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

Graduate Program
- Review apps for eligibility and completeness
- Rank applications
- Forward top apps to Grad Studies

Grad + Postdoc Studies

Vanier

Affiliated Fellowships
NSERC
SSHRC
CIHR

Competition Overview

Grad + Postdoc Studies
- Review apps for eligibility and completeness
- Forward eligible apps to one of six adjudication committees

Master Ranking List

Nat Sci & Eng 1
Nat Sci & Eng 2
Health Sci
Soc Sci 1
Soc Sci 2
Hum

UBC Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Competition Overview

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

Competition Overview

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
Application Materials

Canadian Common CV

- Submitting, reference numbers and PDF

Application Materials

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?

Further Resources

www.grad.ubc.ca/awards

Resources for Award Applicants
Contact Info

Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
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