UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS OFFICE

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
GUIDE FOR AGENCY-BASED SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR APPLICATIONS TO THE 2020 BANTING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS COMPETITION

The following information is to provide general assistance in accordance with the guidelines for the Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships Program Peer Review Committee Members.

For the 2020 competition, preliminary packages will be due at the Faculty level on **June 02** and in the Office of the Vice-President (Research and Innovation) on **June 17**. The VPRI office will prepare a spreadsheet documenting the applications for each agency (applicant name, supervisor, department, faculty, title of proposal) and will also ensure eligibility and completeness of preliminary packages.

The VPRI office will then make the preliminary packages and spreadsheet available to appropriate agency-based subcommittee members by **June 22**.

By **July 20**, the agency-based subcommittees will select applications to prepare full packages. Feedback will be provided by the subcommittee to those applicants invited to complete a full nomination; those candidates not invited to prepare a full package will be advised and feedback will also be provided to them. Subcommittee Chairs will advise the Vice-President (Research and Innovation) of the results of their adjudication of preliminary packages.

Preliminary packages will include the following:

- Completed Assessment form
- Proposal (500 word max.)
- Special Fit Rationale
- CV of applicant
- CV of proposed supervisor
- Justification on why applicant is not moving institutions is required if applicant is currently at the University of Alberta

Assessment forms will identify the following:

- Applicant name and contact information
- Proposed supervisor/co-supervisor name and department
- Relevant agency (NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR)
- Applicant's Gender
- Date of PhD (plus explanation if more than 3 years ago)
- Location of PhD (plus justification if candidate is from U of A and proposing to stay here as a PDF)
- Proposed start date (between April and October)
- Proposed referees
- Confirmation that person is not currently a Tri-Council PDF award holder
  *Or if they are, confirm when the funding will end.
- Title of research

In preparing the applications, attention should be paid to the criteria used by the national Banting Selection Committee. These criteria are presented below; this information is directly from the Banting Selection committee guide. The University of Alberta will be using the same criteria for its internal assessments.

A) Selection Criteria

i. **Research Excellence and Leadership in the Research Domain**
ii. **Quality of the applicant's proposed research program**
iii. **Institutional commitment and demonstrated synergy between applicant and institutional strategic priorities**

i) Research excellence and leadership in the research domain

Demonstrated capacity for research excellence based on track record as defined by quality of applicant's research contributions, and demonstrated capacity for leadership in the research domain defined by the sphere of influence achieved to date by the applicant.

The candidate's research history and the impact of their activities in their area of expertise to date are important indicators of their potential as research leaders of tomorrow. Reviewers should consider the sphere of influence of candidates relative to others along the following continuum of expanding impact:

- **Research program**
- **Institution**
- **Research community**
- **International research community**
- **Society at large**

In evaluating this criterion, both the nature/prestige of this award and the stage and nature of the applicant's career should be considered.

All indicators of excellence of the candidate must be factored in the evaluation to allow for individual workstyles, contributions and commitments. For example, collaboration, teamwork, mentoring are important and valid contributions to research and training of highly qualified personnel. Each contribution should be valued equally regardless of gender of the candidate. For example, single-authored vs multi-authored publications should be valued similarly regardless of gender.

Evaluate excellence/productivity commensurate with the career stage of the candidate, work-family balance and other special circumstances that can lead to delays in research and dissemination of the results (e.g. career interruptions for child bearing and raising impacting publication records). These personal circumstances must be considered on a case-by case basis; careful consideration must be given to these gender-based factors in the evaluation process.

In the case of health professionals, consideration should be given to standards of research productivity, etc. for their level of experience/qualifications relative to those with a PhD. For applicants who have relevant work experience, scientific productivity prior to graduate school should be considered.

Supporting evidence to be evaluated for this criterion:

- Applicant CCV
- The clarity with which the applicant writes their proposal to a multi-disciplinary committee (non-specialist audience)
- List of contributions (in CCV)
- Description of significance of up to three research contributions (maximum one page)
- Leadership contributions of applicant (maximum one page)
    - Description of significance of up to three leadership contributions (maximum one page)

- Supervisor's statement (discussion of the significance of the applicant's contributions)
- Special circumstances (maximum one page – optional)
    - To address any career/research delays
    - Justification for remaining in PhD Research Environment
        - Only in exceptionally rare circumstances will a Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship be awarded to an applicant who is staying at the same institution or within the same research environment where they completed their PhD, PhD-equivalent or health professional degree. Applicants who wish to undertake postdoctoral level research training in the same institution (or its affiliated hospitals, research centres and other laboratories or within the same research environment) at which they received their PhD, PhD-equivalent or health professional degree **must** provide a strong justification in the Special Circumstances attachment. The more similar the proposed research environment is to that prevailing during the applicant's PhD, PhD-equivalent or health professional degree, the stronger the required justification. This should be balanced against any indicators of a broad, cross-institutional outlook (e.g., inter-university collaborations, participation in international networks, etc.).
    - Justification for remaining in the same research environment (other than PhD)
        - Any time an applicant proposes to remain at the same research environment that they were affiliated with at the time of application submission, they are required to justify this lack of mobility.

ii) Quality of the applicant's proposed research program

The Proposal need to be examined in terms of the potential of the proposed research program (taking into consideration feasibility, timelines and novelty of research), executed in the proposed institutional environment, to position the applicant for significant impact through a research-intensive career (*potential for significant impact*).

The potential contribution of the proposed research to the advancement of knowledge in the field is dependent on the promise and quality of the proposal, the environment in which it will be conducted, and the aspirations of the candidate. Reviewers should consider the potential for significant impact presented by the above-noted combination of factors.

Supporting evidence to be evaluated for this criterion:

- Three referee assessments (*Merit of proposed research* section)
- Supervisor's statement (discussion of the significance of proposed research)
- Research proposal (maximum four pages)
- Lay abstract of research proposal (maximum half a page)
- Bibliography, citations included in the Research proposal (maximum four pages)

iii) Institutional commitment and demonstrated synergy between applicant and institutional strategic priorities

examined in terms of:

- demonstrated commitment of the institution to support the development of the applicant's research and leadership capacity through institutional support (funding, facilities, equipment, etc.) and professional development
- demonstrated research capacity in the area of the applicant's proposed research, which will enable the institution to provide an intellectually stimulating environment to position the candidate as a research leader

- demonstrated alignment and synergy between the applicant's research ambitions and the institution's potential to benefit strategically from its engagement with the applicant (alignment with institution's strategic priorities)

This should not be an assessment of the institution per se, but rather of its commitment to the applicant, its capacity to enable the applicant to become a future leader in their chosen field and its potential to build upon its strategic priorities.

Supporting evidence to be evaluated for this criterion:

- **Three referee assessments** (*Suitability of the research environment* section)
- **Supervisor's statement** (maximum five pages)
    - To be completed by the proposed supervisor
    - Provide evidence that the institution and supervisor are well-positioned to provide the required support to the applicant in relation to the research proposed
    - Include supervisor's description of their academic and research background, key contributions/accomplishments to date (note that a full CV for the supervisor is not required)
    - Clearly describe the fit between the research interests/background of the supervisor and candidate, and the anticipated mutual benefits
    - Provide details concerning the applicant's proposed research environment. The details should clearly state the institution's commitment, for example in terms of the funding, facilities/resources and personnel that will be available to support the applicant
    - Describe the institution's commitment to the applicant's professional development, clearly indicating the resources and/or mentoring activities available through the institution to support career development
    - Describe the institution's documented strategic priorities and illustrate the synergy between these priorities and the applicant's proposed research program

B) Evaluation of Applicants

Subcommittee members are reminded that only the highest quality preliminary packages should be invited to complete a full nomination. Each subcommittee can determine the specific mechanisms it will use for the evaluation of candidates and the selection of those candidates invited to prepare a full proposal.

From http://banting.fellowships-bourses.gc.ca/en/app-dem_instit-etab.html

Equity and diversity must be considered at all levels of the selection/recruitment, endorsement and review processes of a Banting application. The Vanier-Banting Secretariat is actively engaged in increasing awareness of implicit (or unconscious) bias with everyone involved in the selection of a Banting Fellow. The following links can be very useful:

1. Unconscious Bias [PDF (208 KB) - external link] – An overview that was developed by Westcoast Women in Engineering, Science and Technology (WWest)
2. Harvard Test on Implicit Bias: Gender – Science test, and/or the Gender – Career test.
3. CIHR's Learning Module: Unconscious Bias in Peer Review
4. Tips for Banting Selection Committee Members on reducing gender bias in the review process

For further information, please contact bantingpdf@ualberta.ca.

Please note: Applications for and awards provided through the Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships Program are subject to the policies and guidelines for awards programs as outlined by each funding agency.