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**2025/26**

# **Master's Personnel Awards for Black Scholars**

**Fall 2024 Competition Guidelines**

*(October 31, 2024)*

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## 2025/26 MASTER'S PERSONNEL AWARDS FOR BLACK SCHOLARS

### A. GENERAL INFORMATION

2025/26 Master's Personnel Awards for Black Scholars	
Competition Launch Date	October 31, 2024
Application Submission Deadline	March 20, 2025, 4:00 PM ET
Letters of Support Deadline	March 20, 2025, 4:00 PM ET
Award Notification Date	July 2025
Award Start Date	September 1, 2025
Award Value	Up to \$54,000 CAD (\$27,000 per year for up to two (2) years)
Application Procedures	See <a href="#">B.10 How to Apply</a>
Contact	Email: <a href="mailto:research@heartandstroke.ca">research@heartandstroke.ca</a>

#### A.1 Objectives of the 2025/26 Master's Personnel Awards for Black Scholars

Heart & Stroke and Brain Canada are supporting the 2025/26 Master's Personnel Awards for Black Scholars in committing up to a total of \$270,000. This award was established to support Black scholars of African or Caribbean heritage and/or ancestry in Canada, and was co-created with Black leaders at all career stages who supported Heart & Stroke in the development of this funding opportunity. The objective of the competition is to increase the number of highly-qualified Black trainees across Canada committed to working in the fields of heart and/or brain research.

In the context of this award, heart and/or brain health research encompasses research addressing conditions, including neurological, that affect the cardiovascular and/or cerebrovascular health of people living in Canada. This could include research focused on prevention, treatment, and/or recovery related to heart conditions, stroke, vascular cognitive impairment, and mental health in relation to these conditions. The stipends awarded will be up to \$54,000 CAD (\$27,000 per year for up to two (2) years) enabling Black trainees to focus on their Master's research studies and engage with mentors as part of their training.

**! Note: All applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully read and follow the instructions and requirements outlined in this guideline document.**

#### A.2 Application Submission Deadline

A registration for the funding opportunity needs to be completed via [CIRCULink](#) before you can access and submit the application. We strongly encourage applicants to **begin the registration process as early as possible**, and well in advance of the application submission deadline to ensure timely completion.

**! Please note that registration for the award will close (3) hours prior to the submission deadline.**

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that a completed application is submitted via [CIRCULink](#) no later than **Thursday, March 20, 2025, 4:00 PM ET**. [CIRCULink](#) will **NOT** allow submissions after this deadline. Any applications attempted or submitted by email or mail after the deadline will **NOT** be accepted. There will be no appeal process for late submissions.

**Note:** Letters of Support must be received by email to [research@heartandstroke.ca](mailto:research@heartandstroke.ca) by Thursday, March 20, 2025, 4:00 PM ET.

#### A.3 Incomplete/Unacceptable Applications

All submissions are considered final. No alterations or changes will be accepted. Any incomplete applications, as noted in this guideline document, will not be admissible to the competition.

#### A.4 Competition Results

Official letters will be sent to all applicants in July 2025, with a public announcement posted at a later date on the Heart & Stroke Research and Brain Canada websites.

## A.5 Non-Employee Status

The granting of an award is deemed to establish neither an employer-employee relationship nor a partnership between the funders and the recipients.

## A.6 Applicant Profile

All applicants are required to create an Applicant Profile as a part of the registration process in [CIRCULink](#) when applying for funding. If you already have an Applicant Profile, you can use it for the current competition without creating a new one. However, it is essential that you update your profile before starting the application process. For detailed instructions on updating or creating profiles, please refer to section [B.12](#).

Please note that all applicants are required to complete a Self-Identification section as a part of the Applicant Profile in [CIRCULink](#); however, applicants may select "I prefer not to answer" for any or all of the questions. This information in the Applicant Profile will be used for statistical purposes only and will **NOT** be shared with Lay Reviewers or members of the Selection Committee.

## A.7 Self-Identification Confirmation

All applicants are required to answer a Self-Identification question as a part of the online Application e.Form in [CIRCULink](#) to confirm eligibility to the program. Please note that given that this Funding Opportunity is only open to specific populations, selecting "No" or "I prefer not to answer" **will prevent the applicant's candidacy from being considered**.

Additionally, applicants will be required to complete a Self-Attestation section. The information provided may be reviewed by a committee of community members to confirm that an applicant meets the self-identification eligibility requirements as outlined in this competition guideline. If an application is deemed not to meet this eligibility requirement, Heart & Stroke and Brain Canada reserve the right to remove the application from the competition. Heart & Stroke will inform those that are removed due to ineligibility.

## A.8 Communicating Research to the Public and Donors

Successful applicants need to be aware that the title of their research program and the lay summary could be placed into the public domain or included in the funders' publications without notification. Applicants are cautioned not to disclose information that could endanger a proprietary position in these sections.

Raising funds to support research is difficult and more than ever funders need to let donors and the public know that their donations are being used to support world class research. As successful applicants are well-positioned to explain the role of research in increasing heart and brain health and reducing the burden of heart disease and stroke, they may be asked by Heart & Stroke and Brain Canada to communicate the importance of research to donors and the public, through various means, such as interviews and meetings with donors.

## A.9 Ethical Requirements

By signing and submitting applications to this competition, applicants undertake the responsibility to ensure any experimentation will be acceptable to the institution on ethical grounds and comply with the following guidelines and host institution research policies, as applicable:

- Tri-Council Policy Statement: [Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#)
- [Good Clinical Practice \(GCP\)](#)
- [Good Laboratory Practice \(GLP\)](#)
- In the case of laboratory animal experimentation, the guiding principles and standards that have been enunciated by the [Canadian Council on Animal Care](#)
- Guidelines and standards for biological and chemical hazards as outlined in the Public Health Agency/Canadian Food Inspection Agency's [Canadian Biosafety Standards and Guidelines](#)
- Any research involving human pluripotent stem cells must adhere to the CIHR-ICRH [Guidelines for Human Pluripotent Stem Cell Research](#). The institution must notify Heart & Stroke as to the results of the review by the CIHR Stem Cell Oversight Committee.
- [TCPS2 \(2018\) – Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples of Canada](#)

## A.10 Sex- and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (SGBA+), Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), and Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Indigenous Peoples of Canada

The funders are committed to advancing SGBA+ and EDI towards enhancing the specificity, representativeness, rigour and transparency of research and sustaining positive change in the heart and brain research ecosystem. The applicants are therefore encouraged to become familiar with the principles of SGBA+, EDI, and the framework for ethical conduct of research involving Indigenous Peoples of Canada, with the goal of integrating such principles, if applicable, into future research practice and design.

### Mandatory\*\*

- [CIHR Research Training Module: Sex and Gender Considerations](#) (See [B.11](#))

### Recommended

- [Government of Canada Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\)](#)
- [Guide on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology](#)
- [Women's College Hospital Sex-Specific Analyses and Reporting in Clinical Trials](#)
- [TCPS2 \(2018\) – Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples of Canada](#)
- [Heart & Stroke Glossary of SGBA+ and EDI Terminology](#)
- [Heart & Stroke List of SGBA+ and EDI E-Learning and Resources for Researchers](#)

## A.11 Patent Rights

The funders have no intellectual property (IP) claims on the outputs of the funded research. However, institutions of funded recipients are expected to have appropriate policies in place to protect the intellectual property of the outputs that arise from the funded research.

## A.12 Open Science and Open Access to Research Outputs Policy

All award recipients are required to make their research outputs and findings publicly available as soon as possible but no later than twelve (12) months after project completion or final publication. To meet this requirement, applicants should become familiar with the guiding principles that enable sharing data, information, tools and resources, and that respect Indigenous data governance and sovereignty.

- [Open Science](#) is the practice of making scientific inputs, outputs and processes freely available to all with minimal restrictions. Open Science is enabled by people, technology, and infrastructure. It is practiced in full respect of privacy, security, ethical considerations, and appropriate intellectual property protection. To learn more about Open Science, applicants are encouraged to review the Federal Government's [Roadmap for Open Science](#).
- [FAIR: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable](#) are guiding principles to inform data management and stewardship of digital assets.
- [CARE \(Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility and Ethics\)](#) are guiding principles for Indigenous Data Governance.
- First Nations [Principles of OCAP® \(Ownership, Control, Access and Possession\)](#) guide how First Nations' data should be collected, protected, used and shared.
- [ClinicalTrials.gov](#) is a database of privately and publicly-funded clinical trials around the world.
- [PROSPERO](#) is an international prospective register of protocols related to COVID-19.

Research outputs may include peer-reviewed journal publications, research data, and the results of clinical trials that will not be published in peer-reviewed journals. Research findings may be shared in ways that are culturally relevant and in formats that are functional, useful and practical to distinct needs of Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) communities.

Indigenous Peoples share common histories and concepts; however, each community has specific methods for knowledge synthesis, translation, and exchange. For Indigenous knowledge mobilization to be successful, [meaningful and culturally safe](#), engagement with Indigenous communities is encouraged as Indigenous communities are best positioned to guide researchers towards the co-development knowledge mobilization practices that work best for their communities.

### A.13 Research Integrity Policy

The primary objective of [Heart & Stroke's Research Integrity Policy](#) is to protect and defend the integrity of the research process and to deal with allegations of scientific misconduct in a timely and transparent fashion. Data related to research by and with First Nations, Inuit, Métis or Urban Indigenous communities whose traditional and ancestral territories are in Canada must be managed in accordance with data management principles developed and approved by those communities, and on the basis of free, prior and informed consent. This includes, but is not limited to, considerations of Indigenous data sovereignty, as well as data collection, ownership, protection, use, and sharing.

Responsibilities of researchers, institutions and Heart & Stroke with respect to research integrity are outlined in the [Heart & Stroke Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research](#). All award recipients agree to comply with the Principles and Responsibilities set out in this policy, and the research misconduct provisions below. Heart & Stroke defines research misconduct to include actions that are inconsistent with "integrity" as defined in the [Tri-Agency Policy Framework for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#), and to include such actions as fabrication, falsification, destruction of research records, plagiarism, redundant publications or self-plagiarism, invalid authorship, inadequate acknowledgement, mismanagement of Conflict of Interest. Heart & Stroke will assess allegations of scientific misconduct in the following manner:

- Any allegation of scientific misconduct will be initially reviewed by Heart & Stroke to determine whether an investigation is warranted. If it is felt that an investigation is required, Heart & Stroke may request that this be conducted by the host institution of the individual considered to have performed the alleged misconduct. In allegations specifically related to the peer review process, the investigation may be conducted jointly by the institution and Heart & Stroke.
- Heart & Stroke will not act on verbal allegations of misconduct. All allegations must be submitted in writing. Although the confidentiality of persons who submit an allegation of scientific misconduct will be protected as much as possible, it must be recognized that due process will often result in the identity of this person being released to the investigating institution.
- The institution will be required to submit a written report upon conclusion of the investigation. This report will summarize the findings of the investigation and any future actions that will be undertaken by the institute as a result of the findings.
- Applicants must certify that all statements made (or answers provided) in the application are correct and complete. Any misrepresentation of these statements (or answers provided) may result in the cancellation of the award or delivery of funds to the recipient.
- In cases where misconduct is concluded to have occurred, Heart & Stroke may apply sanctions against the individual(s) implicated. These sanctions will range from a reprimand letter to a ban from applying for or holding Heart & Stroke funds for a set period of time.

### A.14 Acknowledging Publications

Heart & Stroke must be notified in advance of the publication date of any major publications arising from the funded research by email at: [research@heartandstroke.ca](mailto:research@heartandstroke.ca). Recipients must acknowledge the support of Heart & Stroke and Brain Canada; further details will be provided to all successful applicants.

*"Funding for this project is provided by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, and the Canada Brain Research Fund (CBRF), an innovative arrangement between the Government of Canada (through Health Canada) and Brain Canada Foundation".*

### A.15 Funding Availability

Financial contributions for this initiative are subject to availability of funds. Should the funders funding levels not be available or decrease due to unforeseen circumstances, funders reserve the right to **reduce, defer or suspend financial contributions** to awards received as a result of this funding opportunity.

## B. SPECIFIC PROGRAM INFORMATION

### B.1 Eligibility

In order to be eligible to apply for the 2025/26 Master's Personnel Award for Black Scholars, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- a. Applicants must self-identify as Black. Please refer to section [A.7](#) for further details.
- b. As of the application deadline date applicants must be Canadian citizens, permanent residents of Canada or Protected Persons under subsection 95(2) of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Canada).
- c. At the time of submission, applicants must either (a) be enrolled in a full-time Master's program at an [eligible Canadian institution](#), or (b) have applied for full-time admission to a Master's program at an [eligible Canadian institution](#), with a start date of no later than September 30, 2025. Applicants must submit, from the institution, confirmation of being enrolled/accepted as a full-time student, or have submitted an application for full-time admission in a Master's program. For more details, please refer to the '*Institutional Statement*' in section [B.12](#).
- d. Partial Master's Personnel Awards for less than one (1) year of funding are not available.
- e. Applicants must have an identified research supervisor based at an [eligible Canadian institution](#) where the research will be undertaken.

### B.2 Tenure

- a. The award start date is September 1, 2025, for a period of up to 24 months. The term of the award will include reasonable holiday time according to the arrangement with the recipient's supervisor(s) and institution.
- b. Recipients starting their Master's program in September of 2025 are eligible for up to two (2) years of funding.
- c. The term of the award cannot be extended beyond the period originally specified and approved at the time of the award offer unless for reasons outlined in [B.8](#).
- d. An awardee may defer the start date of the award for up to 6 months (i.e., no later than March 1 of the following year). Deferral requests must be made at the time of the award offer and can only commence on the first day of the deferred month requested. Deferral requests beyond 6 months of the award start date will not be considered. Recipients are strongly encouraged to submit a new application for the following year's competition. Deferral is defined as a delay in the start date of the award beyond the available start dates outlined above in [B.2.a](#). Any start date deferral must ensure that the award end date remains consistent with the original program end date unless for reasons outlined in [B.8](#).
- e. Award recipients who are fast-tracked (transfer/move without completing their Master's degree) into a Doctoral program after admission to the Master's program can maintain their award if all other criteria continue to be met. For confirmation, fast-tracked award recipients must submit a written request and provide documentation of acceptance into a Doctoral program to Heart & Stroke.
- f. In the event that the recipient receives a Doctoral Personnel Award, the Master's Award will be terminated.
- g. The recipient must notify Heart & Stroke if their Master's registration status changes (e.g., termination of studies, successful defense, program change, etc.).

### B.3 Stipend and Allowances

- a. Recipients may be awarded up to \$54,000 CAD (up to \$27,000 per year for a maximum of two (2) years). See [B.4](#) for details.
- b. These multi-year stipends may be used **ONLY** for salary support for the recipient. No part of this stipend is to be used to support other direct or indirect costs associated with any research programs or operating grants.
- c. Recipients may engage in and receive remuneration for departmental activities (e.g., undergraduate teaching) that contribute to their development as researchers. It is expected that these activities would not impinge upon the time dedicated to the proposed research training.
- d. Recipients who hold internal non-peer-reviewed awards or scholarships from their own host institution, awarded based on merit or as part of the admission process rather than through a competitive selection, are permitted to retain those awards. This is subject to any specific policies or conditions outlined by the institution regarding such awards.



- e. Recipients who hold internal peer-reviewed awards from their own host institution through a competitive selection, same conditions for external awards in [B.4](#), apply.

#### **B.4 Disclosure of Other Awards**

- a. It is the responsibility of the recipient and/or the supervisor to inform Heart & Stroke if the recipient receives any other external peer-reviewed stipend award(s) (i.e., NOT travel or poster awards) within 30 days of receiving another stipend award. Disclosure of alternate stipend awards must include the formal offer of the award(s), along with the terms and conditions.
- b. Recipients may **NOT** hold another external peer-reviewed stipend award(s) valued at \$27,000 per year for two (2) years or higher.
- c. An external peer-reviewed stipend award that presents an overlap refers to a financial stipend or award, reviewed and awarded by an external funding agency or entity, where the objectives, funding period, or scope of the award overlaps with this personnel award and the project it's funding. This overlap may include duplications in the proposed research, financial salary support, or time commitment, potentially resulting in duplicated obligations between the awards.
- d. Top-up funding is available under this program in order for the recipient to reach the same funding level should they receive another external peer-reviewed award for less than \$27,000 per year for two (2) years.

#### **B.5 Multiple Heart & Stroke Awards**

Applicants may submit applications to multiple Heart & Stroke Personnel Awards, but they may not hold multiple Heart & Stroke Personnel Awards at one time. This includes awards through the Heart & Stroke open competitions and strategic initiatives. Where partnership programs are in place, the applicant must contact Heart & Stroke for more information.

#### **B.6 Transfer of Award**

Personnel Awards may not be assigned or transferred to another individual under any circumstances. Recipients of Personnel Awards are not permitted to change supervisors, programs or institutions without the documented permission of the funders. The institution to which the award recipient is moving will be required to supply the same supporting documentation as was required in the original application.

#### **B.7 Award Termination**

When work under an award is complete, or if for any reason the work cannot be continued, the award will be closed. The recipient must notify Heart & Stroke immediately, and any remaining funds will be frozen and cannot be reallocated to other uses. The institution will prepare the final accounting and return outstanding funds to the funders.

#### **B.8 Prolonged Absence from Work**

The recipient or supervisor will notify the funders of any causes (parental leave, medical leave, personal leave, vacation time, etc.) necessitating absence from work exceeding thirty (30) successive days. Extension of the award duration may be considered, and continuation of the award will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the funding partners. Relevant institutional policies will also apply, and the end date of the award will be extended by the approved duration of the leave. For further details, recipients are encouraged to review the Heart & Stroke [Grant Management Guidelines](#).

#### **B.9 Eligible Research Areas**

The applicant must estimate the proportion of the proposed heart and/or brain research that falls under the four (4) health research themes as defined by CIHR.

##### Theme 1. Biomedical Research

Research with the goal of understanding normal and abnormal human function, at the molecular, cellular, organ system and whole-body levels, including the development of tools and techniques to be applied for this purpose; developing new therapies or devices which improve health or the quality of life of individuals, up to the point where they are tested on human subjects. Biomedical research may also include studies on human subjects that do not have a diagnostic or therapeutic orientation.



Theme 2. Clinical Research

Research with the goal of improving the diagnosis and treatment (including rehabilitation and palliation) of disease and injury; improving the health and quality of life of individuals as they pass through normal life stages. Clinical research usually encompasses research on, or for the treatment of, patients.

Theme 3. Health Services Research

Research with the goal of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of health professionals and the health care system, through changes to practice and policy. Health services research is a multidisciplinary field of scientific investigation that studies how social factors, financing systems, organizational structures and processes, health technologies, and personal behaviours affect access to health care, the quality and cost of health care, and ultimately Canadians' health and well-being.

Theme 4. Social, Cultural, Environmental and Population Health Research

Research with the goal of improving the health of the Canadian population, or of defined sub-populations, through a better understanding of the ways in which social, cultural, environmental, occupational, and economic factors determine health status.

**B.10 How to Apply to the 2025/26 Master's Personnel Awards for Black Scholars**

A complete application must include the following:

- [CIRCUlink](#) online Application e.Form including the:
  - Main fillable fields - Self-Attestation , Personal Statement, Research Summary, and Lay Summary;
  - Mandatory Attachments - Academic Transcript(s), Applicant Canadian Common CV, Supervisor(s)' Canadian Common CV (including Co-Supervisor's Canadian Common CV if applicable), Institutional Statement, Mentorship & Training Plan, CIHR Research Training Module: Sex and Gender Considerations Certificate, Signature Page, and Proof of Canadian Citizenship / Residency / Protected Person.
- Two (2) Letters of Reference submitted by the identified referees via [research@heartandstroke.ca](mailto:research@heartandstroke.ca).

**! Note:** Should any significant changes occur from the time of submission to award notification, Heart & Stroke reserves the right to withdraw that application from the competition. Changes to a research topic will need to be justified. Changes that impact eligibility status such as acceptance of another grant of equal or higher value or evidence of falsifying identity, will result in application withdrawal. Misrepresentation of any content by the applicant may result in cancellation of the award.

**B.11 Submission Process and Checklist**

All application components noted below must be completed and submitted via [CIRCUlink](#) by the specified deadline date. Use the Application Checklist below to confirm that you have completed all application components required to be uploaded to [CIRCUlink](#) as part of this competition.

<b>Application Checklist</b>	<b>Submission Method</b>	<b>Completed and Submitted by</b>
Registration and Profile Setup	<i>CIRCUlink – Fillable Fields</i>	<i>Applicant</i>
Application e.Form (all sections)	<i>CIRCUlink – Fillable Fields</i>	<i>Applicant</i>
Academic Transcripts (undergraduate and graduate if applicable)	<i>CIRCUlink – Attachment</i>	<i>Applicant</i>
Applicant's Common CV (Heart & Stroke Version)	<i>CIRCUlink – Attachment</i>	<i>Applicant</i>
Supervisor(s)' Common CV (Heart & Stroke Version)	<i>CIRCUlink – Attachment</i>	<i>Applicant</i>
Institutional Statement	<i>CIRCUlink – Attachment</i>	<i>Applicant</i>
Mentorship and Training Plan	<i>CIRCUlink – Attachment</i>	<i>Applicant</i>
CIHR Research Training Module: Sex and Gender Considerations Certificate	<i>CIRCUlink – Attachment</i>	<i>Applicant</i>
Signature Page Form	<i>CIRCUlink – Attachment</i>	<i>Applicant</i>
Proof of Canadian Citizenship/Residency/Protected Person	<i>CIRCUlink – Attachment</i>	<i>Applicant</i>
Letter of Reference #1	<i>Email</i>	<i>Referee</i>
Letter of Reference #2	<i>Email</i>	<i>Referee</i>

## B.12 Application

Applications will be completed online using Heart & Stroke's online system, [CIRCULink](#). A detailed [CIRCULink User-Guide](#) to assist in navigating the online system is available, and all **applicants are strongly encouraged to review it in advance of starting an application to optimize user experience**. Additionally, the following tutorials have been created to assist applicants in the creation/updating of an applicant profile in [CIRCULink](#):

- [Profile Creation Tutorial](#)
- [Profile Update Tutorial](#)

Applicants must complete and upload/submit all application components listed below in the Personal, Research, Academic and Additional Components via [CIRCULink](#) by the specified deadline date. Applicants may submit the application in English or French.

All uploaded components must be **unprotected** in PDF form and:

- Single-spaced using either 12-point Times New Roman or 11-point Arial font. Condensed type or spacing is not acceptable.
- Margins should be set at 1.87 cm (3/4 inch) all around.

**! All application components listed below are considered mandatory and required for a submission to be considered complete. Incomplete submissions will result in the application being withdrawn from the competition, without appeal.**

### Self-Attestation Component

Self-attestation of Black heritage and/or ancestry is required for applicants applying to this funding opportunity. The information collected may be reviewed by a committee of community members to confirm that an applicant meets the self-identification eligibility requirement as outlined in this competition's guidelines. Please refer to section [A.7](#) for further details.

### Personal Declaration

Applicants are required to confirm their eligibility for the award by completing a self-attestation within their application including a Personal Declaration outlining their connection, engagement and/or relationship to their Black heritage, ancestry and/or community (*limit: 5,000 characters/1 page*).

**! Any falsification of claim regarding Black Self-Identification will be considered a serious violation and will result in appropriate consequences including, but not limited to, the revocation of the award, recovery of disbursed funds, and temporary/permanent disqualification from future competitions, depending on the severity of the breach and the specific circumstances involved.**

### Personal Component

**Personal Statement.** In [CIRCULink](#), applicants should outline the relevant experiences (lived, academic and/or community) that have led up to their current career goals (*limit: 10,000 characters/2 pages*).

**Two (2) Letters of Reference (Required).** The two (2) referees listed in the Application Form who are able to provide insight into the applicant's character and ability to pursue a career in research must email their letters of reference directly to Heart & Stroke at [research@heartandstroke.ca](mailto:research@heartandstroke.ca) to arrive not later than **4:00 PM ET on Thursday, March 20, 2025**.

Please label the file and email subject as follows: *Application Attachment\_LAST NAME, First Name of Applicant\_Referee Initials\_Date of Submission*.

Each letter of reference is required to be no more than two (2) pages. At least one letter must be from an academic familiar with the applicant's work/research. The other letter may be from a community member or an academic member. Due to conflict of interest, letters of support from the funders' employees are not permitted.

**! Applications missing the required 2 letters of reference or applications where the letters of reference exceed 2 pages, may result in the application being withdrawn from the competition, without appeal.**

## Research Component

**Research Summary.** In [CIRCUlink](#), applicants should detail the rationale, objective(s), methodological approach, timeline and significance/impact of their proposed research (*limit: 7,500 characters/1.5 pages*).

**Mentorship & Training Plan:** In a co-signed letter, of a maximum of two (2) pages attachment (to be uploaded to [CIRCUlink](#)), the applicant and supervisor should co-develop a plan that includes: (a) The role of the applicant's advisory committee (supervisor and/or co-supervisors) in mentoring the applicant; (b) The expected research milestones over the course of the award; (c) Specific knowledge and skills that the supervisor expects the applicant will acquire; (d) An overview of the research and academic training environment for the applicant; (e) Details on resources, programs, technologies, etc., which will be made available to the applicant.

**! Applications where the Mentorship and Training Plan is missing or exceeds 2 pages may result in the application being withdrawn from the competition, without appeal.**

## Academic Component

**Academic Transcript(s).** Include both undergraduate and graduate transcripts, if applicable; to be uploaded to [CIRCUlink](#) as an attachment.

Please note that:

- Transcripts printed from the applicant's personal institution account are acceptable.
- Up-to-date official transcripts are defined as transcripts issued by the Registrar's Office and dated or issued in the fall session of the year of the application (if currently registered) or after the last term completed (if not currently registered).
- Copies of official transcripts from the institution are accepted. A copy is defined as a copy of the original document (or of the original translated document if official transcript is not in either English or French).
- Applicants who are or were registered at an institution that does not provide transcripts must submit, in lieu of a transcript, a letter bearing the official institution seal/stamp or a letter signed by the Dean of Graduate Studies confirming the applicant's program of study, the applicant's registration status, the date of initial registration, the degree obtained or sought and the fact that the institution does not provide transcripts.

**Applicant's Canadian Common CV (Heart & Stroke version only).** The [Canadian Common CV \(CCV\)](#) allows researchers to enter their CV data once and output it in formats suitable for submission to CCV Network member organizations, including Heart & Stroke. Applicants should use the web-based form to enter their CV information directly online via <https://ccv-cvc.ca/indexresearcher-eng.frm> for the categories including, but not limited to: education, recognitions, employment, research funding history, activities (supervisory, mentoring, community and volunteer, knowledge and technology transfer, international collaboration), contributions (presentations, interview and media relations, publications, intellectual property). Once applicants have completed the CCV, output the form in the Heart & Stroke format. Please see the reference guide [CIHR Academic CV](#) for more information. Applicants are required to upload the completed CCV to [CIRCUlink](#) as an attachment.

## Additional Component

**Lay Summary.** In [CIRCUlink](#), applicants should provide a lay summary of the research proposal in non-scientific, everyday language at a level no greater than Grade 8\*. The use of analogies, simplifications, and generalizations is recommended rather than scientific and technical terms. For more information on how to assess grade level, please refer to the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

**SGBA+ and EDI.** In [CIRCUlink](#), applicants should describe how sex and/or gender (socio-cultural) considerations will be considered in their research design or explain why sex is not applicable in their research design. (*limit: 2,500 characters/0.5 pages*). Applicants should outline how EDI have been integrated in the research design. For more details about SGBA+ and EDI, please refer to [A.10](#).

**Lay Descriptors and Classification.** In [CIRCUlink](#), applicants are asked to identify their research area focus, descriptors, risk factors, keywords and other pillars that are most relevant to their research.

**Supervisor's Canadian Common CV (Heart & Stroke version only).** Applicants are required to submit the supervisor(s) Canadian Common CV (CCV), including co-supervisor if applicable, as part of their application. Applicants are required to combine all supervisor(s)' CCVs into one PDF and upload to [CIRCULink](#) as a single attachment. This information will not be included in the Evaluation Criteria but is requested so that the Selection Committee can gauge the alignment of a supervisor's research expertise with proposed research project of the applicant. The [Canadian Common CV \(CCV\)](#) allows researchers to enter their CV data once and output it in formats suitable for submission to CCV Network member organizations, including Heart & Stroke. Use the web-based form to enter your CV information directly online via <https://ccv-cvc.ca/indexresearcher-eng.frm> for the categories including, but not limited to: education, recognitions, employment, research funding history, activities (supervisory, mentoring, community and volunteer, knowledge and technology transfer, international collaboration), contributions (presentations, interview and media relations, publications, intellectual property). Once you have completed the CCV, output the form in the Heart & Stroke format. Please see the reference guide [CIHR Academic CV](#) for more information.

**Institutional Statement.** The applicant's institution must provide a Statement detailing the following:

- The Research Program the applicant is enrolled in or has applied to;
- The applicant's start date within the program the applicant is seeking support for;
- The applicant is enrolled in a graduate program and is in good standing, or for applicants who are not enrolled, that their application to the school's graduate program has been submitted with a start date of no later than September 30, 2025;
- Confirmation of the applicant's supervisor(s);
- Endorsement of the applicant and that they meet eligibility and other requirements of the competition.

The Statement is to be signed by an institutional representative not involved with any other aspects of the application and who is authorized by the institution to confirm the required information. Applicants are required to provide this written statement as part of their complete application submission, as an attachment uploaded to [CIRCULink](#).

**Proof of Citizenship.** All applicants must submit their valid proof of Canadian Citizenship, Permanent Resident or Protected Person document. The document must be uploaded to [CIRCULink](#) in unprotected PDF format.

The following are the acceptable forms of proof:

- Certificate of Canadian Citizenship;
- Birth certificate/copy of an act issued by the proper provincial government authority;
- Valid passport;
- Permanent Resident Card;
- Form IMM 1000;
- Form IMM 5292;
- Letter received indicating a positive decision from the Immigration and Refugee Board;
- Verification of Status (VOS) document with positive Pre-Removal Risk Assessment (PRRA) decision from IRCC; or
- Temporary Resident Permit if you are a Protected Temporary Resident.

**Signature Page Form.** All applicants must complete the signature page form, as found in [CIRCULink](#), and upload a completed form to their [CIRCULink](#) application as an attachment. The signature form requires all fields to be completed, including the mandatory two institutional signatures.

### **B.13 Evaluation Criteria**

All applicants must self-identify as Black for the application to proceed to the evaluation stage. Heart & Stroke will perform a relevance review to identify that applicants meet the eligibility criteria, and that applications are in alignment with Heart & Stroke and Brain Canada objectives and strategy of this funding opportunity. Applications that do not meet these criteria will be withdrawn from the competition. There will be no appeal process once decisions are made. The Personal, Research and Academic Components, noted below, will be reviewed by the Selection Committee, and one overall score for each applicant will be calculated. The relative weight of each component is detailed below.

Review Criteria	Description
Personal component (40%)	Personal Statement
	Letters of Reference
Research component (30%)	Research Summary
	Mentorship & Training Plan
Academic component (30%)	Academic Transcript(s)
	Applicant Common CV (Heart & Stroke version only)
<p><b>! Should any significant changes occur from the time of submission to award notification, Heart &amp; Stroke reserves the right to withdraw the application from the competition. Changes to a research topic will need to be justified. Changes that impact eligibility status such as acceptance of another grant of equal or higher value or evidence of falsifying identity, will result in application withdrawal without appeal.</b></p>	

<b>PERSONAL COMPONENT ASSESSMENT (40%)</b>
<p>This combined component, composed of the Personal Statement and Letters of Reference, is intended to assess the applicant's potential to pursue a career in research.</p> <p>Indicators of excellence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lived experience;</li> <li>• community experience;</li> <li>• work experience;</li> <li>• leadership experience;</li> <li>• involvement in academic life; and</li> <li>• volunteerism/community outreach.</li> </ul>

<b>RESEARCH COMPONENT ASSESSMENT (30%)</b>
<p>This combined component, composed of the Research Summary and Mentorship &amp; Training Plan, is intended to assess the quality of the proposed research as well as the mentorship and training plan.</p> <p>Indicators of excellence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• significance of proposed research;</li> <li>• clarity of research question and/or hypothesis.;</li> <li>• well-defined goals and objectives;</li> <li>• appropriate approaches and methodologies to answer the research questions;</li> <li>• realistic timelines for completing the proposed research;</li> <li>• impact of proposed research to heart and brain-related knowledge, healthcare, health services or health outcomes;</li> <li>• clear role of applicant's advisory committee (supervisor and/or co-supervisors) in mentoring the applicant;</li> <li>• clear research milestones over the course of the award;</li> <li>• specific knowledge and skills that the supervisor expects the applicant will acquire;</li> <li>• alignment of academic training environment with the applicant's proposed research; and</li> <li>• appropriate resources, programs, technologies available for the applicant's research and training.</li> </ul>

<b>ACADEMIC COMPONENT ASSESSMENT (30%)</b>
<p>This combined component, composed of the Academic Transcript and the Applicant's Common CV, is intended to assess past academic results, transcripts, awards and distinctions.</p> <p>Indicators of academic excellence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• academic record;</li> <li>• quality of program and relevance of courses pursued;</li> <li>• relative standing (if available);</li> <li>• recognitions, scholarships and awards;</li> <li>• employment history;</li> <li>• research funding history;</li> <li>• activities (supervisory, mentoring, community and volunteer, knowledge and technology transfer, international collaboration); and</li> <li>• contributions (presentations, interview and media relations, publications, intellectual property).</li> </ul>



Awards will be allocated in a top-down rank, according to the following grading scheme. Only applications whose overall score is ranked from Outstanding (4.5 - 4.9) to Very Good (3.5 - 3.9) are within the accepted fundable range. Overall scores of less than 3.5 are not eligible for funding.

Overall Score	
Outstanding	4.5 - 4.9
Excellent	4.0 - 4.4
Very good ( <i>Threshold for funding is 3.5</i> )	3.5 - 3.9
Fair ( <i>Not eligible for funding</i> )	3.0 - 3.4
Poor	0.0 - 2.9

#### **B.14 Selection Committee and Lay Reviewers**

Heart & Stroke's peer review process engages national and international researchers and includes over 180 members of the [Scientific Review Committee](#) (SRC). The SRC comprises up to 13 separate panels that ensure in-depth knowledge and expertise in all areas of heart disease and stroke. All review panels may meet in person or virtually at the discretion of the SRC and Heart & Stroke. The SRC will oversee the Selection Committee and the Lay Reviewers. All members must agree to respect the privacy, confidentiality and conflict of interest rules of the funders.

The Selection Committee will be ad-hoc, comprised of a minimum of 6-8 external members (depending on the number of applications received), with the goal of including members of Black communities, including researchers with expertise in heart and brain research. If necessary, Heart & Stroke may recruit international members for the Selection Committee.

Lay Reviewers are also incorporated in the scientific review process in order to increase accountability and transparency of the review process and ensure that the proposed research is aligned with the objectives of this funding competition. If Lay Reviewers identify that the lay summary is unsatisfactory, funds will be encumbered pending receipt of a satisfactory lay summary. Every effort will be made to recruit Black Lay Reviewers. For more information on the lay summary, please see the related section on the Application electronic form (e.Form) on [CIRCULink](#).

#### **B.15 Notification of Results and Award Commencement**

All applicants will be notified of the results in July 2025. The award start date is September 1, 2025.

#### **B.16 Reporting Process: Financial, Progress and Final Reports**

The recipient's institution is required to submit (a) an annual consolidated Financial Report for the reporting period for the recipient, (b) an annual Progress Report for the recipient; and (c) a Final Report for the recipient. Recipients will be sent annual email reminders with instructions to submit the reports via [CIRCULink](#).

The annual Finance and Progress Reports are to be received no later than 30 days after the end of each funding year (*e.g., if award start date is September 1, 2025, the Financial and Progress Reports would be due October 1, 2026*).

Satisfactory Financial and Progress Reports are required; the recipient can expect to receive communication from Heart & Stroke within sixty (60) business days if any issues of concern are identified with a submitted annual report.

A Final Report must also be submitted to Heart & Stroke no later than one (1) month after completion/termination of the award (*e.g., for Master's Awards ending August 31, 2027, the final report would be due October 1, 2027*).

## **B.17 Contact Information**

**For any questions or concerns, the preferred form of communication is email.** Your email will go to a research email inbox which is accessed by multiple research team members and is the best way to get a timely response.

Heart & Stroke can provide general guidance but cannot confirm eligibility and/or relevance of your research topic during the application process. Final determination on eligibility and/or relevance can only be made on receipt of the full application and after the application deadline.

**Email:** [research@heartandstroke.ca](mailto:research@heartandstroke.ca)

**Website:** <https://www.heartandstroke.ca/what-we-do/research/for-researchers>

<b>! Please note this EMAIL ACCOUNT is only monitored <u>from 9am-5pm ET, Monday to Friday.</u></b>
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## **B.18 About the Funders**

### **Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada**

Life. We don't want you to miss it. That's why Heart & Stroke leads the fight against heart disease and stroke. We must generate the next medical breakthroughs so people in Canada don't miss out on precious moments. Together, we are working to promote health, save lives and enhance recovery through research, health promotion and public policy.

### **Brain Canada**

Brain Canada Foundation is a national non-profit organization that develops and supports collaborative, multidisciplinary, multi-institutional research across the neurosciences. Through partnering with the public, private and voluntary sectors, Brain Canada connects the knowledge and resources available in this area to accelerate neuroscience research and funding and maximize the output of Canada's world-class scientists and researchers.