



training a new generation of researchers
in gastroenterology and liver

former une nouvelle génération de
chercheurs en gastro-entérologie et foie

SECURE ECR AWARD GUIDELINES

version 6 March 2026



The SECURE program is designed to provide the support Early Career Researchers (ECRs) in gastroenterology and hepatology are currently missing, to succeed in the long term, as scientists and clinician-scientists.

SECURE faculty will already have salary support from their home institution. Therefore, TRIANGLE focuses on providing innovative, tailored, and targeted support to ECRs that is not available at their universities and research institutes but are integral to personal and professional success.

These include:

- training and mentorship that will allow ECRs to successfully and seamlessly bridge the gap between the training and lab leader stages of their careers
- funding travel to TRIANGLE's face-to-face annual summit, where ECRs will have access to the top Canadian faculty in their fields for mentorship, learning, networking, and collaboration building
- possible annual ECR leadership retreat where TRIANGLE ECRs develop critical leadership skills and leverage the expertise of colleagues within and beyond GI and liver
- access to competitive PhD, postdoc, and summer student trainee stipend support (AMPLIFY and CONNECT awards) to help ECRs recruit world-class trainees to their labs

Eligibility

Applicant: This award is open to all ECRs who are actively pursuing a career as a scientist or clinician-scientist at a Canadian institution. CIHR defines an ECR as an individual within five years of the date of their first independent research-related appointment.

Location: The award must be held at a Canadian academic institution and/or health research institute.

Research: All projects must focus on gastrointestinal (GI) or liver research.

Timing:

- All applicants must have at minimum 50% protected time for research
- Career interruptions are not counted toward years of ECR experience. Applicants should provide context for their career interruptions in the optional TRIANGLE Personal Statement. Interruptions could include, but are not limited to:
 - maternity, parental, and/or adoption leave
 - illness and/or disability
 - pandemic-related delays
 - mandatory military service
 - war, civil conflicts, and/or natural disasters
 - socio-economic factors
 - lack of research opportunities
 - child and/or elder-care responsibilities

Citizenship: This program is open to citizens of any country. Citizens of a country other than Canada must provide proof upon application of a valid permit at the time the award begins and at the beginning of each award year thereafter.



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Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Prioritization Statement: We are committed to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion within our training and funding programs. As part of this commitment, the review committee may prioritize applications from individuals who identify as members of equity-deserving groups, including but not limited to Black and Indigenous trainees, as well as applicants from underrepresented geographical regions. These applicants must meet the CIHR academic eligibility cutoff, but they may not necessarily rank within the top scoring tier of applicants. Prioritization will be applied to ensure that our awards foster greater inclusivity, broaden participation, and support trainees who have historically faced systemic barriers within health research.

Support

TRIANGLE will give out 3 awards each year to the top 3 ranked applicants.

AWARD DURATION: 3 years

FINANCIAL SUPPORT: Not Applicable. No financial support for the applicant's salary is provided.

CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- Travel and expenses for the TRIANGLE annual summit. Up to \$1,500 per year for 3 years via reimbursement post-meeting.
- Travel and expenses for TRIANGLE planned ECR leadership retreats, via reimbursement post-retreat.
- Salary support for one CONNECT Summer Student over the 3 year award in your lab at \$6,000. Application is required.

NONFINANCIAL SUPPORT

- skill and knowledge building via the TRIANGLE curriculum
- mentorship and guided career planning from leaders in research, industry, government, non-profit, and more
- access to large research teams/networks
- community, network, and collaboration building with the gastroenterology and hepatology communities within and beyond TRIANGLE
- support for mental, physical, and emotional well-being

Maternity/Parental, Medical or Family Caregiver Leave: Learners are eligible for unpaid Maternity/Parental, medical or a family caregiver's leave for up to 12 months. The latter is to provide care or support to certain family members who have a serious medical condition. Awards will be placed "on hold" for the duration of the leave with supported documentation from the local institution. The leave must be requested at minimum 30 days in advance of the leave start date. Awards will resume upon the return of the individual to the training environment. The term of the award will be extended by the length of the approved leave up to but not exceeding 12 months.

Application Requirements

Deadline to apply: June 1st at 11:59 pm EST. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.



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When you are ready to submit your application click on the “**APPLY NOW**” button on our website to complete the online form. You will be asked to enter or upload each of the following documents so please have them ready.

1. **Current Role**
2. **Academic Institution**
3. **ORCID ID**
4. **Self-declaration:** TRIANGLE collects demographic data from all participants, including faculty, staff, and applicants, to make quality improvement decisions toward its mandate to ensure that TRIANGLE membership reflects the diversity of Canadian society. This information will only be used in aggregate by the operations team. Completing this questionnaire is required to apply to TRIANGLE. There is a "prefer not to answer" option for all questions should you not want to share some or any information with TRIANGLE.
5. **Citizenship status:** Applicants who are not Canadian citizens or permanent residents will be required to upload copies of work visas, permits, and/or immigration status. Kindly name the file "CandidateLastname_Citizenship"
6. **Top 3 TRIANGLE mentors:** Part of the TRIANGLE award includes an assigned mentor. Please review our list of mentors by [clicking here](#) and list your top 3 choices.
7. **Research, Academic, and/or Clinical Contributions Statement - 1 page maximum (3,000 characters/500 words):** Please choose 3 research, academic, and/or clinical contributions from your CV and describe:
 - the contribution
 - your role
 - its significance to the field, patients and families, and/or your career development and future plans
8. **Community Contributions Statement - 1 page maximum (3,000 characters/500 words):** Please choose 3 community contributions (e.g. teaching, mentorship, supervision, committee work, coaching, volunteering, artistic or athletic achievements, etc.) from your CV and describe:
 - the contribution
 - your role
 - its significance to your research or other communities, your personal/professional development, and your research and/or career plans
9. **Career and Professional Development Plan - 1 page maximum (3,000 characters/500 words):** Use this space to explain your goals for your current degree/role and your future career.
 - Please note why and how membership in TRIANGLE and access to TRIANGLE support – including training, mentorship, funding to attend conferences and events, internships, lab exchanges, community building, and salary support (for applicants without other external funding) – will help you achieve your research and career goals.
 - You do not need to know what career or industry you're aiming for
 - Reviewers want to understand what you want to contribute or improve as someone trained in GI/liver research and/or practice, but you don't need to know yet specifically where or how you'll do that.
 - TRIANGLE programming and supports include many opportunities for career and personal exploration, so your career and development plan can and should involve exploring career options via:
 - Career/personal exploration workshops and activities (including the annual Individual Development Plan (IDP) creation and review with a TRIANGLE advisor at the summit)
 - Networking and mentorship with professionals in business, government, non-profit, or research
 - Experiential learning placements in business, government, non-profit, or research
 - Other activities that you'd like to propose and/or lead as a TRIANGLE member
 - For more information about TRIANGLE programs and supports, please review our website and/or contact the Program Manager.



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10. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Statement - 1 page maximum (3,000 characters/500 words):

Please describe how your participation in the TRIANGLE program will promote a culture of equity, diversity, and belonging within and outside the program. Things you may wish to note include:

- training or lived experience that has equipped you with skills and knowledge to be part of and promote a diverse TRIANGLE community
- how you incorporate EDI principles beyond sex & gender into your research, community involvement, and other activities
- how you would like to see TRIANGLE support you as part of our community

11. Optional Personal Statement - 1 page maximum (3,000 characters/500 words):

Our mandate is to equitably support a diverse community of researchers in achieving their academic and career goals. Please use this space to provide any context that will help the TRIANGLE committee understand your training, career, and research trajectory thus far. To aid in this process, the TRIANGLE selection process will consider the contexts in which applicants have worked, the impact of their lived experience, and the barriers they have faced. We encourage you to broadly articulate these contexts and their impacts on your academic, research, and career progress. However, we recognize that you may not wish to share this information with the TRIANGLE committee and so this statement is optional. Examples of factors and experiences that could have impacted your journey and your development may include, but are not limited to:

- being a first-generation and/or low-income student
- family responsibilities, including child and/or elder care, parental leave(s)
- health, mental health, and/or disability
- membership in a group (racial, ethnic, sex/gender, orientation, ability, etc.) that has historically been excluded from advanced studies in STEMM, or that is currently under-represented in STEMM
- COVID-19-related delays or challenges
- supervisory changes and/or issues
- immigration status
- atypical academic, research, and/or career trajectory

12. Lay title

13. Lay Abstract - 1 page maximum (3,000 characters/500 words)

14. Project title

15. Research proposal for upload - 2 page maximum (6,000 characters/1000 words) plus 1 page for references and 1 page for figures and tables if needed. Please use 1-inch margins and 12-point font. Your project summary should address the following in clear language aimed at a non-specialist audience that includes scientists, health practitioners, and patients:

- the relevance, significance, and potential impact of your project
- the novelty of your project, i.e. the gap in knowledge that you're proposing to fill and the necessity of filling it, any novel methods/approaches/tools you'll be using
- a compelling hypothesis
- clear aims
- the measures you're taking to ensure a high-quality study (e.g. selection of methods, adequate population size to ensure statistical significance, controlling for confounding factors, carefully considering sex/gender, research ethics (including working with Indigenous patients and participants), any training or collaborations you'll be pursuing to fill any skill or knowledge gaps)
- if appropriate, how you will engage patients and families, or take into consideration their needs and experiences, in your research project (including sharing the results of your research)
- how your research and/or clinical experience to date will help you be successful with this project



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- how you're going to share your research findings
 - Please name this file "CandidateLastname Research Proposal"
- Sex considerations statement: ½ page maximum (1,500 characters/250 words):** Brief description of how sex (biological) considerations are taken into account in your study design and analysis. For a guide to sex and gender-based analysis, please consult the CIHR website: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/32019.html>
 - Gender considerations statement: ½ page maximum (1,500 characters/250 words):** Brief description of how gender (socio-cultural) considerations are taken into account in your study design and analysis. For a guide to sex and gender-based analysis, please consult the CIHR website: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/32019.html>
 - Applicant CCV:** Please upload your CCV using the full Common CV academic format. Please name it "CandidateLastname_CV".
 - Health professional licenses:** If you are a licensed health professional, please upload a copy of your active license and name it "CandidateLastname_License".
 - Institutional letter of support:** Applicants require one letter of support from their current department chair, program head, division chief, or equivalent. Clinician-scientists must request this letter from their division chief to ensure the commitment of at least 50% protected research time. The letter must stipulate the following:
 - commitment to the applicant's career development
 - commitment to a minimum 50% protected research time
 - suitability of the facilities to conduct the proposed research
 - support for the applicant to engage fully in the TRIANGLE program and activities (e.g., career development curriculum, annual summit, mentorship program, hiring summer students)
 - Please name this letter "CandidateLastname_Host Letter".
 - Signature Page:** Please [download the signature page here](#). Once all signatures are attained, please name it "CandidateLastname_Signatures" for upload.

Adjudication Process

EVENT	Date
Applications Open	March 10 th
Deadline to apply	June 1 st
Review of applications	June 2 nd – July 15 th
Notice of funding results	September
Award Start date	January 1 st
Award period	January – December, 3 years

Reviewer Assignment and Conflict of Interest:

1. Upon application deadline, the Platform Manager collates applications and ensures that each applicant meets all eligibility requirements.
2. An email is sent to all Selection Committee members with a list of applicants and their demographics, for conflicts of interest and declaration of expertise.
3. The Platform Manager sends the Selection Committee Chair, Co-Chair and Director the list of applicants with demographics, project title, abstract, and conflicts of interest. Individuals with a conflict of interest for certain applicants, and from the same institution will not be assigned to the applicant in question.



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- The Selection Committee Chair, Co-Chair, and platform manager assign 3-5 reviewers to each candidate: Emails are sent to the reviewers to accept or decline and declare any conflict of interest. A new reviewer will be assigned if a reviewer declines or has a conflict. Reviewers who accept a review may be required to join a Selection virtual meeting. The Platform Manager sends each reviewer the applications they will be reviewing with an evaluation form.

Reviews and Scoring:

- Reviewers are given approximately 4-6 weeks to complete their reviews and return the evaluation form with scores.
- Reviewers will score the candidates based on the following categories. Each category contributes the specific weight (described in points) to the application's overall score out of 100. Reviewers carefully consider all the contexts detailed in applicants' Personal Statement when assigning a score to each area. Reviewers are not required to provide detailed comments on each application.

Category	Points
RESEARCH, CLINICAL, AND/OR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS	20 POINTS
<p>Research and/or clinical contributions or achievements: Reviewers will holistically assess the contributions noted in your CV and your Research, Academic and/or Clinical Contributions statement. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> grants and awards scholarships, fellowships, and awards contributions as a health professional to patient care, policy, practice inventions or patents publications aimed at scholarly readers or the public presentations at academic conferences, to school or special interest groups other scientific outreach activities supervision and mentorship of research and/or clinical trainees <p>Reviewers will carefully consider any contexts noted in the personal statement section of the application that have impacted the number, nature, or timing of your research and/or clinical contributions</p>	
COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS	20 POINTS
<p>Social conscience: Your community contributions demonstrate a sense of citizenship and care for the community/communities to which you belong and suggest that you'll be a caring and contributing member of the TRIANGLE and broader GI/liver communities</p>	10 points
<p>Personal Characteristics: Your contributions demonstrate positive personal characteristics (e.g. leadership, service, determination, care for others, sense of justice, etc.) that indicate you will be a positive addition to the TRIANGLE community and the GI/liver field. You effectively articulate how your community contributions, as highlighted in the Community Contributions statement, connect to and have prepared you to move forward with your research and/or career plans.</p>	10 points
CAREER AND DEVELOPMENT PLANS	20 POINTS



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<p>Career and Development Plan: Your plan effectively articulates why and how membership in TRIANGLE and access to TRIANGLE supports will help you achieve your research and career goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You do not need to know what career or industry you're aiming for Reviewers want to understand what you want to contribute or improve as someone trained in GI/liver research and/or practice, but you don't need to know yet specifically where or how you'll do that TRIANGLE programming and supports include many opportunities for career and personal exploration, so your career and development plan can and should involve exploring career options via: Career exploration workshops and activities (including the annual IDP creation and review with your mentor) Personal exploration workshops and activities (including the annual IDP creation and review with your mentor) Networking and mentorship with professionals in business, government, non-profit, or research Experiential learning placements in business, government, non-profit, or research Other activities that you'd like to propose and/or lead as a TRIANGLE member 	<p>10 points</p>
<p>Research and/or Clinical Contributions Statement: You effectively articulate how your research and/or clinical contributions, highlighted in the Research and/or Clinical Contributions statement, connect to and have prepared you to move forward with your research and/or career plans.</p>	<p>10 points</p>
<p>RESEARCH PLAN</p>	<p>20 POINTS</p>
<p>Scientific quality of the plan: You effectively articulate, for a non-specialist audience that includes researchers, health practitioners, and patients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the relevance, significance, and potential impact of your project the novelty of your project, i.e. the gap in knowledge that you're proposing to fill and the necessity of filling it, any novel methods/approaches/tools you'll be using a compelling hypothesis clear aims the measures you're taking to ensure a high-quality study (e.g. selection of methods, adequate population size to ensure statistical significance, controlling for confounding factors, carefully considering sex/gender, research ethics (including working with Indigenous patients and participants how you're going to share your research findings 	<p>10 points</p>
<p>Feasibility: You effectively articulate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how your research and/or clinical experience to date will help you be successful with this project any published or preliminary data you've already collected any training or collaborations you are currently, or are planning to, pursue to fill any skill or knowledge gaps 	<p>10 points</p>



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> monetary and non-monetary resources, equipment, core facilities, funding, training, professional development 	
EDI STATEMENT	10 POINTS
Quality of the statement: You effectively describe how you will contribute to the development of a diverse and inclusive TRIANGLE community through your teaching, research, supervision, mentorship, and/or service. You articulate what steps you have taken (through training, mentorship, personal reflection, etc.) to develop your knowledge and skills related to EDI	10 points
INSTITUTIONAL LETTER	10 POINTS
Institutional research support: The proposed project clearly aligns with institutional priorities and strengths, and the institution clearly articulates resources and supports available for the project.	4 points
Institutional career development support: The institution understands and has a plan for their role in ensuring the success of the applicant and their project via training, support (e.g., high-quality trainees, administrative support, start-up funding), resources (e.g., core facilities, grant administration and development, IT), training, etc. The Institution confirms 50% of protected time for research	4 points
Commitment to TRIANGLE: The institution supports the candidate to fully participate in the TRIANGLE program and in professional development activities offered at or outside the institution, including experiential learning placements, leadership retreats, and attendance at the TRIANGLE annual summit at CDDW-CLM. Additionally, the institution commits to supporting the ECR's participation in TRIANGLE as a faculty mentor and contributor, including via the hiring, supervision, and provision of matching funds for TRIANGLE-funded students and fellows.	2 points

Ranking:

- All candidates are ranked based on their scores. The top 3 candidates are selected for an award.
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Prioritization Statement: We are committed to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion within our training and funding programs. As part of this commitment, the review committee may prioritize applications from individuals who identify as members of equity-deserving groups, including but not limited to Black and Indigenous trainees, as well as applicants from underrepresented geographical regions. These applicants must meet the CIHR academic eligibility cutoff, but they may not necessarily rank within the top scoring tier of applicants. Prioritization will be applied to ensure that our awards foster greater inclusivity, broaden participation, and support trainees who have historically faced systemic barriers within health research.

Executive Committee Approval:

- The rank order will be presented and discussed and approved by the Steering Committee. This decision will be based on funding availability and recommendations from the Director and Selection Committee Chair and Co-Chair.

Notice of Award:

- Following the review process, notification letters will be sent to all candidates. These letters will be drafted by the Platform Manager, then vetted by the Selection Committee Chair, Co-Chair, and Director. Copies of the reviews will not be sent to the candidates. However, each



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letter will include up to 2 strengths and 2 weaknesses from each reviewer as feedback. Candidates are also welcome to follow up with the Program Manager should additional feedback be requested.

Grievances:

11. All grievances with the selection process can be brought to the Steering Committee via the Program Manager or anonymous feedback survey:
<https://surveys.sickkids.ca/surveys/?s=47TLPWH9MNNJN9AHF>
12. A follow-up telephone call with the Selection Committee Chair can be requested if a candidate has specific questions regarding feedback provided by the selection committee and the outcome of the competition.

Virtual panel review if required:

13. The Platform Manager sends out a personal scorecard to each Selection Committee member one week before the meeting.
14. The Platform Manager shares the reviewer scores and their averages with the Selection Committee Chair, Co-Chair and Director. If scores for a candidate are highly variable, the Selection Committee Chair, Co-Chair and Director may request to see the reviews.
15. Based on (a) the compatibility of the scores among reviewers for each candidate and (b) conflicts of interest among Selection committee members, the Selection Committee Chair and Co-Chair will determine the order of discussion for each candidate. Reviewers with a conflict of interest will be asked to leave the meeting when reviewing the applicant in question and prompted to return when the discussion is complete. Should the Director have a conflict, the Director will leave the call and the Selection Chair will act as the Director and Selection Co-Chair as the Chair. Should the Selection Chair have a conflict, they will leave the call and the Selection Co-Chair will act as the Selection Chair.
16. At the Selection Committee meeting, each candidate will be reviewed in the order determined by the Selection Committee Chair.
17. For applicants who attained low scores, the Selection Committee Chair and Co-Chair may streamline the application. If approved by all reviewers, this application will not be discussed.
18. Scientific review: Reviewers 1, 2, and 3, will each state their scores and then respectively outline their reviews of the proposed application.
19. A discussion then follows with the rest of the selection committee who may have additional questions, concerns or insights.
20. The 3 scientific reviewers agree on a consensus score based on the application discussion. All scientific review members of the selection committee are then asked to (a) record the consensus score on their scorecards; (b) score the candidate plus or minus (+/-) 0.5 of the consensus score.
21. The above 3 items are repeated for each candidate until all candidates have been reviewed. Selection Committee members with conflicts are asked to leave before and return after (via text message) the conflicting application.
22. Immediately following the virtual meeting, each reviewer emails the Platform Manager their completed personal scorecards.



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23. A tally and average of the personal scores is created by the Platform Manager. The Selection Committee Chair, and Director are sent the final average only of the tally for each candidate. Please see line item #7 “Ranking” for next steps.

Award Requirements

All successful candidates who attain a TRIANGLE award, plus their host institution, must agree to the following conditions as part of the award acceptance.

1. The awardee will attend monthly virtual meetings on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 4pm EST, starting in the 1st month (January) of their award for onboarding. Click [here](#) to learn more about our workshop and sessions.
2. The awardee will complete the Becoming a Resilient Scientist (BRS) series within the 1st 5 months of their award term. These will be scheduled based on the presenter’s availability and sent via calendar invitations before your start date. Click [here](#) to learn more about the BRS series.
3. The awardee will participate in an Early Career Researcher Retreat. Click [here](#) to learn more about the Retreat.
4. The awardee will complete all [9 CIHR Research Training modules](#) by the end of their award term.
5. The awardee must submit an annual Individualized Development Plan (IDP) by November 30th each year, starting at onboarding, to ensure satisfactory progress in their training. For more information on the IDP click [here](#).
6. The awardee will participate in the in-person Annual Summit for the duration of the training award. Failure to attend, except in extraordinary circumstances, will jeopardize the continuation of funding for the awardee. Annual Summits normally take place 2 days prior to CDDW in the same location as CDDW. Learn more about the Annual Summit [here](#).
7. The awardee will meet with their assigned mentor and mentorship pods as mutually agreed upon in your mentorship agreement, and complete a review of the relationship that is due on June 30th of each year. Click [here](#) to learn more about TRIANGLE mentorship.
8. The Host Institution must commit to having space, resources and time for the awardee.
9. The awardee will acknowledge TRIANGLE, CIHR, CAG, and any other sponsor identified in their acceptance letter, in all presentations and publications for the duration of the award. All logos can be found on our [Resources page](#).

Additional information on all these requirements can be found on our [curriculum page](#) or by downloading our [Welcome to TRIANGLE Slide Deck](#). A downloadable timeline can also be accessed [here](#).