

AMS Healthcare Fellowship FAQ

AMS Background

AMS Healthcare is an Ontario-based Charity with a legacy that dates back to the prepaid health insurance era. Now AMS is a self-funded organization that focuses on two key areas in the healthcare domain: the history of healthcare and medicine; and, compassion in the healthcare system. In response to the explosion of technology in the healthcare system, AMS amended its strategic focus to include the impact of digital technologies and artificial intelligence (DT/AI) and compassionate care. This change was intended to provoke a dialogue on what is going to happen to compassionate healthcare with the introduction of time-saving technologies and what will be the place of humans in a healthcare environment employing AI-driven technologies and the subsequent impact on health and health-related (bioethics, law, etc) disciplines. The gift of time technologies could allow us to be more human, more empathic, more compassionate in the care we give. Compassion and technology are not an “either/or” proposition, technology can potentially enable compassionate care.

AMS has made a couple of changes to the program since it was originally launch. The program will now fund up to ten (10) Fellowships this year. AMS identified a particular interest in supporting at least two Fellowships looking at the intersection of compassion and technology/AI through a lens of equity as it relates to vulnerable populations (Long term care, homelessness, Indigenous populations, etc). The interest in equity has emerged from the pandemic which has provoked questions regarding the use of technology and how it is being experienced and/or accessed by vulnerable populations.

The goal of the Fellowship is to develop scholars and researchers to lead in this area. The Fellowship should support early and mid-career individuals with learning opportunities and competency development in this field. Ideally the Fellowship will feed some cross-discipline training opportunities across applicants and form the basis of networks of scholars and researchers. AMS is hoping to attract applications from the research and health discipline communities as well as from relate fields areas such as computer science, law, ethics and others to develop a community of expertise in this area.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Applicant Eligibility

Q: As a post-doc, would I be eligible for this Fellowship?

A: Yes. What will be important to show in your application is an understanding of how the Fellowship will support your development in relation to the goals and objectives of the program. As an early career applicant, you should think about the mentorship and sponsorship you will receive to optimize your growth and development generally and as a leader in DT/AI and compassionate care.

Q: Are applicants from outside Ontario eligible to apply for this award? If not, is there a comparable Fellowship program in BC?

A: As a result of the regulations governing AMS as a charitable organization, we are obliged to focus our funding primarily in Ontario. However, AMS is interested in funding to best scholars in this program, so would encourage you to apply regardless where in the country you reside. You will notice that there is a requirement that applicants be either Canadian citizenship or have landed immigrant status. Our goal is to create scholars who lead in this area in Canada.

Q: would someone with only an MD degree (without a Masters or PhD training) be eligible to apply.

A: The program is focused on developing scholars, researchers and others to lead in this area. Individuals are required to hold either a Masters (health or technology-related discipline) degree or PhD. Unfortunately, the answer is, no.

Q: The call states that the applicant must have Masters or PhD training, can the Masters degree be in a professional discipline (eg: Masters of Health Administration, Nursing)?

A: Yes, a professional masters degree would be considered. You will need to think about the type of leadership development you will be experiencing. Leadership is a focus of AMS. Consider what activities, learning and development that you are going to experience as an individual in order for you to effectively lead and contribute knowledge in this area.

Q: For mid-career researchers, could a multi-mentor model be used instead of engaging a supervisor?

A: Yes, it could be more suitable for a mid-career researcher to engage multiple mentors in order to access the best advice, guidance and resources in order to successfully develop expertise and leadership in the area. Overall, we are looking to see that the applicant has built the right team around them.

Q: How can we position a multi-mentorship model in the application form.

A: For a mid-career researcher, identify a lead mentor (first page of the LOI Submission Template). In the "Expectations of the Supervisor and the Mentor" field, name the mentorship team and discuss the multi-mentorship model.

Q: Can you distinguish the roles of the Supervisor and the Mentor

A: The Supervisor would be looking after the general development of the applicant, their relationship with the host institution and financial management. The Supervisor may be your department head that signs off on release time and other institutional contributions. The Mentor is an external person that brings a different perspective to your development as a Fellow and brings needed expertise (equity piece, AI piece, etc) to this learning opportunity.

Q: Can proposals include multiple co-applicants or is it one applicant with multiple collaborators?

A: the purpose of the Fellowship is to develop the individual to lead in this area. You may do that through a project which engages others as a collaborator, or they may act as a mentor or supervisor to the Fellow. The goal is not to conduct a particular research project, it is really to do some developmental work.

Q: Can the mentor be from outside Ontario?

A: Yes. One of the issues to consider in your proposal is where the funding will be held. The funding should be held at an institution in Ontario.

Q: We were originally planning on having a Post-doc student work with us on the project. But since our institution is not very big, we may not be able to secure a Post-doc. Could a PhD student in a related field of study (someone who works on medical robots, to be precise) be involved?

A: As you would be the applicant for the fellowship, you might be able to incorporate the PhD student as a collaborator or as a sponsor organization's contribution. Their primary issue with the Fellowship is the quality of the program for the applicant and achieving the outcome of a scholar/leader to advance knowledge and discussion on AI/Digital technology and compassionate healthcare.

Q: Furthermore, we understand that we need to have a supervisor and a mentor, but in addition to those, we are wondering if we can have two or three co-principal investigators, one of whom is currently working in Germany. If co-principal investigators is not an option, then could we have multiple collaborators?

A: The addition of other researchers supporting the development of the Fellow would be welcome, especially if they are bringing unique expertise to the learning experience. The purpose of the funding is to develop scholars in this field, and not to specifically fund a research project. The only caveat to note is that AMS Healthcare funding must be used to support activities in Ontario.

Q: In terms of time commitment, how much is expected for this award?

A: There is no specific amount of time required for this award. It needs to be reasonable based on the proposed activities and developmental plan, and the background, environment and discipline of the applicant.

Q: Is there a minimum amount of release time for this award?

A: No minimum amount of release time (time dedicated to the project) is stated. We understand that the cost of release time can vary depending on the discipline you are in (nurse, physician, lawyer, bioethicist, computer science researcher). We will be looking at a reasonable amount of time to complete the proposed activities, develop as a leader and comply with the requirements of the award. This should be indicated as a % of time.

Eligible Expenses

Q: Can the award be used to fund the project if the hospital pays my salary?

A: Yes, the funding can be used for salary replacement (release time) or project specific expenses. The piece that will be important for you to demonstrate in your proposal is that there is adequate release time in order to be focused on the Fellowship. Additionally, the release time provided by the institution can be considered an in-kind contribution.

Q: If my institution provides salary support, can the award be used for the cost of the research itself?

A: As previously stated, release time can be considered as an in-kind contribution to the project. In broad terms, the Fellowship award is to be used to support the learning and development of the Fellow. This may be achieved through a particular project or through travel to learn from experts in other centres, or attend meetings. Applicants are encouraged to use creativity in what they want to use the funding for. Overall, the funding should be used to support the development of the Fellow.

Q: What is the value of in-kind supports to this program?

A: In-kind contributions are an important measure of the support that is being provided to the Fellow that enables them to grow and develop and to help support their overall success.

Q: Can the start date be moved?

A: AMS has some flexibility regarding the start date of the award. However, AMS would like to flow the funding before the end of 2020.

Q: With respect to the use of funds to support salary support, can the salary of a Research Assistant (RA) who is supporting the project be eligible?

A: Yes. If the RA's work is specific to the activities. Expenses for equipment (i.e. computers) and institutional charges/overheads are not eligible.

Q: Would activities that occur outside of Canada be eligible for this Fellowship?

A: AMS recognizes that there is a lot of expertise within Canada that can be engaged to support this Fellowship and one of the principle goals of the program is to develop scholars and leaders in Canada. The intended of the award is to support learning opportunities at organization located in Canada. However, if there is a really good reason for the Fellow to study or conduct some activities internationally, assuming that is even possible given the current environment, and the need is clear and compelling, then it would be eligible.

For example, there is an opportunity, when people collaborate across the country, to start to build some of the relationships that, for the most part, probably don't quite exist for equity, compassion and technology. The technology group is fairly well connected across Canada through CFAR and its work, however the addition of the equity lens may present an opportunity for some international networking.

It is important to note that the award is not intended to fund an international study tour.

Other questions

Q: What if my background is not strong in equity, can I still apply?

A: Absolutely! AMS added two additional Fellowship awards to fund projects with an additional lens on equity. This approach was used to attract a whole range of proposals for scholars and leaders. AMS expects that many applications may not have an equity component in their proposals.

Q: Are the review guidelines posted?

A: The Review Panel will be struck with clinical and non-clinical experts representing the diversity of proposals submitted. Standard review guidelines have been prepared for the review panel to use, however, they are not posted on the website. The LOI Submission Guide contains information about the review process and some important considerations to include in your proposal.

Q: Once I become a funded Fellow, will there be an opportunity to meet other Fellows in this program and see what projects they are working on?

A: Yes, this is an important part of the Fellowship program. Through the partnership with the OSSU, all Fellows will be invited to participate in a workshop scheduled for December 9, 2020 to network with each other and learn about patient oriented research and how to prepare policy briefs for government. Fellows will also be encouraged to participate in a DT/AI and compassionate care community of practice. Finally, OSSU will support Fellows to participate at one of our Research Round Tables where project outcomes can be presented to key stakeholders and government decision makers. AMS will also bring fellows together at the annual conference and other events.

Q: if your proposal includes an equity piece, does that need to be stated explicitly?

A: Yes, the LOI Submission Template includes a field for you to declare the stream you are submitting to. AMS will fund at least two Fellowships that include an equity component in the proposal.

Q: Can applications request less funding from AMS.

A: Yes. AMS will fund Fellowships up to \$75,000.