



**UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY**

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

CGS Masters Scholarship

Student Workshop

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2018

- The application and selection process
- Criteria for selection
- Preparing the application
- General tips
- Questions



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Background and Why to Apply

CIHR

Canadian Institute for Health Research

NSERC

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council

SSHRC

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

- **CIHR:** Frederick Banting and Charles Best CGS
- **NSERC:** Alexander Graham Bell CGS
- **SSHRC:** Joseph-Armand Bombardier CGS

- Value: **\$17,500** for one year, non-renewable.

- Not sure which TriCouncil you fall into? **Ask them!**
<http://www.science.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=en&n=FEE7261A-1>
 - **CIHR** cgsma@cihr-irsc.gc.ca
 - **NSERC** schol@nserc-crsng.gc.ca
 - **SSHRC** fellowships@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca

Top Reasons to Apply for a Tri-council Scholarship

- Experience in applying for funding and in scholarly writing (especially proposals).
- Prestige! Tri-council success is a broad metric across Canada.
- Your success helps the university/program distribute funding to others.
- You do not want to wait until the first time you think you have a legitimate shot at a scholarship to try preparing an application!

- CGS Masters applicants will be *automatically* considered for QEI scholarships and Faculty of Graduate Studies Master's Research Scholarship through the Faculty of Graduate Studies based on ranking in the university competition
- Your program also receives a quota of QEIs to distribute in addition to any success in the Tri-council competition.
- ***Apply to the Tri-council and you have two chances at QEI awards, otherwise only one.***

Tri-council Harmonization for Masters

- All applicants to the CGS Masters competition submit through a common online portal.
- Applicants apply to the university they plan to carry out their studies (may be different from their present locale).
- Applicants can apply to up to 3 institutions.
- Universities receive a *quota* per Tri-council and the awards are determined by the University (FGS) committee (application does not go to Ottawa).

http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/CGSHarmonization-HarmonizationBESC_eng.asp

- CIHR: 16
- NSERC: 28
- SSHRC: 29
- Total: 73

http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/CGSAllocations-QuotasBESC_eng.asp



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Eligibility

- Must be a Canadian Citizen or permanent resident of Canada;
- Be enrolled in, or **intend to apply** for full-time admission to an eligible graduate program at the master's or doctoral level at a Canadian university with a CGS M allocation;
- Respect the internal deadline to apply for admission for your intended **program** of study. Contact the Faculty of Graduate Studies (or its equivalent) at the selected Canadian institution(s) for more detailed information;
 - UCalgary: December 1, 2018
 - If applying elsewhere, might have a sooner internal deadline

- have completed, as of December 31 of the year of application:
 - between **zero and 12 months** of full-time studies (or full-time equivalent) in the program for which you are requesting funding, which may be:
 - a master's program;
 - a doctoral program that you are entering without having ever been enrolled in a master's program (i.e., direct-entry);
 - a combined master's-doctoral program;
 - a master's program that will transition to an eligible doctoral program, either before or after award activation, with no master's degree conferred (i.e., fast-track); or
 - a master's program for which the degree requirements will be completed before the end of the award, allowing the award to continue into an eligible doctoral program;
 - between **four and 12 months** of full-time study (or full-time equivalent) in a master's program for which the degree requirements will be completed before activation of the award, allowing it to be activated during the subsequent doctoral program for which you are requesting funding (**CIHR and NSERC only**);

- Not have previously held a CGS M;
 - For CIHR and NSERC, scholarship support for graduate studies (master's and doctoral) is limited to a lifetime maximum of four years (48 months) of full-time equivalency.
- Have achieved a first-class average^{**}, as determined by the host institution, in each of the last two completed years of study (full-time equivalent);
- Submit a maximum of one scholarship application per academic year to **either** CIHR, NSERC or SSHRC
 - Research Portal will allow the application to be submitted to up to three institutions (e.g. UCalgary) – refer to [Application procedures](#).
 - Where does your research fall? Check [here](#).

****Institutions may, at their discretion, offer a CGS M award to applicants who have not obtained a first-class average (> 3.5 GPA in the last two years).**

- Eligible graduate program must have a **significant research component**
 - Joint programs with a professional degree (e.g., MD/PhD, DVM/PhD, JD/MA, JD/PhD, MBA/PhD, MA/MBA) are eligible if they have a significant research component.
 - Clinically-oriented programs of study, including clinical psychology, are also eligible programs if they have a significant research component.
 - Master's programs that are based only on course work are typically not eligible since they do not include a significant research component.



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Timelines

**Applications are submitted electronically
through the [Research Portal](#).**

**CGS Masters Deadline:
December 1, 2018 (before 8:00 p.m. (ET))
REFEREES**

- If you are currently registered as a master's student at the University of Calgary, and you are not applying for this award at other universities, you may request copies of your transcripts from the University Designate (gsaward@ucalgary.ca).
 - **If you are not currently registered as a master's student** at the University of Calgary, University of Calgary transcripts must be requested from the [registrar](#).
- Send an email to gsaward@ucalgary.ca indicating 'CGS_Master's transcripts_*your last name*' in the subject line.
- In the body of the email, include:
 - your full name
 - UC student ID number
 - statement that you are a Master's student at UCalgary, your research area (NSERC, CIHR, SSHRC)
 - your program
 - a list of all transcripts from every post-secondary institution you have attended.

Ensure the University has your most recent and complete transcripts.

Deadline to request is November 9.

How will I find out if I am successful?

- On the same day in the first week of April, all universities will send out results by email: Successful, Unsuccessful, or Waiting List.
- As applicants have applied to multiple schools, there is a tumble down of offers as awards are declined (initially and also some months later).
- Offer of a scholarship from a university does not mean acceptance to a program at that university!



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Application Procedures & Components

What do you need to submit?

- Application through Research Portal (opens Mid-September)
- Outline of proposed research (max 1 page plus max 1 page bibliography and citations)
- All required undergraduate and graduate transcripts
 - You upload after receiving official copies from institution
- The CGS-M Canadian Common CV (CCV)
 - To be completed then connected to application through Research Portal
- Two reference assessments
 - Uploaded through Research Portal



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Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria Weightings	
	CGS M (percent)
Academic excellence	50
Research ability or potential	30
Personal Characteristics and Interpersonal Skills	20

Our internal Graduate Awards Competition uses these criteria at weightings of 40:40:20 for both Masters and Doctoral.

- **50% Academic Excellence**
 - Transcripts
 - Awards
 - Reference assessments (x2)

- **30% Research Potential**
 - Research proposal
 - Common CV
 - Reference assessments (x2)

- **20% Personal Characteristics and Interpersonal Skills**
 - Common CV
 - Reference assessments (x2)

- As demonstrated by past academic results, transcripts, awards and distinctions:
 - Academic record (first class average)
 - Transcripts
 - Scholarships and awards held
 - Application form, CCV (Awards), reference assessments
 - Duration of previous studies
 - Type of program and courses pursued
 - Course load
 - Relative standing (if available)
- **Since this is worth 50%, do everything you can to make sure you address all of the selection criteria:**
 - **Reference assessments**
 - **Address potential weaknesses head-on**

- Quality and originality of contributions to research and development
- Relevance of work experience and academic training to field of proposed research
- Significance, feasibility, and merit of proposed research
- Judgement and ability to think critically
- Ability to apply skills and knowledge
- Initiative, autonomy and independence
- Research experience and achievements relative to expectations of someone with the candidate's academic experience

- Publications, conferences, etc.
- 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

- Work experience
 - CCV
- Leadership experience
 - CCV, reference assessments
- Project management incl. organizing conferences and meetings
 - CCV, reference assessments
- The ability or potential to communicate theoretical, technical and/or scientific concepts clearly in written and oral formats
 - Research proposal, references, awards, CCV
- Involvement in academic life
 - references, CCV
- Volunteerism/community outreach
 - references, CCV

What is “leadership”?

- **Personal achievement:**
 - professional involvement in dance, arts, music, etc.;
 - significant artistic achievement;
 - recognized athletic achievement, especially in a leadership role;
 - entrepreneurial achievement (startup company); and/or
 - foreign travel and study.
- **Involvement in academic life:**
 - mentoring/teaching;
 - supervisory experience;
 - Involvement in student government and in the university community, including committees, teams, senate, boards, ethics committees, etc.;
 - project management;
 - roles in professional societies; and/or
 - organization of conferences and meetings.
- **Volunteerism/community outreach:**
 - community involvement in charity or not-for-profit organizations.
- **Civic engagement:**
 - parliamentary page positions and internships;
 - political activity; and/or
 - elected positions.

Top Things the Adjudicator Wants To Know

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

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?

Top Reasons Good Students Don't Get Funded

- A generic reference. The assessment is positive but gives no specifics and does not address criteria.
- Content, context and/or impact of research not clearly stated. (“So what?”)
- Not following instructions (or stretching rules).
- Frustrating evaluators by making material hard to find.
- Diluting genuinely important/impressive material by describing generic material at length.
- Not addressing possible weaknesses in the application.

- **Start early**

- Writing a good application takes time and planning. Make a schedule so that you can meet the competition deadlines and submit with confidence.

- **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.



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Research Proposal

Highlight:

- What is new and important about your research?
- What is the key question your research addresses and how will it be answered?
- How does your research fit with institutional and/or funding agency priorities?
- What are estimated milestones and what does success look like for this research proposal?
- Write clearly
- What is the **impact**?
- Feasibility. What resources are available?

- Don't cram as much text as possible into the document
- Consider using some of the following:
 - Space between paragraphs
 - Indentation
 - Headings

Image copyright Ally Brosh
<http://hyperboleandahalf.blogspot.ca/>



- Consider your audience
 - The committee will likely include non-specialists
 - Will be by tri-council
- Avoid jargon
- Limit abbreviations (or avoid them altogether)
- Explain technical terms

- “Hooking” your audience
 - Draw the audience into the importance of the work quickly
 - Introduction written at newspaper level
 - Understandable regardless of educational level

Introduction:

Even if humanity could completely halt human carbon emissions today, the climate risks they pose would persist for millennia,¹ yet fossil fuels remain our primary source of energy to satisfy the population’s energetic needs. [...] According to climate scientists, if there is no immediate and substantial reduction of CO₂ emissions, the earth will witness massive and effectively irreversible impacts on ocean ecosystems before 2100. Hence, society is left with the question: **how can we avoid disastrous long-term consequences when we know that society is as dependent on fossil fuels as ever?**



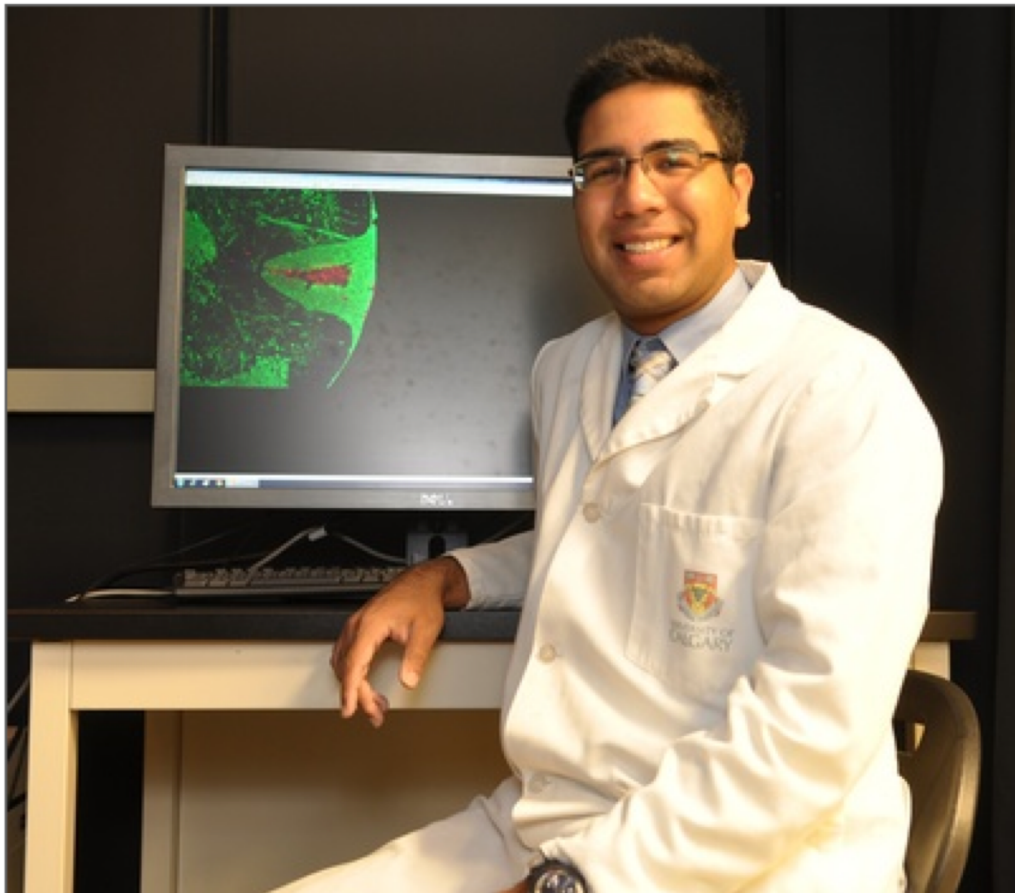
Motherhood and marginalization: Barriers and strategies in forming primary supports during pregnancy (SSHRC)



Alix Robinson 2015

- “I found that women of ethnic minority status were the most vulnerable to psychosocial stress during pregnancy and have significantly poorer pregnancy and birth outcomes than those who identify with the dominant culture.”
- Robinson’s ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life of marginalized populations, particularly women and children, by using findings from her research and her position as a registered psychologist to advocate for systemic changes in primary support for marginalized populations, both locally and internationally.

“Grads in Profile” <https://werklund.ucalgary.ca/media-room/news-events/grads-profile-alix-robinson>



Vanier scholar Khalil Rawji is researching compounds which could be used to repair nerve damage in patients with MS.

Vaniers: Khalil Rawji explores new ways to repair nerve damage

First-hand encounter with an MS patient inspired PhD student to pursue new therapies

Utoday October 3, 2014 <https://ucalgary.ca/utoday/issue/2014-10-03/vaniers-khalil-rawji-explores-new-ways-repair-nerve-damage>



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CCV

- Use this to your advantage!
- Start early – can be tedious.
 - Plan for outages
- Keep criteria from each section in mind (Academics, Research Potential, Personal Characteristics).
- Demonstrate that you are well-rounded.

No limits on number of entries per contribution.



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References

- **Ask early and send reminders!**
- **Choose wisely:** ask your potential referees if they can provide you with a positive reference; one of them should be your current supervisor or someone who is familiar with your academic work.
- **Give them the details:** The **scoring criteria** for the award
 - Your research **rationale and goals**
 - Your recent **presentations and publications**
 - Your **accomplishments** It may be that they know you as a good student, but struggle with specifics – it's your job to remind them!
 - The **deadline** to submit the letter and instructions on how to submit it
- **Follow up - Don't be shy!**
 - Remind your referees of the deadline a week or more before the reference is due.

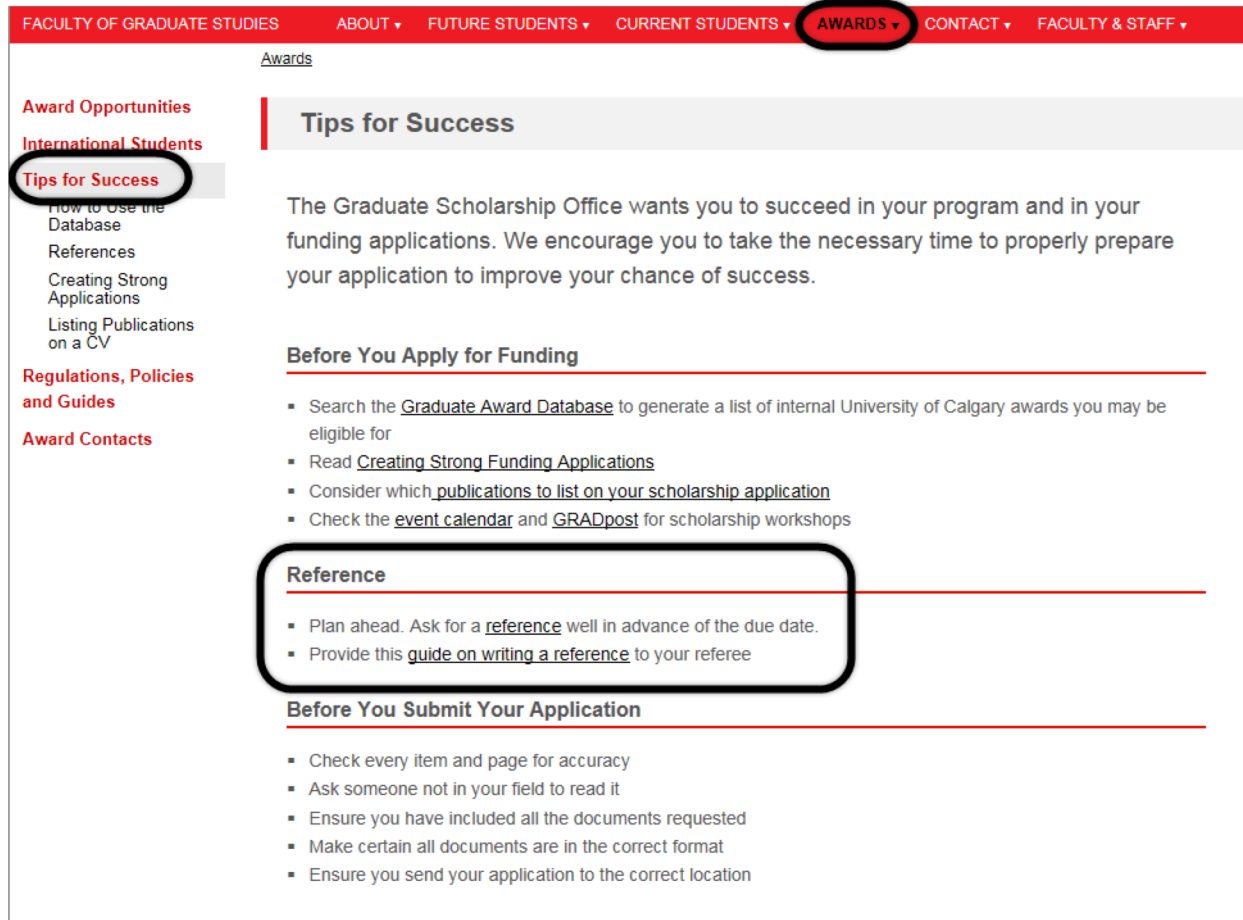
- It is always a good idea to use your supervisor. If you are a new student, use this as an opportunity to discuss your goals for the next few years with your supervisor. Chat with them about this.
- Tri-councils are research awards, so it is best to have researchers write your assessments.
- This section is important for your score: ensure that your referees know this and write accordingly.
- Have the assessments complement your application.
- Give your referees some time (2 weeks minimum).

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.
- Provide transcripts and a CV: highlight areas you wish to have covered in the assessment.
- Meet to discuss: what criteria do you think they should address?
- Be strategic in choosing your referees in terms of covering the criteria.

- Address the criteria in each sub-field.
- Characteristics and abilities are mostly assessed from references. Leadership is not just extracurriculars, address the personality traits and comment on where you think this student will end up in their career.
- **Be specific.** Back a point up with an anecdote.

- Guide on writing a reference – send this
- Remind of the deadline!



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Awards

Award Opportunities
International Students
Tips for Success
How to Use the Database
References
Creating Strong Applications
Listing Publications on a CV
Regulations, Policies and Guides
Award Contacts

Tips for Success

The Graduate Scholarship Office wants you to succeed in your program and in your funding applications. We encourage you to take the necessary time to properly prepare your application to improve your chance of success.

Before You Apply for Funding

- Search the [Graduate Award Database](#) to generate a list of internal University of Calgary awards you may be eligible for
- Read [Creating Strong Funding Applications](#)
- Consider which [publications to list on your scholarship application](#)
- Check the [event calendar](#) and [GRADpost](#) for scholarship workshops

Reference

- Plan ahead. Ask for a [reference](#) well in advance of the due date.
- Provide this [guide on writing a reference](#) to your referee

Before You Submit Your Application

- Check every item and page for accuracy
- Ask someone not in your field to read it
- Ensure you have included all the documents requested
- Make certain all documents are in the correct format
- Ensure you send your application to the correct location

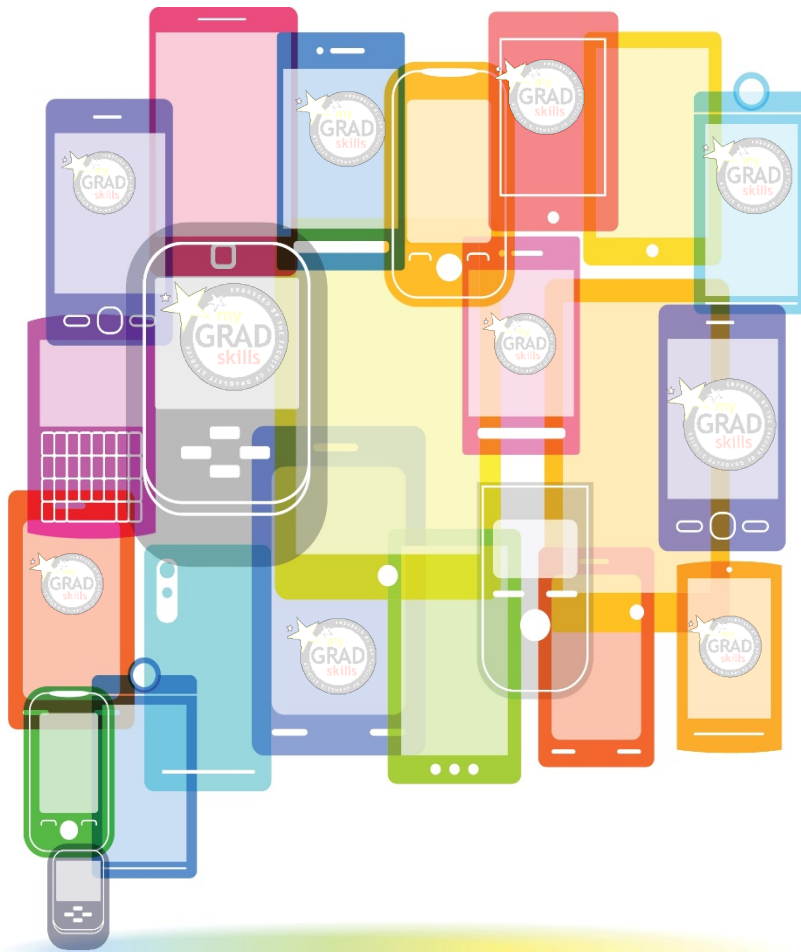


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Questions and Contact Info

- Graduate Scholarship Officers:
 - CIHR: Jamie Pryde (jpryde@ucalgary.ca)
 - NSERC: Erin O'Toole (erin.otoole@ucalgary.ca)
 - SSHRC: Erin Coburn (ecoburn@ucalgary.ca)
 - To request a copy of the Slides: gsaward@ucalgary.ca
- Graduate Leaders Circle
 - gradlead@ucalgary.ca
 - Scholarship Cafés
 - Wednesday, November 7, 2018, 9-12
 - SB324

Connect and learn more about other workshops!



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twitter.com/mygradskills

mygradskills@ucalgary.ca

http://www.grad.ucalgary.ca/awards/tips_for_success

