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Date: May 22, 2024

To: Department Chairs/Graduate Coordinators, Graduate Program Administrators, Students/Applicants

From: Award Services, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

Re: **2024-2025 Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship Competition**

The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) is pleased to announce the details of the 2024-2025 Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship (CGS) competition at the University of Alberta (U of A). Although the competition has not yet been formally launched by the Vanier-Banting Secretariat (housed within CIHR, on behalf of Canada's three granting agencies – CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC), notification is hereby provided of the institutional application and nomination process.

The objective of the Vanier CGS Program ($50,000/year for 3 years) is to attract and retain world-class doctoral students and establish Canada as a global centre of excellence in research and higher learning. Vanier Scholars demonstrate leadership skills and a high standard of scholarly achievement in graduate studies in the social sciences and humanities, natural sciences and/or engineering and health.

Scholarships are distributed equally between the three federal granting agencies:

- Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR): university quota - 8
- Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC): university quota - 13
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC): university quota - 6

Note that internal processes and requirements are subject to change once Vanier has officially announced the program guidelines and deadlines, which will be approximately mid-end of June 2024; any revisions and confirmed dates will be circulated. To assist in the promotion of this doctoral scholarship, we request departments disseminate information about this year's national competition to their students and potential applicants.

Eligibility

Applicants are to review the Vanier CGS program website for complete eligibility criteria and requirements. It is the applicant's responsibility to read all eligibility criteria and instructions on Vanier's website and GPS's website, and be familiar with the application process before applying. Applications

that do not meet all of the eligibility criteria will be deemed ineligible.

Application Procedures and Department Commitment

Applicants: This is a direct application whereby students apply through CIHR's online application system [ResearchNet,](#) in accordance with the [Vanier application/nomination process](#). Applicants are to follow the university's process, transcript requirements, and deadlines available on [GPS's website](#).

September 5, 2024: Institutional deadline for students to submit their complete application in ResearchNet (including leadership letters of reference, referee assessments, and other attached documents as described in [Vanier's application instructions](#)). Students must also submit their transcripts to GPS (via the Student Service Centre [portal](#); *Student Services Catalogue/Contact GPS/Scholarships, Loans, and Funding*) by September 5. Refer to the full competition outline below. **Late submissions of applications or transcripts will not be accepted.**

Departments: There is no nomination, list, or ranking required by the department. However, departments will be required to confirm their commitment to support their students/applicants in the institutional review process. If the departments' commitment is confirmed and the applicant is selected to be forwarded for the national competition (following final adjudication), this will require departments to provide a nomination letter as part of the university's nomination submission to Vanier. The process is as follows:

1. Once the application closes in ResearchNet, departments will be notified by GPS of the students who applied. At this time, they will be given the opportunity to decide whether or not to support the student in this year's Vanier CGS competition.

Note that applications will not be shared with departments (nor can the ResearchNet application system grant viewing access to departments), but departments may request copies from the student should they want it for their own internal review purposes. Departments may request students to provide the following to help facilitate the nomination process:

- A PDF copy of the student's full Vanier application (printable from ResearchNet)
- Leadership reference letters: letters are given directly to students; therefore, students may provide a copy to their department
- Academic reference letters: referees are required to submit a confidential online form, and therefore letters are not available to students. If academic reference letters are required for writing a nomination letter, departments must contact the referee(s) directly

2. GPS's Graduate Scholarship Committee (GSC) will adjudicate the applications and will select a shortlist of candidates. Departments will be notified by GPS of the shortlisted candidates selected to be forwarded to the national competition.
3. Departments that support their shortlisted candidates for federal review will be required to write a

two page nomination letter (as the *'Department head equivalent',* as defined by Vanier). GPS will provide further instructions at this time. Departments may refer to the attached *Appendix - 2024-2025 Vanier Scholarship: Nomination Letter Guide for Departments* for nomination letter requirements should early preparation be preferred.

Applicants and departments are to take note of the following:

- The U of A may nominate applicants who self-identify as Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis) without those nominations being counted towards the university's quota. Applicants who wish to self-identify themselves as an Indigenous are to complete the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships (Vanier CGS): Voluntary Self-Identification Form and upload it within their application.

- Eligible candidates may apply to both the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships program and other agency-specific doctoral-level scholarship/fellowships programs (whether to the same or a different federal granting agency) in the same academic year, provided that the research proposed in each application falls within the mandate of the federal granting agency to which the application is submitted. For more information, refer to Identify area of research of Vanier's Application/nomination instructions.

  Note: since eligibility, evaluation criteria and competition deadlines are different; applications submitted to Vanier CGS are not considered in agency-specific doctoral award competitions. Students must apply to each program individually.

- Subject matter eligibility (research area): The onus is on the applicant to carefully consider which selection committee should review the application. Refer to Identify area of research of Vanier's Application/nomination instructions.

- Nominating institutions are encouraged to consider diversity on multiple levels (e.g., research discipline, official language, cultural background, citizenship) when considering which applicants to nominate for the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships (Vanier CGS) program. review the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion page.

- The Secretariat encourages applicants to identify any circumstances that may have delayed or interrupted their academic and/or career advancement (if applicable) in the Special Circumstances attachment of their nomination.

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The proposed timeline and process is as follows (subject to change):

Timeline 2024-2025:

Mid-late June (TBA)	• ResearchNet portal opens for applications • Students are to arrange their transcripts as early as possible
August (TBD)	• Anticipated Academic Success Centre (ASC) Virtual Workshop on Vanier Leadership Statements and Research Proposals
Thursday, September 5, 2024 11:59pm	• U of A internal (institutional) application deadline: ResearchNet portal closes – all applications are due in the system • Transcript submission deadline: all transcripts are due at GPS (via Student Services Centre Portal) as part of a complete Vanier application for university review (students cannot upload transcripts to ResearchNet) *note: GPS will include a summary describing the grading scale only for candidates selected for national review*
September 6, 2024	• GPS will notify departments of the students who applied • Departments will be required to confirm if they will commit to supporting the student(s) • Applicants will not have the opportunity to revise their application; only candidates selected for federal review may have their application returned for edits
September 11, 2024	• Deadline for departments to respond if they will or will not commit to supporting the student(s)
September 13, 2024 (latest)	• Applications are shared with GSC members for review and adjudication
Week of October 14 – 18, 2024 (latest)	• Final adjudication
Mid October 2024 (TBA)	• *Deadline to submit the list to Vanier identifying applications from Indigenous* (First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis) applicants above and beyond the institutional quota*
Monday, October 18, 2024	• GPS will notify departments of candidates selected for federal review • Departments are required to write two page nomination letter and submit to GPS (further instructions will be provided) • Selected candidates may opt for editing services from the ASC • Applications will be returned to selected candidates via ResearchNet for revisions

Friday, October 23, 2024	• Deadline for departments to send nomination letters to GPS
End of October 2024 (TBA)	• National deadline for GPS to submit nominations in ResearchNet for federal review • GPS will upload transcripts and an international grading system summary (if applicable) to selected candidates' applications
April 2025	• Final national results announced by Vanier • GPS will connect with recipients regarding award acceptance • Departments will be notified of all successful/unsuccessful results

For any questions regarding this year's competition, please contact grad.awards@ualberta.ca.

Sincerely,

GPS Award Services

Nomination Letters

- For candidates nominated for a Vanier CGS by GPS's Graduate Scholarship Committee

- To be completed/signed by the U of A Department Graduate Coordinator/Department Chair supporting the candidate. The Graduate Coordinator/Department Chair serves as the equivalent/designate for signing authority to support the candidates nomination

- Letter requirements are also available on [Vanier's website: Information for nominating institutions](#)

- The nomination letter should be a maximum of two pages in length and is the Institution's opportunity to outline for the selection committee what makes the nominee unique. This is the **primary** purpose of the nomination letter.

The rationale for choosing the candidate should be **emphasized** in the letter. 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:

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.
    - Highlight the candidate's achievements
2. Research training environment:
    - Elaborate on the appropriateness of the supervisor in terms of resources, funding, publications and other research outputs, 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.)
    - Elaborate on your institution's resources regarding any established research-related policies and protocols (e.g., OCAP® for First Nations or any established protocols by Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada; approvals for research involving the use of humans, animals or biohazards).
        - In the case of applications in which the proposed research respectfully involves and engages Indigenous communities, describe how respectful relationships are being developed with relevant Indigenous communities to engage their collaboration in the proposed research and to promote reciprocity in terms of the benefits derived from the research process and outcomes that are meaningful and culturally appropriate. Describe any support provided to facilitate collaborations between the applicant, the host institution and Indigenous communities/partners.

The following key concepts should be substantiated in the institution's statement:

- Indigenous or traditional knowledge
- Reciprocity
- Community
- Respect, relevance and contributions

For more information, see our [EDI page](#).

- o Discuss how the supervisor's commitment will be available to support the candidate in furthering their professional and leadership development.
- o 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:
    - o Outline how the institution's research environment will foster the student's research interest and leadership skills.
    - o 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).

Achieving a more equitable, diverse and inclusive Canadian research enterprise is essential for creating the excellent, innovative and impactful research necessary to seize opportunities and for responding to global challenges.

The creation of this equitable, diverse and inclusive research community is the responsibility of every member of the community, including applicants, selection committee members, referees, institutions, and the agencies.

Institutions can contribute to the three federal granting councils' efforts to counter systemic barriers, explicit and unconscious biases, and inequities by promoting the recruitment of groups underrepresented in sciences and by ensuring a strong level of institutional support is provided to these candidates in their application process.

The Secretariat acknowledges that certain circumstances may legitimately affect a nominee's record of research achievement. Institutions are encouraged to highlight in the *Nomination letter* the circumstances that have affected the candidates' path and how this nomination will lead to a more equitable, diverse and inclusive research community.