

VCHRI Investigator Awards 2024 Competition Guidelines

The purpose of this competition is to promote excellence and build health research capacity through peer-reviewed salary support awards for clinician scientists located at Vancouver General Hospital (VGH), Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) - Vancouver Community, UBC Hospital (UBCH), and G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre. The VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation and VCHRI fund this competition.

There are two award categories: Mentored Clinician Scientist Award (MCS) and Clinician Scientist Award (CS). These awards are aimed at clinician scientists who want to reduce their clinical practice commitments in order to continue developing their research careers as independent investigators.

Deadlines

Complete registration and application must be received **via online forms** by the times specified or they will not be accepted. Notification of results will be available in spring 2024.

- Registration deadline (mandatory): Tuesday, October 10, 2023 by 4:00pm (PST)
- Grant development 1-on-1 session (20 minutes): Tuesday, November 7, 2023
- Application submission deadline: Monday, December 4, 2023 by 4:00pm (PST)

Award Types

Mentored Clinician Scientist (MCS) Award

These awards are \$75,000 per year for two years; renewable for a third year based on progress reports. In addition, \$20,000 in start-up funds from applicant's department. To be eligible, you must:

- be a clinician (e.g. MD, PT, OT) with completed formal research training component as part of a fellowship, residency, or other further educational training such as a PhD, MPH or similar;
- conduct most of your clinical AND research work at one or more of the VGH, VCH – Community, UBCH, or GF Strong sites. If you are not currently practicing at one of these sites, you must include a letter from the relevant VCH Clinical Head confirming you will be practicing at VGH, VCH – Community, UBCH, or GF Strong by July 1, 2024;
 - VCH clinical appointments must be permanent (e.g. not casual, locum, or contract).
 - If you work at another VCH site, you may be eligible, *dependent on funding*. Please contact education.award@vch.ca to confirm.
- not currently hold a research salary award that is ongoing past June 30, 2024;
- receive your first university appointment at the clinical assistant professor/assistant professor level no earlier than July 1, 2021* (last 3 years) from any institution;
 - Note: If you do not yet have an appointment at this level, your academic department head's letter must confirm explicitly that you will be given such an appointment by July 1, 2024 if successful in this competition
- have a **research mentor** who will participate fully in the mentoring aspect of this program;
- have a **cash commitment (e.g. not in-kind) of \$20,000 in research start-up funds from your academic department** (must be confirmed explicitly in the letter from your dept. head);
- have access to dedicated research space;
- be able to devote a significant amount of your time to investigator-initiated research.

*Justified career interruptions can be deducted from the calculation.

Mentor Requirements:

Mentors must be able to support and encourage novice clinician scientists as they develop productive and successful research careers. Award holders are expected to work with their mentors and others to develop their skills in areas such as, but not limited to:

- Writing and submitting grant proposals
- Writing and submitting manuscripts
- Managing the research process
- Politics of the organization and/or the research community
- Time management/organizational skills
- Life/family issues with regard to the pursuit of research

Note: A mentor can be named for only one applicant per competition year and for a maximum of two MCS award holders at any time. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the person they enlists as a mentor meets the above conditions.

Clinician Scientist (CS) Award

These awards are \$100,000 per year for two years; renewable for a third year based on progress reports. To be eligible you must:

- be a clinician (e.g. MD, PT, OT) with completed formal research training component as part of a fellowship, residency, or other further educational training such as a PhD, MPH or similar;
- conduct most of your clinical AND research work at VGH, VCH – Community, UBCH, and/or GF Strong sites. If you are not currently practicing at one of these sites, you must include a letter from the relevant VCH Clinical Head confirming you will be practicing at VGH, VCH – Community, UBCH or GF Strong by July 1, 2024;
 - VCH clinical appointments must be permanent (e.g. not casual, locum, or contract).
 - If you work at another VCH site, you may be eligible, *dependent on funding*. Please contact education.award@vch.ca to confirm.
- not currently hold a research salary award that is ongoing past June 30, 2024;
- devote a significant amount of your time to research, and have a record of research achievement;
- have an **ongoing, investigator-driven** research program;
- have a commitment to your career as a clinician scientist within your academic department beyond the award term, outlined explicitly within your Academic Department Head's letter
- have **dedicated research space**;
- By July 1, 2024, you must be within six years (July 1, 2018*) of your first university appointment as clinical assistant/assistant professor or higher from any institution;
- not currently hold an external research salary award that is ongoing;
- hold at least one **external funded** operating grant as a PI that will be ongoing past this date.

*Justified career interruptions can be deducted from the calculation.

We invite all qualified individuals, including those from four specific groups—persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, members of visible minorities or racialized individuals, and women—to take part in this award program.

Important Notes

- Investigators with outstanding final project reports from any previous Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute (VCHRI) internal salary competition at the application deadline will not be eligible for this competition.
- VCHRI requires holders of all Investigator Awards to apply for external salary funding. If an investigator receives an external salary award, VCHRI must be notified immediately and the remainder of the Investigator Award must be returned. If the value of the external award is less, the external award will be topped up to the value of the Investigator Award for the original award term. When possible, the external salary award should be administered by VCHRI.
- If, during the term of the award, the Award recipient's clinical or research work location changes so that they are no longer conducting most of their clinical practice AND research at VGH, UBC Hospital, or GF Strong sites, they are required to notify VCHRI immediately and return the remainder of the Award.

- Disbursements from your VCHRI Investigator Award should be made to the institution that administers your salary. If UBC or VCH are not applicable, the Investigator Award may be disbursed to you individually or to your corporation. It is the responsibility of the award recipient to determine if GST should be charged for their personal corporation. Whether the Investigator Award is disbursed to you individually or to your corporation, the award recipient is responsible to fulfill all tax obligations and report to the Canada Revenue Agency.

Evaluation Criteria

Two reviewers will be assigned to each application. The selection committee's review and discussion will focus on the following:

1. The applicant's research training/experience, research productivity and strength of the mentor/mentoring relationship (last point for MCS only).
2. The applicant's research environment, collaborations, commitment to research including their amount of protected time for research, research potential, and departmental support (both clinical and academic).
3. The research proposal itself, including the applicant's capacity to do the proposed work and the potential and/or expected impacts, including those on the provision of health care.

Outcomes and Reporting

1. Annual financial reporting is required.
2. Progress reports: To be eligible for the final year of funding, award holders must submit progress reports upon request by VCHRI at 12 and 20 months. These reports will include information on presentations and grants submitted/received, status of the research project, and progress in developing a research career. A template will be provided.
3. At a minimum, award holders must submit one operating grant application to an external peer-reviewed funding competition per year. If external funds are awarded, the grant should be administered by VCHRI.
4. Final award reports are required at the end of the award term. Both VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation and VCHRI will use these final reports to publicize research activities and to evaluate the impact of the program.

Responsibilities

VCHRI Executive Director will:

- meet with mentors and award holders as requested to establish connections, provide support, assist with problem solving;
- communicate with department/division heads to facilitate support for award holders, as needed.

Mentors (working with MCS recipients) will:

- undertake the task with commitment;
- develop specific goals with award holder (as per mentoring plan); and
- meet regularly with Award holder to assess progress and provide advice.

Award holders will:

- Meet with mentor at least 6 times per year, more often if mutually agreed upon (MCS only);
- Act on advice of mentor (MCS only);
- Seek help as needed (from mentor, other researchers, consultants, VCHRI staff, etc.);
- Be available to participate with the promotional activities of the donors;
- Participate as a reviewer for subsequent VCHRI Internal Awards competitions.

Contact Information

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