

CHARLIE FISCHER GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP IN ADVANCING PATIENT- AND FAMILY-CENTRED RESEARCH

Award Guide

The University of Calgary strives to create and maintain a positive and productive learning and working environment in which there is respect for the dignity of all persons, and fair and equitable treatment of individuals in our diverse community. As part of the UCalgary community, ACHRI believes that diversity in our team is a strength. ACHRI commits to considering qualified applicants from members of any and all equity seeking groups, including women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and persons who are members of a visible minority group in Canada.

Purpose of Award

This award has been made possible through a gift honouring Mr. Charlie Fischer by Ms. Joanne Cuthbertson. This Scholarship was created to honour the many contributions made by Mr. Charlie Fischer toward improving outcomes for children and families through research, education, and care. Mr. Charlie Fischer was a passionate advocate for incorporating patient and family experiences into health practitioners' training, knowledge, treatment, and practices, helping to position the Alberta Children's Hospital as an early leader in child and family centered care. Thus, a goal of this award is to support research that will engage patients and their families to measurably enhance health outcomes for patients, at the individual and public level. New knowledge and discoveries produced by this research will empower families, advance their voices, and amplify child and youth health and wellness.

Eligibility Criteria

Candidates are eligible to apply for the Charlie Fischer Scholarship if:

- they have applied to¹, or are currently enrolled in a graduate studies program (Master's or PhD) at the University of Calgary with a primary supervisor who is a member of ACHRI;
- their research project fits with the mandate of the Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship, and
- they are working within the child health and wellness context

Areas of study could include but are not limited to the following:

- Advancing the voices of patients and families in their role of informing and co-creating clinical research;
- Creating new knowledge that advances and contributes to improved patient and family outcomes;
- Generating evidence to enable care transformation and improve outcomes;
- Improving understanding of the importance of research among patients and families.

¹ Students must have applied to UCalgary for admission.

Current holders of internal and external awards such as CIHR, NSERC and other agencies, are eligible to apply for the Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship only if funding from these agencies will be ending within 12 months from the application deadline.

Multiple applicants from the same supervisor/ lab may apply for the Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship. However, only one graduate application from a single supervisor will be offered the Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship in a given competition. Note, this applies to new applicants only; renewing applicants do not apply through the same system as new applicants and therefore, are not counted toward the total number of awards offered to the same supervisor/ lab.

Financial Support

In order to access the award, successful applicants must be enrolled in a Graduate Studies program at the University of Calgary and be registered as ACHRI trainees at the time of commencement of the award.

The value of the Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship is:

\$17,000 per year for MSc students (domestic),
\$18,000 per year for MSc students (international),
\$19,000 per year for PhD students (domestic), and
\$20,000 per year for PhD students (international).

Both Master's and PhD-level Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarships must be supplemented by an additional \$10,000 per year from the supervisor's and/or co-supervisor's funds or another relevant source. By submitting an application for the Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship, supervisors agree to this financial partnership with ACHRI.

The Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarships may only be used for stipend support. These awards are intended to support trainees during full-time academic studies and research related to their degree. Any other employment and awards must be reported to ACHRI promptly. Tuition and other fees for the Faculty of Graduate Studies are the responsibility of the student.

The term of the Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship is minimum 12 months with a possibility of extension for an additional 12 months contingent on satisfactory progress of the awardee, completion of a progress report (approved by the supervisor), participation in the ACHRI and Child Health and Wellness training activities and events, and effort to secure external scholarships. The maximum duration of the Charlie Fischer Scholarship is 24 months.

Holders of the Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship are expected to apply for internal and external awards for which they are eligible, including those from provincial or national agencies. Trainees who have been successful in obtaining another award must inform ACHRI and the Graduate Awards Office at the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) of the new award at their earliest opportunity. Students may not hold more than one award from [CSM institutes](#) at the same time. In case of other awards, external or internal, trainee's eligibility for continuing to receive funding through the Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with the rules and regulations of the FGS. Typically, holders of the Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship who win other awards take up the other award at the earliest possible date and either decline their Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship or have the ACHRI portion of the award adjusted, so that the combined award amount does not exceed the [CSM maximum stipend level](#) for graduate students (note, supervisor contribution is not included in calculating the maximum combined

award amount). If the term of the other award is less than 12 months, the Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship may be paused for the duration of the other award and be reinstated once the other award has been paid in full.

As part of their Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship, trainees will be provided with a one-time allowance of \$1000 to be used for research-related travel (e.g., for attending a scientific meeting or a course related to their research/ field of study or travelling to a partner laboratory or an external course to learn a new technique). This travel allowance is not transferrable to the trainee's supervisor or another trainee and must be used by the end date of the CF Graduate Scholarship. Trainees are not eligible to apply for ACHRI Trainee Travel Awards (but may apply for ACHRI Research Visit/ External Course Awards) until their travel allowance is spent in full.

Application Deadline

Deadlines for new applications are listed on the [ACHRI Funding Page](#), under Graduate Stipend Support.

Applications for renewal are due by **5 PM local time on July 15**, unless otherwise noted.

Application Instructions: New Applicants

In order to apply for the Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship, candidates must submit the following:

- Graduate Award Competition Application (GAC), available online, through your Student Centre. The form includes the following components:
 - Eligibility statement
 - References
 - Transcripts: Transcripts will be added to your application after the deadline by your Graduate Program Administrator (GPA) based on the information provided in the application. You do not need to request transcripts.
 - Other sections, including Academic History; Awards; Research Abstract (250 words) and Proposal (thesis) (800 words); Bibliography (1000 words); Presentations and Contributions (1000 words); Leadership and Interpersonal Skills (800 words)
- GAC Harmonized Award Attachment, which includes:
 - Confirmation of funding commitment
 - Training experience, expectations and personal considerations section
 - Training environment statement
 - Supervisor Common CV CIHR Biosketch or equivalent

Please note that both the GAC application and the GAC Harmonized Award Form are submitted electronically through the UCalgary Student Center.

Application Instructions: Renewing Applicants

In order to renew their Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarships for a second year of support, applicants must submit:

- Progress Report, available on the ACHRI website, completed by the trainee applicant;

- One letter of reference submitted by the applicant's supervisor via email describing the progress of the trainee and approving the renewal application;
- Updated electronic copy of the applicant's academic transcript (unofficial copies are acceptable in pdf or jpg format).

Renewal packages and reference letters should be sent **electronically** to the ACHRI STEP office at achri.training@ucalgary.ca.

It is the responsibility of the applicant and his/her supervisor to ensure all application documents are complete and submitted on time. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. If the application is deemed non-compliant (e.g., does not follow application instructions as stated; supporting documents exceed page limit, etc.), reviewers have the right to reject the application.

Adjudication Process and Evaluation Criteria

Eligible applications will be reviewed by the ACHRI Training Review Committee, selected from the ACHRI College of Reviewers, in conjunction with the ACHRI Training and Education Committee. Applications will be adjudicated based on the following criteria:

- alignment of the proposed project with the mandate of the award
- significance and quality of the proposed project;
- quality of the candidate (e.g., academic excellence, research experience, awards);
- training environment (e.g., supervisor's publications, grant support, experience in trainee supervision, excellence in mentorship).

Please note that the Review Committee is a multi-disciplinary group of reviewers and may include a patient/community representative, who may not have the in-depth knowledge in all the projects submitted. Applicants must ensure that their project proposals can be understood by a non-specialist reviewer.

Terms of the Award

The Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship will be administered under the terms and conditions of ACHRI STEP and LEAP Training Programs, which include the following requirements:

- continued application for external funding support: with a goal of increasing training capacity in Child Health and Wellness, we require all our awardees to explore opportunities for external awards, so that if successful, training funds can be released for supporting additional trainees. We also ask you to kindly notify us of any awards you may receive through either external or internal agencies or programs during the term of your traineeship with ACHRI;
- participation of the awardee in training activities (i.e., courses, workshops, professional development opportunities) organized by ACHRI and/or ACHRI's partner programs;
- participation and presentation by the awardee at the ACHRI Annual Research Retreat (or another similar event);
- timely submission of trainee and supervisor final report, and other documentation, as required;
- participation of the awardee's supervisor(s) in ACHRI Committees (including Training Review Committees), when asked.

Additional requirements as part of the Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship include:

- Recipient's research plan must align with the purpose of the award, as described above.
- At the end of the funding term, the recipient will be given the opportunity to participate in the Charlie Fischer Lecture Series in Advancing Patient- and Family-Centered Research at a relevant venue within UCalgary.
- The recipient is required to use the following wording for funding recognition in any publication, research report, policy brief, promotional material, public event, news release or other work arising from this support: *“Financial assistance is provided by generous community donations to the Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship in Advancing Patient- and Family-Centered Research through the Alberta Children’s Hospital Foundation.”*
- In addition to reporting requirements of ACHRI/ ACHRI STEP, the recipient will be available to meet with the donor to provide a verbal update on progress and will provide a written, lay language summary of activity/progress during the tenure of the award.

Training must take place at the University of Calgary, except for short-term research-related visits to other institutions for up to three months per year.

Scholarships will terminate either at the end of the 24-month period or the last day of the month in which the Master’s or PhD thesis is submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (i.e., up to 30 days after oral thesis defense). The award holder must notify the ACHRI STEP office of their defense date when it is confirmed.

For trainees in the Leaders of Medicine program, the Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship will only be provided during the research training component of the degree and will terminate as soon as the MD component commences.

The Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship is not intended to be portable (e.g., change of supervisor, or transferring to a different program of study). Trainees are required to notify ACHRI STEP of any changes to their academic status, supervisor, program, or any other changes in circumstances that may affect the scope of their studentship and/or affect start dates and/or duration of studentship.

Recipients of the Charlie Fischer Graduate Scholarship must notify the ACHRI STEP office if they are transferring from a Master’s program to a PhD program (i.e., not completing the Master’s degree prior to commencing the PhD degree), to determine if they are eligible to continue their Charlie Fischer Scholarship funding at the PhD stipend rate. In cases where the trainee has completed their Master’s degree and has used only one year of their Charlie Fischer Scholarship, and is commencing a PhD program, he or she may apply as a new applicant for additional funding through the Charlie Fischer Scholarship for their PhD degree, if eligible. If successful, the trainee will receive a maximum of 12 months of the Charlie Fischer graduate funding for their PhD degree.

With any questions, please contact the ACHRI Training Program office at:

Email: achri.training@ucalgary.ca

Telephone: 403.220.8158