



FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES



Developing Strong Applications to Apply for Graduate Student Funding

Grad Success Week

**Dr. Donna-Marie McCafferty, Assoc. Dean Scholarships
Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS)
Hannah Dimmick, Graduate Leader Circle Co-Chair**

May 2, 2023 – 2:50 PM – 4:20 PM

- This session will be recorded and will be available for viewing on the Faculty of Graduate Studies website.
- Please turn off your video and microphone during the presentation.
- There will be specific times for questions, which will be noted in the presentation. At those times, please enter questions into the chat box.

- Graduate Award Opportunities & Timelines
- Components of a Scholarship Application and assessment criteria
- Creating a Strong Scholarship Application
- General Tips & Strategies
- Contacts & Resources



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Graduate Award Opportunities

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- **Federal Scholarship Opportunities:** Canadian Graduate Scholarships (CGS)-M, CGS-D/PGS-D, Vanier Scholarships [SSHRC, CIHR, NSERC]
- **Provincial Scholarship Opportunities:** Alberta Innovates (AI): specific target areas
- **University Scholarships:** Graduate Award Competition (GAC) including various special awards; Indigenous GAC.
- **Institute/Faculties/Dept Scholarships/Awards**
- **Program Level Awards**
- **External funding opportunities**

Alberta Graduate Excellence Scholarships (AGES)

AGES Category	Value	Apply/Nominated/Contingent
AGES Faculty Quota	11 K	Nominated by Faculties (through programs). Nominations are due by late June for either masters or doctoral domestic students
AGES Research	15 K	Distributed through the CGS competition internal rank lists. Students must apply to the CGS -D or - M to be visible for the awards. Given to students who are eligible to apply in the Fall for CGSD and contingent on application. Paid in October
AGES Research	11 K	Distributed through the CGS internal rank lists. Students must apply to the CGS-D to be visible for the awards. 11 K awards given to students who were forwarded for national review, were unsuccessful and are not eligible to reapply (as long as money allows). Paid in September.
AGES Indigenous Research	15 K	Self-declared eligible indigenous students currently in a doctoral program are offered an AGES research award contingent on submitting a CGSD application. Paid in October.
AGES Indigenous	11 K	Students apply through the Indigenous Graduate Awards Competition in Sept/Oct. Currently high success rate. Eligible for students in course/thesis based, master/doctoral, certs and diplomas (lowest priority) graduate programs. Paid out prior to Christmas.
AGES International	11 K	Students apply through the GAC. Award normally starts in September.

Faculty of Graduate Studies website: First port of call

- ✓ Administer scholarship funding both internal & external
- ✓ Important information on eligibility and how and where to apply
- ✓ **Internal deadlines**
- ✓ Graduate awards database
- TriAgency (CIHR, SSHRC, NSERC) websites
- Provincial Websites (Alberta Innovates)
- Graduate Program Administrators (note: own internal deadlines)
- Foundation/Non-profit organizations

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[Future Students](#)[Current Students](#)[Awards](#)[My GradSkills](#)[Grad Life](#)[Services](#)[About Us](#)

Graduate awards

Search the database for awards that match your requirements, or find the terms of reference for some larger awards listed on this page.

[Graduate Awards Database](#)

About applying for awards



You must apply for awards

You are not automatically submitted. It is important to read the eligibility requirements and follow the application instructions for each award you are considering.

[Learn more about eligibility »](#)



You do not need to be accepted into your program

You may apply for awards after you have submitted an application for admission and received a University of Calgary student number (UCID).



Some awards are restricted by citizenship

International students are eligible for many awards. See the list of awards open to international students under Award Opportunities. You can also search the Awards Database and select International in the Citizenship category.

[Awards Database »](#)

<https://grad.ucalgary.ca/awards/award-opportunities/search-awards>

Award opportunities

Click on the award name to see award information, terms of reference, application details, and other resources such as online presentations or upcoming workshops to help you prepare your application.

Federal awards

These awards are administered through the University of Calgary

[Canadian Graduate Scholarships-Master's \(CGS M\)](#)

[Canadian Institutes of Health Research-Doctoral \(CIHR CGS-D\)](#)

[Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada-Doctoral \(NSERC CGS-D/PGS-D\)](#)

[Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada-Doctoral \(SSHRC CGS-D/PGS-D\)](#)

[Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships \(CGS\)](#)

[Canada Graduate Scholarship - Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplements \(CGS-MSFSS\)](#)

[SSHRC Impact – TALENT Award](#)

University awards

These awards are administered through the University of Calgary

[Achievement Awards](#)

[Elizabeth Cannon Graduate Scholarship in Entrepreneurial Thinking](#)

[Entrance Awards](#)

[Graduate Award Competition](#)

[Izaak Walton Killam Doctoral Scholarships](#)

[Medals and Prizes](#)

[Travel Awards](#)

Program recommended awards

- See a list in the Graduate Awards Database by refining your search results using the **recommended by program** category.

Provincial awards

[Alberta Innovates \(Health\)](#)

This award is administered through the University of Calgary

[Alberta Innovates \(Tech\)](#)

Indigenous awards

[Indigenous external awards](#)

These awards are administered through the University of Calgary

[Indigenous Graduate Award Competition](#)

[ii'taa'poh'to'p Graduate Scholarship](#)

[Captain Nichola KS Goddard Memorial Graduate Scholarship](#)

[Métis Scholar Graduate Award](#)

Types of Awards

External awards

Fulbright Canada

Mackenzie King Scholarships

Mitacs

Schmeelk

Trudeau Scholarships

Delta Kappa Gamma International

International students

Restrictions

You are considered an international student if you are not a Canadian Citizen or Permanent Resident and you come to Canada on a temporary basis for the purpose of pursuing an accredited course of study.

Students fully funded by a third party sponsor, including government funding, are not eligible for University of Calgary awards under the **Graduate Award Regulation**.

Students registered in a graduate program at the University of Calgary-Qatar are not eligible for any graduate awards unless explicitly stated in the terms of reference for the award.

Awards

International students should explore all award options in the **Awards Database**, including the following:

Alberta Innovates (Health)

Alberta Innovates (Tech)

Delta Kappa Gama

Entrance Awards

Graduate Award Competition

Mackenzie King

Mitacs

Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships (CGS)



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Timelines

Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
VANIER Preliminary Assessment Form (PAF) required Citizenship: unrestricted									
				TRUDEAU Citizenship: unrestricted					
	CIHR/NSERC/SSHRC PhD Citizenship: Cdn/PR								
			CIHR/NSERC/SSHRC Master's Citizenship: Cdn/PR						
					Indigenous Citizenship: Canadian				
					Entrance Citizenship: unrestricted				
					GAC Citizenship: unrestricted				
					Alberta Innovates- Technology Citizenship: unrestricted				
						Mackenzie King Citizenship: unrestricted			

NOTE on Eligibility:

- 1) Must check you are eligible
- 2) Check the eligibility on websites or on Terms of Reference for the award (see FGS database)
- 3) You must be eligible at the time the award is given/distributed.

Graduate Studies Awards

You must meet the eligibility criteria at the time the award is paid.

[Help/Instructions ?](#)

Award Name	<input type="text"/>		
Program	<input type="text"/>		
Category	<input type="checkbox"/> Bursaries <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous <input type="checkbox"/> Recommended by Program	<input type="checkbox"/> Entrance <input type="checkbox"/> Medals and Prizes <input type="checkbox"/> Special Awards	<input type="checkbox"/> External <input type="checkbox"/> Open Doctoral <input type="checkbox"/> Travel
Keywords	<input type="text"/>		
Degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's Course-based	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's Thesis-based	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
Citizenship	<input type="checkbox"/> Canadian or Permanent Resident <input type="checkbox"/> International		
Registration Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Full-Time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-Time		

Tri-Council: NSERC; CIHR; SSHRC

Planning your Application Season

Award Name	Funding Body	Internal Deadline	External Deadline	Letters of Rec?	Website for Application	Notes
Vanier	Federal	PAF: June 8 Application: first week of September	Late October	Yes; 4	https://vanier.gc.ca/	Completed no more than 20 months of study
AI (T)	Provincial (but through GAC)	Jan. 25 (double check!)	N/A	Yes; 2	See GAC page on FGS website	1-4 year award for PhD, but have to submit renewal
Travel Award	FGS	Multiple	N/A	No	FGS website https://albertainovates.ca	Check reqs for invoices
Prof. Dev. Grant	Grad Student Association	Multiple	N/A	No	GSA website	Check for GSA award office hours?

- Many and varied opportunities available
- Do some research (check eligibility, deadlines)
- Plan ahead
- Everyone should be applying for something

- Graduate Award Opportunities & Timelines
- Components of a Scholarship Application and assessment criteria
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QUESTIONS?

<https://grad.ucalgary.ca/awards/award-guide/step-1-applying/preparing-your-application>



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Components of a Scholarship Application and assessment criteria

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What do you need to submit?

- Academic history (including transcripts)
- Scholarship and award history
- References (2 or more)
- Research abstract and proposal (thesis)
- Bibliography
- Presentations and contributions
- Leadership and interpersonal skills
- Allowable inclusions

[Up-to-date CV/Resume helps!]

- Academic Excellence (40-50 %)
- Research Potential (30-50 %)
- Leadership and Interpersonal Skills (20-40 %)

For Example GAC Selection Criteria

Academic Excellence (40 %)

Research Potential (40 %)

Personal Characteristics
& Interpersonal Skills (20 %)

- **Academic Excellence**
 - Transcripts
 - Awards
 - Reference assessments

- **Research Potential**
 - Research proposal
 - Presentations and Contributions
 - Awards
 - Reference assessments

- **Personal Characteristics and Interpersonal Skills**
 - Leadership Statement
 - Reference assessments

Evaluation Criteria

WEIGHT	CRITERIA
50 %	Research ability and potential
50 %	Relevant experience and achievements achieved within and beyond academia

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Creating a Strong Scholarship Application

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How to Create a Strong Scholarship 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.
- **Know how are you being evaluated** (selection criteria & weighting)
- **Follow the rules**
- **Write to a broader audience**



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Criteria: Academic Excellence

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- As demonstrated by past academic results, transcripts, awards, and distinctions
 - Academic record (first class average)
 - Scholarships and awards held
 - Duration of previous studies
 - Program requirements and courses pursued
 - Course load
 - Relative standing (if available)

- 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 \$2000)
- Include declined awards
- Funding Source (Federal, Non-profit, Provincial, University, Other)
- Include details if possible (e.g., number awarded)



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Criteria: Research Potential

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- Research Proposal (Thesis-based)
 - What key question(s) your research will address? How will the question(s) be answered? Why is this the most appropriate way to explore the question? **Justify** the methodology.
 - What is new about your research and why is it important? Highlight any way that your research project promises a **notable advancement or innovation** in the discipline.
 - Ensure your proposal is **specific**. An ambiguous or indefinite proposal will weaken your application.
 - The project **must be achievable** within the time-frame allowed. Offer milestones if possible.

- Highlight:
 - Try the 30-second exercise: can you explain your work to someone not in your field? Remember that many adjudicators come from disciplines other than your own.
 - Peers in unrelated fields are perfect audiences.
 - Write clearly and avoid jargon. Aim for language that can be understood by the non-specialist but shows a familiarity with the specialist field.
 - Start strong and capture the reader's attention.
 - Convince committee members that your studies are worth funding.



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Criteria: Personal Characteristics and Interpersonal Skills

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- As demonstrated by the applicant's communication skills, past professional and relevant extracurricular interactions and collaborations.
 - Work experience
 - Leadership experience
 - Project management including organizing conferences and meetings
 - The ability or potential to communicate and present theoretical, technical and/or scientific concepts clearly and logically in written and oral formats
 - Involvement in academic life
 - Volunteerism/community outreach



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Presentations and Contributions

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- Publications, presentations, performances and other contributions
 - Highlight your academic accomplishments.
- **Provide as much background information as possible**
 - Adjudicators outside of your discipline may not be aware of the **conferences** at which you have presented or the prominence of the **journal** in which you have been published. Do not use acronyms.
- If there is not a specified citation format, follow the format most commonly used in your discipline.
 - Contact your program and supervisor for those details.

Publications & Presentations

- If you spoke at an international versus regional meeting, indicate that.
- Submitted manuscripts should be accompanied by the manuscript ID and date.
- Explain the prominence of journals (e.g., impact factor, prominent journal in the field)

- The curriculum vitae (CV) is a record of your academic background; it captures:
 - Degrees
 - Awards
 - Research
 - Publications, presentations and other achievements.

- Set aside more time for the CCV than you think you will need to complete it

Differences:

CIHR: Canadian Common CV

NSERC: Form 201 (Contributions and Applicants Statement; 2 pages)

SSHRC: Research Contributions (1 page)

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References

Choose wisely! Be proactive and make it easy for your referee to write a good assessment:

- Provide your referee with the award criteria.
- Ask them to directly address the criteria and provide examples.
- Provide transcripts and a CV.
- Highlight accomplishments or areas you wish to have covered in the assessment.
- Meet with them.
- Be strategic in choosing your referees in terms of covering the criteria.

- Ask for references early.
- Ensure referee confirms receipt of email request
 - It may end up in the junk/spam folder!
- Send guide on writing a reference.
 - FGS has comprehensive tips on their website!
- **Follow up - Don't be shy!**
 - Remind your referees of the deadline a week or more before the reference is due.

■ Guide on writing a reference

<https://grad.ucalgary.ca/awards/award-guide/step-1-applying/preparing-your-application/writing-scholarship-reference>

Tips for writing a scholarship reference

Students applying for competitive scholarships are usually required to include letters of reference with their applications. If you are asked to write a reference letter for a student, this page outlines your responsibilities as a referee.

Guide

Before you start

- You are not obligated to fulfill the request. If you don't feel you can write a letter of reference that will enhance the student's application, say no. It is better for the student to have time to find another letter writer.
- Be aware of the deadline for the letter. A letter submitted late, or not at all, will harm the application and may result in its withdrawal from the competition.
- Discuss the application with the student. Ask for specific details about their work that will make your letter more personal. You can also use this opportunity to determine where the applicants already strong relative to the adjudication criteria.
- Collect background materials that will assist you with the letter, such as the student's CV, transcripts, and examples of the student's work.

Considerations

Criteria

Each competition has its own set of criteria but, regardless of agency and regardless of discipline, the criteria do not stray far from:

- Academic excellence
- Research ability or potential
- Communication skills
- Interpersonal and leadership skills Perhaps also
- Research environment
- Research fit with strategic themes

Group your comments in relation to the criteria of the award. You may use headings to delineate this for reviewers.

The selection process

Will the application be reviewed by experts and non-experts in the field? If non-experts, you need to more clearly explain the impact of the student's research

Remind them of the deadline!



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Allowable Inclusions

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- When appropriate, outline extraordinary circumstances that may have delayed or interrupted:
 - 1) Your completion of degree(s)
 - 2) Record or research achievement
 - 3) Your research career
- Extraordinary circumstances include care of **family members, illness, disability or other exceptional factor**. **Employment** while completing your degree **is not generally considered extraordinary**.

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General Tips & Strategies

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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?
- Do I have a picture of who this person is?
- Is this a good investment?

**Reviewers are from multiple fields.
Tailor your application to a general audience.**

Scan Test:

- Have someone outside your field read your 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

- They do not apply or give up after first attempt.
- A generic reference: the assessment is positive but gives no specifics and does not address criteria.
- The content, context, and/or impact of research are not clearly stated.
- 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.

- Engage in the process
- Plan ahead
- Get your application reviewed

Persevere!



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Contacts & Resources

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- Scholarship office: gsaward@ucalgary.ca
- Graduate Leaders Circle – Kate Bourne and Dana Lowry:
gradlead@ucalgary.ca
- Associate Dean Graduate Studies:
 - Dr. Donna-Marie McCafferty dmmccaff@ucalgary.ca
- Student Success Center: writing workshops/one-on-one
<https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success>

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