Date: Tuesday, September 12, 2017

To: Chairs, Graduate Coordinators, and Graduate Program Administrators SSHRC Area Departments

From: Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research – Award Services

Re: 2018 SSHRC Doctoral Competition – Updates and Important Reminders

The timeline for the 2018 SSHRC Doctoral Competition is now available on the FGSR website. Applications for SSHRC Doctoral awards must be received in FGSR by Tuesday, October 31st, 2017.

All applications for the SSHRC Doctoral Competition must be completed on-line using SSHRC web-based forms and printed for submission. There are a number of important updates and reminders for the 2018 competition with regard to eligibility. Please ensure applicants refer to the SSHRC website for clarification concerning the value, duration and eligibility.

Aboriginal Applicants and Aboriginal Research

SSHRC is implementing several pilot measures intended to support research by and with Aboriginal Peoples. These are aimed at supporting graduate students or postdoctoral researchers applying for, respectively, SSHRC Doctoral Fellowships, Joseph-Armand Bombardier CGS Doctoral Scholarships or SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowships. The pilot measures include:

- an opportunity for applicants to self-identify as Aboriginal, allowing SSHRC to track and assess participation and success rates for First Nations, Métis, Inuit and other Indigenous doctoral and postdoctoral applicants (note: this information is not used in the adjudication process);

- an opportunity to identify a proposed program of study as Aboriginal research, such that SSHRC’s Guidelines for the Merit Review of Aboriginal Research will apply (note: this checkbox is separate and distinct from the option to self-identify and is visible to merit reviewers); and

- an opportunity to identify and detail additional special circumstances that might impact the academic careers of some Aboriginal applicants.

To learn more, please consult Aboriginal Talent Measures.

Calculation of the Number of Months of Doctoral Study Completed

In calculating the value and duration of awards, SSHRC includes all prior doctoral-level studies in the same discipline.

SSHRC assumes that all studies were full time and uninterrupted. Students who studied part-time, or who interrupted their studies with their university’s official approval, must include an official letter from their university that specifies the dates of interruption or part-time study.

For combined MA/PhD or fast-track programs, SSHRC determines the value and duration of an award based on the number of months of full-time study (or equivalent) the applicant will have completed by December 31 of the year of application.

Calculation in fast-track situations where no credits have been transferred will begin from the start date of the doctoral portion. Calculation for combined MA/PhD programs and fast-track situations where credits have been transferred will begin from the start of the Master’s portion. Please ensure this information is clear in the application.
**Combined MA/PhD, Fast-Track and Direct-Entry Programs**

Students who are or will be registered in a combined MA/PhD, fast-track program (accelerated from a Master’s program into a doctoral program without obtaining the Master’s degree) or direct-entry doctoral program may be eligible to apply to the Canada Graduate Scholarships-Master’s Scholarship program (CGS M), if they have completed between zero and 12 months of graduate-level studies by December 31 of the year of application.

Students who are currently registered in a combined MA/PhD, fast-track or direct-entry doctoral program and have or will have completed more than 12 months of graduate-level studies as of December 31 of the year of application may only apply to the Doctoral Awards funding opportunity.

These procedures apply whether or not the degree was completed and whether or not the current university recognizes the previous credits or years of study.

**Canada Graduate Scholarship to Honour Nelson Mandela (Reminder)**

Some Canada Graduate Scholarship (CGS) recipients may be considered for the honour of having their scholarship named a “Canada Graduate Scholarship to Honour Nelson Mandela,” should SSHRC deem their application to be aligned with at least one of five themes championed by Mandela: national unity; democracy, freedom and human rights; leadership; children’s participation in society; and children’s health. There will be up to 10 CGS Master’s (CGS M) and up to 10 CGS Doctoral (CGS D) awards that include “in Honour of Nelson Mandela.” Duration of the honorary mention will be for the entirety of the CGS M or CGS D awarded. There is no separate application for the CGS to Honour Nelson Mandela. For more information about the CGS to Honour Nelson Mandela, please consult SSHRC’s website.

**Eligibility to Apply (Reminder)**

Applicants registered in a degree program at a Canadian university with a quota during the year of application must apply through that university. All other applicants apply directly to SSHRC by November 7, 2017.

**Consent to the Disclosure of Personal Information (Reminder)**

As of 2012, the tri-agencies require all applicants consent to have some of their personal information disclosed in cases of serious breach of agency policy. A Consent to Disclosure of Personal Information form must be completed, signed and submitted by each applicant along with their application for funding. For more information and access to the form, please visit [http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/forms-formulaires/index-eng.aspx](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/forms-formulaires/index-eng.aspx)

**Eligibility of Subject Matter at SSHRC (Update)**

In May 2017, the *General Guidelines for the Eligibility of Subject Matter at SSHRC* were updated and can be found on SSHRC’s website at: [http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/apply-demande/background-renseignements/selecting_agency-choisir_organisme_subventionnaire-eng.aspx](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/apply-demande/background-renseignements/selecting_agency-choisir_organisme_subventionnaire-eng.aspx). The following are considerations when assessing the eligibility of the subject matter of applications related to health:

- Applicants whose proposed research is health-related should consult CIHR’s mandate first to explore eligibility. CIHR has policies and procedures to adjudicate the full range of social sciences and humanities research proposals related to health research.
- The use of social science or humanities theories, methodologies and hypotheses is, in and of itself, not sufficient to make a proposal eligible at SSHRC.
- Applicants working in research areas where boundaries overlap are advised to state clearly in their application for funding why they believe their proposal is appropriate for support by the agency to which they are submitting their application.

Please explore funding opportunities at one of the other federal granting agencies while the proposal is reviewed for eligibility, to ensure that deadlines are not missed.

Please note that SSHRC does not permit appeals on grounds of subject matter eligibility.
Official Letter Confirming Part-time Studies and/or Leave of Absence (Reminder)

Students who studied on a part-time basis, or who interrupted their studies with their university’s official approval, must specify the dates of interruption or part-time study and these dates must be documented in an official letter from the applicable university.

Multiple Applications (Reminder)

In general, applicants may submit only one application to SSHRC in a given year. Also, fellowship and scholarship applicants may only submit one application in each academic year to either SSHRC or NSERC or CIHR. The only exception to this rule is that applicants may simultaneously apply to both the Doctoral Awards program and the Vanier CGSD program. At the U of A, applicants who are in the current SSHRC Vanier CGS competition should also complete the SSHRC Doctoral application (using SSHRC online forms) if they are eligible (ie citizenship status is Canadian/Permanent Resident). Please note that original transcripts, including current University of Alberta transcripts and letters of appraisal are required for each application. Successful applicants may only take up one award.

In addition, 2017/18 recipients of the UofA Master’s Scholarship and UofA Doctoral Recruitment Scholarship are required to apply for Tri-Agency funding if they are eligible (ie. citizenship status is Canadian/Permanent Resident).

Departmental Nominations

There are no restrictions on the number of applications that departments may forward to the FGSR for the doctoral competition; however, the FGSR requests that departments consider the workload of the adjudicators and nominate only those students who have a reasonable chance of success relative to the limited number of applications that may be forwarded to Ottawa for the competition. Applications being forwarded to the FGSR should be reviewed within the department to ensure that they are complete and accurate according to the SSHRC Guidelines. Please note that the departmental ranking cannot be signed by an individual whom has written a letter of reference or is supervising a student whose application is being forwarded to FGSR.

Departmental Appraisal (Reminder)

Please ensure that each application forwarded to the FGSR is accompanied by a Department Appraisal. The form and instructions can be found on SSRHC website.

We wish all students and departments success in the upcoming competitions!