



Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
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Date: March 25, 2026

To: Department Chairs, Graduate Coordinators, Graduate Program Administrators

From: Award Services, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

Re: **2026 Killam Grand Challenges Scholarship for Interdisciplinary Research Competition**

The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) is delighted to announce the Killam Grand Challenges Scholarship for Interdisciplinary Research competition. Funded by the Killam Trusts, this new scholarship is awarded to exceptionally talented doctoral students undertaking research which combines two or more diverse disciplines, to resolve 'wicked problems' and as-yet-unknown grand challenges.

Value

Valued at \$45,000 per year (for up to 4 years), plus additional \$10,000 per year to offset tuition and fees.

The scholarship may be held concurrently with other scholarships, including major external scholarships such as Tri-Council awards.

Eligibility

Refer to GPS [website](#) for complete details of eligibility criteria. Note that the GPA for current graduate students is calculated over graded course work in the current graduate program. For newly admitted graduate students or current graduate students who have no graded course work to date, the admission GPA will be used. A reminder that GPA calculation guidelines for awards purposes is available to Graduate Program Administrators/Contacts in [Canvas](#) (GPAC>Modules>GPA Guidelines_GPS Awards_May 2025.pdf).

Nomination Instructions & Deadline

Students are to submit their completed application package to their department by the departmental deadline. Departments should set an earlier internal deadline to allow sufficient time to receive applications from students for their own internal review for completeness/eligibility, internal departmental adjudication, and to submit nomination(s) to GPS via the GSMS Awards Portal by the nomination deadline.

Wednesday, May 6, 2026: deadline for departments to submit complete nominations to GPS via GSMS Awards Portal. Only one (1) scholarship will be awarded to the best and brightest, outstanding doctoral nominees. In consideration of adjudicator workload and the total number of scholarships available, departments may only submit a maximum 2 nominations.

Should departments wish to have an additional exceptional nominee considered (over and above quota), Graduate Program Coordinators/Department Chairs may request such by sending a detailed, written memo of the

rationale to GPS by April 30, 2026 for consideration. As GPS has transitioned to the Student Services Portal (Freshservice), please submit a ticket using the [Contact us](#) page, and ensure the subject line states "Request to nominate additional Killam Interdisciplinary nominee above quota."

Once nominations have been submitted to GPS, no revisions will be permitted. Incomplete nominations, including those submitted with missing or outdated transcripts, missing signatures, or missing letters of reference will not be considered. **It is the department's responsibility to ensure that the nomination package is complete and correct in every respect before submitting to GPS via GSMS. GPS will not follow up with departments for corrected documents.**

Departments are responsible for notifying their students on whether or not they have been nominated to GPS for the Killam competition. GPS is not responsible for responding to student inquiries related to departments' internal results statuses.

A complete nomination package **must** include:

1. **[Killam Grand Challenges Scholarship for Interdisciplinary Research Application Form](#)**: completed application form signed by the student only; additional attachments will not be accepted.
2. **Department Appraisal Letter**: The nominating department must submit a one-page letter on official letterhead, signed and dated, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of the nominee's research. This may be a joint letter written by a Graduate Coordinators (or delegates) from the nominee's all relevant departments.
3. **Two Letters of Reference**: Must be from the applicant's intended joint supervisors, which must address the interdisciplinary nature and expected contributions of the student's proposed research.
 - Each joint supervisor must provide a one-page letter, and the supervisors must be from different departments; letters from supervisors within the same department are not allowed.
 - All letters should be on official letterhead, signed, and dated.
 - As reference letters are confidential, these must be submitted by the referees directly to the student's nominating department.
 - It is highly recommended students give their referees a deadline at least one week prior to any application deadline to allow sufficient time and to avoid any possible delays/changes.
 - Letters exceeding the 1 page maximum will not be considered.
 - Students are encouraged to review GPS's [Preparing Your Reference Letters](#) tips on how to request reference letters for a successful scholarship application.
4. **Up-to-date transcripts**: transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate studies must be included with the nomination (includes all transfer credit, even if transferred to the U of A, and incomplete work/non degree study/qualifying years, etc). With the exception of the U of A, all other institutions must be copies of the official transcripts. Missing or illegible transcripts may deem students' applications as incomplete and will not be reviewed. Departments are responsible for ensuring all transcripts are included and properly submitted for nomination. Up-to-date transcripts include (but is not limited to):
 - a) **U of A Transcripts**: U of A unofficial transcripts (printed from Bear Tracks) will be accepted:



- U of A transcripts must be up-to-date and show current full-time registration (courses/thesis in progress) if the applicant is currently registered at the time of nomination (i.e. both Fall 2025 and Winter 2026 terms).
 - For newly admissible students (i.e. recommended for admission to a doctoral degree program starting May 1 or September 1, 2026) and who have no previous U of A record, please upload their other institution transcript under the mandatory field in GSMS.
 - Newly admissible students with a prior U of A record may also provide an unofficial transcript.
 - Nominations submitted with outdated or missing U of A transcripts will not be adjudicated and will be rejected. GPS will not generate an updated U of A transcript for a department nomination submitted incorrectly.
- b) Other Institution Transcripts:** copies of official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate studies from other institutions attended are required (must show all completed coursework and grades, and conferral of any degrees). Opening and scanning a paper transcript, or providing a copy of an official e-transcript will not render the transcript unofficial:
- Transcripts must be up-to-date; students are responsible for obtaining official transcripts and appending a copy to their application by the department deadline.
 - GPS does not provide copies of transcripts from student records held at the U of A (includes transcripts from other Canadian/international post-secondary institutions, and transcripts included in former, recent, or in progress admission/award applications).
 - One copy of the legend (reverse of each transcript) must be included.
 - Self-produced transcripts or mark sheets from institutions' self-served student systems are considered unofficial and will not be considered.

We wish students and departments success in the Killam Grand Challenges Scholarship for Interdisciplinary Research competition!

Sincerely,

Awards Services