2020 HEALTH PROFESSIONAL-INVESTIGATOR COMPETITION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DEADLINES:
LETTER OF INTENT: **February 10, 2020, 4:30 P.M. PT**
FULL APPLICATION: **April 17, 2020, 4:30 P.M. PT**
Application Phase Questions

1. Who can apply for a Health Professional-Investigator (HP-I) award? ........................................... 1
2. Are all health professions eligible? ................................................................................................ 1
3. What does board-certified or board-eligible mean? ..................................................................... 1
4. I am an eligible health professional, but I am not involved in making clinical judgments/decisions; instead, I oversee other health professionals who engage directly in patient care. Am I eligible to apply? ............................................................................. 1
5. Why did MSFHR introduce two applicant streams – physician and non-physician? ................. 2
6. Which stream should I choose? ..................................................................................................... 2
7. What is the nature of the appointment that I must have with a BC institution? .......................... 2
8. Can research associates and post-doctoral fellows apply? ........................................................... 3
9. What does “eligible” BC host institution refer to? ........................................................................ 3
10. Can I apply for this award if I already hold an MSFHR Scholar award? ......................................... 3
11. My appointment is with a university, but my research is conducted at a different site. Who should complete the department head form? .............................................................. 3
12. My appointment is with a university, but my research will be conducted at a different site. Who should complete the dean of faculty form? ........................................................... 3
13. My host institution (e.g., health authority) does not require the approval of a dean. Who completes the dean’s form in MSFHR ApplyNet? ................................................................. 3
14. Is verification of degree completion required? ............................................................................. 4
15. Why is information about mentorship and/or continuing research training included in the HP-I application? .................................................................................................................. 4
16. My project proposal may include work relevant to Indigenous health and/or vulnerable populations. Is there anything I should be aware of? ................................................................. 4
17. Will interruptions/delays in my career be taken into account when reviewing my application? ........................................................................................................................................... 4
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 award competition? .................................................................................................................. 5
19. 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? ........................................................................................................................................................................5

20. 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? ..................................................................................................................................................5

21. What are the instructions on how to register my interest in the partner awards? .................5

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 the MSFHR HP-I or Scholar award? ........................................................................................................................................5

23. What is the difference between a reference letter and letter of collaboration? ......................6

24. Who do I get my letters of reference from? ..............................................................................6

25. Is the additional application for Mitacs Accelerate internship funding required? .................6

26. I have indicated my interest in applying for Mitacs funding in the HP-I letter of intent. What happens next? ...............................................................................................................................................6

27. How do I get help with developing a Mitacs Accelerate proposal? ........................................7

28. I have included the Mitacs application as part of my HP-I full application. What happens next? ..................................................................................................................................................7

29. What happens if I included the Mitacs application as part of my HP-I full application, but I was not awarded an HP-I award? ..............................................................................................................7

30. Do I need to identify a trainee for the Mitacs Accelerate internship during the HP-I application? ................................................................................................................................................7

**Award Administration Questions**

1. Can I defer the start date of the HP-I award? ...................................................................................8

2. How much time do I have to respond to an offer for the HP-I award? ...........................................8

3. What documents will I need to provide before I can start my award? ...........................................8
Application Phase Questions

1. **Who can apply for a Health Professional-Investigator (HP-I) award?**
   The HP-I award is designed to increase the research capability of practicing health professionals, allowing them to conduct and apply research that leverages their practical knowledge in patient care in order to improve the patient experience and outcomes. Applicants must be a clinician, health practitioner, health professional, and/or health provider who is currently in a role in which you make clinical judgments and/or clinical decisions, and must show evidence of a track record that demonstrates a committed interest in pursuing research.

2. **Are all health professions eligible?**
   Only members of those health professions recognized¹ 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 those who belong to a health profession requiring board certification², and who are a member in good standing of its respective provincial or national certification body. Typical examples of the latter include genetic counsellors, physician’s assistants, etc.

3. **What does board-certified or board-eligible mean?**
   Board certification is an achievement by a health professional 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/nationally-accepted standards of knowledge and practice. Board-eligible individuals are those that 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 in their respective professional certification body.

4. **I am an eligible health professional, but I am not involved in making clinical judgments/decisions; instead, I oversee other health professionals who engage directly in patient care. Am I eligible to apply?**
   Eligible health professionals who meet the minimal requirements as an eligible health professional in name, but are involved in full-time research, the management/administration of medical or health-care services, and/or do not make clinical judgments and/or clinical

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¹ A list of regulated health professions and their respective regulatory colleges can be found at [http://bchealthregulators.ca/about/who-are-regulated-health-professionals/](http://bchealthregulators.ca/about/who-are-regulated-health-professionals/)

² Individuals must be board-certified or board-eligible.
decisions that impact patients and/or patient care (i.e., all time devoted to administration, teaching and/or research) are not eligible. The HP-I Program is primarily designed to allow for the release time from clinical practice of health professionals so as to allow them to pursue their research interests.

5. Why did MSFHR introduce two applicant streams – physician and non-physician?

The intent of the HP-I program is to provide all eligible health professionals an equal opportunity to obtain salary support for research. However, MSFHR recognizes that there are fundamental differences between physicians and non-physician health professional researchers in their training (including research training), career progression and available support for research. Therefore, for the 2020 competition, these two groups will be evaluated separately in order to ensure a more equitable comparison within streams.

6. Which stream should I choose?

Applicants must select the most applicable stream for their background – physician or non-physician – only one stream can be selected per application.

**Physician stream** applicants must be a member of the following regulated health professions as recognized by the BC Health Regulators: physician, dental surgeon or podiatric surgeon. They must hold a valid license to practice in BC, be a member in good standing of the appropriate regulatory college and hold a medical doctorate, or equivalent (e.g., MD, DDS, DPM, etc.).

**Non-physician stream** applicants must be a member of a regulated health profession, as recognized by the BC Health Professions Act, (excluding physicians and surgeons) with a valid license to practice in BC and be a member in good standing of the appropriate regulatory college, OR belong to a health profession requiring board certification³, and be a member in good standing of its respective provincial or national certification body. They must hold a Bachelor’s degree, or equivalent.

7. 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, to hold peer-review funding and permits you to publish research findings. Depending on your institution, this can include academic, clinical and institutional research appointments, among others. Please check with your institution to make sure your appointment meets program eligibility.

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³ Individuals must be board-certified or board-eligible.
8. **Can research associates and post-doctoral fellows apply?**
Yes, but they must meet all other eligibility criteria as stated in the competition guidelines at the time of application.

9. **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.

10. **Can I apply for this award if I already hold an MSFHR Scholar award?**
No. Eligible applicants must not currently hold, or have previously held an MSFHR Health Professional-Investigator or Scholar award, or currently hold an MSFHR Innovation to Commercialization award. Furthermore, 2020 Scholar award applicants are ineligible to apply for a 2020 HP-I award.

11. **My appointment is with a university, but my research is 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.

12. **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.

13. **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 an additional question in the department head form that captures the information required of the dean.
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 information about mentorship and/or continuing research training included in the HP-I application?**

It can be difficult for clinicians, especially those early in their research careers, to maintain a 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 successful completion of a research project. A mentorship plan allows an applicant 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 training plan that describes strategies on 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?**

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 (2018) and specifically TCPS 2 – Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada if the program of research involves Indigenous peoples. If applicable, data collection and management must adhere to OCAP® principles. Additional information about Indigenous health and wellness can be found on the First Nations Health Authority website.

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 award 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 success in the competition.

19. **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 confirmed in the department head, or equivalent form. This is to be filled out and submitted electronically by the respective third parties within the MSFHR ApplyNet application.

20. **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?**

   Details regarding potential partners is available on our [website](#) and in MSFHR ApplyNet, MSFHR’s online application portal, and will be updated regularly throughout the competition as more partners are identified.

21. **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 indicate this preference in MSFHR ApplyNet when completing their full application. Please indicate the partner(s) of interest and how your research aligns with their funding priorities.

   Alternatively, MSFHR may use 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 that will be available on our [website](#) and in MSFHR ApplyNet, and ensure that their scientific summary within the application captures at least one of the keywords.

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 the MSFHR HP-I or Scholar award?**

   The intent of the HP-I program is to help close the gap between health research and its implementation. It does this by supporting health professionals who are actively involved in patient care to conduct and apply research relevant to health and the health system. For this reason, reviewers will be assessing how the HP-I award will have an impact on an applicant’s career, and how the funds awarded will help to further develop their career in health research alongside their clinical duties. The focus of the Scholar program is academic career advancement for early-career researchers (within five years of their first academic appointment).
Health professionals within the first five years of their initial academic appointment with interests and career trajectories primarily focused on research may consider the Scholar award more applicable to their career development.

23. **What is the difference between a reference letter and letter of collaboration?**
The three reference letters are mandatory and must be part of 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 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.

24. **Who do I get my letters of reference from?**
Applicants are required to provide the following letters of support: One letter must be 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 can comment on the applicant’s research abilities and personal traits. 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 individual themselves. Finally, one letter must be from a mentor or collaborator. This can include someone the applicant has worked with before, i.e., has published with or has held funding with.

25. **Is the additional application for Mitacs Accelerate internship funding required?**
No. Inclusion of the Mitacs Accelerate proposal application (Part 1) is completely optional. It simply allows applicants who are interested in applying for additional funding for trainee support to have access to an expedited review process for their Mitacs application.

26. **I have indicated my interest in applying for Mitacs funding in the HP-I letter of intent. What happens next?**
Information regarding applicants who have expressed interest in applying for Mitacs Accelerate funding will be shared with Mitacs so that their Business Development team is aware of interested applicants. Applicants interested in including Mitacs Accelerate internships in their MSFHR HP-I application must contact their regional [Mitacs Business Development](https://www.mitacs.ca/) representative to learn more about the Mitacs Accelerate program and obtain a Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application (Part 1). Applicants who indicate their interest in applying for Mitacs funding at the letter of intent stage are under no obligation to complete the Mitacs application at the full application stage. Conversely, an expression of interest in Mitacs funding at the letter of intent stage is not a requirement for completing the Accelerate proposal application at the HP-I full application stage.
27. **How do I get help with developing a Mitacs Accelerate proposal?**

Applicants interested in applying to the Accelerate program must contact the appropriate Mitacs Business Development team. In order to facilitate Accelerate internships, Mitacs must work with interested applicants to determine how best an internship can be integrated into the proposed HP-I research proposal. Applicants interested in including Mitacs Accelerate internships in their MSFHR HP-I 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.

28. **I have included the Mitacs application as part of my HP-I full application. What happens next?**

All HP-I applications will undergo peer review. Reviewers will consider additional review criteria related to the Mitacs application. Applicants who are awarded HP-I awards, and have applied for Mitacs funding will be asked to contact Mitacs and complete Part 2 of the Mitacs Accelerate proposal application. Mitacs will then review Part 2 of the application for eligibility. If all requirements are met, Mitacs funding will be awarded. All details regarding the Mitacs Accelerate program can be found at: [http://www.mitacs.ca/en/programs/accelerate](http://www.mitacs.ca/en/programs/accelerate).

29. **What happens if I included the Mitacs application as part of my HP-I full application, but I was not awarded an HP-I award?**

The expedited review process for Mitacs Accelerate internship funding is only eligible for successful applicants in the HP-I competition. However, unfunded applicants can still apply for this or other Mitacs funding for trainee support on their own, although these funding requests will be independent of MSFHR, and subject to Mitacs’ full peer review process.

30. **Do I need to identify a trainee for the Mitacs Accelerate internship during the HP-I application?**

No. HP-I applicants interested in applying for Mitacs Accelerate internship funds do not need to provide the name of the trainee at this stage. For Part 1 of the Accelerate proposal application, research supervisors only need to identify the academic level of the proposed trainee, the length of the internship, provide a work plan for the trainee, as well as information on how the trainee will benefit from an internship with the partner organization.
Award Administration Questions

1. **Can I defer the start date of the HP-I award?**
   Deferrals may only be requested for the following reasons: required appointment not yet obtained, medical or parental leave, and caregiving. Other reasons not stated will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If a deferral is required, award recipients must indicate the requested award start date and the reason for deferral on the *Award Acceptance Form* and obtain approval from MSFHR. The deferred start date must be on the first day of any month and be no later than September 1, 2021. Deferred start dates, once confirmed by MSFHR, cannot be revised.

2. **How much time do I have to respond to an offer for the HP-I 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 on-line *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 *Grant Award Agreement* task.