



Michael Smith

**Health  
Research BC**

## **2026 Research Trainee Program**

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### **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

### **DEADLINES**

Letter of intent: November 27, 2025, 4:30 p.m. PT

Full application: January 29, 2026, 4:30 p.m. PT

Applicant Expertise and Experience	Weighting – 30%
<p><b>Assessment Criteria</b></p> <p>Please assess the applicant's expertise and experience based on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualifications of the applicant, including research training and experience, and clinical training and experience, with consideration of how the proposed research area and methods build on the applicant's experience and training.</li> <li>• Research quality, expertise, and leadership of the applicant as demonstrated by research and professional contributions.*</li> <li>• Evidence of the applicant's ability to implement pathway to impact** (Knowledge Translation) strategies and activities, as appropriate to their area of research.*</li> </ul> <p>* Research quality, leadership, and knowledge translation (KT) skills should be weighed with consideration of the applicant's career stage, health profession (if applicable), and research area.</p> <p>** For more information, please refer to <a href="#">Section 10 of the Research Trainee Program Guidelines</a>.</p>	
Assessment Descriptor	Score
<p><b>Outstanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed research builds on and synergizes with the applicant's research training and experience. The research training, and clinical training (where applicable), complement the proposed research area and methods.</li> <li>• The applicant has a well-established record of high-quality research outputs, and professional contributions for their career stage. The applicant has demonstrated leadership in their field and amongst their peers.</li> <li>• The applicant demonstrates expertise with pathway to impact (KT) strategies and activities, as appropriate to their area of research.</li> </ul>	<p><b>4.5 – 4.9 may be funded</b></p>
<p><b>Excellent</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed research builds on the applicant's research training and experience. The research training, and clinical training (where applicable), are aligned with the proposed research area and methods.</li> <li>• The applicant has a record of quality research outputs and professional contributions for their career stage. The applicant demonstrates some leadership in their field and amongst their peers.</li> <li>• The applicant demonstrates a good understanding of pathway to impact (KT) strategies and activities, as appropriate to their area of research.</li> </ul>	<p><b>4.0 – 4.4 may be funded</b></p>
<p><b>Very Good</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant's research training and experience provide the necessary expertise to complete the proposed research with some minor potential knowledge gaps. The research training, and clinical training (where applicable), are adequately aligned with the proposed research area and methods.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3.5 – 3.9 may be funded (above 3.8)</b></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant has some record of quality research outputs and professional contributions for their career stage. The applicant has demonstrated limited leadership in their field or amongst their peers.</li> <li>The applicant demonstrates some understanding of pathway to impact (KT) strategies and activities, as appropriate to their area of research.</li> </ul>	
<b>Fair</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant's research training and experience provides some of the expertise needed to complete the proposed research; however, there are multiple potential knowledge gaps. The research training, and clinical training (where applicable), are only partially aligned with the proposed research area and methods.</li> <li>The applicant has a limited record of research outputs and professional contributions and/or the quality of the outputs and contributions is modest. There is little or no evidence that the applicant demonstrates leadership in their field or amongst their peers.</li> <li>The applicant demonstrates limited understanding of pathway to impact (KT) strategies and activities, considering their area of research.</li> </ul>	<b>3.0 – 3.4 not fundable</b>
<b>Less than Adequate</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant's research training and experience do not provide adequate expertise to complete the proposed research. The research training, and clinical training (where applicable), are not aligned with the proposed research area and methods.</li> <li>The applicant has a limited record of research outputs and professional contributions and/or the quality of the outputs/contributions is poor. There is no evidence that the applicant demonstrates leadership in their field or amongst their peers.</li> <li>The applicant demonstrates poor understanding of pathway to impact (KT) strategies and activities, considering their area of research.</li> </ul>	<b>0 – 2.9 not fundable</b>

Research Project	Weighting – 50%
<b>Assessment Criteria</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completeness of the background/literature review and relevance to the research question(s), research design, and methods.</li> <li>Clarity and originality* of the research question(s) and potential of the research to address important knowledge gaps.</li> <li>Clarity of rationale for the research design and methods.</li> <li>Appropriateness and feasibility of the research design and methods.</li> <li>Appropriateness and feasibility of the project timeline.</li> <li>Adequacy of the identification of risks and plans for management of potential difficulties that may be encountered during the term of the research.</li> </ul>	

- Appropriateness and adequacy of the pathway to impact (KT) activities.

\*Originality refers to research that will generate new knowledge that may be vital to the progress of a field. Originality does not necessarily require innovation in research methods or approaches.

Assessment Descriptor	Score
<b>Outstanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The background/literature review is complete and relevant to the research question(s), research design, and methods.</li> <li>• The research project contains clear research question(s), is original, and will address important knowledge gaps.</li> <li>• The research design and methods are clearly described, feasible, and appropriate to address the research question(s).</li> <li>• The timeline is appropriate and feasible.</li> <li>• The research project identifies risks that may be encountered during the term of the research and how to manage/mitigate these risks.</li> <li>• The pathway to impact (KT) activities are clearly described and appropriate.</li> </ul>	<b>4.5 – 4.9 may be funded</b>
<b>Excellent</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The background/literature review is sufficient and provides adequate context on the research question(s), research design, and methods.</li> <li>• The research project contains clear research question(s). The research is very likely to be original, and very likely to address important knowledge gaps.</li> <li>• The research design and methods are clearly described, feasible, and appropriate to address the research question(s), with only a few minor details lacking.</li> <li>• The timeline is appropriate and feasible.</li> <li>• The research project identifies risks that may be encountered during the term of the research and how to manage/mitigate these risks.</li> <li>• The pathway to impact (KT) activities are clearly described and appropriate.</li> </ul>	<b>4.0 – 4.4 may be funded</b>
<b>Very Good</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The background/literature review may lack some details, but the information is sufficient to support the research question(s), research design, and methods.</li> <li>• The research project contains clear research question(s) and has the potential to be original. It is likely that the research will address knowledge gaps.</li> </ul>	<b>3.5 – 3.9 may be funded (above 3.8)</b>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research design and methods are feasible, and appropriate to address the research question(s), with only some details lacking.</li> <li>• The timeline is appropriate and feasible but some details may be missing.</li> <li>• The research project identifies all major risks likely to be encountered during the term of the research and how to manage/mitigate these risks. Some minor risks and mitigation approaches may be missing.</li> <li>• The pathway to impact (KT) activities are largely appropriate but may lack some details.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Fair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The background/literature review does not provide adequate information to support the research question(s), research design, and methods.</li> <li>• The research question(s) are unclear and/or they require major revision. It is unclear whether the research will be original and/or whether the research will address knowledge gaps.</li> <li>• The research design and methods have major flaws and/or are not appropriate to address the research question(s).</li> <li>• The timeline is of questionable feasibility and/or lacks key details.</li> <li>• The research project fails to identify important risks that are likely to be encountered during the term of the research or propose actions to manage/mitigate these risks.</li> <li>• The pathway to impact (KT) activities are poorly described and/or inappropriate.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3.0 – 3.4 not fundable</b></p>
<p><b>Less than Adequate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The background/literature review does not provide adequate information to support the research question(s), research design, and methods.</li> <li>• The research project does not contain clear research question(s), the research is not original, and/or the research does not address knowledge gaps.</li> <li>• The research design and methods are poorly described, not feasible, or not appropriate to address the research question(s).</li> <li>• The timeline is inappropriate or not feasible.</li> <li>• The research project is missing information on risk assessment and mitigation.</li> <li>• The pathway to impact (KT) activities are missing, poorly described and/or inappropriate.</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 – 2.9 not fundable</b></p>

Environment and Support	Weighting – 20%
<p><b>Assessment Criteria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The alignment of the proposed research and pathway to impact (KT) activities with the expertise of the applicant, supervisor, co-supervisor, and collaborators.</li> <li>Adequacy of sources of funding to complete the proposed research project and KT activities.</li> <li>A confirmation of protected research time and access to the personnel, facilities, and infrastructure necessary to complete the proposed research and KT activities, including support from collaborators, where appropriate.</li> <li>The quality and suitability of the mentorship and training plan to support the applicant on their career path.</li> </ul> <p><b>Notes:</b></p> <p>Collaborators and mentors can be from within or external to the applicant's host institution.</p> <p><i>Reminder:</i> 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.</p>	
Assessment Descriptor	Score
<p><b>Outstanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed research and pathway to impact (KT) activities align well with the expertise of the applicant and supervisor(s), with letters of collaboration from collaborators who are needed to fill gaps in expertise.</li> <li>There is evidence of adequate sources of funding to complete the proposed research project and KT activities.</li> <li>There is confirmation of protected research time, and evidence that the applicant will have access to the personnel, facilities, and infrastructure necessary to complete the proposed research. There is evidence of support from collaborators, where needed, to complete the research project and KT activities.</li> <li>The mentorship and training plan is comprehensive and suitable to support the applicant on their career path.</li> </ul>	<p><b>4.5 – 4.9 may be fundable</b></p>
<p><b>Excellent</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed research and pathway to impact (KT) activities align with the expertise of the applicant and supervisor(s), with letters of collaboration from collaborators who are needed to fill all but the most minor gaps in expertise.</li> <li>There is evidence of adequate sources of funding to complete the proposed research project and KT activities.</li> <li>There is confirmation of protected research time and evidence that the applicant will have access to the personnel, facilities, and infrastructure necessary to complete the proposed research and KT activities, with only</li> </ul>	<p><b>4.0 – 4.4 may be fundable</b></p>

<p>minor potential gaps. There is evidence of support from collaborators, where needed, to complete the research project and KT activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The mentorship and training plan is thorough and suitable to support the applicant on their career path.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Very Good</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed research and pathway to impact (KT) activities align with the expertise of the applicant and supervisor(s), with minor gaps in expertise, and insufficient collaboration to fill these gaps.</li> <li>There is evidence of adequate sources of funding to complete the proposed research project and KT activities, with only minor details lacking.</li> <li>There is confirmation of protected research time and evidence that the applicant will have access to the personnel, facilities, and infrastructure necessary to complete the proposed research and KT activities, with only minor potential gaps. Evidence of support from necessary collaborators is not provided.</li> <li>The mentorship and training plan is adequate and suitable to support the applicant on their career path.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3.5 – 3.9 may be fundable (above 3.8)</b></p>
<p><b>Fair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed research and pathway to impact (KT) activities have some alignment with the expertise of the applicant and supervisor(s), with major gaps in expertise and insufficient collaboration to fill these gaps.</li> <li>The application lacks key details on the source of funding for the research and KT activities, or there are concerns that the funding is inadequate.</li> <li>There are concerns that the applicant will not have sufficient protected research time or that the applicant will not have access to the personnel, facilities, and infrastructure necessary to complete the proposed research and KT activities. Evidence of support from necessary collaborators is not provided.</li> <li>The mentorship and training plan is limited or not designed to support the applicant on their career path.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3.0 – 3.4 not fundable</b></p>
<p><b>Less than Adequate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed research and pathway to impact (KT) activities have poor alignment with the expertise of the applicant and supervisor(s), with considerable gaps in expertise.</li> <li>The application does not provide sources of funding, or the funding is inadequate to support the proposed research and KT activities.</li> <li>The applicant will not have sufficient protected research time or will not have access to the personnel, facilities, and infrastructure necessary to complete the proposed research and KT activities. Evidence of support from necessary collaborators is not provided.</li> <li>The mentorship and training plan is inadequate or not suitable to support the applicant on their career path.</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 – 2.9 not fundable</b></p>

## Appendix A – Indigenous Health Research Evaluation Criteria

### Assessment Criteria – Indigenous Health Research

Please consider the following points in your assessment, with particular focus on the aspects that are essential to Indigenous health research:

#### Applicant Expertise and Experience

- Qualifications of the applicant, including research training and experience, and clinical training and experience, with consideration of how the proposed research area and methods build on the applicant's experience and training.
  - Is the applicant a member of the community in which the work is being done? Does the applicant acknowledge their roles, responsibility, and privileges that enable their research and knowledge exchange activities in an appropriate way?
- Research quality, expertise, and leadership of the applicant as demonstrated by research and professional contributions.\*
  - Has the applicant developed (or is the applicant developing) good quality relationships with the people, communities and organizations that are involved in the research?
- Evidence of the applicant's ability to implement pathway to impact\*\* (knowledge translation (KT) or knowledge exchange (KE)) strategies and activities, as appropriate to their area of research.\*

\* Research quality, leadership, and knowledge translation (KT) or knowledge exchange (KE) skills should be weighed with consideration of the applicant's career stage, health profession (if applicable), and research area.

\*\* For more information, please refer to [Section 10 of the Research Trainee Program Guidelines](#).

#### Research Project

- Completeness of the background/literature review and relevance to the research question(s), research design, and methods.
- Clarity and originality\* of the research question(s) and potential of the research to address important knowledge gaps.
  - Does the research address the priorities of the people and communities involved?
  - Does the research have the potential to produce valued outcomes from the perspective of those people and communities?
- Clarity of rationale for the research design and methods.
- Appropriateness and feasibility of the research design and methods.
  - Does the applicant name the people, communities and organizations with whom they plan to work? Do they describe how they will work together? Is the described approach to working with people and communities clearly detailed and appropriate?
  - Does the proposed work abide by the [Tri-Council Policy Statement Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples of Canada](#) and/or Indigenous partnering community / organizational ethical guidelines?
  - Do the research and KE activities respect Indigenous values and ways of knowing and sharing?



- Appropriateness and feasibility of the project timeline.
- Adequacy of the identification of risks and plans for management of potential difficulties that may be encountered during the term of the research.
- Appropriateness and adequacy of the pathway to impact (KT/KE) activities.

\* Originality refers to research that will generate new knowledge that may be vital to the progress of a field. Originality does not necessarily require innovation in research methods or approaches.

### **Environment and Support**

- The alignment of the proposed research and pathway to impact (KT/KE) activities with the expertise of the applicant, supervisor, co-supervisor, and collaborators.
- Adequacy of sources of funding and support to complete the proposed research project and KT/KE activities.
  - Are the supports that will be provided by people, communities and organizations adequate for the proposed research and KT/KE activities?
- A confirmation of protected research time and access to the personnel, facilities, and infrastructure necessary to complete the proposed research and KT/KE activities, including support from collaborators, where appropriate.
- The quality and suitability of the mentorship and training plan to support the applicant on their career path.

### **Notes:**

Collaborators and mentors can be from within or external to the applicant's host institution.

*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.