

2026 GUIDELINES

VCHRI Top Graduating Doctoral Student Award and Rising Star Award

The purpose of the Top Graduating Doctoral Student and the Rising Star Awards are to recognize outstanding trainee role models who demonstrate research excellence, foster research understanding through communications and contribute to the Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute research culture and environment.

Award Amounts

As participation at scientific conferences is an important activity in the development of a research career, this competition will support VCHRI research trainees to present at a conference (oral or poster) with a travel award. The award amounts are \$2000 for a Top Graduating Doctoral Student Award and \$1000 for a Rising Star Award.

Eligibility

- Rising Star Award – applicants must be VCHRI trainees in a Master's or PhD program or a Postdoctoral Fellow whose supervisor is a VCHRI researcher.
- Top Graduating Doctoral Student Award – applicants must be PhD candidates graduating or submitting a thesis between January 1st and December 31st, 2026, and whose supervisor is a VCHRI researcher.
- Your application *requires* a 3-minute thesis presentation of your work on February 24th 2026 in the VCHRI/UBC Faculty of Medicine Heat.

Deadlines

- Two deadlines:
 1. Registration for a presentation timeslot must take place by February 10th, 2026
 2. Full Applications must be submitted by 4pm on Friday, March 27th, 2026 (online)

Application process

1. **Register to participate in the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT®) presentation**
<https://www.vchri.ca/events/three-minute-thesis-vchri-heat-2026>
2. **Present your work as a part of the VCHRI/UBC Faculty of Medicine 3MT® Heat on February 24th, 2026** (for more information about 3MT® and resources - <http://3mt.grad.ubc.ca>)
 - a. *Note, if you cannot attend the VCHRI heat please register for a UBC heat (information [here](#)) and inform us via email: education.award@vch.ca
3. **Submit the following documents (online)**
 - Submit via our [website](#).
 - VCHRI Trainee Award Application Cover Sheet
 - Maximum one-page abstract: a lay (non-technical) summary detailing your research project in simple and clear language suitable for general audiences.
 - VCHRI Biographical Sketch – maximum 4 pages
4. **Have the following letters of reference submitted to VCHRI (via email):**
 - Letter of nomination from research supervisor confirming that the thesis will be submitted by December 31, 2026 (For Top Graduating Doctoral Applicants only)
 - Two letters of reference detailing not only the student's research accomplishments, but also their mentorship or other activities that contribute to the research environment of their group
 - Letter of reference from current supervisor, may be combined with letter of nomination (state they are combined in the letter)
 - Letter of reference from a faculty member (not current supervisor) OR Letter of reference from peer (current or past trainee colleague)
 - Have all letters of reference emailed directly from the referee (not the applicant) to: education.award@vch.ca by 4pm on Friday, March 27th, 2026

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by a multidisciplinary selection committee. The selection committee will review the applications considering the following:

Applicant

- Review letters of reference for critical thinking, independence, perseverance, originality, organizational skills, interest in discovery, research ability, leadership
- Review the candidate's contribution to the research environment, knowledge translation activities and training
- Examples of activities include organizing scientific meetings, journal clubs, trainee events, participating in public communication events, and mentorship of other trainees. Examples of training include specialized workshops or courses including equity, diversity and inclusion, cultural safety, Indigenous health research.

Research

- Recognitions: review biosketch information on contributions, presentations, research prizes and other indicators of the candidate's research productivity
- Publications: review biosketch information on the list of articles and other publications produced by the candidate. Publication activity of the candidate will be reviewed in consideration of expectations of someone with their academic experience

Eligible expenses (original receipts must be provided, including boarding passes)

- Air (economy fare) and ground transportation to conference site
- Accommodation
- Conference registration
- Cost of printing conference poster presentation (if applicable)
- Meals:
 - For meals you can either claim a **per diem OR submit receipts** for each meal (between your departure and return times) that is **NOT** provided through the conference fee, up to the maximums below. You cannot claim a mixture of per diem and submission of receipts for each meal for the duration of your trip.

Breakfast \$12

Lunch \$15

Dinner \$25

Total = \$52 / day

Note: the per diem reimbursement level is based on the VCH travel expenses policy.

Contact Information

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