

HSC and Brain Canada Partner to Fund Studentships in Huntington Disease Research

Eight Undergraduate Students across Canada are receiving fellowships through Brain Canada and the Huntington Society of Canada.

The *2026 Undergraduate Student Fellowships* is a program designed to attract the brightest young scientists into the field of Huntington disease research and to facilitate meaningful research to clarify the biological mechanisms underlying Huntington disease pathology.

Huntington disease is a hereditary, neurodegenerative illness with physical, cognitive and mental health symptoms. It is caused by a mutation in the gene that makes the protein called huntingtin. To date, there are no drugs to slow or stop the progression of Huntington disease. Research is being conducted in Canada and globally to find promising treatments and approaches to treating Huntington disease.

"We are thrilled to be supporting these undergraduate students in their efforts to contribute to research that meaningfully impacts those living with Huntington Disease. In continuing our work with the Huntington Society of Canada, Brain Canada hopes to move towards a future without Huntington disease."

- Dr. Viviane Poupon, President and CEO of Brain Canada

"Every breakthrough in Huntington disease research begins with curious, dedicated researchers who choose to focus their talents on this devastating disease. We are proud to partner with Brain Canada to invest in inspiring the next generation of scientists while supporting research that brings hope to families across Canada."

- Shelly Redman, CEO of the Huntington Society of Canada.

The Fellowships offer undergraduate university students across Canada the opportunity to pursue a Huntington disease research project that can be conducted over a 12-week period, between May and September. Fellowship recipients, working under the supervision of senior Huntington disease scientists, will undertake a project that is focused and achievable in a short timeframe, yet helpful in guiding future Huntington disease research.

Introducing the 2026 recipients:

Emily Yuqing Pan – University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia

Title of research: Investigating Trans-acting Genetic Modifier Variants' Association with Loss of Interruption (LOI) Variants and Impacts on Age of Onset in Relation to Canonical Alleles

Harsimran Dhillon Kaur – University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia

Title of research: The influence of loss of interruption variants on astrocyte reactivity in Huntington disease

Lianna Li – University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario

Title of research: Development of NanoBRET Target Engagement Assays for Huntingtin Protein

Wan Qi Zhang – Université Laval, Québec City, Québec

Title of research: Beyond Exon 1: Exploring the Pathogenic Role of Novel Huntingtin Aggregates in vivo.

Jeea Thakker – Western University, London, Ontario

Title of research: Combining Glutamine Missense Suppressor tRNA and Antisense Oligonucleotide Therapy to Reduce Polyglutamine Aggregation in Huntington's Disease

Hannah McLean – University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario

Title of Research: Cell-Type-Specific Activation of the Integrated Stress Response in the Striatum of Huntington Disease Patients

Woojae (Matt) Cho – University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia

Title of research: Identification of a Splice Variant Product in the Huntingtin (HTT) Gene

Ella Williams – University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta

Title of research: Brain network-based determination of genes that clear mutant huntingtin fibrils

