Tri-Council Doctoral Scholarships

GSE Scholarship Team

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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

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:
  - http://science.gc.ca/eic/site/063.nsf/eng/h_FEE7261A.html?OpenDocument

Tri-Council Harmonization

- Agencies use common launch site:
  - https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/CGSD-BESCD_eng.asp
  - 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?

CIHR

CIHR

- Apply and submit application through ResearchNet:
  - https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/38887.html

- Students and supervisors must have:
  - A ResearchNet account.
  - A CIHR PIN in ResearchNet
- Applicants require:
  - A Common CV account

- Do this ASAP if you haven't done this already:
  - Can take up to 3 business days.

CIHR

- 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

NSERC

NSERC

- Access application and submit through the NSERC portal:
  - 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

- 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".
  - https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/_doc/EDI/Guide_for_Applicants_EN.pdf
- 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.

- 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).

SSHRC

- 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

<u>Scan Test:</u>

- 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:

- **<u>DO:</u>**
  - 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.

- **<u>DON'T:</u>**
  - 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

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

- <u>GSE Scholarship Website:</u>
    - 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 15th, 20th, 22nd, 27th, 29th.

- 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.
  - 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

Questions?