CLINICAL TRIALS TRAINING PROGRAM / PLATFORM

StrokeCog

Application Guidelines

2025-2026 • Postdoctoral Fellowship • Funding Opportunity

The **StrokeCog Post-Doctoral Fellowship** Competition provides funding for **up to five awards** to support the training of future experts in **stroke and vascular cognitive impairment (VCI) clinical trials.** This initiative aims to develop highly skilled researchers advancing knowledge and improving outcomes for individuals affected by stroke-related cognitive decline. The fellowship fosters innovative research, professional development, and collaboration among emerging leaders in the field, equipping them with the expertise needed to drive impactful clinical advancements.

StrokeCog is an EDIA-focused training platform transforming stroke clinical trial expertise in Canada. By embedding equity, diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility at every stage, StrokeCog fosters diverse, skilled trial teams to lead innovative, high-quality research across the stroke continuum. This approach ensures more inclusive, accessible, and representative clinical trials, generating equitable evidence to improve stroke prevention, treatment, and outcomes.

Eligibility:

- Applicants (PhD/MD) must have been accepted into a recognized research Post-Doctoral Fellowship position in a Canadian institution, with a start date before December 31, 2025.
- Must be a Canadian resident or permanent resident or hold a valid Canadian work permit or student visa.
- Must be engaged in scholarly work focused on clinical trials in stroke and/or Vascular Cognitive Impairment. This may take the form of a clinical trial, or analysis of clinical or behavioural trial samples and/or data, and which are aligned with the vision and mission of StrokeCog.

Term:

- The award covers ONE (1) year of training.

Funding value:

- The maximum potential total for this award is up to $62,500. A total annual stipend of CDN$52,500, will be funded by StrokeCog in whole, or if available, co-funded from a provincial co-funder or private partners. The award will be transferred to the academic institution of the applicant and/or supervisor. In addition, submissions that satisfactorily describe how people with lived experience (PWLE) with stroke and/or their family/caregiver communities are being meaningfully engaged in the clinical trial project will be eligible to receive up to an additional $10,000 as operational funds to be used for PWLE and/or family/caregiver community engagement.

Potential Co-Funders: CIHR IRSC; Michael Smith Health Research BC; Alberta Innovates; Research Manitoba; SHRF; Fonds de recherche Santé Québec; research recherche nb; nova scotia health innovation hub; NL Health Services

- It is expected that the supervisor contributes to the trainee's funding in the amount required to meet at least any minimum stipend rules at their institution. This fellowship may be combined with other awards, up to a combined maximum stipend allowed by the institution, provincial or private co-funder, and the funding conditions of currently active awards obtained by the applicant. Also, provincial co-funder rules regarding co-funding or concurrent funding support will apply.

Award Application Timeline

- Notice to programs: March 31, 2025
- Application Deadline: May 28, 2025 17:00 EDT
- Review Process: June 2 – June 27, 2025
- Notification of Funding: July 18, 2025
- Funding Start: September 2, 2025 (note: adjusted start date can be requested)

PLEASE NOTE:
Only one application per fellow enrolled in a Postdoctoral program.
The applicant must select **only one** CTTP.
Only one award per academic supervisor.
Previously funded supervisors or applicants are eligible to apply, although preference may be given to new supervisors/applicants.

The program considers scientific excellence and aims to support the full and fair participation of all members of the health research community through consideration of barriers experienced by underrepresented groups, with respect to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) principles.

At least two of the StrokeCog fellowship awards (~50%) will be given to individuals from a diverse background or under-represented or marginalized population, provided they meet the minimum acceptable score of 80%.

Mandatory requirements

- Completing the CANTRAIN CURRICULUM levels 1-2-3 of the Common Core Foundation courses and Mentor-led Engagement sessions will be mandatory for all successful applicants of the StrokeCog awards program. All successful applicants will also be required to complete any additional training required by StrokeCog, which includes the completion of EDIA training modules.
- Academic supervisors of successful applicants are invited to participate in the National College of Reviewers for future funding competitions and also invited to participate in CANTRAIN CONNECT, the Canadian National College of Mentors.
- At the end of the one-year period of support, the successful applicant will need to submit end of funding financial and progress reports related to salary and patient engagement funding, if applicable. The awardee will be required to participate in all training activities and attend the annual meeting of StrokeCog, as will be detailed in their letter of award.

Intended tangible outcomes and expectations

- certified training in Good Clinical Practice (ICH-GCP) and Health Canada Division 5, and TCPS2, as required for regulatory compliance;
- acquired further knowledge of the regulations and practices around clinical trials, based on the modular curriculum provided through CANTRAIN and StrokeCog, and
- participated in either individual or group mentoring experiences as required by StrokeCog.

Document Format:

- PDF format (the only authorized format);
- 8 1⁄2 in x 11 in (216 mm x 279 mm), i.e. "Letter" size;
- All margins: Minimum 2 cm;
- Font: Times New Roman (12 points);
- Single line spacing;

- Inscribed in the header:
  Last name, first name of the applicant, and status at the time of application (e.g. DOE_John_Postdoctoral_Fellow_1st_Year)

APPLICATION DETAILS:

0. **Cover letter (half page maximum)**
Provide a short cover letter providing contact information for the applicant and anticipated program start and end dates.

1. **Personal statement**. **(max 2 pages)**
This letter should include the following elements:
- Describe how your project is related to clinical trials;
- Describe why the StrokeCog Clinical Trial Training Program is of interest to you and how you expect to benefit from this training experience;
- Discuss your current training environment and supervisory support;
- Describe your professional, academic and extracurricular experiences/achievements and how they have prepared you for success in your fellowship program;
- Describe your career goals and how the award would help to support your pursuit of these goals;
- If applicable, describe barriers that you have experienced as a member of an underrepresented group in science or research and how you have sought to overcome these barriers. How would this award support you to overcome barriers relative to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

2. **Applicant full academic CV.**
Your academic CV (may be in Canadian Common CV format but not mandatory) should include all relevant academic and research activities, including a full publication record (include submitted, accepted/in press and e-published papers (provide letter from the editor(s)), list of presentation abstracts (poster versus oral presentations at local, provincial, national, international venues), the establishment of dataset(s), intellectual property, commercialization activities/participation in start-ups. Do not include manuscripts that are in preparation.

2.i. **Applicant Alternative Achievements. (max 2 pages)**
Up to 10 additional points towards your academic CV score (up to the max of 30) may be added by reviewers to reflect alternate achievements not included in the traditional academic records. If you have alternative achievements not typically included in the academic CV (in addition to traditional academic achievements such as publications, grants, presentations that are captured in the CV), please list and describe them here. By doing this, it may provide a more holistic reflection of a candidate's personal achievements, in compliance with the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA; https://sfdora.org/).

3. **First letter of support from the primary supervisor**. **(max 2 pages)**
This letter should address the following elements:
- In what capacity do you know the applicant, and for how long;
- Rate and explain your reasoning regarding the applicant's performance and experience, strengths/weaknesses, including their professionalism;
- Explain why you think the applicant would benefit from participation in this program;
- Describe the applicant's training environment and how it supports the proposed project and applicant's personal goals;
- Describe how the primary supervisor's program of research is related to clinical trials, and how the applicant's proposed clinical research project is related, in part, to clinical trials research in your lab;
- Describe how the training environment, and/or the project will address the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).

4. **Second letter of support / letter of reference. (max 2-pages)**
The person providing the letter should have worked closely with the applicant, and the letter should address the following elements:
- In what capacity do you know the applicant and for how long;
- Rate and explain your reasoning regarding the applicant's performance and experience, strengths/weaknesses, including their professionalism;
- Describe why you think the applicant would benefit from participation in this program.
- Description of any support or mentorship you will be providing the applicant, if any.

5. **Primary supervisor's full academic CCV.**
Upload a copy of your supervisor's full academic CCV.

6. **Proposed project.**

The project description must include the elements listed below. The review scoring scheme (making up the 40 points total) is provided in brackets beside each category.

i. *Title of prosed project*
ii. *Lay Summary (max 300 words)*
    a. Description of the project and expected outcomes written in lay language (which could be used in future public communications of award winners, e.g., website).
iii. *Scientific Abstract (max 300 words)*
    a. Description of the project and expected outcomes written in scientific language (sufficient to be included in a journal publication).

iv. Complete **project proposal** written in scientific language that is sufficient to be published in a peer-reviewed journal **(Max five (5) pages, including tables, graphics, images, but not references).** The project proposal should include the elements listed below.
    a. *Background and Rationale* (5 points).
        - Describe the relevant background and rationale for the proposed project, including if available any preliminary results.
        - State the objectives and hypotheses for the project.
    b. *Methods* (15 points)
        - Describe the project population
        - Project design/implementation. Describe how the project aligns with the mandate of clinical trials research.
        - Intervention. If applicable, describe the intervention.
        - Outcome measures (including measurable outcomes and definitions of success). Community impact and real-world experience should be highlighted.
        - Analytic plan (including sample size justification, where appropriate). Describe the analytic plan for the project.
    c. *Impact and Expected Outcomes* (10 points).
        - Description of expected results, project deliverables and knowledge translation and dissemination plan. This description should include how this project will impact the training of the applicant.
    d. *Feasibility and timelines* (10 points).
        - Demonstrate scientific and technical feasibility (e.g., recruitment of patients, acquisition of data, biostatistics, access to necessary equipment, etc.). Identify potential limitations and describe mitigation strategies. Describe timelines and milestones. Where the proposed project relies on existing resources (e.g., databases, established research infrastructure, equipment), describe the availability of these resources.
    e. *Incorporation of EDIA Principles (satisfactory/unsatisfactory)*

- Describe how the clinical trial project and project research team incorporates the principles of equity, diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility (EDIA) into all level of the clinical trial project (i.e., research question development, trial design, team creation, recruitment strategies, trial conduct, and analysis, reporting and dissemination of trial results.)

f. *Role of the applicant*. *(satisfactory/unsatisfactory)*
- The role of the applicant in the project must be clearly stated.

7. **Clinical Trial Project Meaningful Engagement with People With Lived Experience with Stroke and/or Their Family/Caregiver Community.**
Up to $10,000 of operating funds can be requested towards meaningful engagements pf PWLE with stroke and/or their family/caregiver community.

i. Describe how the clinical trial project and project research team will be meaningfully engaging **people with lived experience (PWLE)** with stroke and/or their family/caregiver community. Please provide sufficient details to be able to assess how PWLE and/or their family/caregiver community will be meaningfully engaged in the project from project design, trial/project execution and/or results dissemination, as appropriate. (max 500 words)

Examples of meaningful engagement: Participation in study design planning meetings; Incorporating suggested input into study design or protocol; Having patient/family participating as active participants in knowledge dissemination (e.g., at a conference, in a webinar or focus group).

ii. A budget and budget justification describing how the funds would be used to support PWLE and/or family/caregiver community engagement must be included. (max 300 words)

SCORING (satisfactory/unsatisfactory):

- A project proposal will be deemed satisfactory if it clearly states how PWLE and/or their family/caregiver community will be meaningfully engaged in the clinical trial project and will receive up to their budget request (max $10,000) to be used as operational funds to support engagement.
- A project proposal will be deemed unsatisfactory if it does not provide sufficient information to assess or fails to clearly state how PWLE and/or their family/caregiver community will be meaningfully engaged in the clinical trial project and will not receive any operational funding to support engagement.

Evaluation Criteria

0. Cover letter providing contact information for the applicant and anticipated program start and end dates (0.5-page maximum)	---------
1. Personal statement (2-page maximum)	15 points
2. Current academic curriculum vitae (CV) (from https://ccv-cvc.ca/) *Navigation instruction for CCV from https://ccv-cvc.ca/:* *Funding Source (select): Common CV* *CV Type (select): Full CV* 2.i Alternative Applicant Achievements – possible supplement to CV score (up to max of 30)	30 points
TWO letters of reference (2-page maximum for each): 3. First letter from the primary supervisor 4. Second letter from any other mentor or supervisor who can comment on the applicant's qualities and accomplishments	 5 points 5 points
5. Supervisor's full academic CCV (Canadian Common CV format).	5 points

6. Proposed clinical trial research project description	40 points
TOTAL SCORE	**100 points**
7. Description and budget justification for meaningful engagement of PWLE into the clinical trial project	Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory

PLEASE NOTE: Applications and supporting documentations written in French are allowed 25% more space.

HOW TO APPLY: Online through the application portal on the CANTRAIN website under Postdoctoral Fellowships: **https://wecantrain.ca/home/studentships-fellowships-and-internships/postdoctoral-fellowship/** (application portal will be opened around mid-April).