



ACHORD

Alliance for Canadian Health
Outcomes Research in Diabetes

ACHORD RESEARCH TRAINEE PROGRAM

TERMS OF REFERENCE

ACHORD is a CIHR funded team and represents collaboration among health outcomes and health services researchers, with a focus on diabetes and related conditions. These researchers share a common goal of improving the quality and efficiency of diabetes care so that patients living with diabetes may experience improved health outcomes. Building capacity in diabetes health outcomes research and providing mentorship to research trainees is a priority for ACHORD. The ACHORD training program is a new initiative aimed at providing trainees interested in research careers with education and experience in diabetes health outcomes research.

The ACHORD research trainee program will have two components: research training mentorship and stipend funding. ACHORD research trainee funding will be limited to 3 or 4 stipends annually, as selected through the ACHORD Research Trainee Subcommittee. Eligibility and application requirements are detailed in the following sections.

RESEARCH TRAINING MENTORSHIP

ACHORD research trainees will receive mentorship from the ACHORD investigators and collaborators. In addition to providing education in diabetes research, the ACHORD training program will provide instruction in career development and offer seminars in scientific and grant writing. The ACHORD research program will provide training on a number of special topics related to health outcomes research including, but not limited to:

1. Use of administrative data in health services research
2. Therapeutics
3. Evaluation of therapeutic efficacy and effectiveness
4. Pharmacoepidemiology
5. Economic evaluation
6. Biostatistics

The ACHORD research trainee program has two trainee streams; *Clinician Researcher* stream and *Academic Research* stream. Trainees will have similar educational and research training experiences within the program but will receive career development mentorship specific to each stream. Funding opportunities differ between the streams and this is detailed further below.

ACHORD investigators have several rich data sources which include administrative databases of Saskatchewan Health, Alberta Diabetes Surveillance System and the Alberta Provincial Project of Outcomes in Coronary Artery Disease. These sources will provide trainees with hands on experience in diabetes related health outcomes and/or health services research.

Funding Eligibility Requirements

- a) The ACHORD program is open to both Canadian citizens and those from abroad who wish to pursue a graduate degree, post-doctoral or post MD training in Canada under the tutelage of a mentor affiliated with the program.
- b) The program is open to a wide variety of clinical and non-clinical trainees who are working in, or interested in working in, diabetes research.
- c) Applicants must be eligible for external funding from a major funding agency such as CIHR, AHFMR or CDA.
- d) Applicants must be pursuing a research program primarily supervised by an ACHORD mentor, or intend to pursue a research project with an ACHORD mentor. A list of eligible mentors (investigators and collaborators inclusive) can be found on the ACHORD web site at www.achord.ca. The selected mentor must agree to supervise the applicant prior to application to the ACHORD program. The applicant's research plan should be written in full consultation and agreement between the mentor and applicant.
- e) Documentation of degree completion and licensing (if applicable) will be required prior to final acceptance into the program.
- f) It is expected that the candidate will dedicate at least 75% of their time and effort to diabetes-related research project(s).
- g) Applicants must be pursuing a research program and graduate studies or post-doctoral training.
- h) The applicant's research project should be in the area of diabetes and related conditions. Relevance to the research priorities of ACHORD should be detailed in the application form.

General Policies

Research Requirement

During the tenure of the ACHORD training fellowship, the applicant shall devote 75% of his/her time and effort to their research projects(s). The trainee may, with the approval of the ACHORD mentor, engage in and receive appropriate remuneration for departmental activities, including undergraduate teaching, that are contributory to their development as a research worker; however, these activities must not interfere with the trainee's primary research activities.

Healthcare Benefits

ACHORD does not provide additional funds for health care benefits. Arrangements to pay post-doctoral fellow (PDF) benefits should be made by the graduate or PDF supervisor.

Acknowledgement

The grant was provided in partnership with the CIHR. The following guidelines are intended to ensure a consistent format that recognizes appropriately the participation of partner organizations as well as CIHR's Institutes. ACHORD and CIHR must be acknowledged in the communication of research results produced by program trainees.

STIPEND FUNDING

Funding of trainees is available through ACHORD and a wide variety of external and internal sources. However, awards are considered bridge funding and trainees are expected to make every effort to secure external funding from a major funding agency (such as CDA, CIHR or AHFMR) during their fellowship term. Trainees should apply at the earliest opportunity for such an award. If an award is offered from one of these agencies, the candidate must accept it.

Stipends are subject to the Income Tax Act and Regulations of the Government of Canada.

Full Award

Trainees may be eligible for a full award. Stipend will be level with those offered by the CIHR, currently \$21,000 per annum for doctoral students and \$17,500 for MSc students.

Supplemental Award

If a trainee receives partial funding from another source, he/she may be eligible to receive an ACHORD contribution, which would bring the stipend up to the level of a CIHR award.

Partial Award

Only trainees within the Clinician Researcher stream are eligible for the partial award.

Highly qualified clinical research trainees in the ACHORD trainee program will be offered 50% of the full award and will be encouraged to seek matching funding from their home institution. Opportunities for matching funds should be reviewed with your ACHORD mentor prior to applying to the ACHORD trainee program. Your ACHORD mentor should serve as an advocate to help secure matching funds.

ACHORD Incentive Award

If a trainee receives an external personnel award from a peer-reviewed source, he/she may be eligible to receive an ACHORD Incentive Award in support their research training. This Incentive Award with the approval of the trainee's mentor may be directed towards a variety of research purposes after the approval by the program (a list of approval purposes is available from the Program Manager). The award will be pro-rated based on the CIHR's determined stipend of the trainee and the magnitude of the external award.

The Incentive Award must be used within 12 months, unless under exceptional circumstances. Contact the ACHORD office for further details on exceptions. Trainees and mentors must jointly submit an account of these expenditures in the ACHORD Exit Report Form (see below).

General Policies

Term of Stipend

ACHORD stipends will last for an initial period of 12 months.

Renewal

Stipends are provided for an initial period of 12 months and may be renewed for one additional year upon submission of a progress report that is satisfactory to the Executive Advisory Committee. Renewal will depend on available funding and the trainee's research progress.

Location of Tenure

Trainees must be pursuing a research program in Diabetic sciences with a mentor affiliated with the Program.

Mentor

An ACHORD mentor or co-mentor must be assigned to each trainee. The mentor will provide direct supervision.

Mentor Sabbatical

Should an ACHORD mentor go on sabbatical, other supervisory arrangements must be made and the mentor must inform the ACHORD office of the arrangements.

Change of Mentor

The trainee must obtain approval from the Executive Advisory Committee to change their ACHORD mentor(s).

Changes to Research Program

Normally, the research project should not be substantially altered. In the event that changes should become necessary, the trainee must obtain prior approval from the Executive Advisory Committee. Furthermore, the ACHORD mentor must agree with the proposed changes, and the original aims and conditions of the award must be satisfied.

Termination of Support

The trainee and mentor must immediately notify ACHORD of any intention to terminate an award prior to its normal date of completion. An appointment may be terminated at any time for good cause by the trainee or ACHORD.

TRAINEE EXPECTATIONS

Funding

Trainees must inform the ACHORD office immediately if there is a change in their funding situation. Awards are considered bridge funding and trainees are expected to make every effort to secure external funding from a major funding agency (such as CDA, CIHR or AHFMR) during their fellowship term. Trainees should apply at the earliest opportunity for such an award. If an award is offered from one of these agencies, the candidate must accept it.

Research Project

All trainees are required to complete their training under the selected mentor, and to adhere to the research project outlined in the application. If a research project has not been specified, the trainee, along with their mentor, must submit their project to the Executive Advisory Committee one month after the program start date.

Trainees will also be required to present their research-in-progress to faculty and other trainees once per year.

Core Curriculum

Trainees in the program are expected to attend and actively participate in the ACHORD core curriculum, including on-line learning and workshops. In circumstances where the trainee is not able to attend a workshop, he/she must inform the Program Director in advance (if possible) of the reason.

Other Mandatory Events

It is also expected that trainees will actively participate in the following events by attendance and submission of abstracts.

- ACHORD Research Retreat
- Canadian Diabetes Association Professional Conference
- Resident Research Day (if a clinical trainee)
- Others to be determined at a later date

Expected Productivity

- **Grant Applications** – All trainees will be expected to submit a studentship/fellowship application in conjunction with their mentor within the first 6 months of their training (unless external funding has already been achieved by a major agency i.e. CIHR, AHFMR or CDA). It is also recommended that trainees get experience writing research grant applications.
- **Abstracts** – All trainees will be expected to submit an abstract to the Canadian Diabetes Association Professional Conference or any other applicable national or international conferences within the 12 months of their training.
- **Research Projects** – All trainees should endeavor to have some additional projects (other than their planned graduate or PDF project) under their mentor's supervision to ensure appropriate peer reviewed productivity at the conclusion of their program.

- **Presentations** - All trainees should present at a national/international meeting within 18 months of enrollment in the program. It is also recommended that trainees present at local/regional meetings as well.
- **Publications** – All trainees should endeavor to publish during their program. General guidelines are: one publication within 12 months of commencement of training and one 1st author paper within 24 months of commencement of training.
- **Conferences** – All trainees should attempt to attend a major scientific national or international conference within the first 12 months of their training.

Evaluation

Trainees will be required to develop a project outline and will also be required to keep a log cataloging research experiences and participation in the ACHORD core curriculum.

Progress in the ACHORD Program will be regularly monitored by:

- Mentor
- Executive Advisory Committee

It is expected that there will also be appropriate liaison with the trainee's Thesis Committee and Graduate Program.

Exit Report

The trainee and the mentor must jointly complete and submit the Exit Report Form within one month of the termination or completion of an award.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications and will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria.

- Academic distinction
- Strong letters of reference
- Distinguished professional experience
- Demonstrated research training and experience
- Demonstrated productivity
- Research environment

- Competitiveness for external awards
- Demonstrated ambition to succeed and determination to undertake a research career
- Potential to become a leader in Diabetes research
- Quality of research project or proposed research plan, including importance of research, originality, feasibility and preliminary results (if applicable).
- The overall impact of the training program on the applicant's career development
- Other factors that the reviewers consider relevant to the potential success of the candidate's program and career.

Note that the Annual Progress Reports for renewal will be based on the similar criteria however; research progress, productivity and participation in the ACHORD program will also be heavily evaluated.

Review Process

Each application will go through an in-depth review by the Executive Advisory Committee.

APPLICATION DETAILS

A complete application will consist of one original and five (5) copies of the following:

- a) A completed ACHORD Program application form
- b) Required attachments, as detailed below
 - i. Curriculum vitae or printed version of Common CV Module. All post-docs should include a summary of previous research experience (one original and 5 copies)
 - ii. Official transcripts - undergraduate, graduate and / or health professional training. Post Doc and Post MD applicants need not submit copies of their undergraduate transcripts (one original and 5 copies)
 - iii. Names of 3 referees and letters in sealed envelopes (original only - no photocopies required)

- iv. Copy of permanent resident document or student visa, if applicable
(1 copy)
- v. Proof of licensure to practice medicine in Canada, if applicable
(1 copy)
- vi. Copies of up to 3 most recent publications, if applicable
(6 copies)

IMPORTANT DATES

- Program Start: **July 1, 2009**
- Application Deadline: **April 28, 2009**