

Regulations of the
Postdoctoral Fellowship
Program
2027-2028



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Regulations of the Postdoctoral Fellowship Program 2027-2028
Institut de recherche Robert-Sauvé en santé et en sécurité du travail (IRSST)

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1. Aims of the Program

The aim of the Graduate Studies Scholarship and Postdoctoral Fellowship Program of the Institut de recherche Robert-Sauvé en santé et en sécurité du travail (IRSST) is to increase the number of scientists available to meet occupational health and safety (OHS) research needs.

Postdoctoral fellowships are intended for individuals with a PhD who wish to expand their research horizons or to explore new, related fields specifically in the occupational health and safety sector. These fellowships should lead to increased competencies in research and knowledge transfer, preparing the recipients to establish themselves as independent researchers.

This category of funding offers three options, and is designed to assist new researchers in:

- carrying out their postdoctoral training at a university or recognized research centre outside Québec;
- carrying out their postdoctoral training in a university or recognized research centre in Québec;
- carrying out their postdoctoral training under the direction or co-direction of a researcher from the IRSST and holding a Ph.D. obtained from a university located outside of Québec; hereinafter referred to as the fellowship for a visiting trainee at the IRSST, for which foreign candidates are eligible.

To encourage the development of the new generation of researchers according to the IRSST's scientific and organizational priorities, the following factors will be considered important assets in the awarding of fellowships:

- applications from individuals with a PhD whose subject of study is relevant to occupational health and safety;
- postdoctoral training projects related to the [Reference Framework for OHS Research](#).
- projects that incorporate knowledge transfer activities when applicable.

In this perspective, and given the limited number of scholarships available, interested persons may also submit applications to other granting agencies.

2. Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible, applicants must have held a PhD for four years or less. In the event that the doctorate has not been completed, provide a certificate of the initial submission of the thesis no later than August 15, 2027.

2.1 Canadian citizen or permanent residents of Canada, eligible for the RAMQ

As of the deadline of the competition, they must have a valid medical card issued by the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ) or proof of eligibility for the RAMQ

- a. AND have Canadian citizenship within the meaning of the *Citizenship Act* (R.S.C. 1985, c. C-29)
- b. OR the status of permanent resident of Canada within the meaning of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (S.C. 2001, c. 27)

2.2 Foreign applicants

- a. Complete postdoctoral training under the supervision or co-supervision of IRSST researchers.
- b. Submit a proposal for a research project that will be carried out at an institution different from that where they obtained their PhD and where they did their initial postdoctoral training, if such is the case.
- c. Not have submitted more than two applications for postdoctoral fellowships to the IRSST in the past, regardless of whether these applications were accepted or refused.

2.3 Presentation of the research project

Submit a proposal for a research project that is deemed relevant to the field of occupational health and safety:

- a. A relevant research project is one that aligns with the IRSST's mission as defined in its [Scientific Policy](#) and with the research areas and themes of the IRSST interest, as defined in its [Reference Framework for OHS Research](#).

2.4 Application Form

- a. Submit the IRSST Postdoctoral Fellowship Application Form, duly completed and signed, as well as all other required documents for the fellowship category concerned, by no later than the competition deadline.
- b. At the time when the applicant accepts the fellowship, he must have met all the requirements.

2.5 Defense

If the defense had not yet taken place at the time of the scholarship application, proof indicating that the defense was successful must be provided, before the third payment of the scholarship, by the head of the department, failing which the fellowship offer is cancelled.

2.6 Restrictions

- a. Applicants who are on a sabbatical or a study leave and receiving a salary representing more than 50% of their base salary are not eligible. However, applicants receiving a deferred salary are not subject to this restriction.
- b. Applicants may not obtain a second IRSST scholarship for the same level of university studies.

2.7 Training and research location

- a. The training and research must be completed at a university or recognized research centre.
- b. For individuals who do not have a valid medical card from the RAMQ or proof of eligibility for the RAMQ and Canadian citizenship within the meaning of the *Citizenship Act* (R.S.C. 1985, c. C-29) or the status of permanent resident of Canada within the meaning of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (S.C. 2001, c. 27) must do their training and research under the supervision or co-supervision of one of the IRSST researchers.

3. Fellowship Eligibility Period and Duration

3.1 Duration

- a. The duration of the fellowship is two years (six consecutive sessions), following evaluation of an application for renewal.

- b. The period for using the fellowship begins between May 1 of the year in which it was awarded and January 15 of the following year.
- c. Fellowships may not be transferred from one year to another.

3.2 Parental leave

- a. A scholarship holder is eligible to only one parental leave for the entire period of scholarship eligibility.
- b. Parental leave cannot exceed 12 months, i.e. the equivalent of three sessions.
- c. A scholarship holder may receive up to two payments, equivalent to two sessions (8 months) during their leave.
- d. If the university allows the scholarship holder to extend this leave for an additional period of four months, this parental leave will, however, be without pay.
- e. The end of the scholarship funding period is postponed according to the number of leave sessions granted.
- f. To be eligible for this benefit, a scholarship holder must not be enrolled in a program of study or have a paid job.
- g. Parental leave is authorized by the IRSST on the condition that the university allows parental leave and that the scholarship holder has informed the person directing the research.
- h. Note that only one parental leave is granted per child. Parents are free to arrange parental leave at their convenience.
- i. IRSST reserves the right to reject any request that is insufficiently justified.
- j. IRSST parental leave can be combined with Québec Parental Insurance Plan.
- k. To receive parental leave, the scholarship holder must apply for it and provide a copy of the medical certificate attesting to the pregnancy and, at the appropriate time, the child's birth or adoption certificate and proof of the suspension of university registration

3.3 Deferral of payments for reasons of serious illness or major family obligations

- a. The IRSST permits the deferral of one or more payments if studies are interrupted for serious medical reasons or major family obligations, for as long as the university allows.
- b. In this situation, the fellowship is always awarded for the maximum number of eligible sessions.
- c. An official document attesting to the suspended enrolment, and, if need be, a medical certificate specifying the duration and reason for the suspension must be provided.
- d. The payment(s) will then be deferred to the end of the funding period.

3.4 Deferral of payments for acquiring relevant experience

The IRSST may authorize the deferral of one fellowship payment (one session) for each complete year of funding awarded to allow the scholarship recipient to acquire relevant experience (work with a research team, teaching experience related to the field of study, language stay, etc.).

- a. A maximum of two deferrals, whether consecutive or not, may be authorized during the program.
- b. The deferral(s) must be approved by the research supervisor.
- c. The payment(s) will then be deferred to the end of the funding period.

3.5 Exceptions for part-time enrolment

- a. Part-time studies are allowed exceptionally for caregivers, parents, and persons with a disability.
- b. A fellowship holder who is serving as the caregiver of a close family member or who is the main person providing care for a young child may exercise the option to enrol in part-time studies and receive partial payment of the fellowship (50%), provided that the university authorizes part-time enrolment and upon presentation of a medical certificate or other official document justifying the situation.
- c. A fellowship holder who is a person with a disability, within the meaning of the *Act to secure handicapped persons in the exercise of their rights with a view to achieving social, school and workplace* (R.S.C. c. E-20.1) may also exercise the option of enrolling part-time and receive full payment of the fellowship, provided that the university authorizes part-time enrolment.

4. Fellowship Amount and Procedures for Payment and Use

4.1 Amount

- a. The amount of the postdoctoral fellowship is \$45,000 a year.
- b. The amount of the postdoctoral scholarship is \$55,000 a year for a recipient whose training and research program takes place outside Québec.
- c. The person whose program takes place partly in Québec and partly outside Québec must contact the IRSST to agree on the terms that apply to their case regarding the establishment of the scholarship amount.

4.2 Payments

The IRSST sends fellowship payments directly to the person holding the grant by direct deposit. The IRSST then provides receipts for tax purposes.

4.3 Research and travel indemnity

- a. Costs incurred to facilitate knowledge transfer activities or participation in a conference or to cover other training-related expenses are reimbursed upon presentation of supporting documents, up to a maximum of \$3,000 per year. However, the costs of purchasing a computer or hiring a research assistant or other research-related expenses are not reimbursed.
- b. A fellowship recipient whose training takes place outside Québec or who comes from outside Québec, and the holders of a visiting trainee at the IRSST, may be reimbursed for the costs of a round-trip travel at the price of an economy class plane ticket or the cost of transportation by car upon presentation of supporting documents, up to a maximum of \$2,000 per year.

4.4 Conversion of the fellowship into a start-up grant

- a. A postdoctoral fellowship holder may, after completing at least one full year of postdoctoral research, ask to use part of his fellowship as a start-up grant if he or she obtains a position as a regular-faculty professor at a university in Québec.
- b. A maximum amount of \$15,000 may be converted into a grant.

- c. To benefit from this option, the fellowship holder must contact the person responsible for the program at the IRSST directly.
- d. The rules and regulations concerning the use of this grant are the same as those applicable to the [Research grant program](#) (in French only).

5. Concurrent Funding and Other Remuneration

5.1 Concurrent Funding

- a. IRSST fellowship recipients cannot combine it with other scholarships awarded by the Government of Canada, the Government of Québec, any of their agencies, or a federal or provincial granting agency.
- b. Concurrent funding from the private sector (foundations, institutes, companies, universities, etc.) is allowed.
- c. Depending on the standards in force within their affiliated institution, the recipient of an IRSST scholarship may earn additional income solely for working on their research project.

5.2 Other remuneration

Subject to approval from their research supervisor and provided that the work does not interfere with their research activities, fellowship holders may teach one 45-hour course per session or may accept remunerated work that is relevant to their research field and does not exceed 225 hours per session. For purposes of this regulation, a 45-hour course load is considered equivalent to 150 hours of work.

6. Change to or Termination of the Program

6.1 Change

Fellowship recipients may not change their training program and research project during the year, or change institution or research supervisor, without prior written authorization from the IRSST. The reasons for the change must be detailed in a request addressed to the person responsible for the IRSST's Graduate Studies Scholarship and Postdoctoral Fellowship Program. The change request will be assessed by the IRSST, which may decide, if applicable, to reduce, suspend, or terminate the payments.

6.2 Termination

When the fellowship holders renounce it or complete their university program during the fellowship validity period, its amount is reduced proportionally. They must inform the IRSST as soon as the date of termination is established and must reimburse any overpayment(s) received.

7. Annual Renewal

To continue receiving their fellowship beyond the first year of funding for the sessions for which they are eligible, fellowship holders must submit a duly completed application for renewal each year. The fellowship is renewed if:

- a. the fellowship holder has applied for renewal in accordance with the established procedures;
- b. the fellowship holder has demonstrated satisfactory progress, according to the IRSST's assessment, in both the training study program and research project;
- c. the research project demonstrates continuity (any changes made to the originally planned schedule must be soundly justified).

8. Documents Required*

8.1 New application

- a. The Fellowship Application Form duly completed and signed by the applicant on the [Synto-IRSST portal](#).
- b. Copies of the official transcripts for all years of university study, whether completed or not.
- c. The transcripts must be complete and include all grading scales (back of the transcript), for both Québec applicants and foreign applicants. Unofficial electronic versions of transcripts are not accepted.
 - The document explaining the grading system in effect at the institution concerned for transcripts obtained outside North America.
 - The transcript for a study program currently under way must be the most recent one.

- If no transcript is issued by the institution where the studies were done, an explanatory letter must be included with the application.
- d. A letter of recommendation (a maximum of two pages) written by the research supervisor who must provide an overall assessment of the applicant and the proposed research project; specify how the project fits in with his or her own work, if applicable; specify the supervision he or she intends to offer the applicant; describe and justify the research environment.
- e. For the research supervisor, and, as the case may be, the co-supervisor, the personal CV (or Canadian Common CV). The CV should contain the following information: training, areas of expertise, academic affiliation, number of publications, selection of the 5 most relevant publications in relation to the candidate's research project. Each CV must be limited to a maximum of 5 pages.

8.2 Renewal application

The Renewal Application Form, duly completed and signed by the applicant and the research supervisor on the [Synto-IRSST portal](#).

* The IRSST reserves the right to perform verifications regarding the documents submitted. For example, it may demand to see the original documents or papers to confirm their authenticity or to receive a certified copy of the originals. The IRSST may also contact the authorities that issued the documents. If the applicant fails to cooperate promptly in any request for verification, the application may be deemed ineligible.

9. Presentation and Submission of Applications

9.1 Presentation of applications

The application file must include the IRSST's Fellowship Application Form, duly completed and signed, along with the required documents, which are specified for each fellowship category.

- a. No incomplete file will be forwarded to the evaluation committee.
- b. All documents contained in the file that are written in a language other than French or English must be accompanied by a certified translation of the originals.

- c. No documents other than those required will be forwarded to the evaluation committee.
- d. The applicant is responsible for his or her file.
 - He or she is responsible for knowing the different fellowship categories and their requirements;
 - He or she must ensure that all the required information and documents are submitted to the IRSST by no later than the competition deadline.

9.2 Submission of applications

- a. The deadline for submitting applications to the IRSST is 4 p.m. on the third Wednesday of October.
- b. The documents must be submitted in PDF format on the on the [Synto-IRSST portal](#), according to the IRSST PDF presentation criteria.
- c. An acknowledgment of receipt will be sent to the candidates and to other people involved in the file (e.g., director, co-director, etc.) via the [Synto-IRSST portal](#). If you have not received one, please notify us by email at bourses@irsst.qc.ca

10. Processing of Applications

10.1 Assessment of administrative eligibility

IRSST personnel assess the administrative eligibility of the applications and reject those found to be ineligible.

10.2 Decision regarding the relevance

The IRSST's Scientific Advisory Board issues an opinion on the relevance of the applications, then the President and Chief Executive Officer decides and only retains the files deemed relevant for scientific evaluation.

10.3 Evaluation of scientific merit

The following criteria will be judged by a multi-disciplinary committee composed of external specialists in the relevant fields during the evaluation of the scientific merit of a new application:

Applicant's performance

- Academic record and its progression: university grades, relevance of courses taken and progression in studies, scholarships, awards and distinctions earned
- Research abilities: publications and other research activities, overall scientific competence and ability to pursue a career in research, relevant work experience and achievements
- Weighting (postdoctoral fellowship): 6/20

Scientific merit of the project:

- Originality, clarity of objectives, methodology and impact on the research field
- Weighting (postdoctoral fellowship): 10/20

Quality and relevance of the research environment:

- Quality of supervision, calibre of researchers and productivity of the environment, relevance to the subject under study, and occupational health and safety expertise
 - Weighting (postdoctoral fellowship): 4/20
- a. An applicant must obtain a minimum score of 15/20 to be recommended for a fellowship.
 - b. The scientific evaluation of the applications is carried out independently of the final approval process, which is the Board of Directors' responsibility.
 - c. Applicants and research supervisors must not contact the chair or members of the evaluation committee at any time. The IRSST reserves the right to withdraw any applications from the competition that are the subject of canvassing or interference in the evaluation process.

10.4 Recommendation and announcement of results

- a. Following the scores awarded by the evaluation committee, the Scientific Advisory Board submits its opinion to the IRSST's President and Chief Executive Officer. The latter submits the funding recommendation to the Board of Directors, which renders the final decision.

- b. The IRSST's decision is sent by email to each applicant in April, to the address indicated on the application form. Note that the decision is final. Therefore, there is no appeal procedure.

10.5 Inquiries concerning the evaluation

Inquiries concerning the evaluation of fellowship applications must be submitted in writing to the person responsible for the scholarship program, who undertakes to respond to them as quickly as possible.

10.6 Acceptance of the fellowship

- a. Successful applicants must inform the IRSST of their acceptance or refusal of the fellowship within 30 days of the date on which the IRSST's decision was transmitted.
- b. Selected foreign applicants must also provide a certified true copy of a work permit issued by Canadian consular services for the duration of their stay in Québec.
- c. Any applicant who fails to comply with these requirements within the prescribed time limit is considered to have refused the fellowship offered.
- d. The IRSST may publish the list of fellowship recipients on its Web site and in any publication (hard copy or electronic) and may make it public in any other manner that the Institute deems appropriate.
- e. By accepting the fellowship, the applicant undertakes to comply with the general regulations governing the program and all the applicable conditions and requirements. Applicants who fail to comply with these rules and regulations will have their fellowships cancelled.

11. Final report and Publications

11.1 Final report

All IRSST scholarship holders must submit a final report on their work within six months of receiving their last scholarship payment, using the IRSST template designed for this purpose.

11.2 Publications

All IRSST scholarship holders are obliged to acknowledge the assistance received from the IRSST in any publication or communication resulting from the funded work.

12. Declaration, Ethics and Integrity

12.1 Declaration

Any candidate who, for the purpose of obtaining a fellowship, knowingly makes a false declaration, will have his or her application rejected, and will have to reimburse the IRSST any amounts that have been paid. Moreover, this person may not apply for another IRSST fellowship for a period of three years.

12.2 Research ethics¹ and scientific integrity²

The holder of an IRSST fellowship and the research supervisor must ensure that the proposed research project complies with the ethical standards generally applicable to professional research activities.

13. IRSST's Responsibilities

- a. The IRSST has no other obligation or responsibility than that of paying the fellowships when all the conditions are met, subject to funding availability.
- b. The IRSST is under no obligation to accept a predetermined number of applications or to set in advance the number of fellowships to be attributed in each category of program. The IRSST reserves the right to set quotas by occupational health and safety research field.
- c. IRSST may not be held liable for any damages whatsoever arising directly or indirectly from the establishment or administration of the Graduate Studies Scholarship and Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, including, notably, damages arising directly or indirectly from the processing, absence of processing, acceptance or refusal of a scholarship/fellowship application, or from any publication pertaining to the scholarships/fellowship and the scholarship/fellowship program.
- d. An English version has been provided solely to help Anglophone readers better understand the applicable regulations. In the event of a

1. *Politique d'éthique de la recherche avec des êtres humains* (in French only)

2. *Politique de l'IRSST sur l'intégrité* (in French only)

discrepancy between the English and French versions of the regulations, the French version prevails.