



BrightRed Student Research Award Guidelines 2025/26

Background

Heart & Stroke, a volunteer-based health charity, leads in reducing heart disease and stroke through research, policy and advocacy, systems change, public awareness and education as well as support and engagement of people with lived experience.

Our vision is: *Life. Uninterrupted by heart disease and stroke.* Our mission is: *Promote Health. Save Lives. Enhance Recovery.*

Heart & Stroke invests in research excellence that has the greatest impact on improving the health of Canadian families. Since its inception in 1952, Heart & Stroke has invested more than \$1.63 billion in vital heart and stroke research, making it the largest contributor in Canada after the federal government.

The Heart & Stroke *BrightRed* Student Research Awards Program (offered exclusively in Nova Scotia) is a donor-funded investment, which provides scholarship opportunities for student investigators, in collaboration with training institutions; to strengthen the recruitment and retention of researchers in Nova Scotia that align with Heart & Stroke's strategic mission priorities.

Goal

The goal of the *BrightRed* Student Research Awards Program is to recognize excellent emerging cardiovascular and cerebrovascular researchers in Nova Scotia at differing stages of career development. It will provide financial support to students and trainees enrolled in research-based Masters, Doctoral, Postdoctoral, or Doctor of Medicine training programs at academic institutions in Nova Scotia.

Eligibility

Individuals eligible for the *BrightRed* Student Research Awards Program will be:

- Undertaking research training that is relevant to the mission and strategic priorities of Heart & Stroke.
- Currently enrolled (in good standing) and/or accepted as a full-time student in a research-based Masters, Doctoral or Postdoctoral training program at a Nova Scotia university¹ or the Research in Medicine Doctor of Medicine program at Dalhousie University.
- Under the supervision of (at minimum) one supervisor who has a full-time academic appointment.
- Have not received a BrightRed Student Research Award in the past.

In addition, potential recipients will have demonstrated:

- Academic excellence; and
- Potential as an excellent emerging cardiovascular and/or cerebrovascular researcher (various places to highlight this in the application).

The *BrightRed* Student Research Awards are open to Canadian citizens, landed immigrants, or people who reside in Nova Scotia with a valid work or student visa.

¹We encourage students and trainees to apply even if they have not yet received official confirmation of acceptance into a research-based program. Disbursement of award to successful applicants will only occur once official confirmation of enrollment is received by Heart & Stroke.

Value and duration

A limited number of awards will be supported by Heart & Stroke based on budgetary approval and upon recommendation by the Research Engagement Committee of Heart & Stroke.

For the 2025/2026 academic year, Heart & Stroke will offer up to three (3) awards, each valued at \$5,000, as follows:

1. *The BrightRed Mission Award*: to the highest rated candidate of any level
2. *The John and Judy Bragg Family Foundation Award*: to the highest rated Masters level or Doctor of Medicine candidate
3. *The Paul and Mary O'Regan Graduate Research Award*: to the highest rated Doctoral or Postdoctoral candidate

Awards are one-year, non-renewable and non-transferable. Individuals may receive the *BrightRed* Student Research Award only once.

Submitting an application

The application must include the following documents to be considered:

1. Completed *BrightRed* Student Research Awards application form, including a description of the proposed research project that is not to exceed three (3) pages (references excluded) and lay summary of research;
2. Copy of applicant's current CV (follow CV formatting instructions);
3. Electronic copy of official academic transcripts from all academic training; and
4. Supervisor Assessment form from applicant's primary supervisor (Supervisor submits via email directly to H&S).

See the application form for specific details on each of these application documents.

Description of Proposed Research

Heart & Stroke supports excellence in research across all research themes; however, at a strategic level, Heart & Stroke is interested in broadening research support beyond the biomedical theme. To this end, Heart & Stroke encourages submissions of applications from the biomedical, clinical, health services/systems and population health areas. The four (4) themes of health research as defined by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research are:

Basic Biomedical (I)

Research with the goal of understanding normal and abnormal human function, at the molecular, cellular, organ system and whole-body levels, including the development of tools and techniques to be applied for this purpose; developing new therapies or devices which improve health or the quality of life of

individuals, up to the point where they are tested on human subjects. Studies on human subjects that do not have a diagnostic or therapeutic orientation.

Clinical (II)

Research with the goal of improving the diagnosis and treatment (including rehabilitation and palliation) of disease and injury; improving the health and quality of life of individuals as they pass through normal life stages. Research on, or for the treatment of, patients.

Health Services/Systems (III)

Research with the goal of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of health professionals and the health care system, through changes to practice and policy. Health services research is a multidisciplinary field of scientific investigation that studies how social factors, financing systems, organizational structures and processes, health technologies, and personal behaviours affect access to health care, the quality and cost of health care, and ultimately Canadians' health and well-being.

Social, cultural, environmental and population health (IV)

Research with the goal of improving the health of the Canadian population, or of defined subpopulations, through a better understanding of the ways in which social, cultural, environmental, occupational, and economic factors determine health status.

Sex and Gender Based Analysis (SGBA)

Applicants should integrate sex (biological) and gender (socio-cultural) based analysis (SGBA) in their research design. All applicants should provide a rationale as to how SGBA is incorporated into their project or why it would not be relevant to the project if they are not incorporating. Please see CIHR's resources on how to integrate sex and gender into research: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50836.html>.

All applicants are strongly encouraged to complete CIHR's Institute of Gender and Health training modules: <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49347.html>.

Ethical Requirements

By signing and submitting applications to Heart & Stroke, applicants undertake the responsibility to ensure any experimentation will be acceptable to the institution on ethical grounds and comply with the following guidelines and host institution research policies, as applicable:

Applicants must ensure all experiments comply with the following guidelines and host institution research policies, as applicable:

- Tri-Council Policy Statement: *Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*².
- Good Clinical Practice (GCP).

² See www.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/Default/ for details. ³
See www.cac.ca/en/standards/guidelines for details.

- Good Laboratory Practice (GLP).
- In the case of laboratory animal experimentation, the guiding principles and standards enunciated by the Canadian Council on Animal Care³.
- Guidelines and standards for biological and chemical hazards as outlined in the Public Health Agency/Canadian Food Inspection Agency's *Canadian Biosafety Standards and Guidelines*³.
- Any research involving human pluripotent stem cells must adhere to the CIHR *Guidelines for Human Pluripotent Stem Cell Research*⁴. The institution must notify Heart & Stroke as to the results of the review by the CIHR's Stem Cell Oversight Committee.

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Please use the CV formatting instructions in the application package.

Supervisor Assessment Form

This form is to be completed by the applicant's primary supervisor. Supervisors will have the opportunity to provide an assessment of the applicant across a variety of characteristics and provide additional details where appropriate.

Application submission

Complete applications for the *BrightRed* Student Research Awards Program must be received in the Heart & Stroke Nova Scotia office no later than **11:59 pm AST on May 9th, 2025**. **Any applications received after this time will not be accepted.**

A complete application includes:

- Electronic application (PDF format) emailed to kathryn.rand@heartandstroke.ca (NOTE: supervisor assessment form is not to be included in with this electronic application)

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure completeness of the application package. All applicants are strongly cautioned to carefully read and follow the instructions and requirements outlined in this guideline document. All submissions are considered final, no alterations or changes will be accepted. Incomplete applications will not be admissible to the competition.

Application review

Decisions on awardees will be subject to evaluation and recommendation by the Nova Scotia Research Engagement Committee (REC) of Heart & Stroke. The Nova Scotia REC is comprised of five researchers who cover different in-depth knowledge and expertise in areas of heart disease and stroke.

³ See <http://canadianbiosafetystandards.collaboration.gc.ca/index-eng.php> for details.

⁴ See <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/15255.html> for details.

Applicants will be evaluated on the following:

80% weight

- Academic excellence (GPA, supervisor assessment form, scholarships/awards, past scholarships)
- Research potential/ productivity (Research potential/productivity as an excellent emerging cardiovascular and/or cerebrovascular investigator: Including scholarly activities such as publications, presentations, knowledge translation activities, etc.)
- Quality of proposed research

20% weight

- Personal characteristics and interpersonal skills (e.g., volunteer engagement, community involvement)

Award regulations and financial administration

Notification of awards will be made by Heart & Stroke to the recipient and to the recipient's supervisor. Individuals selected to receive an award will receive an electronic letter via the e-mail provided in their application; all other applicants will also be notified by email. Notification to all applicants will occur by August 2025.

All award recipients must confirm full-time enrollment in their program at a Nova Scotia academic institution before disbursement of the award. Awards will be paid directly to the recipient by Heart & Stroke after September 1, 2025.

Awardees will be recognized by Heart & Stroke during the 2025/26 academic year in a way that will honor awardees achievements.

The granting of a *BrightRed* Student Research Award is deemed to establish neither an employer-employee relationship nor a partnership between Heart & Stroke and the award recipient.

Obligations of recipients

Awardees must submit a 1-2-page summary report on the work (in progress or final) that they accomplished during the period of the *BrightRed* Student Research Award. This report will be due to Heart & Stroke one year from receipt of award (**September 1st, 2026**). Details on the report will be provided to the awardee by Heart & Stroke.

Award recipients are also expected to acknowledge Heart & Stroke in all communications regarding their award and related research activities. This includes, but is not limited to, academic publications, presentations (oral, poster, other) and related dissemination activities. The Heart & Stroke logo (provided to recipients) and following two statements should be included:

- "This research was supported in part by Heart & Stroke."
- "™The heart and / Icon on its own and the heart and / Icon followed by another icon or words are trademarks of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada."

Heart & Stroke encourages receipt of copies of academic publications funded fully or in part by the *BrightRed* Student Research Awards Program.

Contact information

For further questions, or to submit an application, please contact the following:

Kathryn Rand

Director, Health Policy and Systems, NS, NL, PE

Phone : 902 932 7607

Email : kathryn.rand@heartandstroke.ca