FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Graduate Award Competition
Student Workshop

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2019
Graduate Award Competition
– Student workshop

- The application and selection process
- Criteria for selection
- Preparing the application
- General tips
- Questions
Background and Why to Apply
The following scholarships are awarded through the annual Graduate Award Competition (GAC):
- Doctoral Entrance Scholarships
- Izaak Walton Killam Doctoral Scholarships
- Open Doctoral Scholarships
- Alberta Innovates Graduate Student Scholarships (Technology)
- Special Awards
Eligibility
Eligibility

- You must meet the eligibility criteria for each award you are applying for.
  - Terms of reference for the Killam, Open Doctoral, Special Awards can be found on the Graduate Award Database. [https://iac01.ucalgary.ca/FGSA/Public/PublicHome.aspx](https://iac01.ucalgary.ca/FGSA/Public/PublicHome.aspx)
  - Terms for the Alberta Innovates Graduate Student Scholarships (Technology) can be found at [https://albertainnovates.ca/programs/graduate-student-scholarships/](https://albertainnovates.ca/programs/graduate-student-scholarships/)

- Eligibility for the Killam and Open Doctoral categories requires a first-class average, in the last two completed years of study (full-time equivalent). At the University of Calgary that is an average of 3.5 or higher.
Timelines
Applications are submitted electronically through your Student Centre.

GAC General Deadline:
February 1, 2020

YOUR PROGRAM MAY HAVE AN EARLIER DEADLINE
(Check with your GPA)
Each graduate program is allocated a certain number of spots to forward applications for the Entrance, Killam Doctoral Scholarship and Open Doctoral Awards

- Some programs are more transparent than others in this regards (e.g., will inform students that have been forwarded). Please speak with your program in late February/early March if you have not been told either way.

All Special Awards and Alberta Innovates (Technology) applications are forwarded to the competition, no Graduate Program quotas
When will I find out if I am successful?

- Results are expected to be announced as follows:
  - Izaak Walton Killam – April/May (successful students only)
  - Open Doctoral – April/May - September (successful students only)
  - Alberta Innovates – August (successful students only)
  - Special Awards – August (successful students only)
  - Unsuccessful notices for all award categories will go to students by late August / early September

This will be posted on the GAC webpage: https://grad.ucalgary.ca/awards/opportunities/gac
Application Procedures & Components
my.ucalgary.ca -> Academic -> Student Centre
What do you need to submit?

- Online application through Student Centre
  - Select Awards
  - 2 References
  - Academic History
  - Scholarship and Award History (up to 10)
  - Research Abstract (250 words) and Proposal (thesis) or Statement of Study (course-based) (800 words)
  - Bibliography (1000 words)
  - Presentations and Contributions (1000 words)
  - Leadership and Interpersonal Skills (800 words)
  - Allowable Inclusions (250 words)
Selection Criteria
● Academic Excellence (40 %)
● Research Potential (40 %)
● Personal Characteristics and Interpersonal Skills (20 %)
Selection Criteria

- **40% Academic Excellence**
  - Transcripts
  - Awards
  - Reference assessments (x2)

- **40% Research Potential**
  - Research proposal
  - Presentations and Contributions
  - Awards
  - Reference assessments (x2)

- **20% Personal Characteristics and Interpersonal Skills**
  - Leadership Statement
  - Reference assessments (x2)
Academic Excellence (40 %)

As demonstrated by past academic results, transcripts, awards and distinctions

- Academic record (first class average, 3.5)
- Scholarships and awards held
- Duration of previous studies
- Type of program and courses pursued
- Course load
- Relative standing (if available)
As demonstrated by the applicant’s research history, interest in discovery, proposed research, potential contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the field, and any anticipated outcomes:

- 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
- Judgment 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
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
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
How to create a strong scholarship application

- **Start early**
  - Writing a strong 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.
Select Awards
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Eligibility Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entrance</strong> - Minimum GPA of 3.5 or First Class Standing required. Selecting individual scholarships is not required, you will be considered for all scholarships within this category.</td>
<td>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Isaak Walton Killam Doctoral Scholarship</strong> - Minimum GPA of 3.5 or First Class Standing required.</td>
<td>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open Doctoral Scholarships</strong> - Minimum GPA of 3.5 or First Class Standing required. Selecting individual scholarships is not required, you will be considered for all scholarships within this category.</td>
<td>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alberta Innovates Graduate Student Scholarships</strong> – Your research must be related to Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Nanotechnology or Omics. Complete the following information.</td>
<td>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Awards</strong> – You must meet the eligibility criteria for each individual award you apply for. Click the button to open the Special Award list and view the award terms of reference. If eligible, select the award and add it to your List of Special Awards Selected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Select Awards

- Make sure you meet the eligibility requirements for the awards you are applying for.
- It is worth spending the time to look through all Special Awards to see if you are eligible.
  - Can also sort in the Graduate Awards Database.
References
References

- Fill out online form
- Names, email, organization
  - They will receive an email with instructions and deadline after selecting notify
    - Can delete and change references
- Ensure referee confirms receipt of email request
  - It may end up in the junk/spam folder!
- You both will receive an email when submitted
- If you recently applied to graduate school, may be able to use same references if less than 11 months old (no earlier than March 2019)
Haley Alleson Vecchiarelli is applying for the 2019 Graduate Award Competition at the University of Calgary and has requested that you provide a scholarship reference. The deadline to provide the reference is **9 Jan 2019.**

**E.g. Neuro grad program internal deadline (not universal)**

In accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy act (FOIP), the student gives you, the referee, consent to disclose personal information required to evaluate the application for scholarship purposes.

To complete the reference for this student, please click on this link: [Online Reference Form](#).

**WARNING:** if you are a University of Calgary faculty member and are currently logged into PeopleSoft, you must either logout of PeopleSoft or open an new browser before completing the Online Reference Form.

**How to write a strong academic reference.**

Please comment on the student's ability and potential in three areas, Academic Excellence, Research Potential, Personal characteristics and interpersonal skills. See [Selection Criteria and Indicators](#) for more details.
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.
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.

Have the references complement your application.

Give your referees some time (2 weeks *minimum*, most references require more, a good rule is 3-4 weeks).
Reference Assessments: Tips for Referees

- Guide on writing a reference – send this
- Remind them of the deadline!
Academic History
Your academic history as entered in your admission application will be listed here. Duplications may appear due to duplicated data entered during the admission process. Ensure you delete all duplicate entries and add any missing degree data as required.

ALL post-secondary institutions, whether or not you received a degree from those institutions, must be listed, including the University of Calgary even if no grades are assigned. Items on this page will be carried forward to future applications. Changes to this page will not affect the data in your student admission file.

Transcripts for all institutions will be uploaded by the Graduate Program Administrator in the program for which you are applying for funding. If final official transcripts are outstanding from your admission package or the transcripts have been updated since last submitted (e.g., degree granted, grades updated) ensure the most up-to-date copies have been received by the Graduate Program Administrator and added to your student file.
Scholarship History
Scholarship History

- Up to 10 scholarships or awards you have received
  - Do not include: assistantships, supervisor funding, group awards or funding paid through grants
  - Balance between prestige, most recent and $ value
- 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
Scholarship History

- **Funding Source**
  - Federal
  - Non-profit
  - Other
  - Provincial
  - University

- **View/Edit Comment**
  - Use this section to provide context
    - E.g., Did you have to decline the second year of the award, but is a multi-year award?
    - E.g., AGCA is awarded to 20 UCalgary graduate students (50 total provincially) each year for their leadership and commitment to service
Research Proposal or Statement of Study
Research Proposal or Statement of Study

- Title of research proposal or statement of study (254 characters, excluding spaces)
- Abstract (250 words)
  - Summary of whole thesis or statement of study
  - Should capture all major elements of your work
- Research proposal or statement of study (800 words)
  - Approximately 1.5-2 single spaced pages
- Bibliography and works cited (1000 words)
  - Format according to your discipline
Research Proposal or Statement of Study

- Write in a word processing software, then copy into form boxes
  - Form logs out after 30 min
**Highlight:**

- What is new and important about your research or field of study?
- What is the key question your work addresses and how will it be answered?
- How does your work fit with institutional priorities? (Eyes High)
- What are estimated milestones and what does success look like?
- Write clearly
- What is the **impact**?
- Feasibility. What resources are available?
Highlight:

- Try the 30-second rule: 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.
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.
Statement of Study (Course-based)

- Explain what you are studying and why – similar to a research paper
- Demonstrate your ability to apply your skills and knowledge and your ability to think critically
- Describe the quality and originality of contributions to your field
Presentations and Contributions
Presentations & Contributions

- 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.

- If there is not a specified format, follow the format most commonly used in your discipline.
Personal Characteristics and Interpersonal Skills
Personal Characteristics and Interpersonal Skills

- Relevant:
  - Leadership
  - Work experience
  - Project management
  - Involvement in academic life
  - Volunteerism

- 800 words
Allowable Inclusions
Allowable Inclusions

- 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 considered extraordinary.

- 250 words (less than one page)
Before you submit
Before you submit…

- Review your application one last time, check for spelling, grammar, formatting or factual errors.
- Read the application instructions again
- You will increase your chance of success by following these tips and following the instructions exactly
- If you have questions, contact the Graduate Award Office at gsaward@ucalgary.ca.
Student Awards Application

The Program Application Deadline will display "TBD" until you select at least one award in your online application.

If your program deadline expires, you will be unable to edit or submit the application.

The definition of application status can be found here.

### Your existing applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Application Number</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Program Application Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Graduate Award Competition</td>
<td>10000420</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
<td>7 Jan 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Create New Application**

To create a new application, select one of the links below:

- Graduate Award Competition
GAC Scholarship Café #1
Friday, December 13th, 2019
1:00pm-3:30pm
Main Campus; That Grad Space, Crowsnest Hall
Sign up here: https://doodle.com/poll/s3hdienw3arcg8xu

GAC Scholarship Café #2
Monday, January 6th, 2020
1:00pm-3:30pm
Foothills Campus; Room O1500
Sign up here: https://doodle.com/poll/6tdu847yn4rw266r

GAC Scholarship Café #3
Thursday, January 16th, 2020
10:00am-12:30pm
Main Campus; That Grad Space, Crowsnest Hall
Sign up here: https://doodle.com/poll/hrga7w2f8pdzzus4
To access slides from today and to sign up for a scholarship café:

https://grad.ucalgary.ca/awards/award-opportunities/graduate-award-competition

**Drop-in Hours:**

- Tuesday, Dec. 17th, 2019 • 10:00-11:00am • HSC O1500, Foothills
- Thursday, Jan. 2nd, 2020 • 1:00-2:00pm • HSC G344, Foothills
- Monday, Jan. 13th, 2020 • 11:00am-12:00pm • That Grad Space, Main
- Tuesday, Jan. 28th, 2020 • 2:00-3:00pm • That Grad Space, Main
Still have questions? Contact

- Scholarship office: gsaward@ucalgary.ca

- Graduate Leaders Circle – Shasta Webb and Chelsea Christie: gradlead@ucalgary.ca

- Associate Dean Graduate Studies:
  - Dr. Donna-Marie McCafferty

- Your graduate program administrator
Connect and learn more about other workshops!

ucalgary.ca/mygradskills/workshops

facebook.com/mygradskills

twitter.com/mygradskills

mygradskills@ucalgary.ca

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