

## **1. Program Overview and Objectives**

The Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry at Western University delivers outstanding education, advances high-impact research and innovation, and partners with communities to improve health for today and tomorrow.

The Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry “Scientist in Training” Postdoctoral Fellowship program will provide support for postdoctoral scholars pursuing fundamental and translational medical research. Funded by generous donors, support will be provided on a competitive basis to postdoctoral scholars with a research focus that aligns with donor interests. In this inaugural phase the program aims to attract and support top-tier postdoctoral scholars working in the areas of pain, neuroscience, or cardiovascular imaging.

The proposed program will incorporate the following key features:

- Trainees will engage in **high-impact research** with access to state-of-the-art equipment and resources, including Core Facilities.
- Trainees will **collaborate across disciplines** to tackle complex research questions and drive innovation.
- Training will **enhance career prospects** by preparing trainees for diverse career paths in academic, industry, and clinical practice through robust training and mentorship from renowned Faculty.
- Trainees will receive **competitive stipends**.

This program aligns with the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry's strategic mission to foster innovation and translational research that improves health outcomes globally.

### **1.1 Research Themes**

The program currently supports three research themes, each established through generous philanthropic donations. Future expansion of themes may be possible with additional donor support:

- **Pain Research** – Two fellowships available; research must focus on pain.
- **Neuroscience Research** – Two fellowships available; research must be in neuroscience.
- **Cardiovascular Imaging** – One fellowship available; research must focus on cardiovascular imaging.

Applicants may apply for only one theme.

## 1.2 Award Value and Allocation

The Schulich Postdoctoral Fellowship supports full-time research-intensive projects at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry. For the 2025 competition, up to five (5) awards will be granted.

Each award has a 2-year term and provides a minimum stipend of:

- **Year 1:** \$70,000 stipend plus 14% benefits
- **Year 2:** \$70,000 stipend (plus annual increase per PSAC collective agreement), plus 14% benefits

The approximate total award value is \$161,515. While a 2-year award is standard, the selection committee may also consider 1-year awards, depending on the proposed project and funding plan.

*Funding Breakdown:*

- **Schulich Contribution:** Up to \$50,000/year (\$100,000 total).
- **Supervisor Contribution:** Remaining cost of fellowship stipend, which is expected to be \$29,800 (Year 1) and \$31,715 (Year 2, subject to change based on the PSAC collective agreement). Matching funds must be sourced from external funds and must be secured at the time of application.

| Source       | Stipend         |                 | Total            |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
|              | Year 1          | Year 2*         |                  |
| Schulich     | \$50,000        | \$50,000        | \$100,000        |
| Supervisor   | \$29,800        | \$31,715        | \$61,515         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>\$79,800</b> | <b>\$81,715</b> | <b>\$161,515</b> |

\*Year 2 stipend amount is subject to change based on the collective agreement

*Additional Costs:* Supervisors will be responsible for paying out any unused vacation benefits and for the Employer Compliance fee for international students requiring a work permit.

## 1.3 Schulich Research Scholar Award

Schulich Postdoctoral Fellows are expected to apply for external Fellowship awards in their first year of funding.

If a Schulich Postdoctoral Fellow secures an external fellowship\* that providing at least \$40,000 per year in salary support during the term of their Schulich Postdoctoral Fellowship, they will receive a "*Schulich Research Scholar Award*". This award is for the duration of the external award or the remaining duration of their Schulich Postdoctoral Fellowship, whichever is shorter.

*Priority for the Western Research Scholar Award:* Fellows who receive a Tri-Council fellowship award are strongly encouraged to apply for the Western Research Scholar Award. If a Schulich Postdoctoral Fellow is awarded a Western Research Scholar Award, they will not be eligible for the Schulich Research Scholar Award.

Schulich Research Scholars will receive funding in addition to their external award from Schulich and their supervisor as outlined below:

- **Stipend:** A top-up to the total external award up to \$80,000/year plus 14% benefits
  - Schulich covers 60% of the top-up amount
  - Supervisor covers 40% of the top-up amount
- **Research Allowance:** \$5,000 per year, fully funded by Schulich

The top-up funding will be pro-rated for the remaining term of the Schulich Postdoctoral Fellowship from the start date of the external award. Any remaining funding from the original award will be returned to the source.

### 1.4 Award Period and Duration

Funding will begin on a mutually agreed start date between the Schulich Postdoctoral Fellow and their supervisor and must commence within six months of receiving the award. Deferrals beyond six months require approval from the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry.

Funding will be typically be awarded for a period of two years from the funding start date. If a Fellow leaves their postdoctoral position early, funding will terminate on their last completed day and any remaining funds will returned to the source.

## 2. Eligibility

This program supports candidates pursuing full-time postdoctoral studies under the primary supervision of a Faculty member with an eligible research academic appointment within the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry.

Applicants may also apply for other internal (e.g., Western Postdoctoral Fellowship) or external (e.g. CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC postdoctoral fellowships) fellowships. Applicants may currently or have previously held a postdoctoral position at Western University.

To be eligible, applicants must:

- a. Meet [Western University definition of a Postdoctoral Scholar](#) at the time of award.
- a. Not hold a permanent faculty position, or a faculty position leading to permanency.
- b. Not hold a postdoctoral position at another institution while holding this award.

- c. Secure the written commitment, including matching funds described in 1.2, from a Faculty member with the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry who has the expertise, experience, and capacity to act as the Supervisor of the Postdoctoral Fellow and their proposed project. The Primary Supervisor must hold a full-time research-eligible position at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry. Applicants may also be co-supervised by a faculty member who holds a full-time research-eligible position at another Faculty within Western University or at an external institution.
- d. Applicants who are not Canadian citizens must obtain the necessary permits, visa, or documentations. More information can be found on Western's [School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#)' website. Applicants may contact Mihaela Harmos ([mharmos@uwo.ca](mailto:mharmos@uwo.ca)) for any immigration or appointment-related issues.
- e. Schulich especially welcomes applications from First Nations, Métis and Inuit, racialized and 2SLGBTQ+ communities, women, people with disabilities, and those not listed who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas.

### 3. Adjudication

#### 3.1 Selection Committee

Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry is committed to ensuring that the selection committee will include broad and appropriate representation. This committee will be composed of internal reviewers from Western University, and external reviewers with relevant expertise. This approach is designed to minimize the possibility of unconscious bias influencing the evaluation process when reviewing applications.

#### 3.2 Adjudication Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria. The first two criteria are assessed by a binary, yes/no, sufficient/insufficient decision and failure to meet these will result in an unsuccessful application. The remaining sections are scored and weighted as indicated.

| Criteria                            | Evaluation                  | Description  |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 3.2.1 Alignment with Research Theme | Yes/No                      | The proposed research must align with the Schulich Postdoctoral Fellowship program and the chosen theme (Pain, Neuroscience, or Cardiovascular Imaging).   |
| 3.2.2 Research Training Environment | Sufficient/<br>Insufficient | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The training environment must provide appropriate space, facilities, equipment, funding, and personnel.</li> <li>The supervisor must demonstrate commitment to both the research project and the applicant's professional development.</li> </ul> |

|  |                    |   |
|--|--------------------|---|
|  |                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The supervisor's qualifications and research track record should reflect excellence and impact, including publications, patents, external funding, and HQP training.</li> </ul>  |
| 3.2.3 Applicant's Achievements and Activities      | 35% of total score | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Honours, Awards, and Distinctions - Relevance, significance, and scope (regional, national, international) of awards.</li> <li>Research Contributions and Activities - Publications, mentorship, datasets, tools, and community engagement. Applicant's role, impact of contributions, and both Evaluates both qualitative and quantitative research metrics.</li> </ul> |
| 3.2.4 Proposed Research Project                    | 35% of total score | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alignment with the applicant's experience and career stage.</li> <li>Feasibility and significance of the research question and methodology.</li> <li>Summary should include hypothesis, research plan, and potential impact.</li> </ul>  |
| 3.2.5 Research/Training Plan & Career Expectations | 15% of total score | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarity of career goals and research plans within the chosen theme.</li> <li>Relevance of training to career objectives and how this award supports future independent research.</li> <li>Alignment between applicant's research skills and training opportunities provided by the supervisor.</li> </ul>  |
| 3.2.6 Sponsor's Assessment                         | 15% of total score | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strength of reference letters from sponsors familiar with the applicant's research potential.</li> <li>Evaluates creativity, critical thinking, independence, and perseverance.</li> </ul>   |

**Scoring:**

- Scores are averaged and weighted equally across Faculty selection committee members.

*(Adapted from CIHR Fellowship Award and Western's BrainsCAN PDF Fellowship.)*

## 4. Application Submission

### 4.1 Key Dates:

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| March 2025           | Schulich PDF Program Launch                         |
| <b>May 20, 2025</b>  | <b>Deadline for Application and ROLA submission</b> |
| June 2025            | Adjudication Committee review                       |
| July 2025            | Communication of Results                            |
| July – December 2025 | Successful Candidates' Start Date                   |

### 4.2 Submission Process

Applicants must submit a complete Postdoctoral Fellowship Program Application Package to the Schulich Research Office. Documents should be in the order outlined below:

1. Application Form\*
2. Research Project Proposal
3. Alignment with Research Themes – Relevance Form
4. Postdoctoral Applicant CV
5. Supervisor and Co-Supervisor (if applicable) CV
6. Proof of PhD
7. Most Significant Contributions
8. Training Expectations
9. Research Training Environment
10. Career Interruptions and Exceptional Circumstances (if applicable)
11. Candidate Assessment Form and Letter of Support from two referees (Note: Referees send this directly to the Schulich Research Office).

\*If you have applied for an internal (e.g., Western Postdoctoral Fellowship) or external (e.g., Tri-Council Fellowship) fellowship for the same research project, you may submit that application instead of the Schulich application form. However, you must still include all required attachments listed in this document. While your external application can follow its original page limits and formatting, all additional attachments must meet Schulich's formatting guidelines.

Complete applications must be submitted to the Schulich Research Office through the [online submission portal](#) as **one PDF file** by the stated application deadline. Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered.

## **5. Post-Award Processes**

### **5.1 Award Acceptance**

The award must be accepted within 15 working days of the date of offer or the award may be cancelled and potentially offered to the next fundable applicant.

### **5.2 Funding Start Date**

Successful applicants are expected to begin their award between July and December 2025. For individuals who do not yet hold a doctoral degree, awards will only begin after proof is provided that the recipient has completed all the requirements of the PhD program, including the oral examination. For foreign applicants coming to Canada, awards may only begin after proof of an entry visa into Canada is provided.

### **5.3 Reporting and Recognition**

Award recipients are required to submit a brief progress report at the end of year one and a final report within three months after the end of the fellowship. All publications and presentations resulting from the fellowship must acknowledge the support of the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry Postdoctoral Fellowship Program.

## **6. Contact Information**

This competition is administered by the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry's Research Office. Please contact [research@schulich.uwo.ca](mailto:research@schulich.uwo.ca) with any questions about this funding opportunity or its guidelines.