be reached based on the funding criteria. All applicants will be notified of the Committee's funding decisions and receive unattributed external reviewer comments within 15 business days.

AWARD RECIPIENT REQUIREMENTS

If funding is awarded, the following requirements are a condition of funding:

ASSISTING THE FOUNDATION

- PSI reserves the right to invite the trainee or the mentor to participate in the peer review grant process and may call upon them to assist in grant review. This may include, but is not limited to, inviting grantees to provide peer reviews of applications and to rank multiple applications.
- The award recipient must agree to attend and potentially present their results of research at PSI events.

CONDITIONS OF RELEASING THE INITIAL PAYMENT

- The award recipient is to provide a start and end date of the award. Please note: PSI will use this date to determine when the sponsoring institution will close the funds account and when to expect interim and final reports from the award recipient.

REPORTING & CONDITIONS OF RELEASING FUNDS

- The award recipient is responsible for submitting an annual report for review by PSI's internal review committee. Subsequent funding depends upon a satisfactory report.
- The award recipient is responsible for submitting a final report via the PSI Online Grants Management system, describing the results and impact of the award within three months of the end date of the scholarship.
- If a portion of the award is used to fund a study, a statement of disbursement of these funds must be submitted to the Foundation at the completion of the project.

CHANGES TO THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL

- The award recipient and/or the sponsoring institution are responsible for notifying the Foundation of any significant changes to the original proposal and training plan.
- The award recipient must notify the Foundation of any leave to be taken that will affect the award.

UNUSED FUNDS

- The institution to which an award is paid must immediately notify and return unused funds to PSI if the award recipient is unable, for any reason, to carry out or complete the research for which the award is given.
- Within three months of the end of the granting period, the research account must be closed and all unused funds remaining in the account must be returned to PSI along with a final accounting statement for how funds were used.

- When work is completed or cannot be continued for any reason unused funds must be immediately returned to PSI.

ACKNOWLEDGING PSI FOUNDATION

- All publications, presentations, public messages, or media coverage arising from the funded project are to include acknowledgement of funding from "PSI Foundation." Grant recipients are encouraged to connect with us prior to any media announcements. Furthermore, PSI's logo should be included whenever possible. An electronic file of the logo is available on the website.

- Where papers are published or presented, reprints or copies must be submitted to PSI. Please note that you may send electronic copies by email rather than paper copies.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- PSI requires that all funded research projects adhere to the sponsoring institution's policies and procedures as well as accepted research standards.