Fall 2018 Vanier-CIHR, NSERC & SSHRC CGS Doctoral Scholarship Application Process

The Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships Doctoral awards are very prestigious and, as such, are highly competitive competitions. Award winners are selected according to criteria with a higher level of achievement than a typical doctoral scholarship. A two-stage internal review process is in place at McMaster to help identify the strongest applications and to select the most competitive candidates in each mandate area of CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC.

Important Deadlines

- **Tuesday, September 11, 2018, 10:00 am.** Stage 1 Letter of Intent (LOI) package is due to SGS.
- **Thursday, October 11, 2018, 10:00 am.** Stage 2 endorsed candidate applications are due to SGS.
- **Wednesday, October 24, 2018, 11:59 pm** McMaster Internal ResearchNet deadline (for students): Stage 2 endorsed candidates will submit a complete application on ResearchNet.
- **Wednesday, October 31, 2018 (8:00 pm Eastern Time)** Vanier Deadline McMaster must forward their selected nominations to the Vanier CGS program.

Please refer to following pages for complete details.


McMaster’s Vanier application quotas

- CIHR - 10 applications
- NSERC - 7 applications
- SSHRC - 4 applications

Determining the area of research before you begin your application

Please refer to Selecting the Appropriate Federal Granting Agency.

The candidate’s proposed research project and doctoral program of study must be eligible within the mandate of the federal granting agency to which the nomination is submitted. If in doubt, applicants should consult with the Secretariat by sending an e-mail to vanier@cihr-irsc.gc.ca in advance of submitting a Stage One LOI package to McMaster. This also applies to applications involving interdisciplinary fields of research or research areas that span the mandates of two or more of the federal granting agencies.

- Information on CIHRs mandate and subject matter eligibility is available on the CIHR website;
- Information on NSERCs mandate and subject matter eligibility is available on the NSERC website;
- Information on SSHRCs mandate and subject matter eligibility is available on the SSHRC website;
- Additional information on selecting the appropriate federal granting is available at science.gc.ca website
Stage 1

Stage 1: Letter of Intent (LOI) package must include the following documents:

**Due date:** Tuesday, September 11, 2018, 10:00 am

Applicants must have the graduate administrator from their department submit the complete Letter of Intent (LOI) package, to the School of Graduate Studies. Please have them supply all documents as one pdf (in the order of the application checklist) to graduatescholarships@mcmaster.ca. McMaster's email system only delivers messages whose total size is less than 25 megabytes. If your pdf exceeds 25 megabytes, please divide package into 2 pdf files and email each file in a separate message.

**Notes:** Applications must be scanned in black and white. Submit only one application per email with the following naming convention: LASTNAME_VANIER_2018.

1. **Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship Application Checklist**

2. **Graduate Studies Approval Form:**
   
   *To be completed by the proposed supervisor, the applicant and the department*

   The Approval Form is included with the Vanier documents in this package.

3. **Research Proposal:**
   
   *To be completed by applicant in conjunction with proposed supervisor*

   **Maximum of 2 pages** including graphs and images and must follow Vanier's *Presentation standards for attached documents.* (Please refer to page 10 of this document)

   This document does not include your project references. That is a separate document that is not required at Stage 1.

   Provide a detailed description of your proposed research project for the period during which you are to hold the Vanier CGS.
   
   - Provide background information to position your proposed research within the context of the current knowledge in the field.
   - Be as specific as possible while keeping in mind that Vanier CGS selection committees are multi-disciplinary. Wherever possible, use non-technical terms and avoid jargon. Define any technical or discipline-specific terms.
   - State the objectives, hypothesis, research question and your specific role.
   - Outline the experimental or theoretical approach to be taken (citing literature pertinent to the proposal), the methods and procedures to be used and the contribution of the project to the advancement of knowledge.
   - Describe the benefit conferred by undertaking your research at the nominating institution (e.g. supervisor/departmental specialization, lab facilities, funding opportunities, support structures offered/in place).
   - If your research proposal includes human subjects (including interview processes), address how you have / will comply with your institution’s Ethics Review Board processes.
   - If your potential or current PhD supervisor is unable to provide you with a reference letter, briefly explain why.
If you are proposing to conduct research involving Indigenous Peoples, the research proposal should reflect that you and your host institution are aware of and are referring to the relevant principles and protocols established for this type of research.

You are also encouraged to indicate, when applicable, how diversity (gender, sex, age, culture, religion, etc.) has been taken into account in your proposed research. While accounting for diversity is not an evaluation criterion, doing so has the potential to increase the rigour and usefulness of the research. Refer to the list of resources intended to help applicants, institutions, referees, and evaluators consider equity, diversity, and inclusion in their application.

As you write your research proposal, employ the citation style common to your field of research. Do not use more than one citation style. Footnotes or endnotes should be employed for citation purposes only, and should not elaborate on the information contained in the 2-page research proposal. For guidance on how to best present your Research Proposal to the selection committee, we recommend consulting with your supervisor, mentor, department, or faculty.

Remember that your program of study will be evaluated by a multi-disciplinary committee (non-specialist audience), and as such should be written in non-technical terms, avoiding jargon.

**Note:** All information about interruptions to your academic career and choice of nominating institution should be included either in the Personal Leadership Statement or the Research Proposal.

4. **Personal Leadership Statement**

*To be completed by applicant*

**Maximum 2** pages and must follow Vanier's *Presentation standards for attached documents.*

(Please refer to page 10 of this document)

This document should present to the committee a clear statement of what challenges and opportunities have shaped your doctoral research. Before crafting your Personal Leadership Statement, take a moment to review the instructions for the selection committee on evaluating this criterion.

When crafting your Personal Leadership Statement, consider the following:

- Leadership can take many forms. When crafting this statement, be sure to outline not just your accomplishments for the committee, but how those accomplishments required you to leverage your leadership skills to achieve your goals.
- The selection committee considers that volunteerism, outstanding achievement in sports or the arts, and employment in leadership positions do not demonstrate leadership in and of themselves. When including leadership in these and other areas in your Personal Leadership Statement, be sure to outline how you have gone above and beyond the expected norms in those areas in order to overcome obstacles, foster others, spearhead change, or otherwise demonstrate leadership.
• Define your career goals and trajectory, and outline for the committee the ways in which you have created opportunities for yourself and others, how you have overcome obstacles to your vision, and how your PhD research, knowledge dissemination and mentorship activities will help accomplish those goals.

• How have you fostered your ability to lead others, and how have you leveraged that skill?

• What led you to doctoral research? How have your life experiences and personal circumstances (which may include administrative responsibilities, maternity/parental leave, childrearing, illness, cultural or community responsibilities, socio-economic context, trauma and loss, or health-related family responsibilities) shaped your academic, research, and leadership choices, challenges, and successes?

• How has your life driven you to share and disseminate your research?

• How does your nominating institution provide an environment that nurtures your leadership skills?

Your academic transcript, your CCV, and your reference letters will provide details of your commitments and accomplishments, but this essay gives you the opportunity to present the overarching narrative about your life, leadership accomplishments, and research goals.

Note: All information about interruptions to your academic career, choice of nominating institution, and mobility should be included either in the Personal Leadership Statement or the Research Proposal.

5. Official Academic Transcripts:
Applicants must include copies of all official undergraduate and graduate transcripts and legends.

6. Canadian Common Curriculum Vitae (CCV):
To be completed by applicant
If you don’t have a CCV account, register for one. When creating your CCV, select the Vanier-Banting academic template. For further information about the CCV or to register for an account, please visit: https://ccv-cvc.ca/indexresearcher-eng.frm

7. Special Circumstances (optional):
To be completed by applicant
Maximum 1 page- and must follow Vanier’s Presentation standards for attached documents. (Please refer to page 10 of this document)

This document is completed in order to provide an accurate calculation of the number of graduate studies months completed. If you are registered in a combined undergraduate and doctoral program (e.g., MD/PhD), use this document to provide a timeline of your undergraduate versus doctoral program studies, broken down by semester. This calculation must be consistent with the transcripts provided. For purposes of this calculation, the undergraduate portion will not count towards the number of months completed.

If you have been enrolled part-time during your PhD studies, specify which semesters.
Note: No other information included in this document will be forwarded to the committee. All information about interruptions to your academic career and choice of nominating institution should be included either in the Personal Leadership Statement or the Research Proposal.

8. Nomination Letter:
Nomination letter to be completed/signed by the Department Chair nominating the candidate

Maximum of 2 pages and must follow the specifications found in Presentation standards for attached documents (found on Page 10). The letter must also be on McMaster institutional letterhead and signed by the Department Chair. Please contact the School of Graduate Studies if an equivalent or designate is required to complete the letter for the Department Chair.

The nomination letter is the Institution’s opportunity to outline for the selection committee what makes the nominee unique. It should give the committee context for the nominee’s achievements – outline how the nominee is exceptional and how the institution both fosters and benefits the student (e.g., what kind of benefits or advantages the institution will offer). Address the following points:

The nomination letter should address the following points:

1. Rationale for the choice of candidate:
   - Highlight the factors used to determine why the student is deserving of a Vanier CGS. Clearly articulate the excellence of the candidate according to the three selection criteria: Academic Excellence, Research Potential and Leadership (potential and demonstrated ability). Ensure that the letters focus on leadership potential and demonstrated abilities.

2. Research training environment:
   - Elaborate on the appropriateness of the supervisor in terms of resources, funding, publications, their research and training environment. Elaborate on the funding, facilities/resources and personnel that will be made available to support the candidate as they carry out their proposed research and develop their leadership potential.
   - Discuss how the research interests/background of the student and supervisor align with the institution’s priorities. (Ensure that claims about the uniqueness of the research environment are accurate.)
   - Discuss how the supervisor’s commitment will be available to support the candidate in furthering their professional and leadership development.
   - If known, comment on the research group and/or faculty with whom the candidate will interact and how the Canadian institution will support the development of the candidate’s leadership potential. If unknown, address the reasons behind why the candidate has not selected a supervisor and research environment.

3. Rationale of recruiting the candidate:
   - Outline how the institution’s research environment will foster the student’s research interest and leadership skills.
   - Elaborate on the commitment from the department or university as to what kind of benefits they will offer the potential scholar.
4. Recruitment:
   o Comment on how the institution’s nomination of the candidate promotes the recruitment of new foreign or Canadian candidates to Canadian institutions.
   o If the candidate has completed a previous degree within your institution, provide an explanation as to why it is in the candidate’s best interest to stay at the same institution (i.e. research/paid institution (or its affiliate), supervisor or co-supervisor, availability of specialized equipment).

5. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:
   o Comment on the university's commitment to fostering equity, diversity and inclusion as part of the recruitment and nomination processes.
   o Refer to the new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion section of the Vanier website for further information.

**SGS (LOI) Internal Adjudication Meeting**
Candidates are evaluated and selected on the basis of the following three criteria, which are weighted equally:
- [Academic Excellence](#)
- [Research Potential](#)
- [Leadership (potential and demonstrated ability)](#)
Please click on the above links for detailed information about the three criteria.

**Week of September 24, 2018**
SGS anticipated notification to **Stage 1 Endorsed and Non-Endorsed Candidates.**
Stage 2 - For Applicants

Stage 2: pdf of full application package due to Graduate Studies

Due Date: Thursday, October 11, 2018, 10:00 am

1. Register for a ResearchNet account if you don’t have one.
   https://www.researchnet-recherchenet.ca/rnr16/LoginServlet?language=E

2. Link your CCV to your ResearchNet account.

3. Complete the application on ResearchNet and also create and upload all the required documents to your application. Please ensure all your attachments to your application are prepared according to Vanier’s Presentation standards for attached document (Please refer to page 10 of this document). If you were required to make any changes to the documents you submitted at Stage One, please do so before you upload them to your application.

4. Please collaborate with your graduate administrator who will assist you in uploading your transcripts and legends. For students including foreign transcripts, the institution must include a standard table or record that outlines the institution’s understanding of the foreign transcript. Student explanations of grades will not be forwarded to the committee for evaluation. For more information about foreign transcript grade conversion to Ontario admission equivalencies, please access the OURA Graduate Studies International Admission Placement Guide: http://oura.ca/resources-for-members/graduate-studies-international-admission-placement-guide/. Department graduate administrators should contact graduatescholarships@mcmaster.ca if they require the password to access this website. The transcripts can be uploaded by your department administrator only after you have submitted your application on ResearchNet by McMaster’s Internal ResearchNet Deadline of Wednesday, October 24, 2018 11:59pm.

5. Nomination Letter - The School of Graduate Studies’ Associate Dean from your faculty will contact your Department Chair with any feedback or suggested changes to your letter. You are not required to resubmit this letter at Stage 2.

6. Please remember to identify your referees as soon as possible and follow the instructions on ResearchNet in order for each referee to receive the email with the link to complete the reference letter, instructions, and due date. ResearchNet does not grant the referees access to view the application. You will not be able to submit your application to ResearchNet until the reference letters are uploaded to your application. It is important to note that it is the applicant’s sole responsibility to follow up with referees to ensure the assessments are submitted at least two (2) days (October 22, 2018 11:59pm EDT) prior to McMaster’s Internal ResearchNet Deadline of Wednesday, October 24, 2018, 11:59 pm EDT. This is a link that you can provide to your referees to assist them with the writing their reference letters: http://www.vanier.gc.ca/en/information_for_referees-information_a_l_intention_des_repondants.html.

7. The two leadership reference letters are separate from the two assessments uploaded to ResearchNet by your referees. You, the applicant, are responsible for procuring and uploading the leadership reference letters in PDF format to your ResearchNet application. It cannot be submitted by the letter-writer via ResearchNet.

Note: An invitation to complete a full application on ResearchNet does not guarantee the University will give the candidate final endorsed approval for nomination to the national competition.
Please print all the documents from your application on ResearchNet (excluding ANY of your reference letters) and submit it as one pdf to graduatescholarships@mcmaster.ca no later than Thursday, October 11, 2018, 10:00 am. Please ensure the application is scanned in black and white. McMaster’s email system only delivers messages whose total size is less than 25 megabytes. If your pdf exceeds 25 megabytes, please divide package into 2 pdf files and email each file in a separate message.

The School of Graduate Studies will contact the endorsed and non-endorsed Stage 2 candidates by Friday, October 19, 2018.

All Stage 2 endorsed candidates must have their Vanier ResearchNet application complete, including reference letters, by McMaster’s Internal ResearchNet deadline of Wednesday, October 24, 2018 11:59 pm.
Stage 2 - For Department Chair and Associate Dean and Graduate Administrator

Nomination Letter

The Associate Dean from the applicant’s Faculty will contact the applicant’s Department Chair with any feedback or changes to the letter after the Stage One meeting. The Associate Dean may assist the Department Chair in the redrafting of the letter.

The revised nomination letter is to be submitted by the Department Chair or Associate Dean to the School of Graduate Studies at graduatescholarships@mcmaster.ca by Tuesday, October 23, 2018.

Transcripts:

Transcripts can be uploaded by the Graduate Administrator (or equivalent) only after the applicant has submitted their application on ResearchNet by our internal deadline of Wednesday, October 24, 2018 11:59 pm.

In order for a Graduate Administrator to be able to upload the transcripts, he/she must create an account in ResearchNet to receive access as a “Secondary User”. Upon account confirmation from ResearchNet, please notify The School of Graduate Studies at graduatescholarships@mcmaster.ca and include the name and email address that was used to create the ResearchNet account;

Note: Graduate Administrators (or equivalent) who already have an existing account with ResearchNet for Vanier are not required to create a new account for this year’s Vanier Competition.

ResearchNet link: ResearchNet
References

Presentation Standards for Attached Documents

All attachments to your application must be prepared according to the standards provided. Applications submitted that are not prepared according to the instructions provided may be deemed ineligible.

If you have supporting documents written in a language other than English or French, you are required to submit a certified translation of these documents.

Formatting instructions to prepare your documents:

- Pages must be 8 ½” x 11” (216 mm x 279 mm).
- Insert a minimum margin of 2 cm (3/4 inch) around the page (top, bottom and sides).
- Use a minimum font size of 10-point Arial font, black type. Maximum of six lines per inch. Do not use condensed/narrow font sizes, type density, or line spacing. Smaller text in tables, charts, figures, and graphs is acceptable as long as it is legible when the page is viewed at 100%.
- Photo-reduce the supporting documents if the originals are larger than 21.25 x 27.5 cm / 8.5” x 11”.
- Any images, diagrams, technical drawings, or any other image must be contained within allowable page limits.
- Attachments must be uploaded in PDF format (unprotected).
- The size of the attached document(s) cannot exceed 30 MB per document.
- For documents prepared by the applicant: At the top of each page, indicate your name and the title of the document as it appears in the instructions.
- For documents prepared by the institution: These must all be on institutional letterhead.
- For multi-page attachments, number the pages sequentially.

ResearchNet application process: general information

1. In ResearchNet, complete all tasks listed for the Vanier CGS application.
2. Preview the Full Application Package version of your application in ResearchNet, using the "Preview Application Materials” task, to ensure that your application is complete. Note: What you see previewed is exactly how your application will look when submitted electronically to the Canadian nominating institution and to the Vanier CGS program.
3. Print the entire application.
4. Save the pdf version of the entire, completed application.
5. Submit the completed electronic application through ResearchNet by completing the "Consent and Submit Application” task. Note: McMaster cannot accept your application until you complete this task.
6. For technical help, call 1-888-603-4178 or 613-954-1968 or email support@cihr-irsc.gc.ca from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm. Eastern Time.
7. For program-related help, please contact vanier@cihr-irsc.gc.ca.
Contacts

School of Graduate Studies:
graduatescholarships@mcmaster.ca

Vanier Program Information:
vaniel@cihr-irsc.gc.ca

Vanier Application Technical Support (ResearchNet):
support@cihr-irsc.gc.ca

Canadian Common CV:
CCV-CVC@cihr-irsc.gc.ca

For complete instructions on how to complete a Vanier ResearchNet application, please refer to the Vanier website.