



# Aspiration Postdoctoral Fellowships

## Call for proposals

*The Vice President Research and Innovation provides competitive match-funding for faculty to recruit and support outstanding postdoctoral fellows to conduct cutting-edge research at the University of Victoria.*

### About the Aspiration Postdoctoral Fellowships

Aspiration Postdoctoral Fellowships will be awarded to new outstanding postdoctoral fellows supervised by faculty members at the University of Victoria. This investment advances our world-class training and commitments to develop the next generation of research leaders. In this inaugural competition, **approximately 10 fellowships** will be granted in a competitive process. These awards will provide critical salary support, research training, and recognition for individuals at this unique career stage. Preference will be given to postdoctoral candidates who advance Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in their respective discipline(s).

### About Aspiration 2030

*Aspiration 2030* is UVic's new Research and Creative Works Strategy, which identifies the university's research aspirations, actions, outcomes and impact areas. UVic's vision is creating a better world through curiosity, engagement and innovation. The aspirations and actions outlined in *Aspiration 2030* reflect the university's unwavering institutional commitment to research and creative work in all its forms. These awards will advance research in one or more of the five Impact Areas of *Aspiration 2030*.

### Funding

This is a matched-funding opportunity. There are two Funding Stream options:

1. **UVic Aspiration Postdoctoral Fellow (\$55,000/year x 2 years = \$110,000 total)**, co-funded with \$25,000/year from the Office of the Vice President Research and Innovation, and \$30,000/year from the supervising faculty member(s), academic unit, research centre, and/or Dean.
2. **UVic Aspiration Mitacs Accelerate Industrial Postdoctoral Fellow (\$60,000/year x 2 years = \$120,000)**, co-funded with \$15,000/year from the Office of the Vice President Research and Innovation, \$15,000/year from the supervising faculty member(s), academic unit, research centre, and/or Dean, and \$30,000/year from Mitacs. This stream requires the participation of an eligible external partner organization and Mitacs approval (see "Stream 2 Details" below for more details).

## Key Dates

- Notice of Intent Due: December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 (12 noon Pacific Standard Time)
- Invite to Full Application: January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Full Applications Due: February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 (12 noon Pacific Standard Time)
- Results Announced: March 2022
- Fellowships Begin: April 1<sup>st</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022

## Value

An annual salary of \$50,000 will be provided to the postdoctoral fellow. An additional \$5,000/year will cover mandatory employer portion of non-discretionary benefits (e.g. Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, WorkSafe, BC Employer Health Tax). Supervisors are encouraged to make additional funds available to support the fellow's research and training activities. Stream 2 funding includes an additional \$5,000/year for additional salary, research and training expenses as part of the overall Mitacs Accelerate Industrial Postdoc award.

## Duration & Timing

- The fellowship is two years, full-time.
- The fellowship may start as early as April 1, 2022 or as late as September 1, 2022.

## Eligibility

- The proposed research project must be in alignment with one or more of the five Impact Areas of [\*Aspiration 2030 Research and Creative Works Strategy\*](#), inclusive of fundamental research, inquiry, and theoretical perspectives.
- **The award must recruit a new postdoctoral fellow to UVic.** Postdoctoral fellows who currently hold or have previously held a postdoctoral appointment at UVic are **not eligible**.
- Eligible proposals will nominate one postdoctoral fellow candidate in collaboration with a primary supervising UVic faculty member (research stream). A secondary co-supervising faculty member may be included.
- **UVic faculty members may only serve as a supervisor (either as primary or secondary co-supervisor) on one application.**
- Postdoctoral candidates must have fulfilled all degree requirements for a PhD or PhD-equivalent degree prior to commencing their postdoctoral appointment, but no longer than three years prior to the start of the award. To support equity, extensions to these time parameters will be considered in cases where applicants have experienced other career [interruptions as defined by the Tri-Agencies](#); please ensure you complete the Special Circumstances document as part of your Full Application.
- There is no citizenship requirement, but postdoctoral fellows must be legally entitled to work full-time in Canada by the award start date.

- We encourage postdoctoral candidates to seek affiliation with a [Research Centre](#) once they are appointed.

## Conditions

- This funding opportunity follows [UVic's Post Doctoral Fellows policy](#).
- The postdoctoral fellowship appointment must be full-time for two years.
- Fellowship recipients are permitted to teach a maximum of one course (1.5 units) per year.
- Successful Aspiration Postdoctoral Fellows are required to apply for at least one external Fellowship each year (e.g. SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR, MSFHR, Banting).
- If any external postdoctoral salary support funding is secured during the term of this award, the funding contribution from OVRPI will cease. The supervising faculty contribution can also be reduced, so long as the postdoctoral 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. Remaining OVRPI funds must be returned to OVRPI for use in future competitions.
- In the case that a postdoctoral fellowship is relinquished before the end of the two-year period, the OVRPI funds for Stream 1 Awards will be returned to the OVRPI for future competitions. For Stream 2 Awards, Mitacs policy and process will be followed.
- Stream 1 awards may use Tri-Council funds as matching funds. For Stream 2, federal stacking limits apply (i.e. Tri-Council funds, for example, are not eligible to be leveraged for this opportunity). Questions about match funding eligibility can be submitted to [aspiration2030@uvic.ca](mailto:aspiration2030@uvic.ca).

## Stream 2 Details

This is an opportunity for a **new postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Victoria with an external partner organization** through a [Mitacs Accelerate Industrial Postdoc application](#). The Stream 2 option addresses the limitation that many Mitacs eligible organizations (e.g. non-profits, charities, foundations) do not have access to the required cash to cover their share of a Mitacs postdoctoral fellow.

The Stream 2 goals are three-fold:

- 1) Leverage our internal resources to fund additional postdoctoral fellowships
- 2) Establish new relationships between UVic faculty and external partners or deepen relationships between UVic faculty and existing external partners
- 3) Provide an enhanced and applied training environment for postdoctoral fellows

Remember, federal stacking limits apply to match funding (i.e. Tri-Council funds, for example, are not eligible to be leveraged for this opportunity). In addition to meeting all Mitacs Accelerate Industrial program's requirements, there are additional requirements for the UVic Aspiration Postdoc – Stream 2:

- Fellowships must be 2 years in length

- Normally, a \$30,000/year cash contribution from the external partner organization is required. Instead, if successful in this internal UVic Aspiration Postdoc competition, the OVPRI will provide \$15,000/year x 2 years (\$30,000 total), with the remaining contribution provided by the supervising faculty member(s), academic unit, research centre, Dean, or external partner.
- Normally, Mitacs requires a minimum postdoc stipend/salary of \$45,000/year. Instead, UVic Aspiration Postdoctoral fellows are required to be paid at least \$50,000 in annual salary (plus \$5,000/year in non-discretionary benefits).
- Mitacs eligible partner organizations include municipalities, foundations, hospitals, and not-for-profits (including incorporated societies). In this internal UVic Aspiration Postdoctoral Fellowships competition, for-profit companies with 50 or more employees are not eligible to serve as partner organizations, however, smaller for-profit companies (<50 employees) are eligible. Questions regarding partner organization eligibility can be directed to Nolan Beise ([nbeise@mitacs.ca](mailto:nbeise@mitacs.ca)).
- If awarded in Stream 2, the final application must be submitted to Mitacs for their ultimate approval.

### Notice of Intent Procedure

#### **Due 12 noon PST, December 15, 2021**

A Notice of Intent must use the [NOI form](#) and be submitted by the primary supervising UVic faculty member to [aspiration2030@uvic.ca](mailto:aspiration2030@uvic.ca) as a **single PDF**, named using the following format: "AspirationPDF\_CandidateLastName(s)\_CandidateFirstName(s)". The Notice of Intent will be used to confirm eligibility, match funding sources, and to identify potential reviewers. Applicants to Stream 2 will have their proposed partner organization eligibility verified by a Mitacs Business Representative.

### Full Application Procedure

#### **Due 12 noon PST, February 1, 2022**

Only those invited following the Notice of Intent stage may proceed to a Full Application. Applications must be submitted to [aspiration2030@uvic.ca](mailto:aspiration2030@uvic.ca) as a **single PDF**, named using the following format: "AspirationPDF\_CandidateLastName(s)\_CandidateFirstName(s)". All documents are to be on 8.5 x 11-inch page size with 12-point font text and a minimum of 2 cm margins on all sides. A complete application includes the following components:

- **Candidate Statement (max. 1 page)** – to be completed by the Postdoctoral fellow candidate
  - The candidate should summarize how this fellowship will help advance their independent career, the training and experience they expect to receive, justify the choice of supervisor(s), and highlight any Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion considerations relevant to themselves and this application.
- **Supervisor(s) Statement (max. 1 page)** – to be completed by the UVic faculty supervisor(s)
  - *Appropriateness of the supervisor(s):* Describe the fit between your research interests and those of the applicant, and the anticipated mutual benefits. Provide specifics about how the proposed research complements your ongoing projects and/or new research

directions. Detail the contributions you and the applicant have made in the design and development of the proposed research as well as the contribution the postdoctoral fellow would make to your academic unit and/or research centre.

- *Research environment*: Provide details concerning the applicant's proposed research environment, clearly stating the commitment from you, your academic unit, and/or any research centre or partner organization. Examples of commitment include (but are not limited to) mentorship and professional development, opportunities for collaboration, dissemination/knowledge translation and resources (e.g., funding, facilities, personnel) that will be available to support the applicant as they carry out their proposed research and develop their leadership potential. Please comment on the possibility for and commitments to career advancement of the postdoctoral candidate.
- **Research Proposal (max. 2 pages, Stream 1 Applicant ONLY)** – to be completed by the Postdoctoral fellow candidate in collaboration with faculty supervisor(s)  
Provide a detailed description of your proposed research project, addressing the following elements:
  - *Objectives* of the proposed research project, including research goals, questions and/or hypotheses;
  - *Background and importance*: 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;
  - *Methods and approaches*: an overview of the methodology and theoretical framework, including a rationale for your choice of methods and approach;
  - *Expected outcomes* of the proposed research project (both short and long-term)
  - *Significance and impact* of the proposed research project, such as novelty and the potential contribution your research will make to the advancement of knowledge as well as your plan to disseminate the findings and/or enhance the potential for impact.
- **References (max. 5 pages, Stream 1 Applicant ONLY)** – to be completed by the Postdoctoral fellow candidate in collaboration with faculty supervisor(s)  
References should be in the format used by the primary discipline of the proposed research.
- **Mitacs Accelerate Industrial Postdoc Application form (no page limit, Stream 2 Applicant ONLY)** – to be completed by the Postdoctoral fellow candidate in collaboration with faculty supervisor(s)  
In collaboration with the external partner organization, a Mitacs Industrial Postdoc Application form must be completed (NB: this form will be provided once partner organization eligibility is confirmed from the Notice of Intent).
- **Candidate Contributions (max. 2 pages)** – to be completed by the Postdoctoral fellow candidate  
Using the following headings, outline your Background and Training, Awards and Honours, Research Contributions, Most Significant Contributions, and Relevant Leadership Activities.
- **Candidate Curriculum Vitae (no page limit)** – to be completed by the Postdoctoral fellow candidate  
A lifetime CV for the candidate should be included, and can be in any format (e.g. free-form, Canadian Common CV).

- **Special Circumstances (max. 1 page, OPTIONAL)** – to be completed by the Postdoctoral fellow candidate.

Candidates are encouraged to explain any personal circumstances in order to allow for a fair assessment of their research productivity. Identify any circumstances that might have delayed or interrupted your academic and/or career advancement, scientific research, other research, dissemination of results, training, etc. Common examples of an interruption/delay are parental leave, child rearing, illness, disability, cultural, community or family responsibilities, socio-economic factors, access to research/leadership opportunities or relocation of your research environment. Note that your eligibility window will only be extended by the duration of the eligible delay(s)/interruption(s). **It is essential that you provide specific dates for your delays and/or interruptions, including the exact number of months or days of these interruptions.** Candidates who wish to undertake postdoctoral research training at UVic and obtained their PhD at UVic **must** provide a strong justification for this exceptional circumstance which will be assessed as part of the selection committee review process. The more similar the proposed research environment is to that of the PhD, PhD-equivalent or health professional degree environment, the stronger the justification is required to be. Examples of valid justifications are:

- scientific reasons (e.g., availability of specialized equipment/infrastructure or expertise);
- family reasons (e.g., family obligations);
- health reasons (e.g., proximity to health care facilities);
- reasons related to community or cultural responsibilities; and
- conducting research with Indigenous communities.

### Adjudication Process and Selection Criteria

The success rate will depend on the number of applications received. The Vice-President Research & Innovation (VPRI) will oversee a peer review process and make final decisions on the allocation of awards. Invited reviewers (internal or external to UVic) will evaluate the proposals. Reviewers will be drawn from the areas of expertise within which applications are received.

The evaluation of successful proposals will be based on the following criteria:

- (a) the quality and potential impact of the proposed research project (25%);
- (b) demonstrated and potential research and leadership success of the candidate (50%); and
- (c) quality of the research environment, including synergy with the proposed supervisor(s) and integration with a research centre, group, lab and/or partner organization (25%).

The VPRI will make final decisions with consideration to review scores as well as the following criteria:

- Alignment with one or more of the five Impact Areas of [\*Aspiration 2030 UVic Research and Creative Works Strategy\*](#), inclusive of fundamental research, inquiry, and theoretical perspectives. This is less about the kind of research done, and more about how it directly or indirectly (in the short, medium or long term) contributes to an Impact Area.
- Preference will be given to postdoctoral candidates:

- from under-represented groups in their respective discipline.
- who did not complete their PhD at the University of Victoria.

**Questions concerning this call for proposals may be directed to Nathan Lachowsky, Special Advisor Health Research via [aspiration2030@uvic.ca](mailto:aspiration2030@uvic.ca).**