

## **Dalla Lana School of Public Health Black Postdoctoral Fellowship Program**

### **Background and Motivation**

Against a backdrop of longstanding, systemic, anti-Black racism at Canadian universities, including the University of Toronto, the Dalla Lana School of Public Health (DLSPH) is establishing the DLSPH Black Postdoctoral Fellowship Program. The program responds to the historical and contemporary underrepresentation of Black faculty at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, and at other schools of public health, and to the underrepresentation of Black leadership in other public and private sector entities. The premise of the program is that this underrepresentation may be occurring for many reasons, two of the most prominent of which are: (a) a range of racist practices may disadvantage and undervalue Black doctoral applicants in open call awards and, (b) potential reticence of Black students about applying to DLSPH for post-doctoral fellowships because of its (and the broader university's) history of underrepresentation and anti-Black racism.

The program is thus intended to provide a dedicated source of opportunity for Black doctoral students to complete a high-quality postdoctoral fellowship, in which they feel supported and respected, and which leads to tenure-track, academic appointments at University of Toronto or other leading universities, or to other leadership positions in the public or private sector, as their interests dictate.

### **Value and Duration**

Funding will be available to engage each post-doctoral fellow for two years. In addition, DLSPH will provide the standard benefit rate (at the time of writing, this is 10%), and the University of Toronto health plan contribution for each postdoctoral fellow, individual or family rate, as applicable to each postdoctoral fellow, (at the time of writing, this is roughly \$50/month for Green Shield). Each selected postdoctoral fellow will also receive an unrestricted research start-up fund of \$10,000.

### **Eligibility**

This award is open to both domestic and international post-graduates.

Nominees must:

- Identify as Black
- Demonstrate academic excellence and high potential for success in their chosen field.
- Have obtained a doctoral degree, normally within five years from the start date of funding (though this may be waived for exceptional cases), or will have obtained their doctoral degree at the time the fellowship commences.
- Not have held a DLSPH Black Postdoctoral Fellowship Award previously.

Recipients must:

- Have a primary supervisor who is a core faculty member of DLSPH (Tenured, Tenure Track, Academic CLTA, and Term appointees who draw all or part of their salary from DLSPH)
- Be a postdoctoral employee at the University of Toronto
- Register and remain registered with the postdoctoral office at SGS
- Not hold concurrently another major fellowship
- Not hold a tenure-track faculty position, or be on leave from such a position

### **DLSPH's Responsibilities**

DLSPH will ensure that there is a contact person (program manager) with whom prospective applicants and current postdoctoral fellows can communicate about administrative and general informational matters. The



DLSPH will pair each postdoctoral fellow to a faculty supervisor that has been mutually agreed upon by the postdoctoral fellow and the faculty supervisor. The DLSPH will ensure that the faculty supervisor has agreed to key aspects of mentorship, including facilitating the postdoctoral fellow's research opportunities (with explicit agreement about primary authorship), ensuring networking opportunities (with explicit understanding of the people and organizations with whom the supervisor will connect the postdoctoral fellow), and providing a respectful and nurturing environment. In keeping with the understanding the principal purpose of postdoctoral fellowships is to bolster one's research portfolio, the DLSPH will not make any demands of the postdoctoral fellows' time and will reinforce a culture that the fellowship is designed to enable postdoctoral fellows to concentrate on and develop their scholarship. DLSPH will provide opportunities for fellows to engage in teaching, if they so desire. DLSPH will also provide independent mechanisms to address general or specific issues that may arise.

Outside of a formal academic mentor, the DLSPH will work to provide additional faculty mentors for each postdoctoral fellow, but this will be optional and left to the discretion of each postdoctoral fellow. The University of Toronto is currently establishing a Black postdoctoral fellows' network, and postdoctoral fellows will be introduced to this network.

## Application Process

Interested applicants will identify a faculty member whom they are interested in having as a supervisor, and work with that supervisor to develop a research plan. Interested supervisors will provide a letter of support that details (a) how their experience and expertise will facilitate the postdoctoral fellow's proposed research and future academic trajectory, (b) the people and organizations whom the supervisor will provide as opportunities for the postdoctoral fellow to expand their academic networks, particularly in preparation to take on a tenure-track, academic appointment (with specific examples) and, (c) how the supervisor will ensure a secure and respectful environment.

The following documents should be submitted as part of the application process.

1. Postdoctoral applicant proposed research plan for the duration of the fellowship (maximum 2 pages)
2. Postdoctoral applicant CV
3. Letter of support from proposed supervisor detailing required sections above
4. A short personal biography of the nominee (150-word limit) which may be used on DLSPH website or other communications should they be selected as a DLSPH Black Postdoctoral Fellow
5. A brief statement indicating the synergy between the applicant's research proposal and the research goals of the supervisor (1 paragraph), the DLSPH [academic plan](#) (1 paragraph), and the mission of the University (1 paragraph).

## Selection Criteria

Applications received by the DLSPH graduate office will be evaluated by a committee composed of faculty and students based on the following selection criteria.

- Excellence of the research proposal and the of the nominee's CV
- Excellence of the environment and support that the supervisor is able to provide, as outlined in their letter.

## Relationship to the University of Toronto Provost's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program for Black and Indigenous Scholars

Successful candidates will be automatically considered for the University-wide postdoctoral fellowship program. Candidates who are successful in both competitions will be required to decline the DLSPH fellowship.

