



## 2018 HEALTH PROFESSIONAL-INVESTIGATOR COMPETITION

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## Application Phase Questions

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### 1. Who can apply to the Health Professional-Investigator (HP-I) award?

Health professionals who are actively involved in patient care or public health practice in BC, and who have a track record that demonstrates a committed interest in pursuing research. The HP-I award is designed to increase the capability of practicing health professionals to do research, contribute to the establishment and/or continued development of research careers for health professionals, and increase the capacity for health professionals to produce and utilize research evidence that informs best practices for health, health care delivery and/or health system improvement.

### 2. Are all health professionals eligible?

Only those health professions<sup>1</sup> recognized by the BC [Health Professions Act](#) with a valid license to practice in BC, and who are a member in good standing of the appropriate regulatory college **OR** belong to a health profession requiring board certification<sup>2</sup>, and who are a member in good standing of the appropriate provincial or national certification body.

### 3. What does board-certified or board-eligible mean?

Board certification is an achievement by a health profession in which all requirements of that individual's professional certification body have been met. This may include the accumulation of a threshold level of continuing education credits, achieving proficiency in specific core competencies as determined through examination, and/or verification of provincially/national-accepted standards of knowledge and practice. Board-eligible individuals are those who have successfully completed training or residency, but have yet to accrue enough continuing education credits and/or have yet to obtain proficiency in specific core competencies. These individuals, who are often just beginning their health professional career, must still be a member in good standing of their respective professional certification body.

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<sup>1</sup> A list of regulated health professions and their respective regulatory colleges can be found at [www.bchealthregulators.ca/index.php/sample-page/about/who-are-regulated-health-professionals](http://www.bchealthregulators.ca/index.php/sample-page/about/who-are-regulated-health-professionals)

<sup>2</sup> Individuals must be board-certified or board-eligible.



**4. I am an eligible health professional, but I am not involved in direct patient care; instead, I oversee other health professionals who engage directly in patient care. Am I eligible to apply?**

Yes, eligible health professionals involved in the management of medical or health care services are eligible, provided all other eligibility criteria are met. The phrase “actively involved in patient care or public health practice in BC” is meant to differentiate health professionals who primarily identify themselves as clinicians from those who predominantly work in a research laboratory, and thus identify more as researchers.

**5. What does “scope of practice” mean?**

Scope of practice refers to all activities that are covered under the rules of licensure by the relevant professional college or association. For example, the College of Registered Nurses of BC defines a certain number of practice hours under its scope of practice, which includes education, research, development of guidelines, etc., as long as the activities require the “application of registered nursing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and judgments”.

**6. What is the nature of the appointment that I must have with a BC institution?**

The appointment must allow you to engage in independent research activities that conform to the institutional requirements for and conduct of research, allow you to hold peer-reviewed funding, and permit you to publish research findings. Depending on your institution, this could include academic, clinical, or other institutional research appointments. Please check with your institution to make sure your appointment meets program eligibility.

**7. Can research associates and post-doctoral fellows apply?**

Yes, but if they are successful in the HP-I competition, they must have an appointment at an eligible BC institution as of the award start date (June 1, 2018), and meet all other eligibility criteria as stated in the [competition guidelines](#).



## 8. What does “eligible BC host institution” refer to?

An eligible BC institution is one that has a memorandum of understanding with MSFHR. View a complete [list of eligible host institutions](#).

**Note:** The host institution is the institution that administers funds for the duration of the award. The selection of the host institution is based on where the research project is being conducted and the majority of resources to support the project (e.g. infrastructure, human resources, administration, etc.) is provided. It does not need to be the same BC institution where the appointment is held. Applicants should verify their host institution and where their appointment is held prior to submitting a full application.

## 9. Can I apply for this award if I already hold an MSFHR Scholar or Research Trainee award?

Yes, but if you are successful in being awarded an HP-I award, you will need to give up the previous award as award recipients can only hold on MSFHR salary award at a time.

## 10. My appointment is with a university, but my research will be conducted at a different site. Who should complete the department head form?

The nominated department head should be associated with the host institution that is administering the award. Therefore, if the host institution is a university, please nominate the appropriate department head at that university. If the host institution is a health authority or research institute, nominate the department head or equivalent associated with that institution.

## 11. My appointment is with a university, but my research will be conducted at a different site. Who should complete the dean of faculty form?

The dean of faculty at the university (host institution) that will administer the funds should complete the dean’s form in MSFHR ApplyNet.



## 12. My host institution (e.g. health authority) does not require the approval of a dean. Who completes the dean's form in MSFHR ApplyNet?

Do not nominate a dean in the third party section in MSFHR ApplyNet. The department head or equivalent at the health authority completes an additional question in the department head form that captures the information required of the dean.

## 13. What is independent research?

The researcher is engaged in systematic, intensive study that is intended to:

- Increase knowledge or understanding of the topic being studied.
- Apply new knowledge to meet a recognized gap.
- Apply new knowledge to the production of useful material, devices and systems or methods including design, development and improvement.

## 14. Is verification of degree completion required?

Degree and medical/clinical licensure completion dates are requested in the Canadian Common CV (CCV). Applicants are expected to provide true, accurate and complete information and to provide documented proof when requested.

## 15. Why is a mentorship plan included as a component of the HP-I application?

It can be difficult for clinicians, especially those early in their research careers, to maintain proficient knowledge in a relevant body of research evidence and methodologies while engaging in clinical practice. It is therefore common practice for clinician-researchers to engage with a more senior researcher or clinician who can provide the necessary guidance that can help ensure the successful completion of a research project. A mentorship plan allows applicants to describe how engaging with a mentor will help them achieve their research goals. Applicants who are more established researchers can substitute a mentorship plan with a continuing research learning plan that describes strategies for how the applicant will maintain their knowledge base in the relevant research field.



**16. My project proposal may include work relevant to indigenous health and/or vulnerable populations. Is there anything I should be aware of?**

Applicants who are considering a research project involving Indigenous peoples or other vulnerable populations are strongly encouraged to refer to the [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#) (2014), and more specifically, [TCPS 2 – Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#), when formulating their research proposal.

**17. Will interruptions/delays in my career be taken into account when reviewing my application?**

Interruptions and delays in your research and clinical career will be taken into account by reviewers when assessing productivity in an applicant's letter of intent and full application. You are advised to clearly and fully describe any interruptions or delays that affected your research and/or dissemination of research results in the "Career Interruptions" section of the letter of intent and full application.

**18. Will I be at a disadvantage if the dean, or the department head or equivalent indicates that my appointment is conditional upon my success in the HP-I competition?**

Institutional support is an important component of the HP-I application and review process. A host institution should demonstrate a strong commitment to the applicant regardless of their success in the competition.

**19. What is the difference between a reference letter and a letter of collaboration?**

The three reference letters are mandatory and must be included in the application package. These can be written by former supervisors, managers, mentors and experts in the field. Letters of collaboration are not mandatory and are written by individuals who are expected to make a significant contribution to your proposed project of research, confirming their enthusiasm to participate in the manner indicated.



**20. Where in the application does MSFHR want the written commitment to protect a minimum of 50 percent of the applicant’s time for research for the duration of the HP-I award?**

This commitment must be demonstrated in the department head or equivalent and dean (if applicable) approval forms. These are to be filled out and submitted electronically by the respective third parties in MSFHR ApplyNet.

**21. Where can I find the list of available partners, funding criteria to be considered for a partnered HP-I award, and instructions on how to register my interest in these awards?**

Applicants interested in partnered awards are encouraged to email [partners@msfhr.org](mailto:partners@msfhr.org) for instructions on how to register interest in a partnered award and to indicate how their research aligns with partner areas of interest. Details regarding potential partners will be available on our website in the coming weeks.

**22. I am a practicing health professional with a tenure-track academic appointment, devoting more than 75 percent of my time to research, and have a research laboratory with trainees under my supervision. Should I apply for an HP-I or Scholar award?**

Only licensed health professional-researchers who are within the first five years of their first university appointment are technically eligible for both the HP-I and Scholar awards. The focus of the Scholar program is primarily is to allow early career researchers to establish an independent research career, whereas the HP-I program supports health professionals engaged in clinical service the opportunity to gain experience in research while still maintaining up to 50% of their clinical duties. Those early-career health professional-researchers whose career trajectories are primarily directed towards research (i.e., >75% research) should consider the Scholar Award more applicable to their career development. Conversely, those early-career health professional-researchers who prefer a greater balance between their clinical practice and their research may consider the HP-I award as a better option.



### 23. Who do I get my letters of reference from?

Applicants are required to provide the following letters of support:

1. One letter from a previous or current supervisor or equivalent who can comment adequately on the applicant's professional and research experience and achievements. This can include someone who the applicant has trained with, and who can comment on the applicant's research abilities and personal traits.
2. One letter must be from an expert in the area proposed in the applicant's research area who can comment on the applicant's body of work rather than the applicant themselves.
3. Finally, one letter must be from a mentor or collaborator from outside the host institution (within BC, national or international). This can include someone the applicant has worked with before, i.e. has published with or has held funding with.



## Award Administration Questions

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### 24. Can I defer the start date of my HP-I award?

MSFHR allows you to defer the start date of your HP-I award by a maximum of 12 months. The deferred start date, once confirmed, will not be revised. The start date must be on the first day of the month.

### 25. How much time do I have to respond to an offer for an HP-I award?

Successful award recipients have 15 business days to accept or decline the award as of the date on the funding notification letter.

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

A copy of the Award Acceptance Form signed by you and your department head or equivalent (which also confirms your research appointment) must be uploaded in .pdf format to MSFHR ApplyNet via the “Accept Grant Award Agreement” task.

