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PREPARING EXCELLENT APPLICATIONS FOR FALL FELLOWSHIP COMPETITIONS



PREPARING APPLICATIONS

- Think/plan/write now!
- Work backward from deadlines to include
 - Time for referees
 - Feedback from peers
 - Considered revisions
- Share drafts/ask for others' applications
- Seek feedback beyond specialization
- Does your application generate enthusiasm?

RELEVANT COMPETITIONS

Deadlines

- Vanier: September 3 ^{CA} 🌐
- Canadian Graduate Scholarships Doctoral Program (CGSD): Sept 17 ^{CA}
- Canadian Graduate Scholarships Master's Program (CGSM): December 2 ^{CA}
- Affiliated scholarships (follows CGS) ^{CA} 🌐
- Pierre Elliot Trudeau Foundation: mid December ^{CA} 🌐

Check on changeable specifics regularly!
<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/scholarships-awards-funding/award-opportunities>






OVERVIEW



- What is adjudication?
- What are selection criteria?
- How to talk about your past and future research trajectory
- Reference letters
- Some writing suggestions

ADJUDICATION

- Peer review is fundamental to science
- Adjudication processes ensure fairness
- Adjudicators select excellence among highly qualified applicants
- Consistent rankings by adjudicators
- You cannot second-guess adjudicators
- Large number of applications but little time
- Many adjudicators search for additional information online

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
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SELECTION CRITERIA

- Past academic excellence
- Future research potential
- [Communication, leadership, etc]

Relative importance varies by competition, but is specified by instructions.



FOLLOW GUIDELINES

- Instructions are carefully worded
- If there is something you disagree with in instructions, ask questions, but follow guidelines
- If guidelines specify criteria, speak to all of these in your application



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...”



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
- Do-able in terms of methods, time, resources
- Detailed proposals beat out vague plans



REFERENCE LETTERS

- 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
- Provide referees with complete information/drafts of application



OTHER CRITERIA

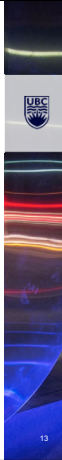
- What are selection criteria? Speak to them!
- Always be specific, give examples
- Let referees know about non-standard criteria
- Clarify role
 - In organizing grad conference, did you set the agenda, select papers, or handle logistics?
 - As a volunteer, what exactly did you do?
- If dissemination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



THINK ABOUT FORMATTING

Application forms specify most formatting parameters, but

- Use (sub)headers to structure text
- Think about reminders to adjudicators when they review an application
- Consider bold or *italics* to highlight
- Be obvious by mirroring application instructions: If criterion is “Research”, why not have a subheader, “Research: [insert your topic here]”?



MAIN LESSONS

- Start thinking now
- Draft versions of research proposal
- Start assembling necessary pieces
- Have conversations with supervisor, potential letter writers
- Find peer groups to share with
- Maintain wellness/reduce stress

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