Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships Information Session

- Program overview & eligibility

- Essential elements of an application

- Selection criteria

- Important terminology

- Upcoming competition

- UM internal process

- Common questions

- Reviewers' perspective and insights

- Recent Banting program evaluation (2016)

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What are Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships?

Funds the <u>very best postdoctoral applicants</u> who will positively contribute to Canada's social, economic, and research-based growth.

Value: <u>$70,000/year</u> (stipend)

Duration: Two years (non-renewable)

Objectives: Attract and retain <u>top-tier PDF talent</u>, both nationally and internationally;
Develop their <u>leadership</u> potential;
Position them for success as <u>research leaders</u> of tomorrow.

"Applicants have already demonstrated exceptional research results, are recognized as emerging leaders in their field and have the potential to launch an international-level, research-intensive career." *(source: Banting PDF brochure)*

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Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships – Scope

70 Banting PDFs awarded annually (April 1 – October 1 start date), distributed *equally* among CIHR, SSHRC and NSERC.

2015-16:

Agency	Applications	Funded Applications	Success Rate
CIHR	216	23	11%
NSERC	223	23	10%
SSHRC	162	24	15%
TOTAL	**601**	**70**	**11.6%**

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Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships – Previous 5-Year Period

Table 3.1-1: Banting PDF Program – Percentage Change in Volume of Applications and Success Rates, 2010-2015

Competition Year	Number of Applications*	% Change (Year on Year)	Success Rate
2010-11	658	-	10.6%
2011-12	501	-23.9	14.6%
2012-13	442	-11.8	15.8%
2013-14	434	-1.8	16.1%
2014-15	564	30.0	-
Average for 2010 to 2014			13.9%

*Numbers reflect eligible applications submitted, after transfers were completed.

Source: Administrative data from Vanier-Banting Secretariat.

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Who is eligible for a Banting PDF?

- Canadian citizens
- Permanent residents of Canada   with restrictions
- Foreign citizens

New for 2017-18: The Banting PDF program has removed the limit on the number of awards granted to PDF trainees for tenure abroad (formerly 25%).

Eligible host institutions: Canadian and foreign universities, affiliated research hospitals, colleges and not-for-profit organizations with a strong research mandate and capacity.

- Banting PDFs are only tenable at the institution that supported the application.

⭐ <u>Eligibility restrictions:</u>

Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada can hold their PDF at a non-Canadian institution if they received their PhD at a Canadian institution. All others may only hold the PDF at a Canadian institution.

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<u>Who is eligible for a Banting PDF?</u>

- All requirements* for a PhD, PhD-equivalent, or health professional degree fulfilled:
  - o Between September 20, 2014 and September 30, 2018 (inclusive)*;
  - o Before the start date of their Banting PDF award.

- Eligibility window may be extended by <u>up to two years</u> due to:
  - o Parental leave; illness; health-related family responsibilities; or mandatory military service.
    - Must have occurred **after** degree requirements were fulfilled, and **before** the application submission deadline.

- Eligibility window may be extended by the duration of post-degree, non-research related clinical training (e.g., residency).
  - o Health professionals.

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Who cannot apply for a Banting PDF?

- Individuals who currently hold a PDF award from NSERC, SSHRC or CIHR that will not expire on or before **September 30, 2019** and prior to Banting PDF award start date.
  - *Early termination in order to apply to Banting PDF competition is not permitted.*

- Individuals who hold tenure-track or tenured faculty position (nor can they be on leave from a position).

⭐ Only in <u>exceptionally rare circumstances</u> will a Banting PDF be awarded to an applicant staying at same institution/research environment as their PhD or health professional degree.
  - Applicants choosing to apply in collaboration with their same institution (or affiliated hospitals, research centres, or laboratories) must provide a solid justification.

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What are the key elements of a Banting PDF application?

- Canadian Common CV (CCV) – Vanier-Banting academic CCV
    - o Free-form CVs are **not** accepted.

- Three referees (at least one at arm's length)
    - o Online assessments of applicant's research excellence and leadership, proposed research program and suitability of proposed research environment
        - o *The applicant is responsible for providing referees with the information required to complete their assessments.*

- Application (*complete on ResearchNet*)

- Fulfillment of degree requirements form (*must be signed by the institution that conferred your PhD, PhD-equivalent or health professional degree*)

Point to consider: the best applicants in TriAgency fellowship competitions *may not* be the best candidates for the Banting PDF program.

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What are the key elements of the application form?

- Significance of <u>research</u> contributions (top 3, 1 page)

- Significance of <u>leadership</u> contributions (top 3, 1 page)

- Research proposal (4 pages)

- Supervisor's Statement from your proposed supervisor and co-supervisor(s) as appropriate (5 pages) –*supervisors do not attach a CCV*

- Special circumstances – justification for career/research delays, eligibility window extensions, same research environment for PhD studies and current PDF studies *(the longer the applicant has been at the same institution or research environment, the stronger the required justification)* (1 page)

<u>Sections to be completed by the institution:</u>

- Letter of endorsement (1 page)

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What are main changes to the 2018 Banting application?

- Removal of the 25% cap on the number of Banting PDFs awarded for tenure abroad.

- Addressing implicit/unconscious bias in the selection process.

Reminders:

- All applications must have at least **1 arm's length referee.**
- Candidate and supervisor should carefully consider the selection committee chosen to review the application.
- Support from institutions – from department, faculty, and institution.

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What are the evaluation criteria?

1. **Research excellence and leadership in the research domain**

    - Track record to date as demonstrated by the quality of the applicant's research contributions [research history]
        - Research excellence and productivity.

    - Sphere of influence achieved to date by the applicant [leadership and impact of their activities]

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What are the evaluation criteria (cont.)?

2.   Quality of applicant's proposed research program

- Promise and <u>quality</u> of the research proposal (feasibility, timelines, novelty of the research)

- Proposed institutional <u>environment</u>

- <u>Career aspirations</u> of the applicant and the potential to make a significant impact [rationale for why the applicant is working with the proposed supervisor at the proposed institution]

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What are the evaluation criteria (cont.)?

3. **Institutional commitment and demonstrated synergy between applicant and institutional strategic priorities**

- Commitment of the institution to <u>support</u> applicant's research (<u>funding, facilities, equipment, personnel</u>, etc.) and their leadership capacity (<u>professional development</u>) **<u>above and beyond what is offered to regular postdoctoral fellows.</u>**

- Demonstrated institutional <u>research capacity</u> in the applicant's proposed research and ability to provide <u>excellent environment.</u>

- Demonstrated <u>alignment and synergy</u> between the applicant's research ambitions and the institution's strategic priorities (how will the institution **strategically** benefit from engagement with the applicant).

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Important terminology in a Banting PDF application:

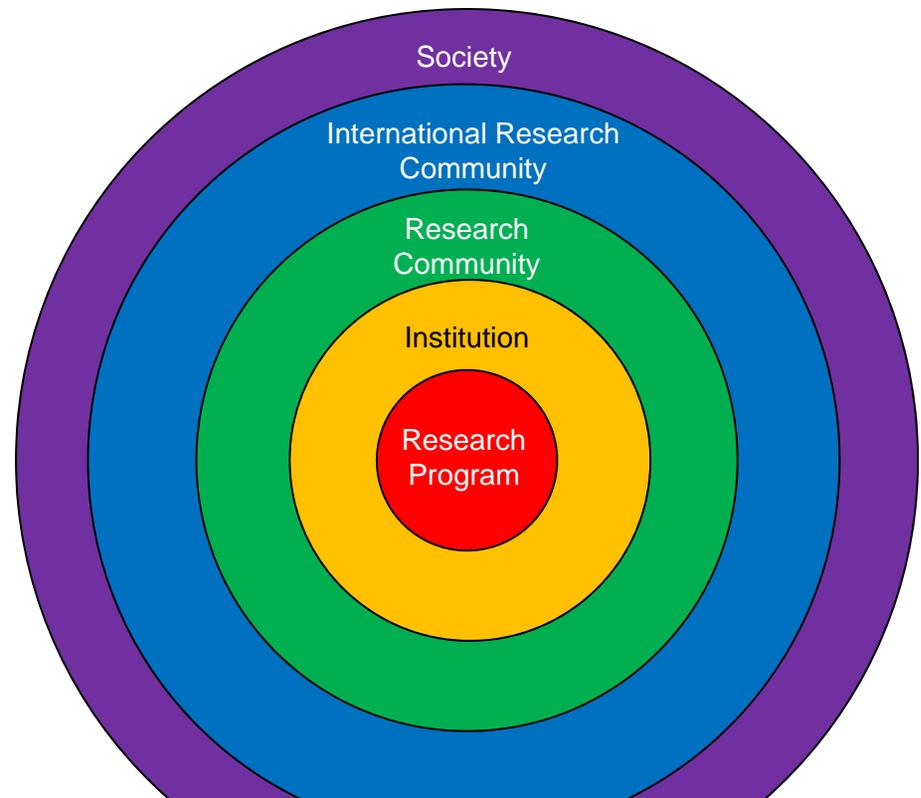**Leadership contributions:**

- <u>Memberships</u> on academic/scientific committees, selection/merit/peer review committees, student or professional associations;

- <u>Teaching activities</u> (courses taught, course/program development);

- <u>Supervisory and advisory activities</u> (student supervision, staff supervision, mentoring);

- <u>Administrative activities</u> (editorial activities, event administration/organization);

- <u>Assessment and review activities</u> (review activities for journals, conferences, research funding agencies; organizational review)

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Important terminology in a Banting PDF application:

Impact:

- Applicant's potential as research leader of tomorrow.

Society

International Research Community

Research Community

Institution

Research Program

How have you impacted the direction of thought and activity within your field and beyond?

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Important terminology in a Banting PDF application:

Synergy:
- How you/your research program fits with the supervisor's research expertise and the institution's strategic priorities

The "fit" between your research program, your supervisor, and the institution
- What are the anticipated mutual benefits.
- Why was this supervisor and institution chosen?
- Why was this applicant endorsed/chosen by the supervisor/institution?
- What specific institutional strategic priorities are relevant to your area of research?

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Important terminology in a Banting PDF application:

Professional development :

- <u>Supervisor</u> must demonstrate commitment to support the applicant's development of a successful research-intensive career

Examples of professional development include training, resources or mentoring in:

- Grant/proposal writing, publications and presentations;

- Knowledge translation/mobilization;

- Intellectual property regulations;

- Teaching and mentoring skills;

- Research collaborations and research with knowledge users/partners;

- Career counselling;

- Responsible professional practices.

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2018 Banting PDF competition: important dates

Competition launch: **April 2018**

Application deadline: **September 19, 2018**

Decision release: **Mid-February, 2018**

⭐ Institutional internal deadline is **July 25th**. Consult the Research Services' *Upcoming Major Funding Opportunities database* on its Search for Funding webpage.

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UM internal process for Banting PDF competition

- <u>Announcement</u> of the Banting PDF competition sent to all faculties when program was formally launched (mid-April).

- Complete applications are requested <u>at least 5 weeks</u> prior to Banting deadline (*not including the institutional letter of endorsement and referee assessments*)

- Applications are reviewed and scored by an <u>internal multidisciplinary committee</u> of researchers.

- Vice-President (Research and International) office makes final decisions on applications to submit (*there are no institutional application quotas for the Banting PDF program*).

- ORS works with applicants to finalize submissions prior to the deadline.

Institutions should demonstrate:
- Strategic use of the proposed research program;
- Support for the proposed research program;
- Commitment to developing the research and leadership potential of the applicant;
- Positioning the candidate for leadership in a research-intensive career;
- Gender equity.

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Responding to common questions about this program:

- All areas of research under the three Federal granting agencies (NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR) are eligible for the Banting PDF program.

- There is no explicit requirement for an institution to retain a Banting PDF after the fellowship has ended.

- International travel is allowed during a Banting fellowship, but the applicant must continue to be based at their host institution.

- Banting PDF applications are distinct from other PDF programs not only due to their value, but more importantly since they are prepared by the applicant and the supervisor with institutional support/commitment.

- Applicants can apply to both the Banting PDF program and other Tri-Agency postdoctoral fellowship programs at the same time *(applicants who are successful in both competitions will have to choose which award to accept)*

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Insight from the reviewers' perspective: review process

- Applications are reviewed by a <u>multi-disciplinary</u>, agency-specific selection committee (NSERC, SSHRC or CIHR). *Be sure to write your application with a non-specialist research audience in mind.*

- 0.1 – 9.0 scoring scale for each of the three evaluation criteria (<u>equally weighted</u>)
    - 10% of applications can be between 7.5 and 9.0 - Recommended;
    - 20% between 5.1 and 7.4 – Could be recommended;
    - 50% below 5.0 – Not recommended;
    - Remaining 20% distributed as reviewers see fit.

- Minimum threshold score for funding is 5.1 for each individual criterion.

- Each application reviewed by two reviewers and a reader. All members of the committee will participate in the discussion about an application.

- <u>No written review comments</u> provided to applicants (**scores** are provided to applicants on three criteria, as well as **final rank** in committee).

- Competition success rate is between **10-15%**.

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Insight from the reviewers' perspective: application

- The PDF candidate and the supervisor should be **first-rate**!

- **Institutional support** – extra funding support is always discussed at committee table (avg. $10k-$15K) even though matching funding is not a program requirement – *internal reviewers were instructed not to look at whether there was a position commitment from the institution*

- Very hard to justify staying at same location as your PhD.

- Supervisors should be **supportive and involved in the application** – it shows to the reviewers!

- There should ideally by evidence of some manner of collaboration at the time of application between the PDF and the supervisor.

- Project should be cutting-edge!

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<u>Recent Banting program evaluation (2016): Key Findings</u>

- Banting program was seen to be attracting among the best postdoctoral talent in the world, and these awardees had comparatively higher relative citation scores and relative impact factor scores than others.

- More foreign researchers came to Canada than Canadians left to go study abroad.

- However, there has been a recent decline in the proportion of foreign applications from 2013-2015 (program might be too Canada-centric). <u>Recommended</u> that steps by taken to address the decline in international applicants.

- There is wide variation in the additional supports provided by host institutions. <u>Recommended</u> that there should be guidance on leading practices for the support of Banting fellows to develop their leadership potential and position them for success as research leaders of tomorrow.

- Banting PDFs were more likely to engage in research leadership development activities compared to teaching and service leadership development activities.

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