APPLYING SUCCESSFULLY FOR GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING
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Fall Competitions
• Vanier Scholarships – 5 September
• Tri-Agency / Affiliated Doctoral Scholarships – 17 September
• Tri-Agency / Affiliated Master’s Scholarships – 1 December
• Trudeau Scholarships – to be confirmed

What should I apply for?
Eligibility
• Citizenship
• Research area
• Months of study
• First-class academic standing

Competitiveness
• Value of learning to apply

When and where do I submit?
Deadlines (are strict)
• For referees
• For applicants
• For graduate programs
• For universities

Where to submit
• Online vs. hard-copy submission
• Grad program vs. G+PS vs. funding agency

Competition Overview

UBC Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
**Competition Overview**

**Master Ranking List**
1. Jones – Affiliated
2. Singh - Affiliated
3. Cushan - NSERC
4. Wong - CIHR
5. Thompson - SSHRC
6. Wright - NSERC
7. Tennebrau - Affiliated
8. Lourie - CIHR

- Top NSERC apps forwarded to NSERC (doctoral) / offered CGSM (Master’s)
- Top SSHRC apps forwarded to SSHRC (doctoral) / offered CGSM (Master’s)
- Top CIHR apps forwarded to CIHR (doctoral) / offered CGSM (Master’s)

**Vanier, NSERC, SSHRC, and CIHR release doctoral results in late March to late April**

**UBC release first round of CGSM results 1 April**

**UBC release Affiliated Fellowship results in May**

**Application Materials**

**Application form**
- Each agency uses a different platform
- Allow time for technical glitches (also known as don’t submit two minutes before the deadline)
- Spell check content
- Follow the instructions
- Follow the instructions
- Follow the instructions

**Canadian Common CV**
- Select correct CCV type
- Submitting, reference numbers and PDF

**Research proposal**
- Free-form pages completed as separate document and uploaded / added to your application
- Review after file has been uploaded
- Page limits, margins, font size
Application Materials

Transcripts
- All post-secondary studies
- Official vs. original transcripts
- Must be up-to-date
- Often need to show fall term registration
- Include transcript key
- Talk to your graduate program about which transcripts they can provide (don't assume)

Reference letters
- Allow lots of time for referees to prepare and submit their references
- Encourage referees to log into online system early, to confirm no technical difficulties
- Set an earlier deadline for your referees
- Electronic vs. hard-copy references
- Using reference forms vs. free-form letters

Ethics and Integrity
- Application must be an accurate picture of applicant
  - Beware of hyperbole and embellishment
  - Give credit where credit is due
- Who should write the research proposal?
  - Applicant alone?
  - Applicant together with supervisor?
- Consequences

Last Advice
- Check your spelling
- Be careful about formatting (font sizes, margins, etc.)
- Have others read your application
- Follow the instructions

  "This is a very important project, and I am the very best person to do it"

TYPICAL SELECTION CRITERIA
- Tri-Agency Doctoral
  - 50% Research ability and potential
  - 50% Relevant experience and achievements obtained within and beyond academia
- Tri-Agency Masters
  - 50% Academic excellence
  - 30% Research potential
  - 20% Personal characteristics and interpersonal skills
ADJUDICATION

• Peer review is fundamental to science
• Adjudication processes are designed to ensure fairness and consistency in results
• Adjudicators select excellence among highly qualified applicants
• Adjudicators agree surprisingly often
• You cannot second-guess adjudicators
• Don’t assume knowledge/familiarity with specific field/research among adjudicators
• Large number of applications but little time
• Small differences matter

SELECTION OF ADJUDICATORS

• Big competition = more variable adjudicators in substantive expertise on specific applications & disciplinary expectations
• Conflict of interest
• Multiple adjudicators
• Expectation of fairness & dedication

ADJUDICATORS’ HABITS

• When dealing with many applications, adjudicators like to refer to files by some shorthand
• Many adjudicators take extensive notes
• Many adjudicators search for additional information online

You can facilitate these habits in applications.

FOLLOW GUIDELINES/SELECTION CRITERIA

• Instructions are almost always carefully worded
• If there is something you disagree with in instructions, ask questions, but follow guidelines
• If guidelines list specific criteria, speak to all of these criteria in your application

CLARITY IN WRITING

You will always have more to say than space allows, so
• Reduce filler words and phrases
• Keep sentences short
• Organize your writing by thinking about opening sentences, enumerating objectives, methods, results, transitions
• Use strong active words like “is” and “will”, avoid conjunctives

THINK ABOUT FORMATTING

Application forms will specify most formatting parameters, but
• Use (sub)headers to structure text
• Think about reminders to adjudicators when they review an application
• Consider some bold or italics to highlight aspects
• Be obvious by mirroring application instructions: If criterion is “Research”, why not have a subheader, “Research: [insert your topic here]”
PREPARING APPLICATIONS

• Think/plan ahead
• Work backward from deadlines to include
  • Time for references (if needed)
  • Feedback from peers
  • Considered revisions
• Share your drafts/ask for others’ applications
• Seek out feedback beyond your immediate specialization
• Does your application generate enthusiasm?

SPECIFIC ELEMENTS: PROPOSED RESEARCH

• Must be easy to read, including in its use of technical, (sub)discipline-specific terminology
• Clear discussion of objectives of research/hypotheses
• Highlights contributions to be made
• Must be do-able in terms of methods, time, other resources
• Detailed proposals beat out vague plans
• Will readers be as excited about this proposal as you are?

SPECIFIC ELEMENTS: CV

• Think about narrative (selection of research topic, events/breaks in progress)
• Not all entries are automatically meaningful to all audiences
  • Kinds of publications, rates of productivity, positions, incl academic positions, etc
• Define and highlight your personal contributions, esp in collaborations
  • “I designed the experiment…”
  • “While we designed the study jointly, I focused on identifying the research site…”

REFERENCES

• Plan ahead
• Developing a “stable” of references vs not overburdening referees
• Be strategic in selection
• Give (gentle) instructions, including elements to highlight, address, etc.
• Do legwork for referees and provide them with complete information/drafts of application

OTHER CRITERIA

• What are selection criteria? Speak to them!
• Always be specific, give examples
• Let referees know about non-standard criteria
• Clarify role
  • In organizing grad conference, did you set the agenda, select papers, or handle logistics?
  • As a volunteer, what exactly did you do?
  • If dissemination of results will rely on “a website” how will you find audience/audience find you?

WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

Your feedback about this workshop is very helpful to us, to improve the experience for next time. Please take a moment to complete a short online questionnaire at:

http://bit.ly/2ROjng1
Further Resources

www.grad.ubc.ca/awards

Resources for Award Applicants

Contact Info

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