

New NSERC program to bridge gap between RNA research and industry partners

RNA Innovation now accepting applications!

The next revolution in biotechnology will be rationally designed ribonucleic acid (RNA)-based systems, molecular machines and devices. In order to prepare the next generation of RNA researchers, the University of Lethbridge, Université de Sherbrooke, and industry collaborators, have come together to offer the new RNA Innovation program. This unique partnership aims to produce highly qualified personnel with skills in advanced RNA research, scientific leadership, and industry experience. “We are very excited about the training possibilities



offered to Université de Sherbrooke and University of Lethbridge students!” says Dr. Michelle Scott, grant co-applicant and Université de Sherbrooke professor, “these will be instrumental in helping to prepare our students for future biotech jobs.” Trainees will develop professional skills in management, leadership, communication, and ethics. They will graduate with “job-ready” knowledge of applied and basic research and receive funding for on-site industry training and project development, while gaining access to leading industry partner collaborations. A strong supporter of the new program, Rory Degenhardt from Dow AgroSciences says “We actively seek out graduates with advanced technical and professional skills, and are strong advocates for programs that help to develop those skills.”

The RNA Innovation program is comprised of two key components, an entrepreneurial research and development challenge (deepYellow Challenge) and an extensive internship program (the Twinning Program). In the deepYellow Challenge, trainees will collaborate as a team to solve a complex scientific problem proposed by the program’s industry partners. Through the Twinning Program, all trainees will be matched with a specific industry internship, providing students with mentorship and a personalized networking experience. Contacts developed during this time will be extremely beneficial to the trainees for their future transition into the workforce. “The University of Lethbridge is committed to upholding excellence in both research and graduate education. This program will contribute to the training of high quality personnel, and effectively ensure the sustainability of Canada’s future knowledge-based economy,” states Dr. Erasmus Okine, VP Research at the University of Lethbridge.

Dr. HJ Wieden from the University of Lethbridge, who led the NSERC CREATE application process says, “The students engaging with RNA Innovation will be on the leading edge of RNA research and will graduate with strong connections to industry partners and the skills that they are looking to hire.” Competitive funding opportunities are available for MSc, PhD, and post-doctoral positions at this time. Interested applicants should have a

minimum GPA of 3.5 in their last two years of undergraduate studies, although applicants with a lower GPA are still encouraged to apply if they have sufficient research and/or industry experience.

To apply for RNA Innovation, please submit a 1-page letter of intent, CV, transcripts (undergraduate and graduate, if applicable) and reference letters from three (3) academic or industry referees. Application documents can be sent to admin@rnainnovation.ca before the April 1, 2019, 11:59 PM MST deadline. This opportunity is open to Canadian and international students. Women and visible minorities are strongly encouraged to apply.

For more information on this exciting new program you can visit RNAInnovation.ca. Follow the progress of the trainees on social media: [@InnovationRNA](https://twitter.com/InnovationRNA)

Contact:

Program Coordinator

Laura Keffer-Wilkes (kefferwilkesl@uleth.ca) 403-332-4544

NSERC CREATE

http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Professors-Professeurs/Grants-Subs/CREATEResults-ResultatsFONCER_eng.asp