

New Collaborations Program Guidelines

Description

The New Collaborations program is intended to encourage collaborations between researchers from an Alberta-based institution with researchers from institutions outside Alberta.

Qualified investigators may seek funding for small research projects directly related to prion diseases and/or human neurodegenerative diseases and dementias where the etiology involves protein misfolding and the pathogenesis has prion-like characteristics. New Collaborations grants are intended to foster the development of new research partnerships by supporting short-term research projects aimed at addressing relevant fields of inquiry in the Prion Institute themes as listed and described below.

New Collaborations grants will be held by at least two Principal Investigators (PI) who are from at least two different research institutions. One Alberta-based PI is to be identified as the nominated Principal Investigator for the New Collaborations grant, and funds for the grant will be flowed through the institution of the nominated PI. The second Principal Investigator must be from an institution outside of Alberta.

Grantees will be expected to participate in the training of young investigators, especially graduate students and fellows, and their stipends may be paid from a New Collaborations Program grant.

Operating expenses for a New Collaborations project must be consistent with the Tri-Council (Canada) policy on the use of grant funding (www.nserc.ca). Salaries for investigators, major equipment purchases and overhead costs are not eligible.

Objectives

The New Collaborations program offers applicants the opportunity to collaborate for the purpose of piloting a research project that builds on the excellence of researchers from Alberta and abroad. Applicants are encouraged to present imaginative designs in developing collaborations that will lead to finding solutions directly related to prion diseases and human neurodegenerative diseases and dementias where the etiology involves protein misfolding and the pathogenesis has prion-like characteristics.

Funding is accessible for the study in all relevant fields of inquiry in the themes as listed and described below.

Themes accessible for funding of Prion Diseases:

Protein folding and misfolding

- Applying tools of structural biology, biophysics, biochemistry, molecular biology and bio-computing to understand the mechanisms of transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) and other diseases of prion-like protein misfolding.

Pathobiology of TSEs

- Understanding TSE biology, susceptibility, transmissibility and disease progression using genomics, proteomics, metabolomics and other innovative approaches that will contribute to the diagnosis, prevention, cure and possible elimination of the diseases. This may include prion-like human neurodegenerative mechanisms in pathobiology.

Surveillance and Control

- Minimizing risks associated with prion exposure, including disposal of specified risk materials, technologies for inactivation and decontamination of prions in water, wastewater, soil and the environment.
- Diagnosing TSEs based on prion genomics; focusing on immunologic and biomedical engineering technologies to apply, validate and improve ante-mortem tests developed elsewhere; and exploring opportunities for new tests to be developed in Alberta.

TSEs and Society

- Studying policy and response modelling, assessing economic and sociological components of community impact, risk perceptions, consumer acceptance and impact on markets, and ensuring fair and accurate communication of scientific advances. This component will also provide information useful to all levels of government for the development of public policies regarding TSEs.

Funding

Grants of up to **\$100,000 Canadian** for a maximum period of **two years** are available from the Alberta Prion Research Institute.

The total from partner funders provided to support a Prion Institute New Collaborations proposal will be a **cash** contribution of at least 25 per cent of the total amount contributed by the Prion Institute. This cash contribution must be at least 20 per cent of the total project costs) In-kind contributions are welcome, but they are not eligible to be counted against this requirement. The Prion Institute will solely decide on the eligibility of the contribution(s) in terms of meeting this requirement for partner contribution.

The nominated Principal Investigator must provide to the Prion Institute written confirmation from the partner funding organization that a cash contribution up the amount requested in the application is committed to the proposal. Proof of partner support must be submitted to the Prion Institute within **10 days** of the application submission. Partner contributions must be external to the nominated Principal Investigator's organization.

The nominated Principal Investigator must provide an undertaking from the partner(s) participants and funders that it will accept the Prion Institute peer review process and Prion

Institute decision on whether to fund the designated project. Partner funders and institutions must either transfer funds to the Prion Institute for management or provide an accounting to the Prion Institute of how their funds directed to the grant will be monitored and how the Prion Institute will be advised of their expenditure on the approved project. The Prion Institute will provide its annual scientific and financial reports on the designated project to the partner funding organization(s).

Application Process

Application forms are available on the [Alberta Innovates application website](https://www.fundingconsortium.gov.ab.ca/AI/Account) (<https://www.fundingconsortium.gov.ab.ca/AI/Account>).

There is a continuous intake of proposals submitted to this program.

Review Process

The Prion Institute will appoint members from the Prion Institute's International Research Advisory Council to review applications in conjunction with appropriate external peer reviewers from the international community. Decision and funding will be made after the Prion Institute considers recommendations from the Council and external reviewers.

Contact Information

For questions on the Alberta Prion Research Institute New Collaborations Program contact:

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