



Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
Killam Centre for Advanced Studies
2-29 Triffo Hall, University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB, Canada T6G 2E1

T 780.492.9460
F 780.492.0692
grad.awards@ualberta.ca
ualberta.ca/graduate-studies

Date: Friday, September 18, 2026

To: Department Chairs, Graduate Coordinators, Graduate Program Administrators

From: Award Services, Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies

Re: **2026-2027 Western Association of Graduate Schools (WAGS) & ProQuest Awards:
Distinguished Master's Thesis Award and/or Final Master's Capstone Project Award in the
Creative, Visual and Performing Arts**

GPS is pleased to announce this year's WAGS-ProQuest Distinguished Master's Thesis Awards and/or Final Master's Capstone Project Award in the creative, visual and performing arts. This award recognizes distinguished scholarly achievement and creative arts' achievement at the master's level in any of the disciplines noted above. The 2026-2027 recipient will receive \$1,000 and a Certificate of Award presented at the annual WAGS Conference (March 29 – April 1, 2027 in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho).

Eligibility

The scholarly or creative work eligible for this competition is one of the following:

- A traditional, formal written thesis;
- A major capstone paper or creative product (e.g. collection of poetry);
- An audio, video, or digital file of a performance, portfolio, or exhibition.

Since many fine and performing arts Master's projects involve a combination of written and artistic products, both may be submitted for review (if applicable) and considered in the decision for the award. The nominee must have successfully completed all requirements for their scholarly or creative work in the context of degree progression and/or completion.

Typically, this means that a written thesis will have been successfully defended and final copy submitted; their major capstone paper or creative product will have been submitted and evaluated for degree completion; or their performance, portfolio, or exhibition will have been publicly presented and/or evaluated for degree completion, as appropriate within the **period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026.**

Nomination Process

Each eligible department may submit **one** nomination for this award to GPS via the GSMS Awards Portal by **Thursday, October 1, 2026**. Departments with no nominees are not required to notify GPS; if nothing is submitted by the deadline we consider them as no nominee.

The following documents are required; nominations with materials exceeding the page limits as indicated will not be adjudicated by the GPS Graduate Scholarship Committee (GSC) and will be removed from the competition:

1. A non-technical summary prepared by the nominee (1000-1500 words) describing the research, artistic approach, inspiration and/or major influences, and its significance. This summary is intended for a general academic audience of non-specialists. For those submitting projects that involve a public performance or exhibition, we encourage a video recording of the event as well, so that the scope and impact of the event can be considered.
2. An abstract or example of the nominee's research or project (not to exceed 10 double-spaced pages). Appendices containing nontextual material, such as charts or tables, may be included as additional pages. All pages should be numbered, and each should bear the name of the nominee.
3. Two nomination letters (not to exceed 1 page per letter). One letter from the department head or major professor and one letter from an additional faculty member. The letters should include information regarding the significance of the thesis and/or project, the contribution of the thesis and/or project to the program of the degree granting unit, and the impact of the thesis on the knowledge base of the discipline.
4. The nominee's CV or resume (not to exceed 5 pages).

Evaluation Criteria:

1. Originality; 2. Aesthetic merit; 3. Technical execution, and 4. Potential to reach beyond the original academic audience through future performance, exhibition, or publication.

The GPS GSC will adjudicate all nominations received. GPS is eligible to submit one nomination for the Distinguished Master's Thesis and/or Final Master's Capstone Project Award to the WAGS National Office by their deadline of October 11, 2026. Successful nominees will be notified directly by WAGS.

Sincerely,

Award Services