



MICHAEL SMITH FOUNDATION  
FOR HEALTH RESEARCH

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## 2019 SCHOLAR COMPETITION



### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DEADLINES:

LETTER OF INTENT: **NOVEMBER 29, 2018, 4:30 P.M. PT**

FULL APPLICATION: **JANUARY 31, 2019, 4:30 P.M. PT**

## Application Phase Questions

1.	Who can apply to the Scholar Program? .....	1
2.	What is the nature of the appointment that I must have with my host institution? .....	1
3.	Can research associates and post-doctoral fellows apply? .....	1
4.	What does a “host institution” refer to? .....	1
5.	Is the Scholar competition open to both PhDs and health professionals?.....	1
6.	My appointment is with a university, but my research will be conducted at a different site. Who should complete the Dean of Faculty Form? .....	1
7.	My host institution (e.g. health authority) does not require the approval of a dean. Who completes the dean’s form in MSFHR ApplyNet? .....	2
8.	What is independent research? .....	2
9.	What are the requirements for embedding knowledge translation (KT) activities within the program of research? .....	2
10.	Is verification of degree completion required? .....	2
11.	Will interruptions/delays in my career be taken into account when determining my eligibility? .....	2
12.	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 Scholar Program competition? .....	3
13.	What is the difference between a reference letter and a letter of collaboration? .....	3
14.	Where in the application does the department head, or equivalent, indicate their commitment to protect a minimum of 75 percent of the applicant’s time for research, for the duration of the Scholar award?.....	3
15.	The review criteria states that the availability of mentorship to the applicant is assessed within the Environment and Support category. What does this mean? .....	3
16.	Can I apply for this award if I already hold an MSFHR Health Professional Investigator or Innovation to Commercialization award? .....	3
17.	My project proposal includes work relevant to Indigenous health and/or vulnerable populations. Is there anything I should be aware of?.....	4
18.	Where can I find the list of available potential Scholar award partners? .....	4



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- 19. What are the instructions on how to register my interest in the partner awards? .....4
- 20. I am transitioning from my post-doctoral position to my first faculty appointment.  
Will I be evaluated against early career researchers who have been faculty  
members for several years? .....4
- 21. How do I get help with developing a Mitacs Accelerate proposal?.....5

### **Award Administration Questions**

- 1. Can I defer the start date of the Scholar award? .....5
- 2. How much time do I have to respond to an offer of the Scholar award? .....5
- 3. What documents will I need to provide before I can start my award? .....5



## Application Phase Questions

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### 1. **Who can apply to the Scholar Program?**

Applicants who have a PhD or equivalent, are within five years from the start of their first university appointment (at an assistant professor level or equivalent) as of the full application competition deadline (January 31, 2019), and can commit to a minimum of 75 percent of their time conducting research are eligible to apply.

### 2. **What is the nature of the appointment that I must have with my host institution?**

The appointment must allow you to apply for and hold peer-reviewed funds as a principal investigator, be a research supervisor for graduate and post-graduate trainees, and publish your research results.

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

Yes, but if they are successful in the Scholar competition, they must have the appointment described in point 3 at a BC institution (university, health authority or research institute) as of the award start date (July 1, 2019).

### 4. **What does a “host institution” refer to?**

The host institution is typically the institution where the research project is being conducted, and that provides the majority of resources to support the program of research (e.g. infrastructure, human resources, administration, etc.). The selected host institution is also responsible for administering the award funds. Host institutions must have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with MSFHR. A current list of host institutions with valid MOUs with MSFHR can be found at [www.msfhr.org/sites/default/files/MOU\\_List.pdf](http://www.msfhr.org/sites/default/files/MOU_List.pdf).

### 5. **Is the Scholar competition open to both PhDs and health professionals?**

Yes. PhDs and health professionals may apply to the Scholar competition as long as they meet **all** eligibility criteria; however, please note that all applicants will be evaluated under identical criteria.

### 6. **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.



**7. 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 MSHR ApplyNet. The department head or equivalent at the health authority completes additional questions in the Department Head Form that captures the information required of the dean.

**8. What is independent research?**

Independent research refers to when a researcher is no longer part of a formalized research training program, and no longer under the direct supervision of an academic supervisor. The researcher is engaged in a systematic, intensive study that is intended to increase knowledge or understanding of the topic being studied, apply new knowledge to meet a recognized gap, and apply new knowledge to the creation of useful material, devices, and systems or methods.

**9. What are the requirements for embedding knowledge translation (KT) activities within the program of research?**

MSFHR requires Scholar applicants from all disciplines to include KT activities, as appropriate, over the course of the program of research. KT activities are embedded at multiple stages of research, including at the beginning, integrated throughout the program of research, and at the end of funding. For more information, refer to the document [Incorporating KT into your program of research](#).

**10. Is verification of degree completion required?**

Degree completion dates are provided by the applicant. Applicants are expected to provide true, accurate, and complete information and to produce documentation when requested.

**11. Will interruptions/delays in my career be taken into account when determining my eligibility?**

Interruptions and delays in your studies will be taken into account when determining eligibility. This information is also used by peer-reviewers when assessing productivity. You are advised to clearly and fully describe any interruptions or delays that affected the research and the dissemination of research results in the "Career Interruptions" section of the letter of intent.



**12. 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 Scholar Program competition?**

Institutional support is an important component of the Scholar application and the review process. The form from the host institution should indicate a strong commitment to the applicant, both during and after the term of the award, regardless of success in the competition.

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

Three reference letters are a mandatory requirement for the full application, and must be part of the application package. These are typically written by former supervisors, mentors, and experts in the field who are familiar with your work. Letters of collaboration are not mandatory and are written by collaborators who are expected to make a significant contribution to your program of research, and are confirming their enthusiasm to participate in the manner indicated.

**14. Where in the application does the department head, or equivalent, indicate their commitment to protect a minimum of 75 percent of the applicant's time for research, for the duration of the Scholar award?**

This commitment must be indicated in the Department Head (or equivalent) Form.

**15. The review criteria states that the availability of mentorship to the applicant is assessed within the Environment and Support category. What does this mean?**

Mentoring provides a network of support and resources for new and junior faculty to more efficiently learn policies and practices, and guidance when challenges inevitably arise. For example, junior faculty members who are mentored are more likely to be successful at navigating the tenure process, increasing the chances of career success. Furthermore, accomplished faculty members who are well mentored are most likely to become effective mentors themselves. Given the importance mentorship plays for new and junior faculty, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide evidence of this within their application, and/or ensure that the availability of mentorship is explicitly included in the Department Head Form.

**16. Can I apply for this award if I already hold an MSFHR Health Professional Investigator or Innovation to Commercialization award?**

No. Applicants are not allowed to hold these salary-based awards concurrently with the MSFHR Scholar award.



**17. My project proposal includes work relevant to Indigenous health and/or vulnerable populations. Is there anything I should be aware of?**

For applicants proposing programs of research related to Indigenous health and wellness, it is expected that appropriate community representatives, leaders or those with lived-experience be engaged and included in order to share their traditions and Ways of Knowing with researchers. Applicants must comply with the ethical and research policies outlined by the [Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#) (2014) and specifically, [TCSP 2 – Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#) if the research project involves Indigenous peoples. Additional information about Indigenous health and wellness can be found on the [First Nations Health Authority](#) website.

In addition, applicants whose research is related to Indigenous health will be asked to describe their data management plan, in accordance with the principles of [OCAP](#)<sup>®</sup>: ownership, control, access and possession.

**18. Where can I find the list of available potential Scholar award partners?**

Partners will be added to MSFHR's website as they are confirmed. MSFHR will email the Office of Research Services, grant facilitators, and applicants who have launched a letter of intent or full application with a link to the list of available partners.

**19. What are the instructions on how to register my interest in the partner awards?**

- Applicants interested in being considered for partnered awards are encouraged to email [mkassam@msfhr.org](mailto:mkassam@msfhr.org) to register your interest. Please indicate the partner(s) of interest and how your research aligns with their funding priorities.
- If partners are confirmed after the full application deadline, MSFHR staff will match the keywords of the applicants with those provided by the partner, and if there is a match, they will inform the respective applicant.

**20. I am transitioning from my post-doctoral position to my first faculty appointment. Will I be evaluated against early career researchers who have been faculty members for several years?**

No. New for the 2019 competition, applications from those who are within 0-2 years of their first appointment will be separated from those who are between 3-5 years from their first appointment, so as to ensure equitable evaluation and scoring between new faculty recruits and more established faculty. Applications within their respective pools will then be reviewed and assessed relative to each other. Furthermore, reviewers will be instructed to assess research independence in context of an applicant's relative career stage. That is, applicants who have more recently completed their post-doctoral studies will likely have more evidence for *potential* research independence compared to applicants applying closer to the end of the



five-year eligibility window, who will likely show more examples of *demonstrated* research independence. Reviewers will be instructed that within each context, both are legitimate forms of research independence.

**21. How do I get help with developing a Mitacs Accelerate proposal?**

Applicants interested in applying to the Accelerate program must contact the Mitacs business development team [www.mitacs.ca/en/contact-us/business-development](http://www.mitacs.ca/en/contact-us/business-development). In order to facilitate Accelerate internships, Mitacs must work with interested applicants to determine how best an internship can be integrated into the proposed Scholar Program of research. Applicants interested in including Mitacs Accelerate internships in their MSFHR Scholar application must contact their regional [Mitacs Business Development](#) representative to learn more about the Mitacs Accelerate program and obtain a Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application (Part 1). All questions regarding the Accelerate program, such as eligibility, timelines, expectations and benefits should be directed to Mitacs.

## Award Administration Questions

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**1. Can I defer the start date of the Scholar award?**

The start may be deferred up to a maximum of 12 months for specific circumstances (e.g. academic appointment not yet obtained, medical leave, parental leave, caregiving). If a deferral is required, award recipients must contact MSFHR with the deferral request and obtain approval. The start date must be on the first day of any month and be no later than July 1, 2020. Deferred start dates, once confirmed by MSFHR, cannot be revised.

**2. How much time do I have to respond to an offer of the Scholar award?**

Successful award recipients have 10 business days to accept or decline the award as of the date on the funding notification letter.

**3. 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 Award Agreement* task.

