Guidelines for the McDonald Institute Experimental Postdoctoral Fellow (MI-EPDF) Award in Astroparticle Physics

Round 2 (2027)

The McDonald Institute Experimental Postdoctoral Fellow (MI-EPDF) Award in Astroparticle Physics supports faculty at a recognized Canadian academic institution to hire a postdoctoral fellow in experimental astroparticle physics. Each award will support a postdoctoral fellow by covering 75% of the direct cost, up to an annual salary of $71,500 CAD plus benefits, for up to two years. Other components of the package (e.g., relocation, travel allowance, etc.) are 100% paid by the host institution. Recognizing that the salary packages may vary by institute, applicants should outline the total salary, the source(s) of other funding with an explanation, and the amount of funding requested.

Any PI/Group/Institution whose research in experimental astroparticle physics in Canada **aligns with the McDonald Institute Research Strategy** may apply for an MI-EPDF award by completing the short application form. It will be evaluated based on scientific merit, alignment with the objectives of the McDonald Institute, need for the position, training and postdoctoral opportunities, and expected impact. The degree to which the applicant(s) incorporate Indigenization - equity, diversity, and inclusion (I-EDI) principles into their research environment and recruitment processes will also be evaluated. For more details on expectations with regards to I-EDI, please refer to Appendix A.

Application process

For each position, the applicant(s) must complete the application form (section A) and answer the questions (section B) found on the McDonald Institute website. Note there are assigned page limits.

Applications that fail to follow the template will not be considered. Completed applications should be sent to admin@mcdonaldinstitute.ca with the subject line "**MI-EPDF Awards R2 – {Primary Supervisor Last Name}**".

Applications must be received by **December 4, 2026**. Notice of awards will be issued by early February.

Award recipients will be **required to post publicly a job ad and cross-post their job ad** on the Careers in Astroparticle Physics website hosted by the McDonald Institute. To ensure time to reach a broad pool of possible candidates, job ads must be posted for a minimum of three weeks. However, award recipients are encouraged to keep postings open for longer to reach an even broader pool of applicants. If an applicant advertises the proposed position before an award is confirmed, they must promptly share with the McDonald Institute their job advertisement for cross-posting (as we encourage for all job postings relating to astroparticle physics in Canada). **Please share job ads by email to admin@mcdonaldinstitute.ca.**

Advertising Text:
Please include the following text when advertising for fellow positions:

> *[Institution] is inviting applications for the McDonald Institute Experimental Postdoctoral Fellowship in the field of [specify field], to work with [specify PI/group members].*
>
> *As part of the application process, we invite applicants to complete a short, voluntary demographic survey to support the McDonald Institute's Indigenization - equity, diversity, and inclusion (I-EDI) efforts, and equitable hiring practices amongst the Astroparticle Physics community. Individual responses will be kept confidential and will have no impact on your candidacy.*
>
> *https://queensu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6FPUBsNJGXrnyPc*

Eligibility

The lead applicant must be able to supervise at an associated Canadian institution and be eligible to hold an institutional account for grants or awards. The proposed research must be related to the field of astroparticle physics in **Alignment with McDonald Institute Research Strategy**.

Ticket Value

The McDonald Institute recognizes that different institutions have different pay scales and arrangements for salaries. The expectation is for salaries to be consistent with the norms in your department, but the ticket value will not exceed **75% of $71,500 per year maximum (plus benefits in line with institutional norms)** over two years. Indirect funds are also made available to the host institute, with specific details provided in the award letter.

Successful applicants will be granted one ticket for each successful position. The awarded ticket is expected to be filled (i.e., a future or current postdoctoral fellow has been identified for this funding) by early June 2027. To ensure the two full years of funding, the postdoctoral fellow must be using the funds by September 2027, unless an explicit exception is granted. All unused tickets and/or portions of funding will be returned to the pool to support subsequent competitions.

The annual base pay for the postdoctoral appointment must be declared in the application form and be consistent with departmental norms at the host institution.

Reporting Requirements

All host institutions with tickets awarded and claimed will be required to submit a midterm and final report on completion. Report templates will be shared after the ticket is filled.

MI-EPDF Reviewing Committee

A Scientific Review Committee of experimental faculty (including early career and established researchers) from across Canada adjudicates applications and forwards recommendations to the Scientific Director.

The committee will rank applications as per the matrix available at the end of the application form. The PI is authorized to make an offer to their top-ranked applicant as usual, with all hiring and on-boarding processes following the standard postdoctoral hiring conventions at the host institute.

Arthur B. McDonald
Canadian Astroparticle Physics Research Institute

Appendix A

Indigenization - Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (I-EDI)

I-EDI considerations are an evaluation criterion in this competition. The McDonald Institute recognizes that equitable recruitment, inclusive research environments, and effective supervision contribute to research excellence by supporting equitable access to research opportunities and the development of highly qualified personnel (HQP). Applicants will be assessed on how they incorporate Indigenization, equity, diversity, and inclusion into both their recruitment, hiring, and onboarding of research personnel, as well as the research training environments they establish to support HQP in their academic development.

Applicants will be evaluated on the specificity and demonstrated implementation of practices that contribute to equitable recruitment and inclusive research and training environments. Evaluation considerations include:

- Equitable and Inclusive recruitment: Transparent, accessible and bias-aware recruitment processes; diverse candidate outreach; structured interviews; equitable onboarding; the use of institutional equity tools; and strategies to identify and reduce barriers.
- Inclusive Research and training environments: Practices that support equitable access to research resources and professional development, accessible and flexible training opportunities for HQP, respectful working relationships, inclusive mentorship, and targeted support for equity-deserving groups.
- Continuous improvement: Evidence that the applicants reflect on their practices, employ accountability and feedback mechanisms, identify barriers, and implement improvements to recruitment, supervision and research group environments.
- Indigenization (if appropriate): Where relevant to the research and training context, efforts to support Indigenous participation, recognize Indigenous knowledge and perspectives, and foster respectful and reciprocal relationships.

Applicants should provide specific examples of practices they have implemented, the rationale for these approaches, and, where available, evidence of their effectiveness. Applicants establishing new research groups may describe planned initiatives and how they intend to assess their effectiveness.

Faculty are encouraged to utilize the Diversity and Equity Assessment Planning (DEAP) Tool or other equivalent tools or resources to reflect on their practices, identify opportunities for improvement, and demonstrate their commitment to creating equitable research and training environments.

The McDonald Institute acknowledges that individuals hold intersectional identities (e.g., race, socioeconomic class, gender, sexuality, disability, nationality, religion, language) and that categorizing HQP can marginalize their lived experiences. Categorization is grouping individuals based on demographic traits (e.g., sex, age, ethnicity, or religion), personality and interests (e.g., introversion), or health status. **It is inappropriate to disclose an individual's medical status, sexual orientation, sex, ethnicity, race, religion, or other personal characteristics in this application.** Observations about others may not reflect their self-identification and sharing such information infringes on personal privacy.

Instead of categorizing individuals, applicants should highlight activities and initiatives that demonstrate their approach to integrating I-EDI principles into their research environment. Please consider:

Example 1: Equitable recruitment and selection: "When recruiting two undergraduate research assistants for summer positions, I recognized that our previous recruitment approach relied heavily on recommendations from faculty colleagues, potentially limiting who learned about available opportunities. I revised our recruitment process to advertise positions across multiple departments, including disciplines not traditionally represented in our research group. I also developed a standardized interview process with questions shared in advance and a common evaluation rubric. These changes expanded our applicant pool from 8 to 19 candidates and introduced applicants with academic backgrounds that had not previously been represented in our recruitment process."

Example 2: Inclusive research and training environments: "Following feedback from research group members that weekly meetings sometimes conflicted with coursework, employment, and other responsibilities, I introduced a rotating meeting schedule and the option to participate remotely. I also began distributing meeting agendas in advance and providing written summaries afterward so that students could contribute in different ways. At the end of the semester, I invited anonymous feedback on these changes. Responses indicated that group members found it easier to participate in meetings and stay informed about research activities, and I incorporated these practices into our group's onboarding materials."

Example 3: *Continuous improvement and equitable access to professional development: "During annual discussions with research group members, I learned that opportunities to attend conferences and participate in collaborative research projects were not always communicated consistently. In response, I developed a shared professional development opportunities list and established transparent criteria for allocating available travel funding. I also introduced individual development meetings twice a year to discuss research goals, skill development, and opportunities for participation. Over the following year, all six*

members of the research group participated in at least one professional development activity, and feedback collected during our annual review helped identify additional opportunities to improve access to training and mentorship.”