TERMS OF REFERENCE
Cumming School of Medicine Post-Doctoral Scholarship Competition

Policies regarding the Cumming School of Medicine Post-Doctoral Scholarship funded by the McCaig Institute for Bone and Joint Health and the Cumming School of Medicine, University of Calgary. Updated November 2, 2026

1. OVERVIEW

The Cumming School of Medicine Post-Doctoral Scholarship competition (CSM PDF competition) provides funding, matched by the candidate's supervisor, for three post-doctoral fellows or more at a time.

2. PURPOSE OF THE AWARD

This competition is intended to fund top postdoctoral fellows (PDFs) in the McCaig Institute thereby providing a valuable training experience while supporting further development to enable success in external salary award competitions at the provincial or national levels.

3. ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for a CSM PDF scholarship:

(a) The supervisor must be a full member of the McCaig Institute for Bone and Joint Health whose research falls within the mandate of the McCaig Institute and who is a full-time, primary CSM faculty member.

(b) The supervisor must be able to provide $30,000 per year plus benefits to the candidate for 2 years.

(c) The applicant may be new (i.e., fast-tract recruitment) or be within 3 years of completing their PhD or MD.

(d) Successful applicants must be enrolled in full-time research and not currently holding external salary support.

4. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

PDFs must receive a minimum of $57,500 per year plus benefits. Salary will be provided on a cost-sharing basis, with the Office of the Associate Dean Research (OADR) providing up to $15,000 for an initial 2 years, with possible extension up to 3 years. The remaining salary support will be provided as matching funds of $12,500 per year from the Institute, and $30,000 per year plus benefits from the supervisor.

5. PROCEDURES

(a) **Application & Adjudication:** Applications to the CSM PDF competition will be accepted on a rolling basis with adjudication for awards conducted as needed to fund up to 3 candidates at a time. Adjudication deadlines will be announced a minimum of one month prior to the application deadline.

(b) **Research Requirements:** The research must align with the strategic plan of the McCaig Institute for Bone and Joint Health and the Cumming School of Medicine of the University of Calgary.

(c) **Term of Support:** Successful applicants will receive funding for 2 years. An additional 3rd year may be considered pending confirmed continued support by the principal supervisor, submission of a progress report, an updated CCV and formal request letter. The McCaig Institute will prioritize support for new applicants over extending funding for a third year. If the Institute is unable to commit to a third year of support, the principal investigator may cover the Institute's portion to receive funding from the OADR for a 3rd year.

(d) **Administration:** Onboarding processes and professional development programs will be administered by the CSM Postdoctoral Office.

(e) **Final Reports:** A final progress report is due to the Chair, McCaig Institute Education Committee.

(f) **Evaluation Criteria**: In selecting awardees, the McCaig Institute Education Committee will use the following evaluation criteria:

- Academic excellence of the candidate
    - Including, but not limited to, GPA, productivity, cover letter and letters of reference
- Significance, impact and quality of the project
    - Project fits with the strategic goals and scope of the McCaig Institute
    - Approach (approaches and methods appropriate to deliver the proposed outputs and achieve proposed contribution(s), identification of challenges and appropriate mitigation strategies, appropriate timelines)
    - Well defined outcomes
- Supervisor's research and training environment
    - Publications, grant support, number of trainees supervised, etc.
    - Resources available to support the project of the CSM PDF

In selecting awardees, the Education Committee should place considerable emphasis on the quality of the applicant and quality of the research project. The description of the team's research project is one of the main criteria for evaluating an application. Research proposals that are **feasible**, **focused** and identify well-defined **outcomes** will be strongly considered. The Education Committee will have discretion to balance the type of research projects that are funded (i.e. discovery phase, based on preliminary data, strategic priority in the McCaig, etc.).

(g) **Review Committee:** The ranking and final selection of eligible candidates will be the responsibility of the Education Training and Mentoring Committee based on the criteria outlined above.

Each application will be reviewed by the Committee, with the Chair voting to break a tie of equally ranked applications. Funding of applications will be based according to rank.

The Committee will avoid all real and apparent conflicts of interest. During the evaluation process, supervisors (and co-supervisors) will not score their own grant, and all conflicted members will be excluded from participating any aspect of the adjudication of such an application.

(h) **Application Submission Procedures:** Interested applicants are required to submit their application and supporting documentation directly to McCaig Institute office via email (mccaig@ucalgary.ca). Applications may be submitted on a rolling basis, or by the stipulated deadline for competition adjudication. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered. Applications and all supporting documents must be submitted as a **single PDF file**. Letter of reference must come directly from the supervisor via email.

Application packages must include:

- A cover letter written by the candidate indicating how their work is consistent with the mission of the Institute and if it addresses a strategic priority of the Institute;
- Completed application form;
- Two-page version of the supervisor's CV;
- One (1) electronic copy of the applicant's academic transcript (unofficial copies are acceptable, however official copies will be required upon acceptance of the award);
- A minimum of one letter of reference (hard copy or email directly to the McCaig office). If the letter is not from their previous supervisor, two alternate letters should be provided by persons who have worked directly with the student during their doctoral training.

6. OBLIGATIONS OF AWARD HOLDERS

Awardees agree to certain obligations that include, but are not limited to:

- PDFs must begin full time training within 1 year of receiving an award.
- Awardees must submit salary applications to external funders for each year they are eligible and are encouraged to apply to other tri-council agencies. Individuals obtaining external or internal funding support must immediately inform the OADR (medgrant@ucalgary.ca) and the McCaig Institute (mccaigh@ucalgary.ca) to enable re-allocation of funding.

- Awardees must enroll in at least one Professional Development program or other activity relevant to career advancement each year (i.e. teaching, leadership, career path, etc.), as offered by the University of Calgary.
- Presenting at the McCaig Institute Seminar Series throughout the academic year;
- Timely submission of reports and other documentation, as required;
- Acknowledgement of the McCaig Institute for Bone and Joint Health in all publications, presentations, communications and marketing materials associated with the supported research project;
- Provision of biographical sketches to be used for reporting and publicity purposes upon request.