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Date: Wednesday, September 10, 2025

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

From: Award Services, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

Re: 2026 Canada Graduate Research Scholarships – Master's Competition

The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) is pleased to announce the details of the 2026 Canada Graduate Research Scholarship – Master's (CGRS M) competition (formerly the Canada Graduate Scholarship – Master's program [CGS M]). The CGRS M program, valued at \$27,000 for one year, has a single harmonized application process for the three federal granting Tri-Agencies: Natural Sciences & Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), the Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). The selection process and post-award administration are carried out at the institutional level, under the guidance of the three agencies.

The objective of the CGRS M program is to help develop research skills and assist in the training of highly qualified personnel by supporting students who demonstrate a high standard of achievement in undergraduate and early graduate studies.

Applicants must complete and submit an application using the Tri-Agency's [Research Portal](#) in accordance with the instructions. Applicants must indicate the institution(s) at which they intend to hold the CGRS M award. Applicants can select up to three Canadian post-secondary institutions; however they may select only institutions where:

- either they are currently enrolled full time in an eligible program of study and intend to pursue their studies
- or they will apply for full-time admission to an eligible program of study by the internal deadline set by the institution(s) indicated in their application
  - *prospective U of A graduate students must apply for graduate admission by February 9th, 2026 to be considered for the CGRS-M competition at the U of A. Refer to the Application Deadline and Submission section below for complete details.*

Submitted applications are reviewed by each institution at which they propose to hold the award. Each university has a set allocation for each granting agency. The U of A's allocations are: CIHR: 41; NSERC:

54; SSHRC: 53. Winners may receive offers from multiple institutions, but may accept only one CGRS M offer and are to note the award is not transferrable.

Departments are not required to submit completed rankings and evaluations of U of A applications to GPS; however, to assist in the promotion of this master's scholarship, we request departments disseminate information about this year's national competition to their prospective and current students.

GPS strongly encourages all winners of the 2025/26 University of Alberta Graduate Entrance Scholarship to apply for CGRS M funding if they meet the eligibility requirements.

## Eligibility

Prospective and current U of A students are to review the CGRS M section on [NSERC's website](#) (information applies to all three Agencies) for complete program requirements and eligibility criteria. It is the student's responsibility to read all eligibility criteria and instructions on the [CGRS M website](#) and [GPS's website](#), and be familiar with the application process before applying.

Tri-council defines a program as having a significant research component as follows therefore, the U of A takes this definition as a base:

An eligible graduate program must include a significant research component that leads to the completion of a 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. If the program requires additional admission into the major research component stream, this acceptance must be confirmed before a student can hold the award.

At the U of A, completing a capstone or research project (Course number XXXX 900 - Directed Research Project/Capstone Project/Directed Final Project) does not alone meet the definition as described above.

The work completed in the course-based program must be considered equivalent to a major research project and is appropriate for students who intend to proceed to doctoral studies. Departments may be contacted to confirm the research component for their program.

**Subject matter eligibility (research area):** The onus is on the applicant to carefully select the agency that best aligns with their research subject matter to ensure their application will be reviewed by experts in disciplines closest to their field(s) of study. Refer to [Selecting the Appropriate Agency](#) of the CGRS M Application Procedures.

## Application Process

- Application steps, transcript requirements, timelines, and instructions for prospective and current U of A students leading up to U of A review and adjudication are on the [GPS website](#) under

Application Procedures. It is the student's responsibility to read all eligibility criteria and instructions on the [CGRS M website](#) and [GPS's website](#), and be familiar with the application process before applying.

- Both prospective and current students submit applications through the [Research Portal](#), the Tri-Agency's electronic system for creating, managing, and submitting applications for funding. Students who are currently registered at the U of A must select the U of A as one of the proposed host institutions. For applicants also applying to other institutions other than the U of A, it is imperative they check in with the other institutions directly regarding their application process and transcript regulations/policies, and follow such rules carefully.
- Following the Tri-Agency application deadline of December 1, 2025, GPS will access all applications from the Research Portal that have identified the U of A as the proposed institution.
- Prospective and current students are not required to submit applications to their departments or to their proposed department of study.
- Prospective and current students must complete the applications entirely online using the Research Portal, which includes obtaining reference assessment forms and uploading copies of official up-to-date transcripts for all post-secondary institutions they have attended.
  - Note: GPS will accept unofficial U of A transcripts (**must be produced from Beartracks**); all other transcripts **MUST** be official. If applicants are applying to other institutions, applicants **MUST** check in with those institutions directly regarding their transcript policies/requirements.
  - Refer to [GPS' Application Procedure](#) for complete details on transcript requirements. These instructions are crucial as non-compliance with transcript-related guidelines is the primary reason for the rejection of applications.
  - **Transcripts deemed incomplete and/or unofficial may result in the applicant being removed from the competition.**

## Application Deadline and Submission

**December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025:** Deadline for applicants to submit their completed application and CCV through the Research Portal before 6:00 PM (Mountain Time)/8:00 PM (Eastern Time). Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their application well ahead of the deadline. As the deadline approaches, delays may occur due to high traffic on the research portal; this may prevent the timely submission of student's applications, and they should plan accordingly.

- **The Research Portal will not permit the submission of incomplete or late applications.** GPS cannot assist with issues students may encounter with the external Research Portal.

- No changes or updates can be made to an application once it has been submitted, either before or after the deadline. Only personal contact information may be updated through your Research Portal account.

**December 1 – February 9, 2026:** GPS accesses U of A applications, and completes its initial preliminary review to verify eligibility and completeness.

- GPS contacts U of A applicants to acknowledge receipt of their applications. At this time GPS includes a notice for prospective students that they must apply for admission to a U of A graduate program by their department program deadline, or by February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025, **whichever comes first**, in order to be considered for a CGRS M at the U of A. Note: this is for May 1, 2026, July 1, 2026, September 1, 2026, and January 2027 admission intakes. Recipients of a CGRS M are eligible to take up the award in either May or September 2026, or January 2027.
- Prospective students only need to submit an application for admission; complete admission decisions are not required for the CGRS-M competition, and thus are included in the full nomination review.
- Departments are allowed to contact promising CGRS M applicants who have not applied for admission and encourage them to apply.

**February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026:** If not yet admitted to a U of A graduate program, prospective students must apply for admission no later than February 9<sup>th</sup> in order to be considered for the CGRS M at the U of A.

- Prospective students who haven't applied for admission by this date will have their applications removed from the competition.
- An award offer does not guarantee admission to the program in which a prospective student originally applied to. GPS Award Services does not assist with the process of securing admission to a program.

**Mid-February 2026 – end of March 2026:** GPS Graduate Scholarship Committee (GSC) reviews and adjudicates eligible applications.

**April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026:** Applicants are notified of results on the online Research Portal. Note: GPS is unable to release any assessment of a student application generated during the adjudication process (rankings, comments, etc), as these assessments are intended for internal adjudication decision-making purposes only. GSC members will not generate feedback for applicants during the adjudication.

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

Sincerely,

Awards Services