



Aspiration Post-doctoral Fellowships

Evaluation Guidelines (2024-25)

Background

- Full details of the funding call are available in the Call for Proposals.
- All applications will be vetted for eligibility by OVPRI prior to peer review.
- Application titles and applicant names (PDF candidate and supervisors) will be provided to potential reviewers to determine any conflicts of interest
- Applications will be assigned to and rated by at least 3 reviewers, if applicable. Scores will be used to guide Review Committee deliberations and final recommendations for funding to OVPRI.
- PDF candidates are assessed on how they advance Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in their research, leadership activities, and respective discipline(s). Please review these resources on [EDI for Banting Post-doctoral Fellowships](#) and [on best practices in EDI in research](#).

Evaluation Criteria (informed by Banting PDF)

demonstrated and potential research and leadership success of the candidate (45%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated capacity for research excellence based on track record as defined by the quality of the applicant's research contributions and demonstrated capacity for leadership in the research domain as defined by the sphere of influence achieved to date by the applicant. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 impact of journals • If included, carefully consider the “Special Circumstances” response as a legitimate explanation for delays in research productivity
quality and potential impact of the proposed research project (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential of the proposed research program to position the applicant to have significant impact through a research-intensive career. • The quality of the proposal in terms of its novelty/originality, feasibility and significance • Potential impact (in the short, medium or long term), including fundamental impacts and those aligned with an Aspiration 2030 Impact Area.
quality of the research environment, (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
EDI considerations (15%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions and potential of the candidate to advance EDI in their respective discipline(s) • Consideration of how proposed research design advances EDI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Research respectfully involves Indigenous peoples (if applicable) – community engagement • Consideration of EDI training and development opportunities

Reducing Unconscious Bias

- Reviewers are strongly encouraged to complete the [Tri-Agency unconscious bias training module \(19 minutes\)](#), which focuses on unconscious bias in the evaluation process.
- Additional resources and readings include:
 - [Unconscious Bias \[PDF \(208 KB\) - external link \]](#)
 - Harvard tests on [Implicit Association](#) (recommended: Gender – Science, and Gender – Career tests)
 - [Global Research Council: Statement of Principles and Actions Promoting the Equality and Status of Women in Research \[PDF \(92 KB\) - external link \]](#)
 - [Canada Research Chair's Program: Equity and Diversity within the Program's Peer Review Process](#)
 - [Tips on reducing unconscious bias in the review process](#)
 - [Increasing Equity in Decision Processes](#)

Pre-Meeting Scoring Process

- Reviewers will be provided with a copy of all applications, to facilitate Committee discussions
- Reviewers will be provided with a customized pre-scoring rubric (Excel) outlining the applications for which they have been assigned as a reviewer.
- Reviewers will read all assigned applications and assign a pre-score (based on criteria above) in **Columns C-F**. Excel will automatically calculate a weighted score in column I (do not adjust this column). The following table is a guide to help determine your scores (based on Banting PDF):

Funding recommendation	Score
Recommended	7– 9
Could be recommended	3 – 6
Not recommended	0 – 2

- Reviewers are expected to give a pre-score (i.e., a score that is given before the review committee meeting and that may or not coincide with the final score) **between 0 and 9 (in increments of 1, with 9 being strongest and 0 being weakest)** to their assigned applications for each of the three selection criteria. In order for this system to work effectively, it is essential that the entire range be used. Therefore, reviewers should make every effort to distinguish between applications in order to avoid ties.
- Finally, reviewers are encouraged to share any qualitative comments/feedback for the applicants in **Columns G and H identifying any strengths and areas for improvement in the applications**. This is especially helpful for those rated lower who may not be successful in order for them to improve their future applications.
- **Reviewers must submit completed Excel file to postdocadmin@uvic.ca no later than the appointed deadline. We always welcome early submissions ☺** It is critical that the deadline be respected, as these will inform the final review committee meeting.
- Once all reviewers' pre-scores have been received, OVPRI calculates the average of the three reviewers' overall pre-scores and ranks the applications from strongest to weakest.

- OVPRI identifies applications where there is a discrepancy of 1.5 or more points between the reviewers' pre-scores. These will be flagged for discussion. If possible, an additional reviewer may be asked to complete a review of that application.
- OVPRI produces a preliminary ranked list of the applications, identifying the reviewers, and those applications that will be discussed at the meeting, namely:
 - The top applications (those scoring above 6.5)
 - All discrepant applications (as defined above, >1.5 difference in reviewer scores)

Review Committee Meeting

- Committee members are required to bring to the meeting their personal notes on applications assigned to them.
- The procedure for reviewing an application during the meeting consists of the following steps:
 - The **first reviewer** introduces the application briefly to describe the research topic, career stage/path and any special circumstances indicated in the application. The reviewer will then verbally summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the application by addressing each criterion in turn. This summary should take approximately five minutes.
 - The **second reviewer** provides comments, as needed, to highlight agreement or disagreement with the first reviewer's analysis. These comments should take approximately three minutes.
 - The **third reviewer (if applicable)** provides comments, as needed, to highlight agreement or disagreement with the first and second reviewer's analysis. These comments should take approximately two minutes.
 - **Other committee members** may make comments or raise questions in order to clarify information presented by the reviewers, which may lead to committee discussion. Members must ensure that career stage/path of the applicants and any special circumstances (e.g. unusual types of research contributions, research/leadership opportunities that were available to the applicant) have been considered in the assessment of their track record.
 - The committee comes to a **consensus** on the application's final score, taking into consideration the feedback provided by the three reviewers.
- All notes and review documents must be securely destroyed at the end of the meeting.
- The final ranked list of all applications, their consensus score, and all notes are submitted to the OVPRI for final decisions on funding.
- Time at the end of the meeting will be reserved to discuss the process and seek feedback from committee members on recommendations about how to improve the competition in the future.