

## Terms of Reference for VAST Scholars

### VAST Graduate and Postdoctoral Scholarship Awards

The Vascular Training (VAST) Platform is a nationwide, openly accessible learning platform focused on the area of Vascular Cognitive Impairment (VCI). VAST complements traditional university curricula and graduate programs, and provides a diverse set of trainees with individualized, mentored, adaptive learning paths to prepare them for careers in multiple sectors: academic, private for-profit, private-non-profit, community organizations, government, and healthcare. VAST has funding to support a cohort of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows (i.e., VAST Scholars) who will be engaged in VAST curriculum at award amounts of \$8750 for MSc, \$10,500 for PhD, \$22,500 for PDF for a 1-year term September 1 to August 31.

#### 1. Eligibility

- a) Currently enrolled in a graduate or post-doctoral program at a Canadian University.
- b) Did not hold a previous VAST scholarship in the preceding academic year.
- c) Co-supervision by two PIs is required. Supervisor and co-supervisor must both be [VAST co-investigators](#). Students supervised by ECRs (< 5 years since first academic appointment) who are registered VAST members and have contributed content development and/or mentoring students in the VAST mentorship program are eligible, as long as the other supervisor/co-supervisor is a VAST co-investigator. ECRs who feel they meet these criteria can apply to become a VAST ECR Member [here](#). Only those approved and accepted will be eligible for funding. Please contact Program Manager Jolene Phelps [jolene.phelps@ucalgary.ca] for any questions about eligibility.
- d) Proposed project must be related to vascular contributions to cognitive impairment and dementia.
  - a. Projects involving other neurodegenerative processes (e.g., Alzheimer's disease) are allowed as long as vascular dysfunction is being investigated as a cause, modulator, or outcome of those processes.
- e) Preference will be given to individuals who do not currently hold other awards and are in the early stage of their program. In addition, preference may be given to specific candidates who meet targeted recruitment criteria for VAST's equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) goals. EDI goals are: i) 40% recruitment from underrepresented groups, ii) the percentage of ECRs funded must equal the percentage of ECRs who applied.

#### 2. Student accountabilities

Trainees accepting a VAST scholarship award (i.e., VAST Scholars) shall:

- a) Complete VAST individualized learning program + mentorship program (est. 1 h/week),

- a. [The VAST mentorship program](#) is run Jan-Dec each year – trainees are matched with a VAST academic mentor outside of their supervisory committee, a senior peer mentor, and a mentor from outside of academia.
- b. Each individualized learning program is run online and entails the following:
  - i. Presenting during a VAST journal club,
  - ii. Attendance at a minimum of five VAST seminars,
  - iii. Participation in a minimum of one VAST workshop,
  - iv. Further opportunities for collaborative projects, internships, and networking are available with priority given to VAST Scholars (not mandatory).
- b) Acknowledge VAST in all related presentations and publications,
- c) Attend the annual VAST symposium (in-person in alternating years, with supplementary travel funding available),
- d) Notify the Program Manager immediately of any changes to status or funding that could affect the candidate's eligibility for this award. This includes termination of enrolment or employment, early completion of the requirements of research, award notification of other sources of funding, internship, or residency or leave of absence,
- e) Ensure compliance with award eligibility requirements of their institution.

### 3. Supervisor accountabilities

Supervisors of trainees accepting a VAST scholarship award shall:

- a) Confirm a source of matching support to maintain the guaranteed minimum funding for the duration of the award,
- b) Contribute an online learning module,
- c) If asked, participate in a future VAST Application Review Committee.

### 4. Other sources of funding

Before accepting a VAST Award, students and supervisors must consult with the rules and regulations governing graduate awards at their host institution and with any other organizations with whom they hold funding.

Minimum funding is considered based on the updated tri-council award values: \$27,000 for students enrolled full time in a MSc program, \$40,000 for students enrolled full time in a PhD program, and \$70,000 for students enrolled full time in a PDF program. Supervisors and other sources must provide at minimum, funding to meet this requirement.