

Patient-Oriented Research Graduate Fellowships 2021-22

BC SUPPORT Unit Vancouver Island Centre

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) has developed provincial partnerships to support Patient-Oriented Research (POR) with expertise, resources, and knowledge. In British Columbia (BC), the BC SUPPORT (Support for People and Patient-Oriented Research and Trials) Unit is a multi-partner organization dedicated to increasing the quantity and quality of patient-oriented research, and is one of ten SUPPORT Units across Canada. The provincial Hub is located in Vancouver, with four regional centres located in the Island, Fraser, Northern, and Interior Health Authority regions.

This Fellowship opportunity is being sponsored by the BC SUPPORT Unit Vancouver Island Centre (Island Centre). The Island Centre operates as a partnership between Island Health and the University of Victoria, with the goals of building research capacity and providing support for multidisciplinary POR teams across Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands.

POR is defined as research that is done in partnership with patients, responds to patient-identified priorities, and aims to improve health outcomes. The term 'patient' is inclusive of individuals with personal experience of health issues as well as their informal caregivers, family, and friends.

Description of Funding

The Island Centre POR Graduate Fellowships are for students who will be enrolled in a full-time thesis-based Masters or PhD program as of the application deadline, and who are interested in undertaking Patient-Oriented Research. Students at any of the academic institutions within the Island Health Authority region are eligible to apply.

The objectives of this funding are to:

- Provide students with training and support in the principles and practice of POR;
- Develop capacity through collaboration between research partners (e.g. patient partners, students, supervisors, clinicians, community members, and health system decision-makers);
- Create opportunities for research partners to work together, from conceptualization of the research question through to dissemination and implementation of results;
- Demonstrate the impact of the Fellowship for recipients and patients; and
- Encourage recipients to use patient-oriented approaches to research in the future.

Funds Available

The total funding envelope is \$115,000, and the competition will provide one-time funding for Masters' student at up to \$10,000 and PhD students at up to \$15,000, as a monthly stipend. The number and

value of awards given will be determined based on the number and quality of applications received. Funding terms are five months in duration, with the awards beginning November 1st, 2020.

The Recipient Institution must administer the funds for the benefit of each participating award holder in accordance with the Tri-Council Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions, and with any other relevant policies of the Agency, including those at:

https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/InterAgency-Interorganismes/TAFA-AFTO/index_eng.asp

The Recipient Institution will repay any funds which do not fully conform to applicable Tri-Agency regulations, policies and requirements.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be enrolled in, or accepted to, a graduate program at a Vancouver Island institution and must be undertaking or planning to undertake health-related thesis research.
- Applicants must be registered as a full-time, regular (not on-leave) student during the one-year term of the Fellowship.
- International students are eligible for this Fellowship.
- Applicants must have a confirmed thesis supervisor who is an established faculty member at their home institution.
- As health is influenced by numerous and varied determinants, students who are registered in departments other than Health/Medicine are also eligible to apply.
- Activities undertaken during the course of the award must involve populations within the Island Health region or must be directly relevant to those populations.

Examples of POR

Students may consider some of the following patient-oriented approaches to research during the term of their Fellowship:

- Inviting patient partners to be part of a project advisory group
- Convening a workshop with patient partners to explore their experiences of a particular lived experience, or to talk about their priorities for research
- Travelling to a POR conference or workshop to learn from others in the field
- Inviting patient partners to collaborate on certain aspects of a project (e.g. defining/refining a research question; helping to determine study methods; assisting with data collection or analysis; co-developing knowledge translation products)
- Hosting a community dialogue to better understand patient needs in the local area
- Asking a patient partner to be a mentor/external supervisor for a thesis or research project (university regulations permitting)

Potential Topics of Interest

Topics that are aligned with the strategic priorities of healthcare partners on Vancouver Island include: personalized medicine; cultural safety and humility; Indigenous wellness; seniors' health and care transitions; mental health; substance use, including responses to the opioid crisis; health promotion and prevention; social determinants of health; the COVID-19 pandemic and associated health implications. Students who wish to conduct research in other areas will be considered for funding, but must show that they are exploring an identified need or patient priority.

Key Dates

Deadline for application submission: September 27, 2021

Notification of results: November 1, 2021

Start of funding: November 1, 2020

End of funding: March 31, 2022

Fellowship Conditions and Responsibilities

Submission of an application implies acceptance of the following conditions by the applicant:

- *Letter of Agreement:* The successful candidate will be required to sign a letter of agreement with the Conditions and Responsibilities of the Fellowship before the award will be administered.
- *Acknowledgement:* Any formal presentation, publication, or thesis resulting from the Fellowship must acknowledge the support of the BC SUPPORT Unit Vancouver Island Centre.
- *Training:* Active participation in one or more of the CIHR National Curriculum for Patient-Oriented Research training modules will be encouraged.
- *Multi-disciplinary teams:* Successful POR requires the involvement of multiple stakeholders; the BC SUPPORT Unit Vancouver Island Centre will facilitate connections between successful Fellowship applicants and clinicians, healthcare professionals, or patient partners as required.
- *Interim Reporting:* The successful candidate will be required to give a short presentation to the BC SUPPORT Unit Vancouver Island Centre's Oversight Committee after five months of funding, to update the committee on the candidate's POR-related activities.
- *Final Report:* A brief summary of the activities and accomplishments achieved during the Fellowship will be submitted within six weeks of the end of the funding period.

Application Components

1. Application form
2. Applicant statement (max 250 words): Describe why you are interested in pursuing a Fellowship in Patient-Oriented Research.
3. Patient-Oriented Research project plan (max 1,000 words): Provide an overview of your POR plan, including background on the topic, specific project aims, and proposed patient/stakeholder engagement methods, and how equity, diversity, and inclusion will be considered throughout the project.
4. Knowledge Translation plan (max 500 words): Describe how you will share, implement, and/or create impact with your proposed project.
5. Supervisor letter of support: Describe the applicant's suitability for this Fellowship; how they will benefit from training and support in the area of Patient-Oriented Research; how you (as a supervisor) commit to supporting their project (e.g. through funding, provision of facilities or equipment, or transfer of knowledge/expertise); and how you have been involved with projects over the course of your career which meaningfully include patient partners.

Please note: Applications must use a minimum of 12-point font and 1-inch margins for all submitted materials. Documents may be submitted in Word or PDF form (or equivalents). Information to help with the application can be found on the [BC SUPPORT Unit Resources page](#). Please do not include any additional materials in the application, as they will not be considered.

Selection Process and Review Criteria

The BC SUPPORT Unit Vancouver Island Centre Oversight Committee (comprised of patient partners and representatives from academic and clinical partners) will follow a formal selection process and will evaluate each of the submissions, taking into account the following:

- Quality and promise of the applicant (25%)
- Quality and clarity of the proposed POR activities (25%)
- Research environment (e.g. supervisory excellence, resources required and/or available to conduct the POR project) (25%)
- Potential impact, as demonstrated by Knowledge Translation Plan (25%)

Application Submission and Support

Inquiries can be addressed to: islandcentre@viha.ca.

Please email completed application packages to islandcentre@viha.ca no later than 4pm (PST) on September 27, 2021.