2020 Canada Graduate Scholarship Timeline

October 3, 2019
• Institutional deadline for students to submit their application through the appropriate agency’s portal

October
• Applications are reviewed for completeness and eligibility by the FGSR Awards Advisors
• Each application is reviewed by a minimum of two members of the Graduate Scholarship Committee (GSC)

November
• The GSC convenes and ranks applications
2020 Canada Graduate Scholarship Timeline Cont…

November 21, 2019
• Program Deadline: FGSR submits nomination packages to the Canada Graduate Scholarship national competition

Early April 2020
• Anticipated notification of results. Nominees will be notified by email when the results are available.
Application Resources/Information

Canada Graduate Scholarship Website:
- Competition Overview [CGS-Doctoral Competition Page]
- Selecting the appropriate agency
- Detailed Instructions to Applicants (read in detail)
  - Selection Committee Guide (explains how your application will be evaluated at the national competition)
  - Presentation Standards (explains how to format your attached documents)

FGSR Website:
- U of A specific competition [information]
- Internal U of A deadlines
- Application Resources
Who do I ask for help?

Canada Graduate Scholarship:
• Contact the appropriate agency (CIHR, SSHRC, NSERC) with your questions.

FGSR (U of A) can:
• Help you fill out the administrative details of your application, if you are unsure of what to write (e.g. filling out your “months in program”, or the tenure of an award you list on your CV
• Transcript questions

For advice on how to best present the information in your application (e.g., how to write your research proposal):

1.) Review the detailed Canada Graduate Scholarship application instructions
2.) Seek advice from members of your faculty/department (supervisor, grad chair, etc)

For writing support:
Academic Success Centre
www.ualberta.ca/current-students/academic-success-centre

Centre for Writers
http://c4w.ualberta.ca/
Contact Information

CIHR Contact Centre
support-soutien@cihr-irsc.gc.ca

NSERC Contact Centre
schol@nserc-crsng.gc.ca

SSHRC Contact Centre
fellowships@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca

FGSR Awards Services:
Phone: 780-492-9460
Email: grad.awards@ualberta.ca
https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/awards-and-funding
Overview of Tri-Council Awards

**CIHR**
Frederick Banting & Charles Best CGS-D
$30,000/yr + $5,000 research allowance 3 yrs

**NSERC**
Alexander Graham Bell CGS-D ($35,000 3 yrs)
Post-graduate scholarships - doctoral (PGS-D) ($21,000 3 yrs)

**SSHRC**
Joseph Armand Bombardier CGS-D ($35,000 3 yrs)
Doctoral Fellowship Program ($20,000 1-4 yrs)
Overview of Tri-Council Awards

**NEW THIS YEAR → HARMONIZATION**

- CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC all have same deadline
- Institutional quota for CIHR
- On-line application system for SSHRC
How to Write a Strong Research Proposal

**READ & CONSULT**

- Instructions!
- Literature in your field/background
- Ask for examples of other students’ proposals
- Interact with your supervisor
Tri-Council Doctoral Awards Workshop
CIHR Instructions
(http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/38887.html)

Research Project Summary
• Should clearly describe the applicant's role on the project.
• Should be written in general scientific language, which is an important skill to acquire for future success in the research environment as applications are being reviewed by multi-disciplinary committees.
• Should be specific, focused, include feasible research question(s), objective(s) and provide a clear description of the proposed methodology.
• **Maximum 1 page**, including references. (Refer to the General Application Process section at top of this document for formatting instructions).
Outline of proposed research (attachment – two pages maximum)

In the Outline of proposed research page of your application, provide the requested information according to the guidelines and format standards outlined in the NSERC Online Presentation and Attachment Standards.

Applicants must complete this section themselves.

Provide a detailed yet concise description of your proposed research project for the period during which you are to hold the award. Be as specific as possible. Provide background information to position your proposed research within the context of the current knowledge in the field. State the significance of the proposed research to a field or fields in NSE. State the objectives and hypothesis, and outline the experimental or theoretical approach to be taken (citing literature pertinent to the proposal) and the methods and procedures to be used.

The inclusion of sex (biological), gender (socio-cultural) and diversity considerations in research design makes research more ethically sound, rigorous and useful. Describe how these aspects will be addressed in the research design, where applicable. Throughout the description of your research project, address the methodology and rationale for including sex, gender and diversity considerations in your research. This is one of the elements that can strengthen your proposal and will be taken into consideration by the committee members during their review. For more information, refer to questions 5 to 7 of the Guide for Applicants: Considering equity, diversity and inclusion in your application.
How to Write a Strong Research Proposal

**PARTS OF THE PROPOSAL**

- Introduction/background
- Research question/hypothesis
- Milestones/aims/approaches/methods
- Expected outcomes/significance
- Bibliography/references
How to Write a Strong Research Proposal

**INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

- Reviewers are very busy & will only devote a small amount of time to each proposal → grab their attention right from the start

- Use clear, concise language → **NO JARGON!!**

- Introduce the problem you are investigating up front

- Describe progress in the area, from the literature, but also any preliminary work you may have done

- Explain significance
How to Write a Strong Research Proposal

RESEARCH QUESTION(S)/HYPOTHESIS

• State your research question/hypothesis/goals in a clearly defined statement

• Set it apart from the other sections of your proposal so the reviewer can find it easier

• Be specific

• Make sure a non-specialist can understand it
How to Write a Strong Research Proposal

METHODS/APPROACH

• Clear, non-specialist language – explain any field-specific approaches

• Demonstrate feasibility (state references, talk about preliminary work, work of others in your group); keep time-lines in mind

• Consider what will happen if your approach fails/weaknesses in your methods/unexpected results → alternate approaches/mitigation strategies

• Use confident, enthusiastic language
How to Write a Strong Research Proposal

SIGNIFICANCE/EXPECTED OUTCOME(S)

• Always good to end with final statement about the importance/significance of your work ➔ IMPACT

• Don’t overstate significance – be realistic about where and who your work will impact the most

• Keep it “tight” – concise and brief
How to Write a Strong Research Proposal

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Use the reference/bibliography style that is typical for your field of study

- Check instructions for your Tri-Council area → is an extra page allowed, is there a specific format requested?

- Keep in mind very limited space – reference only most important sources
Tri-Council Doctoral Awards Workshop

How to Write a Strong Research Proposal

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Writing Tips:

- Begin by setting up necessary headings (see formatting instructions)
- Populate sections in point form as you work
- Use language appropriate to a non-specialist audience
- Have a clear title
- Begin with a powerful statement
- Leave some white space!
Research Problem and Background: In 2015, the Fundão Tailings Dam in Brazil failed, releasing more than 30 million m³ of mine waste that destroyed fish and wildlife habitats and resulted in 19 fatalities (Sarensen 2017). This tailings dam failure was published on a global scale, clearly demonstrating the serious and life-threatening risks associated with these massive structures. Tailings dams are constructed to manage and store the waste generated during mining activities. The wastes are referred to as tailings and generally consist of different combinations of sand, fines, and water (McRoberts 2008). Following the closure of a mine, tailings dams will remain on the site, eventually becoming part of the landscape. In general, these structures are designed by geotechnical engineers with consideration of failure mechanisms that can occur during the mine’s active life which is significantly shorter than the life of the tailings structure. This is problematic, as failure of these structures can still occur long after the closure of a mine site, causing fatalities and large degrees of contamination.

The objective of the proposed research is to determine and assess the long-term risks associated with tailings dams as they transition into landscapes and to aid in the development of suitable monitoring techniques for risk management. The purpose of this research is to close the knowledge gap surrounding the decommissioning of tailings dams to improve public safety and environmental protection by reducing the probability of failure. It is expected that this research will result in the production of a risk assessment tool for mine owners and regulators. Ultimately, this will allow the long-term risks associated with tailings dams to be evaluated such that they can be designed and managed to account for these risks.

Research Methodology: The research will be conducted through three main stages to further the understanding of the long-term behavior of tailings dams. The research will be conducted in collaboration with the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER), and coal and oil sand mines in Alberta will be used as case studies. The first stage involves identifying failure modes and associated monitoring practices as a tailings dam transitions into a landscape following mine closure. This stage will include the development of a fault tree to visually illustrate the causes, effects, and consequence of the various failure modes of a tailings dam after mine closure. Stage two will involve application of the failure modes identified in stage one which will consider different geometries, boundary conditions, initial conditions, and external/external forces that may induce failure. The third stage will involve developing a risk assessment tool based on failure consequence and probability for post-closure tailings structures. This series of charts will be developed for mine operators and regulators for use and guidance in risk management.

Significance of Research: The proposed research has significant implications for future tailings dam management as the study aims to develop tools that assist regulators with risk management of tailings structures over time. While this research is being conducted in collaboration with the AER, it is highly significant from a national and international perspective as there are over approximately 3550 tailings dams worldwide (Davies and Rice 2003). As a result, this research will serve as a case study for other regulatory bodies within Canada and worldwide. Ultimately, the findings of this research will help reduce the risks associated with tailings dams to the public and the environment following mine closure throughout Canada and on a global scale. This is vital in areas where mines operate in the vicinity of urban centres and the risk of fatalities following a dam failure is high.

References:
How to Write a Strong Research Proposal

Review/Feedback:

• If there are instructions for reviewers on-line → read them & use them to guide construction/wording of your proposal

• Go over your proposal outline early on with your supervisor/supervisory committee; incorporate any feedback

• Solicit feedback on your first draft from MULTIPLE people, with different backgrounds

• Proofread, spell-check, ensure that proposal is free of typos and grammatical errors
How to Write a Strong Research Proposal

Final Tips:

• Give yourself as much time as possible

• Remember it’s only a PROPOSAL, it is not written in stone & things may change over the course of your degree as your research develops
How to Write a Strong Research Proposal

QUESTIONS?
How to Get Strong Reference Letters

What reviewers use reference letters for:

• To get a fuller picture of you, your abilities, your accomplishments BEYOND what is in the application

• To place accomplishments (awards, contributions) in context

• Additional information not found in application
How to Get Strong Reference Letters

Before you ask for a letter:

• Figure out how it will be submitted (through appropriate application portal & associated instructions)

• Tri-Council Doctoral Awards all on-line now $\rightarrow$ need to generate an invitation for them through the application portal on-line

• Ask them in person, or by email, before you generate the on-line invitation that will be sent
How to Get Strong Reference Letters

Which referees to ask?

- People that know you (ie. not a professor you have never approached)
- Supervisors/advisors/professors → someone that held a position “above” you
- Academics generally best; but can depend on project
How to Get Strong Reference Letters

How to help your referees

• Ask if they are willing to write you a letter FAR in advance

• Follow up with them → send them reminders (most are very busy and have many deadlines)
How to Get Strong Reference Letters

How to help your referees

• Give them information about yourself → your CV, a copy of your research proposal if possible

• Offer to meet with them (if you didn’t when you asked them for a letter) if they like

• Give them information/explain the competition you are requesting a letter for (prestige, value, duration, what it will mean to your grad program)
How to Get Strong Reference Letters

• Be sure to say Thank-you!
• Tell your reviewers about your successes!
How to Get Strong Reference Letters

How to ask for a reference letter

Straightforward advice for job candidates in search of a professorial recommendation
By ADAM CHAPNICK | MAR 09 2009

https://www.universityaffairs.ca/career-advice/career-advice-article/how-to-ask-for-a-reference-letter/
How to Get Strong Reference Letters