

2026 Black Student Summer Internship Program Details

Overview

BioCanRx – Canada's Immunotherapy Network is a national not-for-profit organization funded by the Government of Canada. BioCanRx's mission is to accelerate the development of Canada's most promising biologically based cancer therapies into clinical trials and to grow the national cancer biotherapeutics sector through innovative research and training.

In partnership with the Canadian Black Scientists Network (CBSN), this new program stream aims to strengthen pathways for Black students in cancer research and related biomedical sciences. CBSN is a national organization dedicated to celebrating, supporting, and increasing the visibility of Black Canadians in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine (STEMM). Through its programs, CBSN fosters mentorship, leadership, and professional development for Black researchers and trainees across Canada.

The BioCanRx–CBSN Black Student Summer Internship Program provides Black undergraduate and college students with meaningful, hands-on research experience in cancer immunotherapy and related disciplines. Students will gain access to mentorship, professional development opportunities, and national networks that support long-term success in academic and scientific careers.

This program seeks to:

- Build equitable access to training and research experiences for Black students across Canada.
- Foster mentorship and representation by connecting students with experienced supervisors in cancer research.
- Strengthen workforce diversity by supporting the next generation of Black scientists and health researchers.

You can learn more about the BioCanRx Summer Studentship projects from previous years [here](#).

Specific Terms of the Award

- The BioCanRx–CBSN Black Student Summer Internship Award provides \$9,000 CAD in salary support for an undergraduate or college student to work on a cancer biotherapeutics research project over a 14-week full-time work term.
- Acceptance of the award is conditional upon a commitment from both the supervisor and student co-applicant that the 14-week work term will be completed in full.
- The award funding will be administered through the supervisor's academic institution.
- At the end of the placement, the student will be expected to submit a short report on the Experience and its impact on their academic or career trajectory by completing the End of Term

Form (sent to the student towards the end of their work term). The purpose of the End of Term Form is to provide BioCanRx with a high-level summary of the students' work, describe the student's academic or career plans, and provide BioCanRx with their opinion and feedback of the program.

- If an award is terminated early (e.g., if the student withdraws from their program), the student must complete a Termination Form, and unspent funds will be returned.
- Research projects must align with the [BioCanRx mandate](#) and demonstrate collaborative and translational impact.
- **Important Note to Students:** At the time of application, students must have identified a supervisor and made arrangements to co-apply for the award. If you are interested in a specific researcher, contact them as early as possible.

Program Key Dates

Application Deadline: February 13th, 2026

Notice of Award: Late March/Early April

Award Start Date: May 4th, 2026

Attendance at CBSN BESTEMM Conference: July 30 - August 1, 2026

Award End Date: August 28th, 2026

Submission of End-of-term Report: mid-September

Attendance at Summit4CI: October 24-26, 2027

Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants must self-identify as Black (e.g., African, African Caribbean, African Canadian, Afro-Latin, or of African descent).
- Applicants must be currently enrolled in an undergraduate or college program at a Canadian institution and have completed at least two semesters.
- Awardees cannot be enrolled in a graduate program while holding this award.
- Students cannot hold this award concurrently with funding from Tri-Council agencies (NSERC, CIHR, SSHRC).
- The proposed academic supervisor must be:
 - Be affiliated with a BioCanRx [Network Member Institution](#)
 - Actively engaged in cancer research or a related field that aligns with BioCanRx's mandate.
 - Supervisors do not need to be current or founding BioCanRx Network Investigators (PIs) to participate in this stream.
 - Supervisors may host students from institutions other than their own.
 - A supervisor may submit one application for the Black Student Internship Program and one for the general stream.

- Past BioCanRx students are eligible to reapply, though priority will be given to first-time participants.

Additional Training and Engagement Opportunities

In addition to completing a research project over the summer, students will have access to a range of training, networking, and professional development opportunities through both BioCanRx and the Canadian Black Scientists Network (CBSN).

Through BioCanRx, students will be invited to participate in webinars focused on building research and communication skills. Some of these offerings include:

- Panel discussions with researchers and senior trainees on navigating academic research environments and careers
- How to Write a Scientific Abstract
- How to Visually Communicate Your Research
- How to Communicate Your Research to Lay Audiences

In addition, students will gain access to CBSN's internal programs and events, including:

- CBSN networking and mentorship activities that connect trainees to professionals and research leaders across disciplines.
- Professional development and leadership workshops offered through CBSN's Career Development and Knowledge Mobilization programs.
- Opportunities to attend the national BE-STEMM Conference, where students can engage with peers, present their research, and participate in sessions highlighting Black excellence in science and medicine.

Students who successfully complete their summer placement and submit an abstract will also be invited to present a poster at BioCanRx's annual Summit for Cancer Immunotherapy (Summit4CI). Travel, accommodation, and conference registration fees will be covered for participating students.

For more information on CBSN programs visit, blackscientists.ca. For information on BioCanRx training programs and past Summer Studentship projects, visit biocanrx.com/training/internships.

Application Procedure

Applicants must apply jointly with a proposed academic supervisor. All materials should be prepared in collaboration and submitted as one complete package.

Required Materials:

1. **Completed Application Form** (separate document).

2. **Curriculum Vitae (CV):** Prepared by the student. There is no page limit, but it must include:

- Degree program and institution
- Any research experience
- Awards or scholarships
- Publications, abstracts, or presentations (if applicable)

3. **Most Recent Undergraduate Transcript:** A legible copy or email printout is acceptable (official copy not required). The transcript must include all grades received.

4. **Statement of Interest (maximum 300 words):** The student should describe:

- What they hope to achieve through the BioCanRx–CBSN Summer Studentship
- How the program supports their academic, professional, or personal goals
- (Optional 100 words) Any personal or structural circumstances that may have influenced their academic record or professional trajectory, including non-traditional experiences, barriers, or lived experiences that have shaped their pathway into research

5. **Supervisor's Letter of Support:**

- This letter should outline the student's potential, the project's value, and the supervisor's mentorship approach.
- Letters must be signed (electronically or by hand) and sent directly by the supervisor to Julie Jonkhans (jjonkhans@biocanrx.com)
- All documents must be submitted as .pdf files.

Submission:

All correspondence, including application materials, should be sent to:

Julie Jonkhans

Training & Research Manager, BioCanRx

jjonkhans@biocanrx.com

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be reviewed by the CBSN–BioCanRx Adjudication Committee, composed of subject-matter experts and reviewers with equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) training.

The following criteria will guide the review process:

1. Alignment with BioCanRx Mandate:

- Does the proposed project fit within the scope of cancer immunotherapy, biotherapeutics, or policy relevant to BioCanRx's objectives?
- Is the research collaborative in nature?

2. Feasibility and Quality:

- Is the project scope realistic for the 14-week timeline?
- Will the experience provide meaningful learning opportunities for the student?

3. Student Strength and Potential:

- Based on academic background and the supervisor's letter of support, does the student demonstrate strong potential for success in cancer research?

4. Mentorship and EDI Commitment:

- Does the supervisor demonstrate intentional and proactive practices to create a safe, inclusive, and equitable research environment?
- Are EDI principles embedded in the mentorship approach?

5. Program Fit and Development Impact:

- How well does the proposed experience align with the student's stated academic, professional, and personal goals?

Supervisor Eligibility

Supervisors play a critical role in ensuring the success of the studentship experience.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Supervisors must hold a faculty or research appointment at a recognized Canadian post-secondary institution.
- Supervisors must be engaged in cancer research, immunotherapy, or related policy work relevant to the BioCanRx mandate.
- Supervisors do not need to be current or founding BioCanRx Network Investigators (PIs) to participate in this stream.
- Supervisors may host undergraduate students from institutions other than their own.

- A supervisor may submit one application for the Black Student Summer Internship Program and one for the general stream.

Supervisors must describe in their letter:

- How they will support the student's academic and professional growth;
- Concrete actions they take to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion (e.g., mentoring practices, lab culture, accessibility);
- How the research environment will provide a safe and respectful learning experience for the student.

Note to Students:

Students must identify and confirm a supervisor prior to submitting the application. Those seeking support in identifying supervisors may contact:

Julie Jonkhans

Training and Research Manager, BioCanRx

jjonkhans@biocanrx.com

While placements cannot be guaranteed, BioCanRx and CBSN can help connect students to potential supervisors. A list of BioCanRx-funded investigators is available on the BioCanRx website as a starting point, but students may apply with any eligible Canadian supervisor working in cancer research or policy.