FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

CGS Master’s Scholarship
Student Workshop

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2019
- Application and selection process
- Criteria for selection
- Preparing the application
- General tips
- Questions
Background and Why to Apply
The Tri-council: CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC

**CIHR**
Canadian Institute for Health Research

**NSERC**
Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council

**SSHRC**
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
Tri-Council Canada Graduate Scholarships (CGS) – Master’s Level

- **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!**
  
  
  - CIHR [cgsma@cihr-irsc.gc.ca](mailto:cgsma@cihr-irsc.gc.ca)
  - NSERC [schol@nserc-crsng.gc.ca](mailto:schol@nserc-crsng.gc.ca)
  - SSHRC [fellowships@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca](mailto: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 submit an application!
AGES Awards and Tri-council Scholarships

- CGS Masters applicants may also be considered for scholarship funding through other sources (e.g. AGES program) based on ranking in the university competition.

- Your program also receives graduate funding to distribute.

Applying to the Tri-council can increase your visibility to other funding sources.
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).
UCalgary Quota 2019

CIHR: 23
NSERC: 34
SSHRC: 34

Eligibility

Eligibility

- Must be a Canadian Citizen or permanent resident of Canada

- Be enrolled in, or intend to apply for, full-time studies at 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.
Eligibility Continued

- 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**);
Eligibility Continued

- 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 (3.5 for UCalgary), 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)

**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.
Timelines
Deadline

CGS Masters Deadline: Sunday December 1, 2019 8:00 pm ET
(As the deadline falls on a weekend, before 8:00 pm ET (6 PM MT) on the 2\textsuperscript{nd})

Pay attention to countdown!

Contact REFEREES & Request Transcripts ASAP
Applications are submitted electronically through the Research Portal.

Instructions:

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:

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

If you are not currently registered as a master's student at the University of Calgary or are applying elsewhere transcripts must be requested from the registrar.
If you select ‘health’ as your field of research, you will need a CIHR Personal Identification Number (PIN)

Can take up to one full working day to process your CIHR PIN request

Register with CIHR here: [http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/38201.html](http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/38201.html)
How will I find out if I am successful?

- Notification on Research Portal by April 1st
- All universities will send out results on same day 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.
- Offers to alternate candidates may be made up until January 31 of the next calendar year. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to regularly verify the Research Portal between April 1 and January 31 for results of the competition**

- Offer of a scholarship from a university does not mean acceptance to a program at that university
Application Procedures & Components
What do you need to submit?

- Application through Research Portal (open)
- Brief summary of proposal (maximum of 1,800 characters including spaces in language that the public can understand).
- Outline of proposed research (max 1 page plus max 1 page bibliography/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
Selection Criteria
## CGS-M Selection Criteria Weightings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection Criteria Weightings</th>
<th>CGS M (percent)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic excellence</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research ability or potential</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Characteristics and Interpersonal Skills</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tbody>
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Selection Criteria

- **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)
Academic Excellence (50%)

- 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
Research Potential (30%)

- 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
Research Potential (30%)

- 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
Personal Characteristics and Interpersonal Skills (20%)

- 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
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.
Technical Assistance Helpdesk:


Program Related:

FGS: Email: gsaward@ucalgary.ca

CIHR Email: cgsma-bescbm@cihr-irsc.gc.ca

NSERC Email: schol@nserc-crsng.gc.ca

SSHRC Email: fellowships@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca
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.
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

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http://hyperboleandahalf.blogspot.ca/
Consider your audience

- The committee will likely include non-specialists
  - Will be organized by Tri-Council agency

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, 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?
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.
References
• **Ask early:** Give your referees time to write a good assessment.

• **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. Tri-councils are research awards, so it is best to have researchers write your assessments.

• **Follow up - Don’t be shy!**
  — Remind your referees of the deadline a week or more before the reference is due.
Do not just ask someone for a reference. Be proactive and make it easy for your referee to write a good assessment:

- Provide the selection 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? Provide examples
- Inform them of the deadline & REMIND them.
Reference Assessments: Tips for Referees

Strong assessments:

- Address the criteria in each sub-field.

- Describe characteristics and abilities. Use extracurricular activities, and describe roles (any leadership roles), address 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.

Remind letter writers of the deadline!
Get Started!
Plan your support network: your supervisor, your program (is there a department workshop?), consult current scholarship holders in your program

**Peer review**: Scholarship Cafés (booking opens next week!), application writing groups

- Café Dates; Locations and Times TBA:
  - Thursday, Nov. 21 • 9:00-11:30am Main Campus
  - Wednesday, Nov. 27 • 1:00-3:30pm Foothills Campus

- Drop-In Hours
  - Tuesday, Nov. 26 • 1:00-2:00pm • That Grad Space, Crowsnest
  - Thursday, Nov. 28 • 3:00-4:00pm • That Grad Space
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.

- Ask Writing Centre in Student Success Centre to review application
Questions and Contact Info
FGS Contacts

- **Graduate Scholarship Office:**
  - Erin Coburn ([ecoburn@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ecoburn@ucalgary.ca))

- **Graduate Leaders Circle**
  - [gradlead@ucalgary.ca](mailto:gradlead@ucalgary.ca)
  - Scholarship Cafés
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