



MICHAEL SMITH FOUNDATION
FOR HEALTH RESEARCH

Discover. Connect. Engage.

2018 RESEARCH TRAINEE COMPETITION



GUIDELINES

DEADLINES:

LETTER OF INTENT: **MARCH 1, 2018, 4:30 P.M. PT**

FULL APPLICATION: **APRIL 10, 2018, 4:30 P.M. PT**

Contents

1. Preface	3
2. Purpose	3
3. Objectives.....	3
4. Award Amount and Duration	3
5. Eligibility Requirements	5
6. Supervisor(s).....	6
7. Knowledge Translation.....	7
8. Partnerships	8
9. Reporting Requirements	9
10. Incentives and Top-Up Funding	9
11. Authorized Paid Work	10
12. Review Process.....	11
13. Award Start Date and Deferral.....	12
14. Key Competition Dates.....	13
15. How to Apply.....	13
16. Applicant Updates.....	14
17. Contact Information.....	15



1. Preface

The Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR), funded by the province of British Columbia, is BC's health research funding agency. MSFHR helps develop, retain and recruit the talented people whose research improves the health of British Columbians, addresses health system priorities, creates jobs and adds to the knowledge economy. 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. The Research Trainee award does this by providing funding to support the award recipient's stipend to protect their time for health research activities during their postdoctoral training.

3. Objectives

Research Trainee awards fund health researchers in the postdoctoral training phase of their research career in order to support career development and long-term success of the BC health research landscape.

The specific objectives of this program are to:

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

4. Award Amount and Duration

The total 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. Additional funds contributed by partners (see Section 8) may increase the number of awards MSFHR is able to offer. Funding allocation will be as follows:

- 70% across the four health research themes (see Section 5).



- 30% across the five (5) BC health system priorities: 1) enhance access to effective primary health care; 2) services for seniors with complex medical conditions; 3) mental health/substance use care; 4) services for patients needing surgery; and 5) rural and remote health care services. The actual allocation of funds across each of the five priorities will depend on the relevant applications received and the outcomes of the application review process described in section 12.

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 an applicant has completed their PhD, or health professional degree, as of the full application deadline. 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 Research Trainee award stipend and research and travel allowance are valued in Canadian dollars, and are taxable.

The table below demonstrates the stipend and research and travel allowance amounts:

Years since degree	Stipend amount	Research & 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

*Eligible for health professionals only

Example calculation of award amount and duration as of the Full Application deadline date, April 10, 2018:



Date of PhD degree completion: September 30, 2014
October 1, 2014 to April 10, 2018 = 42 months
Eligible for 18 months of funding at \$42,000 per annum

5. Eligibility Requirements

At the time of the award start date of **September 1, 2018**, the applicant must:

- Have a PhD **OR** be a health professional in active clinical service.
- Hold or be eligible to hold a postdoctoral fellowship position, or equivalent, 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 minimum of 75 percent time of the PhD 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.
- Be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident or foreign national. Foreign nationals must be sponsored by a BC supervisor who holds an academic
- Not have held a previous MSFHR post-doctoral fellowship award.
- Conduct research in one of the four health research themes² as defined by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research: biomedical, clinical, health services, or population health.
- A clear link to human health must be made in the research project.
- Provide two reference letters from:
 - PhD supervisor, or for health professionals, an individual who can provide the information required in the reference letter; **AND**

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

² MSFHR has adopted the description of the [four themes of CIHR funded health research](#), but with modified titles for themes 3 and 4, with MSFHR referring to these as health services and population health, respectively.



- A mentor or collaborator, either from within or outside your host institution.

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

Successful PhD applicants must provide proof of degree completion by the award start date, 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.

6. Supervisor(s)

An applicant can have up to two supervisors. The primary supervisor must be an established researcher who holds an academic appointment (an academic rank of assistant professor, or higher) 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:
 - Minimum of 75 percent of the applicant's time for health research activities.
 - This represents no less than 30 hours per week, OR
 - Minimum of 50 percent of a health professional applicant's time to health research activities. This represents no less than 20 hours per week.

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 competition 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 competition 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.

7. Knowledge Translation

MSFHR requires all applicants 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 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.](#)

6.1 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 the standard [2018 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.

8. Partnerships

MSFHR partners with other funders to build capacity and fill strategic gaps in health research in BC. By partnering on our competitions, MSFHR and our partners are able to increase the total number of applications funded by the Research Trainee award. Partnered awards have the added benefit of offering researchers the opportunity to develop relationships with partners and their community of stakeholders. Details regarding potential partners will be available on our website in the coming weeks.

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

- Applicants interested in being considered for partnered awards are encouraged to email partners@msfhr.org to register your interest. Please indicate the partner(s) of interest and how your research aligns with their funding priorities.
- MSFHR uses keywords provided by the partners to identify applications that may be relevant to and align with the partners' area of interest. Applicants are encouraged to review the list of partner keywords available on our website.

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 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.]



Applications that fulfill the funding criteria for both MSFHR and a partner organization are eligible for a partnered Research Trainee award. However, only those applications that receive a peer review score of 3.8 or above will be considered. Funding decisions on partnered awards are based on existing MSFHR policies, confirmed partnership support, and available funding. Financial contributions from MSFHR and its partners 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.

9. Reporting Requirements

MSFHR Research Trainees are required to complete annual progress reports. Reporting information will be provided to award recipients by MSFHR.

In addition to these annual reporting requirements, Research Trainees must submit a final report within thirty (30) days following the award end date, and a final financial statement within three (3) months following completion of the Research Trainee award. Any unexpended funds must be returned to MSFHR. MSFHR will provide reporting information and/or materials for these purposes.

MSFHR reserves the right to contact award recipients after the award end date to determine the short and middle-term outcomes and/or impacts of the Research Trainee award.

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.

10. Incentives and Top-Up 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 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 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 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, plus receives MSFHR incentive award of \$7,000

Example of MSFHR research and travel allowance (RTA) adjustment:

MSFHR RTA award	External RTA award ⁴ 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 so that the adjusted value, when added to the external RTA award, will equal \$4,500. (Example: External RTA is \$2,500, MSFHR RTA is reduced to \$2,000; together, the RTA award adds up to \$4,500.)

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.

⁴ 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.



12. 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 six principles of peer review: **integrity, accountability, transparency, balance, confidentiality and impartiality**. For further details, please visit <http://www.msfhr.org/funding/review-process>.

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**.

11.1 Evaluation Criteria

Full applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

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

[A full description of the evaluation criteria can be found on our website.](#)



11.2 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	

11.3 Funding Decision

Following peer 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.

13. Award Start Date and Deferral

Unless otherwise indicated, funding for MSFHR Research Trainee awards begins 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, 2019. **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 ten-year eligibility requirement as previously described.



14. Key Competition Dates

Action	Target date
Competition launch	Early February 2018
LOI deadline	March 1, 2018, 4:30 p.m. PT
Full application deadline	April 10, 2018, 4:30 p.m. PT
Anticipated notice of funding decision	Late July 2018
Anticipated start of funding	September 1, 2018

15. How to Apply

The application process for the 2018 Research Trainee competition is composed of two mandatory stages:

1. Letter of Intent (LOI)
 - Deadline date: **March 1, 2018, 4:30 p.m. PT**
 - Consists of:
 - The short LOI form in MSFHR ApplyNet
2. Full application
 - Deadline date: **April 10, 2018, 4:30 p.m. PT**
 - Consists of:
 - Program of research and appendices⁵
 - Canadian Common CV – MSFHR Abbreviated Version (includes information from the entire career)
 - List of Publications, Patents & Intellectual Property Rights (uploaded as an attachment to the CCV)
 - Supervisor(s)' Approval form
 - Supervisor(s)' Common CV – MSFHR Full Version (includes information from the past five years only)
 - Two letters of reference (one letter must be from PhD supervisor)
 - Doctoral degree certificate or health professional degree certificate

⁵ References, charts, figures, tables and photographs only.



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

Note: Each university has its own internal deadline that is **earlier** than that of MSFHR. Please check with the Office of Research Services, or equivalent, at your host institution for more information.

14.1 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.
- 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 users (applicants, supervisors, referees) using MSFHR ApplyNet for the first time will need to register and create a system account email and password. Additional information on MSFHR ApplyNet can be found in the [MSFHR ApplyNet FAQ](#) document.

16. Applicant Updates

MSFHR will accept updates regarding **new awards** received since the full application deadline (April 10, 2018).

Please email all relevant information, including confirmation of award, to traineeprogram@msfhr.org by **May 25, 2018**.



17. Contact Information

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

Yuliya Shapova
Research Competitions Coordinator
604.714.2775
traineeprogram@msfhr.org

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

MSFHR Help Desk
604.714.6609
helpdesk@msfhr.org

