

Independent Investigator Awards Revised Awards

Last Revised: April 14, 2009

These terms and conditions apply to all independent investigators who are newly funded as a result of applications submitted in the September 2006 competition (i.e. awards implemented as of July 1, 2007 or later). They apply to all awardees that are new to the investigator award system (e.g. new Population Health Investigators, Scholars, etc.); those who have successfully applied for support at the next level of award (e.g. a Scholar who will now be supported as a Senior Scholar); and those who will be receiving a renewal Population Health or Clinical Investigator award. These are referred to as "Revised Awards" in order to distinguish them from the group below.

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1.0 Award Structure

1.1 Award Types

AIHS provides investigator awards in 6 distinct categories. The awards are based on the individual's academic seniority as well as type of research conducted. The 6 categories are:

- i. Population Health Investigator;
- ii. Clinical Investigator;
- iii. Scholar;
- iv. Senior Scholar;

- v. Scientist;
- vi. Senior Investigator.

The guidelines apply equally to the biomedical and the health awards.

The Independent Establishment Grant program is no longer offered.

1.2 Length of Awards

All investigator awards have been extended to a maximum of seven years. Population Health Investigator Renewal and Clinical Investigator Renewal awards are for three years. Only the Population Health Investigator Renewal and Clinical Investigator Renewal Awards are eligible to receive a terminal award.

1.3 Components of Awards

Each investigator award consists of the following components:

- a contribution to the institution for direct investigator support;
- a salary supplement known as the Research Prize provided directly to the investigator;
- research support in the form of the Research Allowance.
- an Establishment Grant (for candidates newly recruited to Alberta only).

1.3.1 Contribution for Direct Investigator Support

The major component of the investigator award is AIHS' contribution to the institution to help offset the investigator's salary and benefits costs. The funds provided by AIHS are pooled at the institutional level and used to support all AIHS-supported investigators collectively.

The amount of the AIHS contribution varies according to each category of award and will remain constant over the term of the award. The amount of the award is independent of the investigator's employment contract with the university and is not linked to the investigator's salary.

The amount provided per year for each award is as follows:

- i. Population Health Investigator - \$110,000;
- ii. Clinical Investigator - \$110,000;
- iii. Scholar - \$110,000;
- iv. Senior Scholar - \$135,000;
- v. Scientist - \$160,000;
- vi. Senior Investigator - \$160,000 (depending on previous investigator award held).

1.3.2 Research Prize

The Research Prize is a direct compensation contribution provided by AIHS to each of its investigators. It is intended to maintain and improve the overall value of investigator awards as a potent vehicle for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified, internationally competitive investigators at Alberta institutions. It is provided for each year of the award.

The Research Prize can only be used towards salary and cannot be used for research operating costs. The amount provided in the Research Prize is to be incremental to the salary that the investigator would normally receive from their university and/or regional health authority.

The value of the Research Prize is determined by the investigator's current AIHS award. The amounts provided per year are as follows:

- i. Population Health Investigator - \$10,000;
- ii. Clinical Investigator - \$10,000;
- iii. Scholar (first faculty appointment or if not previously supported as an AHFMR Population Health Investigator or Clinical Investigator) - \$10,000;
- iv. Scholar (previous holders of an AHFMR Population Health Investigator or Clinical Investigator award) - \$20,000;
- v. Senior Scholar - \$20,000;
- vi. Scientist - \$20,000;
- vii. Senior Investigator - \$40,000.

1.3.3 Research Allowance

Starting in 2007 with the revised award cohort, all Investigators will receive the Research Allowance. It is automatically provided as an integral part of the award to individuals who are receiving their first AIHS investigator award as well as to those who have submitted a successful application for a subsequent investigator award.

The research allowance is to be applied against research-related expenses including the following:

- major and minor equipment (and extended warranties);
- general materials and supplies;
- research-related services such as equipment rental, computer time, data acquisition, library resources;
- publication costs including open access publishing;
- vivarium costs;
- salaries of trainees, research assistants and technicians;
- books, journals, and society memberships;
- research-related travel.

The research allowance cannot be used for hospitality and entertainment expenses.

The Research Allowance is provided as a lump-sum grant at the commencement of the investigator award. The grant will remain open for the full duration of the award. The spend-rate and distribution of the funds within the eligible expense categories is at the discretion of the investigator. Any funds that remain at the end of the term of the award must be returned to AIHS. Extensions to the period of support will not be granted.

The value of the Research Allowance is determined by the level of the AHFMR Investigator award held. The amounts are as follows:

- i. Clinical Investigator (Renewal) - \$15,000;
- ii. Population Health Investigator (Renewal) - \$15,000;
- iii. Clinical Investigator (New) - \$35,000;
- iv. Population Health Investigator (New) - \$35,000;
- v. Scholar - \$35,000;
- vi. Senior Scholar - \$50,000;
- vii. Scientist - \$50,000;
- viii. Senior Investigator - \$20,000.

1.3.4 Establishment Grant - General Information

AIHS provides funds to assist researchers newly recruited to Alberta in the start-up of their laboratories and/or research activities. Candidates who are already established in Alberta (i.e. beyond 24 months) are not eligible to apply for the establishment grant.

The establishment grant may consist of two components: operating support and major equipment support.

Any funds approved are specific to each component and are not transferable between categories without prior approval from AIHS.

1.3.5 Establishment Grant: Operating Support

Operating Funds may be used for the following purposes:

- materials, supplies, and other expendables;
- minor equipment defined as equipment costing less than \$10,000 per unit or set-up;
- equipment rental;
- animals and animal facilities;
- computer and library resources;
- publication costs including open access publishing;
- photocopying and art work for scientific publications;
- technical workshop costs;
- salaries of personnel including research assistants, technicians, coders, interviewers, programmers;

- salaries and recruitment costs of trainees including summer students, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows;
- purchase of books, journals, and periodicals;
- membership fees for scientific societies;
- research-related travel.

All expenditures must be consistent with the policies and procedures of the host institution.

Operating Funds may not be used for the following purposes:

- hospitality and entertainment expenses;
- major scientific equipment (equipment costing more than \$10,000 per unit or set-up);
- tuition fees for students.

Unexpended funds must be returned to AIHS upon expiry of the term of the grant. AIHS will consider requests for one-year extensions of the establishment grants but these must be submitted at least two months before the grants are due to expire.

1.3.6 Establishment Grant: Major Equipment Support

"Major Equipment" is defined as equipment costing \$10,000 or more per unit or set-up.

Requests for major equipment are to include a quotation(s) indicating the cost of the requested equipment, extended warranty, transportation, and any accessories. Matching or contributory funding should be identified for equipment exceeding \$100,000.

All equipment purchased with AIHS funds belongs to the host institution. The institution is responsible for:

- the maintenance of the equipment;
- obtaining adequate and appropriate insurance coverage;
- ensuring that the equipment is used for the purposes outlined in the application;
- notifying AIHS of any changes to the usage of the equipment;
- notifying AIHS of the sale of the equipment;
- ensuring that all equipment, or proceeds from its sale, will be used to support research.

The purchase and delivery of the equipment must be completed in the first year of the investigator award. Beyond this time, unless AIHS receives and approves a special request for an extension, the offer will be withdrawn and the institution will be required to return the funds to AIHS.

2.0 Eligibility

2.1

Candidates for investigator awards must hold academic appointments at an Alberta university not later than July 1 following the September in which the application was submitted.

Independent investigators based at regional or provincial health authorities in Alberta are eligible to hold investigator awards. Joint faculty appointments at the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, or the University of Lethbridge are required for such individuals.

2.2

The following time protection for research must be provided, and confirmed in the institutional letter of support, in order for the candidate to be eligible to hold the award:

- i. Clinical Investigator: Minimum of 75%;
- ii. Population Health Investigator: Minimum of 75%;
- iii. Scholar: Minimum of 75%;
- iv. Senior Scholar: Minimum of 75%;
- v. Scientist: These individuals are expected to devote the majority of their time to research activities;
- vi. Senior Investigator: These individuals are expected to devote the majority of their time to research activities.

2.3

Scientists are eligible to hold major administrative appointments such as directors of research institutes, department heads/chairs, associate/assistant deans, deans, etc. However, written assurance of the time protection for research must be provided to and approved by AIHS.

Other investigators will not be allowed to hold major administrative appointments.

AIHS reserves the right to cancel an award if it is felt that the administrative responsibilities assumed by an awardee will not allow for sufficient time for high-quality research activities.

2.4

Individuals who are not commencing their first academic appointment must demonstrate that they have adequate external peer-reviewed funding in place to conduct the research outlined in their applications. This funding will generally consist of peer-reviewed operating grants from national organizations such as CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC, NCIC, etc. Examples of such individuals would be Scholars previously supported as Clinical Investigators or Population Health Investigators; Senior Scholars; and Scientists. Their role on the grant should be as either the principal investigator or co-principal investigator.

The AIHS award offer may be withdrawn if this funding is not in place at the normal implementation date for the award (i.e. July 1 following the September in which the application was submitted).

3.0 Joint Funding with other Investigator Awards (Incentive Award)

3.1

Investigators are permitted to apply for and hold other personnel support awards such as the CIHR New Investigator Award, Canada Research Chair (Tier I or II), Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada New Investigator Award, etc. Investigators who hold such an award may be eligible to receive the Incentive Award.

3.2

Investigators may apply for or obtain these other awards at any point during the AIHS period of support. AIHS investigators are responsible for ensuring that the other organizations will permit them to hold their awards at the same time as the AIHS award.

3.3

The Incentive Award is generally limited to those individuals whose other personnel support award is provided on a competitive basis from a provincial, national, or international research-related agency from the non-profit or government sector. AIHS reserves the right to determine whether a given external award is eligible for consideration to provide an Incentive Award.

3.4

When an investigator receives another personnel support award, AIHS will contribute to the host institution the amount of its Investigator award minus the value of the external award (up to the maximum value of the AIHS amount or of the outside award, whichever is less). The amount thus recovered by AIHS will then be returned in its entirety to the individual's sponsoring institution according to the following distribution and for the following specified uses:

25%: University level - Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost. These funds are to be added to the AHFMR funding pool managed by this office for AIHS investigator support. In accordance with the defined uses of these pooled resources, the funds can be used mainly for the purpose of offsetting salary and benefits costs and renovation/relocation costs for currently supported investigators.

35%: Faculty level - Office of the Dean. These funds are to be used by the investigator's dean to enhance the research activities of the faculty. Eligible expenses include the direct support of research as per the following:

For the faculty as a whole:

- operating costs for research;

- support of trainees;
- purchase of scientific equipment;
- support of administrative support staff;
- support for core facilities and the staff required to run them;
- recruitment costs to bring potential investigator award candidates to Alberta for visits.

For currently supported investigators only:

- renovations to the investigator's laboratory, research, and/or office space;
- costs for the investigator to relocate to Alberta;
- sabbatical-related costs (e.g. travel, research costs).

As of July 1, 2007 AIHS will no longer provide separate or additional funding for the recruitment, moving/relocation or renovation costs associated with newly recruited investigators.

40%: Investigator level. These funds will be added to the investigator's Research Allowance account to be used according to the guidelines for the Research Allowance (see section 1.3.3).

3.5

AIHS will only consider incentive awards based on formal request made by either: the sponsoring Dean, or VP Academic. For investigators with (ongoing) AHFMR Investigator support awards:

- incentive will start from the original start date of the outside award or;
- the start of the AHFMR award or;
- from a period not greater than 60 days prior to the first request for the incentive award,

Investigators not supported via the Independent Investigator program are not eligible to apply/receive incentive funding.

3.6

Individuals who received Canada Research Chair (CRC) awards upon their recruitment to Alberta must still apply for AHFMR investigator awards within the usual 24-month limit from appointment in Alberta. If no application is submitted by the 24-month limit, they will not be eligible to apply for an AHFMR investigator award at the conclusion of their CRC awards.

Individuals already appointed in Alberta for more than 24 months and who are offered CRC awards are not eligible to apply for an AHFMR investigator award.

4.0 Employment Status

4.1

All awards are made through the host institution/organization; individuals do not become employees of AIHS upon receiving awards.

4.2

The institution agrees to notify AIHS of any change in the investigator's employment status as this may affect eligibility to retain the award. These changes could include loss of academic appointment, transfer to a new faculty, acceptance of a significant administrative appointment, additional external personnel support award(s), leave of absence, parental leave, etc.

5.0 Progress Reports

5.1

Awardees are required to submit annual reports throughout the term of the award. Failure to submit a report will result in suspension of the funding and may lead to cancellation of the award.

5.2

In addition to the annual reports, detailed progress reports will be required in the fourth year of the awards. AIHS expert advisory committees will review these reports and provide feedback to the investigators and their institutions. Continuation of AIHS funding will be contingent on a positive assessment of appropriate progress.

5.3

AIHS will provide awardees the required report forms and submission deadlines.

6.0 Intellectual Property Rights

6.1

Investigators are subject to the intellectual property policies of their host institutions.

6.2

When commercialization of intellectual property is being considered, investigators are required to report any inventions to the technology transfer offices of their institution.

6.3

AIHS makes no claim on intellectual property rights.

7.0 Maternity and Parental Leave

7.1

Investigators must inform AIHS before commencing a maternity leave.

7.2

All institutional policies will apply for maternity leaves.

7.3

AIHS will extend the term of an investigator award for one full year for any female investigator who takes maternity leave during her current term of support. This one-year extension will be independent of the actual length of maternity leave taken by the investigator. There is no parallel policy for males who take parental leave.

7.4

There is no limit to the number of maternity leaves that can be taken during the tenure of a given award. Each maternity leave will result in one additional year added to the term of the investigator award.

7.5

The Research Prize will be provided during this additional year(s).

7.6

All requests for the extension must originate from the sponsoring institution and all general terms and conditions regarding independent investigator awards will continue to apply during the extension period.

7.7

The AIHS contribution for the award will not be reduced during the maternity leave.

8.0 Sabbatical Leave

8.1

Investigators must inform AIHS before commencing a sabbatical leave. This notification is to consist of a copy of the institutional approval of the leave as well as the expected duration, destination, and anticipated activities.

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AIHS will not reduce its contribution to the institution for the award during the sabbatical leave. The Research Prize will continue to be provided.

8.3

AIHS will not provide any direct support for sabbatical costs (e.g. in the form of research or travel allowances).

8.4

Clinical Investigators, Population Health Investigators and Scholars should generally not take a sabbatical leave during the tenure of their award.

9.0 Communications

9.1

All investigators are required to acknowledge AIHS in all public or scientific publications, media interviews, websites, signage, lectures, conferences, as well as institutional listings, events, and publications.

9.2

Materials for the media concerning the investigator's research and generated by the investigator's institution must include acknowledgement of AIHS funding, the AIHS logo, and if appropriate, a quote from the AIHS CEO and a standard description of AIHS, which can be obtained from AIHS' Communications Department.

9.3

The AIHS logo should be included in printed or electronic materials relating to AIHS-funded research, including presentations, publications, news releases, signage, websites, advertising, promotional materials, etc.

9.4

Investigators must inform the AIHS communications staff in advance if their research will be published in a major journal such that it might result in a press release from the university and/or the journal.

9.5

Investigators will, from time to time, be asked to participate in AIHS-generated media work, interviews, student mentorship, or public events.

9.6

AIHS reserves the right to publish and/or disseminate information regarding its grants and awards.

10.0 Support of Research Integrity

10.1

AIHS supports Alberta research institutions in their efforts to promote and ensure the highest standards of research and scholarship practice and behavior.

10.2

It is incumbent upon each applicant to adhere to all research policies and procedures in place at his/her institution, including those regarding integrity in research and scholarship.

10.3

AIHS reserves the right to confirm, through independent means, representations of authorship, credentials or research support.

10.4

In the event of material deviations in the submitted information, including citation sources (in the case of authorship), issuing organization(s) (in the case of credentials), or granting agencies (in the case of research support), AIHS reserves the right to disqualify any applicant from the competition in question. Further AIHS actions may include disqualifying the applicant from future AIHS competitions for a time period to be set at AIHS' sole discretion, withdrawal of any remaining installments of support for any existing AIHS grant or award for which misrepresentation appears in the submission, and seeking partial or full repayment of any past financial support under any AIHS grant or award for which misrepresentation appears in the submission.

11.0 Termination of Award

11.1

AIHS reserves the right to terminate any award if the terms and conditions of the award are not met, or if there is evidence of unsatisfactory progress.

12.0 General Terms and Conditions

12.1

All general terms and conditions governing AIHS research funding will apply to these awards.