



MICHAEL SMITH FOUNDATION
FOR HEALTH RESEARCH

Discover. Connect. Engage.

2019 SCHOLAR COMPETITION



DEADLINES:

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

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

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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 Scholar Program is designed to attract and foster the development of outstanding health researchers in BC. The intent of our Scholar awards is to allow early career researchers to establish an independent research career, build a leading research program, and expand their potential to make significant contributions to their field. The Scholar Program achieves this by providing funding support to a portion of the award recipients' salaries to protect their time for health research activities.

3. Objectives

The Scholar award supports early career researchers to form their own research teams and develop strong research programs that advance cutting-edge health solutions.

The specific objectives of this program are to:

- Develop, attract and retain high quality early career health researchers in BC.
- Enable early career researchers to develop an independent research program, attract additional research funding, and train the next generation of researchers.
- Enable researchers to develop programs of research that inform practice, policy, and further research.

4. Award Amount and Duration

The budget envelope for this funding opportunity is \$5,850,000, enough to fund at least 13 scholars over the total term of the award. The Scholar award provides salary support at \$90,000 per annum for up to a term of five years. The Scholar award cannot be used as an operating grant. For a summary of eligible expenses, see **Appendix A**.

MSFHR has allocated 70 percent of the total funding for this competition to applications across all four themes of health research (biomedical, clinical, health services, and population health). The remaining 30 percent of funding will be allocated across the [five 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**.

5. Eligibility Requirements

At the time of application, applicants must:

- Have a PhD, or equivalent, and commit to a minimum of 75 percent of their time conducting research.
- Hold an appointment at, or have a commitment for an appointment that will begin by the award start date of July 1, 2019, from a BC institution that must allow the applicant to:
 - a. Apply for and hold peer-reviewed funds as a principal investigator.
 - b. Be a research supervisor for graduate and post-graduate trainees.
 - c. Publish their research results.
- Be affiliated with a BC host institution¹ that holds a memorandum of understanding² with MSFHR.
- Be within five years from the start of their first university appointment (at an assistant professor level, or equivalent) as of the full application deadline, **January 31, 2019**.
 - Justified career interruptions (e.g. parental leave for birth or adoption, medical leave, residency training, clinical licensing, etc.) are deducted from the calculation.
 - All time spent in research appointments will be factored into the calculation for eligibility.
 - For calculation of the five-year window, part-time appointments will be counted at 50 percent (e.g. a one-year part-time research appointment will be counted as six months towards the 60-month maximum).
- Have confirmation from the department head (or equivalent) protecting a minimum of 75 percent of the applicant's time for health research activities, or no less than 30 hours per week.
- Conduct research in one of the four themes of health research as defined by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research: biomedical, clinical, health services, and population health.³ A clear link to human health must be made in the application.

¹ The host institution is typically the institution that provides the majority of resources to support the program of research (e.g. infrastructure, human resources, administration, etc.). The selected host institution will be responsible for administering the award funds.

² In order for host institutions to administer MSFHR awards, they must have a valid memorandum of understanding with MSFHR. A list of host institutions with valid memorandum of understandings can be found at www.msfhr.org/sites/default/files/MOU_List.pdf.

³ MSFHR has adopted the description of the CIHR pillars, but retained a shorter title for pillars 3 and 4, referring to them as health services and population health.



- Not currently hold an MSFHR Health Professional-Investigator or Innovation to Commercialization award, or have previously held a Scholar award, in whole or in part.
- Have met all reporting requirements (including a final financial statement, if applicable) if you hold or have previously held MSFHR funding.
- Provide a reference letter from each category below:
 - PhD or post-doctoral fellowship supervisor or equivalent.
 - An expert in the area proposed in the applicant's program of research.
 - A mentor or collaborator from outside the host institution (within BC or national or international).

6. Knowledge Translation (KT)

MSFHR requires all applicants to include knowledge translation (KT) activities in their research proposal. KT is defined as 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 proposal through, for example, research user⁴ 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. For more information about KT and how to embed it within your research, please see our helpful resources [here](#).

KT Science

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

⁴ 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']. www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/45321.html. Accessed June 30, 2015.



7. 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 Scholar awards. 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 mkassam@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 partners to identify applications that may be relevant to and align with partners' areas of interest. Applicants are encouraged to review the list of partner keywords available on our website.

Applications that fulfill the funding criteria for both MSFHR and a partner organization are eligible for a partnered Scholar 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 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 the MSFHR Board of Directors and the partnership organization beyond year one of the award.

8. Mitacs Accelerate Internships

MSFHR and [Mitacs](#) are partnering together to provide applicants access to additional funding and training opportunities for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows involved in a Scholar applicant's program of research, and maximizing the impact of MSFHR funds.

[Mitacs Accelerate](#) supports collaborative research between faculty, graduate student or postdoctoral research interns (trainees) and a non-academic partner that has committed to hosting the students and/or fellows for an experiential learning opportunity. Faculty get flexible funding for new collaborations and experiential training for their researchers. Mitacs Accelerate grants start at \$15,000 per 4-month segment through co-funding with an eligible non-academic partner.

Successful Scholar applicants will have expedited access to Mitacs funding, as Mitacs will recognize the results of the scientific review managed by MSFHR and require only an internal evaluation to confirm eligibility and compliance with Mitacs Accelerate program requirements. Only applicants who are successful in the Scholar competition and who have submitted a Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application (Part 1) are eligible for this expedited review process for additional Mitacs funding.



Applicants interested in benefiting from this additional opportunity must complete a Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application (Part 1) with their Scholar full application. If successful in the Scholar competition, applicants who have submitted a Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application (Part 1) will be asked by Mitacs to complete Part 2 of the application, which requires administrative details on the identity of the intern and the non-academic partner. Part 2 of the application will be reviewed by Mitacs for administrative purposes only.

In order to facilitate these 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).

To apply for Mitacs Accelerate funding with your Scholar application, applicants will need to consider the following:

- The number of interns and the length of each internship (the identity of the intern(s) is not necessary at this stage).
- The name of the non-academic partner organization in Canada where the internship will take place, and that will provide match funding with Mitacs to co-fund the intern.
- Details of the internship project, i.e. the work that the intern will do within the applicant's program of research, including:
 - Specific objectives
 - Methodologies
 - Timeline (in the form of a Gantt chart)
 - Expected deliverables
 - Benefits to the intern
 - Partner interaction
- The partner's proposed role in the project, how the partner will benefit from participating, and how the Canadian community will benefit from this research.

Note: If applicants are interested in applying for Mitacs Accelerate internship funding, they must contact the appropriate [Mitacs Business Development](#) representative to obtain an application.

9. Commitment from Host Institution

The applicant's host institution must ensure that MSFHR funds are used to support:

- Salary and benefits of the Scholar
- Buy out time from administrative and teaching responsibilities



- Stipend and salary of trainees, post-doctoral fellows, research assistants, research technicians working directly with the MSFHR Scholar

The selection of the host institution is based on the institution where the research project is being conducted, and that provides the majority of resources to support the project (e.g. infrastructure, human resources, administration, etc.). The selected host institution will be responsible for administering the award funds.

10. Reporting Requirements

Scholar award recipients are required to complete annual progress reports in April and provide an up-to-date Canadian Common CV (CCV) to MSFHR for each year of their award. MSFHR will provide reporting information for these purposes in advance.

In addition to these annual reporting requirements, a formal review of all Scholar award recipients will be conducted near the end of their third year of support. For that review, Scholars will be required to include an updated research plan for years four and five.

The third year formal review will be evaluated by MSFHR staff, the chief scientific officer, and review panel member(s), if needed, to ensure the Scholar has made sufficient progress. A positive review will ensure continued funding for years four and five. A negative review may result in termination of the award.

A final report and financial statement of expenditures, signed by the award recipient and an authorized financial officer of the host institution, will be required within three months following the award end date. 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 Scholar 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.

11. Incentives and Top-Up Funding

Researchers who hold external salary 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 Scholar award are eligible to receive top-up or incentive funding. MSFHR considers a salary 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 total value⁵ of 50 percent or more of the value of the MSFHR Scholar Award

The top-up or incentive funding would be available for the duration of the Scholar award or to the end of the external award, whichever comes first.

Example (Top-Up):

External salary award amount is \$60,000. MSFHR Scholar award amount is \$90,000. The external salary award amount is more than 50 percent of the MSFHR Scholar award amount. MSFHR will pay the difference (\$30,000) between the other salary award amount and the Scholar award so the total sum is \$90,000 per year.

Example (Incentive):

External salary award amount is \$100,000. MSFHR Scholar Award amount is \$90,000. The external salary award amount is more than the MSFHR Scholar Award amount. MSFHR will provide an incentive award of \$15,000 per year.

Note: Reporting requirements as stated in **Section 10** are also applicable to award recipients who receive top-up or incentive funding.

12. Review Process

Letters of intent (LOIs) for this program are not adjudicated, but will be screened for eligibility by MSFHR staff. Applicants with eligible LOIs will be invited to submit a full application. Eligible full applications will undergo review by an external review panel for funding recommendations.

Note: There will be separate peer review pools for new faculty recruits (within 0-2 years of the first appointment) and more established junior faculty (3-5 years from the first appointment) in order to ensure a more equitable review process.

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 www.msfhr.org/funding/review-process.

The information presented in the **Evaluation Criteria** and **Rating Scale** sections below will be used for the peer review process. All applications will be assessed against a defined set of criteria in three

⁵ Inclusive of match-funding from other funding sources, if applicable. Total award value applies to the portion used for salary, i.e. it is not inclusive of other components above and beyond salary, such as research or travel allowances.



categories: 1) track record, 2) program of research, 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

All applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

Criterion	Weighting
Track record	50%
Program of research	30%
Environment and support	20%

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

Funding Decision

Following application review, the highest rated applications will be identified in each applicant pool. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the peer 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 Scholar awards begin July 1, 2019. 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; 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.**

14. Key Competition Dates

Action	Target Date
Competition launch	October 2018
LOI deadline	November 29, 2018, 4:30 p.m. PT
Full application deadline	January 31, 2019, 4:30 p.m. PT
Anticipated notice of funding decision	Late June 2019
Anticipated start of funding	July 1, 2019

15. How to Apply

The application process for the 2019 MSFHR Scholar competition is composed of two mandatory stages:

1. Letter of intent (LOI)

- **Deadline date: November 29, 2018, 4:30 p.m. PT**
- Consists of:
 - The short LOI Form in MSFHR ApplyNet

2. Full Application

- **Deadline date: January 31, 2019, 4:30 p.m. PT**
- Consists of:
 - Program of research and appendices⁶
 - Canadian Common CV – MSFHR Full Version
 - List of Publications, Patents & Intellectual Property Rights
 - Department Head, or equivalent Form
 - Dean of Faculty Form (if applicable)
 - Three letters of reference
 - Consent forms and questionnaires (if applicable)
 - Letters of collaboration⁷ (if applicable)
 - Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application (Part 1), if applicable

⁶ References, charts, figures, tables and photographs only.

⁷ A collaborator is an individual who participates at some point in the overall program of research and may make a significant contribution to the intellectual direction of the research or research-related activity, and who may play a significant role in the conduct of the research.



To complete your application, create an MSFHR ApplyNet account and follow the instructions in the MSFHR ApplyNet application form. 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.

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 uploaded.

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

All users (applicants, referees, department head, dean) 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 following the full application deadline (January 31, 2019).

Please email all relevant information, including confirmation of award, to careerprogram@msfhr.org by **April 12, 2019**.



17. Contact Information

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

Andrew Biagtan

Research Competitions Coordinator

careerprogram@msfhr.org

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

MSFHR Help Desk

604.714.6609

helpdesk@msfhr.org



Appendix A – Eligible Expenses

Scholar award funds are strictly for use as partial or full salary contributions, inclusive of benefits, for the award recipient, and/or research staff and trainees working directly on the award recipients program of research, if applicable. The Scholar award cannot be used as an operating grant.

Eligible Expenses

- Salary and/or benefits of the award recipient.
- Stipends/salary of students, post-doctoral fellows, research assistants, and technicians directly involved in the research activities of the award recipient.
- Salary and/or benefits of personnel who provide teaching relief to enable the award recipient to maintain protected time. For example, sessional instructors.

Ineligible Expenses

- Costs relating to travel.
- Costs relating to conference presentations, publications, and open-access fees.
- Costs relating to secretarial support.
- Costs relating to equipment, materials and supplies.

Any items not specified should be deemed as non-eligible expenses unless prior approval from MSFHR is received. If the applicant can demonstrate the added value and make a case for an item identified as an ineligible expense, then MSFHR will evaluate the merit of the argument. **Such a case must be made before the expense is incurred.**

