



Michael Smith
**Health
Research BC**

2025 Research Trainee Program

GUIDELINES

DEADLINES

Letter of intent: December 12, 2024, 4:30 p.m. PT

Full application: February 13, 2025, 4:30 p.m. PT

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Help with your Application

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

Asta Jureliaviciute

Research Competitions Coordinator

trainee@healthresearchbc.ca

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

Michael Smith Health Research BC Help Desk

helpdesk@healthresearchbc.ca

604.714.6609 | 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.

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:

- We no longer require applicants to be within a certain number of years of their PhD or health professional degree completion date to be eligible to apply for a Research Trainee award (see [Section 4, Eligibility Requirements](#)). If an applicant is eligible to hold a postdoctoral fellowship under their host institution's policies, they may apply to the Research Trainee Program, provided they meet the other eligibility requirements.
- Applicants and supervisors/co-supervisors will no longer be required to include a Canadian Common CV in Research Trainee 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](#)).

Purpose

Health Research BC's Research Trainee Program is designed to attract, recognize, and support outstanding early career researchers from across BC who have recently completed a PhD, and health

professionals eligible for a research fellowship (or equivalent) program. The Research Trainee award protects award recipients' time for health research activities during post-doctoral training by providing funding to support their stipend. These awards support health researchers in training to strengthen near and long-term health research capacity and contribute to the success of BC's health research system.

Objectives

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

The specific objectives of the program are to:

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

2. Key Competition Dates

Action	Target Date
Competition launch	Mid-November 2024
LOI deadline for applicants	December 12, 2024, 4:30 p.m. PT
Full application deadline (applicants)	February 13, 2025, 4:30 p.m. PT
Full application deadline (host institution)	February 20, 2025, 4:30 p.m. PT
Anticipated notice of funding decision	July 2025
Anticipated start of funding	September 1, 2025

3. Award Amount and Duration

Health Research BC is committed to developing the health research talent BC needs through investments in the Research Trainee Program. Over the past three years, Health Research BC has awarded an average of 44 new Research Trainee awards per year, for an average success rate of 34 percent. These statistics include awards co-funded through partnerships. 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.

The Research Trainee award consists of a stipend valued at \$60,000 per year and a research and travel allowance valued at \$4,500 per year for up to **three years**. Applicants must apply for at least **one year of support**. Research Trainee stipend amounts are inclusive of benefits, i.e. host institutions¹ may

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

use the award stipend to pay benefits to the award holders, according to their respective payroll policies. Eligible expenses for the research and travel allowance can be found in [Appendix A](#).

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

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

Additional Paid Work

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

4. Eligibility Requirements

New for 2025: If an applicant is eligible to hold a postdoctoral fellowship under their host institution's policies, they may apply to the Research Trainee Program, provided they meet the other eligibility requirements listed below. We no longer require applicants to be within a certain number of years of their PhD or health professional degree completion date to be eligible to apply for a Research Trainee award.

At the time of the award start date (September 1, 2025), the applicant must:

- Be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident or foreign national². Applicants who are foreign nationals must be sponsored by a supervisor who holds an academic appointment at a BC institution.
- Have a PhD or equivalent³ OR be a [health professional](#) with a license to practice in BC who is in active clinical service 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 health⁴.
- Hold a post-doctoral fellowship position, or equivalent, at an eligible BC host institution that holds a memorandum of understanding with Health Research BC. The applicant must be eligible to hold the post-doctoral position for the duration of the Health Research BC award. Research associates are not eligible to apply.
- Have a written commitment from a supervisor protecting:

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

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

⁴ 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.

- A minimum of 75 percent time of the PhD (or equivalent) applicant's time for research training. This represents no less than 30 hours per week, **OR**
- A minimum of 50 percent of a health professional applicant's time (those in active clinical service) to health research activities. This represents no less than 20 hours per week.
- Not have previously held a Michael Smith Health Research BC (formerly Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, or MSFHR) Research Trainee award⁵.

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.

5. Supervisors

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

The primary supervisor must be an established researcher who holds an academic appointment at an academic rank of assistant professor⁶ or higher with a BC institution that holds a [memorandum of understanding](#) with Health Research BC. Applicants may also have a co-supervisor who is an independent researcher with expertise related to the proposed research area. The co-supervisor may be located outside of BC. The expertise of the supervisor and co-supervisor should be complementary and appropriate for the proposed research project and pathway to impact (KT) activities, and for the professional development of the applicant. Co-supervisors are expected to significantly contribute to the research project and/or knowledge translation activities, and to the professional development of the applicant.

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

Primary supervisor(s):

- Can support up to a maximum of four fully-funded Health Research BC Research Trainees at any one time.
- Must have a productive health-oriented research record and sufficient resources to ensure the satisfactory conduct of the applicant's research.
- Provide commitment of:
 - For applicants to the PhD (or equivalent) stream, a minimum of 75 percent of the applicant's time for health research activities. This represents no less than 30 hours per week, **OR**
 - For applicants to the health professional stream, a minimum of 50 percent of the applicant's time for health research activities. This represents no less than 20 hours per week.

⁵ If you held an MSFHR Research Trainee Award prior to 2011, please contact trainee@healthresearchbc.ca to verify eligibility.

⁶ Or equivalent; primary supervisors must be able to 1) supervise graduate and post-graduate trainees, 2) apply for and hold peer-reviewed funds as a principal investigator, and 3) publish their research results. If you are uncertain if your supervisor meets these qualifications, please reach out to trainee@healthresearchbc.ca.

The primary supervisor agrees to:

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

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 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 Health Research BC and Indigenous partners. 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.

Indigenous health research in Research Trainee applications

Applications to the Research Trainee competition that propose a research project with a central focus on the health and wellness of Indigenous Peoples⁷, as indicated in the application form, will receive an independent assessment by an expert in Indigenous health research as part of the peer review process (see [Section 13, Review Process](#)). Applicants to whom this applies should refer to the [Evaluation Criteria - Indigenous Health Research](#) (Appendix A) for details on the criteria the Indigenous health research expert is assessing in applications.

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

⁷ 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.

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 will meaningfully and appropriately account for EDI in the design of their research projects, in the analysis and interpretation of the findings, and in their KT activities.

Health Research BC recognizes that meaningful approaches to support EDI in research and KT will vary depending on the research topic, discipline, methods, etc. Health Research BC also encourages supervisors and co-supervisors to use the supervisor/co-supervisor forms 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 and supervisors/co-supervisors will no longer be able to include a Canadian Common CV in Research Trainee applications. Instead, applicants and supervisors/co-supervisors 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 mentoring or leadership
- Prizes or awards
- Engagement/relationship 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)⁸ — 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

⁸ People with lived/living experience (PWLE) include patient, public and community partners who have knowledge or experience with a problem or topic.

the importance of engaging PWLE in health research⁹ 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.

Knowledge Translation Science

Applicants may submit a research project 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](#)

⁹ 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)

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 Research Trainee award. However, only those applications that receive a Health Research BC peer review rating of 3.8 or above will be considered. Funding decisions on partnered awards are based on 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.

12. How to Apply

The application process for the 2025 Research Trainee competition is composed of two mandatory stages: A letter of intent (LOI) stage where applicants are screened for eligibility by Health Research BC 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. We recommend that applicants seek feedback on their full applications from their supervisors and co-supervisors before submission.

Note: Letters of Collaboration - 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).

New for 2025: Applicants and supervisors/co-supervisors will no longer be able to include a Canadian Common CV in Research Trainee applications. Instead, applicants and supervisors/co-supervisors 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: December 12, 2024, 4:30 p.m. PT
 - Consists of:
 - The short LOI form in Health Research BC ApplyNet
2. Full application
 - Deadline: February 13, 2025, 4:30 p.m. PT
 - Complete the full application form in [Health Research BC ApplyNet](#), which includes the following additional components:
 - Research project (max. 4 pages) and appendices (max. 4 pages)¹⁰
 - List of Publications, Patents & Intellectual Property Rights. *Please do not include Journal Impact Factors, article citation counts or H-index in your application.*
 - Supervisor (and Co-Supervisor, if applicable) Form (submitted by supervisor[s] through Health Research BC ApplyNet)
 - At least 2 (max 3) letters of reference from previous supervisors and/or senior mentors or previous collaborators who can comment on the applicant's potential as an independent researcher. Individuals cannot submit both a letter of reference and a supervisor form or a letter of collaboration. Letters of reference must be submitted by the referees through Health Research BC ApplyNet.
 - Letters of collaboration^{11,12} (if applicable)
 - Doctoral degree (or equivalent) certificate or health professional degree certificate¹³

To complete your application, create a [Health Research BC ApplyNet](#) account and follow the instructions in the Health Research BC ApplyNet online application. Ensure that applications are complete and submitted by the Health Research BC application deadline, including Supervisor and Referee forms. 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.

¹⁰ Appendices may include references/citations, tables, charts, figures and photographs that support the information in your research project.

¹¹ A collaborator is an individual who significantly contributes to the conduct and/or direction of the research or knowledge translation activities.

¹² Information on how to write a letter of collaboration can be found on the [CIHR website](#).

¹³ Successful applicants must provide proof of degree completion by the award start date of September 1, 2025, if not complete at the time of application. Health professional applicants must provide proof of active engagement in clinical service. If proof of degree completion or active engagement in clinical service is not provided by the award start date, the award offer will be withdrawn.

- 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 the PDF copy of the application prior to submission to ensure that all data entered are complete and accurate. Once an application is submitted, it cannot be modified in any way.

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

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

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 panel for funding recommendations. For highly specialized applications, Health Research BC seeks external readers with the relevant specific expertise to provide independent assessments that are shared with the review panel. Applications with a central focus on Indigenous health research will also undergo an independent assessment by an Indigenous health research expert using the [Evaluation Criteria - Indigenous Health Research](#) (Appendix A).

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](#).

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

Health Research BC recognizes 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

Applications are assessed against the 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%
Research project	50%
Environment and support	20%

Rating Scale

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

Funding Decisions

Following application review, the highest rated applications are identified. 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, including any independent or external reader feedback. A list of successful applicants is published on Health Research BC's website.

14. Award Start Date and Deferral

Unless otherwise indicated, funding for Research Trainee awards begins September 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 no later than September 1, 2026. Deferred start dates, once confirmed by Health Research BC, cannot be revised.

15. Reporting Requirements

Research Trainee award recipients, and their supervisors and co-supervisors, 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 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

If an applicant's project and/or research environment changes significantly after the application has been submitted, the applicant must notify Health Research BC immediately. Health Research BC will accept updates regarding **new salary awards** received following the full application deadline (February 13, 2025) until April 11, 2025.

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

Appendix A – Research and Travel Allowance

Payments and Usage

The research and travel allowance funds (\$4,500 per year) will be paid on a quarterly basis to the recipient's primary supervisor's research account¹⁴. All expenses must be approved by the primary supervisor and are subject to the travel and expenses reimbursement policies of both Health Research BC and their host institution. Award recipients should review Health Research BC's eligible expenses (below) and discuss the eligibility of expenses with their supervisor before expenses are incurred.

Award recipients must submit receipts to the primary supervisor. Research and travel allowance funds that remain unused at year-end can be carried over into the subsequent year of the award. Research and travel allowance funds may not be used while the award is on hold.

Please note that when an award recipient holds or receives an external stipend award that includes a research and travel allowance during the term of the Research Trainee award, the Incentive funding policy applies (see [Appendix B](#)).

All receipts must be submitted to the primary supervisor within three months following the award end date. Funds not used by the award end date must be returned to Health Research BC. No-cost extension requests for the research and travel allowance may be approved on a case-by-case basis. Award recipients must contact the competition coordinator (trainee@healthresearchbc.ca) to request a no-cost extension at least 30 days before the award end date.

Eligible Expenses

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

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

- Costs associated with knowledge translation, including dissemination of research results (e.g. costs of attending a conference to present the research, page charges and the costs of preparing a research manuscript for publication, development and maintenance of web-based information, videos, toolkits, translation, etc.).
- Costs of attending career development events and activities, including training to accommodate diverse populations (e.g. cultural safety training for religious populations).
- Costs of membership in professional associations or scientific societies, or those required to maintain compliance with provincial regulations when directly related to the research project.
- Purchase/lease and extended warranty of home office furniture, cell phones, tablets, computers, and other hardware and software required for the research (the host institution's policy on ownership of equipment will apply).

¹⁴ The research and travel allowance is normally set up through the Office of Research Services, or equivalent, in an account under the award recipient's primary supervisor's name. Check with your host institution's Office of Research Services, or equivalent for details about setting up an account.

- Monthly charges for the use of the internet from the institution or home when this service is required for the purpose of research and not normally provided by the institution free of charge.
- Safety-related expenses related to the research project, such as protective gear, immunizations, etc.
- Costs related to improving workplace accessibility and/or career support for applicants who have a disability.
- In accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 ([TCPS 2 - Chapter 9 Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#)), Health Research BC recognizes the importance of respecting the culture and traditions of Indigenous Peoples. Expenses related to the conduct of research and knowledge translation with Indigenous communities, including but not limited to the following, are eligible for reimbursement:
 - Costs related to community mobilization and engagement, including culturally relevant promotional items such as tobacco, cloth, feasting and gift giving for honouring ceremonies, and cash reimbursements (in a method acceptable to the individual or community being reimbursed) to compensate community participation.
 - Contracts and/or consultant fees for knowledge translation and communication activities for Indigenous Elders, community members, and Indigenous Knowledge Holders involved in activities related to the Indigenous community.

Some examples of ineligible expenses include:

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

Appendix B – Incentive Funding

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

1. Is external to BC
2. Is granted through an open competition
3. Is peer-reviewed
4. Has a total value¹⁵ of 50 percent or more of the value of the Health Research BC Research Trainee award

Incentive funding is available for the duration of the Health Research BC Research Trainee award, or to the end of the external stipend award, whichever comes first.

Award recipients who receive incentive funding are still required to complete the reporting requirements stated in [Section 15, Reporting Requirements](#).

Incentive Funding Scenarios

When the external stipend award is **less than** the Health Research BC Research Trainee award, then Health Research BC will provide funds to raise the annual stipend so that it equals the Research Trainee award plus \$7,000 per year.

When the external stipend award is **equal to or more than** the Health Research BC Research Trainee award, then Health Research BC will provide an additional \$7,000 per year.

External award annual stipend	Effect on award recipient's annual stipend
\$30,000 or greater, but less than \$60,000	Health Research BC will provide additional funds to raise the award recipient's stipend to \$60,000, plus \$7,000.
Greater than or equal to \$60,000	Health Research BC will provide \$7,000

Research and Travel Allowance

If the external stipend award includes a research and travel allowance¹⁶ that totals less than \$4,500 per year, then Health Research BC will provide funds to bring the research and travel allowance to \$4,500 per year. If the external stipend award includes a research and travel allowance that is equal to or

¹⁵ Inclusive of match funding from other funding sources, if applicable. Total award value applies to the portion used for salary/stipend, i.e. it is not inclusive of other components above and beyond, such as research and/or travel allowances.

¹⁶ In order to qualify for the research and travel allowance incentive funding, the applicant must receive an external stipend award that includes a research and travel allowance. If the external award does not have a research and travel allowance, the applicant will receive the full \$4,500 research and travel allowance with their Research Trainee award.

greater than \$4,500 per year, then no additional funds will be provided. The research and travel allowance incentive funding is available for the duration of the Health Research BC Research Trainee award, or to the end of the external stipend award, whichever comes first.

Appendix C – Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility Questions

Can research associates apply?

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

Can PhD students apply?

Yes, you may apply if you are completing your PhD; however, you must meet all the eligibility requirements by the award start date (September 1, 2025), including having completed your PhD, and hold a postdoctoral fellowship position (or equivalent) at an [eligible host institution](#). If you are a health professional completing a PhD, you must complete your PhD and hold a postdoctoral fellowship position (or equivalent) before you are eligible to hold this award. If you are still completing your PhD, please ensure your PhD defense is scheduled (and successfully completed) before the award start date of September 1, 2025.

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

You are eligible to apply in the health professional stream if you are active in clinical service. You are eligible to apply in the PhD (or equivalent) stream if you are not active in clinical service. Please see [Section 4](#) for more details on eligibility.

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

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

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

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

Yes, you are eligible to apply.

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

Yes, you may apply for the Research Trainee award as long as your host institution allows you to hold a post-doctoral fellowship position (or equivalent) and you meet all other eligibility requirements.

Can I apply for a Research Trainee award if I am also applying for, or already hold, another fellowship that is co-funded by Health Research BC?

Yes, you may apply. If you have questions, please contact trainee@healthresearchbc.ca.

Application Questions

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

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

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

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

What is a host institution? How do I select my 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](#). Applicants should work with their supervisor to determine their host institution. The host institution may be different from the research location.

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

Our updated application and supervisor forms allow 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 and supervisors will no longer be able to include a Canadian Common CV in Research Trainee 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.

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

Applicants may 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 their 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 the unique research-study specific steps embedded in the design, conduct and use of research that aim to increase its 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 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 research project, and at the end of funding. For more information, refer to the document [Knowledge Translation by Research Theme](#).

What is a mentorship and training program?

Supervisors are asked to describe the mentorship and training program for the applicant during the completion of the Supervisor Form. The mentorship and training program should facilitate the development of the applicant's research, technical and professional skills and networks. Mentoring provides a network of support and resources to help postdoctoral fellows navigate their research and future career development. Supervisors are strongly encouraged to describe the mentorship available to the applicant in the Supervisor Form, including the role of co-supervisors, where applicable. 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 Research Trainee 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 partners are confirmed 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 there is a match, they will inform the respective applicant after peer review.

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

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

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

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

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

Health Research BC expects applicants to approach their research and knowledge translation activities with culturally safe practices that demonstrate humility, integrity, accountability and respect for Indigenous self-determination. Applicants must comply with the ethical and research policies outlined in [Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#) of the [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans \(2022\)](#). 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 is the difference between a reference letter and a letter of collaboration?

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

Can I 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.

Administrative Questions

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

No changes will be made to the stipend amount during the term of the award. The stipend for the award is valued at \$60,000 per year. The research and travel allowance is valued at \$4,500 per year. 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.

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

Health Research BC reviewed and increased the stipend levels for the 2025 Research Trainee award. Stipend levels will be reviewed periodically going forward.

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

Deferral requests related to relocation, medical, parental, bereavement or caregiving leave are generally granted. Deferrals requests for other reasons 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, 2026. Deferred start dates, once confirmed by Health Research BC, cannot be revised.

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

A copy of the Award Acceptance Form signed by you and your supervisor (and co-supervisor, if

applicable) must be uploaded in PDF format to [Health Research BC ApplyNet](#) via the “Accept Award Agreement” form.

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

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.

How much time does the applicant have to respond to an offer of the Research Trainee 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.

Why does Health Research BC require Research Trainee awardees to apply for external salary awards?

The Research Trainee Conditions of Award states: “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.” Applying for salary support awards from a competitive major national or international funding agency supports the development of important skills that benefit early career researchers (e.g. grant writing skills). Moreover, attaining such a salary support award is an achievement that can aid success when applying to future research funding opportunities. To further incentivize awardees to apply for external salary awards, Health Research BC has instituted an Incentives policy to reward awardees who are successful in obtaining an external salary award. See [Appendix B](#) for details.

Can the Research Trainee award be used as match funding?

No, the Research Trainee award is not suitable to be used as match funding.