



Michael Smith

**Health  
Research BC**

**2025 Scholar Program**

**&**

**2025 Health Professional-Investigator  
Program**

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**GUIDELINES**

## **DEADLINES**

Letter of intent: November 19, 2024, 4:30 p.m. PT

Full application: January 23, 2025, 4:30 p.m. PT

Updated October 24, 2024

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## Help with your Application

For questions regarding the **Scholar** and **Health Professional-Investigator** eligibility, application form and submission process, please contact:

**Andrew Biagtan**

Research Competitions Coordinator

[scholar@healthresearchbc.ca](mailto:scholar@healthresearchbc.ca)

[HPI@healthresearchbc.ca](mailto:HPI@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](mailto:helpdesk@healthresearchbc.ca)

604.714.6609 | 866.673.4722 (toll-free) | Press 3 to reach the Help Desk line

## 1. Introduction

Michael Smith Health Research BC (Health Research BC) is British Columbia's health research agency. 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](http://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. We welcome applications from across BC and are committed to funding highly ranked applications that reflect the regional diversity of our province.

Health Research BC continues to reach out to interested parties 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.

### Changes for 2025 include:

- The addition of a distinct Indigenous health research peer review panel, to which applicants proposing Indigenous-led research may choose to submit their application (see [Section 7, Indigenous Health Research](#) and [Section 13, Review Process](#)).
- Top-up funding from the [BC SUPPORT Unit](#) is available of up to \$10,000 to 2025 Scholar and Health Professional-Investigator (HP-I) recipients whose research involves meaningfully engaging Indigenous communities to support those engagement activities (see [Section 7, Indigenous Health Research](#)).
- Applicants will no longer be required to include a Canadian Common CV in Scholar and HP-I applications and instead will be asked to complete a few new questions about supervision of trainees, career history, and experience leading or participating in funded research projects (see [Section 9, Assessment of Research Outputs](#)).
- *Scholar only*: An adjustment of the eligibility calculation to align with the Tri-Agency policy on leave credits for early career researchers, so that parental, medical, caretaking and bereavement leaves are credited at twice the amount of time taken (see [Section 4, Eligibility Requirements](#)).

## Purpose and Objectives

### Scholar

Health Research BC’s Scholar Program enables early career researchers to build their health research programs, train the next generation of scientists, and make significant contributions to their field. The Scholar Program protects dedicated time for research activities for award recipients through salary support.

The specific objectives of the Scholar Program are to:

- Develop, attract, and retain high quality early career health researchers in BC.
- Enable early career researchers to develop an independent research program, attract additional research funding, and train the next generation of researchers.
- Enable researchers to develop programs of research that inform practice, policy, and further research.

### Health Professional-Investigator (HP-I)

Health Research BC’s Health Professional-Investigator (HP-I) Program supports health professionals who are actively involved in patient care to build their health research programs, train the next generation of scientists, and make significant contributions to their field. The HP-I Program protects time for research activities through salary support.

The specific objectives of the HP-I Program are to:

- Develop, attract, and retain high quality health professional-investigators in BC.
- Enable health professional investigators to develop an independent research program, attract additional research funding, and train the next generation of researchers.
- Enable researchers to develop programs of research that inform practice, policy, and further research.

## 2. Key Competition Dates

Action	Target Date
Competition launch (applications open)	Week of October 21, 2024
Letter Of Intent (LOI) deadline for applicants	November 19, 2024, 4:30 p.m. PT
Full application deadline (applicants)	January 23, 2025, 4:30 p.m. PT
Full application deadline (host institution)	January 30, 2025, 4:30 p.m. PT
Anticipated notice of funding decision	June 2025
Anticipated start of funding	July 1, 2025

### 3. Award Amount and Duration

The Scholar and HP-I awards provide salary support at \$90,000 per annum for up to five years. Scholar and HP-I award funds are strictly for use as partial or full salary contributions, inclusive of benefits, for the award recipient, and/or research staff and trainees working directly on the award recipient’s program of research, if applicable. The Scholar and HP-I awards cannot be used as operating grants. Researchers who hold external salary awards at the time of application or at the award start date, or who apply and receive such an award during the period they hold a Scholar or HP-I award are eligible to receive incentive funding. See [Appendix A](#) for details about incentive funding.

Over the past three years, Health Research BC has awarded an average of 24 new Scholar awards in each competition, for an average success rate of 41 percent. Over the last three HP-I competitions, Health Research BC has awarded 15 new HP-I awards on average for a success rate of 39 percent. These statistics include awards co-funded through partnerships. Health Research BC will have dedicated funding for applications in the Indigenous Health Research Panel. Award rates may vary from year to year due to factors such as the availability of funds, application demand and the results of the peer review panel.

#### Eligible Expenses

The host institution is responsible for administering the award funds. The applicant’s department and/or host institution must ensure that Health Research BC funds are used to support:

- Salary and benefits of the award recipient.
- Stipends and/or salaries of undergraduate and graduate students, residents, post-doctoral fellows, research assistants, research technicians and statisticians working directly with the award recipient on the proposed research.
- Buy-out time from clinical, teaching, and administrative responsibilities, such as salary and/or benefits of personnel who provide teaching or clinical relief to enable the award recipient to maintain protected time for research.

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.

### 4. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must choose to apply for either the Scholar award or the HP-I award, but not both.



To be eligible for the Scholar award or the HP-I award, applicants must:

- Be conducting research within one of the four themes of health research as defined by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research: biomedical, clinical, health services, and population health<sup>1</sup>.
- Not currently hold or have ever held a Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR) or Michael Smith Health Research BC Health Professional-Investigator, Innovation to Commercialization, or Scholar award.
- Have met all reporting requirements (including a final financial statement) if you currently hold or have previously held MSFHR or Michael Smith Health Research BC funding.

Health Research BC employees, including Clinical Trials BC, Research Ethics BC, and BC SUPPORT Unit, are not eligible to apply. Potential applicants who may be impacted by this policy should contact Health Research BC staff to clarify their eligibility prior to completing the application form.

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<sup>1</sup> Health Research BC has adopted the description of the CIHR themes but retained a shorter title for themes 3 and 4, referring to them as health services and population health.

## Scholar Award

At the time of application, applicants for the Scholar award must:

- Have a PhD, or equivalent.
- Be within six years from the start of their first academic appointment (at an assistant professor level or equivalent) **OR** be within six years of obtaining a PhD<sup>2</sup>, as of the award start date, **July 1, 2025**, whichever is later.
  - **New for 2025:** Health Research BC has adjusted our eligibility calculation process to align with the Tri-Agency policy on leave credits for early career researchers:
    - The following career interruptions will receive leave credits of twice the amount of time taken: parental, medical, care-taking and bereavement leaves. For example, for a parental leave of 6 months, the applicant will receive a leave credit of 12 months.
    - Other career interruptions will receive leave credits equal to the amount of time taken. This includes all interruptions related to career development, such as residency training, clinical licensing, time spent in a non-research-related position, etc. If you have questions about whether a career interruption qualifies for a credit equal to the amount of time taken or twice the amount of time taken, please contact [scholar@healthresearchbc.ca](mailto:scholar@healthresearchbc.ca).
  - All time spent in research appointments will be factored into the calculation for eligibility.
  - Part-time (0.5 FTE) appointments will be counted at 50 percent (e.g. a one-year part-time research appointment will be counted as six months).
- Be affiliated with a BC host institution that holds a [memorandum of understanding with Health Research BC](#) and hold an appointment (or have a commitment for an appointment that will begin by the award start date of July 1, 2025) that allows the applicant to:
  - Apply for and hold peer-reviewed funds as a principal investigator.
  - Be a research supervisor for graduate and post-graduate trainees.
  - Publish their research results.
- The application requires a confirmation from the department head (or equivalent) protecting a minimum of 75 percent of the applicant's time for health research activities, or no less than 30 hours per week.

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<sup>2</sup> In recognition that some host institutions do not require a doctoral degree as a prerequisite for a faculty position.

## HP-I Award

For the HP-I award, applicants must meet all of the HP-I eligibility criteria and the eligibility criteria of one of the two applicant streams (physician or allied health professional).

By the full application deadline, the applicant must:

- Have confirmation from the department head (or equivalent) protecting a minimum of 50 percent of the applicant's time for health research activities, or no less than **20 hours per week** by the award start date

By the award start date, the applicant must:

- Be a clinician, health practitioner, and/or health care provider whose role requires clinical decision-making. **Note:** Health professionals who do not make clinical judgments and/or clinical decisions that directly impact patients and/or patient care (i.e. all time devoted to administration, teaching and/or research) are *not* eligible.
- Hold a valid license to practice in BC and be a member in good standing of the appropriate regulatory college OR be a board-certified/board-eligible health professional and a member in good standing of the appropriate provincial/national certification body ([BC Health Regulators](#)).
- Hold an appointment at a BC host institution that holds a [memorandum of understanding with Health Research BC](#). The appointment must allow the applicant to:
  - Apply for and hold research funding
  - Engage in independent research activities
  - Publish their research results

## HP-I Streams Eligibility Criteria

**Physician stream** applicants must:

- Hold a medical doctorate or equivalent (e.g. MD, DDS, DPM, etc.).
- Be recognized as a physician, dental surgeon, or podiatric surgeon by [BC Health Regulators](#).

**Allied health professional stream** applicants must:

- Hold a minimum of a Bachelor's degree or equivalent.
- Be a member of a [regulated health profession](#), excluding physicians and surgeons. (Note: If your regulated health profession is not listed by BC Health Regulators, please contact [HPI@healthresearchbc.ca](mailto:HPI@healthresearchbc.ca) to verify eligibility before proceeding with your application.)

## 5. Commitment from Host Institution

**Reminder:** Health Research BC encourages department heads to use the Department Head Form to describe any concrete practices or resources they will provide to support accessibility, diversity and inclusion in their work environment and in mentoring and professional development.

The host institution is the institution that administers funds for the duration of the award, and where the majority of resources to support the project is provided (e.g. infrastructure, human resources, administration, etc.). A complete list of eligible host institutions can be found in [Appendix C](#).

The selected host institution will be responsible for administering the award funds. The applicant's host institution must ensure that Health Research BC funds are used to support:



- Salary and benefits of the Scholar or HP-I award recipient.
- Buy out time from administrative and teaching responsibilities.
- Stipend and salary of trainees, post-doctoral fellows, research assistants, research technicians working *directly* with the Health Research BC Scholar or HP-I on the research program described in the application.

## 6. Responsible Conduct of Research

Researchers funded by Health Research BC 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 \(2022\)](#)
- [Canadian Council on Animal Care Policies and Guidelines](#)
- [Canadian Biosafety Standards and Guidelines](#)

### Responsible conduct of Indigenous health research

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 \(2022\)](#). When appropriate, applicants must also describe their data management plan in accordance with the First Nations principles of [OCAP®: ownership, control, access and possession](#), and/or Indigenous partnering community / organizational ethical guidelines.

Additional resources:

- [First Nations Health Authority](#)
- Health Research BC's [Indigenous Research Ethics Resources](#)

### Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in applications

With the latest advancements and rapid uptake in generative AI (such as ChatGPT) to create content, Health Research BC discourages using generative AI tools in application development. Applications submitted to Health Research BC are expected to be the original concepts and ideas generated by the applicant. Applicants should be aware that the content created using generative AI tools may contain the intellectual property of others, false information, or biases. Applicants must ensure that their applications comply with the Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research, especially pertaining to research integrity. Using AI tools could also result in your original content and ideas being harvested and used without your consent or without crediting you.

## 7. Indigenous Health Research

### Health Research BC's commitment to advancing Indigenous reconciliation – improving peer review for Indigenous health research applications

Guided by advice from Indigenous partners, award recipients, peer reviewers and advisors, we are introducing a distinct peer review panel for Indigenous-led health research applications to the 2025 Scholar and HP-I competitions.

This is one step towards building and supporting relationships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and communities, increasing the cultural safety of our funding processes and growing our capacity for review of Indigenous health research applications. Acknowledging we are on a learning journey, this work is part of our ongoing [commitment to advancing Indigenous reconciliation](#).

Additional information and resources:

- [SSHRC Indigenous Research](#)
- [CIHR Indigenous Health Research](#)

## Indigenous health research panel

The Indigenous health research panel will review applications with a central focus on meaningful and culturally safe Indigenous-led research, possibly involving Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, whether recognized as Treaty, Status, or Non-Status. This includes Indigenous people living on reserves and those living in urban and rural communities.

The panel will be composed of reviewers with living experience, knowledge, and/or expertise in Indigenous health research. The panel will review applications according to the Scholar and HP-I Evaluation Criteria, including the specific Indigenous health research panel evaluation criteria.

Applicants who are undertaking meaningful and culturally safe Indigenous-led research related to health and wellness may request to be reviewed by the Indigenous health research panel. Applications to the panel are expected to demonstrate scientific excellence (Indigenous, non-Indigenous or both), respect Indigenous values and ways of knowing and sharing, follow the [Tri-Council Policy Statement Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#), and/or Indigenous partnering community / organizational ethical guidelines. When working on the lands and waters, researchers should demonstrate respect for the protocols and practices of the Indigenous communities on those lands and waters, including ceremonies where appropriate.

## Top-up funds to support research with Indigenous communities

Top-up funding is available from the [BC SUPPORT Unit](#)<sup>3</sup> of up to \$10,000 to 2025 Scholar and HP-I recipients whose research involves meaningfully engaging Indigenous communities. The purpose of this funding is to support researchers in their ability to:

- Support active and meaningful partnerships with Indigenous communities, organizations, or leaders\*.
- Support a strong relationship in alignment with Indigenous methodologies.
- Promote cultural safety and OCAP® practices.

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<sup>3</sup> The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR) is an initiative aimed at improving the health outcomes of Canadians by integrating patients into the research process. The BC SUPPORT Unit is a core element of SPOR in BC, as a locally accessible, multidisciplinary centre of specialized research resources, policy knowledge, and patient perspectives. The BC SUPPORT Unit is part of Michael Smith Health Research BC.

The overall goal of SPOR is to ensure that research is more patient-centered, leading to better health care and outcomes for Canadians. For SPOR, the term “patient” is overarching and is inclusive of individual people with lived experience of a health issue and informal caregivers, including family and friends, and communities, inclusive of Indigenous communities in BC.

- Support capacity bridging within the Indigenous community to participate in research.

\* Guidance on meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities can be found in the [Indigenous Research Level of Engagement Tool Companion document](#) developed by the Saskatchewan Centre for Patient-Oriented Research. [Further resources can be found on their website.](#) The BC SUPPORT Unit recognizes that these guidelines are not specific to BC. These are recommended as general guidelines, and the BC SUPPORT Unit is committed to facilitating the development of guidelines specific to BC in the future.

The start date of the top-up funds is July 1, 2025, and funds must be used by December 31, 2026. Top-up funds will be paid in a lump-sum along with the first Scholar or HP-I award payment. The following expenses are eligible under these top-up funds:

- Honoraria, gifts, ceremony and community protocol
- Travel and transportation
- Hosting events, gatherings and meetings
- Capacity development for Indigenous researchers, community members and students (could include workshops for training or education for the community, opportunities for mentorship, guest speakers, etc.)

Applicants may be from any discipline and research theme, but their research must involve meaningful engagement of Indigenous communities. You do not have to apply to the Indigenous health research panel to apply for these top-up funds. To apply for these funds, applicants will need to select the option to apply in their application form and complete a brief budget.

## 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, acting as a strategic partner on an international consortium undertaking empirical research studies to advance evidence-informed research funding, and requiring all Health Research BC's peer reviewers to participate in unconscious bias training. We are in a continuous mode of listening and learning with our interested parties and international and national partners. [Learn more.](#)

**Note:** The application includes a section for applicants to describe how they meaningfully and appropriately account for EDI in the design of their research programs, in the analysis and

interpretation of the findings, in their KT activities, and in the composition and governance of their research teams.

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 department heads to use the Department Head 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.

**New for 2025:** Applicants will no longer be able to include a Canadian Common CV in Scholar and HP-I applications. Instead, applicants will be asked a few new questions to provide information on supervision of trainees, career history, and experience leading or participating in funded research projects.

Applicants are encouraged to use the Significant Contributions section in the application form to highlight research and knowledge translation (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 development 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 the entire context presented in the Applicant Expertise and Experience section of the application form.

## **10. Pathway to Impact (Knowledge Translation)**

Health Research BC requires applicants to undertake activities to improve the use of health research evidence in practice, policy, and further research. Knowledge translation activities are important enabling activities that form the “pathway to impact” for health research. Health Research BC uses the term “knowledge translation (KT)” to describe these activities which include synthesis of research evidence, exchange of knowledge between researchers and research users, targeted dissemination, and implementation of research evidence. KT activities should be chosen based on appropriateness for your type of research, your expected findings, and your intended audience(s), including the people most likely to use and/or benefit from your research. We acknowledge that applicants may use other terms to refer to pathway to impact and knowledge translation, including knowledge exchange (KE) and knowledge mobilization (KM).

### **Including Research User Engagement in your Knowledge Translation Activities**

Engaging research users — including people with lived/living experience (PWLE)<sup>4</sup> — as partners throughout the research process and KT activities increases the relevance, usefulness, and useability of research evidence. Examples of approaches that engage research users throughout the research process include integrated knowledge translation (IKT) and patient-oriented research (POR).

Both IKT and POR bring together researchers with research users such as health professionals, health system decision-makers, PWLE, and/or researchers from other disciplines. IKT aims to answer priority research questions of importance to any or all research users relevant to the specific research project, while POR aims to answer priority research questions of patients, public and/or community by engaging with patient partners throughout the research process. With the growing recognition over the years of the importance of engaging PWLE in health research<sup>5</sup> to improve health care and health outcomes, PWLE partners have become an important additional dimension of IKT. Both IKT and POR also include KT activities such as synthesis, exchange, and dissemination of research evidence - all of which can occur at different stages throughout the research cycle - and implementation of research evidence and knowledge.

As appropriate for your type of research and expected audience(s), applicants are strongly encouraged to engage research users, including PWLE, throughout the research process.

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<sup>4</sup> People with lived/living experience (PWLE) include patient, public and community partners who have knowledge or experience with a problem or topic.

<sup>5</sup> When research is done in partnership with research users, their valuable experiences can improve care. For example, meaningful patient, public or community partner engagement promotes active collaboration in research governance and throughout the research process, from the planning and conduct of research through to the dissemination, implementation and evaluation of research evidence. Patient, public and community partner engagement brings the unique lived experiences, perspectives and voices to the research process to ensure the work is relevant and that it addresses priorities, questions and outcomes that matter to the people of British Columbia. Domecq, J.P. et al. Patient engagement in research: a systematic review. *BMC Health Serv Res* 14, 89 (2014); <https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6963-14-89>; accessed Aug 22, 2024)

## Knowledge Translation Science

Applicants may submit a program of research that is fully focused on KT science. KT science explores the theories, mechanisms, concepts, and/or methods by which evidence is used in health care practice and policy. 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 applications may be evaluated by a peer review panel that includes expertise in KT science.

## Pathway to Impact Resources

In addition to the resources below, Health Research BC's [Knowledge Translation, Patient-Oriented Research & Implementation Science Resources](#) guide provides examples by research theme of KT and Patient-Oriented Research as well as implementation science activities and resources to support development and implementation of your pathway to impact activities.

### Knowledge Translation

- [Health Research BC Knowledge Translation](#)
- [REACH BC](#)
- [A Guide to Researcher and Knowledge-User Collaboration in Health Research](#)
- [Moving into action: We know what practices we want to change, now what? An implementation guide for health care practitioners](#)

### Engaging with People with lived/living experience Partners and Patient Oriented Research

- [BC SUPPORT Unit Information for Researchers](#)
- [CIHR Patient Engagement Training course](#)
- [A Journey Through Public & Patient Engagement in Health Research: A Road Map](#)
- [BC SUPPORT Unit: How patient oriented is your research?](#)
- [Workbook to guide the development of a patient engagement in research \(PEIR\) plan](#)

## 11. Partnerships

Health Research BC partners with other funders to build capacity and fill strategic gaps in health research in BC. Partnering on competitions offers funders the opportunity to effectively co-fund health research in their areas of focus by leveraging Health Research BC's funding programs, including robust peer review and award administration processes which enables Health Research BC and partners to increase the total number of awards funded. Partnered awards have the added benefit of offering researchers the opportunity to develop relationships with partners and their community of interested parties. Details regarding potential partners will be available on our [website](#) and in [Health Research BC ApplyNet](#) in the coming weeks.

There are two ways applicants may 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 explain how your research aligns with their funding priorities.
- Health Research BC uses keywords provided by partners to identify applications that may be relevant to and align with a partner's 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 capture 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 Scholar or HP-I award. However, only those applications that receive a Health Research BC peer review score of 3.8 or above will be considered. Funding decisions on partnered awards are based on Health Research BC's existing processes and available funds and partners' confirmed support. 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.

**Note:** New partners may come on board after the competition launch date. The research priorities and keywords for these partners may not appear on Health Research BC ApplyNet, but they will be added to the website. Applicants are encouraged to give careful thought to keywords and their description as they will be used to assess alignment with partners' areas of interest.

### **Mitacs Accelerate Internships**

Health Research BC and Mitacs have partnered together to provide Scholar and HP-I applicants with access to additional funding and training opportunities for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows involved in their program of research, through the Mitacs Accelerate internship program. Mitacs Accelerate grants start at \$15,000 per four-month segment through co-funding with an eligible non-academic partner. Applicants interested in benefiting from this additional opportunity must complete a Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application to submit along with their Scholar and HP-I full application.

See [Appendix B](#) for more details.

## **12. How to Apply**

The application process for the 2025 Scholar and the 2025 HP-I competitions is composed of two mandatory stages: A letter of intent (LOI) stage where applicants are screened for eligibility by Health Research BC staff, and a full application stage. Applicants with eligible LOIs are invited to submit a full application.

Applicants are encouraged to refer to the evaluation criteria when completing their applications.

**Note: Letters of Collaboration and Reference Letters** - Health Research BC cannot accept letters of collaboration from any department within Health Research BC (including Clinical Trials BC, Knowledge Translation, Research Ethics BC, and BC SUPPORT Unit). In addition, reference letters are not accepted for the Scholar or HP-I competitions.

**New for 2025:** Applicants will no longer be able to include a Canadian Common CV in Scholar and HP-I applications. Instead, applicants will be asked a few new questions to provide information on supervision of trainees, career history, and experience leading or participating in funded research projects.

## 1. Letter of intent (LOI)

- Deadline: November 19, 2024, 4:30 p.m. PT
- Consists of:
  - The LOI form in Health Research BC ApplyNet

## 2. Full application

- Deadline: January 23, 2025, 4:30 p.m. PT
- Complete the full application form in [Health Research BC ApplyNet](#), which includes the following additional components:
  - Research program and appendices<sup>6</sup>
  - List of Publications, Patents & Intellectual Property Rights. *Please do not include Journal Impact Factors, article citation counts or H-index in your application.*
  - Department Head, or equivalent form
  - Dean of Faculty Form (if applicable)
  - Consent forms and questionnaires (if applicable)
  - Letters of collaboration<sup>7,8</sup> (if applicable)
  - Mitacs Accelerate Proposal Application (if applicable)
  - Budget for top-up funds to support research with Indigenous communities (if applicable)

To complete your application, create a [Health Research BC ApplyNet](#) account and follow the instructions in the Health Research BC ApplyNet application form. 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 the Health Research BC ApplyNet 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. Deans and department heads will also need a system account in order to submit their respective forms.

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<sup>6</sup> Appendices may include references/citations, tables, charts, figures and photographs that support the information in your program of research.

<sup>7</sup> A collaborator is an individual who significantly contributes to the conduct and/or direction of the research or knowledge translation activities.

<sup>8</sup> Information on how to write a letter of collaboration can be found on the [CIHR website](#).



## 13. Review Process

### Indigenous health research panel

As described above in [Section 7, Indigenous Health Research](#), the Indigenous health research panel will review applications with a central focus on meaningful and culturally safe, Indigenous-led research, possibly involving Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, whether recognized as Treaty, Status, or Non-Status. This includes Indigenous people living on reserves and those living in urban and rural communities. Applicants who are undertaking meaningful and culturally safe Indigenous-led research related to health and wellness may request to be reviewed by this panel when completing their application form. The panel will be composed of reviewers with living experience, knowledge, and/or expertise in Indigenous health research. The panel will review applications according to the Scholar and HP-I Evaluation Criteria including the specific Indigenous health research panel evaluation criteria.

### Review process

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

Applications are 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](#).

**For the Scholar competition:** There are separate peer review streams for new faculty recruits (within 0 – 3 years of their first *eligible* appointment) and more established junior faculty (4 – 6 years from their first *eligible* appointment) in order to ensure an equitable review process<sup>9</sup>.

**For the HP-I competition:** There are separate peer review streams for physicians and allied health professionals.

The information presented in the **Evaluation Criteria** and **Rating Scale** sections below is used for the peer review process. A full description of the evaluation criteria can be found on our [website](#). To be **considered** for funding, the application must receive a minimum score of **3.8**.

Health Research BC recognizes that 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

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

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<sup>9</sup> For applicants who have received their first appointment prior to obtaining their PhD, an equivalent separation will be made based on the number of years post-PhD, i.e. the newer faculty pool will include applicants who are 0 – 3 years post-PhD, and the more established faculty pool will include applicants who are 4 – 6 years post-PhD.

Criterion	Weighting
Applicant expertise and experience	30%
Research program	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 application review, the highest rated applications are identified in each applicant stream. Health Research BC intends to support applications from across BC. Applicants are 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 receive notification of the funding decisions and the reviewers' comments. A list of successful applicants is published on Health Research BC's website.

## 14. Award Start Date and Deferral

Unless otherwise indicated, funding for Scholar and HP-I awards begins July 1, 2025. Successful applicants must confirm their acceptance of the award within the stipulated time indicated in the award notification package.

The start date 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 be no later than July 1, 2026. Deferred start dates, once confirmed by Health Research BC, cannot be revised.

## 15. Reporting Requirements

Scholar and HP-I award recipients are required to submit annual progress reports and provide an up-to-date Canadian Common CV (CCV) to Health Research BC for each year of their award. 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, 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 partners reserve the right to contact award recipients up to five years after the award end date to determine the outcomes and/or impacts of the award. Additionally, to inform evaluation and continued improvement of Health Research BC's award programs, award recipients are invited to provide feedback to Health Research BC staff to determine areas of improvement for these funding opportunities.

## **16. Applicant Updates**

Health Research BC will accept updates regarding **new salary awards** received following the full application deadline (January 23, 2025).

Please email all relevant information, including confirmation of award, to Health Research BC staff ([helpdesk@healthresearchbc.ca](mailto:helpdesk@healthresearchbc.ca)) by March 19, 2025.

## Appendix A – Incentive Funding

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

1. Is external to BC
2. Is granted through an open competition
3. Is peer-reviewed
4. Has a total value<sup>10</sup> of 50 percent or more of the value of the Health Research BC Scholar or HP-I award

The incentive funding is available for the duration of the Scholar or HP-I award or to the end of the external award, whichever comes first. Award recipients who receive incentive funding must follow the eligible expenses requirements in Section 3 and complete the reporting requirements stated in Section 15.

### Incentive Funding Scenarios

Incentive funding is applied when:

- The external award totals **less** than the Health Research BC Scholar or HP-I award and is used to raise the combined salary award amount to equal the Scholar or HP-I award, **OR**
- The external award totals **more** than the Health Research BC Scholar or HP-I award and is used to provide an additional amount (\$15,000) on top of the external award.

Health Research BC salary award	External salary award	Effect on Health Research BC salary award
\$90,000	\$60,000	Health Research BC will pay the difference (\$30,000) between the other salary award amount and the Scholar or HP-I award amount so the total sum is \$90,000 per year.
\$90,000	\$100,000	Health Research BC salary award is reduced to \$0 and applicant receives a Health Research BC incentive award of \$15,000.

<sup>10</sup> Inclusive of match funding from other funding sources, if applicable. Total award value applies to the portion used for salary, i.e. it is not inclusive of other components above and beyond salary, such as research or travel allowances.

## Appendix B – Mitacs Accelerate Internships

[Mitacs Accelerate](#) supports collaborative research between faculty, graduate or post-doctoral research interns (trainees) and a non-academic partner that has committed to hosting the trainees for an experiential learning opportunity. Faculty receive flexible funding for new collaborations and experiential training for their trainees. Mitacs Accelerate grants start at \$15,000 per four-month segment through co-funding with an eligible non-academic partner.

Successful Health Research BC applicants have expedited access to Mitacs funding, as Mitacs recognizes the results of the scientific review managed by Health Research BC and requires only an internal evaluation to confirm eligibility and compliance with Mitacs Accelerate program requirements. Scholar or HP-I applicants who have submitted a **Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application** are eligible for this expedited review process.

### How to Apply

Scholar or HP-I applicants interested in including a Mitacs Accelerate internship application in their Health Research BC Scholar or HP-I full application must contact their regional [Mitacs Business Development](#) representative to learn more about the program and obtain a **Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application**. Mitacs will work with interested applicants to determine how best an internship can be integrated into the proposed program of research.

To apply for Mitacs Accelerate funding, Scholar and HP-I applicants will need to include the following in their full application:

- The number of interns and the length of each internship (the identity of the intern(s) is not necessary at this stage).
- The name of the non-academic partner organization in Canada where the internship will take place, and that will provide match funding with Mitacs to co-fund the intern.
- Details of the internship project, including specific objectives, methodologies, timeline, expected deliverables, benefits to the intern, and partner interactions.
- The partner's proposed role in the project, how the partner will benefit from participating, and how the Canadian community will benefit from this research.
- Attach their Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application.

**All questions regarding the Mitacs Accelerate program, such as eligibility, timelines, expectations, and benefits should be directed to [Mitacs](#).**

## Appendix C – Host Institution Selection

Please follow the instructions below to ensure you are choosing the correct host institution. If you have any questions, please connect with the respective contact listed or you can contact Health Research BC.

Location of research project	Instructions to applicants on selection of host institution	Contact
<b>Health Authorities</b>		
First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)	If your research project is being conducted at FNHA, please select FNHA as your host.	<p><b>Payal Batra</b> Director, Research &amp; Knowledge Exchange <a href="mailto:payal.batra@fnha.ca">payal.batra@fnha.ca</a></p> <p><b>Guanghong Han</b> Manager, Research &amp; Knowledge Exchange <a href="mailto:guanghong.han@fnha.ca">guanghong.han@fnha.ca</a></p>
Fraser Health	If your research project is being conducted at Fraser Health, please select Fraser Health as your host.	<p><b>Kate Keetch</b> Director Evaluation &amp; Research Services <a href="mailto:kate.keetch@fraserhealth.ca">kate.keetch@fraserhealth.ca</a></p> <p><b>Ashley Kwon</b> Research Development Specialist <a href="mailto:ashley.kwon@fraserhealth.ca">ashley.kwon@fraserhealth.ca</a></p>
Interior Health	If your research project is being conducted at Interior Health, please select Interior Health as your host.	<p><b>Kim Peake</b> Research Navigation &amp; Community Facilitation Lead <a href="mailto:kim.peake@interiorhealth.ca">kim.peake@interiorhealth.ca</a></p>
Island Health	If your research project is being conducted at Island Health, please select Island Health as your host.	<p><b>Annie Moore</b> Research Education &amp; Grant Facilitator <a href="mailto:isabel.moore@islandhealth.ca">isabel.moore@islandhealth.ca</a></p>
Northern Health	If your research project is being conducted at Northern Health, please select Northern Health as your host.	<p><b>Julia Bickford</b> Regional Director Research Evaluation and Analytics <a href="mailto:julia.bickford@northernhealth.ca">julia.bickford@northernhealth.ca</a></p>

<p>Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) / BC Cancer</p>	<p>If your research project is being conducted at PHSA or its associated sites other than BC Cancer and your paymaster is PHSA, select PHSA as your host and the appropriate site as your Location of Research.</p> <p>Note: Details regarding specific intellectual property (IP) under development may impact identification of the host institution. If you have questions, contact your local research manager.</p> <p>If your research project is being conducted at BC Cancer and your paymaster is PHSA, select BC Cancer as your host and BC Cancer as your Location of Research.</p> <p>If your research project is being conducted at PHSA or its associated sites (including BC Cancer) and your paymaster is UBC, select UBC as your host and PHSA or one of its associated sites (including BC Cancer) as your Location of Research.</p> <p>Please see more information on PHSA host institution selection at: <a href="http://www.phsa.ca/researcher/resources/project-start-up/funding-sources/michael-smith-health-research-bc">http://www.phsa.ca/researcher/resources/project-start-up/funding-sources/michael-smith-health-research-bc</a></p>	<p>General contact for all locations except for BC Cancer: <b>Nur Eisma</b> Research Manager, UBC ORS/BC Children’s Hospital Research Institute <a href="mailto:neisma@bcchr.ubc.ca">neisma@bcchr.ubc.ca</a></p> <p>For BC Cancer applicants: <b>Karen Hagan</b> Grants Officer <a href="mailto:khagan@bccancer.bc.ca">khagan@bccancer.bc.ca</a></p> <p><b>Jillian Lalli</b> Grants Officer <a href="mailto:jillian.lalli@bccancer.bc.ca">jillian.lalli@bccancer.bc.ca</a></p> <p>For BC Women’s applicants: <b>Kathryn Dewar</b> Senior Research Manager <a href="mailto:kdewar@cw.bc.ca">kdewar@cw.bc.ca</a></p> <p>For BC Children’s Health Research applicants: <b>Isabelle Linden</b> BCCHR Research Services Director <a href="mailto:isabelle.linden@bcchr.ca">isabelle.linden@bcchr.ca</a></p> <p>For BC Centre for Disease Control applicants: <b>Priscilla Vuong</b> Research Manager <a href="mailto:priscilla.vuong@bccdc.ca">priscilla.vuong@bccdc.ca</a></p> <p>For BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services applicants: <b>Deborah Ross</b> Provincial Director, Strategic Initiatives <a href="mailto:deborah.ross@phsa.ca">deborah.ross@phsa.ca</a></p> <p>For BC Renal applicants: <b>Dr. Adeera Levin</b> Executive Director <a href="mailto:alevin@providencehealth.bc.ca">alevin@providencehealth.bc.ca</a> <b>cc: Pam Sewell</b> Executive Assistant <a href="mailto:psewell@providencehealth.bc.ca">psewell@providencehealth.bc.ca</a></p>
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<p>Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH)</p>	<p>If your research project is being conducted at VCH and your paymaster is VCH, please select VCH as your host.</p> <p>If your research project is being conducted at VCH and your paymaster is UBC, select UBC as your host.</p>	<p><b>Susan O'Neil</b> Manager, Research VCHRI Office of Research Services <a href="mailto:susan.oneil@ors.ubc.ca">susan.oneil@ors.ubc.ca</a></p>
<b>Universities and Institutes of Technology</b>		
<p>British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)</p>	<p>If your research project is being conducted at BCIT, please select BCIT as your host.</p>	<p><b>Stefan Joseph</b> Program Head Applied Research Liaison Office <a href="mailto:stefan_joseph@bcit.ca">stefan_joseph@bcit.ca</a></p> <p><b>Shan Satoglu</b> Program Head, Healthcare Management BCIT School of Health Sciences <a href="mailto:shan_satoglu@bcit.ca">shan_satoglu@bcit.ca</a></p>
<p>Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU)</p>	<p>If your research project is being conducted at KPU, please select KPU as your host.</p>	<p><b>Cathy Parlee</b> Research Services Specialist <a href="mailto:catherine.parlee@kpu.ca">catherine.parlee@kpu.ca</a></p>
<p>Royal Roads University (RRU)</p>	<p>If your research project is being conducted at RRU, please select RRU as your host.</p>	<p><b>Deborah Zornes</b> Director, Research Services <a href="mailto:deborah.zornes@royalroads.ca">deborah.zornes@royalroads.ca</a></p>
<p>Simon Fraser University (SFU)</p>	<p>If your research project is being conducted at SFU, please select SFU as your host.</p>	<p><b>Primary: Alec Allan</b> Officer, Research Grants <a href="mailto:alec_allan@sfu.ca">alec_allan@sfu.ca</a></p> <p><b>Secondary: Yuzhu Liu</b> Coordinator, Research Services <a href="mailto:ors@sfu.ca">ors@sfu.ca</a></p>
<p>Thompson Rivers University (TRU)</p>	<p>If your research project is being conducted at TRU, please select TRU as your host.</p>	<p><b>Anita Sharma</b> Director, Research Services <a href="mailto:ansharma@tru.ca">ansharma@tru.ca</a></p>
<p>Trinity Western University (TWU)</p>	<p>If your research project is being conducted at TWU, please select TWU as your host.</p>	<p><b>Richard Chandra</b> Associate Provost Research <a href="mailto:richard.chandra@twu.ca">richard.chandra@twu.ca</a></p> <p><b>Sue Funk</b> Research Grants Officer <a href="mailto:sue.funk@twu.ca">sue.funk@twu.ca</a></p>



<p>University of British Columbia (UBC)</p>	<p>If your research project is being conducted at UBC and your paymaster is UBC, please select UBC as your host.</p> <p>If your research project is being conducted at UBC and your paymaster is a health authority, please select the health authority as your host.</p>	<p><b>Phoebe Lu</b> Research Manager, Office of Research Services, VPRI <a href="mailto:phoebe.lu@ors.ubc.ca">phoebe.lu@ors.ubc.ca</a></p> <p><b>Evelina Tolstykh</b> (Faculty of Medicine only) Research Awards &amp; Funding Officer, Faculty of Medicine <a href="mailto:evelina.tolstykh@ubc.ca">evelina.tolstykh@ubc.ca</a></p>
<p>University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC)</p>	<p>If your research project is being conducted at UNBC, please select UNBC as your host.</p>	<p><b>Nicole Balliet</b> Sr. Research Project Officer – Health <a href="mailto:nicole.balliet@unbc.ca">nicole.balliet@unbc.ca</a></p>
<p>University of the Fraser Valley (UFV)</p>	<p>If your research project is being conducted at UFV, please select UFV as your host.</p>	<p><b>Ash Lalani</b> Director, Research Services and Industry Engagement <a href="mailto:ash.lalani@ufv.ca">ash.lalani@ufv.ca</a></p> <p><b>Garry Fehr</b> AVP, Research, Engagement &amp; Graduate Studies <a href="mailto:garry.fehr@ufv.ca">garry.fehr@ufv.ca</a></p> <p><b>Kelly Tracey</b> Officer, Grants &amp; Contracts <a href="mailto:kelly.tracey@ufv.ca">kelly.tracey@ufv.ca</a></p>
<p>University of Victoria (UVic)</p>	<p>If your research project is being conducted at UVic, please select UVic as your host.</p>	<p><b>Cara Pearson</b> Associate Director, Research Grants <a href="mailto:grants@uvic.ca">grants@uvic.ca</a></p>
<p>Vancouver Island University (VIU)</p>	<p>If your research project is being conducted at VIU, please select VIU as your host.</p>	<p><b>Roisin Mulligan</b> Research Development Manager Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity Office <a href="mailto:roisin.mulligan@viu.ca">roisin.mulligan@viu.ca</a></p>

## Appendix D – Frequently Asked Questions

### Eligibility questions for the Scholar competition

#### Who can apply for a Scholar award?

Applicants who have a PhD or equivalent, are within six years from the start of their first academic appointment (at an assistant professor level or equivalent) as of the award start date (July 1, 2025), and can commit to a minimum of 75 percent of their time conducting research are eligible to apply.

#### Can post-doctoral fellows apply for the Scholar award?

Yes, but if they are successful in the Scholar competition, they must have an appointment at a BC institution (university, health authority, or research institute) as of the award start date (July 1, 2025) where they can: (1) apply for and hold peer-reviewed funds as a principal investigator; (2) supervise graduate and post-graduate trainees, and (3) publish research results.

#### Is the Scholar competition open to both PhDs and health professionals?

Yes. Both PhDs and health professionals are encouraged to apply to the Scholar competition as long as they meet all eligibility criteria; however, please note that PhDs and health professional applicants are evaluated under identical criteria in the Scholar competition.

#### Can I apply for the Scholar award if I already hold a Health Research BC (formerly MSFHR) Scholar, Health Professional-Investigator or Innovation to Commercialization award?

No. Applicants cannot currently hold, or have ever held, a Health Research BC (formerly MSFHR) Health Professional-Investigator, Innovation to Commercialization, or Scholar award, in whole or in part.

#### What is the nature of the appointment that I must have with my host institution for the Scholar competition?

The appointment must:

- Allow you to apply for and hold peer-reviewed funds as a principal investigator.
- Allow you to be a research supervisor for graduate and post-graduate trainees.
- Allow you to publish your research results.

#### Will career interruptions be considered when determining my eligibility for the Scholar award? How are they calculated?

Yes, career interruptions will be considered. Applicants are advised to clearly describe any interruptions that occurred after the completion of their PhD degree or their first academic appointment (whichever is later) in the Career Timeline section of the letter of intent (LOI). This information is used by peer reviewers when assessing productivity.

Beginning this year, career interruptions due to parental, medical, caregiving, and bereavement leaves will be credited at twice the amount of time taken for the Scholar award. For example, an applicant who experienced a medical leave of 12 months would have their eligibility window increased by 24 months. Other leaves, including leaves related to career development such as residency training or time spent in a non-research-related position, will receive a credit equal to the amount of time taken. If you have questions about how your career interruption should be credited, please contact [scholar@healthresearchbc.ca](mailto:scholar@healthresearchbc.ca).

For more details on how Scholar award eligibility is calculated, see [Section 4, Eligibility Requirements](#).

### **I am transitioning from my post-doctoral position to my first faculty appointment and applying for a Scholar award. Will I be evaluated against early career researchers who have been faculty members for several years?**

No. Applications within 0 – 3 years of their first appointment will be separated from those who are between 4 – 6 years from their first appointment to ensure equitable evaluation and scoring between new faculty recruits and more established faculty. Applications within their respective pools are then reviewed and assessed **relative to each other**. Furthermore, reviewers are instructed to assess research independence in context of an applicant's **relative career stage**. That is, applicants who have more recently completed their post-doctoral studies will likely have more evidence for **potential** research independence compared to applicants applying closer to the end of the five-year eligibility window, who will likely show more examples of **demonstrated** research independence. Reviewers are instructed that within each context, both are legitimate forms of research independence.

## **Eligibility questions for the Health Professional-Investigator (HP-I) competition**

### **Who should apply for an HP-I award?**

The HP-I award is designed to increase the research capability of practicing health professionals, allowing them to conduct and apply research that leverages their practical knowledge in patient care in order to improve the patient experience and outcomes. The applicant must be a clinician, health practitioner, and/or health care provider whose role requires clinical decision-making, and they must demonstrate a committed interest in pursuing research. See [Section 4, Eligibility Requirements](#) for more information and [view decision key information](#).

### **Are all health professions eligible for the HP-I award?**

Eligibility for the HP-I award is limited to [regulated health professionals](#) recognized by the [BC Health Regulators](#) who hold a valid license to practice in BC and are a member in good standing of the appropriate regulatory college, OR who are a board-certified/board-eligible health professional and a member in good standing of the appropriate provincial/national certification body.

For physician applicants, this means being recognized as a physician, dental surgeon, or podiatric surgeon by [BC Health Regulators](#).

For allied health applicants, this means being a member of a [regulated health profession](#), excluding physicians and surgeons. If your health profession is not regulated under the Health Professions Act, please contact [HPI@healthresearchbc.ca](mailto:HPI@healthresearchbc.ca) to confirm eligibility.

### **Can research associates and post-doctoral fellows apply for an HP-I award?**

Yes, but they must meet all other program eligibility criteria.

### **What is the nature of the appointment that I must have with a BC host institution?**

The appointment must allow you to apply for and hold research funding, engage in independent research activities, and publish research findings. Depending on your institution, this can include academic, clinical and institutional research appointments, among others. Please check with your institution to make sure your appointment meets program eligibility.

**I am a health professional, but I oversee other health professionals who engage directly in patient care, and I am not directly involved in making clinical judgments/decisions. Am I eligible to apply for the HP-I award?**

No. Eligible health professionals who do not make clinical judgments and/or clinical decisions that impact patients and/or patient care (i.e. all time devoted to administration, teaching and/or research) are not eligible. The HP-I Program is primarily designed to allow for the release time from clinical practice of health professionals to allow them to pursue their research interests.

**Can I apply for an HP-I award if I already hold a Health Research BC (formerly MSFHR) Scholar, Health Professional-Investigator or Innovation to Commercialization award?**

No. Applicants cannot currently hold or have ever held a Health Research BC (formerly MSFHR) Health Professional-Investigator, Innovation to Commercialization, or Scholar award, in whole or in part.

**Why are there separate applicant streams for physicians and allied health professionals?**

Health Research BC recognizes that there are fundamental differences between physicians and allied health professionals in their research training, career progression and access to research support and resources. Therefore, these groups are evaluated separately to ensure a more equitable comparison.

**Which applicant stream should I choose?**

Applicants must select the most applicable stream for their background – physician or allied health professional — and only one stream can be selected per application. See [Section 4, Eligibility Requirements](#) for more information.

**I'm a practicing health professional who was allowed to hold research funds as an independent investigator in my prior or current role, but I didn't actually do so until (possibly much) later. What date should I enter as my "date of first research appointment"?**

For the HP-I competition, the date of first research appointment that you identify is used by peer reviewers to understand your research career trajectory and does not contribute to the calculation of an eligibility window. If you are applying to the HP-I Program and there is a significant gap between when you started a role that technically allowed you to hold research funding and conduct independent research, and when you began (or will begin) to hold research funds as an independent researcher, you may enter the later date if you feel this best represents when your active research career began. You may wish to consider using the open-ended "Career Trajectory" question to clarify any discrepancy in dates.

## **Application Questions relating to both Scholar and HP-I Programs**

**My project proposal includes work relevant to Indigenous health. Is there anything I should be aware of?**

Guided by advice from Indigenous partners, award holders, peer reviewers and advisors, Health Research BC is introducing a distinct peer review panel for Indigenous-led health research applications to the 2025 Scholar and HP-I competitions. Please see [Section 7, Indigenous Health Research](#) for more details. Applicants who are undertaking meaningful and culturally safe Indigenous-led research related to health and wellness may request to be reviewed by the Indigenous health research panel when completing the application form. If you are unsure about whether you should request to have your application reviewed by the Indigenous health research panel, please contact the competition coordinator ([scholar@healthresearchbc.ca](mailto:scholar@healthresearchbc.ca) or [HPI@healthresearchbc.ca](mailto:HPI@healthresearchbc.ca)).

Health Research BC expects applicants in all panels 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 \(2022\)](#). When appropriate, applicants must also describe their data management plan in accordance with the First Nations principles of [OCAP®: ownership, control, access and possession](#) and/or Indigenous partnering community / organizational ethical guidelines. Additional resources for researchers can be found on the [First Nations Health Authority](#) website and at Health Research BC's [Indigenous Research Ethics Resources](#).

### What do you mean by “Indigenous-led” health research? Do I need to self-identify as an Indigenous person to apply to the Indigenous health research panel?

Indigenous-led health research means that Indigenous people, communities and/or organizations have a central role in leading or co-leading the research project. You do not need to self-identify as an Indigenous person in order to submit your application to the Indigenous health research panel. Please refer to the Evaluation Criteria for a complete list of assessment criteria and descriptors that will be considered by the Indigenous health research panel. If you have questions about whether you should submit your application to this panel, please contact the competition coordinator ([scholar@healthresearchbc.ca](mailto:scholar@healthresearchbc.ca) or [HPI@healthresearchbc.ca](mailto:HPI@healthresearchbc.ca)).

### What is a host institution?

The host institution is the institution that administers funds for the duration of the award and where the majority of the resources to support the project are provided (e.g. infrastructure, human resources, administration, etc.). Host institutions **must** have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Health Research BC. View a complete list of [eligible host institutions](#).

If you are uncertain which host institution to apply through, we recommend initiating discussions with your department head, dean or equivalent **early in the application process** to determine the best institution to host your application and award.

### What is independent research?

Independent research refers to when a researcher is no longer part of a formalized research training program, and no longer under the direct supervision of an academic supervisor. The researcher is engaged in a systematic, intensive study that is intended to increase knowledge or understanding of the topic being studied, apply new knowledge to meet a recognized gap, and apply new knowledge to the creation of useful material, devices, and systems or methods.

### The Canadian Common CV is no longer an application upload. What is changing in the application process?

Our updated application form allows researchers to provide a more comprehensive picture of the quality of their research and how it influences practice, policy and future research. It helps reviewers look beyond indicators such as number of citations, journal impact factors, and size and number of research grants. Most of these adjustments were already made in the 2024 applications. This year, we have removed the CCV requirement and added three new questions to provide information on supervision of trainees, career history, and experience leading or participating in funded research projects. These minor adjustments reduce the collection of redundant information while minimizing

applicant burden. Evolving our application process reflects our continued commitments to advancing equity, diversity and inclusion and to fair and equitable assessment of research outputs.

### **What does this mean for applicants?**

The streamlined application process means applicants will no longer be able to include a Canadian Common CV in Scholar and HP-I applications. The application forms are mostly unchanged from last year with the addition of three new questions to provide reviewers with the necessary information for assessing the applications. The three new questions focus on supervision of trainees, career history, and experience leading or participating in funded research projects.

### **Will the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic be considered as part of my application?**

Applicants will be able to describe the impacts of the pandemic in questions in the Career Timeline section of the application form. These questions also allow applicants to describe the impacts of other life events on the applicant's career, research activities, and research outputs. Review panels will receive guidance from Health Research BC to appropriately consider the impacts of factors beyond the applicant's control when assessing applications.

### **Why does Health Research BC refer to knowledge translation (KT) activities as “pathway to impact”?**

Health Research BC defines knowledge translation (KT) 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 research project or program, or the study of those KT activities themselves, is the “pathway to impact” for the use of health research evidence. That is, those KT activities, and/or the study of those KT activities, are unique research-study specific steps embedded in the design, conduct and use of research that aim to increase the impact of the evidence generated in that study. KT activities may include synthesis, dissemination, knowledge exchange, and/or implementation of research evidence, and/or the science of evidence synthesis, the science of knowledge exchange, dissemination science and/or implementation science.

### **What are the requirements for embedding pathway to impact activities within the research program?**

Health Research BC requires Scholar and HP-I applicants from all disciplines to include proposed pathway to impact activities, as appropriate, as part of the proposed research program. 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](#).

### **The availability of mentors for the applicant is included as part of the evaluation criteria within the environment and support category. What does this mean?**

Mentoring provides a network of support and resources for new and junior faculty to learn policies and practices more efficiently, and provide guidance when challenges inevitably arise. For example, junior faculty members who are mentored are more likely to be successful at navigating the tenure process, increasing the chances of career success. Furthermore, accomplished faculty members who are well mentored are most likely to become effective mentors themselves. Given the importance mentorship plays for new and junior faculty, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide evidence of this within their application and ensure that the availability of mentorship is explicitly included in the Department Head Form.



Mentorship and collaboration activities can exist in research networks both within and external to the host institution.

### **Where can I find the list of available potential Scholar and HP-I award partners?**

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 their scientific summary within the application captures at least one of the keywords. At the full application stage, applicants will see a list of potential partners in the application form. Potential partners that come onboard after the full application launch will be listed on our website.

### **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 reviewed for potential partnership matches and may be eligible for partnership opportunities whether or not interest is expressed at the application stage.

If potential partners are secured after the full application stage, Health Research BC staff will match the keywords provided by the partner with the lay and scientific summaries of applicants. If a match is identified, they will inform the respective applicant after peer review.

### **How do I get help with developing a Mitacs Accelerate proposal?**

Applicants interested in including Mitacs Accelerate internships in their Health Research BC Scholar application **must** contact their regional [Mitacs Business Development](#) representative to learn more about the Mitacs Accelerate program and obtain a Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application. Mitacs must work with interested applicants to determine how best an internship can be integrated into the proposed research program.

All questions regarding the Accelerate program, such as eligibility, timelines, expectations, and benefits should be directed to Mitacs.

## **Third Parties (Dean, Department Head, Collaborators and References)**

### **How many reference letters do I need for my application?**

Reference letters are no longer required or accepted for either the Scholar or HP-I competitions.

### **Will I be at a disadvantage if the dean or the department head (or equivalent) indicates that my appointment is conditional upon my success in the Scholar or HP-I competition?**

Institutional support is an important component of the Scholar and HP-I application and review processes. We recommend that applicants discuss the Department Head form questions with their department head (or equivalent) prior to submitting their application. A host institution should demonstrate a strong commitment to the applicant regardless of their success in the competition.

### **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 the applicant's work. Letters of collaboration are written by collaborators or partners who are expected to make a significant contribution to the applicant's research program 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 still reference work that I am doing with Health Research BC departments (including Clinical Trials BC, Knowledge Translation, Research Ethics BC, BC SUPPORT Unit) in my application form?**

Work with or supported by one of Health Research BC's departments may be described or referenced in your application (e.g. in the description of knowledge translation activities, in the description of the proposed work section, etc.). However, applicants must not include the name of employees of Health Research BC in their application form except where specifically requested in the "Collaboration or Support by Health Research BC Department" section (see below).

**My research project includes collaborative work with a Health Research BC department (including Clinical Trials BC, Knowledge Translation, Research Ethics BC, BC SUPPORT Unit). What can I do to verify to peer reviewers that I have developed a working relationship with this Health Research BC department?**

Applicants may not submit Letters of Collaboration from Health Research BC departments. Health Research BC has implemented a verification process for applicants who plan to collaborate with departments within Health Research BC. This process will replace having a Letter of Collaboration from a department of Health Research BC. Applicants will be asked for information on collaborations with Health Research BC departments in the application form. Health Research BC staff will verify the relationship between the applicant and the staff person and provide a statement verifying this relationship in the application form that is provided to peer reviewers. The verification process is not an endorsement of the application, only a verification of the collaboration between the applicant and the Health Research BC department.

**My appointment is with a university, but my research will be conducted at a different site. Who should complete the Dean Form?**

The dean (or equivalent) of the host institution that will administer the funds should complete the Dean Form in Health Research BC ApplyNet.

**My host institution (e.g. health authority) does not require the approval of a dean. Who completes the Dean Form in Health Research BC ApplyNet?**

Do not nominate a dean in the Third Party section in Health Research BC ApplyNet. The department head or equivalent at the health authority completes additional questions in the Department Head Form that captures the information required of the dean.

**I have a joint appointment with two or more institutions. How do I select my host institution for this application?**

The host institution is the institution that administers funds for the duration of the award and where the majority of resources are provided to support the project (e.g. infrastructure, human resources, administration, etc.). It does not need to be the same BC institution where the appointment is held. Host institutions must have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Health Research BC. View a complete list of [eligible host institutions](#). See Appendix C for information on who to reach out to in order to choose your host institution.



**My host institution has a dean (or equivalent) but no department head. What form needs to be completed?**

Your dean (or equivalent) should complete the Department Head Form instead of the Dean Form. The Department Head Form contains more detailed questions about the nature of the applicant's appointment. Please follow the instructions in the application form on how to do this.

**Where in the application does the department head, or equivalent, indicate their commitment to protect a minimum of 75 percent of the applicant's time for research (Scholar award) or 50 percent of the applicant's time for research (HP-I award)?**

This commitment must be indicated in the Department Head Form (or equivalent).

## **Award Administration Questions**

**Can I defer the start date of the Scholar or HP-I award?**

Deferrals may only be requested for the following reasons: medical or parental leave, bereavement and caregiving. Other reasons not stated are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If a deferral is required, you **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 July 1, 2026. Deferred start dates, once confirmed by Health Research BC, cannot be revised.

**How much time do I have to respond to an offer of the Scholar or HP-I award?**

Successful award recipients have a minimum of five business days to accept or decline the award as of the date on the funding notification letter.

**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 department head or equivalent (which also confirms your research appointment) must be uploaded in PDF format to Health Research BC ApplyNet via the "Accept Award Agreement" form.

If you hold other external funding, you are also 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.