

AllerGen NCE Inc.-Karolinska Institutet HQP Research Exchange Awards

Background

More than 240 Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) designated by AllerGen investigators currently contribute to AllerGen's research programme across Canada. As the Network moves to approve a new research programme to be implemented in the period September 2009 to March 31, 2012, the involvement and development of HQP, and added-value for the training of HQPs through Network research -- a core objective of the Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) Programme -- are to be given renewed emphasis by all Network researchers.

In this context, and within the ongoing NCE-funded International Partnership Initiative (IPI) collaboration in fiscal year 2009-2010 (April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010), AllerGen and the Centre for Allergy Research (CfA) of the Karolinska Institutet/KI (Sweden's internationally renowned institute for (bio)medical research and training) have agreed to internationalize and further enrich the training environment of their HQPs through joint AllerGen-Karolinska HQP Research Exchange Awards.

Beginning in September 2009, AllerGen and the Centre for Allergy of the Karolinska Institutet will each make available HQP exchange awards. This will enable, on a matching basis, AllerGen HQPs to be associated with a KI CfA research project in Sweden, and KI CfA HQPs to be similarly associated with an AllerGen research project in a Canadian university. AllerGen will allocate a maximum of \$68,500 for this purpose in FY2009-2010, to be matched by the Karolinska Institutet.

The number of and duration of stay of the applicants selected for funding will determine the overall number of individuals participating; the current funding envelope is estimated to be able to support a maximum of 8 to 12 months of exchange activity from Sweden to Canada and a maximum of 12 months of exchange activity from Canada to Sweden in total to March 31, 2010. Please note that 50% of the funds for exchanges from Canada to Sweden were committed in 2008-09.

Purpose

These HQP awards will:

- Enhance AllerGen's partnership linkages with a foremost international centre of excellence in allergy and immune disease research and training, through knowledge sharing, knowledge exchange and partnered research training that contribute to the excellence of the Network's research programme and promote the development of a new generation of Canadian research professionals;
- Provide AllerGen and KI HQPs with a new opportunity to gain valuable short-term international research and training exposure in the other leading allergy research jurisdiction;
- Expose HQPs to cutting-edge international discovery and development efforts contributing to reductions in the impact of allergic diseases.

Eligibility

This is an opportunity for Masters, PhD, MD, postdoctoral students, summer students, undergraduates and allied health professionals, matched and sponsored jointly by agreement between AllerGen and Karolinska CfA research project supervisors, to spend at least one month in the other jurisdiction, working on a similar or complementary AllerGen or Karolinska CfA project with the counterpart investigator and her/his research team.

Joint applications must be submitted by AllerGen and Karolinska HQP supervisors (PIs or Co-Investigators), on behalf of their HQPs engaged in similar research within the approved research programmes of the two partnering bodies respectively.

The following conditions apply to each joint application for funding to support an HQP exchange:

- Formal written agreement, before application submission, between an AllerGen investigator leading or co-leading an approved Network research project and a Karolinska Institutet-CfA researcher operating in similar conditions within the Institutet (see “Procedure” below).
- The AllerGen HQP proposed for each exchange must be formally designated as an HQP within an AllerGen research project, and must have signed the Standard NCE Network Agreement (available from the AllerGen administrative Centre).
- IPI funds for this and other collaborative activity with the Karolinska Institutet are restricted to covering the cost of additional networking activities to develop and enhance research and knowledge transfer/sharing linkages with the Karolinska Institutet that are aligned with AllerGen’s mission, goals and strategic priorities and that add value to AllerGen research. AllerGen support can be used for travel, living costs and apartment rental as well as meeting and planning costs. The AllerGen award funds cannot be used for research costs (including infrastructure and materials), or for salary support, stipends, bursaries or honoraria for HQPs or their supervisors. The CfA funds, however, may be used for stipends (postdocs only) or a monthly allowance and costs for apartment rental (other personnel categories).

Agreed Reciprocity in Award Implementation

At the level of the sponsoring partners (i.e., AllerGen NCE Inc. and the CfA of the Karolinska Institutet) and of the applicants, the key principle is reciprocity. Using award funds from AllerGen or the Karolinska Institutet as applicable, the sending partner is responsible for providing support for reasonable international return travel costs of its own HQPs visiting the other partner body. Reasonable accommodation and meal costs of visiting HQPs are supported by the host partner, i.e., in the case of AllerGen HQPs visiting the Karolinska Institutet, AllerGen will provide international travel funding support to its approved HQPs and the Karolinska Institutet will support their reasonable living expenses in Stockholm. The converse applies to Karolinska Institutet HQPs visiting Canada.

Award Value (AllerGen total budget – up to \$68,500¹, to be matched by the Karolinska Institutet in keeping with the principle of reciprocity)

¹ AllerGen budget estimate for this HQP exchange activity is \$68,500. It is estimated that one person month for in-Canada stay by Karolinska HQPs = CAD\$5100 approx. (8 person months = \$40,800); per person Canada-Sweden return travel support for AllerGen HQPs = CAD\$3560 (8 HQPs = CAD\$28,480).

Awards are for travel and for reasonable living expenses on a per-month basis, limited as follows:

- *International (Canada-Sweden) return travel support for **AllerGen** HQPs: Up to \$3,560 Canadian per month per HQP*
- *International (Sweden-Canada) return travel support for **Karolinska** HQPs: Up to \$3,560 Canadian.*
- *Reasonable accommodation and other living expenses (one month per HQP): Up to \$5,100 Canadian per month per **Karolinska** HQP.*
- *Reasonable accommodation and other living expenses (one month per HQP): Up to \$3,500 Canadian per month per **AllerGen** HQP.*

Procedure

- Each application needs to be submitted jointly and concurrently by an AllerGen investigator and by a Karolinska CfA investigator to AllerGen NCE Inc. (the Managing Director) and to the Karolinska Institutet (the Director of the Centre for Allergy Research).
- All awards are subject to the availability of funds.
- **Application Information:**
 - Name, Title, Department and Institution of the AllerGen and Karolinska investigators sponsoring the HQP exchange
 - Mailing, e-mail and fax address of the investigators
 - Confirmation of prior agreement between the investigators involved to carry out the proposed two-way HQP exchange
 - Title, purpose, description and proposed dates of the HQP exchange
 - Statement on how the HQP exchange contributes to the respective AllerGen and Karolinska research projects/programmes
 - Proposed location, including summary description, of the supporting HQP training environment led by each investigator,
 - Name and status of each HQP exchangee (attach two-page CV for each):
 - Proposed accommodation for each visiting HQP
- Budget for travel, accommodation and living costs (itemized). *Funding support requested for each of these items must be within the limits stated under "Award Value" above. Investigators may choose to exceed or "top-up" these limits by using funds from other non-AllerGen sources.*
- AllerGen and the Karolinska Institutet will confer and make joint funding decisions once per month, beginning in August, and will endeavour to respond to applicants with a decision within 4 weeks of the monthly meeting until all available funding is exhausted.
- A joint report on each HQP exchange, approved by the supervising investigators, will be completed by the HQPs concerned and forwarded to the Managing Director of AllerGen and the Director of the Karolinska Institutet Centre for Allergy Research within 1 month of completion of the final round of each exchange. Details of the required report structure will be made available to supervisors and their HQPs upon announcement of the decision for each award.