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ALS CANADA  
RESEARCH PROGRAM

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## Terms of Reference: ALS Canada Career Transition Award 2026

### Overview

The vision of the ALS Society of Canada (ALS Canada) is to achieve “a world free of ALS”. To build momentum for the continued pursuit of new treatments and a better understanding of the disease, it is imperative that promising early career investigators are nurtured into a career focused on ALS research. This program will identify and engage rising stars exploring innovative ALS research at academic institutions in Canada. This award has the long-term goal of developing the next generation of ALS scientists across various disciplines, spanning both fundamental and clinical research, and contributing to knowledge generation that enhances the pathway towards improved treatment and care of ALS patients.

To fulfil this mission, ALS Canada will provide a two (2) year award to support talented early career investigators, with a primary focus on ALS research, and who have secured a faculty appointment at a Canadian institution. The expectation is that a successful recipient will integrate with, and strengthen, the Canadian ALS research ecosystem, and contribute to Canadian ALS research excellence.

### About the ALS Society of Canada

The ALS Society of Canada is working to change what it means to live with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, an unrelenting and currently terminal disease. Grounded in and informed by the Canadian ALS community, we respond to the urgent unmet need for life-changing treatments by investing in high-quality research that will fuel scientific discovery, and by engaging industry, supporting increased clinical capacity, and advocating for equitable, affordable and timely access to proven therapies. Responding to the tremendous need for current and credible ALS knowledge, awareness and education, we empower Canadians affected by ALS to navigate the current realities of ALS, to be informed consumers of ALS information, and to advocate effectively for change. In Ontario, we provide direct community services to help people navigate ALS. Founded in 1977, we are a registered charity that receives no core government funding – our work is powered by the generous donors who share our vision of a world free of ALS.

[www.als.ca](http://www.als.ca)

### Funding

The award will be for up to two (2) years for a total of \$250,000 CAD. Each year, ALS Canada will provide a \$60,000 salary and \$65,000 to contribute to the recipient’s program, combining research allowance and/or salary for personnel. It is intended to be flexible. Examples of eligible expenses include, but are not limited to, stipend support of trainees, salary contribution towards research staff, or research supplies in full if other means of hiring personnel are procured. Alternative allocations within this total may be considered with appropriate justification.

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## Eligibility

The intent of this award is for ALS Canada to provide competitive support to facilitate the hiring of early career researchers (postdoctoral fellows or research associate level) as new, independent investigators who are dedicated to ALS research and are employed at Canadian universities/research institutions. The award must be held by an independent investigator, defined according to [CIHR guidelines](#), and at a qualifying Canadian institution, defined according to [CIHR guidelines](#). The applicant must demonstrate clear evidence of independent research, showing intellectual contributions to research through their publication and presentation record. Applicants should be imminently ready to start, or already be in the process of seeking an independent academic position. Applications will not be considered if there is insufficient evidence of transition planning or lack of a clear letter of support from their current supervisor outlining readiness for independence. Applicants with an MD should explain why, based on their project and future career plans, the [Clinical Research Fellowship](#) is not the appropriate avenue to seek support from ALS Canada. The Clinical Research Fellowship and Career Transition Award are distinct, alternative career development pathways. Individuals who have previously received an ALS Canada Clinical Research Fellowship have already received support intended for that stage of their career and are therefore not eligible to apply for the Career Transition Award.

Canadian and international applicants are eligible to apply. All applicants will have demonstrated significant contributions to research, which may or may not have been directly related to ALS, but proposed future research must have a majority focus on ALS.

This program is intended for individuals with a genuine interest in building a career that contributes to the field of ALS research, as the award is supported through philanthropic dollars, committed with the hope of genuine impact towards a world free of ALS.

Evidence clearly shows that increasing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in research environments enhances excellence, innovation, and creativity. ALS Canada is committed to excellence through equity, and we encourage applicants of diverse backgrounds to apply to our funding opportunities, which will promote the expression of diverse perspectives, approaches, and experiences, including those of underrepresented groups.

## Key Dates

This program follows an ongoing application and review process with no fixed deadlines. Applications may be submitted at any time. Once an applicant is deemed eligible, funding will be made available upon confirmation of an independent academic appointment. Given the rolling program setup of this program, it is imperative that the ALS Canada Research Team ([research@als.ca](mailto:research@als.ca)) is notified as soon as possible, after procuring a position, to secure the award. When a successful applicant receives an award, all other currently eligible individuals will immediately be informed by ALS Canada regarding a timeline for repopulating the fund. The intent of this innovative approach is to have an immediate opportunity available

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for additional awards, however the number of successful recipient(s), timing within a calendar year, annual fundraising success, and more, will need to be considered at the time of any award program renewal.

Recipient(s) who have not obtained an independent position within two years of their offer of award will need to resubmit their application for re-evaluation of suitable evolution and continued applicability to the field of ALS research.

## Application Process

Complete applications should be submitted via email to the ALS Canada Research Team ([research@als.ca](mailto:research@als.ca)) at the appropriate time for their academic position search (during or just prior to starting). Applicants should request delivery and read receipts. An email acknowledging receipt of the application will be sent.

Applications must be formatted using standard fonts (Calibri-11, Arial-11, or Aptos -11), single-spaced, on a letter-size page with minimum margins of 0.5"/1.27 cm on all sides. The font size for figures and legends must be a minimum of 10 points. Use of a condensed font and spacing is not permitted. **It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure their submission adheres to these requirements.**

Please submit your applications for review in the following order:

- 1) Cover page
- 2) Letter from the applicant (limit 2 pages)
- 3) Scientific summary/abstract (limit ½ page)
- 4) Research plan (limit 3 pages)
- 5) Figures and Tables (optional, limit 1 page)
- 6) Planned path to successful independence (limit 1 page)
- 7) Planned path for contribution to the field as an ALS scientist (limit 1 page)
- 8) Budget for research allowance
- 9) Curriculum vitae of applicant (no page limit)

Additional items to be sent directly to [research@als.ca](mailto:research@als.ca):

- 10) Letter from the current supervisor (limit 2 pages)
- 11) Two additional letters of support (limit 2 pages each)
- 12) Additional documents supportive of the application pertaining to hiring process (if applicable)

### 1) Cover page

Please note, this is provided as a fillable form page (hyperlink) (Word Doc), downloadable from the ALS Canada website.

### 2) Letter from the applicant

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The letter is the applicant's opportunity to explain to the reviewers why they should be chosen. Maximum **TWO** pages. Suggested material includes, but is not limited to:

- Previous training and how it relates to the present proposal
- Research goals, including a long-term vision for their intended line of ALS research as a junior faculty
- Career goals
- Importance of their research proposal to ALS research and the vision and mission of ALS Canada

### 3) Scientific summary/abstract

The abstract should be scientific and approximately one-half page in length describing the hypothesis, rationale, specific aims, and significance.

### 4) Research Plan

The research plan for the project to be carried out during the two years of funding must not exceed the limit of **THREE** pages excluding bibliography. The research plan should include the following information:

- 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;
  - a description of how sex, gender, and/or other diversity considerations are taken into account in the research project, as applicable
  - a consideration of appropriate statistical analysis
  - applicants should review NIH's guidelines for enhancing reproducibility through rigour and transparency in grant applications <https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/reproducibility/guidance> - reviewer will consider these aspects when considering an application
- Bibliography
  - [Vancouver Style](#) citations are recommended. Citations should provide sufficient information for easy cross-referencing of information; excluded from page limit

### 5) Figures and Tables (optional)

One page will be allowed for figures and/or tables to accompany the research plan (including preliminary data or information to support feasibility). This page may not be used for supplementary text.

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#### 6) Planned path to successful independence

This section provides applicants with the opportunity to describe their strategy for achieving an independent academic position at a Canadian institution, with the goal of demonstrating their competitiveness for success beyond their science. It is recommended that short term, concrete plans related to the job search are included. It is encouraged, but not mandatory, that this section be completed in collaboration with the supervisor. Examples may include a mentorship plan, a brief outline of the applicant's approach to pursuing an independent position, and identification of individuals or networks the applicant hopes to leverage for support and guidance. Maximum **ONE** page.

#### 7) Planned path for contribution to the field as an ALS scientist (limit 1 page)

Describe how you envision advancing this research within the broader ALS ecosystem. Explain the potential significance of the anticipated results and how they might open new funding directions for inquiry or lay the groundwork for future studies. Discuss how you plan to build on the findings, including potential sources of future funding and opportunities for collaboration in the ALS landscape. Applicants are also encouraged to consider how they plan to engage with the wider ALS research, advocacy, and lived experience communities.

#### 8) Budget for research allowance

Using the template provided ([hyperlink](#)), the budget should clearly itemize proposed use of the research allowance for the two years under appropriate categories. The budget allowance is intended to directly support the recipient's work outlined in the application. Eligible expenses include consumable supplies required for the proposed research, fees for outsourced services, and travel (up to \$2000 CAD per year). Equipment expenses are not a primary focus for this award but with appropriate justification, equipment under \$5000 may be considered. For any other items, sufficient justification must be made. For questions about the eligibility of specific expenses, please contact [research@als.ca](mailto:research@als.ca). Securing matching funds from external sources, including local philanthropy, are encouraged to leverage ALS Canada donor dollars, but not expected.

Unauthorized expenses include:

- Indirect costs
- Equipment over \$5000
- Insurance fees
- Purchase or rental of office equipment (laptop excepted – maximum \$1500)
- Membership or subscription dues
- Moving costs

#### 9) Curriculum vitae of 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

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not submit CIHR Common CV. There is no page limit.

10) Letter from the current supervisor

The letter is the supervisor's opportunity to explain to the reviewers why the applicant should be chosen. Maximum **TWO** pages. Suggested content includes, but is not limited to:

- Applicant's qualifications and potential for independent research career
- Professional development plan for the applicant

11) Additional letters of support

Two additional letters of support (Maximum **TWO** pages per letter) are required:

- Letter of support from another individual with an academic appointment familiar with the applicant
- Letter of support from an additional, recognized member of the ALS research community attesting to the quality of the applicant's proposed research program and potential to impact the ALS field as a Principal Investigator

All letters must be sent directly to [research@als.ca](mailto:research@als.ca), independent of the application.

12) Additional documents supportive of the application pertaining to hiring process (if applicable)

- Applicants considering addition of these documents should confirm their value to the application by contacting [research@als.ca](mailto:research@als.ca) in advance of submission

## Evaluation

Applications will be reviewed by a committee, convened by ALS Canada. The composition of this committee will include (but is not limited to) not-in-conflict member(s) of the Scientific & Medical Advisory Council (SMAC) of ALS Canada, additional members of the Canadian ALS research community, international ALS research experts, and non-ALS researchers with relevant expertise (as necessary).

Each application will be considered on an individual basis. Every effort will be made to provide evaluation in a timely manner, with an anticipated decision time of one to three months depending on committee member availability. The application package will first be reviewed and evaluated; and the committee may request an interview, coordinated by ALS Canada, to support a recommendation. Interviews will be a maximum of 60 minutes in length.

Applicants will be provided a letter indicating a "support" or "not support" outcome via email, based on a recommendation to ALS Canada from the review committee. This decision may be communicated at any stage of the process (e.g., eligibility screening, review of application package, virtual panel meeting, interview).

Successful applicants will be provided a **Letter of Conditional Award** to include in their academic

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applications moving forward. Funding would be triggered by confirmation of acceptance of an independent position at an eligible institution, via a signed letter with start date indicated, and proof that the proposed research program in the faculty application significantly reflects the successful Career Transition Award application, as deemed by the review committee. If the proposed research program has been significantly modified for use in an academic application, the applicant must contact ALS Canada to confirm/validate the eligibility of the revised research program, or risk being subsequently declared no longer eligible.

Any questions can be directed to the ALS Canada Research Team at [research@als.ca](mailto:research@als.ca).

Reviewers will consider the merit of the applicant, the quality of the project, work to date, and its relevance to ALS. Likelihood for success in obtaining and maintaining a faculty position, potential for the applicant and proposed program to have complementary and/or collaborative value to the Canadian and global ALS research community, and the applicant's vision of how their proposed research program to impact ALS will impact ALS, will be greatly considered in the decision. It is not anticipated that every applicant will receive a positive outcome, and a negative outcome should not necessarily be viewed as a reflection of academic merit.

The review committee may also invite a submission of a revised application for consideration in a second review, rather than a "not support" evaluation. If an applicant receives a "not support" evaluation, they will be notified whether there is an opportunity to reapply with a different or revised program, or if recommended, at a later time of stronger competitiveness. Not all applicants will be provided this opportunity.

All applicants will receive anonymized reviewers' comments and a summary of any major discussion points from the ALS Canada Research Team, alongside their decision letter.

Applicants should review NIH's guidelines for enhancing reproducibility through rigour and transparency in grant applications <https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/reproducibility/guidance> - reviewer will consider these aspects when considering an application

## Conditions of the Award

1. Funds will be sent in instalments to the awardee's institution. Release of funds will be subject to receipt of relevant ethics approval from the applicable institutional review committee(s), where necessary (for use of human subjects, research animals, or hazardous materials). Note, the awardee will be responsible for ensuring that relevant ethics approvals have been obtained at their institution.
2. Significant changes in research aims or budget allocation requires *a priori* approval by ALS Canada.
3. Annual progress reports are required. Subsequent instalments will be contingent upon receipt of satisfactory scientific and financial reports. Reporting templates will be provided by ALS Canada upon acceptance of the award. Please note that funding may be suspended or terminated

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following failure to produce such reports within the one month of the deadline. Reporting deadlines will be delineated in a Letter of Conditional Award. Progress reports will be evaluated by ALS Canada and any questions/concerns on progress will be followed up on by members of the Research Team.

4. A final progress report is due within 60 days of the end date of the grant. Individuals, including their personnel, where reports from completed grants remain outstanding will not be eligible to reapply to ALS Canada programs until received.
5. Initial and continued funding is contingent upon compliance with the [policies of ALS Canada](#).
6. Budgetary overlap for the project with other funding provided by ALS Canada or another agency must be disclosed so that ALS Canada can work with other agencies so that a solution can be found that benefits the applicant, avoiding duplication but without penalizing success.
7. The intent of these grants 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 through this competition. Manuscripts or other presentations in press must be sent to the Research Team of ALS Canada upon acceptance for publication. ALS Canada should also be notified as soon as possible of media events related to the project.
8. Awardees are required to inform the Research Team of ALS Canada of significant difficulties, availability of resources, additional funding sources, or changes to the experimental plan throughout the term of the grant.
9. For the purposes of advocating the mission of ALS Canada, it is expected that funded researchers will actively engage with, or on behalf of, ALS Canada when requested.
10. Funded researchers will be expected to make every effort to attend all ALS Canada-related research meetings as a sponsored invitee and will be encouraged to present their project upon request.

## Questions and Additional Information

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