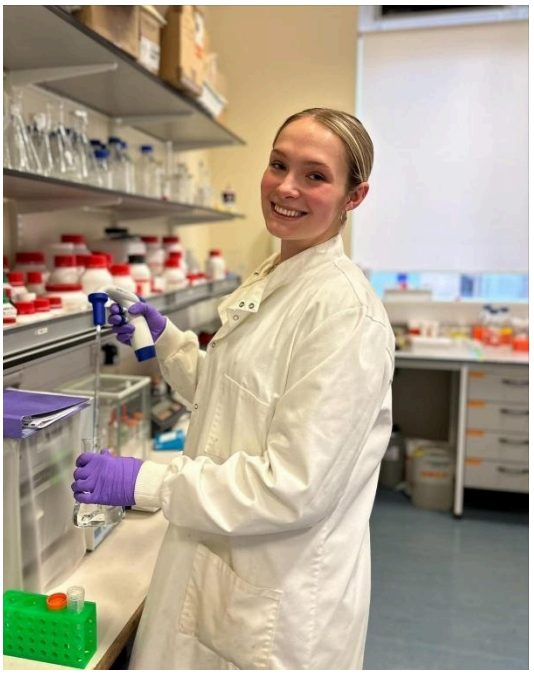
Alyssa Corbett

Scotiabank Scholarship 2026 – 2027



Programme: PhD, Neurobiology, University of St. Andrews
Biography (IN ENGLISH): Alyssa Corbett is a Canadian Neurobiology PhD candidate at the University of St Andrews. She is driven by a commitment to improving the lives of people living with a fatal neurodegenerative disease called amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).

Originally from Whitby, Ontario, Alyssa completed an Honours Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology at Dalhousie University, specialising in Human Physiology and Disability Management. Her passion for neurodegenerative research began during a summer research internship in the laboratory of Dr Janice Robertson at the University of Toronto, where she was introduced to ALS research. She then joined various ALS advocacy efforts, meeting those affected by the disease and emphasising the urgent need for a cure. The passion, momentum, and strength in both patient and research communities inspired Alyssa to help understand and combat this devastating disease.

ALS is a fatal neurodegenerative disease that affects thousands of Canadians and their families each year. The disease causes the progressive loss of the nerve cells responsible for movement, leading to increasing muscle weakness, paralysis and, eventually, respiratory failure. Despite decades of research, there is no cure and treatment options are limited. Canada is among the countries with the highest rates of ALS worldwide and advancing research is crucial to improving outcomes for people living with ALS.

Now in the final year of her PhD, Alyssa investigates how communication between nerve cells and astrocytes, the supportive cells that maintain nervous system function, becomes disrupted in ALS. Her research examines how these cellular changes contribute to disease progression, with the goal of identifying new therapeutic targets for ALS.

Beyond the laboratory, Alyssa is committed to ensuring that scientific discoveries translate into meaningful advances for people affected by ALS. She serves as co-Chair of the Clinical Trials Team at I AM ALS, a non-profit collaborating with researchers, clinicians, patient advocates and industry partners to improve ALS clinical trial design and accessibility. She also volunteers with ALS Canada to improve clinical trial strategy and efficacy, aiming to accelerate the path to a cure.

Alyssa's contributions to ALS research have received international recognition. She was honoured to be selected to co-Chair the 2027 Gordon Research Seminar on ALS, a leading international meeting for early-career ALS researchers.

As she works towards completing her doctorate, support from the Canadian Centennial Scholarship Fund will provide incredibly meaningful support. The opportunity allows Alyssa to accelerate her research in the final stretch of her PhD and build the foundations of a career focused on finding a cure. She is deeply grateful for this recognition and for the opportunity to contribute to efforts that push us closer to a cure for Canadians living with the disease and people affected by ALS worldwide.

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