

MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre Community-Engaged Research Graduate Scholarship

Applicants **in year one, two or three of a PhD program at McMaster University in 2026/27** are invited to submit a research proposal focusing on interdisciplinary, impact-driven approaches in the study of aging to the MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre Graduate Scholarship Program that focus on one or more priority areas identified by the Dixon Hall community. See call for proposals for full details. All applicants must submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) form that includes a project title, priority area, lay summary, statement of interest, and the names of their proposed supervisor and mentor.

Applicants should review the call for proposals before submitting their NOI to ensure their proposed project is eligible and aligned with the goals of this funding call.

Scholarship announced

May 11, 2026

NOI deadline

June 28, 2026, 11:59 p.m. ET

Invitations to submit full application sent out

Mid-August 2026

Meetings with Community Advisory Group

September-October 2026

Application deadline

October 18, 2026, 11:59 p.m. ET

Results announced

Mid-December 2026

Funding period

January to December 2027

Funding available

\$20,000 over one year, renewable for one additional year. If the funding period extends beyond the recipient's academic program, the amount of the scholarship will be prorated. One to two scholarships will be awarded in 2027.

The **MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre Graduate Scholarship Program** offers scholarships at the PhD level to applicants proposing research on aging that seeks to involve and benefit end users and stakeholders, who may include, but are not limited to: older adults, caregivers, and policy makers. Research projects supported by these scholarships will develop the capacity of future leaders in research on aging and generate evidence that contributes to the well-being of equity-deserving older adults.

Proposed projects must focus on one or more priority areas identified by the Dixon Hall community:

- Loneliness, social isolation and emotional well-being
- Housing and aging in place
- Financial well-being and food precarity/security
- Physical and cognitive decline
- Technology access and competency
- System navigation
- Ageism, vulnerability and loss of agency

Applications will be evaluated by an interdisciplinary committee, based on: alignment with MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre research priorities, value of the interdisciplinary approach and supervisory committee, candidate's academic and research potential as indicated by their CV and cover letter, the use of design thinking and/or stakeholder engagement, and the consideration of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the project.

Call for Proposals

McMaster University identifies aging as a research priority, focusing its research strength on addressing the most pressing challenges 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. In April 2021, MIRA partnered with Dixon Hall, a not-for-profit social services organization in Downtown East Toronto, to form the MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre. The Centre aims to bring together Dixon Hall's strong community connections and MIRA's interdisciplinary research expertise to create lasting evidence-based solutions that optimize the physical and social well-being of equity-deserving older adults.

Purpose of this funding call

The MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre invites highly qualified students to submit a research proposal focusing on interdisciplinary, impact-driven approaches in the study of Aging that focus on one or more priority areas identified by the Dixon Hall community.

Research projects supported by these scholarships should aim to improve the well-being of equity-seeking older adults. Priority will be given to projects that clearly articulate engagement of and potential benefit to stakeholders and end users, including but not limited to older adults, caregivers, and policy makers (i.e., co-creation).

Interdisciplinarity

The applicant and principal supervisor are expected to involve one additional researcher from a different McMaster Faculty (outside of the principal supervisor's Faculty) as a mentor in the development of an interdisciplinary research proposal. The proposal should clearly indicate how the supervisor and mentor will contribute to the development and execution of the project, and how this interdisciplinary approach will bring value to the student and to the training experience.

Value and duration of awards

MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre Scholarships are valued at \$20,000 for one year and are renewable for one additional year. If the funding period extends beyond the recipient's academic program, the amount of the scholarship will be prorated. 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 | Dixon Hall Centre requires confirmation that the supervisor and/or program will not use this award to replace funding the recipient would normally receive (e.g., research stipend) and commit to matching the minimum level of support required for the recipient to complete their graduate degree.

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 or second year of a PhD degree, in the academic funding year of the award. Applicants must begin their eligible year (i.e., first, second, or third year of PhD) no earlier than September 2026 and no later than January 2027. It is MIRA's mandate to support interdisciplinary research; as such proposals for all MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre scholarships must involve a mentor from a McMaster Faculty outside of the primary supervisor's Faculty. The applicant's supervisor must be a MIRA member or apply for MIRA membership before funding is released. It is MIRA | Dixon Hall's strong preference that the proposed mentor also join MIRA.

Expectations and deliverables

Applicants should clearly outline the planned research and deliverables that will be accomplished in year one, and how this work will be leveraged and further developed in the following year. Applicants should clearly demonstrate how Dixon Hall staff, leadership and/or clients will be involved in the research process, design or delivery (co-creation). Scholarship recipients are expected to spend time (at least once a month) on-site at Dixon Hall (188/192 Carlton Street, Toronto) to understand the local context. Scholarship recipients are also expected to participate in MIRA activities including attending MIRA trainee network meetings and presenting at the annual Pitch Your Project event and the MIRA & Labarge Knowledge Exchange. Recipients are also required to submit an annual progress report during the tenure of the award, followed by up to two years of closed project reports highlighting the continued impact of the scholarship. Upon completion of the project, the recipient must provide a practical community report or summary for MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre leadership and Dixon Hall community members.

Submission and selection process

Notice of Intent deadline: June 28, 2026, 11:59 p.m. ET

A Notice of Intent (NOI) to apply for this MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre Scholarship must be submitted using this link by the deadline: <https://forms.gle/zPJyN7NaA5Wr4FnD9>.

In addition to completing the online form, applicants should submit the following documents as a single PDF to mirafund@mcmaster.ca by the deadline:

1. Academic Letter of Interest (2 pages max) – applicant's background (academic, professional, research); research interests (focus, methodologies); and vision (academic and career goals)

2. Curriculum Vitae

NOIs will be reviewed by MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre leadership and the MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre Community Advisory Group (CAG) for alignment with Centre and community priorities. Applicants selected to submit a full application will be notified mid-August 2026, and invited to develop their application with input from the CAG and Dixon Hall leadership. Applicants may be invited to attend a CAG meeting at Dixon Hall in September or October to obtain feedback from the community about the proposed project.

Application deadline: October 18, 2026, 11:59 p.m. ET

Full proposal submissions must be emailed to mirafund@mcmaster.ca and include “MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre Scholarship” in the subject line. See Application Requirements section below. MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre will select the award recipient(s) based on the alignment with MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre’s goals and mandate; the quality, feasibility and impact of the research proposal, the value of the interdisciplinary approach; the excellence of the applicant and supervisory team; the incorporation of end-user perspectives; and the consideration of EDI in the project. Please refer to the Evaluation Rubric for details.

Successful applicants are expected to be announced mid-December 2026. A cross-disciplinary committee will review and rank the submissions. If a suitable candidate is not identified based on the feedback of the review committee, the award will not be offered.

How to apply and required documents

Application Requirements

All items below (excluding #8 – confidential letters of support) must be submitted in a single PDF file using the naming convention “LASTNAME.FIRSTNAME.Schol.Appl.2027”, via email to mirafund@mcmaster.ca in the order listed below.

- 1) MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre Scholarship Cover Sheet
- 2) A structured research proposal, written in plain language for an interdisciplinary, non-specialist audience. Two pages maximum, not including references. Arial, Calibri or Poppins font, with 2.5 cm margins. The research proposal must include the following headings:
 - a. Background –position your proposed research within the context of the current knowledge in the field and how your project will address the knowledge gap; support assertions with references. State the significance of

the proposed research (why your question is important and why it needs to be answered now).

- b. Objectives & hypotheses
 - c. Methods – planned analyses including a power analysis – if not, explain why; and how you will recruit participants (if applicable).
 - d. Anticipated outcomes and novel contributions – discuss implications and merit of this project and how it may contribute novel findings to the subject area and future directions.
- 3) References – not to be counted in two-page limit
- 4) Appendix – May be up to two pages. You may add one figure to describe your study timeline, objectives and deliverables, and one additional figure as required.
- 5) One letter from the proposed supervisor confirming that the supervisor and/or program will commit to matching the minimum level of support required for the recipient to complete their graduate degree. The letter should also note the alignment of the proposed scholarship with the supervisor’s existing program of research and describe the involvement of the proposed mentor including:
- a. how their expertise and involvement will meaningfully advance the project
 - b. the mechanism through which their involvement will occur
- 6) Signature from mentor
- 7) Curriculum vitae of the applicant

****Do not include the following item in your submission – this must be sent directly to MIRA | Dixon Hall Centre by the referee****

- 8) One 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. Do not include the confidential letter in application package.

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

