

Alberta Spine Foundation Summer Studentship Award

Terms of Reference

Policies regarding the Alberta Spine Foundation Summer Studentship Awards funded by the Alberta Spine Foundation through the McCaig Institute for Bone and Joint Health.

Updated January 2024

1. Overview

The Alberta Spine Foundation Summer Studentship Award is a result of an initiative by the McCaig Education Committee and the Alberta Spine Foundation.

2. Purpose of the Award

This competitive internal award is intended to provide stipend support to one (1) or more undergraduate student(s) pursuing a summer research position, encouraging trainees to explore spine research as a potential field of study.

3. Eligibility

- a. To be eligible for an Alberta Spine Foundation Summer Studentship, candidates must be supervised by a full or associate member of the McCaig Institute for Bone and Joint Health whose research falls within the mandate of the McCaig Institute.
- b. The student applicant must also meet one of the following criteria:
 - registered in a University of Calgary undergraduate degree program in a medical or health-related field;
 - registered in an undergraduate degree program outside the University of Calgary, and desiring to engage in research during the summer at the University of Calgary;
 - have completed or are currently in the last term of their undergraduate degree and have applied or will apply either to medical school or to a graduate program commencing in the coming fall.
- c. Alberta Spine Foundation Summer Studentship funding is not available to medical students who have already begun their medical training.
- d. Only two summer studentship applicants from the same lab/supervisor are allowed to apply per annual competition, with only one applicant per supervisor being eligible for funding each year.
- e. Applicants may have more than one supervisor/or research project for their summer studentship. In this case, applicants are required to provide the McCaig Institute with descriptions of all projects the student will be involved in.

4. Financial Support

- a. The amount of the stipend for a summer studentship is \$1875 per month. The Alberta Spine Foundation Summer Studentship Award will provide the full monthly stipend of \$1875.
- b. The term of support is 16 weeks.
- c. Payments are made monthly and will be prorated based on the student's term.
- d. In the instance where an awardee is successful in obtaining a major award (e.g., AIHS, NSERC), an internal award (e.g. PURE, USRP) or a combination of several awards that are greater than or equal to the Alberta Spine Foundation Summer Studentship Award stipend level, the trainee is expected to decline the Alberta Spine Foundation Summer Studentship Award.
- e. The Alberta Spine Foundation Summer Studentship Award may only be used for salary support and not for travel, relocation or other purposes. Health benefits are not part of the award and are not provided by the McCaig Institute for Bone and Joint Health.

5. Procedures

- a. The Alberta Spine Foundation Summer Studentship Award will be administered annually to fund one (1) or more applicant(s).
- b. The research that is being supported must be compatible with the strategic plan of the McCaig Institute for Bone and Joint Health, the Alberta Spine Foundation, and the Cumming School of Medicine of the University of Calgary; and for physicians to conform to the standards of the Royal College.
- c. Application Submission Deadlines: The selection and notification of successful applicant will be accomplished within one month of the application deadline. Applications are made through the McCaig Institute for Bone and Joint Health.
- d. Term of Support: The successful applicant(s) to the Alberta Spine Foundation Summer Studentship Award will be provided with support for a 16-week term (4 months). Research must commence in the month of May.
- e. Summer Student Research Symposium: Successful applicants will be required to present in either presentation or poster format at the annual McCaig Institute Summer Studentship Research Symposium.
- f. Final Report: A final report will be required and reviewed by the McCaig Education Committee and sent to the Alberta Spine Foundation.

- g. Evaluation Criteria: In selecting the awardee, the Alberta Spine Foundation Summer Studentship Review Committee will use the following evaluation criteria:
- Academic excellence of the candidate
 - Including, but not limited to, GPA, productivity and letters of reference
 - Significance, impact and quality of the project
 - Project fits with the goals and scope of the McCaig Institute and the Alberta Spine Foundation
 - Approach (approaches and methods appropriate to deliver the proposed outputs and achieve proposed contribution(s), identification of challenges and appropriate mitigation strategies, appropriate timelines)
 - Well defined outcomes
 - Supervisor's research and training environment
 - Publications, grant support, number of trainees supervised, etc.
 - Resources available
 - Evidence of other applications
 - Trainees who have applied to other awards will be looked upon favourably

In selecting an awardee, the Review Committee should place considerable emphasis on the quality of the applicant and the collaborative nature and quality of the research project. The description of the team's research project is one of the main criteria for evaluating an application. Research proposals that are **feasible, focused** and identify well-defined **outcomes** will be strongly considered. The Review Committee will have discretion to balance the type of research projects that are funded (i.e. discovery phase, based on preliminary data, etc.).

- h. Alberta Spine Foundation Summer Studentship Review Committee: The ranking and final selection of eligible applications will be the responsibility of the McCaig Education committee based on the criteria outlined in 5(f) above.

Each application will be reviewed by all committee members. If necessary, equally ranked applications will be decided by the Chair. Funding of applications will be based according to rank.

Conflicts of interest will be avoided by

- No supervisors will be involved in scoring their own grant, and;
 - At the final review committee meeting, conflicted members will be excluded from participating in that application.
- i. Application Submission Procedures: Interested applicants are required to submit their application and supporting documentation directly to McCaig Institute office via email (mccaig@ucalgary.ca) by the stipulated deadline. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered. Applications and all supporting documents must be submitted as a single PDF file. Letter of reference must come directly from the supervisor via email.

Application packages must include:

- Completed application form;
- Two-page version of the supervisor's CV;
- One (1) electronic copy of the applicant's academic transcript (unofficial copies are acceptable);
- One (1) letter of reference from the supervisor (must come directly from the supervisor via email).

6. Obligations of Award Holders

Awardees agree to certain obligations that include, but are not limited to:

- Advising the McCaig Institute of additional awards received during the term of the Alberta Spine Foundation Summer Studentship;
- Presenting in presentation or poster format at the McCaig Institute Summer Student Research Symposium;
- Attendance at the Summer Student Research Symposium day with the award sponsor;
- Submission of a final report outlining the research project and outcomes in layman terms to the McCaig Education Committee;
- Timely submission of reports and other documentation, as required;
- Acknowledgement of the McCaig Institute for Bone and Joint Health in publications, presentations, communications and marketing materials associated with the supported research project;
- Provision of biographical sketches to be used for reporting and publicity purposes upon request.