

Overview

The Research and Policy Fellowship program will help establish and nurture links between provincial and federal decision-makers and scientific professionals to support public policy related to prion diseases for the benefit of improving the wellbeing of Albertans.

Research and Policy Fellowships are designed to do the following:

- Provide opportunities for scientists and policy-makers to learn about processes and context in each other's domains;
- Provide scientific expertise and analysis to support decision makers confronting increasingly complex scientific and technical issues related to prion diseases;
- foster positive exchange between scientists and policy-makers;
- Empower scientists and to conduct policy-relevant research and other activities that address challenges facing society on transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) and prion-like neurodegenerative diseases; and
- Empower policy makers to help scientists to develop policy-relevant research and to develop research findings into policy.

Eligibility

The Research and Policy Fellow must be affiliated with an Alberta post-secondary institution (University or College) in a tenure track position, be a postdoctoral fellowship, or be expecting to be awarded a doctoral degree from an Alberta institution within a year of submission of the application. Candidates must be proceeding to a position within prion or prion-related areas and relevant to the Research and Policy Fellowship and have a minimum of three years of experience involving research on prion or prion-like diseases.

Or

Government employees who have a minimum of three years of experience in a policy environment with the intention of working in a research environment that includes a focus on prion or prion-like diseases.

Funding and Duration

Funding	A contribution toward salary and benefits of up to \$70,000 per year (prorated for shorter terms) and a possible research supplement of up to \$10,000 . The award will be paid to the academic institution or government department that hosts the Fellow for use in activities related to the fellowship.
Term of Award	A minimum of three months and maximum of 12 months. Arrangements could be made for the fellowship to be available for more than one fellowship period of engagement at a host institution. The value of the award cannot exceed \$70,000 over one year. The supplement cannot exceed \$10,000 over one year.

Research and Policy Fellows are expected to do the following:

- Further the overall objectives of one or more of the theme areas and expected outcomes of the Prion Institute;
- As a researcher from an academic setting, gain work experience in a policy environment which could include contributing to the development of guidelines and recommendations related to objectives of the Prion Institute;
- As a policy maker from government or other environment who wishes to spend time in an academic environment they may work on basic or applied research related to the development in an academic milieu to the objectives of the Prion Institute; and
- Aid in the research and development for the implementation of policies and regulations.

Theme areas of the Prion Institute:

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. This may include prion-like human neurodegenerative diseases and dementias.

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; and
- 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.
- **Expected outcomes of the Prion Institute:**
 1. Capacity-building
 2. Knowledge generation
 3. Knowledge transfer, exchange and translation
- Develop partnerships and linkages nationally and internationally on policy frameworks dealing with TSEs and prion-like neurodegenerative diseases.
- Develop partnerships to provide greater understanding of research environment for policy-makers and vice versa.

Information for Applicants**Salary Support**

Research and Policy Fellowships will be funded for three months up to a maximum of 12 months. Funding will be for up to \$70,000 per year and will be prorated for periods of less than 12 months. The salary award may be combined with other sources of funding over the period.

For Research and Policy Fellows who are researchers at an Alberta post-secondary institution or employees of government spending time at an Alberta post-secondary institution, responsibility for the administration of funds will rest with the home institution.

For Research and Policy Fellows at the postdoctoral level, the host government department will be responsible for fund administration.

Fringe benefits should be consistent with those of other employees of the home organization.

Fellows should receive the same salary increments and merit increases as other employees of the home organization.

A possible \$10,000 supplement might be paid to the host academic institution or department for use by the fellow to cover travel expenses to attend one significant conference or meeting, research activities and/or other reasonable expenditures directly related to the activities of the Research and Policy Fellowship.

The general regulations for holding the Research and Policy Fellowship must follow the Tri-Council policy available on the NSERC website unless otherwise specified by the Prion Institute.

Deferment of Award

Awards may be deferred for up to a maximum of one year.

Review Process

The Alberta Prion Research Institute will review the applications in consultation with external peer reviewers from the international community.

Selection Criteria

Prion Institute Research and Policy Fellowship applications will be evaluated for their fit with the Prion Institute theme areas and adherence to the following criteria:

Curriculum vitae of the applicant

Excellence of the Research and Policy Fellow's Environment

The excellence of the research program and the research team, its relationship to similar efforts around the world, and the degree to which it is capable of tackling significant problems in prion research in an integrated and coherent fashion.

Or

The relevance of the policy environment to prion and related research and applications to prion and related diseases.

Freedom of Information Protection of Privacy Act

Alberta Innovates is regulated by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act of Alberta. Information provided by applicants on Personal Data Forms is for the use of Alberta Innovates only and will not be communicated in any way to anyone outside of the organization, except as required under the Act, and to those involved in the grant review processes, and organizations that will partner with the Prion Institute in funding programs. It is a condition of acceptance of a Prion Institute award that for a project that the lay summary or a summary written by a staff member of Alberta Innovates of the project may be released publically at any time at the Prion Institute's discretion.

Application Timeline

There is no formal deadline for applications.

Application Process

Applicants have the opportunity to apply to the Prion Institute Research and Policy Fellowship Program by providing the following information:

1. The applicant's current curriculum vitae or current copy of NSERC (CIHR,SSHRC) Form 100 (*Do not include appendices to the NSERC Form 100*)
2. Two-page outline of the research or policy issues to be examined during the tenure of the fellowship.
3. In a half page for each, the applicant must outline the following exchanges that are expected to take place:
 - a. The benefits that the fellow will bring to the government department, host institution or laboratory; and
 - b. The skills that will be learned from the government department, host institution or laboratory.
4. Letter of support from the sponsoring academic institution research dean or government department head.
5. Letter of support from host academic institution dean or Assistant Deputy Minister of a government department.
6. Letter of approval for a temporary release or secondment from the home academic institution dean or Assistant Deputy Minister of a government department.
7. Institutional signature pages (academic institution, government department) from the sponsoring and host institutions, or by using the Alberta Prion Research Institute Application Checklist and Approvals Form.

All attached letters must be typed using font size of 11 or greater, with page margins not less than one inch on white paper, 8 1/2 x 11 inches (21.5 cm x 28 cm), portrait format, with a single column, unless specified otherwise.

Applications are to be completed online using the Funding Consortium application form for the Alberta Prion Research Institute Research and Policy Fellowship.

For information on this opportunity and to obtain access to an online application contact:

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