
RÉSEAU DE RECHERCHE
EN SANTÉ DE LA VISION



VISION HEALTH
RESEARCH NETWORK

PILOT PROJECT FOR EARLY-CAREER INVESTIGATORS

VISION HEALTH RESEARCH NETWORK

2021-2022 Competition

INSTRUCTIONS

Deadline: **February 15th 2022***

*Should this date falls on a Friday or Saturday, the candidate will have until Sunday night to send the application.

Program description and goals

This program is designated to support early-career investigators and vision rehabilitation professionals (actively seeking an independent researcher* position or who have been in their independent position for less than 5 years) to launch their independent career in research. This includes postdoctoral fellows, residents in medicine, optometrists (O.D.) in graduate studies or other vision rehabilitation professionals who will be holding a university position at the time funding is activated.

Only talented and exceptional candidates with a very strong capacity for research in vision health in Quebec will be supported.

More specifically, this program will:

- Help maintain a critical mass of vision scientists/clinician-scientists in Quebec;
- Attract top international vision scientists to launch their career in Quebec;
- Improve early-stage career advancement;
- Fund pilot projects to provide "proof of concept" or demonstrate feasibility of a project that would then be submitted for funding at other granting agencies.

Preliminary results obtained during this granted period will help the funded researcher to improve their performance and facilitate accessibility to prestigious grants at provincial/federal organizations, private foundation grants, etc. Candidates will benefit from constructive comments of experienced reviewers that will allow them to improve their application and increase their chances of success in other competitions.

A special fund from the "Fondation Antoine-Turmel" is restricted for projects that may have an impact on the understanding or treatment of age-related macular degeneration (AMD). You are therefore encouraged to indicate if this is the case as this could allow the funding of additional projects.

**Independent researcher, as defined by the FRQS: "Person who has a doctorate or its equivalent and a university affiliation allowing him to supervise graduate and postgraduate students; is autonomous vis-à-vis his research activities; and who occupies a regular professorial or research position at a Québec university or a regular research position in a Québec health and social services institution. Professional diploma holders must have completed a minimum of two years of full-time research training" [Source: "FRQ's Common general rules"](#).*

Eligibility

The eligibility criteria are as follows:

- The candidate must be a VHRN member or become one when obtaining the grant.
- The candidate must be a postdoctoral fellow, a resident, an optometrist-researcher, vision rehabilitation professional or an early-career investigator (holding an independent position for five (5) years or less). The recipient must be a university professor or scientist at a research center/institute when funding is activated.
- **IMPORTANT FOR EARLY-CAREER INVESTIGATORS IN TRAINING:** The grant will be activated upon starting your independent position in a research institution in Quebec. The **hiring letter** or contract from a Quebec institution must be provided to the VHRN **no later than 6 months after the date of notification** of the award (special conditions may apply and may be discussed on a case-by-case basis).
- **SPECIAL CONDITION FOR RESIDENTS AND CLINICIAN RESEARCHERS:** They must provide a letter of commitment from the University Department demonstrating that a reasonable amount of time will be reserved for research (50% of the time).
- This competition is open to Canadian citizens, permanent residents and international students wishing to access a position as a researcher or clinician-researcher in vision health in Quebec
- The research project should focus on vision health.
- The funds granted by the VHRN must be used in a Quebec institution.
- Applications submitted late, incomplete or that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be evaluated.
- **RENEWAL:** Only 2019-2020 Project-Pilot who have demonstrated expenses beyond 80% of the initial grant are eligible for a renewal.

Evaluation criteria

The evaluation will be based on criteria of excellence allowing to identify **the candidate AND the project** which will be considered the **most promising**. Criteria are specified at the top of each section of this form.

Three (3) evaluation grids will be used by the jury: [Grid 1 - Trainee](#); [Grid 2 – Early-career investigator \(less than two \(2\) years experience\)](#); and [Grid 3- Early-career investigator \(between two \(2\) and five \(5\) years experience\)](#).

Amount, duration and grant condition

- The maximum budget for this program is \$100,000 per year (maximum **\$50,000/grant/year**). The VHRN will distribute the funds in order to maximize the impact of the program.
- **2019-2020 Project-Pilot recipient only:** Financial support is granted for only **one (1) supplemental year** under submission of the renewal form (including “progress report section” – sections 4 and 5) and if the project has not yet been funded by another organization.
- The competition will be held once a year.
- This grant may be used for start-up funds, laboratory operations, travel expenses, etc.

Commitment

The recipients commit to:

- Mention support from the “Vision Health Research Network”, and the “*Fondation Antoine-Turmel*” (if applicable), in any publication or presentation resulting from the research project funded by the Network;
- Present the research results at the VHRN Annual Meeting;
- Respond to the requests for follow-up sent by the VHRN.

Scientific report

Two (2) scientific reports showing scientific benefits and leverage will have to be submitted: one at the end of this grant; and one one year after the end of the funding period to allow the VHRN to document the impacts of this program. The report will be available soon on our website. These reports will be integrally used for the renewal application in the Network Annual Report and Network renewal application.

Financial report

For any funded project, [a financial report](#) must be produced at the end of each financial year (March 31st) until the end of the fund's activity period. Details will be communicated to recipients at the appropriate time. As mentioned by the FRQS in their Network Management Guide, at the end of the grant period, the unexpended amounts will have to be returned

Eligible and ineligible expenses

Applicants must refer to the document produced by the FRQS "[Common general rules](#)" (section 8).

How to apply

The application must be submitted as a **single PDF document including, in the following order:**

- The « PILOT PROJECT FOR EARLY-CAREER INVESTIGATOR - NEW APPLICATION OR RENEWAL » form duly completed ;
- [Common CVs of the candidate](#) (FRQS format) and including [detailed contributions](#). A resume containing informations similar to the FRQS common CV will also be allowed.
- Depending on your category:
 - a. **Residents and Clinician Researchers:** A clinical release letter from the university department (50% of the time)
 - b. **Postdoctoral Fellows:** A letter of support from their supervisor
 - c. **Other trainees:** A letter of support from a respondent
 - d. **Researchers:** A letter of support from the chair of the home department
- [Financial report](#) describing all expenses related to this project since the first grant

To submit your application (PDF) or for additional information, please contact:

Vision Health Research Network:
reseau.vision@ircm.qc.ca
514-987-5636 (teleworking: 438-825-1425)
visionnetwork.ca

Réseau thématique soutenu par le

**Fonds de recherche
Santé**
Québec 



**PILOT PROJECT FO REARLY-CAREER INVESTIGATORS
VISION HEALTH RESEARCH NETWORK
2021-2022 Competition
RENEWAL FORM**

Deadline: February 15st 2022*

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Category :

Trainee

Post-Doc **Date of entry of this status:** YEAR_MONTH_DAY

Resident **Supervisor / respondent**
(if applicable): _____

Optometrist
Trainee **Institute name for the futur faculty**
position (if knowned): _____

Visual
Rehabilitation
Trainee

Independent position (less than 5 years)

Date of entry of the first independent career position: YEAR_MONTH_DAY

Faculty position : _____

SECTION 1. IDENTIFICATION

LAST NAME, first name and titles:

Email:

Phone number:

Main affiliation:

Postal address:

Axis:

- Retina and Posterior Segment
- Cornea and Anterior Segment
- Brain and Perception
- Visual Impairment and rehabilitation

Domain

- Basic research
- Clinical research
- Translational research (pre-clinical research)

Correspondence language:

French

English

Can this project have an impact on the understanding or treatment of AMD?

yes

no

SECTION 2. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATIONS (if known)

Complete information of the Finance Director or the representative who will manage the grant.

LAST NAME, First name:

Email:

Phone number:

Institution (to which the cheque will be payable to):

Complete address where the cheque must be sent:

(civic number, office number, street name, city, postal code)

SECTION 3. LAYMAN'S SUMMARY (French **and** English, 250 words maximum each language)

Describe, in layman's terms, the goal of the study and impact of this project.

For the purpose of dissemination and promotion.

Titre du projet :

Résumé:

* * *

Project's title:

Summary:

PROGRESS REPORT SECTION

SECTION 4. SCIENTIFIC RESULTS (maximum 1 page)

Describe the scientific discoveries ensued from the project. Please make the content of your text accessible to a researcher who is not in your field.

PROGRESS REPORT SECTION**SECTION 5. PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT** (maximum 2 pages, excluding the present page)

Describe the impact of the project on the visibility of the VHRN research team on the national and international level.

Renewal applications will be assessed following the FRQS performance criteria established for the evaluation of their Thematic Networks, as listed below:

Please answer to all the items listed below when applicable.

1. Leverage effect (grants, public or private investments, partnerships with the biopharmaceutical industry or others). Describe and specify amounts;
 - Specify the title of the grant, the authors, the funding agency, the dates of beginning and end, and the amounts per year;
 - Explain briefly how the Network played a role in the attribution of the grant;
 - If it is an “in kind” partnership, describe and estimate the amount;
 2. Development of new strategic and structuring initiatives;
 3. National and international visibility;
 4. Biotechnology development;
 5. Added value for VHRN members and the scientific community;
 6. Development of cross-sector projects and poles of excellence;
 7. Training of the next generation;
 8. Promotion of clinical research;
 9. Added value for target community (new treatments, new personalized health care implementation of new health practices or policies);
 10. Knowledge transfer, valorization and public communications activities;
 11. Free access to the results;
 12. Highlight success stories.
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SECTION 6. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED RESEARCH and CAREER PLAN FOR NEXT YEAR (5 pages maximum)

An appendix of a maximum of 2 pages is also allowed for figures, tables. There is no page limit for bibliographic references.

Describe the **problem**, the **objectives**, the **methodology**, **preliminary results**, **leverage effects**, and the relevance or **project impact**.

SECTION 7. TIMETABLE, FEASIBILITY and BUDGET (maximum 2 pages)

Describe the timetable of the main stages of the project and the feasibility.

Budget: describe your expenses for the next year (see the FRQS document "[Common general rules](#)", section 8, for eligible expenses).
