



Michael Smith
**Health
Research BC**

2023 Research Trainee Program

GUIDELINES

DEADLINES

Letter of intent: December 5, 2022, 4:30 p.m. PT

Full application: February 13, 2023, 4:30 p.m. PT

Table of Contents

Help with your Application.....	1
1. Introduction	1
2. Key Competition Dates.....	2
3. Award Amount and Duration	2
4. Eligibility Requirements	3
5. Supervisors	4
6. Research Ethics	5
7. Indigenous Health Research	5
8. Integrating Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Considerations in Research	6
9. Assessment of Research Outputs	7
10. Pathway to Impact (Knowledge Translation)	7
11. Partnerships	8
12. How to Apply	9
13. Review Process	10
14. Award Start Date and Deferral	12
15. Reporting Requirements	12
16. Applicant Updates	12
Appendix A – Research and Travel Allowance.....	13
Appendix B – Incentive Funding	15
Appendix C – Frequently Asked Questions.....	16



Help with your Application

For questions regarding the application and submission process, please contact:

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Research Competitions Coordinator

trainee@healthresearchbc.ca

For information about the Michael Smith Health Research BC ApplyNet system or help with login information, please contact:

Michael Smith Health Research BC Help Desk

helpdesk@healthresearchbc.ca

604.714.6609

1. Introduction

Michael Smith Health Research BC (Health Research BC) is British Columbia's health research agency. Launched in 2021, Health Research BC brings together the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR) and the BC Academic Health Science Network (BC AHSN). We are working towards a future where BC is recognized worldwide for its vibrant, coherent, inclusive, and globally competitive health research system, which improves the health of British Columbians, the health system, and the economy. Learn more at www.healthresearchbc.ca.

Delivering for BC in a changing context

As BC's health research agency, we are committed to helping develop, support, and retain the province's research talent base. The COVID-19 pandemic has created rapid change and uncertainty within BC's health research community. Health Research BC continues to reach out to stakeholders in BC's health research system to better understand current needs. Using our program learning and improvement cycle, we continue to grow and evolve our health research funding programs to ensure they meet the needs of BC's health research and life sciences community. Beginning with the 2021 Research Trainee competition, Health Research BC implemented changes to our program eligibility, application and review process to account for the impact of the pandemic on research outputs and activities.

Purpose

Health Research BC's Research Trainee Program is designed to attract, recognize, and support outstanding early career researchers from across BC who have recently completed a PhD, or are a health professional eligible for a research fellowship (or equivalent) program. The Research Trainee award protects award recipients' time for health research activities during post-doctoral training by providing funding to support their stipend. These awards support health researchers in training to strengthen near and long-term health research capacity and contribute to the success of BC's health research system.

Objectives

Health Research BC has a strategic commitment to develop health research talent and strengthen health research capacity across BC. The Research Trainee Program helps develop talent and strengthens provincial health research capacity by investing in health researchers in the post-doctoral training phase of their research careers.

The specific objectives of the program are to:

- Identify and develop talented post-doctoral-level trainees in health research.
- Increase the research productivity of post-doctoral-level trainees, and by extension, their supervisors.
- Prepare post-doctoral-level trainees for successful careers in research, biotechnology, health policy, and other sectors.

2. Key Competition Dates

Action	Target Date
Competition launch	Early November 2022
LOI deadline for applicants	December 5, 2022, 4:30 p.m. PT
Full application deadline (applicants)	February 13, 2023, 4:30 p.m. PT
Full application deadline (host institution)	February 21, 2023, 4:30 p.m. PT
Anticipated notice of funding decision	July 2023
Anticipated start of funding	September 1, 2023

3. Award Amount and Duration

Health Research BC is committed to developing the health research talent BC needs through investments in the Research Trainee Program. Over the past three years, Health Research BC has awarded an average of 48 new Research Trainee awards in each competition, for an average success rate of 32 percent. These figures include partnered awards. Additional funds contributed by partners (see Section 11) may increase the number of awards Health Research BC is able to offer in a given competition.

The Research Trainee award consists of a stipend valued at \$45,000 per annum and a research and travel allowance valued at \$4,500 per annum for up to **three years**. Applicants must apply for at least **one year of support**. Health Research BC Research Trainee stipend amounts are inclusive of benefits, i.e. host institutions¹ may use the award stipend to pay benefits to the award holders, according to their respective payroll policies. Information about travel and research allowances can be found in Appendix A.

¹ The host institution is typically the institution that provides the majority of resources to support the program of research (e.g. infrastructure, human resources, administration, etc.). The host institution will be responsible for administering the award funds via the recipient's supervisor.

Research Trainees who hold external stipend awards at the time of application or at the award start date, or who apply and receive such an award during the period that they hold a Health Research BC Research Trainee award, are eligible to receive incentive funding. See Appendix B for details on incentive funding.

Health Research BC's financial contributions beyond year one of the awards are subject to future funding of Health Research BC by the provincial government and the annual budgetary approval by Health Research BC's Board of Directors.

Additional Paid Work

All award recipients, with the approval of their supervisor(s), may earn additional amounts from other sources by engaging in work outside of their research activities. For example, they may engage in and accept remuneration for limited departmental activities that contribute to their development as an independent researcher. This work cannot interfere with their research training progress.

4. Eligibility Requirements

At the time of the award start date (September 1, 2023), the applicant must:

- Be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident or foreign national². Applicants who are foreign nationals must be sponsored by a supervisor who holds an academic appointment at a BC institution.
- Have a PhD or equivalent³ **OR** be a health professional in active clinical service (i.e. have a license to practice), **AND** be researching in one of the four health research themes⁴ as defined by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research: biomedical, clinical, health services, or population health.
- Hold post-doctoral fellowship position, or equivalent at an [eligible BC host institution](#) that holds a memorandum of understanding with Health Research BC. The applicant must be eligible to hold the post-doctoral position for the duration of the Health Research BC award. Research associates are not eligible to apply.
- Be within **six years** from their PhD (or equivalent) degree completion **OR 11 years** from their health professional degree completion as of the start date of the award, September 1, 2023. (Note: Beginning with the 2021 Research Trainee competition, Health Research BC adjusted this eligibility requirement in recognition of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.)
- Justified post-degree career interruptions (e.g. parental leave for birth or adoption, medical leave, residency training, clinical licensing, etc.) are deducted from the calculation.
- Have a written commitment from a supervisor protecting:
 - a. A minimum of 75 percent time of the PhD (or equivalent) applicant's time for research training. This represents no less than 30 hours per week, **OR**

² A foreign national is a person who is not a citizen or permanent resident of Canada, but is legally allowed to study or work in Canada.

³ Applicants with health professional degrees (e.g. MD) who are not in active clinical service. If you have questions about your eligibility, please contact the competition coordinator.

⁴ Health Research BC has adopted the description of the four themes of CIHR funded health research, but with modified titles for themes 3 and 4, referring to these as health services and population health, respectively.

- b. A minimum of 50 percent of a health professional applicant's time (those in active clinical service) to health research activities. This represents no less than 20 hours per week.
- Not have previously held an MSFHR (now Michael Smith Health Research BC) Research Trainee award.

Eligibility Window Calculation

Applicants who are within six years from their PhD degree completion or eleven years from their health professional degree completion (excluding any post-degree career interruptions) may apply for between 12 and 36 months of support.

Example:

- Date of PhD degree completion: October 24, 2018
- The applicant had a 6-month long post-degree interruption (parental leave) between September 14, 2019 and February 13, 2020
- Number of *full* calendar months between the date of degree completion (October 24, 2018) and the award start date (September 1, 2023) = 58
- Deducting the career interruption: 58 months (since degree completion) – 6 months (career interruption) = 52 months
- The applicant is within the eligibility window (72 months) and is eligible to apply for between 12 and 36 months of support at \$49,500/annum (stipend + research and travel allowance)

5. Supervisors

New for 2023: Health Research BC encourages supervisors and co-supervisors to use the Supervisor Form to describe any concrete practices or resources they will provide to support accessibility, diversity and inclusion in their work environment and in mentoring, training and professional development.

The primary supervisor must be an established researcher who holds an academic appointment (at an academic rank of assistant professor or higher) with a BC institution that holds a memorandum of understanding with Health Research BC. Applicants may also have a co-supervisor who is an independent researcher with expertise related to the proposed research area. The co-supervisor may be located outside of BC. The expertise of the supervisor and co-supervisor should be complementary and appropriate for the proposed research project and pathway to impact (KT) activities, and for the professional development of the applicant.

Both the primary supervisor and the co-supervisor (if applicable) must complete a Supervisor Form. We strongly recommend that supervisors and co-supervisors review and provide feedback on the Research Trainee's full application before it is submitted.

Supervisor(s):

- Can support up to a maximum of *four* fully-funded Health Research BC Research Trainees at any one time.
- Must have a productive health-oriented research record and sufficient resources to ensure the satisfactory conduct of the applicant's research.

- Provide commitment of:
 - For applicants to the PhD (or equivalent) stream, a minimum of 75 percent of the applicant's time for health research activities. This represents no less than 30 hours per week, OR
 - For applicants to the health professional stream, a minimum of 50 percent of the applicant's time for health research activities. This represents no less than 20 hours per week.

The primary supervisor agrees to:

- Supervise the applicant's research and to provide the resources that are necessary for the successful completion of the research project including any KT activities, as appropriate.
- Administer the research and travel allowance of the award recipient.
- Respect the obligations described in the Health Research BC Research Trainee competition guidelines and Conditions of Award, as well as those of the host institution as they relate to the supervision of post-doctoral fellows.
- Ensure the award recipient:
 - Respects and abides by the obligations described in the Research Trainee competition guidelines, Conditions of Award, and the host institution's policies and procedures.
 - Uses the Health Research BC award funds only for the purposes intended.
 - Informs Health Research BC and the host institution immediately of any substantive changes such as the fellow's eligibility status, change of host institution or research location, etc.
 - Meets all reporting requirements of Health Research BC in a timely fashion.

6. Research Ethics

Research Trainee applicants must comply with the ethical and research policies outlined by the host institution and the [Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research](#).

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Tri-Council Policy Statement: [Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans \(2018\)](#)
- [TCPS 2 – Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#) if the research involves Indigenous peoples
- [Canadian Council on Animal Care Policies and Guidelines](#)
- [Canadian Environmental Assessment Act](#)
- [Canadian Biosafety Standards and Guidelines](#)

7. Indigenous Health Research

Health Research BC is on a learning journey towards enacting our organizational commitments to Indigenous cultural safety and Indigenous health research, grounded in respect for Indigenous self-determination and awareness of reconciliation as an active and ongoing process. Our organizational commitments to Indigenous cultural safety and Indigenous health research build on relationships nurtured and work undertaken by the former BC AHSN and former MSFHR. Key among these relationships are the BC Network Environment for Indigenous Health Research (BC NEIHR) and the First Nations Health Authority.

We recognize that we are still learning how to respectfully support reconciliation efforts and develop meaningful relationships and partnerships with Indigenous people in British Columbia. Our work continues to be guided by our Indigenous partners.

Health Research BC expects applicants to approach their research and knowledge translation activities with culturally safe practices that demonstrate humility, integrity, accountability and respect for Indigenous self-determination. Applicants must comply with the ethical and research policies outlined in [Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#) of the [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#) (2018). When appropriate, applicants must also describe their data management plan in accordance with the First Nations principles of [OCAP®: ownership, control, access and possession](#).

Additional resources for researchers can be found on the [First Nations Health Authority](#) website.

8. Integrating Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Considerations in Research

Health Research BC has a [strategic commitment](#) to addressing systemic inequities in the health research system. Diversity in research is important to cultivating talent and promoting inclusive excellence, which in turn drives discovery and helps build a more equitable health research system. Data from Canada and around the world show a lack of diversity in the research system, as well as systemic inequities in access to research jobs, funding and other resources. These inequities disproportionately and negatively affect groups who have been historically underrepresented among researchers and in academia, including those who are Indigenous, Black and people of colour, LGBTQ2S+ people, and people with disabilities.

As BC's health research agency, we have an important role in leading and supporting efforts to address systemic racism and other forms of bias and discrimination that create and exacerbate inequities in the health research system. We are doing this in a few ways including continuing to seek ways to improve the design and implementation of our funding programs and peer review processes, requiring all Health Research BC's peer reviewers to participate in unconscious bias training and being a strategic partner on an international consortium undertaking empirical research studies to advance evidence-informed research funding. We are in a continuous mode of listening and learning with our stakeholders and international and national partners.

New for 2023: A section in the application form will be provided for applicants to describe how they will meaningfully and appropriately account for EDI in the design of their research projects, in the analysis and interpretation of the findings, and in their KT activities. Health Research BC recognizes that meaningful approaches to support EDI in research and KT will vary depending on the research topic, discipline, methods, etc. Health Research BC also encourages supervisors and co-supervisors to use the Supervisor Form to describe any concrete practices or resources they will provide to support accessibility, diversity and inclusion in their work environment and in mentoring, training and professional development.

Where guidance is needed, applicants are encouraged to consult appropriate resources, access additional training and professional development, and seek input from more experienced mentors. Some resources include:

- [NSERC Guide on Integrating Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Considerations in Research](#)
- [SSHRC Guide to Addressing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Partnership Grant Applications](#)
- [CIHR Resources on Integrating Sex and Gender Considerations into Research](#)

9. Assessment of Research Outputs

Health Research BC is a signatory of the [Declaration on Research Assessment](#) (DORA). In keeping with the principles of DORA, Health Research BC no longer allows the use of journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factor, as surrogate measures of research quality. In keeping with best practices for responsible research assessment, Health Research BC no longer allows the use of article citation counts, or H-index, as surrogate measures of research quality or researcher excellence. Please do not include Journal Impact Factors, article citation counts or H-index in your application.

Applicants are encouraged to use the Significant Contributions section in the application form to highlight research and KT achievements, *including how their research has contributed to their field and/or influenced the activities of research users*. Outputs that applicants may wish to highlight in their Significant Contributions section may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Peer reviewed publications, pre-print articles, or other publications
- Datasets or software
- Presentations or speaking engagements
- Contributions to intellectual property, patents or commercial output
- Contributions to a public policy or change in practice
- Success in obtaining peer reviewed grants
- Contributions to leadership
- Prizes or awards
- Engagement/relationship-building with patient, public and/or community partners

The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate the quality and impact of their contribution. Applicants should provide context for their achievements such that peer reviewers from outside of their field can assess their contributions relative to other applicants. Applicants should provide supporting documentation appropriate to the contribution being described (e.g. publications/pre-prints; invitations to speaking engagements; documentation of datasets or contribution to intellectual property, a letter of collaboration from a community representative, or a patient, public or community partner).

Peer reviewers will assess the Significant Contributions while taking into consideration information in the COVID-19 Impact Statement, Career Interruptions and Career Trajectory sections of the application form.

10. Pathway to Impact (Knowledge Translation)

Health Research BC requires all applicants to include activities in their research project that aim to improve the use of health research evidence in practice, policy, and further research. These important enabling activities are the “pathway to impact” for health research. At Health Research BC we use the term “knowledge translation (KT)” to describe the broad range of activities that are needed to form a pathway to impact for your research evidence, i.e. KT activities provide the steps for your research’s pathway to impact.

KT activities must be embedded within your research project through, for example, synthesis and/or dissemination of research evidence, research user⁵ engagement/knowledge exchange, or implementation activities. A decision about which KT activities to include along your pathway to impact should be determined based on the appropriateness for your type of research, your expected findings, and your target audience(s). Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage research users throughout the research process.

Pathway to Impact Resources

For examples of KT activities and resources to explore as you consider what KT activities make sense – and are doable – within the context of your research project, read Health Research BC's [Knowledge Translation by Research Theme](#) guide.

If you would like to assess your KT skills, learn more about KT competencies and find resources on incorporating a pathway to impact into your application, please see [KT Pathways](#). For additional resources on KT in health research, please visit the [Health Research BC KT page](#) or contact the Health Research BC KT team at KT@healthresearchbc.ca.

Knowledge Translation Science

Applicants may submit a research project that is fully focused on KT science. While the practice of KT covers activities to encourage and enable evidence use, for example synthesis, dissemination, exchange and implementation of evidence; KT science is the study of those activities, including implementation science. KT science explores the theories, mechanisms, concepts, and/or methods by which evidence is used in health care practice and policy. KT science applications will be evaluated by a peer review panel that includes expertise in KT science.

11. Partnerships

Health Research BC partners with other funders to build capacity and fill strategic gaps in health research in BC. Partnering on competitions enables Health Research BC and partners to increase the total number of Research Trainee awards funded. Partnered awards have the added benefit of offering researchers the opportunity to develop relationships with partners and their community of stakeholders. Details regarding potential partners will be available on our [website](#) and in [Health Research BC ApplyNet](#), Health Research BC's online application portal, in the coming weeks.

There are two ways for applicants to be considered for partnered awards:

- Applicants interested in being considered for partnered awards are encouraged to indicate this preference in Health Research BC ApplyNet when completing their full application. Please indicate the partner(s) of interest and how your research aligns with their funding priorities.

⁵ Research users are the target audience(s) of research evidence. Research users are experts on their needs, environment, and local context. Including research users as members of the research team will ideally result in more relevant research evidence and an increased likelihood of its use for the purpose of making informed decisions about health policies, programs and/or practices. A research user may include, but is not limited to, other researchers, policy makers, health care practitioners, decision makers, health care administrators, educators, patient user group, or health charity, and the public. [Adapted from Canadian Institutes of Health Research's 'Guide to Knowledge Translation Planning at CIHR: Integrated and End-of-Grant Approaches']. www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/45321.html. Accessed September, 2022.

- Health Research BC uses keywords provided by partners to identify applications that may be relevant to and align with partners' areas of interest. Applicants are encouraged to review the list of partner keywords that will be available on our [website](#) and in [Health Research BC ApplyNet](#), and ensure that the lay and scientific summaries within the application captures at least one of the keywords.

Applications that fulfill the funding criteria for both Health Research BC and a partner organization are eligible for a partnered Research Trainee award. However, only those applications that receive a Health Research BC peer review rating of **3.8 or above** will be considered. Funding decisions on partnered awards are based on existing Health Research BC policies, confirmed partnership support, and available funding. Financial contributions from Health Research BC and its partners are subject to availability of funds and the annual budgetary approvals by both Health Research BC's Board of Directors and the partner organization beyond year one of the award.

12. How to Apply

The application process for the Health Research BC Research Trainee competition is composed of two mandatory stages: A letter of intent (LOI) stage where applicants are screened for eligibility by Health Research BC Research Competitions staff and a full application stage. Applicants with eligible LOIs are invited to submit a full application. In recognition of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on many researchers, applicants will have the option to complete a COVID-19 impact statement as part of the application process. We recommend that applicants seek feedback on their full applications from their supervisors and co-supervisors before submission

1. Letter of intent (LOI)
 - Deadline: December 5, 2022, 4:30 p.m. PT
 - Consists of:
 - The short LOI form in Health Research BC ApplyNet
2. Full application
 - Deadline: February 13, 2023, 4:30 p.m. PT
 - Reminder: As Health Research BC is now a signatory of the [Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#), we no longer allow the use of journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factor, as surrogate measures of research quality. In keeping with best practices for responsible research assessment⁶, we will no longer allow the use of article citation counts or H-index. *Please do not include Journal Impact Factors, article citation counts or H-index in your application.*
 - Consists of:
 - Research project and appendices⁷
 - Canadian Common CV – Health Research BC Trainee Version
 - List of Publications, Patents & Intellectual Property Rights
 - Supervisor (and Co-Supervisor, if applicable) Approval Form (submitted by supervisor(s) through Health Research BC ApplyNet)

⁶ See [Bibliometrics: The Leiden Manifesto for research metrics](#).

⁷ Appendices may include references/citations, tables, charts, figures and photographs that support the information in your Research Project.

- At least 2 (max 3) letters of reference from previous supervisors and/or senior mentors or previous collaborators who can comment to the applicant's potential as an independent researcher. Individuals cannot submit both a letter of reference and a supervisor form or a letter of collaboration. (Letters of reference must be submitted by the referees through Health Research BC ApplyNet.)
- Letters of collaboration^{8,9} (if applicable)
- Doctoral degree (or equivalent) certificate or health professional degree certificate¹⁰

To complete your application, create a [Health Research BC ApplyNet](#) account and follow the instructions in the Health Research BC ApplyNet online application. Ensure that applications are complete and submitted by the Health Research BC application deadline. Incomplete, or late applications cannot be considered.

Submission Requirements

- All steps of the application must be submitted using Health Research BC ApplyNet, the organization's online application submission system.
- All documents uploaded into Health Research BC ApplyNet must be in .pdf format.
- Applicants can access a .pdf version of their application form on the ApplyNet system at any time during the application process. We recommend reviewing a .pdf version of the application before submitting.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to review their application prior to submission to ensure that all data entered are complete and accurate. Once an application is submitted, it cannot be modified in any way.

Health Research BC reserves the right to declare applications ineligible based on the established criteria.

Note: Applicants using Health Research BC ApplyNet for the first time will need to register and create a system account. Supervisors and Referees will also need a system account in order to submit the Supervisor Form and letters of reference.

13. Review Process

Letters of intent (LOIs) for this program are not adjudicated, but are screened for eligibility by Health Research BC Research Competitions staff. Applicants with eligible LOIs are invited to submit a full application. Eligible full applications will undergo review by an external panel for funding recommendations.

⁸ A collaborator is an individual who significantly contributes to the conduct and/or direction of the research or knowledge translation activities.

⁹ Information on how to write a letter of collaboration can be found on the [CIHR website](#).

¹⁰ Successful applicants must provide proof of degree completion by the award start date of September 1, 2023, if the degree was not complete at the time of application. Health professional applicants must provide proof of active engagement in clinical service. If proof of degree completion or active engagement in clinical service is not provided by the award start date, the award offer will be withdrawn.

In recognition of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on many researchers, applicants will have the option to complete a COVID-19 impact statement as part of the application process. Health Research BC will also provide peer reviewers with additional guidance on how to take COVID-19 impacts into consideration as part of the review process.

Applications will be evaluated via a process that incorporates six principles of peer review: **integrity, accountability, transparency, balance, confidentiality and impartiality**. For more details, please see the [overview of Health Research BC's peer review process](#).

The information presented in the **Evaluation Criteria** and **Rating Scale** sections below will be used for the review process. All applications will be assessed against a defined set of criteria in three categories: 1) applicant expertise and experience, 2) research project, and 3) environment and support. To be **considered** for funding, the application must receive a minimum score of **3.8**.

Health Research BC recognizes each BC region brings strengths to the provincial health research system and that there is variation in the infrastructure, resources, and supports available to health researchers at different institutions. Health Research BC's commitment to rigorous peer review includes ensuring applications from across BC are reviewed fairly and equitably.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications are assessed against the criteria and weightings below. A full description of the evaluation criteria will be posted on our [website](#). **It is highly recommended that applicants refer to the evaluation criteria when completing their applications.**

Criterion	Weighting
Applicant expertise and experience	30%
Research project	50%
Environment and support	20%

Rating Scale

Descriptor	Range	Outcome
Outstanding	4.5 – 4.9	May be funded (min. score of 3.8)
Excellent	4.0 – 4.4	
Very good	3.5 – 3.9	
Fair	3.0 – 3.4	Not fundable
Less than adequate	0 – 2.9	

Funding Decisions

Following peer review, the highest rated applications are identified. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the peer review process after the review panel meetings and the subsequent approval of the results. There is no appeal process.

Applicants will receive notification of the funding decisions, as well as the reviewers' comments. A list of successful applicants will be published on Health Research BC's website.

14. Award Start Date and Deferral

Unless otherwise indicated, funding for Research Trainee awards begins September 1, 2023. Successful applicants must confirm their acceptance of the award within the stipulated time indicated in the award notification package.

The start may be deferred up to a maximum of 12 months; if a deferral is required, award recipients must contact Health Research BC with the deferral request and obtain approval. The start date must be on the first day of any month and no later than September 1, 2024. Deferred start dates, once confirmed by Health Research BC, cannot be revised.

15. Reporting Requirements

Research Trainee award recipients are required to complete annual progress reports. Health Research BC will provide reporting information for these purposes in advance. The information gathered in progress reports is used for administration, evaluation, government reporting, and communication purposes, and helps improve our award programs. Recipients of partner funds may be required to complete additional requests for information from partners.

In addition to annual reporting requirements, Research Trainee award recipients must submit a final report in the last year of their award and a final financial statement within **three months** following completion of the award. Any unexpended funds must be returned to Health Research BC. Health Research BC will provide reporting information for these purposes in advance of the award end date.

Health Research BC and its funding partners reserve the right to contact award recipients after the award end date to determine the short and middle-term outcomes and/or impacts of the Research Trainee award.

Additionally, to inform evaluation and continued improvement of our award programs, award recipients will be invited to provide feedback to Health Research BC staff to determine areas of improvement for this funding opportunity.

16. Applicant Updates

If an applicant's project and/or research environment changes significantly after the application has been submitted, the applicant must notify Health Research BC immediately. Health Research BC will accept updates regarding new salary awards received following the full application deadline (February 13, 2023) until April 5, 2023.

Please email all relevant information, including confirmation of award, to trainee@healthresearchbc.ca.

Appendix A – Research and Travel Allowance

Payments and Usage

The research and travel allowance (\$4,500 per annum) will be paid on a quarterly basis to the recipient's primary supervisor's research account. Research and travel funds that remain unused at year-end can be carried over into the subsequent year of the award, but the funds may only be used within the term of the award. All receipts must be submitted to the primary supervisor **within three months** of the award end date, at which time any remaining funds must be returned to Health Research BC. No-cost extension requests for the Research and travel allowance will be approved on a case-by-case basis owing to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on research travel. Award recipients must contact Health Research BC to obtain approval. Research and travel allowance funds may not be used while the award is on hold.

Eligible Expenses

The research and travel allowance may be used for expenses that are directly related to an award recipient's research project only. All expenses must be approved by the primary supervisor and are subject to the travel and expenses reimbursement policies of the host institution. Award recipients should discuss the eligibility of expenses with their supervisor before expenses are incurred.

Eligible expenses may include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- Costs associated with knowledge translation, including dissemination of research results (e.g. costs of attending a conference to present the research, page charges and the costs of preparing a research manuscript for publication, development and maintenance of web-based information, videos, toolkits, translation, etc.).
- Costs of attending career development events and activities.
- Costs of membership in professional associations or scientific societies, or those required to maintain compliance with provincial regulations when directly related to the research project.
- Purchase/lease and extended warranty of home office furniture, cell phones, tablets, computers, and other hardware and software required for the research (the host institution's policy on ownership of equipment will apply).
- Monthly charges for the use of the internet from the institution or home when this service is required for the purpose of research and not normally provided by the institution free of charge.
- Safety-related expenses related to the research project, such as protective gear, immunizations, etc.
- Costs related to improving workplace accessibility and/or career support for applicants who have a disability.
- In accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 (TCPS 2 - Chapter 9 Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada), Health Research BC recognizes the importance of respecting the culture and traditions of Indigenous Peoples. Expenses related to the conduct of research and knowledge translation with Indigenous communities, including, but not limited to the following are eligible for reimbursement:



- Costs related to community mobilization and engagement, including culturally relevant promotional items such as tobacco, cloth, feasting and gift giving for honoring ceremonies, and cash reimbursements (in a method acceptable to the individual or community being reimbursed) to compensate community participation.
- Contracts and/or consultant fees for knowledge translation and communication activities for Indigenous Elders, community members, and Indigenous Knowledge Holders involved in activities related to the Indigenous community.

Some examples of ineligible expenses include:

- Salaries for research or administrative personnel.
- Commuting costs between the residence and host institution or research location, or between two places of employment.
- Immigration and work permit fees.

Appendix B – Incentive Funding

Research Trainees who hold external stipend awards at the time of application or at the award start date, or who apply and receive such an award during the period that they hold a Health Research BC Research Trainee award, are eligible to receive incentive funding. Health Research BC considers a stipend award to be external if the award meets **all four** conditions below:

1. Is external to BC
2. Is granted through an open competition
3. Is peer-reviewed
4. Has a total value¹¹ of 50 percent or more of the value of the Health Research BC Research Trainee award

The incentive funding is available for the duration of the Health Research BC Research Trainee award, or to the end of the external stipend award, whichever comes first. External research and travel awards without a stipend component are not eligible for incentive adjustments.

Award recipients who receive incentive funding are still required to complete the reporting requirements stated in Section 14.

Incentive Funding Scenarios

Incentive funding is applied when:

- The external award totals **less** than the Health Research BC Research Trainee award and is used to raise the combined salary award amount to equal the Research Trainee award, **OR**
- The external award totals **more** than the Health Research BC Research Trainee award and is used to provide an additional amount (\$7,000) on top of the external award.

Health Research BC stipend award	External stipend award received by award recipient	Effect on Health Research BC stipend award
\$45,000	\$22,500 or greater, but less than \$45,000	Health Research BC award reduced to the amount that, when added to the external stipend award, will equal \$45,000 per year, plus receives Health Research BC incentive award of \$7,000
\$45,000	Greater than or equal to than \$45,000	Health Research BC stipend award reduced to \$0 Receives Health Research BC incentive award of \$7,000 per year

¹¹ Inclusive of match funding from other funding sources, if applicable. Total award value applies to the portion used for salary/stipend, i.e. it is not inclusive of other components above and beyond, such as research and/or travel allowances.

Appendix C – Frequently Asked Questions

Can research associates apply?

No. By definition, research associates are full-time or part-time appointees who primarily conduct research with no formal teaching duties and are not considered part of a formalized research training program. Therefore, for the purposes of this award, research associates are not considered trainees.

Can PhD candidates apply?

Yes, you may apply if you are completing your PhD, however, you must meet all the eligibility requirements by the award start date (September 1, 2023), including having completed your PhD, and holding a postdoctoral fellowship position (or equivalent) at an [eligible host institution](#).

Am I eligible to apply for a Research Trainee award if I am a health professional?

You are eligible to apply in the health professional stream if you are active in clinical service and have not held your health professional degree for more than 11 years as of September 1, 2023. You are eligible to apply in the PhD (or equivalent) stream if you are not active in clinical service and you have not held your PhD or equivalent (i.e. your health professional degree) for more than 6 years as of September 1, 2023. (Please see Section 4 for instructions on how to calculate your eligibility.)

Applicants must also be eligible to hold a post-doctoral fellowship position (or equivalent) at an eligible BC host institution for the duration of the award. Please contact Asta if you have questions about your eligibility (trainee@healthresearchbc.ca).

I have a health professional degree but am not in active clinical practice. Am I eligible for 50 percent protected time for research?

No. A health professional who is not in active clinical practice must apply through the PhD (or equivalent) stream and commit to 75 percent protected time for research.

Am I eligible to apply for a Research Trainee award if my post-doctoral fellowship appointment at a BC institution is dependent on my getting the funding from Health Research BC?

Yes, you are eligible to apply.

I've had my PhD (or equivalent degree) for more than six years. Am I eligible to apply for a Research Trainee award?

You are not eligible to apply if you have held your PhD degree (or equivalent) for more than six years and do not have any justified post-degree career interruptions.

Can my post-doctoral supervisor and/or co-supervisor also provide a letter of reference?

No. Your current supervisor and co-supervisor (if applicable) will have to complete a supervisor form in ApplyNet as part of your application. Your current supervisor(s) are not allowed to submit a letter of reference. Applicants may consider asking former supervisors, former mentors, or former collaborators to provide letters of reference. Referees should know the applicant well enough to be able to comment on their potential to become an independent researcher.

There is someone I want to work with who is an expert in the area of my research. Should I add them as a co-supervisor or a collaborator?

Applications can have only one co-supervisor but there is no limit on the number of collaborators. Like collaborators, co-supervisors are expected to significantly contribute to the research project and/or knowledge translation activities, but they also commit to the professional development of the applicant. A collaborator is an individual who significantly contributes to the conduct and/or direction of the research or knowledge translation activities. Collaborators may contribute to the professional development of the applicant, but to a lesser degree than would be expected by a supervisor or co-supervisor.

Will the stipend levels change during the term of the award?

No changes will be made to the stipend amount during the term of the award. The stipend for the award is valued at \$45,000 per annum. The research and travel allowance is valued at \$4,500 per annum. Health Research BC's financial contributions beyond year one of the awards is subject to future funding of Health Research BC by the provincial government and the annual budgetary approval by Health Research BC's Board of Directors.

How often does Health Research BC review the stipend levels for the Research Trainee award?

Health Research BC periodically reviews the stipend levels for the Research Trainee award. Currently the stipend of the Research Trainee award is in line with comparable salary awards in Canada.

Will interruptions/delays in my career be considered when determining my eligibility?

Interruptions and delays in your studies are considered when determining eligibility. This information is also used by peer reviewers when assessing productivity. You are advised to clearly and fully describe any interruptions or delays that affected the research and the dissemination of research results in the "Career Timeline" section of the letter of intent.

How will the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic be considered in my application?

In 2020 Health Research BC introduced changes to our program eligibility, application and review process to account for the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have adjusted the program eligibility window by one year, and applicants will have the option to complete a COVID-19 impact statement as part of the application process. Health Research BC will also provide peer reviewers with additional guidance on how to take COVID-19 impacts into consideration as part of the review process. These adjustments will continue for the 2023 Research Trainee competition.

Why does Health Research BC refer to knowledge translation (KT) activities as "pathway to impact"?

Health Research BC defines knowledge translation as "the broad range of activities and initiatives meant to improve the use of health research evidence in health planning, practice, policy and further research." The set of KT activities undertaken for a specific research project or program of research can be thought of more generally as a pathway to impact for the use of health research evidence. That is, they are the unique steps embedded in the design, conduct, and use of research that aim to increase its impact, such as synthesis, dissemination, knowledge exchange, and/or implementation of research evidence.

What are the requirements for embedding pathway to impact activities within the research project?

Health Research BC requires Research Trainee applicants from all disciplines to include proposed pathway to impact activities, as appropriate, as part of the proposed research project. These activities are embedded at multiple stages of research, including at the beginning, integrated throughout the program of research, and at the end of funding. For more information, refer to the document [Knowledge Translation by Research Theme](#).

How do I indicate interest in a partnered award?

Applicants interested in being considered for partnered awards are encouraged to indicate this preference in [Health Research BC ApplyNet](#) when completing their full application. Please indicate the partner(s) of interest and how your research aligns with their funding priorities. All applicants are assessed on potential partnership matches and may be eligible for partnership opportunities whether or not interest is expressed at the application stage. If partners are confirmed after the full application deadline, Health Research BC staff will match the keywords of the applicants with those provided by the partner, and if there is a match, they will inform the respective applicant.

For partnered awards, is the funding shared evenly between Health Research BC and the partner?

Normally it is a 50-50 funding share between Health Research BC and the co-funding partner. However, it is possible that a Health Research BC Research Trainee award may be funded by more than one partner, or that Health Research BC and a single partner may decide to contribute unequal portions to one particular award.

If I don't match with a partner will that affect my chances of receiving a regular Research Trainee award?

No. Your chances of receiving a regular Research Trainee award are not affected by your interest in a partnered award.

My research project includes work relevant to Indigenous health. What ethical and research policies am I expected to comply with?

Health Research BC expects applicants to approach their research and knowledge translation activities with culturally safe practices that demonstrate humility, integrity, accountability and respect for Indigenous self-determination. Applicants must comply with the ethical and research policies outlined in [Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#) of the [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#) (2018). When appropriate, applicants must also describe their data management plan in accordance with the First Nations principles of [OCAP®: ownership, control, access and possession](#). Additional resources for researchers can be found on the [First Nations Health Authority](#) website.

What is the difference between a reference letter and a letter of collaboration?

Reference letters are typically written by former supervisors or mentors who are familiar with your work. Letters of collaboration are written by collaborators or partners who are expected to make a significant contribution to your program of research, and are confirming their enthusiasm to participate in the manner indicated. Guidance on how to write a letter of collaboration can be found [on CIHR's website](#).

Can I defer the start date of my Research Trainee award?

Deferrals may only be requested for the following reasons: relocation, medical or parental leave, and caregiving. Other reasons not stated are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If a deferral is required, award recipients **must indicate the requested award start date and the reason for deferral on the Award Acceptance Form and obtain approval from Health Research BC**. The deferred start date must be on the first day of any month and be no later than September 1, 2024. Deferred start dates, once confirmed by Health Research BC, cannot be revised.

What documents will I need to provide before I can start my award?

A copy of the Award Acceptance Form signed by you and your supervisor (and co-supervisor, if applicable) must be uploaded in .pdf format to [Health Research BC ApplyNet](#).

If not provided in your full application at time of submission, successful applicants must provide proof of doctoral degree completion by the award start date. The same applies for the corresponding documentation for proof of active clinical service from health professional applicants who did not provide this at the time of application. If proof of degree completion or active engagement in clinical service is not provided by the award start date, then the award offer will be withdrawn.

If you hold other external funding, you will also be required to upload official documents that show (1) that the award has been offered and accepted, and (2) the award duration and amount, including start and end dates.