

# MSSU Trainee Support Program Overview [2024-2025]



## Introduction

The Maritime SPOR SUPPORT Unit (MSSU) provides financial support to high-caliber trainees engaged in patient-oriented health research at academic institutions in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. Patient-oriented health research is defined by CIHR as *a continuum of research that engages patients as partners, focuses on patient-identified priorities and improves patient outcomes. This research, conducted by multidisciplinary teams in partnership with relevant stakeholders, aims to apply the knowledge generated to improve healthcare systems and practice*<sup>1</sup>.

## Objective

The objective of the MSSU Trainee Support Program is to support the development of the next generation of health research leaders and highly qualified health researchers with expertise in patient-oriented research. This Trainee Support is designed for trainees seeking to pursue health research training in any discipline, not just those traditionally related to health sciences. All human health themes are eligible, regardless of proposed methodology or models.

## Requirements

All trainees supported by this award must be supervised by a [MSSU Scientist](#) who has an academic appointment in the Maritimes.

Other required members of the Research Team:

- Patient / Public Partner(s) engaged throughout the project as a Team Member<sup>2</sup>
- Health Care Knowledge User

Projects must:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/48413.html>

<sup>2</sup> Patient: An overarching term inclusive of individuals with personal experience of a health issue and informal caregivers, including family and friends. <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/48413.html>

- Be relevant to the mandate of the MSSU and show how the research activity undertaken is patient-oriented in nature and how POR is to be integrated throughout the research project
- Address a health research priority in the province in which the trainee attends university
- Show the impact / relevance to the patient population (in the Maritime province in which the trainee attends University), and
- How the trainee will measure outcomes that matter to patients / how that has been determined.

Awardees agree to:

- Take part in the CIHR-IMHA Course: A How-to Guide for Patient Engagement in Research and the MSSU Patient-Oriented Research Practicum
- Participate / present at Annual MSSU Meeting
- Participate in any other pertinent activities identified by MSSU during the term of the funding
- Submit progress report and final reports

(Support Recipients are required to submit an annual Progress Report (for multi-year funding) and a Final Report within 60 days of the project end date. Details for completing the report will be included in the Terms and Conditions letter.)

## Review

Applications are reviewed by a Selection Committee composed of MSSU Scientists and Patient / Public Partners to ensure that they:

- Fit with the objective and requirements of the funding program, including the importance of the study to the establishment of applicant's research career in the Maritimes.

Applicants should avoid scientific jargon as their application may not be reviewed by experts in their discipline.

## Overview

<b>Award Types</b>	MSSU Trainee Support is offered at three levels of study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master's</li> <li>• Doctoral</li> <li>• Post-Doctoral</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Eligibility</b></p>	<p>To apply for MSSU Trainee Support, the applicant must meet the following criteria at the time of the application:</p> <p><u>Master's Level Award</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have applied to, been accepted in, or be enrolled in a full-time thesis-based Master's degree program under the supervision of a researcher who is an MSSU Scientist in a university, college, or institution (e.g., medical training programs, regional health authorities' hospitals) in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, or Prince Edward Island.</li> </ul> <p><u>Doctoral Level Award</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have applied to, been accepted in, or be enrolled in a full-time thesis-based Doctoral degree program under the supervision of a researcher who is an MSSU Scientist in a university, college, or institution (e.g., medical training programs, regional health authorities' hospitals) New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, or Prince Edward Island.</li> </ul> <p><u>Post Doctoral Level Award</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have applied to, been accepted in, or be registered as a postdoctoral fellow under the supervision of a researcher who is an MSSU Scientist in a university, college, or institution (e.g., medical training programs, regional health authorities' hospitals) in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, or Prince Edward Island.</li> </ul> <p><u>The applicant must also:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be engaged in research activities related to patient-oriented research.</li> <li>• Include a plan to engage Health Care Knowledge User in the project</li> <li>• Include a Patient Engagement Plan</li> <li>• Include a Knowledge Translation Plan</li> <li>• Describe consideration of Sex and Gender in Proposal</li> </ul> <p>As capacity building is a priority of MSSU, a maximum of two trainees will normally be funded per supervisor per year to assist as many research teams as possible and ensure a breadth of trainees. This program could fund candidates from one supervisor who are at different levels of training (i.e., one graduate trainee and one postdoctoral fellow).</p>
<p><b>Funding Amount and Duration</b></p>	<p>Funding is non-renewable and issued to recipients in the following amounts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master's Level - \$10,000 for 1 year</li> <li>• Doctorate Level - \$15,000/year for 2 years</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post Doctoral Level - \$20,000/year for 2 years</li> </ul>
<b>Funding Caps</b>	<p>A trainee's total funding from all funding sources may not exceed the annual cap established by their institution: <b>It is the responsibility of the trainee to notify their institution of all funding received.</b></p> <p>An MSSU Trainee Support recipient who holds funding that exceeds the institutional funding cap, will be named an Honorary MSSU recipient (i.e. no funding will be issued). Recipients of MSSU Trainee Support will have access to complimentary training opportunities offered to funded trainees.</p>
<b>Dates and Deadlines</b>	<p><b>Application Available:</b> January 29, 2024</p> <p><b>Application Deadline:</b> March 22, 2024, 2:00pm AT</p> <p><b>Results Available:</b> June 2024</p> <p><b>Funds Available:</b> September 1, 2024</p>

### Application Process

<b>Step 1: Confirm Eligibility</b>	<p>Consider whether you meet the eligibility criteria (outlined above). If applicants have any questions related to their eligibility, they are encouraged to contact their institution (see 'Resources and Assistance' section below).</p>
<b>Step 2: Review Application Requirements and Prepare All Supplementary Documents</b>	<p>You will need to prepare all necessary documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CV (see form on website) or <a href="#">Canadian Common CV</a></li> <li>• Research Proposal Form (Application)</li> <li>• Self-Identification Form</li> </ul> <p>Be sure to carefully review the detailed instructions in the Application Requirement section below. CV / CCV that are incomplete or in a different format will not be accepted.</p>
<b>Step 3: Optional Letter of Support</b>	<p>Any letters of support from community organizations, institutions, or individuals, including Supervisor, the trainee intends to partner with to plan and/or conduct proposed engagement activities should be submitted to Sharon Skaling, MSSU Capacity Development Coordinator (<a href="mailto:Sharon.Skaling@nshealth.ca">Sharon.Skaling@nshealth.ca</a>) prior to the application deadline. Letters provided via the applicant will not be accepted.</p>
<b>Step 4: Complete and Submit Application Online</b>	<p>Visit the MSSU website to complete and submit the online Research Proposal Form and Self-Identification Form, and to upload your supplementary documents (CV).</p>

## Application Requirements

### Transcripts

Upon offer of an MSSU trainee support program funding, applicants may be required to submit official transcripts or to have copies validated by the institution to ensure authenticity.

### Research Proposal

Applicants must complete the [Research Proposal Form](#). Trainees (not supervisors) are expected to write the Project Description, which should be written in lay language that is understandable by a broad audience.

### CV or Canadian Common CV

Applications must complete all sections of the [CV](#) or a Canadian Common CV (CCV) with all fields completed.

### Self-Identification Form

Applicants are requested to complete the [Self-Identification Form](#).

## Selection Process

1. Applications will be reviewed to determine whether they are complete and meet the eligibility criteria.
2. Complete and eligible applications will be reviewed by a Selection Committee of MSSU Scientists and Patient / Public Partners in accordance with the assessment criteria outlined below. Applications could be reviewed by committee members with various levels and areas of research expertise.
3. The Committee will submit to the MSSU a list of applicants recommended for funding and a list of alternates, if applicable.

Applicants will be notified of funding decisions and the process for award acceptance and payment for funding recipients will be implemented.

## Assessment Criteria

The following criteria will be used to assess MSSU Trainee Support applications:

Criterion	
<b>Part 1: 40%</b>	Quality of Research Proposal
	Integration of POR into Research Plan

<b>Project Description and contribution to POR</b>	Potential for impact/relevance of research activity on the patient health populations
	Sex and Gender Consideration/Justification
<b>Justification of consideration of sex and gender</b>	
<b>Part 2: 30%</b>	Previous POR training/research experience
	Understanding of POR
	Professional goals, motivation to pursue POR, and development of POR research skills
<b>Case for MSSU Funding</b>	
<b>Part 3: 30%</b>	Quality and feasibility of knowledge user engagement plan
	Quality and feasibility of patient engagement plan
	Quality and feasibility of knowledge translation plan
	Alignment with local priorities for Health Research
<b>Plans and Health System Priority</b>	

## Resources and Assistance

### Application Support

Applicants should contact the office of research and graduate studies in their institution **well in advance of the application deadline** with questions related to application content and eligibility.

### Health Research Priorities

The following are Health Research Priorities identified at the time of the Trainee Support Program:

Nova Scotia

1. Research that contributes to recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals.
2. Research focused on access to people-centered, flexible, quality healthcare.
3. Research contributing to healthcare delivery excellence, including:
  - i) Opportunities for team-based care.
  - ii) The ability of healthcare providers to work to their full scope of practice.
  - iii) Innovative models to reduce wait times.
4. Research that addresses the factors affecting health and well-being of Nova Scotians, including emerging issues in population health and harm reduction.

## New Brunswick

1. Primary Care
2. Mental Health
3. Aging
4. Health System
5. Surgical
6. Technology
7. Health Human Resources
8. Transportation
9. Rural Health

## Prince Edward Island

1. Access
2. Primary care
3. Seniors' health (Home Care and LTC)
4. Workforce development
5. Mental health and addictions
6. Stabilizing acute care