



Michael Smith Foundation for
Health Research

Guidelines and Instructions
2006/07
Research Unit Award
Full Application

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Introduction

Purpose of the Research Unit Award

The Research Unit Award provides infrastructure funding for four years to established Research Units working in a focused area of health research in British Columbia. Funding is intended to cover the costs of providing common services to researchers that will enhance the research environment, increase productivity, build critical mass and improve integration. Funding is also intended to augment funding available to the Research Unit from its host institution and/or other sources, not to replace it or to take the place of support that otherwise would be allocated to the Unit in the absence of MSFHR funding.

The Research Unit Award is an annual competition. In 2006-07, MSFHR will fund up to four Research Units. The award amount is a maximum of \$200,000 per year for Category A Research Units, and a maximum of \$300,000 per year for Category B Research Units for the four-year funding period. (See [Award Amount](#).)

Application Process

Application for the Research Unit Award is a two-stage process:

1. Preliminary Application
2. Full Application (by invitation only)

Preliminary Applications are reviewed by an external [Merit Review Panel](#) comprising senior researchers from outside of BC, and then ranked in order of merit. Research Units with Preliminary Applications rated the highest by the panel are invited to submit a Full Application. The number of Preliminary Applications that proceed to Full Application may vary from one competition to another and will be based on ensuring a reasonable success rate at the second stage given the available program funds.

The requirements for Full Application include a detailed four-year research development plan for the Unit. The plan should be viewed not only as a requirement for the Full Application process, but also as a planning tool for the development of the Unit and its research agenda. The external Merit Review Panel will assess all Full Applications, using the [Research Unit evaluation criteria](#), and the highest rated applications will be recommended for funding. The same external Merit Review Panel will assess the Preliminary and Full Applications in the same competition. However, panel membership will vary from one competition to the next.

Information contained in applications, written reviews and evaluation committee discussions are confidential and are subject to the BC Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA). In order to maintain the integrity of the peer review process, the identity of the reviewers assigned to individual applications is kept anonymous, however the membership of the panel is made public. All MSFHR reviewers are required to observe the MSFHR [Policy on Conflict of Interest](#) (PDF) and [Guidelines on Conflict of Interest](#) (PDF).

Key Competition Dates

- Deadline for host institution approval and submission of Full Applications March 30, 2007, 4:30 pm Pacific Time
- Announcement of Funding Decisions June 2007
- Commencement of funding July 1, 2007

Award Amount

The amount of funding awarded to a Research Unit is based on the size of the Research Unit, the quality of the research development plan, justification for the requested items and the budget that is available, as established by the MSFHR Board of Directors.

Category A Research Units (3 – 10 [Qualified Health Researchers \(QHRs\)](#)) may apply for up to \$200,000 per year for four years. Category B Research Units (11 or more QHRs) may apply for up to \$300,000 per year for four years. The maximum allocation per year is fixed for the funding period. However, unspent funds can be carried forward from year to year, subject to a revised budget indicating likely use of those funds in the following year, and approval by MSFHR. Unspent funds at the end of the fourth year must be returned to MSFHR. MSFHR also reserves the right to reduce or terminate funds where circumstances justify such a decision.

Eligibility Criteria

A Research Unit must consist of at least three [Qualified Health Researchers \(QHRs\)](#) including the Unit Leader; inclusion of [Associate Health Researchers \(AHRs\)](#) is optional. While the Research Unit may vary in size, in large units a core group of no more than 20 QHRs should be specified. All members of the Research Unit and all elements of your application must comply with the MSFHR Infrastructure Program [Definitions](#) to be eligible.

The Research Unit must be able to demonstrate a clearly-defined research agenda (goals and accountability pathways) that is distinct from a traditional university faculty, department or division, or hospital administrative unit. The main purpose of the Unit must be to conduct health-related research.

The members of a Research Unit must be able to demonstrate cohesiveness as a Unit, for example, through prior and currently-held peer reviewed funding, private industry research funding, shared facilities and resources, joint training initiatives and/or other accomplishments realized through common research planning and activities.

How to Apply

Essential Information Before You Get Started

Before proceeding to the Research Unit Full Application in MSFHR ApplyNet, you will need to do the following:

Get your File Number

You need the file number that was assigned to your Preliminary Application in order to complete a Full Application. This number can be found on the Unit Leader's Portfolio screen in MSFHR ApplyNet. Entering this number in your Full Application ensures that the two applications are linked, and that information from your Preliminary Application is used to pre-populate your Full Application.

Communicate with Research Unit members

The Research Unit Full Application must be submitted from the Research Unit Leader's MSFHR ApplyNet account. Other Unit members cannot access or enter information into the online application from their accounts. All communication between Unit members should occur before the Research Unit Leader submits the application; changes cannot be made once the application has been submitted.

Review User Tips & Tutorials

Review the [User Tips](#) and [Tutorials](#) for MSFHR ApplyNet, which provide detailed instructions on filling out MSFHR forms.

Create an MSFHR ApplyNet account

All applicants must [create an MSFHR ApplyNet account](#). This includes the Research Unit Leader as well as all QHRs and AHRs associated with the application. Research Unit members listed on the Preliminary Application already have an MSFHR ApplyNet account; there is no need to recreate one.

Complete and submit the Common CV – MSFHR Abbreviated Version

All QHRs (including the Research Unit Leader) must complete and submit a Common CV – MSFHR Abbreviated Version. You will not be able to submit your application until a CCV – MSFHR Abbreviated Version has been submitted to MSFHR for the Research Unit Leader and all QHRs. All new Research Unit members and any existing members who wish to update their CCVs can [log on](#) to the CCV website to complete, update or submit their CCV to MSFHR. If no updated CCV is submitted for an existing Unit member, the CCV submitted with the Preliminary Application will automatically be linked to the Full Application. CCVs for AHRs are not required.

Complete and submit the Full Application Form on MSFHR ApplyNet

Review the [sample Research Unit Full Application Form](#) (PDF) before you start. Note that the sample form does not include the attachment or the CCVs that must be submitted with the online application. Use the "Validate" button on each screen as you complete your online form to ensure that you have completed the page properly.

Follow the application deadlines and submission process

The Research Unit Full Application deadline is **March 30, 2007, 4:30 pm Pacific Time**. The institution indicated as the host institution must approve your application electronically by this deadline.

As Research Unit Leader you must:

1. Ensure that every Unit member has created an [MSFHR ApplyNet account](#). Members listed on the Preliminary Application will already have an account.
2. Ask each new Unit member for his/her MSFHR system account e-mail address which is used to log into MSFHR ApplyNet. To link new members to your application, you will

need to enter their MSFHR system account e-mail addresses in your application. Existing members will already be linked to the application.

3. Determine whether each Unit member wishes to be affiliated with your Unit as a QHR or as an AHR, and ensure that s/he meets the requirements for the affiliation selected. (See [Definitions.](#)) You may change the affiliation of existing members as long as it does not affect the category (A or B) of your Unit.
4. Determine whether your Unit members are associated with any other [funded MSFHR Teams and/or Research Units](#). In the online application you will need to specify their affiliations with these Teams/Units (QHR or AHR) as well as a brief summary of their roles in these Teams/Units.
5. Ensure that every QHR has created a Common CV – MSFHR Abbreviated Version and submitted it to MSFHR before the application is submitted. It is the QHRs' responsibility to check that the CCV contains relevant information; all CCVs will go to peer review as submitted. No changes or additions can be made after the application package is submitted.
6. Consult with each Unit member to determine what role s/he will play in your Research Unit, and how this will contribute to the Unit as a whole.

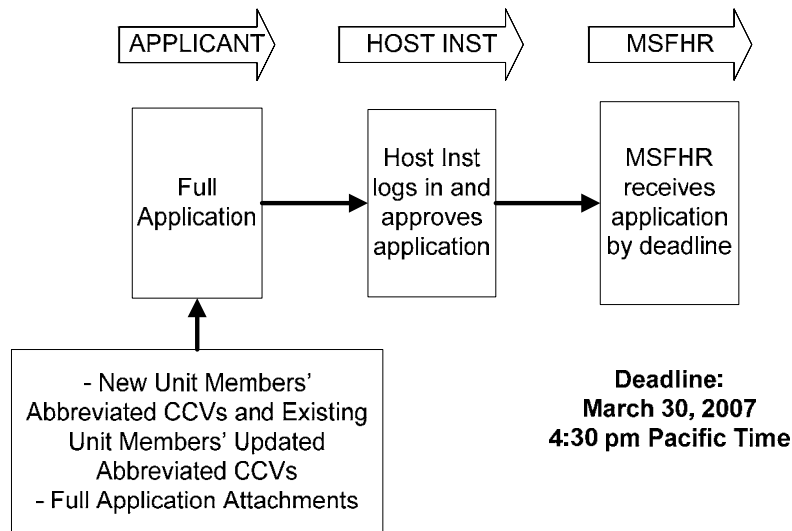
Online Approval and Submission

All required application forms must be completed and submitted through [MSFHR ApplyNet](#). No paper copies are required as the entire submission process is online. You will be able to track the status of your application on MSFHR ApplyNet through the Status column in the Application Activity table on the Portfolio page. Your completed Full Application package will comprise:

- An MSFHR ApplyNet Full Application online form;
- Common CV (MSFHR Abbreviated Version) for each QHR in the Research Unit (including the Unit Leader);
- A separate attachment containing expanded details of your Research Unit and Research Development Plan; and
- An attached letter of support from the Research Unit's host institution.

The submission process of the Full Application occurs in three stages:

1. The Research Unit Leader completes and submits the application in MSFHR ApplyNet. After this initial submission, changes to the application package cannot be made.
2. Once submitted, the application is made available electronically to the host institution for approval.
3. Once approved by the host institution the application is automatically forwarded to MSFHR. This must happen before the deadline: **March 30, 2007, 4:30 pm Pacific Time.**



Please Note: For the Research Unit competition, MSFHR does not require signatures or electronic forms from department heads or deans. Please check with your host institution for internal approval processes and deadlines to ensure your application is approved and submitted by the MSFHR application deadline.

Instructions for MSFHR ApplyNet Research Unit Full Application

Research Unit Contact Details

This is the first section in the online application. It contains contact details for the Leader, Administrative Contact, and the Financial Administrator for the Unit, and the name of your Unit's host institution. The host institution indicated in this section will be the institution that electronically receives your application for approval.

The Contact Details you provided in your Preliminary Application will be copied automatically into your Full Application once you have entered your file number. You do not need to re-enter the contact details. However, you may edit this information if you wish.

Research Unit Name/Keywords/Synopsis

The purpose of this section is to capture summary information about the Research Unit's research focus and the basis for the infrastructure application.

The Synopsis you provided in your Preliminary Application will be copied automatically into your Full Application. You do not need to re-enter this information. However, you may edit it if you wish. Please ensure that your description of the Unit's research focus provides reviewers with a clear understanding of your area(s) of study. You will be able to expand on this in your research plan in the attachment to your application (see below).

Research Unit Members

The purpose of this section is to identify the researchers who are members of your Research Unit. The Research Unit members who were nominated in your Preliminary Application will be copied automatically into your Full Application. You do not need to re-enter this information. However, you may edit it if you wish. For example, you may wish to change the status of a researcher from a QHR to an AHR or vice versa, or you may want to add or delete a member of your Unit. Please use the Validate button to confirm changes.

For Research Unit Category B applications, the maximum number of QHRs is 20. Please note that the Research Unit Leader is considered a QHR. The maximum number of AHRs is 20. (See [Definitions](#) for further information.)

- Each Unit member must already have an MSFHR system account e-mail address in order to be listed in the application. If a Unit member does not yet have an MSFHR system account e-mail address, the person will need to set up an MSFHR ApplyNet account and advise you of the details before you can complete this section of the application. However, you may save and return to this section to add Research Unit members' details any time prior to final submission of your application.
- To add additional Research Unit members, select the New Member button.
- Please note: when you preview or print this section, the Unit members' names will be automatically grouped into those who are QHRs and those who are AHRs. Within each of these groups, the names will be automatically sorted alphabetically.
- While you can make changes to the individual QHRs and AHRs, you cannot change Research Unit categories within the same competition. If you nominated your Research Unit as Category A in the Preliminary Application, you must continue as Category A in the Full Application; if you nominated your Research Unit as Category B in the Preliminary Application, you must continue as Category B in the Full Application. This requirement might prevent you from adding, deleting or changing the affiliation of certain team members. For example, if you submitted a Preliminary Application as a Category A Unit and listed 10 QHRs, in order to add another QHR in your Full Application you would have to delete an existing QHR (or convert him/her to an AHR) to ensure that your Unit remains a Category A unit.

Declaration of Researchers' Affiliations

The purpose of this section is to identify whether the researchers in the current Research Unit (including the Leader) are also members of other [Teams or Research Units](#) funded by MSFHR. The application review process will take this information into account when considering the contributions of researchers to the current Unit. You should ask all QHRs and AHRs in your Research Unit for their existing affiliations, to ensure this section is completed accurately. This section is specific to the Full Application only.

Please note that a researcher cannot be a QHR with more than one MSFHR-funded Team and two MSFHR-funded Research Units, including the current application. In the event that a researcher is a QHR already affiliated with one funded Team and two funded Research Units, the individual will need to be reclassified as an AHR in the current Unit in order to meet the above condition. You will need to return to the Research Unit Members section to make this change. A researcher can be an AHR with multiple Teams and Research Units funded by MSFHR. (See [Definitions](#) for further information.)

- The names of all QHRs and AHRs identified in the Research Unit Members section, including the Unit Leader, will be pre-populated in this section.
- For each researcher appearing in this section, you must indicate whether s/he is affiliated with another MSFHR-funded Team or Research Unit. If you select the Yes button, further data entry fields will be generated for you to complete.
 - The “Affiliated with” field will display a list of all [funded MSFHR Teams and/or Research Units](#). Please select the Team or Research Unit to which the researcher is affiliated.
 - You must indicate if the researcher in the current Research Unit is a QHR or AHR in the other Team or Research Unit.
 - You must provide a brief description of his/her role in the other Team or Research Unit.
 - If the researcher in the current Research Unit is affiliated with additional MSFHR-funded Teams and/or Research Units, select the New Affiliation button and repeat the above steps.
- If you select the No affiliations button, no additional data entry fields will appear. You should proceed to the next researcher and indicate whether the person is affiliated with another MSFHR-funded Team or Research Unit.
- You need to repeat this process for all researchers listed in this section.
- If you subsequently add extra researchers to the Research Unit Members section, you must also return to this section to complete a Declaration of Other Affiliations for these extra researchers.

Training

The purpose of this section is to indicate the number of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows currently training under each QHR in the Research Unit, and the number of trainees who have completed training in the last two years. The numbers should refer only to trainees for whom the QHR is the primary supervisor. This section is specific to the Full Application only.

- The names of all QHRs identified in the Research Unit Members section will be pre-populated in this section.
- The total number for each trainee category will be added up automatically.

Proposed Budget

The purpose of this section is to describe the proposed budget over the four years of the award period, including justification for the items requested. The Proposed Budget submitted in your Preliminary Application will be copied automatically into your Full Application. You do not need to re-enter this information. However, you may edit it if you wish.

Category A Research Units may apply for up to \$200,000 per year for four years; Category B Research Units may apply for up to \$300,000 per year for four years. (See [Award Amount.](#)) Do not include funding from other sources in this budget. Some costs may be phased-in over the four-year period. You should also consider annual increments, for example, for salaries and

benefits, to ensure adequate funding. MSFHR will not provide supplementary funding for this purpose. You should also liaise with your host institution to ensure the requested funding is complementary to any existing infrastructure and funding support already provided. A list of example [eligible and ineligible expenses](#) is available for your reference.

- You must provide details of your proposed budget, starting with personnel expenditures. In the personnel fields, you must identify the type of position you seek to fund (e.g. Research Coordinator), the [Full Time Equivalent \(FTE\)](#) for that position, the projected cost of that position and a brief justification for the position (i.e. how the requested position will contribute to the activities of the Research Unit).
- You must then provide details of any supplies, services and other items you wish to include in your proposed budget. You must identify the item you seek to fund (e.g. conference attendance for trainees), the projected cost of that item and a brief justification for the item (i.e. how the requested item will aid in the activities of the Research Unit).
- The costs within each budget field will be added up automatically. A total budget will also be automatically calculated.

Financial Accountability Structure

The purpose of this section is to describe the mechanism(s) by which the Research Unit will be accountable for using MSFHR funds. MSFHR funds must be paid to the Unit's host institution. The Financial Accountability Structure submitted in your Preliminary Application will be copied automatically into your Full Application. You do not need to re-enter this information. However, you may edit it if you wish.

Current Infrastructure Support

The purpose of this section is to provide an estimate (in dollars) of the financial support that will be available for infrastructure to support the day-to-day operations of the Unit for the one-year period, July 2007 – June 2008. This estimate should include confirmed existing infrastructure support (for example, administrative personnel, consumables, IT, etc.). Potential MSFHR Research Unit Award funds, and any possible support that is contingent on receiving an MSFHR Research Unit Award, should not be included in this item. Research operating grants and capital equipment also should not be included in this item. This section is specific to the Full Application only.

Sustainability of the Research Unit's Infrastructure

The purpose of this section is to briefly describe how funding of the Unit's infrastructure could be sustained beyond the MSFHR funding period. For example, do opportunities exist for your host institution to contribute to your unit's infrastructure, or are there alternate funding sources that might be pursued in the future? This section is specific to the Full Application only.

Attachments

Two attachments are required:

- a document containing expanded details of your Research Unit and Research Development Plan; and
- a letter of support from the Research Unit's host institution.

Research Unit and Research Development Plan

In addition to the online application, you must attach a separate document that contains expanded details of your Research Unit and Research Development Plan.

In the Preliminary Application you submitted an attachment that briefly addressed five topics: research focus; Research Unit structure and governance; Research Unit cohesiveness; training opportunities; and future directions.

In the Full Application, you must submit an attachment that addresses the following eight topics:

- Research Focus;
- Research Unit Members;
- Research Development Plan;
- Collaboration;
- Training;
- Infrastructure Support;
- Knowledge Translation; and
- Performance Measures.

To be eligible for review, this attachment must adhere to the following instructions for presentation and content:

- Microsoft Word or PDF format preferred;
- One (1) page for the Table of Contents, maximum of twelve (12) pages for sections 1 through 8, maximum of three (3) pages for the Appendices, including references;
- Letter size, 8½ x 11" (21.2 x 27.5 cm);
- Arial font (regular), minimum 11-point;
- Single-spaced text;
- 1" (2.54 cm) margin on all sides of each page; and
- A header on each page with the Leader's name in the top left-hand corner, and the page number in the top right-hand corner.

The total number of pages for the Research Unit and Research Development Plan attachment should not exceed sixteen (16) pages.

Research Focus

Describe your Research Unit's research theme/focus, including its goals, innovative characteristics, recent evolution and relevance to British Columbians. Also indicate how your Unit's research will contribute to the research priorities of your host institution. Please ensure your Unit's research theme/focus is clear and sufficiently specific so that reviewers may understand your area(s) of study.

Research Unit Members

Identify the members of the Research Unit and provide a brief description of the role and expected contribution of each person. Indicate what planning and management structures are in place, or planned, to ensure participation and integration of Research Unit members, effective communication and decision-making processes and appropriate engagement of stakeholders.

Research Development Plan

Describe the plan that will be implemented by the Research Unit over the four-year funding period to advance the Unit and its research agenda. You may wish to structure your plan to include research sub-themes. This is optional. The plan may include, but is not limited to, Unit development activities, development and expansion of research methodologies, development and implementation of research plans, and development and expansion of stakeholder relationships. You should also demonstrate that the proposed research plan is feasible within the funding period.

Collaboration

Describe how the Research Unit will enhance ongoing and new collaborations within the Research Unit, as well as with other researchers in BC, across Canada and/or in other countries. If possible, specify key collaborations that will be pursued during the funding period.

Training

Describe the training opportunities the Research Unit offers/will offer to staff and trainees, emphasizing areas of specialty or uniqueness. Identify existing and planned initiatives within and outside the Unit that will enhance the learning experience for trainees.

Infrastructure Support

Briefly describe what new or different resources would be made available to the Unit through MSFHR infrastructure funding, and how these resources will be made available to the Unit's members and contribute to their activities. Also indicate whether any infrastructure support is already available to the Research Unit. If such support does exist, provide a brief summary of the existing infrastructure, and how the requested infrastructure support from MSFHR will complement this existing infrastructure.

Knowledge Translation

Describe the processes and activities that have been used by the Research Unit in the past two years to facilitate translation of research findings. These initiatives are expected to extend beyond sharing of research methods and results with scientific colleagues and peers. Also outline strategies that the Research Unit will use during the four-year funding period to facilitate translation of its research results to relevant target groups and applications such as:

- patients, patient treatment, and patient behaviour;
- the behaviour of professionals working with patients;
- institutional and public policies;
- the directions of the health care system;
- the transfer of technology to industry and other economic opportunities;
- the community (general and specific stakeholders); and/or
- the media.

Performance Measures

For each of the four years of funding, describe process and/or outcome measures that will be monitored and reported to MSFHR. These measures should include indicators of the value added by MSFHR infrastructure funds to the Research Unit's productivity and overall performance. The measures may be quantitative and qualitative. Examples of such measures might include recruitment of support staff funded by MSFHR infrastructure funds, increases in collaborations and partnerships, increases in national and international funding, increases in training capacity and/or numbers of trainees, increases in the number of publications, uptake of research results by stakeholder groups, patent approvals and technology transfer. Applicants should define annual targets, where appropriate. MSFHR reserves the right to review and negotiate performance measures with successful applicants.

Host Institution Letter of Support

Attach one letter from your host institution confirming that:

- your Research Unit application has been reviewed;
- the Unit's plans fit with the Research Development Plan of your host institution;
- your Unit's application is supported; and
- funding will be provided (or is currently being provided) to the Unit towards its research activities by the host institution.

Other letters of support cannot be attached.

Depending on its format, the letter of support might need to be scanned to accommodate electronic attachment.

Signature and Submission

The purpose of this section is to obtain an electronic signature from the Research Unit Leader authorizing submission of the Full Application and attachments. In order for the application to be submitted you must select the Yes and Submit buttons in the Signature and Submission section of the Full Application form. It is strongly recommended that you use the Validate function on each screen of the application as well as preview and print your application before submission to ensure that it complies with all requirements and is as you intended.

Please note that the print/preview option generates a PDF version of your application that is formatted slightly differently from the online screens you have completed. All information that you have provided in the online application is captured in this PDF version. In order to have a complete copy of all documents submitted, you need to separately print out your attachments.

Further changes to your application or attachments are not possible once you have submitted your application.

Once you have selected the Submit button, your application and attachments will be made available electronically to your host institution for electronic approval. You can monitor the status of this process on MSFHR ApplyNet through the Status column in the Application Activity table on the Portfolio page.

Evaluation Process

All Full Applications are reviewed by an external [Merit Review Panel](#) comprising senior researchers from outside of BC. The panel will rank all applications, and recommend those that should receive Research Unit Awards. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the review process in June 2007. Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria

Research Focus

- The research direction is clear and concise.

- The Research Unit demonstrates originality, innovation and scientific merit.
- The Research Unit's research development plan is aligned with the research priorities of its host institution.

Research Unit Members

- The scientific productivity of team members is high and relevant to the Research Unit's research focus.
- The Research Unit members, as a group, will contribute more than 'the sum of the parts'.

Research Development Plan

- The Research Development Plan for the Research Unit over the next four years is clear and well-integrated.
- The plan will significantly advance the Research Unit and its contributions to health research.
- The plan clearly identifies how MSFHR infrastructure funding support will contribute to increased research productivity and competitiveness for the Unit.

Collaboration

- The plan includes strategies to pursue regional, national and international collaborations that are appropriate for the Research Unit.
- The plan specifies key collaborations that will be pursued during the funding period.

Training

- The essential elements required for the provision of high-quality training to existing and new staff, students and post-doctoral fellows are present or are likely to be developed during the funding period.
- The QHRs in the Research Unit have demonstrated appropriate commitment to, and participation in, trainee supervision and mentorship.
- The training environment offers areas of specialty or uniqueness.

Infrastructure Requested

- The items requested are appropriate, i.e. are complementary to current resources and have clear potential to increase the Research Unit's productivity and competitiveness.
- The items requested are sufficiently justified.
- The Research Unit clearly describes the mechanism(s) by which it is accountable for using MSFHR funds.
- The Research Unit has plans for sustaining its infrastructure after the end of the award period.

Knowledge Translation

- Appropriate linkages and processes have been established or defined to enhance translation of research and research results.
- The range of target audiences and areas identified for knowledge translation activities is appropriate and inclusive.
- The Research Unit has identified potential impacts on health care delivery and/or economic development, where applicable.

Performance Measures

- The performance measures provide useful insights into the Research Unit's progress from year to year during the funding period, and include a good mix of process and outcome indicators.

- The performance measures identify the contribution of the Research Unit's activity to academia, the health system, and economic development, as appropriate.
- The performance measures include indicators of the value added to the Research Unit by MSFHR infrastructure funds.
- Proposed targets and milestones are attainable and at the same time appropriately ambitious.

Overall Potential

- The Research Unit has the potential to make a significant contribution to BC's research community.
- The infrastructure funding requested will make a difference to the Research Unit's productivity and its national and international competitiveness.

Grantsmanship

- The applicant has fulfilled the requirements specified in the Guidelines for Full Applications.

Inquiries and Further Information

If you require further assistance, please contact the following:

For inquiries and help with MSFHR ApplyNet online applications, contact the MSFHR Help Desk:

[E-mail the Help desk](#)

Local phone: 604.714.6609

Toll-free phone: 1.866.673.4722 (ask for the MSFHR Help Desk)

For inquiries and information about the Research Unit Award and Research Unit Guidelines:

[E-mail the Infrastructure Program](#)

Andrea McLean, Program Coordinator, Infrastructure, 604.714.6605

Dr. Angela Todd, Senior Director, Infrastructure, 604.714.5371