



Michael Smith  
**Health  
Research BC**

## **2026 Research Trainee Program**

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### **CONDITIONS OF AWARD**

#### **DEADLINES**

Letter of intent: November 27, 2025, 4:30 p.m. PT  
Full application: January 29, 2026, 4:30 p.m. PT

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## 1. General

- 1.1. Compliance with these Conditions of Award is mandatory for Michael Smith Health Research BC's (Health Research BC) continued support of the Research Trainee award. Award recipients and host institutions are required to respond in a timely fashion to any requests from Health Research BC personnel regarding the verification of compliance of these Conditions of Award.
- 1.2. Award recipients must retain their appointment as a post-doctoral fellow at an eligible<sup>1</sup> BC host institution during the term of the Research Trainee award.
- 1.3. Funding received from Health Research BC can be used only for the purpose intended by the Research Trainee Program.
- 1.4. Successful applicants are required to confirm their acceptance of the award within the stipulated time indicated in the award notification package, or the award will be rescinded.
- 1.5. 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](#)

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 [TCPS 2 – 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, award recipients must also comply with the First Nations principles of [OCAP®: ownership, control, access and possession](#) and/or Indigenous partnering community / organizational ethical guidelines.

Any breach of ethics, conflict of interest or scientific integrity must promptly be reported to Health Research BC by the host institution. Health Research BC reserves the right to investigate and/or impose any sanctions it determines to be appropriate.

- 1.6. Health Research BC will not be responsible for any expenditure over and above the approved amount of the Research Trainee award, or for any expenses incurred prior to or after the funding period of the Research Trainee award. All unexpended funds at the end of the award funding period must be returned to Health Research BC.
- 1.7. Funding will be guaranteed for the first **twelve (12) months** of the award. Future funding will be contingent upon:

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<sup>1</sup> An institution that has a signed memorandum of understanding with Health Research BC.

- Timely submission of all reports.
- A satisfactory review of the annual progress reports detailing research-related activities and research outcomes.
- Future funding of Health Research BC by the provincial government and annual budgetary approval by Health Research BC's Board of Directors.

1.8. Award recipients and/or host institutions must advise Health Research BC promptly in writing of any major changes during the funding period with regard to status and academic affiliation of the post-doctoral fellow and/or supervisor. Health Research BC will determine the impact of the change and may decide to continue funding or, in some cases, terminate the award.

1.9. Award recipients may not currently hold, or have ever held, an MSFHR (now Michael Smith Health Research BC) post-doctoral Research Trainee award.

1.10. Host institutions must administer any awards granted by Health Research BC in accordance with the memorandum of understanding signed.

1.11. Following the receipt of the signed *Research Trainee Award Acceptance Form*, payment will be transferred electronically to the host institution as identified in the application in quarterly installments.

1.12. Award recipients consent to the disclosure of their information under the following circumstances:

- Health Research BC reserves the right to publish and/or disseminate information regarding the Research Trainee award and award recipients.
- Health Research BC will use the information provided in the application for processing the application for peer review, partnership support, payment, monitoring and evaluation of the Research Trainee award, and other administrative purposes.
- To meet Health Research BC's obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information, details of awards and award recipients are also made available on Health Research BC's website, and in reports, documents and disclosures to government, partners, interested parties and/or the public.

1.13. All publications and public messages regarding the research or initiative supported by the Health Research BC award must acknowledge the support of Health Research BC.

1.14. Health Research BC expects award recipients to disseminate their work and experiences through traditional and non-traditional activities such as educational sessions with patients, practitioners or policy-makers; media engagement; and social media to maximize the impact and utility of their work.

1.15. Award recipients must ensure that all final peer-reviewed journal manuscripts arising from research supported by the award (in whole or in part) are accessible without charge through either the publisher's website or an online repository within **twelve (12) months** of publication. If these methods are not possible, award recipients should make every effort to ensure these publications are available to the public, such as posting them on their own website or providing copies (paper or electronic) upon request.

1.16. All Health Research BC awards are held by the host institution and may be subject to audits or inspection.

- 1.17. Failure to submit a final report or the accompanying financial statement, or any other information requested by Health Research BC within the designated time frame may result in the denial of new applications to other Health Research BC funding programs by the award recipient until the outstanding documents are received.
- 1.18. Award recipients and host institutions must notify Health Research BC promptly in writing if an award is not held for the full period approved. The purpose is to facilitate corresponding prorated reductions in the stipend, and research and travel allowance.
- 1.19. The Research Trainee award is to be implemented by the host institution and award recipient independent of Health Research BC. Management, compensation and termination of any personnel funded by the award should be conducted in accordance with these award conditions and the host institution's policies but is otherwise wholly within the discretion and power of the award recipient and the host institution. Health Research BC shall not be liable for and is hereby released and indemnified by the host institution for all liability or responsibility related to the conduct of the award recipient.
- 1.20. Award recipients must contribute to the monitoring, review and evaluation of Health Research BC's programs, policies and processes by participating in evaluation studies, surveys or interviews, and provide data or reports as required for the purpose of collecting information to assess progress and results.
- 1.21. The Research Trainee award may be terminated at any time for good or sufficient reason by the award recipient, the host institution, or Health Research BC.

## **2. Responsibilities of the Award Recipients**

The Research Trainee award is effective September 1, 2026. Deferrals may only be requested for the following reasons: relocation, medical or parental leave, and caregiving. Other reasons not stated will be 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, 2027. **Deferred start dates, once confirmed by Health Research BC, cannot be revised.**

Applicants who have not met degree requirements by September 1, 2026, will have their award rescinded, except in unusual circumstances and with prior approval from Health Research BC. Deferral of the start date of the award to meet the eligibility requirement for PhD or health professional degree completion will only be accepted on a case-by-case basis with prior approval from Health Research BC.

- 2.1. The Research Trainee award must be held in British Columbia.

Award recipients must:

- 2.2. Hold a post-doctoral fellow position, or equivalent at an eligible BC host institution that holds a memorandum of understanding with Health Research BC for the duration of the Health Research BC award.

- 2.3. PhD or equivalent award recipients must commit at minimum 75 percent of their time to health research training activities. This represents no fewer than 30 hours per week. Health professionals in active clinical service must commit at least 50 percent of their time to health research activities. This represents no fewer than 20 hours per week.
- 2.4. Notify Health Research BC as soon as it is known if their Research Trainee award will not be held for the full duration.
- 2.5. Inform Health Research BC in writing **thirty (30) days** prior to leaving their post-doctoral position held during the award to take up another position.
- 2.6. In accordance with their host institution's policies, seek patent, copyright and design protection for intellectual property likely to result in a commercial product.

### **3. Funding from Other Sources**

- 3.1. Within the first **twelve (12) months** of a Research Trainee award, award recipients are required to apply for and accept, when offered, external salary awards from major national or international funding agencies. Health Research BC considers a salary award to be external if the award meets **all** the four conditions below:
  - Is external to BC
  - Is granted through an open competition
  - Is peer-reviewed
  - Has a total value<sup>2</sup> of 50 percent or more of the value of the Health Research BC Research Trainee award

Award recipients may be eligible to receive a top-up and/or incentive award for the stipend, and research and travel allowance. Additional awards and remuneration may be held/earned at the discretion of the host institution.

- 3.2. Award recipients must inform Health Research BC in writing of the receipt of any other salary award funding within **thirty (30) days** of receipt of notification of the other funding. The notification must include a copy of the document that states the source, amount, and start and end dates of the funding.
- 3.3. Award recipients who also receive additional BC-based, non-peer-reviewed awards can keep the awards that have a value not exceeding 50 percent of their Health Research BC Research Trainee award. BC-based, non-peer-reviewed awards with a value exceeding 50 percent of the Health Research BC Research Trainee awards will be treated the same as external awards.

### **4. Partnered Awards**

- 4.1. All Health Research BC award conditions apply to partnered awards; the total value of the award remains at Health Research BC amounts.

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<sup>2</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.

4.2. Award recipients who receive partnered awards may be required to commit to the partnership organization's request for participation in select activities; e.g. attend an event, contribute to their website or internal communication regarding the research.

## 5. Reporting Requirements

Award recipients must submit all required reports within the stipulated time. Failure to submit reports may result in your award being placed on hold:

- 5.1. An annual progress report to update Health Research BC on their research activities.
- 5.2. A final progress report within **thirty (30) days** following the award end date.
- 5.3. Submit a final financial statement to Health Research BC within **three (3) months** following completion of the Research Trainee award.
- 5.4. Contribute to Health Research BC's monitoring, review, and evaluation of programs by participating in annual reviews, surveys, and other activities organized for the purpose of collecting information to assess progress and results. Research Trainee awardees are required to participate in these activities during the course of their award and up to **five (5) years** post award.
- 5.5. Health Research BC reserves the right to contact award recipients at any time during or after the award as an evaluation activity to track middle- and longer-term evaluation and research impact outcomes.
- 5.6. Recipients of partner funds may be required to complete additional requests for information to support partnership.

## 6. Change of Supervisor, Co-Supervisor, or Host Institution

Award recipients are required to complete their training under the original sponsoring supervisor(s), adhere to the research project outlined in the submitted application, and remain in the approved training location (host institution). Changes to any of the above must be requested in writing to Health Research BC at least **thirty (30) days** in advance of the change.

### Change of Supervisor/Co-Supervisor

The award recipient must:

- Have the new supervisor(s) complete the Health Research BC Supervisor Form.
- Outline any changes to the approved research plan.
- Provide an acknowledgement of the change from the original supervisor(s) or their department.

### Change of Host Institution

The award recipient must:

- Provide a description of the new host institution and justification for the proposed transfer.

- Be aware that if a new supervisor(s) is required, they must hold an academic appointment at an eligible BC host institution, be physically present in BC and complete the Health Research BC Supervisor Form.

## 7. Acknowledgement of Health Research BC and Partners

Award recipients must:

- 7.1. Acknowledge the support given by Health Research BC and partners in any publication or public messages made while holding a Health Research BC award or resulting from the tenure of the award. Acknowledgement of Health Research BC support should include, where appropriate, Health Research BC's logo (see <https://healthresearchbc.ca/media-toolkit/> for logos and usage guidelines). Copies of these publications are not required by Health Research BC or their partners.
- 7.2. Refer to themselves as a **Michael Smith Health Research BC Research Trainee**, and acknowledge Health Research BC in the signature line of their correspondence.

If it is a partnered award, refer to themselves as a **Michael Smith Health Research BC/Name of Partner(s) Research Trainee**, and acknowledge Health Research BC and the partner(s) in the signature line of their correspondence. Health Research BC/Partner award recipients may be required to meet specific communication needs of the partner.

## 8. Responsibilities of the Host Institution

The host institution must:

- 8.1. Provide physical, organizational, policy and procedural infrastructure for the conduct of research.
- 8.2. Be responsible for any expenditure over and above the approved amount of the Research Trainee award or for any expenses incurred prior to the effective start date of the Research Trainee award. Health Research BC is not responsible for any expenses incurred prior to the start date of the Research Trainee award.
- 8.3. Have a signed memorandum of understanding with Health Research BC.
- 8.4. Acknowledge that additional awards and remuneration may be earned by the award recipient at the discretion of the host institution.
- 8.5. Notify Health Research BC if the Research Trainee award is not held for the full duration approved, as a prorated reduction in salary award may be made.
- 8.6. Ensure that award recipients are paid in accordance with the host institution's payroll policy. Health Research BC will transfer the award funds to the host institution in quarterly instalments.
- 8.7. Inform Health Research BC 2 months prior to leaves (with the exception of vacation leaves) sanctioned to the award recipient.

- 8.8. Provide access to all accounts, records and other information related to the Research Trainee award that Health Research BC may reasonably request during the course of an on-site monitoring visit or inquiry, and respond fully and frankly to any requests Health Research BC may make for information concerning specific grant accounts.
- 8.9. Allow its financial records related to this award to be audited by an independent auditing firm.
- 8.10. Determine ownership of Health Research BC funded intellectual property and responsibility for its identification, protection, management and exploitation.
- 8.11. Health Research BC will not be liable for any costs or liabilities arising from any research activity funded by the Research Trainee award. The host institution will fully defend and indemnify Health Research BC with respect to any claims brought against Health Research BC in this regard.

## **9. Responsibilities of the Supervisor(s)**

Supervisor(s) must:

- 9.1. Commit to supervising the Health Research BC Research Trainee's research and provide the resources that are necessary for the successful completion of the research project including any knowledge translation (KT) activities, as appropriate.
- 9.2. Commit to administering the research and travel allowance of the award recipient.
- 9.3. Respect the obligations described in Health Research BC's Research Trainee competition guidelines and Conditions of Award, as well as those of the host institution as they relate to the role of a trainee supervisor.
- 9.4. Ensure the award recipient:
  - Respects and abides by the obligations described in Health Research BC's Research Trainee competition guidelines, Conditions of Award, supervisor's letter for annual progress reports, 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 including eligibility status, and meets all reporting requirements of Health Research BC in a timely fashion.
- 9.5. The co-supervisor agrees to all of the above and in addition, provides academic support when the primary supervisor is unavailable (e.g. sabbatical leave, extended sick leave).

## **10. Leaves**

The general policies of the host institution relating to vacation, extended illness, parental, family or other types of leaves of absence shall apply to Research Trainee award recipients. A minimum **two (2) months** prior approval must be obtained from Health Research BC for leaves other than vacation.

## Leaves of Absence

- A letter to Health Research BC outlining the reason(s) for the leave.
- A letter from the primary supervisor in support of the leave.

If approved, award funding is on hold for the duration of the leave. The period of leave will be added to the term of the award.

## Paid Parental Leave<sup>3</sup>

Award recipients may be eligible to receive a paid parental leave for a maximum of **six (6) months** during the term of the Health Research BC award in order to be the primary caregiver for the child/children. The leave must be taken within 13 months of the birth and/or adoption of the child/children. Award recipients may start the leave up to 13 weeks before the expected birth date. If both parents are Health Research BC award recipients, they may share the paid leave for a cumulative maximum of six months. An award recipient may request a parental leave for every birth and/or adoption that occurs during the tenure of the Health Research BC award. Award recipients will be paid the same rate excluding research and travel allowance during the leave.

Requests for paid parental leave must be in writing and submitted to Health Research BC **two (2) months** in advance of the start date of the leave. The request from the award recipient must include the following:

- Start and end date of the leave.
- Statement acknowledging that the award recipient is the primary caregiver for the child.
- Statement acknowledging that during the leave, the award recipient will not be actively engaged in studies/research activities or employed in any capacity.
- If the award recipient also holds an external award, a letter from the external funding agency indicating the dates of parental leave and the new award end date.
- Letter from the primary supervisor providing approval for the leave and confirming the start and end dates of the leave.

Health Research BC reserves the right to request additional supporting documentation.

## Unpaid Parental Leave

Award recipients may apply for unpaid parental leave in addition to any requested paid parental leave. The sum of the entire parental leave (including paid and unpaid) may not exceed 18 months. Unpaid parental leave may be taken as one large interruption or in smaller increments. Requests for unpaid parental leave must be in writing and submitted **thirty (30) days** prior to the beginning of the desired leave period and include:

- Start and end date of the leave.
- Letter from primary supervisor providing approval for the unpaid leave and confirming the start and end dates.

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<sup>3</sup> Parental leave is defined as a leave of absence offered to parents who are caring for a newborn or newly adopted child. This leave may begin no later than six months after the birth or adoption of a child.

Upon written confirmation of return to the research training location after paid and/or unpaid parental leave, Health Research BC will reinstate the research and travel allowance. The award end date will be extended by the duration of the parental leave and the award recipient will continue to receive the research and travel allowance to the end of the award term.

## 11. No-Cost Extensions

- 11.1. No-cost extensions are only applicable for the research and travel allowance.
- 11.2. A no-cost extension of up to **three (3) months** after the award end date may be requested for the research and travel allowance. Longer extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis. A request for a no-cost extension must be made **thirty (30) days** prior to the award end date.

No extensions will be granted if the award recipient contacts Health Research BC after the award end date. Any unspent research and travel allowance funds must be returned to Health Research BC at the end of the award.

- 11.3. A request for a no-cost extension must include the following:

- The duration of the no-cost extension.
- Justification for the request.
- Confirmation from the primary supervisor that the justification and duration is approved.

- 11.4. The final report will be required within **thirty (30) days**, and the final financial statement within **three (3) months** from the end date of the no-cost extension.

## 12. Termination of Awards

Health Research BC reserves the right to terminate the award:

- 12.1. If a contract of employment between the host institution and the award recipient is terminated. No liability for payment of other compensatory payment for dismissal of staff funded by the Research Trainee award will be accepted by Health Research BC and the host institution will fully indemnify Health Research BC with respect to any claims brought against Health Research BC in this regard.
- 12.2. If there is significant lack of progress, or for any unacceptable changes to the approved research objectives identified in the application.
- 12.3. If there is a major deviation from these Conditions of Award. Any remaining funds must be returned by the host institution to Health Research BC.