

# Call for Aspiration Post-doctoral Fellowships 2025

## Key information

**Salary** Minimum of \$60,000 per year, with \$30,000 in salary support provided by OVPRI and the rest provided by the faculty supervisor(s).

**Duration** 2 years.

**Eligibility** Candidates must be new to UVic and have received their PhD by the start date of the fellowship, but not more than two years prior to the application deadline, barring special circumstances. There is no citizenship requirement. The proposed research may be in any area.

**Help** Contact [postdocadmin@uvic.ca](mailto:postdocadmin@uvic.ca) for any questions.

For the 2025-2026 competition:

**Number of fellowships** Four Aspiration Post-doctoral Fellowships, plus one or two Aspiration Post-doctoral Fellowships in BC Biodiversity Conservation.

**Application deadline** Thursday, November 13, 2025. 5pm Pacific.

**Start date** Must begin on or before September 1, 2026.

**Results** Announced in January 2026.

## How to apply

Applications must be submitted using the online [application form](#). In addition to the form, the application components consist of a candidate statement, a supervisor statement, a research proposal, a candidate CV, and a special circumstances document (if applicable). Candidates must also secure two letters of reference that must be sent directly to [postdocadmin@uvic.ca](mailto:postdocadmin@uvic.ca).

Instructions for each application component are provided below. All submitted documents must be on an 8.5 x 11-inch size page with 12-point font text and a minimum of 2 cm margins on all sides.

The deadline for the 2025-2026 competition is Thursday, November 13, 2025, at 5pm Pacific.

## Application checklist

- Confirm eligibility and review conditions
- Compile required documents into a single pdf to submit via the Application Form
  - Candidate statement (1 page)
  - Supervisor(s) statement (1 page)
  - Research proposal (2 pages + references)
  - Candidate CV (no page limit)
  - Special circumstances (if applicable, 1 page)
- Request two letters of reference be sent to [postdocadmin@uvic.ca](mailto:postdocadmin@uvic.ca)
- Apply by completing the online [application form](#)

## Application components

### Application form

The application form will request the following information. You will not be able to save your responses, so please ensure you have all of the required information available before completing the form.

- Post-doctoral candidate information
  - Name
  - Email
  - Current position (e.g. PhD student, post-doctoral fellow)
  - Current institution
  - Whether or not your doctoral degree is completed
    - If yes, the date of completion
    - If no, the anticipated date of completion and the name and email of your current primary supervisor
- Supervisor and co-supervisor (if applicable) information
  - Name
  - Email
  - Position title
  - Academic unit
  - Research centre affiliations (if applicable)

- Research project information
  - Project title
  - Lay abstract (max 300 words)
  - Proposed start date (must be on or before September 1, 2026)
  - External fellowships
    - List at least one external fellowship that you intend to apply for or have already applied for
    - Please note the application deadline, as well as when you would be able to begin the external fellowship if your application was successful
    - This list will be used in part to assess the demonstrated and potential research and leadership success of the candidate (Evaluation Criterion I)
  - Letters of reference
    - Provide the names and email addresses of your two referees
    - Your proposed supervisor(s) may not be a reference
    - Letters of reference must be submitted directly by email to [postdocadmin@uvic.ca](mailto:postdocadmin@uvic.ca) before the application deadline and not uploaded by the candidate
    - We will not email the referees to request letters
  - Aspiration 2030 Impact Areas
    - Indicate, if applicable, the alignment of your research project with one or more of the five impact areas of the Aspiration 2030
      - Climate, environmental change and sustainability
      - Health and wellness
      - Indigenous-led scholarship
      - Social justice and equity
      - Technology and the human experience
  - Aspiration Post-doctoral Fellowship in BC Biodiversity Conservation
    - Indicate if you wish to additionally be considered for the Aspiration Post-doctoral Fellowship in BC Biodiversity Conservation
    - To be considered, your proposed research must advance understanding of BC biodiversity conservation, with a

preference for research that centres on or considers the impacts of climate change

- If you choose to be considered for this fellowship, you will still be considered for all other Aspiration Post-doctoral Fellowships
- You will then be required to upload all materials as a single pdf named using the following format:  
"AspirationPDF\_CandidateLastName(s)\_CandidateFirstName(s).pdf".  
This must include the candidate statement, supervisor statement, research proposal, candidate CV, and special circumstances (if applicable).

### Candidate statement

- Maximum of 1 page.
- To be completed by the post-doctoral fellow candidate.
- The candidate statement should summarize how this fellowship will help the candidate advance their independent career, provide an outline of their background and training, describe their past contributions and future plans to advance EDI in their research and discipline(s), discuss the training and experience they expect to receive, and justify their choice of supervisor(s).
- This document will be used primarily to assess the demonstrated and potential research and leadership success of the candidate (Evaluation Criterion I) but may also be used to assess the quality of the proposed research environment, including synergy with the proposed supervisor(s) and integration with a research centre, group, lab, and/or partner organization (Evaluation Criterion III).

### Supervisor(s) statement

- Maximum of 1 page.
- To be completed by the UVic faculty supervisor(s). If there is a primary and co-supervisor, the maximum length is still 1 page, and the supervisors should collaborate on the statement.
- The supervisor(s) statement should address both the synergy of the proposed research with their own research, as well as the research environment.

- The supervisor(s) statement should describe the fit between their research interests and those of the candidate and the anticipated mutual benefits, provide specifics about how the proposed research complements their ongoing projects and/or new research directions, detail the contributions that both they and the candidate have made in the design and development of the proposed research, as well as highlight the contribution the candidate would make to their academic unit and/or research centre.
- The supervisor(s) statement should provide details concerning the candidate's proposed research environment and clearly state the commitment from themselves and their academic unit and/or research centre and/or partner organization. Examples of commitment include, but are not limited to, opportunities for professional development, collaboration, or knowledge translation, or resources such as funding, facilities, or personnel that will be available to support the candidate as they carry out their proposed research and develop their leadership potential. The supervisor(s) should also comment on the possibility for and commitments to career advancement of the candidate.
- The supervisor(s) statement should identify the source(s) of the required match funding.
- This document will be used to assess the quality of the proposed research environment, including synergy with the proposed supervisor(s) and integration with a research centre, group, lab, and/or partner organization (Evaluation Criterion III).

### Research proposal

- Maximum of 2 pages, plus up to 4 pages of references. References should be in the format that is standard in the discipline of the proposed research.
- To be completed by the post-doctoral fellow candidate in collaboration with their faculty supervisor(s).
- The research proposal should provide a detailed description of the proposed research project and include any specific EDI considerations. If working closely with Indigenous communities, it should describe approaches to building respectful relationships and meaningful engagement. The research proposal should address:

- the objectives of the proposed research project, including research goals, questions and/or hypotheses;
- the background and importance of the proposed research project, including a brief overview of relevant information and/or rationale for the proposed research in order to position it within the context of current knowledge in the field;
- the methods and approaches of the proposed research project, including an overview of the methodology and theoretical framing and the rationale in choosing the methods and approach;
- the expected outcomes of the proposed research project, both in the short and long term;
- the significance and impact of the proposed research project, including the novelty of the project, the potential contribution the project will make to the advancement of knowledge, and the plan to disseminate the findings and/or enhance the potential for impact; and,
- the alignment with Aspiration 2030 impact area(s), as applicable.
- This document will be used to assess the quality and potential impact of the proposed research project (Evaluation Criterion II).

### Candidate CV

- No maximum page limit, and no requirements for formatting.
- To be completed by the post-doctoral fellow candidate.
- The candidate CV should include details about the candidate's research outputs, awards, and funding. This should include societal research outcomes such as relationship-building, influence on policy or mentorship, in addition to traditional research outputs like publications and presentations.
- The candidate CV should also include any activities that may help reviewers assess the candidate's leadership abilities.
- This document will be used to assess the demonstrated and potential research and leadership success of the candidate (Evaluation Criterion I).

### Special circumstances (if applicable)

- Maximum of 1 page.

- To be completed by the post-doctoral fellow candidate.
- If the candidate received their PhD more than two years prior to the application deadline, the special circumstances document should explain any personal circumstances that have delayed or interrupted the candidate's academic and/or career advancement, research, dissemination of results, or training.
  - Eligible delays follow [Tri-Agency guidelines](#) and may include parental leave, community or family responsibilities, disability, illness, mandatory military service, disruptions due to war, civil conflicts or natural disasters, or limited research opportunities due to socio-economic factors.
  - An extension to the eligibility window may also be granted if the candidate has been employed full-time in industry or government after they received their PhD.
- If the candidate is not new to UVic, the special circumstances document should provide a strong justification for why they should be eligible for the fellowship.
  - Eligible justifications may include established and ongoing relationships with nearby Indigenous communities, availability of specialized equipment or infrastructure, family reasons or obligations, health reasons, or community or cultural responsibilities.
- This document will only be used for pre-screening of eligibility and will not be shared with reviewers.

### Letters of reference

- The post-doctoral fellow candidate must secure two letters of reference.
- The letters of reference must be submitted directly by email to [postdocadmin@uvic.ca](mailto:postdocadmin@uvic.ca) by the referees before the application deadline and not uploaded by the candidate.
- The references must not be from the proposed supervisor(s).
- The letters of reference will be used to assess the demonstrated and potential research and leadership success of the candidate (Evaluation Criterion I).

## Eligibility

- **Eligible proposals will nominate one post-doctoral fellow candidate in collaboration with a primary supervising UVic faculty member.** A secondary co-supervising faculty member may be included. Post-doctoral fellow candidates who have not yet secured a supervisor are not eligible.
- **Faculty members may only serve as a supervisor or co-supervisor on one application.** They may also only supervise one Aspiration PDF at a time.
- **The award must recruit a new post-doctoral fellow to UVic.** Post-doctoral fellows who currently hold or have previously held a post-doctoral appointment or who completed their PhD at UVic are not eligible, barring exceptional circumstances. If the candidate is not new to UVic, they may submit a special circumstances document that provides a strong justification for why they should be eligible for the fellowship. Eligible justifications may include established and ongoing relationships with nearby Indigenous communities, availability of specialized equipment or infrastructure, family reasons or obligations, health reasons, or community or cultural responsibilities.
- **Applications can be in any research area.** Proposed research will be evaluated in part on its ability to make an impact through fundamental inquiry in alignment with [Aspiration 2030 impact areas](#). Those that have the potential to raise the external profile of the university in high impact areas will be prioritized. Candidates are encouraged to seek affiliation with a [research centre](#). Candidates whose research proposal aligns with the goals of the Aspiration Post-doctoral Fellowship in BC Biodiversity Conservation must indicate that they wish to be considered at the time of application.
- **Candidates must have fulfilled all degree requirements for a PhD or PhD-equivalent degree prior to the start of the award, but no longer than two years prior to the application deadline.** If the candidate received their PhD more than two years prior to the application deadline, they may submit a special circumstances document that explains any personal circumstances that have delayed or interrupted the candidate's academic and/or career advancement, research, dissemination of results, or training. Eligible delays follow [Tri-Agency guidelines](#) and may include



parental leave, community or family responsibilities, disability, illness, mandatory military service, disruptions due to war, civil conflicts or natural disasters, or limited research opportunities due to socio-economic factors. An extension to the eligibility window may also be granted if the candidate has been employed full-time in industry or government after they received their PhD.

- **There is no citizenship requirement.** However, successful candidates must be legally entitled to work full-time in Canada and must not have an active affiliation with any entity on Canada's list of [Named Research Organizations \(NROs\)](#) by the fellowship start date. Delays to the start date will be accommodated when they are caused by major disruptions of service at [IRCC](#). Delays to the processing of a single candidate's file by IRCC are not a grounds for extension but may be accommodated if possible depending on the budget constraints of the Aspiration 2030 PDF program.
- **Successful candidates are required to reside in Victoria for the duration of the award.**

## Conditions

- The post-doctoral fellowship appointment must be full-time for two years.
- Fellowships must begin on or before September 1, 2026.
- This funding opportunity follows [UVic's Post-Doctoral Fellows policy](#), and candidates must be eligible for an appointment according to the policy by the proposed start date.
- The post-doctoral fellow will receive a minimum salary of \$60,000/year for the duration of the award. OVPRI will contribute \$30,000/year in salary, plus the corresponding share of mandatory employment-related costs (MERCs) and employer extended health and dental costs on that amount. The supervisor will contribute at least \$30,000/year in salary, plus the corresponding share of MERCs and employer extended health and dental benefits costs on that amount. The total minimum cost to the supervisor, including MERCs and benefits, will be around \$35,000/year, with the exact cost depending on the post-doctoral fellow's enrolment in benefits.
- Any source of internal or external research funds may be used to meet the supervisor's matching requirement.
- Fellowship recipients are permitted to teach a maximum of one course (1.5 units) per year. These salary funds can be included as part of the match-funding required.
- Successful Aspiration Post-doctoral Fellows are required to apply for at least one external Fellowship each year (e.g. CPRA, MSHRBC Trainee Award).
- OVPRI will provide incentive funding of \$5000/year (plus MERCs and benefits) if the post-doctoral fellow is successful in securing external salary support during the term of this award. This will be a reduction from \$30,000/year, and the remaining funds will be returned to OVPRI. The supervising faculty contribution can also be reduced, so long as the post-doctoral fellow receives a total funding package that is at least \$5,000/year more than the amount they were receiving prior to securing the new award.
- In the case that a post-doctoral fellowship is relinquished before the end of the two-year period, the OVPRI funds will be returned to the OVPRI for future competitions.

## Adjudication process and evaluation criteria

Applications will be reviewed by a multidisciplinary committee that will have varying degrees of expertise in different fields of research. Efforts will be made to assign applications to reviewers with relevant expertise. Candidates are encouraged to keep this in mind when preparing their applications.

All applications will be vetted for eligibility before being sent to reviewers. Applications will be assigned to three reviewers, who will score the applications for each criterion according to the rubric below. To score highly, applications must excel at every indicator for each criterion. The overall score for the application will be calculated according to the assigned weighting for each criterion. Applications must receive an average score above 3.0 to be considered for funding. The reviewers will then meet and deliberate, using the scores as a guide, before providing final recommendations to OVPRI.

UVic is a proud signatory of the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#). Reviewers will evaluate applications according to DORA recommendations and will consider the value and impact of all scholarly outputs in addition to research publications and will adopt a broad definition of impact beyond Journal Impact Factor.

Reviewers will be required to complete UVic's [Increasing Equity in Decision Making](#) course. This course helps participants embed equity, diversity, inclusion (EDI) and anti-racism within decision processes so they will be inclusive of diverse forms of excellence.

### Evaluation criteria

#### **Evaluation Criterion I (50%)**

Demonstrated and potential research and leadership success of the candidate

- Demonstrated capacity for research excellence based on track record as defined by the quality of the candidate's research contributions and demonstrated capacity for leadership in the research domain as defined by the sphere of influence achieved to date by the candidate

- Excellence should not be limited to its narrow and traditional sense and should consider non-traditional career paths and metrics of research such as leadership and applied research
- Assessments should not be limited to the number of publications, the quality of journals, or the Journal Impact Factor
- Contributions and potential of the candidate to advance EDI in their discipline(s)
- Potential to secure external funding
- **Where to look:** Candidate statement, candidate CV, letters of reference, and list of external fellowships.

### **Evaluation Criterion II (30%)**

Quality and potential impact of the proposed research project

- Quality of the proposed research program in terms of its novelty/originality, feasibility and significance
- Potential of the proposed research program to position the candidate to have significant impact through a research-intensive career
- Potential impact (in the short, medium or long term), including fundamental impacts and those aligned with an Aspiration 2030 Impact Area
- Consideration of how proposed research design advances EDI
  - Research respectfully involves Indigenous peoples (if applicable)
- **Where to look:** Research proposal

### **Evaluation Criterion III (20%)**

Quality of the research environment

- Quality of the environment(s) in which the proposed research will be conducted
- Synergy with the proposed supervisor(s)
- Integration with a research centre, group, lab and/or partner organization
- Consideration of EDI training and development opportunities
- **Where to look:** Supervisor statement, possibly candidate statement

## Rubric

- 6** The application excels in all indicators.
- 5** The application excels in most indicators and adequately addresses the rest. Small improvements may be possible.
- 4** The application excels in some indicators and adequately addresses the rest. Improvements are possible.
- 3** The application adequately addresses most indicators. Improvements are required.
- 2** The application does not adequately address all indicators with some flaws or gaps.
- 1** The application does not adequately address all indicators and there are serious flaws or gaps.