Overview of Awards

Frederick Banting and Charles Best Canada Graduate Scholarship
• Master’s (CIHR CGSM): $17,500/year; for 1 year

Alexander Graham Bell Canada Graduate Scholarship
• Master’s (NSERC CGSM): $17,500/year; for 1 year

Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship
• Master’s (SSHRC CGSM): $17,500/year; for 1 year

Other Tri-Agency Awards:

Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement
• Up to $6,000 for a period of research study abroad
Eligibility Criteria

• Canadian Citizen or Permanent Resident of Canada
• Graduate program with a significant research component
• Completed no more that 12 months of full-time studies in the graduate program as of December 31, 2018
• Have at least a 3.5 GPA in each of the last two completed years of study (full-time equivalent)
• Have not received any other Tri-council funding for a master’s program
Application Process

• Apply via the CGSM Research Portal (https://portal-portail.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/).

  **Deadline: December 1, 2018 (6:00 PM Mountain Time, 8:00 PM Eastern Time)**

• You may select up to 3 institutions for your proposed study.

• If not yet admitted to a graduate program, you must also apply for admission at University of Alberta no later than **March 1, 2019** in order to be considered for the CGSM at the University of Alberta.

• **After December 1, 2018**: FGSR reviews CGSM applications for eligibility and completeness and forwards applications to departments

• Departments conduct preliminary evaluations, rank applications and forward to the FGSR Graduate Scholarship Committee for **final adjudication**.

• Decisions are announced via Research Portal on April 1, 2019.
Application Components

- A completed application form

- An outline of proposed research (one page max, plus one page for citations)

- CV (to be completed on the Canadian Common CV online system)

- Two letters of reference (to be uploaded online by referees before December 1st)

- Official and up-to-date transcripts from all postsecondary institutions attended, including University of Alberta transcripts (scanned and uploaded).
A Note about Transcripts…

• Students are required to upload all of their original, up-to-date transcripts to the Research Portal.
• Detailed instructions regarding transcript requirements (and definitions of “official” and “up-to-date” are available on the CGSM Application Instructions web page.
• If your transcripts are uploaded incorrectly OR your transcript record is incomplete, the application is immediately marked as ineligible.
• You are required to provide a complete academic history of your post-secondary education:
  – All transfer credit transcripts (even if they were transferred to this university)
  – OFFICIAL University of Alberta transcripts
  – All transcripts of incomplete work/non-degree study/qualifying years, etc.
  – In almost all cases, FGSR will not release transcripts back to student, even if we have them on file.
Selection Criteria

Academic excellence
• As demonstrated by past academic results, transcripts, awards and distinctions
• Weight: 50%

Research Potential
• As demonstrated by the applicant’s research history, their interest in discovery, the proposed research, its potential contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the field, and any anticipated outcomes
• Weight: 30%

Personal Characteristics and Interpersonal Skills
• As demonstrated by the applicant’s past professional and relevant extracurricular interactions and collaborations
• Weight: 20%
Questions?

For program-related info:
FGSR Awards Services
grad.awards@ualberta.ca
Tel: 780-492-9460
uab.ca/gradstudies

Tri-Agency Contact Info:
Available on the CGSM Application Instructions webpage or on the CGSM Program Information webpage.

For Research Portal issues/questions:
Contact the Research Portal Helpdesk.
Reference Letters

How to make sure they are helpful to your application?

Dr. Ann McDougall
Professor
Department of History & Classics
Graduate Scholarship Committee Member
Reference Letters

Organization of Presentation

- What parts of your application do Reference Letters actually speak to?

- What are evaluators (who write such letters) asked to address?

- How does this (knowledge) influence:
  - who you should ask for a reference?
  - what information you should provide?
  - when you should make your request?
Categories to which Reference Letters Apply

Research Potential (30%)

“As demonstrated by the applicant’s research history, their interest in discovery, the proposed research, its potential contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the field, and any anticipated outcomes.”
Criteria for this category

• 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
• Judgment 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
From the Assessor’s Form

Research Potential
As demonstrated by the applicant's research history, his/her interest in discovery, the proposed research, its potential contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the field, and any anticipated outcomes.

Rating: Top 2% Top 5% Top 10% Top 25% Below Top 25% Unable to comment

Provide an assessment of the applicant's skills, abilities, achievements, awards, experience and contributions related to this criterion. Use concrete examples.
Categories to which Reference Letters Apply

Personal Characteristics/Interpersonal Skills (20%)

“As demonstrated by the applicant’s past professional and relevant extracurricular and interactions and collaborations.”
Criteria

• Work experience

• Leadership experience

• Project management including organizing conferences and meetings

• The ability or potential to communicate theoretical, technical and/or scientific concepts clearly and logically in written and oral formats

• Involvement in academic life

• Volunteerism/community outreach
Personal Characteristics and Interpersonal Skills
As demonstrated by the applicant's past professional and relevant extracurricular interactions and collaborations.

Rating:  Top 2%  Top 5%  Top 10%  Top 25%
Below Top 25%  Unable to comment

Provide an assessment of the applicant's skills, abilities, achievements, awards, experience and contributions related to this criterion. Use concrete examples.
Who should you ask?

- Consider what *kinds* of information your referees are being asked to ‘assess’:

  - who, among your professors, are *best positioned to address that information*?

  e.g. **Research**: at least one, preferably both, should be familiar with the subject of your proposed research; at least one should be knowledgeable in the field.
Who should you ask?

• Consider what *kinds* of information your referees are being asked to ‘assess’:

  e.g. **Personal**: if possible, referees should have interacted with you in some context, outside the classroom or at least be aware of your activities/contributions within the department and/or beyond
Who should you ask?

General Considerations:

• Chose someone who knows you personally: more important than (say) Professor with whom you have highest marks [marks speak for themselves – these letters are *assessments* of what those marks mean in terms of criteria listed above]
Who should you ask?

General Considerations:

• This is NOT about status: Chairs, Deans, other ‘important’ administrators do not carry extra weight here and normally are not good choices

• That said, permanent Faculty members are preferred over Contract Instructors; they do carry more weight because they are known and more familiar with what is required in these recommendations
Who should you ask?

General Considerations:

• If in 4th year (entering MA 2019): letters should be from 4th year if possible; if not, then from second term previous year – as recent as can be arranged keeping other criteria in mind

• If in 1st year (in MA autumn 2018): one letter should be from 4th year (whether at UofA or elsewhere), the other from your (UofA) supervisor (s/he needs to speak to your research proposal)
What Information to Supply?

Consider what *kinds* of information your referees are being asked to ‘assess’: *And make sure they have that information!!*

- CV (easiest to provide them with your SSHRC CV; alternately – one that shows awards, work experience, volunteer work etc.)

- Research Proposal – the *exact one* you are submitting
What Information to Supply?

• Transcript – this helps assessor see you in ‘big picture’ of your academic achievements and background (other courses you have taken relevant for your project etc.) [also, if there is a ‘red flag’ in terms of marks, you can draw attention to it and explain (Letter -- see below)]

• Letter – (see below)
When (and how) to Ask?

At least TWO WEEKS (if not earlier) before Due Date:

Send letter explaining:
- what you are applying for
- what the referee will be asked to provide (in this case, on-line electronic form)
- what you will provide as information (and when)
- WHEN EXACTLY this reference would be due.

ASK if Professor would be willing to provide this (do not assume – even your supervisor deserves to be ‘asked’)
When and How to Ask?

If response is ‘YES’: immediately send LETTER with attachments (Proposal, CV, Transcript)

- Letter should draw attention to anything you especially would like your assessor to mention: awards; personal ‘extracurricular’ activities; special circumstances -- explain what they are, significance.

You can’t tell your referee what to write; you CAN make their job easier by providing easily accessible information in a paragraph or two 😊
When and How to Ask?

Do Not Forget to Say
“THANK YOU”

PS. Not required but appreciated: let your referees know the outcome of your application – hopefully good news but if not, you’ll probably be re-applying at some point and best to keep a referee ‘on your side’. We DO care about your success and are happy to assist as needed. This follow-up helps ensure your referee will be there for you next time.
Research Proposals

Dr. Bonnie Stelmach
Professor
Department of Educational Policy Studies
Graduate Scholarship Committee Member
Application Elements

• **Summary**
  – 1500 characters

• **Outline of Proposed Research**
  – 1 page, single-spaced, Times 12 pt font (PDF)
    • **Objectives** (Purpose/Research Question(s))
    • **Context** (Literature review, policy context, social context, etc.)
    • **Significance** (Contribution to your field)

• **Bibliography/Citations**
  – 1 page
Have you ever been lost?
Being lost is reported to be one of the most stress-inducing experiences for children.
ENGAGE Your Reader

• Is your title memorable?
• 1\textsuperscript{st} and last sentence
  – Ask a question: Have you ever been lost?
  – State a fact/statistic: Being lost is among the top five stress-inducing experiences for children, according to the ABC Psychology Study (2018).
  – Introduce a counterintuitive finding: Sleeping with your dog may enhance chronic pain sufferers’ quality and quantity of sleep.
  – Start/end opening with a purpose statement: The purpose of my proposed research is to ....
Objectives Section
(Purpose/Research Question(s))

• As a reviewer I want to read this section and know:
  – What this research is about
  – What question drives this research proposal
  – The context from which this study emerges
  – That this research addresses an important challenge, problem, persistent issue
  – Who will benefit from this research
  – Why this study is intellectually exciting
Context Section

• Approximately 2 paragraphs
• Appropriateness of the literature review
• Is the literature review up to date?
• Is the literature cited relevant to the study?
• Does the literature review ARGUE for your proposed study?
• Does the literature review identify gaps in scholarship in a diplomatic, respectful way?
Methodology

• Most important section
• How are you going to address your research question?
• Hypotheses?
• Theoretical and/or conceptual framework
  – Explain the framework
  – Justify the framework—why is it appropriate for addressing your research question?
  – HOW will the framework be used as a lens through which to understand your data (if you’re collecting data)
• What steps will you take to conduct your study (e.g. methods of data collection or path of argumentation?)
Characteristics of a Good Proposal

- Document – neat, well organized, easy to read
- Fresh insight into an important problem
- Writing that shows excitement, commitment
- Evidence that the applicant knows the field (strong lit review)
- Feasible work plan (methodology)
- “The best proposals teach” (Porter, 2005, p. 343)

Common Mistakes

• Writing that is vague, unfocussed (takes too long for reviewer to figure out what it’s about)
• Dense academic prose (highly technical, esoteric...manage the *curse of knowledge*)
• No white space (LESS is MORE from reviewers’ perspective!)
• Jargon and/or acronyms (excludes reader)
• Research plan/methodology has a “trust me I know what I’m doing” feel – not enough description of how study will be conducted
• Sloppiness—typos, grammatical errors, etc.
• Laziness—cut ‘n paste (e.g. Summary and Proposal of Research Plan should be entirely different)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>START EARLY</strong></th>
<th><strong>Use Online Resources</strong></th>
<th><strong>Choose References Wisely</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every section of the application takes time, some aspects out of your control.</td>
<td>Search ‘Canada Graduate Scholarships-Master’s Program Resources’</td>
<td>Find people who are reliable and can speak highly about you in all three categories.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Carefully Craft Research Proposal</strong></th>
<th><strong>Edit Proposal into Summary</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have it edited by your supervisor(s), lab members, mentors, friends, etc.</td>
<td>1500 characters aimed towards a general audience, have your parents read it over.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“uplifting the whole people”
— HENRY MARSHALL TORY, FOUNDING PRESIDENT, 1908
Correctly Format Attachments
Search ‘Research Portal Presentation and Attachment Standards’

Boost Your CV
Describe all leadership and work experience

Print for Final Review
Take it home and read it in a different environment

Submit Early
Create a safety net in case of website crashes, unexpected events, etc.

Don’t Panic
While writing application and after submitting