

VCH Research Institute Investigator Awards 2015 Competition Guidelines

The purpose of this competition is to promote excellence and build health research capacity through peer-reviewed salary support awards for investigators located at VGH, VCH - Community, UBC Hospital and G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre.

There are two categories of the Investigator Awards: Mentored Clinician Scientist Career Development Award (MCS) and Clinician Scientist Career Development 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.

Funding Partners

The VCH Research Investigator Awards competition is funded by the VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation.

VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation is a registered charity that raises funds for the latest, most sophisticated medical equipment, world-class research and improvements to patient care for Vancouver General Hospital, UBC Hospital, GF Strong Rehab Centre and Vancouver Coastal Health Research.

Deadlines

Registration is mandatory for this competition. Complete the one-page registration form and submit as an email attachment to Kerri Abramson, Manager, Research Education & Internal Awards, at kerri.abramson@vch.ca.

Registration deadline (by email): Thursday, October 9, 2014 by midnight (PST)

Application submission deadline (by email): Thursday, November 20, 2014 by midnight (PST).

Complete application must be received **via email only** to kerri.abramson@vch.ca by the times specified or they will not be accepted.

The Awards

Mentored Clinician Scientist (MCS) Career Development Award

These awards are \$75,000 per year for two years; renewable for a third year (based on progress reports), plus \$20,000 in start-up funds. The awardees must be actively mentored by a senior researcher, who has agreed to take on this role. Funding for this award comes from two sources: \$75,000 per year will be provided by the VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation, and the start-up funds of \$20,000 must be provided by the award holder's academic department. Salary support will be provided to selected clinician scientists at the beginning of their careers as independent investigators. After the term of the award, we expect the Award holders to continue to be active in research, hold operating grant(s), attract students, and contribute to fostering a culture of research in their departments/divisions.

To be eligible, you must:

- hold (at application deadline) a Ph.D., or an M.D. with a formal research training component as part of a fellowship, residency, or other further educational training.
- conduct most of your clinical AND research work at one or more of the VGH, VCH – Community,

UBCH, or GF Strong sites (this does not include PHC, BCCA, BCCDC, or C&W); if you are not currently practicing at one of these sites, you must include a letter from the relevant Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) Clinical Head confirming you will be practicing at VGH, VCH – Community, UBCH or GF Strong by July 1, 2015.

- not currently hold a research salary award that is ongoing past June 30, 2015.
- receive your first university appointment at the clinical assistant professor/assistant professor level no earlier than July 1, 2012* (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, 2015 if successful in this competition).
- have a research mentor who will participate fully in the mentoring aspect of this program (see Mentor section below).
- have a commitment of \$20,000 in research start-up funds from your academic department/division (must be confirmed explicitly in the letter from your dept. head).
- have (or have access to) dedicated research space (VCH Research Institute is unable to allocate new research space as a result of this award).
- be able to devote a significant amount of your time to investigator-initiated research.

Mentor Requirements:

Mentors must be able to support and encourage novice clinician scientists as they develop productive and successful research careers. An initial mentoring plan is required with application. 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 organisation and/or the research community
- Time management/organisational 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 s/he enlists as a mentor meets the above conditions.

Clinician Scientist (CS) Career Development Award

These awards are \$100,000 per year for two years; renewable for a third year (based on progress reports). Salary support will be provided to clinician scientists continuing to develop their careers as independent investigators. The eligibility criteria are listed below.

To be eligible you must:

- conduct most of your clinical AND research work at VGH, VCH – Community, UBCH, and/or GF Strong sites (this does not include PHC, BCCA, BCCDC, or C&W).
- hold a Ph.D., or an M.D.
- 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 term of this award, outlined explicitly within your Academic Department Head's letter,
- have dedicated research space (VCH Research Institute is unable to allocate new research space as a result of this award).

By July 1, 2015, you must:

- be within six years (July 1, 2009*) 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 are deducted from the calculation.

External Salary Awards

VCH Research Institute requires holders of all VCH Research Institute Investigator Awards to apply for external salary funding. If an investigator receives an external salary award, VCH Research Institute must be notified immediately and the remainder of the VCH Research Institute 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 period of the Investigator Award.

Important Notes

1. Investigators with outstanding final project reports from any previous VCH Research Institute internal competition at the application deadline will not be eligible for this competition.
2. If, during the term of the award, the Award winner's clinical or research work location changes so that they are no longer conducting most of their clinical practice AND research at VGH, UBC, or GF Strong sites, they are required to notify VCH Research Institute immediately and return the remainder of the Award.

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 VCH Research Institute 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. The report will document the activities of the award holder in the categories of:
 - Plan progress
 - Collaborations established
 - Oral presentations given (internal and external)
 - Grant proposals submitted, whether successful or not
 - Manuscripts written, submitted for publication, and published
 - General progress report on research

At a minimum, award holders must submit one operating grant application to an external peer-reviewed funding competition per year.

3. Final award reports are required at the end of the award term. Both VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation and VCH Research Institute will use these final reports to publicize research activities and to evaluate the impact of the program.

Responsibilities

VCH Research Institute 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

- 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

- Meet with mentor at least 6 times per year (more often if mutually agreed upon)
- Act on advice of mentor
- Seek help as needed (from mentor, other researchers, consultants, VCH Research Institute staff, etc)
- Make use of resources such as C2E2 consulting services, shared technical services, etc.
- Be available to participate with the promotional activities of the donors

Contact Information

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