Tri-Council Doctoral Scholarships

GSE Scholarship Team

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Questions

• Which agency are you applying to:
  • CIHR?
  • NSERC?
  • SSHRC?
• Did you submit an NOI to FGS?

• Have you started your application?
Agenda

- Tri-council awards overview.
- Adjudication criteria.
- Tips and tricks for writing a strong application.

- There will be pauses in the presentation for questions.
- Slides will be available on D2L and the GSE website after the presentation.
Tri-Council Programs

• You can only apply to one agency each year:
  • CIHR — Frederick Banting and Charles Best Canada Graduate Scholarships Doctoral Awards.
    • Biomedical research.
  • NSERC — Alexander Graham Bell Canada Graduate Scholarships.
    • Basic sciences.
  • SSHRC — Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarships.
    • Social sciences, arts.
• Awards are $35,000/year for 3 years.
• Selecting the correct agency is important:
Tri-Council Harmonization

- Agencies use common launch site:
  - Applications found and submitted through agency sites.
- Adjudication criteria the same for all agencies.
  - Different adjudication committee structure.
- Common deadline:
  - Oct 3, 2022. 11:59 pm MST
Letters of Reference

Choose referees wisely.

**Do not just ask** someone for a reference. Be proactive and make it easy for your referee to write a good assessment:

- Provide the review criteria.
- Ask them to address the criteria (provide examples).
- Provide transcripts and a CV: highlight accomplishments or areas you wish to have covered in the assessment.
- Meet to discuss.
- Be strategic in choosing your referees in terms of covering the criteria.
Letter of reference

• Ask early!!!
• Ensure referee confirms receipt of email request.
  • It may end up in the junk/spam folder!
• Send guide on writing a reference (Website: Tips for success).

*** Follow up - Don’t be shy! ***
• Remind your referees of the deadline a week or more before the reference is due.
  • Make sure correct deadline (Oct 3, 2022) is selected on reference request form.
Transcripts

• If you submitted an NOI to FGS in June/July:
  • Section on academic institutions attended as part of NOI.
  • CIHR and SSHRC: FGS will put transcripts together as a single PDF and send that to the applicant ~Sept 22. You attach transcripts to application.
  • NSERC: Request transcripts through Form 201 (link on NOI form), FGS will attach transcripts to your application.

• If you did not submit an NOI to FGS.
  • You can still apply, but are responsible for collecting and compiling your transcripts into a single PDF.

• Need to provide transcripts from all post-secondary academic institutions you attended, whether you got a degree or not.
Scholarship and Stipend Officer

• Cameron Vanderwey
  • Email: awardsgse@ucalgary.ca

• Scholarship Support:
  • Advertise major scholarship and award programs to CSM graduate students and supervisors.
  • Administer a subset of GSE scholarship programs.
  • Assist CSM graduate students locate and apply for international, national, provincial, regional, and institutional scholarships and awards (e.g., interpret and navigate application guidelines and processes).

• Stipend Support:
  • Set up, revise, terminate all CSM graduate student stipend payments.
Questions?
• Apply and submit application through ResearchNet:
  • [https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/38887.html](https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/38887.html)

• Students and supervisors must have:
  • A [ResearchNet](https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/38887.html) account.
  • A [CIHR PIN in ResearchNet](https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/38887.html)

• Applicants require:
  • A [Common CV account](https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/38887.html)

• Do this ASAP if you haven’t done this already:
  • Can take up to 3 business days.
• Application requires:
  • 2 letters of reference (sponsors).
  • Common CV.

• Online application with the following attachments:
  • Publication list (2 pgs).
  • Training Expectations (2 pgs).
  • Research project summary (1 pg, includes bibliography) + lay abstract.
  • Proof of Canadian Citizenship/Permanent Resident document.
  • Confirmation of scientific area and signature pages.
CIHR: Sex and Gender

• Part of on-line application:
  • Proposal Information --- Details.
• Yes/No question on have you considered Sex and Gender in your work:
  • Basic science: Sex of animals, cell lines (specific donors).
  • Patient oriented: Sex and gender considerations.
  • If no, need to explain why:
    • Microorganisms? Protein/nucleic acid structure/function?
    • Age of participants. Gender awareness?
CIHR adjudication

- FGS performs institutional review and ranking:
  - Quota for applications sent on federally.
- Agency review for CIHR is online only.
- Committee comprised of postdoctoral fellows.
- Two reviewers per application.
- Two committees:
  - CIHR-A: Biomedical (pillars 1&2).
  - CIHR-B: Population health, health outcomes (pillars 3&4).
- Multi-disciplinary reviewers within each committee.
- [https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/33043.html](https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/33043.html)
NSERC
NSERC

• Access application and submit through the NSERC portal:
  • [https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/OnlineServices-ServicesEnLigne/Index_eng.asp](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/OnlineServices-ServicesEnLigne/Index_eng.asp)

• Two referee reports on the applicant.

• Form 201 (online) and attachments:
  • Research proposal (2 pgs + 5 pgs for bibliography).
  • Contributions and statements (2 pgs):
    • Contributions to research and development.
    • Significant contributions (up to 3).
    • Applicant’s statement.
    • Optional special circumstances.
NSERC

• Contributions and statements (2 pgs):
  • Contributions to research and development:
    • Publications, presentations, patents.
  • Significant contributions:
    • Pick up to 3 and describe why they are important to your career.
  • Applicants statement:
    • Research experience, relevant activities.

• Special Circumstances:
  • Delays in your work (family, disability).
  • COVID-19.
• NSERC: EDI statement:
  • Yes/No question in Form 201.
  • If yes, ensure that diversity considerations are incorporated in your proposal (research design, methods, etc).
  • If no, need to say why.
    • It may not be applicable to your work, but need to consider relevance before selecting "no".
• Talk to your supervisor!!!
NSERC adjudication

• Institutional review by FGS.

• Review at NSERC by committees:
  • Committees meet face-to-face (in person or virtually).
  • Faculty members.
  • 13 different discipline specific committees:
    • Committee assignment based on applicant's research subject code.

• Committees are still multi-disciplinary:
  • Cellular and Molecular Biology includes microbiology and eukaryotic cell biology.

• [Website Link]
  [https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/_doc/Students-Etudiants/SelectionCommitteeGuide_e.pdf]
SSHRC
SSHRC

• Application through SSHRC portal:
  • https://webapps.nserc.ca/SSHRC/faces/logon.jsp

• Attachments:
  • Program of Study (2 pgs).
  • Supplemental Special Initiatives /Sport Justification (1 pg each).
  • Research Contributions (1 pg).
• Referees:
  • Identify 2 referees in the application & SSHRC will send the letter of appraisal directly to the contact email listed for that referee.
  • Once the letter is completed it is automatically attached to the application.
• Adjudication starts with Institutional review.
• SSHRC has 5 selection committees:
  • Applicants can state preferred committee.
• Committees are multidisciplinary.
Questions?
Tips and tricks for writing a strong scholarship application
How to Create a Strong Scholarship Application

• **Start early:**
  • Writing a good application takes time and planning. Also, multiple review rounds.
  • Good idea to discuss timeline with supervisor.

• **Know what you are applying for:**
  • Read the terms of reference to confirm you meet the eligibility criteria and understand what is required to complete the application.

• **Follow the rules:**
  • Reviewers check this (they really do!).

• **Write to a broader audience:**
  • Reviewers are diverse and will likely not be experts in your field.

• **Know how are you being evaluated?**
  • What are the selection criteria and how are they weighted.
Top Reasons Good Students Don’t Get Funded

- Not applying! Giving up after the first attempt.
- Not following instructions – i.e. addressing criteria/stretching rules.
- Frustrating evaluators by making material hard to find.
- Diluting genuinely important/impressive material by describing generic material at length.
- Content, context and/or impact of research not clearly stated.
- Proposal lacks hypothesis/research objective, and has insufficient detail in the method.
- Not addressing possible weaknesses in the application.
- A generic letter of reference. The letter is positive but gives no specifics and does not address criteria.
Top Things the Adjudicator Wants To Know

• What is this person going to do and is the research feasible?
• What will be the outcomes and their impact? Is it new? Who will care?
• Is this a good investment?
• Do I have a picture of who this person is?

***Most scholarships fund the student, not just the project***

Scan Test:
• Have someone outside your field read you application quickly (scan it, ~ 5 minutes).
• What major point(s) do they take away from it? Is it what you wanted them to?
Adjudication criteria 1: Research Ability and Potential 50%
Research Proposal

• Quality of your proposal:
  • Specific, focused, feasible and clearly stated research questions/objectives/hypothesis.
  • Methodology explained clearly.
  • Significance and expected contributions to research.

• Think about:
  • What is new and important about your work?
  • What is the key question and how will you address it?
  • How does your work fit into the bigger picture?
  • What does success look like for your project?
Research Proposal – student perspective

• Research Proposal (Thesis-based)
  • Make your hypothesis and aims clear and easy to understand.
  • With each aim provide an alternative route if it does not work.
    • Important to show foresight.
  • What makes your research novel?
• Who and how will your research findings provide benefit?
  • Ex. Society? Research community?
    • Should be beneficial whether you prove or disprove your hypothesis.
• Be reasonable with your aims and objectives.
  • Time frame and quantity of findings.
Research Proposal – student perspective

• Hook your reader early:
  • Introduction at ”newspaper” level—more general.
  • State importance of work quickly.
  • Minimize use of jargon.

• Lay abstract is important!!!
  • Do not use this as the introduction to your proposal.
  • Non-scientist should understand this abstract.
    • Ask for a non-scientist friend/family member/partner to read.
Research Proposal – student perspective

• Summary of do’s and don’ts:

• **DO:**
  • Have multiple audiences review your proposal (Eg. colleagues, friends, partners).
  • Make sure your supervisor reviews the proposal.
    • If possible, meet in person to discuss.
  • Make each section clear and easy to follow.
    • Should have a flow regardless of its divided up.

• **DON’T:**
  • Use complicated or field specific jargon (better to use simple phrasing).
  • Use very small font to allow yourself to have an extremely long proposal.
    • Should be concise. No one wants to read 100 long proposals.
Research ability and potential

• Training: academic, lived experience, traditional teachings
• Research experience and achievements relative to stage of study, lived experience and knowledge systems.
• Quality of contributions: discipline specific...
  • Published papers, abstracts.
  • Presentations: podium and posters.
  • Patents and IP.
• Demonstrate:
  • Critical thinking, judgement.
  • Ethical conduct.
  • Enthusiasm for research.
  • Ability to communicate.
Research ability and potential

- Evidence for research ability and potential from:
  - Common CV (CIHR), Form 201 (NSERC).
  - Contributions.
  - Personal statement.
  - Letters.
Publications and Other Research Contributions

• Publications include manuscripts, review articles, book chapters, abstracts published in journals:
  • Provide as much background as possible, your reviewers may not know the important journals or conferences in your field.

• Other contributions include:
  • Presentations (posters, talks) at conferences.
  • Abstracts in conference booklets.
  • Patents.
  • Scientific reports.
Publications and Other Research Contributions

• Early stages of graduate career (most contributions are helpful):
  • Non-refereed publications (e.g. working papers).
  • Conference presentations – including small local conferences, student conferences, etc.

• More advanced students (quality of contribution also taken into consideration):
  • Refereed journals are most highly valued.
  • International conference venues.
Relevant Experience and Achievements Obtained Within and Beyond Academia (50%)
Relevant Experience and Achievements

• Academic record:
  • Transcripts.
  • Program requirements, courses taken, course load.
  • Relative standing (if available).

• Scholarships, awards and distinctions:
  • Amount of award, duration, prestige.

• Professional, academic and extracurricular activities

• Evidence
  • References.
  • Personal statement.
  • Transcripts
Scholarship History

- Include dates in chronological order starting from the most recent to the oldest.
- Annual value:
  - If multi-year award, this is the amount per year (e.g., Vanier CGS is $50,000/year)
  - If one-time payout, just list that (e.g., AGCA is $2,000)
- Funding Source (Federal, Non-profit, Provincial, University, other).
- Include details if possible (e.g., number awarded).
- Include declined awards.
Scholarships

• Federal Scholarship Opportunities:
  • Canadian Graduate Scholarships (CGS)-M, CGS-D/PGS-D, Vanier.
• Provincial Scholarship Opportunities:
  • Alberta Innovates (AI)-Health, AI-Tech, SPOR.
• University Scholarships/Special Awards Funding:
  • Graduate Award Competition (GAC).
  • Alberta Graduate Excellence Scholarship (AGES) Research.
• Institute/Faculties/Dept Program awards.
• Program recommended Awards: AGES, others.
Relevant Experience and Achievements

*** This is your chance to tell your story***

- Professional, academic and extracurricular activities:
  - Collaborations.
  - Teaching, mentoring, supervising and/or coaching.
  - Project management, organizing conferences.
  - Outreach to community, science/research promotion.
  - Charing committees.
- Participation in department/institute organizations.
- Agencies fund the student not just the project.
Relevant Experience – student perspective

• Use examples from academic and personal life.
  • Academic: TA courses, your lab, workshops, etc.
  • Personal: community volunteering, committees, mentoring, etc.

• Don’t try and stretch things too much.
  • Give solid examples, not ‘fluffy’ ones.

• Try to be diverse.
  • Ex. Leading workshop, volunteering at homeless shelter, vice-chair of a committee.
Relevant Experience – student perspective

Beyond just listing these...

• What did you learn from these experiences?
  • What skills did you learn that could also benefit you in research?
  • How these experiences fit within your research goals?

• Have referees address achievements/setbacks in a way that is positive.
Allowable Inclusions

• When appropriate, outline extraordinary circumstances that may have delayed or interrupted:
  • 1) your completion of degree(s),
  • 2) record or research achievement, or
  • 3) your research career.
• Extraordinary circumstances include care of family members, illness, disability or other exceptional factor.
• Many agencies are allowing students to explain how COVID-related shutdowns affected research or course of study.
Application support
Application Support: GSE

• **GSE Scholarships and Awards Internal Review Service:**
  • Postdoc reviewers.
  • Simulated review of scholarship (or component thereof) with feedback provided in time to make edits prior to submission to agency.

• **GSE Scholarship Website:**
  • Competition-specific tools and resources.
  • Application information and materials for GSE-administered scholarship programs.
Drop-in sessions with peer mentors

• Students successful in previous competitions.
• 10:00-noon.
• Sept 15\textsuperscript{th}, 20\textsuperscript{th}, 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 27\textsuperscript{th}, 29\textsuperscript{th}.

• Most in GSE boardroom (HSC G344)
• Sept 27 in HSC G349C.

• First come-first served.
Application support: FGS

- FGS Workshops:
  - Graduate Leaders Circle.
- MyGradSkills Workshops.
- FGS Awards Website.
  - Tips for preparing your application.
- GRADpost:
  - Important Updates, Important Deadlines, Awards, and MyGradSkills sections.
Resources:

• Graduate Science Education:
  • [https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/gse/current-students/scholarships.](https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/gse/current-students/scholarships).
  • Internal review, Peer mentors, Workshops.

• Faculty of Graduate Studies:
  • Scholarship office: gsaward@ucalgary.ca
  • Associate Dean Graduate Studies: Dr. Donna-Marie McCafferty dmmccaff@ucalgary.ca
  • Graduate Leaders Circle gradlead@ucalgary.ca

• Student Success Center: writing workshops/one-on-one [https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success](https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success)
Questions?