
2020/ 2021 CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: QUEEN ELIZABETH ADVANCED SCHOLARS (QES-AS) PROGRAM –SPECIAL FOCUS ON NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES& HUMAN CAPITAL

BACKGROUND

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) – in particular cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and mental health disorders – represent major health problems, which can impede healthy longevity. There is considerable evidence that a reduction of NCDs in middle age (broadly defined as ages 30-69 years) leads to *a compression of morbidity during older ages* and healthier longevity. NCDs can seriously threaten countries' human capital, productivity and future economic growth. They reduce human capital in the short term primarily through their negative impact on adult survival and productivity. They can also undermine the creation of future human capital, for example by negatively impacting children's and adolescents' educational attainment. The COVID pandemic has further underscored the importance of a **life-cycle approach** to investments in NCD-free longevity, with targeted investments by governments in ensuring that children and adolescents are protected from the disease. Despite these and other known risks to human capital, health and well-being, NCDs have received relatively less attention from governments. As part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) includes as a target a one-third reduction of premature mortality from NCDs globally, through prevention and treatment.

To support progress towards the prevention and control of NCDs, a Commission on Healthy Longevity (CHL) is being struck. The Commission is being spearheaded by the World Bank, in collaboration with the World Health Organization, the OECD, the University of Toronto and other academic and bilateral partners. The Commission's work will build on the World Bank's Human Capital Project (HCP), including the human capital index (HCI). The HCP has been used by many countries to make the case for increased investments in health and education, including in NCDs. The Commission aims to advance knowledge about novel methods of economic analysis to help quantify gains from NCD investments, to support low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in making evidence-informed investments in interventions, to facilitate collaboration across governments, and support the development of novel measurement metrics. Up to 15 background papers led by three working groups are expected to be produced over an 18-month period. The work will be conducted in partnership with the Disease Control Priorities (DCP) 4 project (www.dcp-3.org)

In 2020/2021, a NCD-oriented **research scholarship** program is being offered to engage **postdoctoral and early career** researchers in supporting the research and analytic work of the Commission on Healthy Longevity.

This scholarship program builds on previous work supported by the University of Toronto, including the novel [Million Death Study](#) (MDS) and the [Statistical Alliance for Vital Events](#) (SAVE) whose mission is to reduce premature mortality through investments in health and mortality information systems in different country contexts. The program is funded by the [Canadian Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Advanced Scholars Program](#) (QES) and supported by the [Centre for Global Health, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto](#) and [Unity Health Toronto's Centre for Global Health Research](#). For more information about past QES alumni scholars and the 2018 and 2019 Summer Institute Programs, please visit [here](#)

THE PROGRAM

The main goal of the 2020/2021 QES program is to build exceptional research and methodological capacity among scholars to quantify gains from NCD investments and to support LMICs to make evidence-informed investments in cost-effective interventions to prevent and control NCDs and improve human capital and healthy longevity.

For 2020/2021:

- Each scholar will be connected with a Research Placement Partner (RPP) – Canadian scholars will be connected with LMIC partners and LMIC scholars will be connected with a Canadian institution.
- Each scholar will be matched with a research mentor from the RPP, who will support the scholar in drafting their learning and mentoring plan and will serve as a resource and facilitator for the duration of the program.
- Each research placement will be aligned with the partner institution's needs and with the individual scholar's learning objectives, as outlined in their customized learning and mentoring plan.
- Each scholar will receive a consolidated remuneration package that includes a research stipend and travel and accommodation costs (if needed).

Each scholar will be expected to:

- Support the research and analytic work of one of three working groups of the Commission on Healthy Longevity. Areas of focus include: methods of economic analysis, analytic methods to support the prioritization and sequencing of interventions to prevent/control NCDs and improve longevity; whole of government strategies; and measurement metrics to support human capital outcomes, create dashboards alongside plans to expand data collection to address routine and urgent health priorities.
- Each scholar will work with key partner institutions for the CHL including the University of Toronto, University of Washington, Bergen University and the research groups within the World Bank.
- Develop competencies and skills in quantitative data analysis and in areas like sex and gender analyses, grant and manuscript writing, knowledge translation, collaboration, leadership, networking, and community engagement
- Spend a minimum of 90 days in a LMIC conducting research (Canadian scholars only)
- Disseminate research results to different stakeholders via high-impact journals.

RECRUITMENT:

For 2020/2021, we are recruiting up to **eight scholars** to support the work of the Commission:

- **Postdoctoral:** up to **two** scholars from Canada and up to **five** scholars from Colombia, Ethiopia, India or Sierra Leone, or a scholar from another LMIC who is willing to work in one of these four LMIC
- **Early career:** up to **one LMIC** scholar from either Colombia, Ethiopia, India or Sierra Leone or a scholar from another LMIC who is willing to work in one of these four LMIC

TIMELINE:

- July - September 2020: promotion and recruitment of scholars
- September 2020: orientation and training of new scholars; development of mentorship plan to identify research deliverables in line with work of the Commission
- Nov 9-15th possible in-person meetings in Toronto of the QES and CHL (pending COVID conditions).

- Other timelines – TBC in line with scheduled work of the Commission

ELIGIBILITY:

APPLICANTS FROM COLOMBIA, ETHIOPIA, INDIA OR SIERRA LEONE

- Must be a citizen or resident of Colombia, Ethiopia, India or Sierra Leone or is from other LMIC and is willing to work in one of these four LMIC
- Applicant be a postdoctoral fellow, or early-career scholar

CANADIAN APPLICANTS

- Must be a citizen or permanent resident of Canada
- Applicant must be a postdoctoral fellow
- Priority will be given to alumni of the Collaborative Specialization in Global Health, University of Toronto, as well as postdoctoral and early career scholars connected to Canadian hospitals with global health departments (e.g. Unity Health, Hospital for Sick Children).
- Canadian applicants must be able to spend a minimum of 90 days in/working with an LMIC partner conducting research

HOW TO APPLY

Applications must include:

- A completed application form
- Graduate transcripts (scholars must have at minimum an A- average in coursework)
- Curriculum vitae or resume, which specifies applicants' current quantitative skills in epidemiology, economics, demography, biostatistics, or related areas.
- Letter of recommendation from your direct supervisor, or in the case of early career researchers, a past supervisor (1 page max)
- A 200-word expression of interest statement outlining:
 - why you would like to be part of the Scholar Program
 - the alignment between the program and your quantitative research interests
- Co-funding from supervisors for postdoctoral scholars is encouraged, but will not be required.

Please also review the FAQs below

Please send all application materials in one .pdf file to Vadim Levin (globalhealth.dlsph@utoronto.ca) by midnight EST on October 25th, 2020

Please include all your application materials in one .pdf file with the following name First Name Last Name – QES Scholar 2020 Application (for example “Vadim Levin – QES Scholar 2020 Application”)

ABOUT

THE CANADIAN QUEEN ELIZABETH II DIAMOND JUBILEE SCHOLARSHIPS (QES)

The Canadian Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarships aim to activate a dynamic community of young global leaders across Canada and the Commonwealth to create lasting impacts both at home and abroad through cross-cultural exchanges encompassing international education, discovery and inquiry, and professional experiences.

CENTRE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH, DALLA LANA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

The Centre for Global Health is the knowledge hub of global health educational activities at DLSPH and views global health in an integrative manner. The Centre for Global Health offers multidisciplinary graduate education in global health, student practicum placements, seminars, lectures, and other training and career opportunities. It partners with research institutions around the world, to host visiting scholars (graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, faculty, and other researchers) and support student and faculty research at the DLSPH. The Centre for Global Health brings together a community of students, faculty, and other partners to advance better health and equity, globally.

Located in one of the most diverse cities in the world, we look to leverage our location and Canadian values of equity, universal healthcare and social protection to make an impact on the Sustainable Development Goals. Universal health coverage will be one of the major topics throughout the year, however, other topics related to the SDGs will also be highlighted as our Centre grows.

CENTRE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH RESEARCH, UNITY HEALTH (CGHR)

The Centre for Global Health Research (CGHR) is an independent, not-for-profit organization co-sponsored by Unity Health (Toronto) and the University of Toronto. Founded in 2002 on the principle that effective health initiatives must be supported by reliable, evidence-based research, CGHR was created to conduct large-scale epidemiological studies in developing countries. CGHR's mission is to lead high-quality public health research that advances global health for all, with particular attention to the world's poorest populations.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How are “postdoctoral” and “early career” defined?

- **Postdoctoral:** “An individual who is conducting research after the completion of their doctoral studies. Fellows usually work under the mentorship of a lead researcher or a principal investigator.”
- **Early career researcher:** An individual who has demonstrated strong evidence of work as an independent researcher, has led his/her own laboratory or research project for **4-7 years** or is in a tenure-track position at a degree-granting institution

I am a Canadian, how much time should I expect to spend outside of Canada?

- Canadians are required to spend a minimum of 90 days conducting research in LMICs.

We do not use letter grades in my institution. What is the equivalent?

- Please see the University of Toronto tool to verify that your grades align with the A- minimum <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/prospectivestudents/Pages/International-Degree-Equivalencies-Tool.aspx>

What does alumni engagement involve?

- Scholars are encouraged to stay connected to their mentors

Do I need to identify a specific Research Question in my application?

- At the time of application, we encourage you to identify your research interests, and preliminary research questions that demonstrate relevance to the goal and objectives of the scholarship program

**Are you able to take a look at my application ahead of time to let me know if I would be a good candidate?
Does my research interest fit this scholarship program?**

- We cannot review your application ahead of time and provide you with feedback about whether your research fits with this scholarship program. Please review the eligibility criteria and goals and objectives of this scholarship program carefully.

How much is the stipend?

- In 2019-20, stipends ranged from \$8 441 to \$16 128 CAD depending on whether scholars were doctoral, post-doctoral or early career.