



Program Description

The National CIHR Research Training Program in Hepatitis C (NC RTP-HepC) recruits and provides training and stipend support to Master's, Doctoral, and Post-Doctoral students as well as MDs and summer students whose research involves Hepatitis C and who have demonstrated excellence early in their careers. All the trainees are registered in a graduate program at one of our eleven affiliated institutions across Canada. In addition, the training program employs the knowledge and experience of thirty-two mentors across Canada from multiple disciplines. Every mentor has played a major role in recent advances in hepatitis C research and has displayed their ability to train excellent researchers.

Objectives

1. To attract and train high quality graduate students (both national and international) to become independent researchers and leaders in the field of hepatitis C
2. To consolidate, enhance, and ensure sustainability of the transdisciplinary approach of the network of mentors and to translate it to trainees, relevant individuals, and the general public
3. To help and support all aspects of HCV research from epidemiology, prevention, infection control, diagnostics, health economics, to vaccine development, viral resistance, immune response, pathogenesis, and psychology
4. To become a central forum for discussion, thinking, and orientation with regards to the political, social, economic and research issues in hepatitis C
5. To build on the now established international recognition of the program by continuing to attract foreign students and experts and to promote international collaborations
6. To eradicate hepatitis C

Eligibility

Trainees, who wish to apply to the National CIHR Research Training Program in Hepatitis C, should confirm that they are eligible candidates by verifying that they meet the following requirements:

Administrative Requirements

- Be able to commit two years (minimum) to the program.
 - Trainees pursuing their PhD can apply to extend their funding for an extra 2 years beyond the original 2 year commitment.
 - The student must be a full-time student for their duration in the program.
- Must be registered or must have the intent to register in a recognized graduate program.
- Must be supervised or co-supervised by an NC RTP-HepC mentor.
- Each mentor can only have 2 trainees in the program at any time. Communicate with your proposed mentor to make sure they have the space for you.

Disciplinary Requirements

The NC RTP-HepC welcomes trainees from all academic backgrounds. The student's research must revolve around hepatitis C.

Sample disciplines:

Clinical Sciences
Social Sciences
Basic Sciences

Nursing
Statistics
Public Health

Academic Requirements

An acceptable candidate may be any of the following types of trainees:

- **Graduate Students**

- Students entering either any recognized Masters or Doctorate program.
- **Post-Doctoral Fellows**
- **M.D.s**
 - Intend to complete or have already completed specialty training in the fields of General Internal Medicine, Gastroenterology, Infectious Diseases or Hepato-Biliary Surgery; or
 - Participants in a Royal College Clinician Investigator Program at one of the eleven participating universities

Note: With the exception of post-doctoral fellows, all applicants must be registered or must have the intent of registering in a graduate program.

Awards & Stipends

Selected NCRTP-HepC applicants will be awarded amounts described below.

Graduate Student pursuing Masters degree	\$17,850/year	up to	2 years
Graduate Student pursuing Doctoral degree	\$23,300/year	up to	4 years
Post-doctoral Fellows	\$36,750/year	up to	2 years
Medical Doctors	\$52,200/year	up to	2 years

Stipends are paid directly to the trainee's supervisor who will then redistribute the money to the trainee. The stipends run from July to June each year. Stipends are pro-rated. Therefore if the trainee will graduate in March, they will only receive 9 months worth of the stipend.

After their first year, all trainees are expected to apply for outside funding such as CIHR fellowship awards, pharmaceutical company scholarships, etc. Students who succeed in obtaining outside funding will receive a bonus of up to \$5,000/year. If the external funding is less than what the NCRTP-HepC would provide, the program will "top-up" the amount and provide the bonus.

- For example, if a Doctoral student wins a \$20,000/year scholarship, the NCRTP-HepC will "top-up" the student's funding with another \$3,300 and then provide a \$5,000 bonus.

Funding is made available to NCRTP-HepC trainees for the following activities:

- Student Elective – Cost of airfare (up to \$750 for economy class) and accommodation (to a maximum amount of \$900 per month for 2 months).
- Attending the NCRTP-HepC Annual Meeting – Travel costs (up to \$750 for economy class), travel to and from the airport.
- CASL Abstract Submission Fees – The NCRTP-HepC reimburses students for the cost of submitting an abstract fee to the annual Canadian Association for the Study of Liver Disease meeting.
- International Conferences - If the trainee's abstract is accepted to an international conference, the NCRTP will provide financial support for the conference registration fee (up to a maximum of \$500 CAD) and economy airfare (up to a maximum of \$1,500 CAD).

The NCRTP-HepC reserves the right to deny or decrease the amount of funding available to the students.

Training Curriculum

NCRTP-HepC selected trainees will be required to participate in the training curriculum listed below:

- Attend the MSC8000Y course – Transdisciplinary Studies in Infectious Disease (using Hepatitis C as a model)
 - To be completed once
 - If a student has already completed all necessary coursework for their degree, they must still audit this course and satisfactorily complete both the assignments and the collaborative grant proposal project
 - Students are welcomed and encouraged to audit the course again without having to do the homework/grant project again in other years
- Participate in the seminar series

- To be completed once (trainees are welcomed and encouraged to audit again in other years)
- Participate in the online journal club
 - To be completed *every* year
 - Trainees should attend a minimum of 80% of meetings
 - Every student must *present at least* once during the year (September – June)
- Liver clinic visits and report on observation
 - Minimum of 15 hours
- 2 month (maximum) trainee elective and report on observation
 - This should be completed *prior* to your thesis defence
- Submitting abstracts to CASL
 - All trainees must submit an abstract to CASL. (First years exempt.) The NCRTP will reimburse you for the \$50 abstract submission fee.
- Maintain contacts with local Canadian Liver Foundation chapters to perform knowledge translation
 - Contact Billie Potkonjak (BPotkonjak@liver.ca) for details on how to get in touch with your local chapter
- Other requirements as introduced

Please visit <http://www.ncrtp-hepc.ca/training.php> for further details.

Application Process

All applicants must be endorsed by an NCRTP-HepC mentor. To be accepted by a mentor, the trainee must contact the mentor directly. Send them your CV and explain that you would like them to be your mentor in the NCRTP-HepC. Make sure to include a brief message detailing your research interests.

The NCRTP-HepC must receive the following documents by **January 11, 2010**.

- Signed and completed NCRTP-HepC Application Form
- Two signed and completed NCRTP-HepC Reference Forms
- Applicant's curriculum vitae
- Applicant's transcript from a recognized academic institution
- Proposed supervisor's curriculum vitae (If your immediate supervisor is not an NCRTP-HepC mentor)
- Completed abstract form

All the application forms can be downloaded from <http://www.ncrtp-hepc.ca/application.php>.

NCRTP-HepC applications should be sent to the following address:

Maureen Barrow
 NCRTP-HepC Administrator
 Centre de Recherche du CHUM
 Hospital St-Luc
 264 Blvd. René-Lévesque Est, Local PEA-423
 Montreal QC H2X 1P1
maureen.barrow.chum@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

All the mentors will receive copies of the applicant's documents. At the annual meeting, the applicants will give a short 10 minute presentation via web/teleconference on their proposed research project. The mentors will ask the trainee questions about their research.

After all the presentations are completed, the mentors will discuss all the applicants and decide who to admit to the program. The announcement of the results of the application process is scheduled for April 2010.

Note: With the exception of undergraduates and postdoctoral trainees, NCRTP-HepC selected trainees **must** be registered or registering in a graduate program by July 2010. Otherwise, acceptance into the program may be temporarily suspended or completely revoked.