



2017 Research Trainee Program

GUIDELINES

DEADLINES

Letter of Intent: Monday, February 6, 2017

Full Application: Monday, March 6, 2017

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1. Preface

The Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR) empowers British Columbia's (BC) best and brightest health researchers to pursue world-class innovation and stretch the bounds of what health research can achieve. The Foundation helps BC's health research community discover solutions to our greatest health challenges; connect knowledge and action on provincial priorities; and engage partners to improve the research enterprise. Learn more at www.msfhr.org.

2. Purpose

The MSFHR Research Trainee Program is designed to attract, recognize, and support outstanding researchers who have completed a PhD, or are a health professional eligible for a fellowship (or equivalent) program.

3. Eligibility Requirements

At the time of application or by the award start date of September 1, 2017, the applicant must:

- Have a PhD **OR** be a health professional in active clinical service.
- Hold or be eligible to hold a post-doctoral fellowship position by the award start date, and for the duration of the MSFHR award, at a BC university or a research institution that holds a [memorandum of understanding](#)¹ with MSFHR.
- Not have held a PhD degree for more than five years or have been a health professional in active clinical service for more than 10 years for the duration of the MSFHR award. Justified career interruptions may be deducted from the calculation. Examples of eligible career interruptions are parental leave for birth or adoption, medical leave, residency training, etc.
- Have a written commitment from a supervisor protecting:
 - a. A minimum of 75 percent time of the PhD applicant's time for research training. This represents no less than 30 hours per week, **OR**
 - b. 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.
- Be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or foreign national. Foreign nationals must be sponsored by a BC supervisor who holds an academic appointment at a BC university.
- Not have held a previous MSFHR Post-Doctoral Fellowship Award.

¹ Please refer to the [list of eligible host institutions](#).

- Conduct research in one of the four health research themes as defined by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research: biomedical, clinical, health services, or population health². A clear link to human health must be made in the research project.
- Provide two reference letters from:
 - a. PhD supervisor or for health professionals, an individual who can provide the information required in the reference letter **AND**
 - b. An expert in your area of research and outside of your host institution **OR**
 - c. A mentor

Note: If the PhD supervisor is the primary or co-supervisor of the current application, he/she cannot be one of the referees.

At the start date of the award, September 1, 2017, successful PhD applicants must provide proof of degree completion if this was not complete at the time of application. Health professional applicants must provide proof of being engaged in active clinical service. If unable to provide proof of degree completion or of being engaged in active clinical service by September 1, 2017, the award offer will be withdrawn.

4. Supervisor(s)

An applicant can have up to two supervisors. The primary supervisor must be an established researcher who holds an academic appointment (at the level of an assistant, associate, or full professor) with a BC university. The co-supervisor must also hold an academic appointment with a BC university. However, the co-supervisor can be an adjunct professor or equivalent.

Supervisor(s):

- Can support up to a maximum of four fully funded MSFHR 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:
 - a. Minimum of 75 percent of the applicant's time for health research activities. This represents no less than 30 hours per week, **OR**
 - b. Minimum of 50 percent of a health professional applicant's (those in active clinical service) time to health research activities. This represents no less than 20 hours per week.

² MSFHR 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.

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 KT activities, as appropriate.
- Administer the research and travel allowance of the award recipient.
- Respect the obligations described in the MSFHR Research Trainee Program guidelines and conditions of award, as well as those of the host institution as they relate to the supervision of post-doctoral fellows.
- Ensure the award recipient:
 - Respects and abides by the obligations described in the Research Trainee Program guidelines, conditions of award, and the host institution's policies and procedures.
 - Uses the MSFHR award funds only for the purposes intended.
 - Informs MSFHR and the host institution immediately of any substantive changes such as the fellow's eligibility status, change of host institution or research location, etc.
 - Meets all reporting requirements of MSFHR in a timely fashion.
 - Complies 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:
 - i. Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (2014)
 - ii. Canadian Council on Animal Care Policies and Guidelines
 - iii. Canadian Environmental Assessment Act
 - iv. Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines

The co-supervisor agrees to all of the above and provides academic support when the primary supervisor is unavailable (e.g. sabbatical leave, extended sick leave) and cannot provide full guidance.

5. Knowledge Translation (KT)

MSFHR requires applicants from all research themes to include knowledge translation (KT) activities in their research project. KT is the broad range of activities meant to improve the use of health research evidence in practice, policy, and further research.

KT related activities must be embedded within the research project through, for example, research user³ engagement, research dissemination, and/or research uptake activities. KT activities should be

³ Research users are the target audience(s) of research evidence. Research users are experts on their needs, environment, and local context. Including research users as members of the research team will ideally result in more relevant research evidence and an increased likelihood of

determined based on their appropriateness given the type of research, expected findings, and target audience. Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage research users throughout the research process. [Additional information about KT can be found on our website.](#)

KT Science

Applicants may submit a research project that is fully focused on KT science; these will be evaluated against set KT science evaluation criteria in addition to standard research trainee evaluation criteria. KT science explores the theories, mechanisms, concepts, and/or methods by which evidence is used in health care practice and policy.

6. Partnerships

MSFHR partners with other funders with a health focus to build capacity and fill strategic gaps in health research in BC. Partnered awards offer researchers the opportunity to develop relationships with the partners and their community of stakeholders such as patients and the public.

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

- Applicants interested in partnered awards are encouraged to email partners@msfhr.org for instructions on how to register your interest for a partnered award and to indicate how your research aligns with partner areas of interest. Details regarding potential partners will be available on our website in the coming weeks.
- MSFHR uses keywords provided by the partners to identify applications that may be relevant to and align with the partners' area of interest.

Applications that fulfill the funding criteria for both MSFHR and a partner organization are eligible for a partnered trainee award. However, only those applications that receive an MSFHR peer review rating of 3.8 or above will be considered. Funding decisions on partnered awards will be made prior to July 15, 2017 and are based on existing MSFHR policies, confirmed partnership support, and the funding envelope available.

MSFHR and partner(s) financial contributions are subject to availability of funds and the annual budgetary approvals by both MSFHR's Board of Directors and the partnership organization beyond year one of the award.

its use for the purpose of making informed decisions about health policies, programs and/or practices. A research user may include, but is not limited to, other researchers, policy makers, health care practitioners, decision makers, health care administrators, educators, patient user group, or health charity, and the public. [Adapted from Canadian Institutes of Health Research's 'Guide to Knowledge Translation Planning at CIHR: Integrated and End-of-Grant Approaches'. <http://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/45321.html>. Accessed June 30, 2015.]

7. Award Amount and Duration

The budget envelope for this funding opportunity is \$2,550,000, enough to fund at least 20 research trainee awards over the three-year term of the award. MSFHR will fund:

- 70 percent or 14 awards across the four research themes.
- 30 percent or six awards specifically across the five BC health system priority areas (in any of the four themes). The ultimate allocation of funds across the five priorities will depend on the applications received and the outcomes of the application review process described in section 13: Review Process.

The award consists of a stipend and a research and travel allowance. MSFHR's financial contributions beyond year one of the awards is subject to availability of funds and the annual budgetary approval by the Foundation's Board of Directors.

The amount and duration of the MSFHR Research Trainee Award is determined by the amount of time since applicants completed their PhD or health professional degree as of the full application deadline, March 6, 2017. No changes are made to the stipend amount during the term of the award.

The award will provide support for up to a maximum of three years. MSFHR will not fund post-doctoral fellows who hold a PhD beyond five years of degree completion or who hold a health professional degree beyond 10 years of degree completion during the term of the MSFHR Research Trainee Award.

Applicants must apply for at least **one year of support**.

The stipend and research and travel allowance are inclusive of benefits, are valued in Canadian dollars, and are taxable.

The table below demonstrates the stipend amounts.

Years Since Degree	Stipend Amount	Research and Travel Allowance
< 3 (0 – 36 months)	\$37,000	\$4,500
3 – 5 (37 – 60 months)	\$42,000	\$4,500
> 5 – 10 (61 – 120 months)	\$47,000	\$4,500

Example calculation of award amount and duration as of the full application deadline date, March 6, 2017:

Date of PhD degree completion: August 31, 2013

September 1, 2013 to March 6, 2017 = 42 months
Eligible for 18 months funding at \$42,000 per annum

8. Reporting Requirements

MSFHR Research Trainee Award recipients are required to complete annual progress reports. Reporting templates will be provided to award recipients a month before the anniversary of their award.

In addition to these annual reporting requirements, research trainee award recipients must submit a final report within 30 days following the award end date and a final financial statement within three months following completion of the research trainee award.

MSFHR reserves the right to contact research trainees after the end date of the award to determine the short- and middle-term outcomes and/or impacts of the research plan.

Additionally, to inform evaluation and continued improvement of our award programs, award recipients will be invited to provide feedback to MSFHR staff to determine areas of improvement for this funding opportunity.

9. Incentive and Top-Up Funding for Stipend, and Research and Travel Allowance (RTA)

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 in the period that they hold a MSFHR Research Trainee Award, are eligible to receive top-up and incentive funding. MSFHR considers a stipend award to be external if the award meets all the four conditions below:

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

The top-up and incentive funding would be available for the duration of the MSFHR Research Trainee Award or to the end of the external stipend award, whichever comes first.

Example of MSFHR award adjustment:

MSFHR stipend award	External stipend award received by award recipient	Effect on MSFHR stipend award
\$37,000	Greater than or equal to \$37,000	MSFHR stipend award reduced to \$0 Receives MSFHR incentive award of \$7,000

\$37,000	\$18,500 or greater but less than \$37,000	MSFHR award reduced to the amount that, when added to the external stipend award, will equal \$37,000 plus receives MSFHR incentive award of \$7,000
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Example of MSFHR RTA adjustment:

MSFHR RTA award	External RTA award ¹ received by award recipient	Effect on MSFHR RTA award
\$4,500	\$4,500 or greater	MSFHR RTA award is \$0
\$4,500	Less than \$4,500	MSFHR RTA award is adjusted such that the adjusted value, when added to the external RTA award, will equal \$4,500 Example: External RTA is \$2,500, MSFHR RTA reduced to \$2,000; together the RTA award adds up to \$4,500
¹ The research and travel allowance (RTA) award must be a component of the external stipend award. RTA awards without a stipend component are not eligible for top-up or incentive adjustments.		

10. Award Start Date and Deferral

Unless otherwise indicated, funding for MSFHR Research Trainee Awards begin on September 1. Successful applicants must confirm their acceptance of the award within the stipulated time indicated in the award notification package. The start may be deferred up to a maximum of 12 months. The start date must be on the first day of any month and be no later than August 1, 2018. **Deferred start dates, once confirmed by MSFHR, cannot be revised.**

Deferral of the start date of the award to meet the eligibility requirement for PhD or health professional degree completion will not be accepted.

Deferral of the award may affect the term of the award if it impacts the five or 10-year eligibility requirement as previously described.

11. Authorized Paid Work

Award recipients are expected to spend 75 percent of their time or a minimum of 30 hours per week in research training. Health professionals in active clinical service are expected to spend 50 percent of their time or a minimum of 20 hours per week in research training. 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.

12. How to Apply

The application process for the MSFHR Research Trainee competition is composed of two mandatory stages:

1. Letter of Intent (LOI)
 - **Deadline date: February 6, 2017, 11:59 p.m. Pacific Standard Time**
 - Consists of:
 - The short LOI form in MSFHR ApplyNet
2. Full application
 - **Deadline date: March 6, 2016, 11:59 p.m. Pacific Standard Time**
 - Consists of:
 - Research project and appendices⁴
 - Canadian Common CV – MSFHR Abbreviated Version (includes information from the entire career)
 - List of Publications, Patents & Intellectual Property Rights (uploaded as an attachment to CCV)
 - Supervisor(s) Approval form
 - Supervisor(s) Common CV – MSFHR Full Version (includes information from past five years only)
 - Two letters of reference (one letter must be from PhD supervisor)
 - Doctoral certificate or health professional degree certificate

To complete your application, follow the instructions as stated in the **application instructions**. Please ensure that applications are complete and submitted by MSFHR's application deadline. Incomplete or late applications cannot be considered.

Note: Each university has its own internal deadline that is earlier than MSFHR's. Please check with the Office of Graduate Studies at your host institution for more information.

Submission Requirements

- All steps of the application must be submitted using MSFHR ApplyNet, the Foundation's online application submission system.
- All documents uploaded onto MSFHR ApplyNet must be in .pdf format. No other formats will be accepted.
- 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.

⁴ References, charts, figures, tables and photographs only.

- As an applicant, you will be able to access a .pdf copy of the full application to review the information you have entered.

MSFHR reserves the right to declare applications ineligible based on the established criteria.

All applicants and referees applying for the first time to MSFHR will need to register on MSFHR ApplyNet and create a system account email and password. Additional information on MSFHR ApplyNet can be found in the [MSFHR ApplyNet FAQ](#) document.

13. Review Process

Research trainee award applications will be screened for eligibility by MSFHR staff. Eligible applications will undergo review by an external review panel for funding recommendations.

Applications will be evaluated via a process that incorporates the three main principles of peer review:

1. *Confidentiality* – All information contained in applications, reports by reviewers, and any discussions by the review panel about applications or applicants are strictly confidential.
2. *Integrity* – MSFHR makes every effort to ensure that its decisions are fair and objective, and are seen to be so.
3. *Parity* – Refers to the willingness and ability of all review panel members to be fair and reasonable, to exercise meticulous scientific judgement and, to understand and take into account the particular context of each application.

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

Evaluation Criteria

Applications to the respective themes will be assessed against the indicated criteria and weightings below:

Criterion	BIOM		CLIN		HSR		POPH	
	PhD	HP	PhD	HP	PhD	HP	PhD	HP
Track record	40	30	35	35	30	30	30	30
Research project	40	50	35	45	40	50	40	45
Environment and Support	20	20	30	20	30	20	30	25

A full description of the evaluation criteria can be found on our website.

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	
Adequate	3.0 – 3.4	Not fundable
Less than adequate	0 – 2.9	

Funding Decision

Following application review, the highest rated applications will be identified. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the review process after the review panel meetings and the subsequent approval of the results. There is no appeal process.

Applicants will receive notification of the funding decisions, as well as the reviewers' comments. A list of successful applicants will be published on MSFHR's website.

14. Contact Information

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

Rashmita Salvi
 Manager, Research Competitions
 604.714.2779
traineeprogram@msfhr.org

Yuliya Shapova
 Coordinator, Research Competitions
 604.714.2775
traineeprogram@msfhr.org

For information about the ApplyNet system or help with login information, please contact:

Technical Questions
 MSFHR Help Desk
 604.714.6609
helpdesk@msfhr.org