

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The McMaster Institute for Research on Aging

MIRA Scholarship Program

McMaster University identifies aging as a research priority, focusing its research strength on addressing the most pressing questions facing the aging population. In 2017, the University made a transformative investment in this critical area by creating the **McMaster Institute for Research on Aging (MIRA)**. MIRA's mission is to optimize the health and longevity of the aging population through leading-edge research, education, and stakeholder collaborations, while upholding the values of integrity, excellence, interdisciplinary collaboration and transparency.

The MIRA Scholarship Program offers scholarships at the Master's and PhD level to applicants proposing interdisciplinary research on aging that seeks to involve and benefit end users and stakeholders, who may include, but are not limited to: older adults, caregivers, clinicians, health care practitioners, industry partners, policy makers, the media, educators and learners, and academics in other disciplines. Research projects supported by these scholarships should aim to develop the capacity of future leaders in aging research and generate evidence that contributes to the well-being of older adults.

Scholarship recipients will demonstrate academic achievement, proven interest and accomplishment in aging research, strong work ethic, the desire to collaborate with diverse disciplines and participate in research activities with potential benefits to older adults. Scholarships are valued at \$15,000 (Master's) and \$18,000 (PhD) for one year. **Note:** MIRA | sMAP PhD Scholarships are valued at \$36,000 over two years.

These awards are intended to **enhance** the support and training experience otherwise provided by the department, Faculty, supervisor or other sources – not replace it. In making the recommendation of these scholarships, MIRA requires confirmation that the supervisor and/or program will commit to matching the minimum level of support required for the recipient to complete their graduate degree.

Applicants are invited to submit a research proposal focusing on interdisciplinary, impact-driven approaches in the study of aging. In addition, MIRA has partnered with several of McMaster's research centres and institutes to further expand our collective impact and build capacity among McMaster trainees. Applications that focus on aging **and** the mandate of any of the co-funding partners as outlined on pages three and four of this call for proposals, may be considered for co-funded scholarships. Priority will be given to projects that clearly articulate engagement and potential benefit to stakeholders and end users.

Eligibility

Canadian citizens, permanent residents and international applicants are eligible for the award. Awards must be held at McMaster University by a full-time graduate student entering their first year of a Master's degree or their first or second year of a PhD degree.

It is MIRA's mandate to support interdisciplinary research; as such proposals for all MIRA scholarships **must** involve a mentor from a McMaster Faculty outside of the primary supervisor's Faculty. The applicant's supervisor and mentor must be MIRA members or become MIRA members before funding is released.

Expectations and deliverables

All scholarship recipients are expected to actively participate in MIRA activities and trainee events, including delivering a poster at the annual MIRA & Labarge Knowledge Exchange. Recipients will be required to submit an annual report to MIRA, detailing research progress, for the duration of their degree.

The applicant is required to describe how they will use MIRA's [Voice Canada](#) – a digital platform connecting researchers to older adults – to connect with the community and facilitate knowledge exchange.

Submission and selection process

Deadline: **January 22, 2024, 4 p.m. ET**

A cross-disciplinary committee of researchers will review and rank the submissions. MIRA will make selections based on the advice of this committee. Successful applicants to be announced in April 2024. Download the evaluation rubric [here](#).

The application package must be uploaded as a **single PDF file** as outlined in the MIRA Scholarship Program application form. Submit applications through the online application portal [here](#).

How to apply and required documents

Proposals must be submitted through the [online application form](#). Using the naming convention "LASTNAME.FIRSTNAME.Schol.Appl.2024", submit all materials in a single PDF with application elements in the following order:

1. Applicant **cover letter**
2. A structured **research proposal** written in lay terms with references (proposal cannot exceed four-pages – references not included in proposal page limit), 11-point Arial font, with 1-inch margins. The research proposal must include the following headings:
 - b) **Lay summary** – approximately one paragraph.
 - c) **Background and purpose** – discuss the gap in literature and how this will be addressed, support assertions with references.
 - d) **Methods** – detailed methods section, including planned analyses, approximately one page in length.
 - e) **Anticipated outcomes and novel contributions** – discuss implications of this project and how it may contribute novel findings to the subject area and future directions.
 - f) **Applicant's contributions** – provide specific details on which aspects of the project you will complete.
 - g) **Relevance to aging and alignment with mandate(s)** – include potential benefits for older adults; alignment of project with MIRA's mandate, and the mandates of potential co-funding partners.
 - h) **Stakeholders and end-users** – How will stakeholder/end-user perspectives be considered? Stakeholders and end users may include, but are not limited to: older adults, clinicians, health care practitioners, industry partners, policy makers, the media, educators and learners, and academics in other disciplines. Applications must also include a plan to use MIRA's [Voice Canada platform](#) to connect with older adults and facilitate knowledge exchange.
 - i) **Mentor contributions** – value of interdisciplinary mentor, mechanism for meeting and collaborating, and the project's potential to stimulate interdisciplinary collaboration.
 - j) **Applicant's career path** – anticipated benefits towards your development in the short and long term.

- k) **Equity, diversity, inclusivity (EDI)** – how will EDI be considered in the development of this project and your professional development? If EDI principles are not applicable, explain why. EDI

Resources:

- [McMaster University: The case for EDI and the inclusive excellence imperative](#)
- [McMaster definitions: Equity, diversity and inclusion \(EDI\)](#)
- [CIHR Guidelines: Integrating sex and gender into research](#)
- [SSHRC Guidelines: Addressing equity, diversity and inclusion in applications](#)
- [NSERC guide on integrating equity, diversity and inclusion considerations in research](#)

3. **Letter from proposed supervisor**, detailing capacity to support the applicant and proposed research
4. **Letter from proposed mentor** describing value of interdisciplinary mentorship role and involvement
5. Applicant's **curriculum vitae**

****do not include the following item in your submission – this must be sent directly to MIRA by the referee****

6. A **confidential letter of support** from someone who can speak to the applicant's research abilities, e.g., previous academic supervisor (preferred), thesis or senior project supervisor from an undergraduate program, collaborating faculty member(s) on current research project(s) or graduate course instructors (depending on the nature of the course). This letter must be emailed directly to mirafund@mcmaster.ca with the applicant's name in the subject line.

Scholarship co-funding partners

All applicants will be considered for a MIRA Scholarship in Aging Research. In addition, MIRA has partnered with several of McMaster's research centres and institutes to further expand our collective impact and build capacity among McMaster trainees. Applications that focus on aging **and** the mandate of any of the co-funding partners below may be considered for co-funded scholarships.

Applicants are encouraged to review the mandates and areas of focus for each of the co-funding partners below, and indicate their interest in having their application considered for specific co-funded awards via their [online application](#).

Labarge Centre for Mobility in Aging (LCMA)

Funded by a generous gift from Suzanne Labarge, the [LCMA](#) supports interdisciplinary collaboration in aging research on the broad topic of mobility in aging, which may include: understanding and defining mobility in aging; maintaining and restoring mobility in aging; and environmental facilitators and barriers that influence mobility in aging. Applicants may be considered for funding through the LCMA if their research proposal focuses on aging and mobility, where mobility is defined to include physical and community aspects of mobility, execution of daily activities and participation in society.

Smart Mobility for Aging Populations (sMAP)

Applicants are invited to submit a research proposal aligned with the goals and research priorities of the [McMaster sMAP program](#). The candidate's research must focus on interdisciplinary, impact-driven approaches to aging, mobility and the development and application of smart technologies, including the following priority research areas: hardware-software co-design, multi-modal data analytics, hybrid modelling to improve mobility or care; understanding the trajectory of mobility status in health and disease from function to impairment; and development of solutions for continuous monitoring, assessing and/or maintaining and restoring of mobility. If successful, sMAP scholarship recipients are expected to complete the required training modules in for sMAP program (more details can be found [here](#)).

McMaster Digital Transformation Research Centre (MDTRC)

The [MDTRC](#) is designed as a knowledge hub to engage in three primary mandates focused on digital transformation: collaborative multidisciplinary research, outreach to academic and non-academic partners, training and education, as well as the development of custom training and educational content. MDTRC is committed to understanding the digital revolution that is transforming every aspect of our personal, social, and professional lives. Leveraging behavioural and neurophysiological techniques, the timely and important cutting-edge research initiatives at MDTRC will lead to a fundamental shift in understanding of the ever-evolving digital revolution and its challenges and opportunities, with far reaching implications for managerial practice across sectors and society at large.

Firestone Institute for Respiratory Health (FIRH)

The intent of the [FIRH](#) is to provide optimal patient care through clinical practice, translational research and the training of health care professionals. Clinical, research and educational activities are integrated and largely collaborative within the FIRH. Research is wide-ranging, from basic studies of animal models of lung disease (asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, fibrosis) to clinical trials and epidemiological studies. Specialized facilities have been established at the FIRH, such as the Sputum Research Laboratory and the Aerosol Research Laboratory. Scientists at the FIRH are performing studies of bone marrow progenitor cells, airway peptide challenges, electrophysiological studies of airway smooth muscle cells, chronic allergen challenges, preclinical models of lung injury and repair, and more.

Micheal G. DeGroote Institute for Pain Research and Care (IPRC)

The [IPRC](#) seeks to fund research and initiatives that will ultimately improve the quality of life for those living with chronic pain. One area of concern is the development of persistent pain after surgery, which is particularly common after cardiac, breast cancer and orthopedic surgery. The IPRC explores causes of chronic post-surgical pain, developing new strategies for its prevention and innovative care for patients. The Institute was made possible as a result of the DeGroote family gift.

Michael G. DeGroote Institute for Infectious Disease Research (IIDR)

Since its inception in 2007 through an unprecedented gift from Hamilton businessman Michael G. DeGroote, the [IIDR](#) is committed to delivering new knowledge and solutions to some of the most pressing challenges in infectious disease. Collaborative research spans the lab and the clinic, and a variety of disciplines ranging from medicine and biochemistry to mathematics, anthropology, and engineering. The breadth of research initiatives at the IIDR is large, reflecting the complexity of global challenges in infectious disease research and clinical practice. Further, the IIDR continually advances its research objectives to align with the evolving infectious disease landscape. Such initiatives include: Microbial and Antimicrobial Research; Vaccines and Antivirals; Host-Pathogen Interaction Research; Diagnostics; and Research into New Technologies.

Applicants and prospective supervisors can direct questions about eligibility, funding, or application requirements to mirafund@mcmaster.ca.