



Michael Smith  
**Health  
Research BC**

## **2023 Scholar Program**

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### **GUIDELINES**

### **DEADLINES**

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

Full application: January 30, 2023, 4:30 p.m. PT

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## Help with your Application

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

**Andrew Biagtan**

Research Competitions Coordinator

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

604.730.8322

## 1. Introduction

Michael Smith Health Research BC (Health Research BC), is British Columbia's health research agency. Launched in 2021, Health Research BC brings together the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR) and the BC Academic Health Science Network (BC AHSN). We are working towards a future where BC is recognized worldwide for its vibrant, coherent, inclusive, and globally competitive health research system, which improves the health of British Columbians, the health system, and the economy. Learn more at [www.healthresearchbc.ca](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. The COVID-19 pandemic has created rapid change and uncertainty within BC's health research community.

Health Research BC continues to reach out to stakeholders in BC's health research system to better understand current needs. Using our program learning and improvement cycle, we continue to grow and evolve our health research funding programs to ensure they meet the needs of BC's health research and life sciences community. Beginning with the 2021 Scholar competition, Health Research BC implemented changes to our program eligibility, application and review process to account for the impact of the pandemic on research outputs and activities.

### Purpose

Health Research BC's Scholar Program is designed to attract and foster the development of outstanding health researchers from across BC. Scholar awards help enable early career researchers to build leading-edge health research programs, train the next generation of scientists, and make significant contributions to their field. The Scholar Program protects dedicated time for health research activities for award recipients through salary support.

### Objectives

Health Research BC has a strategic commitment to develop health research talent and strengthen health research capacity across BC. Through the Scholar Program, we support early career

researchers to form their own research teams and develop strong research programs that advance cutting-edge health solutions.

The specific objectives of this 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.

## 2. Key Competition Dates

Action	Target Date
Competition launch	Early November 2022
LOI deadline for applicants	December 5, 2022, 4:30 p.m. PT
Full application deadline (applicants)	January 30, 2023, 4:30 p.m. PT
Full application deadline (host institution)	February 6, 2023, 4:30 p.m. PT
Anticipated notice of funding decision	June 2023
Anticipated start of funding	July 1, 2023

## 3. Award Amount and Duration

Health Research BC is committed to developing the health research talent BC needs through investments in the Scholar Program. Over the past three years, Health Research BC has awarded an average of 26 new Scholar awards in each competition, for an average success rate of 42 percent.

The Scholar award provides salary support at \$90,000 per annum for up to **five years**. Scholar 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 award cannot be used as an operating grant.

### Eligible Expenses

- Salary and/or benefits of the award recipient.
- Stipends/salary of students, post-doctoral fellows, research assistants, and technicians directly involved in the research activities of the award recipient.
- Salary and/or benefits of personnel who provide teaching relief to enable the award recipient to maintain protected time. For example, sessional instructors.

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 award are eligible to receive incentive funding. See **Appendix A** for details about incentive funding.

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

## 4. Eligibility Requirements

At the time of application, applicants must:

- Have a PhD, or equivalent, and 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>.
- Be within six years from the start of their first university 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, 2023**, whichever comes last. (Note: Beginning in the 2021 Scholar competition, Health Research BC has adjusted this eligibility requirement in recognition of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.)
  - Justified career interruptions (e.g. parental leave for birth or adoption, medical leave, residency training, clinical licensing, etc.) are deducted from the calculation.
  - 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). The same formula applies for the five-year window for obtaining a PhD (e.g. for a part-time PhD student).
- 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, 2023) that allows the applicant to:
  - a. Apply for and hold peer-reviewed funds as a principal investigator.
  - b. Be a research supervisor for graduate and post-graduate trainees.
  - c. Publish their research results.
- The application will require 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.
- Not currently hold or have ever held an MSFHR (now 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 (now Michael Smith Health Research BC) funding.

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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.

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

## 5. Commitment from Host Institution

**New for 2023:** 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.). View a complete list of [eligible host institutions](#).

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.
- 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 on the program of research funded by the award.

## 6. Research Ethics

Health Research BC Scholars must comply with the ethical and research policies outlined by the host institution and the [Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research](#). This includes, but is not limited to:

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

## 7. Indigenous Health Research

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

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

Health Research BC expects applicants to approach their research and knowledge translation activities with culturally safe practices that demonstrate humility, integrity, accountability and respect for Indigenous self-determination. Applicants must comply with the ethical and research policies outlined in

[Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#) of the [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#) (2018). When appropriate, applicants must also describe their data management plan in accordance with the First Nations principles of [OCAP®: ownership, control, access and possession](#).

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

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

Health Research BC has a [strategic commitment](#) to addressing systemic inequities in the health research system. Diversity in research is important to cultivating talent and promoting inclusive excellence, which in turn drives discovery and helps build a more equitable health research system.

Data from Canada and around the world show a lack of diversity in the research system, as well as systemic inequities in access to research jobs, funding and other resources. These inequities disproportionately and negatively affect groups who have been historically underrepresented among researchers and in academia, including those who are Indigenous, Black and people of colour, LGBTQ2S+ people and people with disabilities.

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

**New for 2023:** A section in the application form will be provided for applicants to describe how they 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.

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

- Peer reviewed publications, pre-print articles, or other publications
- Datasets or software
- Presentations or speaking engagements
- Contributions to intellectual property, patents or commercial output
- Contributions to a public policy or change in practice
- Success in obtaining peer reviewed grants
- Contributions to leadership
- Prizes or awards
- Engagement/relationship 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 information in the COVID-19 Impact Statement, Career Interruptions and Career Trajectory sections of the application form.

## 10. Pathway to Impact (Knowledge Translation)

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

KT activities must be embedded within your research proposal through, for example, synthesis and/or dissemination of research evidence, research user<sup>3</sup> engagement/knowledge exchange, or implementation activities. A decision about which KT activities to include along your pathway to impact should be determined based on the appropriateness for your type of research, your expected findings, and your target audience(s). Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage research users throughout the research process.

## Pathway to Impact Resources

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

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

## Knowledge Translation Science

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

## 11. Partnerships

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

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

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

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<sup>3</sup> Research users are the target audience(s) of research evidence. Research users are experts on their needs, environment, and local context. Including research users as members of the research team will ideally result in more relevant research evidence and an increased likelihood of its use for the purpose of making informed decisions about health policies, programs and/or practices. A research user may include, but is not limited to, other researchers, policy makers, health care practitioners, decision makers, health care administrators, educators, patient user group, or health charity, and the public. [Adapted from Canadian Institutes of Health Research's 'Guide to Knowledge Translation Planning at CIHR: Integrated and End-of-Grant Approaches']. [www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/45321.html](http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/45321.html). Accessed September, 2022.<sup>4</sup> See [Bibliometrics: The Leiden Manifesto for research metrics](#).

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

Applications that fulfill the funding criteria for both Health Research BC and a partner organization are eligible for a partnered Scholar 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 existing Health Research BC policies, confirmed partnership support, and available funding. Financial contributions from Health Research BC and its partners are subject to availability of funds and the annual budgetary approvals by both Health Research BC's Board of Directors and the partner organization beyond year one of the award.

## Mitacs Accelerate Internships

Health Research BC and [Mitacs](#) are partnering together to provide Scholar applicants 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 full application.

See **Appendix B** for more details.

## 12. How to Apply

The application process for the 2023 Health Research BC Scholar competition 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. In recognition of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on many researchers, applicants will have the option to complete a COVID-19 impact statement as part of the full application process.

1. Letter of intent (LOI)
  - Deadline: December 5, 2022, 4:30 p.m. PT
  - Consists of:
    - The short LOI form in Health Research BC ApplyNet
2. Full application
  - Deadline: January 31, 2023, 4:30 p.m. PT
  - Reminder: As Health Research BC is now a signatory of the [Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#) we no longer allow the use of journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factor, as surrogate measures of research quality. In keeping with best practices for responsible research assessment<sup>4</sup>, we will no longer allow the use of article citation counts or

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<sup>4</sup> See [Bibliometrics: The Leiden Manifesto for research metrics](#).



H-index. *Please do not include Journal Impact Factors, article citation counts or H-index in your application.*

- Consists of:
  - Program of research and appendices<sup>5</sup>
  - Canadian Common CV – Health Research BC Full Version
  - List of Publications, Patents & Intellectual Property Rights
  - Department Head, or equivalent form
  - Dean of Faculty Form (if applicable)
  - Consent forms and questionnaires (if applicable)
  - Letters of collaboration<sup>6,7</sup> (if applicable)
  - Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application (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. Department heads will also need a system account in order to submit the Department Head Form.

## 13. Review Process

Letters of intent (LOIs) for this program 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.

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<sup>5</sup> Appendices may include references/citations, tables, charts, figures and photographs that support the information in your program of research.

<sup>6</sup> A collaborator is an individual who significantly contributes to the conduct and/or direction of the research or knowledge translation activities.

<sup>7</sup> Information on how to write a letter of collaboration can be found on the [CIHR website](#).

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

Applications 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](#).

There are separate peer review pools for new faculty recruits (within 0-3 years of their first *eligible* appointment) and more established junior faculty (3-6 years from their first *eligible* appointment) in order to ensure an equitable review process<sup>8</sup>.

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.**

Criterion	Weighting
Applicant expertise and experience	30%
Program of research	40%
Environment and support	30%

<sup>8</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 – 2 years post-PhD, and the more established faculty pool will include applicants who are 3 – 5 years post-PhD.

## 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 pool. 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 awards begins July 1, 2023. 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, 2024. Deferred start dates, once confirmed by Health Research BC, cannot be revised.

## 15. Reporting Requirements

Scholar award recipients are required to complete 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 Scholar 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 this funding opportunity.

## **16. Applicant Updates**

Health Research BC will accept updates regarding **new salary awards** received following the full application deadline (January 31, 2023).

Please email all relevant information, including confirmation of award, to [scholar@healthresearchbc.ca](mailto:scholar@healthresearchbc.ca) by March 28, 2023.

## 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 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>9</sup> of 50 percent or more of the value of the Health Research BC Scholar award

The incentive funding is available for the duration of the Scholar 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 14.

### Incentive Funding Scenarios

Incentive funding is applied when:

- The external award totals **less** than the Health Research BC Scholar award and is used to raise the combined salary award amount to equal the Scholar award, **OR**
- The external award totals **more** than the Health Research BC Scholar 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 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>9</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 applicants who have submitted a **Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application** are eligible for this expedited review process.

### How to Apply

Scholar applicants interested in including a Mitacs Accelerate internship in their Health Research BC Scholar 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 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 – Frequently Asked Questions

### Application Phase Questions

#### Who can apply to the Scholar Program?

Applicants who have a PhD or equivalent, are within six years from the start of their first university appointment (at an assistant professor level or equivalent) as of the award start date (July 1, 2023), and can commit to a minimum of 75 percent of their time conducting research are eligible to apply.

#### 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 resources to support the project is 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](#).

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

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.

#### 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.

#### Can post-doctoral fellows apply?

Yes, but if they are successful in the Scholar competition, they must have the appointment at a BC institution (university, health authority, or research institute) as of the award start date (July 1, 2023) 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 apply to the Scholar competition as long as they meet all eligibility criteria; however, please note that all applicants are evaluated under identical criteria.

#### Can I apply for this award if I already hold a Health Research BC Health Professional-Investigator or Innovation to Commercialization award?

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

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

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

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

Applicants will have the opportunity to complete a COVID-19 impact statement at the full application stage describing what impact, if any, the pandemic has had on their research activities and productivity. Review panels receive guidance from Health Research BC to appropriately take COVID-19 impacts into consideration when assessing applications.

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

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

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

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

### **I am transitioning from my post-doctoral position to my first faculty appointment. 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.

**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 more efficiently learn policies and practices, and 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.

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

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

**Where can I find the list of available potential Scholar 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 Scholar Program of research.

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

### **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 Program competition?**

Institutional support is an important component of the Scholar application and review process. The form from the host institution should indicate a strong commitment to the applicant, both during and after the term of the award, regardless of 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 your work. Letters of collaboration are written by collaborators or partners who are expected to make a significant contribution to your program of research, and are confirming their enthusiasm to participate in the manner indicated. Guidance on how to write a letter of collaboration can be found [on CIHR's website](#).

### **My appointment is with one institution 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.

### **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 your 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, for the duration of the Scholar 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 award?

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

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.