



Michael Smith
**Health
Research BC**

2022 Scholar Program

GUIDELINES

DEADLINES

Letter of intent: December 6, 2021, 4:30 p.m. PT

Full application: January 31, 2022, 4:30 p.m. PT

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Help with your Application

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

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Research Competitions Coordinator

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For information about the Michael Smith Health Research BC ApplyNet system or help with login information, please contact:

Michael Smith Health Research BC Help Desk

helpdesk@healthresearchbc.ca

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1. Introduction

Michael Smith Health Research BC (Health Research BC), funded by the Province of British Columbia, is BC's health research funding agency. Health Research BC 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.healthresearchbc.ca.

Delivering for BC in a changing context

As BC's health research funding agency, we are committed to helping develop, support, and retain the province's research talent base. The COVID-19 pandemic has created rapid change and uncertainty within BC's health research community.

Health Research BC continues to reach out to stakeholders in BC's health research system to better understand current needs, and we recognize the critical importance of funding early-career researchers is at this time. Beginning with the 2021 Scholar competition, Health Research BC implemented changes to our program eligibility, application and review process to account for the impact of the pandemic on research outputs and activities.

Purpose

Health Research BC's Scholar Program is designed to attract and foster the development of outstanding health researchers from across BC. Scholar awards help enable early career researchers to build leading-edge health research programs, train the next generation of scientists, and make significant contributions to their field. The Scholar Program protects dedicated time for health research activities for award recipients through salary support.

Objectives

Health Research BC has a strategic commitment to develop health research talent and strengthen health research capacity across BC. Through the Scholar program, we support 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.

2. Key Competition Dates

Action	Target Date
Competition launch	Early November 2021
LOI deadline for applicants	December 6, 2021, 4:30 p.m. PT
Full application deadline (applicants)	January 31, 2022, 4:30 p.m. PT
Full application deadline (host institution)	February 7, 2022, 4:30 p.m. PT
Anticipated notice of funding decision	June 2022
Anticipated start of funding	July 1, 2022

3. Award Amount and Duration

Health Research BC is committed to developing the health research talent BC needs through investments in the Scholar Program. Over the past three years, Health Research BC has awarded an average of 24 new Scholar awards in each competition, for an average success rate of 40 percent. These figures include partnered awards. Additional funds contributed by partners (see Section 10) may increase the number of awards Health Research BC is able to offer in a given competition.

The Scholar award provides salary support at \$90,000 per annum for up to a term of **five years**. 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 recipient's 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.

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 during the period they hold a Scholar award are eligible to receive incentive funding. See **Appendix A** for details about incentive funding.

Health Research BC's financial contributions beyond year one of the awards is subject to future funding of Health Research BC by the provincial government and the annual budgetary approval by Health Research BC's Board of Directors.

4. Eligibility Requirements

At the time of application, applicants must:

- Have a PhD, or equivalent, and be conducting research within one of the four themes of health research as defined by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research: biomedical, clinical, health services, and population health¹.
- Be within six years from the start of their first university appointment (at an assistant professor level, or equivalent) **OR** be within six years of obtaining a PhD², as of the award start date, **July 1, 2022**, whichever comes last. (Note: Beginning in the 2021 Scholar competition, Health Research BC has adjusted this eligibility requirement in recognition of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.)
 - 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.
 - Part-time (0.5 FTE) appointments will be counted at 50 percent (e.g. a one-year part-time research appointment will be counted as six months). The same formula applies for the five-year window for obtaining a PhD (e.g. for a part-time PhD student).
- Be affiliated with a BC host institution that holds a memorandum of understanding with Health Research BC and hold an appointment (or have a commitment for an appointment that will begin by the award start date of July 1, 2022) that allows 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.

The application will require a 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.

- Not currently hold, or have ever held an MSFHR (now Michael Smith Health Research BC) Health Professional-Investigator, Innovation to Commercialization, or Scholar award.
- Have met all reporting requirements (including a final financial statement) if you currently hold or have previously held MSFHR (now Michael Smith Health Research BC) funding.

5. Commitment from Host Institution

The host institution is the institution that administers funds for the duration of the award, and where the majority of resources to support the project is provided (e.g. infrastructure, human resources, administration, etc.). View a complete list of [eligible host institutions](#).

¹ Health Research BC has adopted the description of the CIHR themes, but retained a shorter title for themes 3 and 4, referring to them as health services and population health.

² In recognition that some host institutions do not require a doctoral degree as a prerequisite for a faculty position.

The selected host institution will be responsible for administering the award funds. The applicant's host institution must ensure that Health Research BC 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 Health Research BC Scholar on the program of research funded by the award.

6. Research Ethics

Health Research BC Scholars must comply 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:

- Tri-Council Policy Statement: [Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans \(2018\)](#)
- [TCPS 2 – Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#) if the research involves Indigenous peoples
- [Canadian Council on Animal Care Policies and Guidelines](#)
- [Canadian Environmental Assessment Act](#)
- [Canadian Biosafety Standards and Guidelines](#)

7. Indigenous Health Research

Health Research BC is committed to reconciliation and to supporting health research to improve the health and wellness of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada. Health Research BC is working to grow our knowledge and skills in Indigenous cultural safety through staff training, improving our policies, programs and practices, and building relationships and partnerships with Indigenous organizations, collectives and communities.

Health Research BC expects applicants to approach their research and knowledge translation activities with culturally safe practices that demonstrate humility, integrity, accountability and respect for Indigenous self-determination. Applicants must comply with the ethical and research policies outlined in [Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#) of the [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#) (2018). When appropriate, applicants must also describe their data management plan in accordance with the First Nations principles of OCAP®: ownership, control, access and possession.

Additional resources for researchers can be found on the [First Nations Health Authority](#) website.

8. Integrating Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Considerations in Research

Health Research BC has a [strategic commitment](#) to fostering equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in health research. Diversity in research is important to cultivating talent and promoting inclusive excellence, which in turn drives discovery and helps build a more equitable health research system.

There is a robust body of evidence demonstrating the effects of systemic inequities on the health of people and communities. Systemic inequities disproportionately and negatively affect specific groups, including Indigenous and racialized communities, women, disabled people, and LGBTQ+ people, among others. To achieve impact, health research and knowledge translation must seek to understand, account for and remedy systemic inequities in ways grounded in the needs and priorities of affected communities.

Health Research BC expects applicants to meaningfully and appropriately account for EDI in the design of their research programs, in the analysis and interpretation of the findings, in their KT activities, and in the composition and governance of their research teams. Health Research BC recognizes that meaningful approaches to support EDI in research and KT will vary depending on the research topic, discipline, methods, etc. Where guidance is needed, applicants are encouraged to consult appropriate resources, access additional training and professional development, and seek input from more experienced mentors.

9. Knowledge Translation (KT)

Health Research BC 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. It provides the pathway to the impact of your research.

KT-related activities must be embedded within the research proposal 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.

KT Resources

For examples of KT activities and resources to explore as you consider what KT activities make sense – and are doable – within the context of your research project/program, read Health Research BC's [Knowledge Translation by Research Theme](#) guide.

If you would like to assess your KT skills, learn more about KT competencies and find resources on incorporating KT into your application, please see [KT Pathways](#). For additional resources on KT in health research, please visit the [Health Research BC KT page](#) or contact the Health Research BC KT team at KT@healthresearchbc.ca.

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']. www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/45321.html. Accessed September, 2022.

KT Science

Applicants may submit a program of research that is fully focused on KT science. While the practice of KT covers activities to encourage and enable evidence use, for example synthesis, dissemination, exchange and implementation of evidence; KT science is the study of those activities, including implementation science. KT science explores the theories, mechanisms, concepts, and/or methods by which evidence is used in health care practice and policy. KT science applications will be evaluated by a peer review panel that includes expertise in KT science.

10. Partnerships

Health Research BC partners with other funders to build capacity and fill strategic gaps in health research in BC. Partnering on competitions enables Health Research BC and partners to increase the total number of Scholar awards funded. 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](#) and in [Health Research BC ApplyNet](#), Health Research BC's online application portal, 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 indicate this preference in Health Research BC ApplyNet when completing their full application. Please indicate the partner(s) of interest and how your research aligns with their funding priorities.
- Health Research BC 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 that will be available on our [website](#) and in [Health Research BC ApplyNet](#), and ensure that the lay and scientific summaries within the application captures at least one of the keywords.

Applications that fulfill the funding criteria for both Health Research BC and a partner organization are eligible for a partnered Scholar award. However, only those applications that receive a Health Research BC peer review score of **3.8 or above** will be considered. Funding decisions on partnered awards are based on existing Health Research BC policies, confirmed partnership support, and available funding. Financial contributions from Health Research BC and its partners are subject to availability of funds and the annual budgetary approvals by both Health Research BC's Board of Directors and the partner organization beyond year one of the award.

Mitacs Accelerate Internships

Health Research BC and [Mitacs](#) are partnering together to provide Scholar applicants access to additional funding and training opportunities for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows involved in their program of research, through the Mitacs [Accelerate](#) internship program. Mitacs Accelerate grants start at \$15,000 per four-month segment through co-funding with an eligible non-academic partner. Applicants interested in benefiting from this additional opportunity must complete a Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application to submit along with their Scholar full application.

See **Appendix B** for more details.

11. How to Apply

The application process for the 2022 Health Research BC Scholar competition is composed of two mandatory stages: A letter of intent (LOI) stage where applicants are screened for eligibility by Health Research BC staff, and a full application stage. Applicants with eligible LOIs are invited to submit a full application. In recognition of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on many researchers, applicants will have the option to complete a COVID-19 impact statement as part of the full application process.

1. Letter of intent (LOI)

- **Deadline: December 6, 2021, 4:30 p.m. PT**
- Consists of:
 - The short LOI form in Health Research BC ApplyNet

2. Full application

- **Deadline: January 31, 2022, 4:30 p.m. PT**
- **New for 2022 competition: As Health Research BC is now a signatory of the [Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#), we no longer allow the use of journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factor, as surrogate measures of research quality. In keeping with best practices for responsible research assessment⁴, we will no longer allow the use of article citation counts or H-index. *Please do not include Journal Impact Factors, article citation counts or H-index in your application.***
- Consists of:
 - Program of research and appendices⁵
 - Canadian Common CV – Health Research BC Full Version
 - List of Publications, Patents & Intellectual Property Rights
 - Department Head, or equivalent form
 - Dean of Faculty Form (if applicable)
 - At least 2 (max 3) letters of reference from previous supervisors and/or senior mentors and/or previous collaborators who can comment to the applicant's potential as an independent researcher. Individuals providing letters of reference cannot also provide a letter of collaboration or a supervisor form. (Letters of reference must be submitted by the referees through Health Research BC ApplyNet.)
 - Consent forms and questionnaires (if applicable)
 - Letters of collaboration⁶ (if applicable)
 - Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application (if applicable)

To complete your application, create a [Health Research BC ApplyNet](#) account and follow the instructions in the Health Research BC ApplyNet application form. Ensure that applications are complete and submitted by the Health Research BC application deadline. Incomplete or late applications cannot be considered.

⁴ See [Bibliometrics: The Leiden Manifesto for research metrics](#).

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

⁶ A collaborator is an individual who significantly contributes to the conduct and/or direction of the research or knowledge translation activities.

Submission Requirements

- All steps of the application must be submitted using the Health Research BC ApplyNet online application submission system.
- All documents uploaded into [Health Research BC ApplyNet](#) must be in .pdf format.
- 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 uploaded.

Health Research BC reserves the right to declare applications ineligible based on the established criteria.

Note: Applicants using Health Research BC ApplyNet for the first time will need to register and create a system account. Department heads will also need a system account in order to submit the Department Head Form.

12. Review Process

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

In recognition of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on many researchers, applicants will have the option to complete a COVID-19 impact statement as part of the application process. Health Research BC will also provide peer reviewers with additional guidance on how to take COVID-19 impacts into consideration as part of the review process.

Applications are evaluated via a process that incorporates six principles of peer review: **integrity, accountability, transparency, balance, confidentiality, and impartiality**. For more details, please see the [overview of Health Research BC's peer review process](#). There are separate peer review pools for new faculty recruits (within 0 – 3 years of their first *eligible* appointment) and more established junior faculty (3 – 6 years from their first *eligible* appointment) in order to ensure an equitable review process⁷.

The information presented in the **Evaluation Criteria** and **Rating Scale** sections below is used for the peer review process. A full description of the evaluation criteria can be found on our [website](#). To be **considered** for funding, the application must receive a minimum score of **3.8**.

Health Research BC recognizes that each BC region brings strengths to the provincial health research system and that there is variation in the infrastructure, resources, and supports available to health researchers at different institutions. Health Research BC's commitment to rigorous peer review includes ensuring applications from across BC are reviewed fairly and equitably.

⁷ For applicants who have received their first appointment prior to obtaining their PhD, an equivalent separation will be made based on the number of years post-PhD, i.e. the newer faculty pool will include applicants who are 0 – 2 years post-PhD, and the more established faculty pool will include applicants who are 3 – 5 years post-PhD.

Evaluation Criteria

All applications are assessed against the following criteria and weightings below. A full description of the evaluation criteria can be found on our [website](#). **It is highly recommended that applicants refer to the evaluation criteria when completing their applications.**

Criterion	Weighting
Applicant expertise and experience	30%
Program of research	40%
Environment and support	30%

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 Decisions

Following application review, the highest rated applications are identified in each applicant pool. Applicants are 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 receive notification of the funding decisions and the reviewers' comments. A list of successful applicants is published on Health Research BC's website.

13. Award Start Date and Deferral

Unless otherwise indicated, funding for Scholar awards begins July 1, 2022. Successful applicants must confirm their acceptance of the award within the stipulated time indicated in the award notification package.

The start date may be deferred up to a maximum of 12 months; if a deferral is required, award recipients must contact Health Research BC 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, 2023. Deferred start dates, once confirmed by Health Research BC, cannot be revised.

14. Reporting Requirements

Scholar award recipients are required to complete annual progress reports and provide an up-to-date Canadian Common CV (CCV) to Health Research BC for each year of their award. Health Research BC will provide reporting information for these purposes in advance. The information gathered in progress reports is used for administration, evaluation, government reporting, and communication purposes, and helps improve our award programs.

In addition to annual reporting requirements, award recipients must submit a final report in the last year of their award and a final financial statement within **three months** following completion of the award. Any unexpended funds must be returned to Health Research BC. Health Research BC will provide reporting information for these purposes in advance of the award end date.

Health Research BC reserves the right to contact award recipients up to five years after the award end date to determine the outcomes and/or impacts of the Scholar award.

Additionally, to inform evaluation and continued improvement of Health Research BC's award programs, award recipients are invited to provide feedback to Health Research BC staff to determine areas of improvement for this funding opportunity.

15. Applicant Updates

Health Research BC will accept updates regarding **new awards** received following the full application deadline (**January 31, 2022**).

Please email all relevant information, including confirmation of award, to scholar@healthresearchbc.ca by **March 28, 2022**.

Appendix A – Incentive 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 during the period they hold a Scholar award are eligible to receive incentive funding. Health Research BC 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 value⁸ of 50 percent or more of the value of the Health Research BC Scholar award

The incentive funding is available for the duration of the Scholar award or to the end of the external award, whichever comes first. Award recipients who receive incentive funding must follow the eligible expenses requirements in Section 3, and complete the reporting requirements stated in Section 14.

Incentive Funding Scenarios

Incentive funding is applied when:

- The external award totals **less** than the Health Research BC Scholar award and is used to raise the combined salary award amount to equal the Scholar award, **OR**
- The external award totals **more** than the Health Research BC Scholar award and is used to provide an additional amount (\$15,000) on top of the external award.

Health Research BC salary award	External salary award	Effect on Health Research BC salary award
\$90,000	\$60,000	Health Research BC will pay the difference (\$30,000) between the other salary award amount and the Scholar award amount so the total sum is \$90,000 per year.
\$90,000	\$100,000	Health Research BC salary award is reduced to \$0 and applicant receives a Health Research BC incentive award of \$15,000.

⁸ 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.

Appendix B – Mitacs Accelerate Internships

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

Successful Health Research BC applicants have expedited access to Mitacs funding, as Mitacs recognizes the results of the scientific review managed by Health Research BC and requires only an internal evaluation to confirm eligibility and compliance with Mitacs Accelerate program requirements. Scholar applicants who have submitted a **Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application** are eligible for this expedited review process.

How to Apply

Scholar applicants interested in including a Mitacs Accelerate internship in their Health Research BC Scholar full application must contact their regional [Mitacs Business Development](#) representative to learn more about the program and obtain a **Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application**. Mitacs will work with interested applicants to determine how best an internship can be integrated into the proposed program of research.

To apply for Mitacs Accelerate funding, Scholar applicants will need to include the following in their full application:

- 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, including specific objectives, methodologies, timeline, expected deliverables, benefits to the intern, and partner interactions.
- 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.
- Attach their Mitacs Accelerate Proposal application.

All questions regarding the Mitacs Accelerate program, such as eligibility, timelines, expectations, and benefits should be directed to [Mitacs](#).

Appendix C – Frequently Asked Questions

Application Phase Questions

Who can apply to the Scholar Program?

Applicants who have a PhD or equivalent, are within six years from the start of their first university appointment (at an assistant professor level or equivalent) as of the award start date (July 1, 2022), and can commit to a minimum of 75 percent of their time conducting research are eligible to apply.

What is a host institution?

The host institution is the institution that administers funds for the duration of the award and where the majority of resources to support the project is provided (e.g. infrastructure, human resources, administration, etc.). Host institutions **must** have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Health Research BC. View a complete list of [eligible host institutions](#).

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.
- Allow you to be a research supervisor for graduate and post-graduate trainees.
- Allow you to publish your research results.

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.

Can research associates and post-doctoral fellows apply?

Yes, but if they are successful in the Scholar competition, they must have the appointment at a BC institution (university, health authority, or research institute) as of the award start date (July 1, 2022) where they can: (1) apply for and hold peer-reviewed funds as a principal investigator; (2) supervise graduate and post-graduate trainees, and (3) publish research results.

Is the Scholar competition open to both PhDs and health professionals?

Yes. Both PhDs and health professionals are encouraged apply to the Scholar competition as long as they meet all eligibility criteria; however, please note that all applicants are evaluated under identical criteria. If eligible, health professionals may wish to consider applying to our Health-Professional Investigator Program.

Can I apply for this award if I already hold a Health Research BC Health Professional-Investigator or Innovation to Commercialization award?

No. Applicants cannot currently hold, or have ever held a Health Research BC Health Professional-Investigator, Innovation to Commercialization, or Scholar award, in whole or in part.

Will interruptions/delays in my career be considered when determining my eligibility?

Interruptions and delays in your studies are considered when determining eligibility. This information is also used by peer reviewers when assessing productivity. Applicants 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 (LOI).

How will the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic be considered as part of my application?

Applicants will have the opportunity to complete a COVID-19 impact statement at the full application stage describing what impact, if any, the pandemic has had on their research activities and productivity. Review panels receive guidance from Health Research BC to appropriately take COVID-19 impacts into consideration when assessing applications.

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

Health Research BC 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 [Knowledge Translation by Research Theme](#).

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. Applications within 0 – 3 years of their first appointment will be separated from those who are between 4 – 6 years from their first appointment to ensure equitable evaluation and scoring between new faculty recruits and more established faculty. Applications within their respective pools are then reviewed and assessed **relative to each other**. Furthermore, reviewers are 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 are instructed that within each context, both are legitimate forms of research independence.

The availability of mentors for the applicant is included as part of the evaluation criteria 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 ensure that the availability of mentorship is explicitly included in the Department Head Form.

Mentorship and collaboration activities can exist in research networks both within and external to the host institution.

My project proposal includes work relevant to Indigenous health. Is there anything I should be aware of?

Health Research BC expects applicants to approach their research and knowledge translation activities with culturally safe practices that demonstrate humility, integrity, accountability and respect for Indigenous self-determination. Applicants must comply with the ethical and research policies outlined in [Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#) of the [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#) (2018). When appropriate, applicants must also describe their data management plan in accordance with the First Nations principles of [OCAP®: ownership, control, access and possession](#). Additional resources for researchers can be found on the [First Nations Health Authority](#) website.

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

Applicants are encouraged to review the list of partner keywords that will be available on our [website](#) and in [Health Research BC ApplyNet](#), and ensure that their scientific summary within the application captures at least one of the keywords. At the full application stage, applicants will see a list of potential partners in the application form. Potential partners that come onboard after the full application launch will be listed on our website.

How do I indicate interest in a partnered award?

Applicants interested in being considered for partnered awards are encouraged to indicate this preference in [Health Research BC ApplyNet](#) when completing their full application. Please indicate the partner(s) of interest and how your research aligns with their funding priorities. All applicants are reviewed for potential partnership matches and may be eligible for partnership opportunities whether or not interest is expressed at the application stage.

If potential partners are secured after the full application stage, Health Research BC staff will match the keywords provided by the partner with the lay and scientific summaries of applicants. If a match is identified, they will inform the respective applicant after peer review.

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

Applicants interested in including Mitacs Accelerate internships in their Health Research BC 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. Mitacs must work with interested applicants to determine how best an internship can be integrated into the proposed Scholar Program of research.

All questions regarding the Accelerate program, such as eligibility, timelines, expectations, and benefits should be directed to Mitacs.

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 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.

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

Reference letters are typically written by former supervisors or mentors who are familiar with your work. Letters of collaboration 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.

My appointment is with one institution but my research will be conducted at a different site. Who should complete the Dean Form?

The dean (or equivalent) of the host institution that will administer the funds should complete the Dean Form in Health Research BC ApplyNet.

My host institution (e.g. health authority) does not require the approval of a dean. Who completes the Dean Form in Health Research BC ApplyNet?

Do not nominate a dean in the Third Party section in Health Research BC 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.

My host institution has a dean (or equivalent) but no department head. What form needs to be completed?

Your dean (or equivalent) should complete the Department Head Form instead of the Dean Form. The Department Head Form contains more detailed questions about the nature of your appointment. Please follow the instructions in the application form on how to do this.

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 Form (or equivalent).

Award Administration Questions

Can I defer the start date of the Scholar award?

Deferrals may only be requested for the following reasons: medical or parental leave and caregiving. Other reasons not stated are 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 Health Research BC**. The deferred start date must be on the first day of any month and be no later than July 1, 2023. Deferred start dates, once confirmed by Health Research BC, cannot be revised.

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

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

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 Health Research BC ApplyNet via the “Accept Award Agreement” task.

If you hold other external funding, you are also required to upload official documents that show 1) that the award has been offered and accepted, and 2) the award duration and amount, including start and end dates.