Overview
The vision of ALS Canada is “By 2024, ALS will be a treatable disease.” As a result of the continued pursuance of new treatments and a better understanding of the disease through the end of the decade and beyond, it is imperative that promising young investigators are nurtured into a career focused on ALS research. Attracting the brightest young minds to ALS research will contribute to a succession plan for the Canadian ALS research community and will nurture new ideas to the field. Supporting the highest calibre applicants at this career stage provides the best possible chance for maintaining Canadian ALS research excellence in the future.

Qualifying Applicants

**Doctoral Scheme (replaces Doctoral Research Award competition)**
Qualifying trainees currently hold or have secured a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree and, at the time of application, have applied to, been accepted for, or are enrolled in a PhD program under the supervision of an investigator who holds an academic position at a qualifying Canadian institution, defined according to CIHR guidelines (http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/36374.html). Non-Canadians training in Canadian labs are eligible to apply.

**Postdoctoral Scheme (replaces Postdoctoral Fellowship competition)**
Qualifying trainees currently hold or have secured a postdoctoral position under the supervision of an investigator who holds an academic position at a qualifying Canadian institution, defined according to CIHR guidelines (http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/36374.html). Non-Canadians training in Canadian labs are eligible to apply. At the time of application, applicants should be transitioning from graduate work to a postdoctoral position or be within the first two years of postdoctoral studies.

**Clinical Scheme (Replaces Clinical Research Fellowship competition)**
** - new for 2017 – Successful applications will require proof of a post fellowship offer of employment.

The applicant must be a citizen or permanent resident of Canada have completed residency training leading to certification (FRCPC or equivalent) in neurology, physiatry, or a related specialty and have an interest in pursuing an academic career in motor neuron diseases.

The applicant’s supervisor must be a clinician recognized for expertise in both ALS patient care and research. It is recommended that the fellowship be carried out at a Canadian academic medical centre with an active multidisciplinary ALS program.

This opportunity is for a full-time position with 100% of the applicant’s time to be spent pursuing the fellowship. Clinical training is expected to be directed by the proposed supervisor. The awardee will work closely with multidisciplinary team members including allied health professionals, patient advocacy staff, research assistants, etc. Co-supervision is possible, including when clinical training and basic research training are to be provided by separate individuals. Research training is to be concurrent with clinical training. Applicants are required to pursue an educational program that has the objective of preparing the individual to ultimately design, execute, and collaborate in clinical or basic research. Such a program would lead to an appropriate certification, for example an MSc in public health/clinical epidemiology or in neuroscience. The academic and clinical training program should be individualized to optimize the research and clinical training of the particular candidate in consideration of previous education and goals to achieve this program. Under special circumstances, inter-institutional educational opportunities may be considered, if justified.

It is expected that the applicant will play a major role in a research project specifically related to ALS; the applicant’s role in the project must be clearly defined in the application. It is expected that such a study would lead to a presentation at a scientific meeting and publication.
Should a formal, degree-based program not be pursued, applicants must provide sufficient justification; however, this is not encouraged and may result in being deemed ineligible.

Grant Details

- A pool of funds in excess of $200,000 will be available for this program (exact amount tbd)
- The distribution of doctoral, postdoctoral and clinical research fellowships will be determined by relative merit of the applications
- Each Doctoral Award would be funded at $25,000 per year for up to three years
- Each Postdoctoral Fellowship would be funded at $55,000 per year for up to three years (to be named the Tim E Noël Postdoctoral Fellow)
- A Clinical Research Fellowship would be funded at $100,000 per year for up to two years

Use of Funds

- Funds may only be used as stipend/salary support
- Should the award/fellowship be terminated early, any unused funds must be returned to ALS Canada

Application Process

Complete applications should be submitted via email to:

Dr. David Taylor
Vice President, Research
ALS Canada
Email: dtaylor@als.ca

Applications will be accepted until 1:00 pm EST April 14, 2017. Applicants should request delivery and read receipts. An email acknowledging receipt of the application will be sent.

Applications must be prepared as a single PDF file using standard type fonts (Calibri-11, Arial-11 or Times Roman-12) with 0.5 inch/1.27 cm margins and numbered pages.

Applications that do not meet the formatting guidelines will be returned to the investigator for a single resubmission before the deadline or within 24 hours if submitted at the deadline.

Please submit your applications for review in the following order:

1) Cover page
2) Letter from the applicant (limit 2 pages)
3) Letter from the proposed supervisor (limit 2 pages)
4) Scientific summary/abstract (limit ½ page)
5) Research plan/Fellowship proposal (limit 3 pages)
6) Figures and Tables (optional, 1 page)
7) Research training environment (limit 1 page)
8) Percentage of time spent on other activities (limit ½ page)
9) Curriculum vitae of applicant
10) Curriculum vitae of proposed supervisor (limit 4 pages)
11) Additional letter of support
12) Letter indicating post fellowship offer of employment (Clinical Scheme only)
1) **Cover page**  
Please note, this is provided as a fillable form page (Word Doc), downloadable from the ALS Canada website. Sign and complete.

2) **Letter from the applicant**  
The letter is the applicant’s opportunity to explain to the reviewers why they should be chosen. Suggested material includes, but is not limited to:
- Previous training and how it relates to the present proposal
- Research goals and how the proposed training and environment will contribute
- Career goals and how this training and environment will contribute
- Importance of their research proposal to the field of ALS research and ALS Canada’s vision

3) **Letter from the proposed supervisor**  
The letter from the proposed supervisor should describe why the applicant is being supported, including the fit between the applicant and the supervisor’s research program, how the overall professional development of the trainee would be supported, and how the supervisor’s research program and the training environment would prepare the trainee for a career in ALS research.

4) **Scientific summary/abstract**  
The abstract should be scientific and approximately one-half page in length describing the hypothesis, rationale, specific aims and significance.

5) **Research plan/Fellowship proposal**  
Research plan can be completed in collaboration with the proposed supervisor – limit **THREE** pages excluding bibliography

**Doctoral/Postdoctoral Schemes**  
The research plan should be organized under the following headings:
- Rationale for the project
  - including hypothesis
- Specific aims
- Background
  - a comprehensive literature review is not expected. Please supply only the information that is required for reviewers, who are specialists in ALS and neurodegenerative disease, to understand the proposal
- Preliminary data
  - if existing
- Experimental Plan
  - a clear and logical experimental plan that addresses the hypothesis and specific aims
- Bibliography
  - include titles and all authors of the referenced articles; excluded from page limit

**Clinical Scheme**  
- Fellowship proposal, including details of the clinical training, research training, formal education program and funding available to support the proposed project (can be completed in collaboration with the proposed supervisor – limit **THREE** pages).

6) **Figures and Tables**  
One optional page will be allowed for figures and/or tables which accompany the research plan (including preliminary data or information to support feasibility). This page may not be used for supplementary text.
7) **Research training environment**  
This section may include a description of, but not limited to: space, equipment and personnel support available to the applicant, opportunities for professional development, etc. where applicable.

8) **Percentage of time spent on other activities**  
Please provide a breakdown of time spent on additional activities.

9) **Curriculum vitae of the applicant**  
Applicants’ CVs should include the following sections: Education and Training, Positions and Honours, Professional Activities and Awards, Peer-reviewed Publications and Poster/Oral Presentations. For all multi-authored publications, an indication of the applicant’s contribution should be provided. Please do not submit CIHR Common CV. There is no page limit.

10) **Curriculum vitae of the proposed supervisor**  
Supervisors’ CVs should take the form of an NIH-style abbreviated biosketch, including the following sections: Education and Training, Positions and Honours, Research Focus (one paragraph), Professional Activities and Awards, Peer-reviewed Publications relevant to the proposal, and Research Funding (last five years). Maximum **FOUR** pages. Please do not submit CIHR Common CV.

11) **Additional letter of support**  
Please send directly to dtaylor@als.ca.

12) **Letter indicating post fellowship offer of employment**  
Applications to the Clinical Research Fellowship must include some indication that a position will be available at the end of the funding period. Relevance of the position to the investment by ALS Canada will be considered.

**Evaluation**  
Applications in all three schemes will be reviewed and scored together by a not-in-conflict subcommittee of the Scientific & Medical Advisory Council of ALS Canada. Reviewers will consider the merit of the applicant, the quality of the project and the relevance of the work to ALS and the vision of ALS Canada. Written feedback will be provided to the applicant from each reviewer.

Additional members of the Canadian ALS research community may be utilized as ad hoc reviewers when necessary. This subcommittee will include the Vice President, Research of ALS Canada and will be facilitated by an additional ALS Canada staff member. A funding scenario will be recommended based on top ranked applications fitting into the available funding pool. The Vice President, Research will relay the recommendations of the subcommittee to the ALS Canada Board of Directors for decisions on successful applicants.

**Conditions of the Award**  
1) Funds will be sent as annual instalments to the supervising PI’s institution (Institution paid). Release of funds will be subject to receipt of relevant ethics approvals from the supervising PI’s institutional review committees, where necessary (for use of human subjects, research animals, or hazardous materials). Note, the PI will be responsible for ensuring that relevant ethics approvals have been obtained at each participating institution. Significant changes in research aims or budget allocation requires *a priori* permission of ALS Canada.
2) Annual progress reports are required. A final progress report is due within four weeks of termination of the grant. A template for reports will be provided by ALS Canada upon acceptance of the award.

3) Funding is contingent upon compliance with the policies of ALS Canada.

4) Awardees may not hold another salary-based fellowship or award concurrently with an ALS Canada Training Grant.

5) The intent of ALS Canada fellowships and awards is to fund research that will be in the open domain. All manuscripts, presentations, abstracts, etc. must acknowledge funding by ALS Canada. Funded researchers should make every effort to publish all findings related to the project and to acknowledge ALS Canada in media events discussing research funded by ALS Canada. Manuscripts or other presentations in press must be sent to the Vice President, Research of ALS Canada upon acceptance for publication. ALS Canada should also be notified as soon as possible of media events related to the project.

6) Trainees are required to inform the Vice President, Research of significant difficulties, availability of resources, additional funding sources, or significant changes to the experimental plan throughout the term of the grant. As per ALS Canada policy, in the case of a leave of absence (e.g., parental leave or medical leave/long term disability), the award will be suspended and resumed upon return. ALS Canada cannot provide paid leave. Vacation policy will follow the trainee's institutional guidelines.

7) For the purposes of advocating the mission of ALS Canada, it is expected that ALS Canada funded researchers will actively engage with, or on behalf of, ALS Canada when requested.

8) ALS Canada funded trainees will be expected to make every effort to attend the annual ALS Canada Research Forum irrespective of being chosen as an accompanying junior for their supervisor. ALS Canada will cover their expenses as a separate, sponsored invitee.

Questions and Additional Information
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Important Dates
- Call announced: January 2017
- Application deadline: April 14, 2017
- Announcement of award: August 2017
- Earliest funding start date: September 1, 2017