



Centre de
recherche Azrieli
**CHU
Sainte-Justine**
Le centre hospitalier
universitaire mère-enfant

Université 
de Montréal

Information Sheet

Postdoctoral Training at the Centre de recherche Azrieli du CHU Sainte-Justine

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International Candidates

Will I be Reimbursed for Recruitment-related Expenses?

No, you will not automatically receive reimbursement for expenses related to your recruitment (airfare, work permit, medical examination fees, relocation costs, etc.). You are expected to cover costs associated with meeting immigration requirements, as well as your travel to Canada and accommodation.

That said, you may discuss with your supervisor the possibility of receiving a one-time supplement upon arrival to help cover part of these expenses. It is at the supervisor's discretion to determine whether they are able to provide such support.

Do I have Access to Université de Montréal Residences?

Yes, you have access to the university residences. To do so, you must provide an official document from the university confirming your academic status.

For full details, please consult the [ZUM Résidences de l'Université de Montréal](#) website.

Am I Eligible for the Tax Exemption for Foreign Postdoctoral Trainees Program?

If you hold a work permit, you will receive communications from the university regarding the program entitled “Tax Exemption for Foreign Postdoctoral Trainees.” This program allows postdoctoral fellows who are paid through a salary (which is the case for postdocs paid at the university, see the following sections) to benefit from an exemption from provincial income tax.

However, postdoctoral trainees funded at CHU Sainte-Justine (CHUSJ) are paid in the form of a scholarship, which is by default exempt from provincial income tax.

As a result, if you are paid at CHUSJ, no action is required on your part to obtain this exemption: it applies automatically to your situation.



Status, Funding and Benefits

Am I an Employee of CHU Sainte-Justine?

No. The status of postdoctoral fellows depends on the source of their funding.

As a general rule:

- **Scholarship Holder Postdoctoral Fellow:** a person paid through research funds held in a university-affiliated centre or directly by a funding agency. The term refers to the awarding of a scholarship and to the trainee status.
- **Postdoctoral employee:** a person paid through funds held by a Canadian university. The term refers to the payment of a salary and to employee status.

Postdoctoral fellows paid through research funds at CHUSJ are “scholarship holders” and have a “Postdoctoral Trainee” status. They are admitted to a postdoctoral training program at the home university of the researcher who hosts them and are considered researchers in training.

Nevertheless, as a postdoctoral fellow at CHU Sainte-Justine, you have access to several benefits, including:

- Union cafeteria menu at the main cafeteria (preferential rates)
- Group classes offered through the Mieux-Être program ([intranet](#))
- Research Centre Student Association ([website](#))
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP), available 24/7 at 1-833-819-4696
- Office for Quality of Work Life (514-345-4931, ext. 3787, or by [email](#))
- Peer Support Program ([Volunteer Directory](#))
- CHU Sainte-Justine Early Childhood Centre (CPE)
- Access to scholarship competitions, congresses, conferences, and other scientific activities

What is the Difference Between a Postdoctoral Scholarship and a Postdoctoral Salary?

The distinction between a scholarship and a salary is based mainly on the nature of the relationship with the institution, the applicable tax framework, and access to social protections. There is no universally more advantageous status: each option has different characteristics, and the choice largely depends on the historical practices of the paying institution.

To illustrate the differences, here is an example of an individual receiving gross annual funding of \$50,000. The elements presented below are intended to provide general reference points and are for illustrative purposes only.

Employee Status (salary)

This type of funding generally applies to postdoctoral fellows who are paid directly by a university — which, as a reminder, is not the case for those paid at CHUSJ. Funding is provided in the form of a salary, **with mandatory deductions at source** (taxes, contributions to public programs, group insurance plans, pension plans, etc.). In this example, deductions amount to approximately \$18,200 per year, resulting in an **approximate net income of \$31,800**.

Employee (salaried) status offers a lower net income, but provides access to certain social protections and programs, such as employment insurance, parental insurance, institutional pension plans, and group insurance coverage.

Trainee Status (scholarship)

This type of funding generally applies to postdoctoral fellows who are paid directly by a university-affiliated centre, such as CHUSJ, or by a funding agency. Funding provided in the form of a scholarship involves more **limited deductions at source**. In this example, these deductions amount to approximately \$3,640 per year. However, the mandatory health insurance coverage is not included and must be arranged individually. Assuming a conservative estimate of \$1,500 per year for a personal prescription drug insurance plan, the **approximate net income is \$44,860**.

Trainee status allows for greater flexibility in both the structure and amount of funding (as salaries are generally governed by institutional pay scales, whereas scholarships do not have predefined ceilings) and generally results in higher net funding, in exchange for more limited social protection.

Moreover, the minimum funding required by the Centre de recherche Azrieli is, in general, higher than the minimum salary required by the Université de Montréal¹.

Comparison of Net Funding by Payment Method

Approximate deductions for annual funding of \$50,000	Postdoc Salary	Postdoc Scholarship
Federal income tax	3 640,00 \$	3 640,00 \$
Provincial income tax	4 160,00 \$	-
Mandatory public pension plan	3 120,00 \$	-
Employer pension plan	3 380,00 \$	-
Employment Insurance	780,00 \$	-
Group insurance plans ²	2 080,00 \$	-
Parental insurance (QPIP)	260,00 \$	-
Union dues	780,00 \$	-
Total – Déductions at source / year	18 200,00 \$	3 640,00 \$
Personal prescription drug insurance (RAMQ or other) ³	0,00 \$	1 500,00 \$
Gross Annual Funding	50 000,00 \$	50 000,00 \$
Net Annual Funding	31 800,00 \$	44 860,00 \$

None of these statuses is inherently “better” than the other. Each has its advantages and disadvantages.

Postdoctoral trainees paid at CHUSJ are exclusively funded through scholarships. If you believe that employee (salaried) status would be more advantageous for you, you may discuss this with your supervisor to determine whether it is possible for your remuneration to be paid through the university as a salaried employee. To be eligible, your supervisor must, among other requirements, hold funds at the university.

¹ Minimal funding in February 2025: 38 602\$ /year in salary at UdeM and 46 100 \$ /year in scholarship at CHUSJ.

² Prescription Drug and Health Insurance. Employer group insurance plans replace the public prescription drug insurance plan administered by the RAMQ. When such insurance is offered by the employer, enrollment is mandatory.

³ In 2025, the maximum contribution to the RAMQ public prescription drug insurance plan was less than \$800 per year. The \$1,500 amount shown in the table represents a conservative estimate covering various scenarios; for reference, individual prescription drug insurance plans outside the RAMQ generally cost less than \$1,000 per year.

What Deductions are Applied to my Scholarship Payments?

As a postdoctoral fellow paid through research funds at CHU Sainte-Justine, the only deduction at source is **federal income tax**.

In Canada, unlike in Quebec, scholarships are exempt from tax only if they are received for studies leading to a degree (bachelor's, master's, doctorate, etc.). Under Canadian tax law, postdoctoral training is considered a form of professional development or research activity rather than a degree-granting academic program. As a result, **postdoctoral funding is not treated as a tax-exempt scholarship for federal tax purposes**.

The amount of federal tax deducted depends on your annual funding – the higher your funding, the higher the proportion of deductions. For example, with annual funding of \$50,000, approximately \$3,500 in federal income tax is deducted (about \$135 per bi-weekly payment).

For more details, you may consult an online tax calculator.

Lump-sum payments: It is important to note that if you receive a larger amount in a single payment, the portion of federal tax withheld at source will be higher, because the payroll system annualizes the amount as if it were a recurring payment. In such cases, any excess tax paid will be refunded by the government when you file your annual income tax return.

Do I Have Access to Health Insurance?

CHUSJ does not offer an insurance plan for postdoctoral fellows. However, in Quebec, it is mandatory to have health and prescription drug insurance. You must therefore purchase insurance coverage, and it must remain valid for the entire duration of your postdoctoral training.

Two options are available to you:

- 1) Individuals who are eligible must enroll in the Quebec public health insurance plan (RAMQ): [Register or re-register for health insurance | RAMQ](#)
- 2) Individuals who are not eligible for the RAMQ must obtain private health and prescription drug insurance. For reference, here are some insurance providers commonly used by the student and postdoctoral community:
 - Blue Cross
 - Desjardins
 - Allianz
 - Other international insurance companies

Are Retirement Savings Automatically Deducted?

No. If you receive your funding through CHUSJ, you do not contribute to the Quebec Pension Plan (QPP), nor to an employer pension plan. As a result, no retirement savings are accumulated automatically during your postdoctoral training.

We recommend that you build personal retirement savings on your own. A financial advisor can inform you about the different retirement savings products available and provide recommendations tailored to your situation.

Am I Entitled to Paid Parental Leave?

Scholarship holder Postdoctoral fellows do not contribute to the social programs associated with employee status. As a result, they are not eligible for the Québec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP).

That being said, other financial support mechanisms exist specifically for postdoctoral fellows, depending on their source of funding.

Possible programs and funding sources during parental leave:

- **Grants or fellowships from federal funding agencies (CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC):** Individuals funded through a grant (held by the supervisor) or a training fellowship from one of the three federal agencies may be eligible for 100% paid parental leave, for a duration of up to 12 months, in accordance with the applicable policies of the funding agency.
- **Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) training fellowships:** Holders of an FRQ postdoctoral fellowship may be eligible for 100% paid parental leave for a maximum duration of 8 months, subject to the applicable rules.
- **Other funding agencies:** Some external or private funding agencies offer additional financial support measures during parental leave. Terms and conditions vary from one agency to another.
- **Emergency Fellowship – CHU Sainte-Justine Foundation:** As a last resort, it is possible to apply for an [emergency fellowship](#) for individuals wishing to take parental leave without access to the funding sources listed above. The granting of this assistance is subject to the availability of funds and an evaluation of the application. The amount of this financial assistance is set at the level of the minimum funding of the Research Centre.

Eligibility criteria, duration of leave, and payment modalities vary depending on the funding body. It is essential to verify directly with the relevant funding agency which rules apply to your situation.

The Office of Academic Affairs (affaires_academiques.crhsj.hsj@ssss.gouv.qc.ca) can assist you with these steps.

Am I Entitled to Child Benefits?

Yes. There are two main child benefit programs for which you will be eligible: the **Canada Child Benefit (CCB)** and the **Quebec Family Allowance**. In both cases, the amounts granted are calculated primarily based on family income and the number of dependent children. Having a salary is not an eligibility requirement. As a result, you may receive child benefits—and often at the highest amounts.

Essential requirement: To receive these benefits, you (and your partner, if applicable) must file an income tax return every year, even if you have no income to declare. Without a filled tax return, benefit payments cannot be issued.

To learn more about eligibility criteria and how to apply:

- [Who can apply - Canada child benefit \(CCB\) - Canada.ca](#)
- [Family Allowance - Quebec](#)

Am I Eligible for the Student Fare for Public Transit?

No. The Société de transport de Montréal (STM) does not recognize you as a full-time student. As a result, you are not eligible for the reduced student fare. **The regular fare applies to transit passes.**



Extension and End of Postdoctoral Fellowship

How Long Can I Stay in Postdoctoral Training?

In accordance with the *Policy on the Status of Postdoctoral Fellows of the Université de Montréal* (2024), the maximum duration of postdoctoral training is **five (5) years**, including any postdoctoral training completed prior to your arrival at the Université de Montréal, if applicable.

Exceptional extensions may be granted in certain specific situations, for example if you had a child after your Ph.D. For further details, please consult the institutional policy or contact the responsible service.

[For more details \(UdeM\).](#)

What Should I Do if I Wish to Extend my Training Beyond the Initial End Date?

Here are the steps to extend your postdoctoral training:

1. Contact the [Academic Affairs Office](#) of the Research Center.
2. Verify the end date of your eligibility for postdoctoral training.
 - The maximum duration of postdoctoral training is five (5) years. If this limit is exceeded, an exceptional extension request must be supported by a letter from your supervisor, in accordance with the *Policy on the Status of Postdoctoral Fellows of the Université de Montréal* (2024).
3. Obtain approval for the extension from your supervisor.
 - An extension offer letter as well as the Postdoctoral Fellow Acceptance Form (UdeM) must be completed. This form must also be signed by Academic Affairs. Funding must be confirmed for the entire duration of the extension (scholarship, research funds, etc.).

4. For holders of a work permit: Extend your permit.
 - The application must be submitted before the current permit expires.
 - You will benefit from maintained status during processing, allowing you to continue working in Canada (without the possibility of leaving the country).
 - As processing times can be very long (they reached up to 10 months in 2025), it is important to plan ahead if you expect to travel outside the country.
5. Submit a request to extend your university registration.
 - Maintaining an active registration in the postdoctoral training program is required. You must complete these steps yourself with your university: [Registration – Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies – UdeM.](#)
6. Sign a new postdoctoral training agreement at CHU Sainte-Justine.
 - This step is also an opportunity to review your funding.

Am I Protected if my Supervisor Wants to End the Training Before the Scheduled End Date?

Since you are not an employee, the rules governing termination of employment under labour standards do not apply to your situation, particularly with respect to the reasons for and notice periods surrounding the termination of a postdoctoral project.

That said, you do benefit from protections specific to your status. In particular, you are covered by the [Policy on the Status of Postdoctoral Fellows of the Université de Montréal](#) (2024). This policy provides that the supervisor or the University may terminate postdoctoral training at any time for **serious reasons**, subject to the delivery of **written notice of at least 30 days**, except in exceptional circumstances.

You are also protected by the [Act respecting the protection of trainees in the workplace](#), which prohibits the application of discriminatory measures, reprisals, or sanctions related to the exercise of your rights.

In short, even though the rules applicable to employees do not apply, it is not permitted to terminate your training for unfounded, discriminatory, or retaliatory reasons.

Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure the availability of funds for the entire duration of the postdoctoral training offer made to you. Except in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances, insufficient or absent funding does not generally constitute a valid reason for prematurely ending a postdoctoral fellowship.

If you have questions or concerns about the reasons for the termination of your training, please do not hesitate to contact [Academic Affairs](#) or [Études supérieures et postdoctorales \(UdeM\)](#).

What Will Happen when my Period of Eligibility for Postdoctoral Status Comes to an End?

If, at the end of your postdoctoral eligibility period, you wish to continue working at CHU Sainte-Justine, you will need to be **hired under a different job title**.

Please note that only your supervisor (the responsible **researcher**) is authorized to initiate this process. It is their responsibility to formally contact the Research Centre's Human Resources department in order to begin the needs assessment process and, where applicable, the creation and posting of the position. This process is subject to the internal rules of the Centre de recherche Azrieli, as well as the applicable budgetary and regulatory requirements.

Work permit

- If you hold a work permit, you will be required to submit a **new work permit application** linked to your new position.
- As a holder of a PhD, you may be eligible for certain streams under the [International Mobility Program](#), which are exempt from the Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA). LMIA-exemption codes C44 or A75 are frequently used in this context. In such cases, salary level is not taken into account for the issuance of the permit.
- While your new work permit application is being processed, it is generally **permitted to continue working** at CHUSJ under a different job title if you hold a work permit issued specifically for a postdoctoral position at CHU Sainte-Justine, subject to the applicable conditions.

It is strongly recommended that you anticipate this transition and discuss it as early as possible with your supervisor and with Human Resources in order to avoid any interruption in status or employment.

Will I be Eligible for Employment Insurance (Unemployment)?

In general, no.

Individuals funded exclusively through a scholarship are not eligible, as this type of funding does not involve contributions to Employment Insurance (see the section “What is the difference between a postdoctoral fellowship and a postdoctoral salary?”). If you held another employee position during your postdoctoral training, you may be eligible.

How Long Should I Expect to Spend Looking for a Job After my Postdoctoral Training?

At this career stage, a job search period of approximately six months is not unusual. However, the duration may vary depending on the field, the type of position sought, and the state of the labour market at that time.

It is strongly recommended to begin your job search several months before the expected end of your postdoctoral training in order to facilitate the transition to the next professional stage. Do not hesitate to seek guidance from mentors to support you through this transition.

Most of the information contained in this handout can be found in the initial offer letter, the Postdoctoral Pedagogical Internship Agreement, on the website of [Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#) at the Université de Montréal, or in the [Student Guide](#).



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