Canada Graduate Scholarship – Master’s (CGSM) 2017-2018
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

• **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, 2016

• Have at least a 3.5 GPA in each of the last two years of full time study (or equivalent)

• Have not received any other Tri-council funding for a master’s program
Application Process


• You may select up to 5 institutions for your proposed study.

• If not yet admitted to a graduate program, you must also apply for admission no later than March 1, 2017 in order to be considered for the CGSM at the University of Alberta

• FGSR reviews CGSM applications for eligibility and completeness and forwards applications to departments

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

• Decisions are announced via Research Portal on April 1, 2017
Application Components

• The 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).
Statistics from 2016 Competition

• Allocations for 2017: CIHR 19, NSERC 50; SSHRC 48

• In 2016 FGSR received 55 CIHR applications, 246 NSERC applications, and 152 SSHRC applications.

• After the preliminary departmental evaluation, Graduate Scholarship Committee adjudicated 36 CIHR applications, 143 NSERC applications, and 98 SSHRC applications.
Selection Criteria

**Academic excellence**
- Grades, awards and distinctions
- Weight: 50%
- What helps: GPA of at least 3.5 in each of the past two years

**Research Potential**
- Potential contribution to advancement of knowledge
- Weight: 30%
- What helps: Research activity, well-written proposal

**Personal Characteristics and Interpersonal Skills**
- Past professional and relevant extracurricular interactions and collaborations
- Weight: 20%
- Evidence is required
Details of Selection Criteria for CGSM con’t

Research Potential
• Quality 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, and justification for location of tenure
• Ability to think critically
• Ability to apply skills and knowledge
• Judgment and Originality
• Initiative and autonomy
• Enthusiasm for research
Details of Selection Criteria for CGSM con’t

Personal Characteristics and Interpersonal Skills

• The ability or potential to communicate scientific concepts clearly and logically in written and oral formats. Could be:
  • quality of the application's presentation;
  • participation in preparing publications; and
  • awards for oral presentations or papers.

• Professional and relevant extracurricular interactions and collaborations. Could be:
  • mentoring; teaching; supervisory experience;
  • project management;
  • chairing committees; organizing conferences and meetings; and
  • elected positions held.
Science perspective: Heinke

- Craig Heinke, Physics (astrophysics)

- Judged PGSD/CGSD awards, Postdocs
- Also have judged NSERC USRAs
- Very difficult, most are very good!
Science: Academics

- Difficult to compare institutions
- PGSD evaluators not required to calculate GPAs; but most do
- I created scale, from first-class (~3.5; differs) to maximum, to compare students
- Extra points for (large) GPA improvement, more competitive school
Science: Research Statements

• Looking for clear, feasible, significant research plan
• Background of problem, & why it matters
• Describe state of the art (current work)
• Plan of attack; new ideas, new methods, new observations?
• Expected results
Science: Research Statements

– To avoid:
  • Excessive jargon (think of a nonspecialist!)
  • Omitting “why it matters”
  • Overstating what will do (think of specialist!)
  • Waiting until last minute.

*Very* helpful for someone to give feedback.
Science: Personal Characteristics

• Evidence of leadership, communication skills.
• Leadership in research (e.g. mentoring others), or in extracurriculars (membership alone not helpful).
• Communication: success in presentations (&/or papers), working within group.
• Look in CCV, reference letters.
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Outline of Proposed Research— Some Basics

• “...a detailed description of your proposed research project for the period during which you will hold the award.”

• CGS guidelines—Maximum two pages.
• All facets of research project: context, specific questions, theoretical framework, methods used in project.

• Conclude (or begin) with wider significance of study.
An Idiosyncratic Piece of Writing

• Understand and write to a non-specialist audience. Imagine audience as informed, well-read but not an expert.

• Place in larger context but also be specific and precise.

• Delineate the bigger significance, curiosity, puzzle or context of work—in non academic terms.
Fundamentals of a good statement

• Leaves reader with a clear sense of project.
• Establishes clear research goals, questions and plan.
• Demonstrates project is manageable, achievable.
• Cites relevant literature.
• Highlights research component of work (for creative projects)
Things to avoid!

• Any irrelevant, obtuse or grand claims or broad generalities.

• Fluff and jargon.

• Questions that do no match proposed research.

• Overstating the case or imprecision.

• Writing errors (grammar, spelling) can be fatal!
Questions to answer

• Does the proposal seem consistent with the questions asked?

• Can it be accomplished in time frame?

• It is possible, understandable, interesting to non-specialist?

• Is it clearly written and presented?

• Is it rooted in a specific literature?
How to get there?

• Have a non-academic (or non-specialist) friend read it over.

• Engage supervisor and other students in your field.

• Time for proof-reading and distance from text.
Questions?

Contact Tri-Council
CIHR, CGS M Award Program Delivery Coordinator
Tel.: 613-952-0763
E-mail: cgsma@cihr-irsc.gc.ca

NSERC
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