Strategic Training in Transdisciplinary Radiation Science for the 21st Century (STARS21)
PROGRAM INFORMATION

The overarching goal of STARS21 is to build research capacity in Canada in the realm of radiation medicine. We aim to address an unmet need for education in translational and transdisciplinary cancer research. To this end, STARS21 has been designed to provide graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, residents and clinical fellows the skills essential to conduct innovative translational and trans-disciplinary research in Radiation Medicine, as well as the leadership, communication and collaboration proficiencies necessary to define them as the future leaders of Canada's scientific community. We aim to create a learning community that resembles the multidisciplinary nature of today's team-based science.

The STARS21 curriculum consists of biweekly 1.5 hour workshops, 2 group projects, a career development day and a research day. Approximately 25 trainees participate in the program yearly. For the 2020-2021 academic year, there will be a mix of virtual and in-person workshops. Evaluations show that 100% of STARS21 alumni would recommend the program to colleagues, and believe the program had been invaluable to their learning; "I think this program offers an important and very interesting 360 degree overview of cancer treatment, focusing on radiation science... The opportunity to learn about transdisciplinary research and work with scientists from wide variety of fields was invaluable". – STARS21 Scholar 2016. The STARS21 program is co-Directed by Drs. C. Anne Koch (Radiation Oncologist and Affiliate Scientist, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre) and Shane Harding (Scientist, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre), and invited experts lead workshops.

Co-funded by Princess Margaret Research (PMR) and the Radiation Medicine Program (RMP), STARS21 provides 50% stipend support to accepted trainees for 1 year.

Eligibility:

- Any trainee affiliated with the sponsoring institutions (PMR and RMP).
- Graduate students who meet specific eligibility criteria* may be offered funding through the endowed Gifford fund administered at the Department of Radiation Oncology, University of Toronto (*Canadian Graduate students supervised by graduate faculty appointed to the Department of Radiation Oncology, University of Toronto).

2020/2021 funding levels are:
MSc – $12,500
Post Doc Fellow – $20,000
Clinical Fellow – $15,000
PhD – $15,000

Radiation Oncology or Medical Physics Residents are also eligible to apply, and they will be awarded up to $2,000 for reimbursement of costs relating to conferences, provided they present their research (oral or poster presentations). Funded STARS21 trainees may also apply for travel awards of up to $1,000.

Candidates are selected through a competitive process, adjudicated by a review panel based on the following criteria:

- Academic excellence
- Leadership potential
- Research excellence
- Scientific merit of the research proposal
- Relevance of the research for radiation medicine
- Transdisciplinary aspects of the research
- Excellence of the research environment and its contribution to training in radiation medicine/science

Supervisors of accepted trainees will be granted status as STARS21 mentors for 3 years. Mentors are expected to contribute to the STARS21 program through invited presentations and review panels.

The Letter of Intent for applications to the 2020/2021 academic year will be due **Friday July 31, 2020** by **5 pm EST**. Please submit this letter by e-mail to the STARS21 Program Manager, Shahbano Mustafa (shahbano.mustafa@rmp.uhn.ca). Late LOI submissions will not be accepted or considered for application to the program. Please refer to the LOI attachment for elements that need to be included.

Warm regards,
Shahbano
STARS21 Program Manager