



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER  
UNIVERSITY

# TRI-COUNCIL GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION CGS-MASTERS

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# Outline

- Overview
- Evaluation Criteria
- Eligibility
- On-Line Forms and Tips
- Quotas and Where to Apply
- Other Funding
- Help (!!!)





# The Scholarships

- 3000 national scholarships at Masters level
  - SSHRC 1365
  - NSERC 840
  - CIHR 795
- Value is \$17,500
- Tenable only at an eligible Canadian university
- 12 months of funding
- You can only hold one of these scholarships in your lifetime
- Designed to support a research-based Masters degree program





# Eligibility

- Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada
- Enrolled in / applying for full-time admission to an eligible graduate program at the master's or doctoral level at a Canadian university with a CGS M allocation
- Have completed, as of December 31 of the year of application, between zero and 12 months of full-time studies (or full-time equivalent) in:
  - Master's program; **or**
  - Doctoral program, if admitted to doctoral program directly from Bachelor's (never registered in M program), or are registered in combined Master's-PhD program); **or**
  - Master's program, fast-tracking from Master's to Doctoral program within 12 months of starting Master's; and
- Have achieved a first-class average, as determined by the host university, in the last two completed years of study (full-time equivalent)
  - **IMPORTANT CAVEAT** – Universities can override this requirement





# Program of Study Eligibility

- Must have a significant research component
- Original, autonomous research that leads to the completion of
  - Thesis
  - Major research project
  - Dissertation
  - Scholarly publication
  - Performance, recital and/or exhibit that is merit/expert reviewed at the institutional level as a requirement for completion of the program
- Master's programs that are based only on course work are not eligible
- Joint programs with a professional degree (e.g. MD/PhD, DVM/PhD, JD/PhD, MBA/PhD, MA/MBA) are eligible if significant research component
  - You must justify and explain!
- Clinically-oriented programs of study, including clinical psychology are also eligible programs if significant research component





# Subject Matter Eligibility

- You will identify your proposed "field of research"
  - Health
  - Natural sciences and engineering
  - Social sciences and humanities
- Universities are responsible for approving this categorization, and may override
- Universities can only award scholarships according to the agency-specific CGS M allocations they receive
  - Example: Health application would be awarded a CIHR CGS-M, but if the university has no CIHR allocation, you are not approved
- You must ensure you submit to a university that has an allocation for the field of research you wish to pursue
- Applications deemed by a host university to have been labeled incorrectly will be re-labeled
- Universities must ensure that agency-specific scholarships are awarded to applications eligible under each agency's research subject matter guidelines
- When in doubt, contact Research Office AND contact the graduate studies office at the university where you intend to apply for admission for further guidance on subject matter eligibility





# Agency Subject Matter Guidelines

- SSHRC
  - Primarily in the social sciences and humanities
  - Intended outcome must primarily be to add to our understanding and knowledge of individuals, groups, and societies - what we think, how we live and how we interact with each other and the world around us
- NSERC
  - Primarily in the natural sciences and engineering;
  - Objectives must be, primarily, to advance knowledge in one of the natural sciences or in engineering
- CIHR
  - Primarily improve or have an impact on health and/or produce more effective health services and products and/or strengthen the Canadian health care system
- <http://www.science.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=en&n=FEE7261A-1>





# Application Process Overview

- Universities with graduate programs have been given scholarships to offer
- Students complete a single, generic, application using the Research Portal and the Canadian Common CV
- Students submit application to up to 3 universities where they wish to be considered
- Universities have their own individual selection processes but must use common, pre-defined evaluation criteria
- Universities inform students of results
- **Overall success rate is 35%, but 40% for applicants from small universities like STFX**







# Timelines and Key Dates

- December 1 – Application deadline
- December to March – Evaluation period
  - There will be NO communication with applicants nor release of results of results during this period
  - **CAVEAT** – may be offers of “minimum level of support”
- April 1 – all universities release results to all students using the Research Portal
  - Offer, Alternate List, Not Approved, Ineligible
  - Students have 3 weeks to accept or decline offer(s)
- April 22 – next round of offers made to students on Alternate Lists, if universities receive notices of declined offers
- 3 week process continues until all scholarships are offered and accepted





# Conditions of Award

- Must be held at the university from where the offer is made
- **Not** portable between universities
- May be portable **within** the host university and within the same field (e.g. change of department)
- As long as award eligibility requirements continue to be met
- And at the discretion of the host university
- Must comply with agency regulations concerning acceptance, start date, etc





# Evaluation Criteria

- 50% Academic excellence
- 30% Research potential
- 20% Personal characteristics and interpersonal skills





# Academic Excellence

- Academic record (first class average)
- Scholarships and awards held
- Duration of previous studies
- Type of program and courses pursued
- Course load
- Relative standing (if available)





# Research Potential

- 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
  - **Note: You are not bound to do exactly what you propose**
- 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





# Personal Characteristics and Interpersonal Skills

- 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
- Be as explicit and descriptive as possible, demonstrate how you stand out from others





# Making the Application

- Research Portal
  - Access the application form
- Canadian Common CV
  - Create your CV in the fields required
  - Will be stored in the system for future use (just need to update!)





# Research Portal (The Form)

- There are direct links from CGS-M or each of NSERC, SSHRC, and CIHR
- Create an account / user profile
- Create application
- Complete all sections and validate
- Upload 2 PDF files as per instructions
- Upload CCV reference # as per instructions
- Send “invitations” to two (2) references
  - The auto-email might go to their “junk” mailbox
  - If they are having difficulty, ask them to contact David Bruce, Office of Research Services
- Submit once everything is complete







# Transcripts

- Obtain latest official transcript from your current university
- Obtain transcripts from any other university where you have taken courses:
  - Transferred from another university
  - Summer courses (such as from Athabaska University)
  - Exchange / abroad programs
- Scan all together as one PDF
  - Be sure to include the grading scheme if found on the back page of the transcript (just scan once)
- Upload to Research Portal Form





# Research Portal – Key Points

- Access “Table of Contents” menu on the right
- Select a “field of research”
  - There is no selection of agency / scholarship type
- Select up to 3 host organizations
  - Drop down menu – only becomes active once you complete the first part of the “Application” screen
  - “Faculty” refers to broad organization group like “Arts”, not the name of an individual
- Special Circumstances (**OPTIONAL, ONLY IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY**)
  - Describe anything you want the committee to take into consideration that may have affected your research, professional career, record of academic or research achievement or completion of degrees (5,000 characters incl spaces)
- Preview from any screen
- Generate full PDF preview from Application Overview screen





# Canadian Common CV

- Register, create account
- From drop down menu, choose CV, then FUNDING, then CGS-Masters
- Complete all sections
- Verify
- Submit (you submit the CV to “yourself”)
- From drop down menu, choose History
- Insert CCV reference number from the “History” menu into your application





# Canadian Common CV

- Personal Information
- User Profile
- Education
- Recognitions
- Employment
- Research Funding History
- Activities
- Memberships
- Contributions (publications, artistic performances, etc)
  - It is OK to have some (most!) of these items blank if you have nothing to report / show – will be based on your experience and stage of education / career
- “Pencil” to edit, “check” is no errors, “X” is error, and “trash can” is delete
- There is no “save” function; as you complete something and choose “done” it is saved in your master CV file





# The Research Proposal

- 2 pages only
- Use Page 1 (only) to clearly outline your proposed Masters research activity
  - Provide a detailed description, be as specific as possible
  - Provide background information to position your proposed research within the context of the current knowledge in the field
  - Objectives and hypothesis
  - Experimental or theoretical approach to be taken (citing literature pertinent to the proposal)
  - Methods and procedures
  - State the significance of the proposed research to a field or fields
- **NOTE** – write in your disciplinary style to the extent that is possible
- **Do not embed URLs or refer to “more details found in...”**
- Use Page 2 to provide a list of citations / bibliography





# Important Formatting Issues

- 2 page PDF attachment
- Follow format instructions carefully:
  - Text 12 pt Times New Roman font
  - Single-spaced, with no more than 6 lines of type per inch
  - Default in WORD is 1.08, so change it
  - All margins set at a minimum of 3/4"
  - Use a left-justified, standard page layout
  - Include your name in the page header (on every page)
  - Number the pages sequentially





# Tips and Suggestions (1)

- Grammar, spelling, punctuation, syntax are all important and do matter
- Be clear and specific about your proposed research
  - Interesting, doable, viable
  - Scientific / scholarly / disciplinary merit
  - How it will contribute to your field
  - If appropriate, mention a specific faculty member or research lab that you intend to work with (IF applying to only one university)
- Be sure to have a faculty member and someone else read the final draft of your research proposal and statement to be sure that it reads well
- Do the “Summary of Proposal” module, last, once the rest of the application is full and complete (less than half page, 1,800 characters)
- David Bruce available to assist with review and comment





## Tips and Suggestions (2)

- Make yourself stand out from everyone else
- Embed key phrases in the research proposal:
  - “I have been trained on and used the NMR at STFX to perform XXX, and I will use this experience to perform the following procedures....”
  - “For my honours work I was trained on how to properly transcribe and interpret German writing from the 1850s, and for my Masters work I will....”
- Give your referees concrete examples of what you have done and ask them to illustrate these in their reference for you
- Find ways to use the CCV sections to your advantage (but be honest and truthful)







## Tips and Suggestions (3)

- Special Circumstances (optional):
  - Only use if appropriate and if you have something to say
- Describe any special considerations that have had an effect on your academic performance, research, or gaps in the chronology of your experience
  - Include any considerations that may have resulted in delays in your academic career or disseminating your research results
  - Health problems, family responsibilities, disabilities or other circumstances
  - COVID-19
- Explain the **IMPACT**
- No requirement to disclose personal information about specific illnesses, diagnoses, etc
- There is a similar section in the CCV, which can briefly complete with dates and basic information, but use this part of the form for the detailed explanation





## Tips and Suggestions (4)

- For HEALTH applications only (if you select Health as the “Field of Research” on the Research Portal)
- You must provide a CIHR Personal Identification Number (PIN)
- To register for a CIHR PIN, you must first register for a [ResearchNet account](#)
- Create an account and request a PIN
- It takes up to one full working day to process your CIHR PIN request





# Important Things to Know

- **Start EARLY**, do not wait till the last few days to start the process
- You do not rank order your preferences about which universities you wish to send your application to
- Universities are blind to how many or where you sent your scholarship application
- No reference letters
  - 2 referees (current faculty whom you invite) complete an evaluation / ranking of you on the system and provide comments





# References (1)

- Will rank you and comment on the following:
  - Academic excellence
  - Research potential
  - Personal characteristics and interpersonal skills
- Rank: Top 2%, Top 5%, Top 10%, Top 25%, Below Top 25%, Unable to Comment
- 2,400 character (incl spaces) commentary on each
- Once they complete and validate their form, they exit; you will then see a message on your “Application Overview” page stating that the reference has been completed
  - You cannot access / see the reference





## References (2)

- Choose your references carefully – who will be able to clearly describe your attributes and give examples?
- Be sure to meet with them and discuss your proposal, interests, plans, the universities you are applying to
- Give them examples of your experience that they can talk about in the reference
  - Research experience (specific equipment or techniques you have been trained in and how it relates to the research proposal / Masters, etc)
  - Lab work, teaching, mentoring, etc
  - Relevant activities (involved in a society, a relevant work experience, leadership activities, etc)
- Ask them to complete the reference by November 24 (this gives you one week to followup with them if it is not complete)
  - You can “set a deadline” in the application form when you create the invitation





# Self-Identification for Equity Diversity, and Inclusion

- When you first register with the system, you will be presented with a “self-identification” screen
- Questions concerning:
  - Gender, visible minority status, Indigenous status, disability status, etc
- Completion of this is mandatory but you have the option of “prefer not to answer” for each
- Collected for administrative data purposes only





# Consent to Disclosure of Personal Information

- I understand that maintaining public trust in the integrity of researchers is fundamental to building a knowledge-based society.
- By submitting an application, by linking my CV to an application led by another researcher or institution, or by accepting funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and/or the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), **I affirm that I have read and I agree to respect all the policies of these agencies that are relevant to my research, including the Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research.**
- In cases of a serious breach of agency policy, the agency may **publicly disclose my name**, the nature of the breach, the institution where I was employed at the time of the breach and the institution where I am currently employed. I accept this as a condition of applying for, or receiving, agency funding and I consent to such disclosure.





# University Quotas

- Determined by the average number of CGS M awards held by students at the university of study over the past 3 years in EACH field
- Most universities with large quotas get way more applications
- UoT 289/1432; UBC199/984; McG171/777; Ottawa95/518; Queens70/468

Universities	CIHR	NSERC	SSHRC	Total
STFX	1	2	4	7
McGill University	82	48	79	209
UNB	2	7	12	21
Dalhousie University	18	19	20	57
University of Victoria	6	15	33	54







# Deciding Where to Apply

- Start early with a conversation with your current supervisor
- You should be looking for a faculty supervisor / program that aligns with your interests and research proposal
- Make contact and discuss
- Having made contact will not hurt your chances, it can only help
- Examine the university quotas to help you assess your chances





# Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplements

- Extra funds to carry out field research or data collection or a research training experience outside of Canada as part of your approved research project
- Up to \$6,000
  - Eligible – Travel, living and other expenses such as accommodation, meals, tuition, insurance and other necessary, non-research related costs
  - Costs directly related to the research must be covered by other funding sources
- Minimum of 2 months, maximum of 6 months
- Must hold a concurrent CGS-M
- Apply through the university where you hold the CGS-M





# Indigenous Applicants

- Indigenous Scholars Awards and Supplements Pilot Initiative
- If approved, you get a \$5,000 “Indigenous Scholars Supplement”
- If placed on an Alternates, you get \$17,500 “Indigenous Scholars Award”, plus the \$5,000 supplement
- Choose this in “Supplements/Joint Initiatives”
- Complete a 3,000 character personal statement
- Describe how your proposed research project, career and/or education goals have been informed by your experience as a First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis person.
- If appropriate, discuss your existing connection, or efforts to develop or re-establish a link, with your Indigenous community.





# National Defence Supplements

- Mobilizing Insights in Defence and Security (MINDS) Scholarship Initiative
- Social science / humanities applicants only
- Scholarships for Indigenous Students \$17,500
- In addition to CGS-M award
  - Select “MINDS Master’s Scholarships for Indigenous Students”
- Scholarship Initiative Supplements \$10,000
  - Select “MINDS Scholarship Initiative Supplements”





# Systematics Research Supplements

- Offered by [Canadian Museum of Nature](#)
- \$5,000 each
- Science applicants only, must submit by April 30
- Must be doing research project directly related to an area of systematics, such as taxonomy, evolution, biogeography, phylogeny and crystal chemistry, within the disciplines of zoology, botany, paleontology or mineralogy.
- Other conditions apply, read carefully





# Research in the Field of Impact Assessment Supplements

- Offered by [Impact Assessment Agency of Canada](#)
- 20 awards of \$10,000 each
- Science applicants only
- Research involving impact assessments, including project level, regional, and strategic assessments
- No separate application or extra information required
- Automatic consideration if any of the following keywords are in your application:
  - Environmental assessment, impact assessment, sustainability or sustainable environments, cumulative environmental effect, natural resource(s), pipeline(s), oil sands, mining, environmental management, best environmental practices, artificial intelligence (related to environment), wildlife (monitoring, assessment, and impacts on), aquatic ecosystems, terrestrial ecosystems, habitat, precautionary principle, risk or uncertainty (related to environment), mitigation, monitoring (related to environment), citizen science, best available technology





# Other Science Opportunities

- Indirect support through research grants
- Collaborative Research and Training Experience Program (CREATE)
- NSERC Indigenous Student Ambassadors
- Summer Programs in Japan or Taiwan
- Supplements from other organizations
- See NSERC website under **Postgraduate Programs**
- Example: Environment Canada Atmospheric and Meteorological Graduate Supplements, \$5,000





# NS Graduate Scholarships

- Universities directly administer the provincial program
- Supervisor nominates new or continuing grad students
- Funds for both Masters (up to \$10,000) and PhD (up to \$15,000)
- Feb 15 deadline using internal form
- Must be doing thesis in a provincial priority sector
- Must be full time graduate student







# Ontario Graduate Scholarships

- Apply directly to universities in Ontario if this is where you intend to go
  - Check with the graduate studies office where you wish to apply
- \$5,000 per term to maximum of \$15,000 per year
- Application is very similar to the CGS-M





# Where to Get Help

- David Bruce, Research Services (Nicholson 715)
- Your current supervisors / faculty
- Office of Graduate Studies where you intend to apply
- Tri-Council agencies





# Key Websites

- [General](#)
- [CGS-M Resources](#)
- [University Quotas](#)
- [Application Instructions](#)
- [Canadian Common CV](#)
- [NSERC](#)
- [SSHRC](#)
- [CIHR](#)

