

Terms of Reference for VAST Scholars VAST Summer Trainee 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 summer trainees at 50% of the NSERC level (i.e., \$3,000, at a maximum of \$750/month) from May to August, (4 weeks, minimum).

1. Eligibility

- a) Currently enrolled in an undergraduate program at a Canadian University.
- b) Co-supervision by two PIs is required. Supervisor and co-supervisor must both be [VAST co-investigators](#) OR either the supervisor or co-supervisor may be eligible if they are both i) an early career researcher (< 5 years since first academic appointment), and ii) a registered VAST member contributing content development and/or mentoring students in the VAST mentorship program.
- c) 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.
- d) 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 goals.

2. Student accountabilities

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

- a) Complete VAST summer learning program (est. 1 h/week),
 - a. Attendance and participation at VAST seminars and workshops over the summer – these are tailored towards summer trainees and will be focused on relevant communication and research skills, and expanding knowledge of the breadth of research across the VCI field,
 - b. Further opportunities for collaborative projects, internships, and networking are available with priority given to VAST Scholars (not mandatory).

- b) Participate in VAST summer mentorship program,
- c) Acknowledge VAST in all related presentations and publications,
- d) Attend the annual VAST summer symposium (online at the end of August),
- e) 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,
- f) 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.

Minimum funding is considered based on NSERC standards of \$6000 / 4-month term, for students enrolled full time in an undergraduate program.