GRADUATE AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

TRI-AGENCY (CIHR / SSHRC / NSERC)

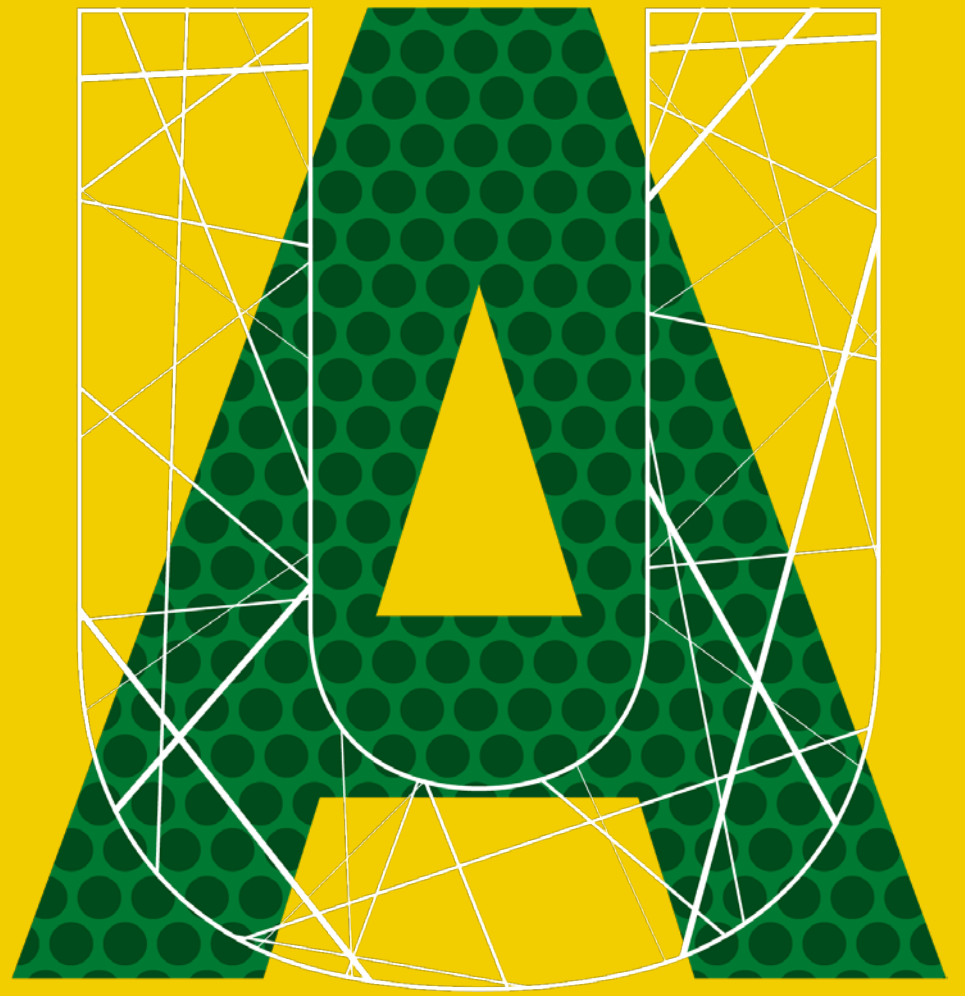
CANADA GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP – MASTER'S PROGRAM

Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS)

Award Services

October & November 2026

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA



Agenda

Tri-Agency (CIHR / SSHRC / NSERC)
Canada Graduate Research Scholarship – Master's program

- Introduction of the web sites (U of A and Tri-Agency)
- CGRS M Applications:
  - Value | Eligibility | Application Procedures | Nomination Procedures | Adjudication Procedures | Deadline and Timelines
- General Structure of a Proposal
- Characteristics of a Good Proposal
- Reference Letters
- Final Reminders
- Q & A

Introduction

https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/fees-funding/scholarships-awards/canada-masters-competition.html

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies

Graduate Admissions + Programs | Postdocs + Visitors | Resources | Fees + Funding | Training + Events | About Us

Fees + Funding > Scholarships + Awards > Canada Graduate Research Scholarships - Master's (CGRS M) Competition

Scholarships + Awards

- Graduate Award Resources
- Awards Deadlines at a Glance
- Funding for Graduate Students
- Funding for Postdoctoral Scholars
- Killam Laureates

Canada Graduate Research Scholarships - Master's (CGRS M) Competition

The Canada Graduate Research Scholarships - Master's Program (CGRS M) has a single, harmonized application process for the three federal granting agencies: the 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). These three agencies are also referred to as the "Tri-Council". Note: effective 2025 the CGRS M program replaces the agencies former Canada Graduate Scholarship – Master's (CGS M) program.

The CGRS M selection process and post-award administration are carried out at the institutional level, under the guidance of the three agencies. Eligible Canadian institutions receive a CGRS M allocation indicating the number of students to whom they can offer scholarships; these allocations are divided by broad fields of study: health, natural sciences and/or engineering, and social sciences and/or humanities.

Recipients of a University of Alberta Graduate Entrance Scholarship are encouraged to apply for CGRS M funding if they meet the eligibility requirements.

Funding for Graduate Students

Killam Trusts Graduate Scholarships

- Dorothy J Killam Memorial Graduate Prizes
- Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Scholarship
- Killam Grand Challenges Scholarship for Interdisciplinary

Value

The CGRS M is valued at $27,000 for 12 months. It is not renewable.

Eligibility

Application Procedures

Nomination Procedures

Adjudication Procedures

Deadlines

Additional Information

Resources

- 2027 CGRS M Memo to Departments & Applicants Memo
- CGRS M Application & Reference Instructions
- Research Portal
- Canadian Common CV (CCV) Portal
- GPS Tips & Tools for a Successful Scholarship Application
- Universities with allocations

Canada Research Training Awards Suite – Research Travel Supplements

SSHRC Impact Talent Award

Alberta Innovates Graduate Funding

- Alberta Innovates Graduate Student Scholarship
- Alberta SPOR SUPPORT Unit (AbSPORU) Graduate Studentship in Patient-Oriented Research
- Data-Enabled Innovation Program
- Health-Related Programs

Thesis Completion Awards

- Governor General's Gold Medal

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Fees + Funding > Scholarships + Awards > Canada Graduate Research Scholarships - Master's (CGRS M) Competition

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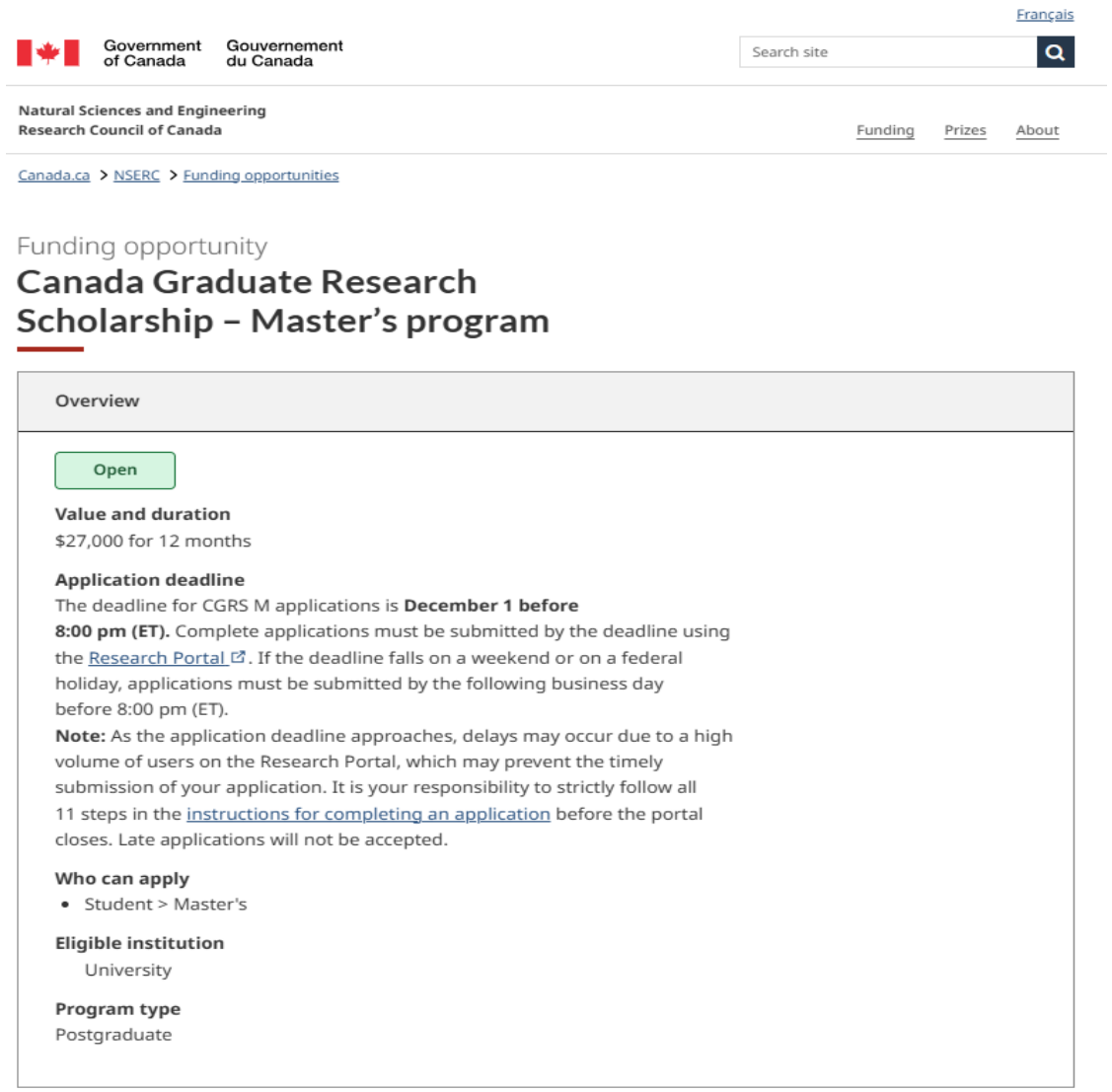
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Introduction

https://nserc-crsng.canada.ca/en/funding-opportunity/canada-graduate-research-scholarship-masters-program



Français

Government of Canada | Gouvernement du Canada

Search site

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada

Funding | Prizes | About

Canada.ca > NSERC > Funding opportunities

Funding opportunity

Canada Graduate Research Scholarship – Master's program

Overview

Open

Value and duration

$27,000 for 12 months

Application deadline

The deadline for CGRS M applications is **December 1 before 8:00 pm (ET).** Complete applications must be submitted by the deadline using the Research Portal. If the deadline falls on a weekend or on a federal holiday, applications must be submitted by the following business day before 8:00 pm (ET).

Note: As the application deadline approaches, delays may occur due to a high volume of users on the Research Portal, which may prevent the timely submission of your application. It is your responsibility to strictly follow all 11 steps in the instructions for completing an application before the portal closes. Late applications will not be accepted.

Who can apply

- Student > Master's

Eligible institution

University

Program type

Postgraduate

Eligibility: Who can Apply?

- Canadian citizen, PR, or Protected Person
- Must be in or applying to a full-time graduate program with a significant research component
- Must have a minimum 3.5 GPA in each of the last two years of study (first class average at the U of A)
- 0–12 months of graduate study completed as of Dec 31, 2026
- Cannot hold another Tri-Agency master's award, Indigenous Scholars Award & Supplement, or funding for Indigenous researchers at the master's level at CIHR

For complete eligibility details, consult the CGRS M website.

Eligibility: Course-based Master's

- Must be in or applying to a full-time graduate program with a **significant research component**

- **Significant Research Component** = graduate program must be predominantly research oriented, leading to the completion of a thesis, major research project, dissertation, scholarly publication, performance, recital and/or exhibit that is merit/expert-reviewed by a panel of experts at the institutional level as a requirement for completing the program

Master's programs that are based only on course work are typically not eligible since they do not include a significant research component, as described above.

Selecting the Right Agency

- Applicants must select the most appropriate agency for their project. Choose based on your research area:
    - **CIHR** - Health sciences
    - **NSERC** - Natural sciences & engineering
    - **SSHRC** - Social sciences & humanities
- Responsibility rests with the applicant to select the correct agency
- Each application is reviewed by experts in that discipline

How to Apply (Research Portal)

- Submit online via Tri-Agency **Research Portal** by **Dec 1 2026 (6 PM MST)**
- You may apply to up to three Canadian universities (each institution reviews independently)
    - Winners may receive offers from multiple institutions, but may accept only one CGRS M offer; this award is **NOT** transferable to other universities.
- U of A students must select U of A as a proposed institution
- Prospective students must also apply for U of A admission no later than **Feb 8, 2027**

Application Components

- ✓ **Canadian Common CV (CCV)**
- ✓ **Research proposal** (1 page outline + 1 page Bibliography)
- ✓ **Transcripts** from *all* post-secondary institutions
  (must be official transcripts, unless U of A)
- ✓ **Two Reference Assessment Forms** submitted through the Portal
- ✓ *Optional:* Special Circumstances section (if needed)

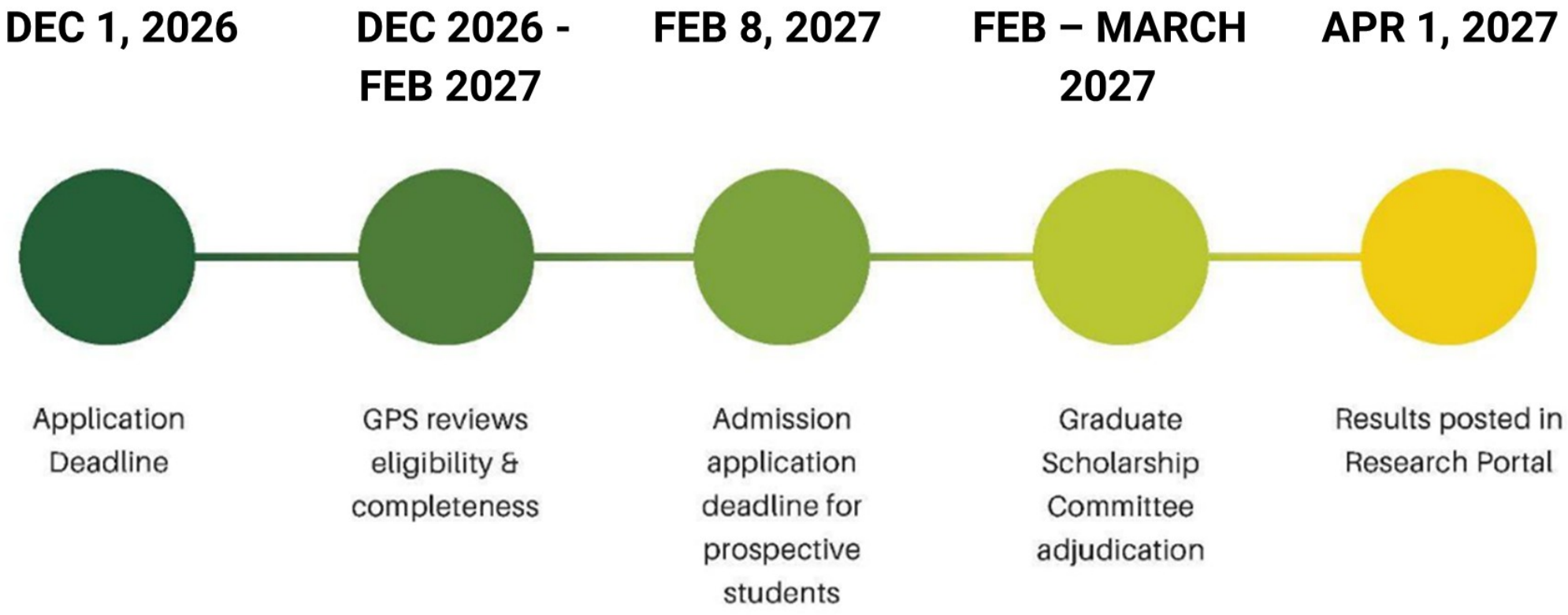
For more information, please consult the CGRS M website & CGRS M Application Instructions, and the GPS website

Transcripts & References: Tips

- ✓ Request references early
  - Give them a deadline ≥ 2 weeks before December 1, 2026
- ✓ Confirm referees understand the program and your proposal
- ✓ Ensure transcripts include legend and cover page for e-transcripts
- ✗ Incomplete or unofficial transcripts = application ineligible

For more information, please consult the CGRS M website & CGRS M Application Instructions, and the GPS website

Timeline at a Glance



Additional Funding Opportunities

- **Canada Research Training Awards Suite – Research Travel Supplements (CRTAS-RTS)**
  Active CGRS M holders who wish to undertake research outside of Canada for a defined period of time may consider applying for this supplement.

- **Indigenous Scholars Awards and Supplements Pilot Initiative**
  To the limit of available funding, the Indigenous Scholars Awards and Supplements Pilot Initiative will provide financial support to meritorious Indigenous students who have applied to the Canada Graduate Research Scholarship—Master's program (CGRS M).

- **Black Student Researchers**
  The Government of Canada has provided additional funds to increase direct support for Black student researchers. Meritorious CGRS M applicants who self-identify as Black and provide consent in their application to be considered for funds designated for specific groups may be selected to receive this funding.

For more information, please consult the CGRS M and CRTAS – RTS website.

How Applications Are Reviewed

- Two-stage process: GPS eligibility check → Graduate Scholarship Committee merit review
- Selection criteria (weighting):
  - Academic Excellence - 50%
  - Research Potential - 30%
  - Personal characteristics and interpersonal skills - 20%
- U of A allocations (2027–28): CIHR 41 | NSERC 54 | SSHRC 53

CGRS M Applications: SELECTION CRITERIA

Criteria	Description	Weight
Academic excellence	As demonstrated by past academic results, transcripts, awards and distinctions **Indicators of academic excellence:** • academic record • scholarships and awards held • duration of previous studies • type of program and courses pursued • course load • relative standing (if available)	50%

CGRS M Applications: SELECTION CRITERIA

Research potential	As demonstrated by your research history, your interest in discovery, the proposed research, its potential contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the field and any anticipated outcomes **Indicators of 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 • sound judgment and ability to think critically • ability to apply skills and knowledge • initiative and autonomy • research experience and achievements relative to expectations of someone with your academic experience	30%

CGRS M Applications: SELECTION CRITERIA

Personal characteristics and interpersonal skills	As demonstrated by your past professional and relevant extracurricular interactions and collaborations **Indicators of personal characteristics and interpersonal skills:** • work experience • leadership experience • project management, including organizing conferences and meetings • ability or potential to communicate theoretical, technical or scientific concepts clearly and logically in written and oral formats • involvement in academic life • volunteerism/community outreach	20%

Strengthening Your Application

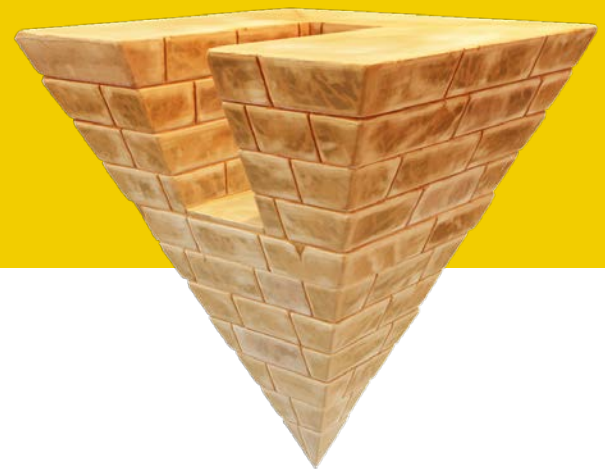
- ✓ Start early – draft proposal and contact referees now
- ✓ Review successful past applications (where available)
- ✓ Keep proposal concise and well-structured
- ✓ Align language with Tri-Agency selection criteria
- ✓ Proofread and submit well before Dec 1 deadline

General Structure of a Proposal

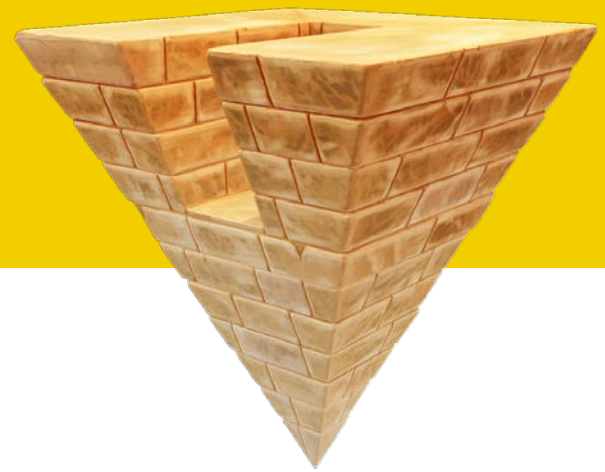
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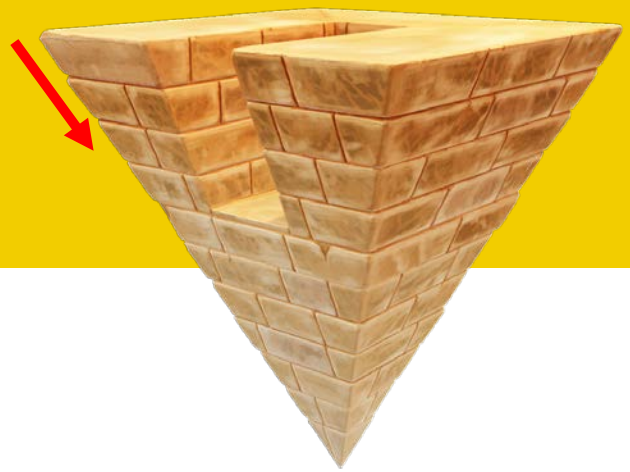


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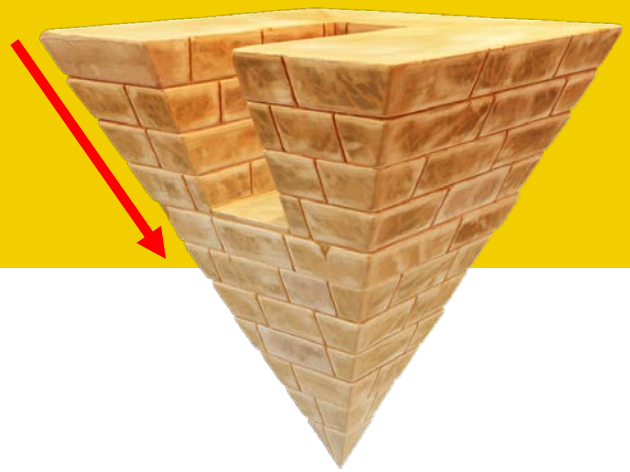
- **Title**
  - **Catchy, short, informative**

General Structure of a Proposal



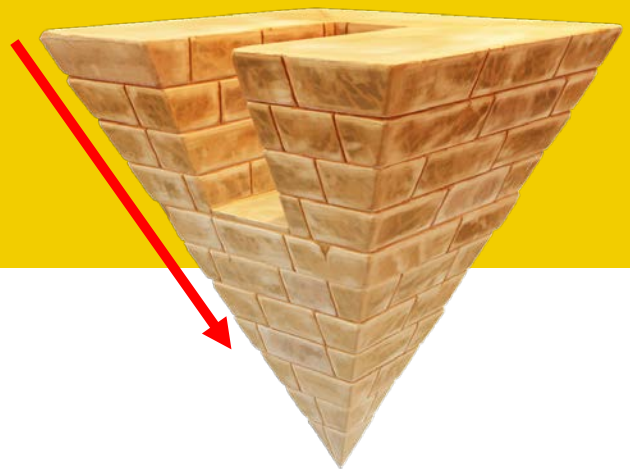
- **Title**
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- **Introduction**
  - **Lay out the big picture that your proposal is a part of – high level information**
  - **Identify the portion of the big picture you are interested about: “your proposal”**

General Structure of a Proposal



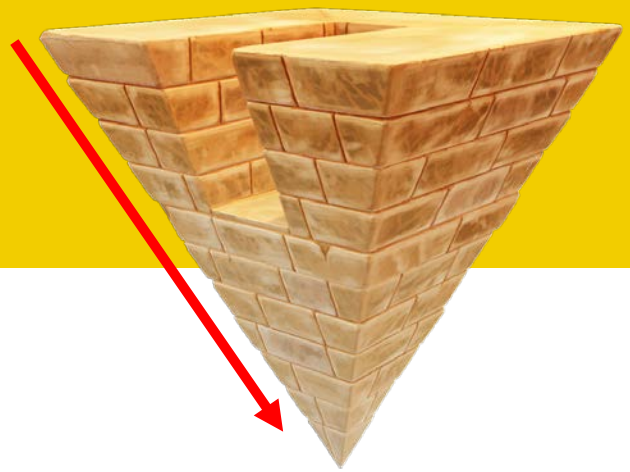
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- Literature Review
  - What has been done in the area related to “your proposal”
  - Identify what is “the gap” in the literature

General Structure of a Proposal



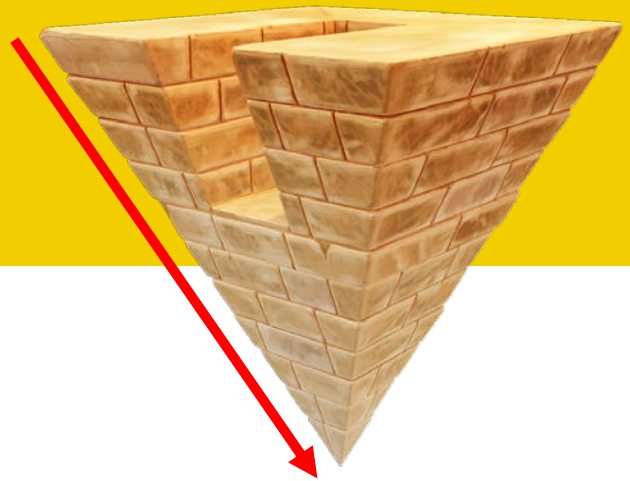
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  - Identify what is “the gap” in the literature
- Problem statement
  - Define the problem
  - Identify what portion of the gap will your proposal will close

General Structure of a Proposal



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  - Define the problem
  - Identify what portion of the gap will your proposal will close
- Identify the Methodology you will use

General Structure of a Proposal





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  - Catchy, short, informative
- Introduction
  - Lay out the big picture that your proposal is a part of – high level information
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- Literature Review
  - What has been done in the area related to “your proposal”
  - Identify what is “the gap” in the literature
- Problem statement
  - Define the problem
  - Identify what portion of the gap will your proposal will close
- Identify the Methodology you will use
- Outline the novelty and potential short- and long-term impacts of your proposal

Characteristics of a Good Proposal

- Command of the field!
  - Outline strong literature and highlight the gap in the literature
- Novelty!
  - Underline the crucial importance and the need to close the gap in the literature
  - Define the novelty and explain the reason how your solution will close the gap
- Respect to the reviewer!
  - Demonstrate strong fundamental understanding of the field without unnecessary repetition
- To the point!
  - Well structured and concise
  - Strong and clear methodology
  - Clear deliverables

Some of the “Avoids”

- Mistakes in fundamentals in your proposal/methodology/statements
- Missing the natural flow of a proposal
  - Usually due to unorganized thoughts
- Missing highlighting the gap in the literature
- Missing clearly stating the objectives and deliverables and novelty
- Unrealistic timelines
- Unrealistic deliverables
  - Overpromising or underpromising!
- Avoid white-spaces

Reference Letters

- Importance of Reference Letters:
  - Verifies your qualifications you list on your application/CV
  - Provides context on your potential
  - Provides explanation(s) to special circumstances, if needed
  - Provides additional credibility to your application
  - Provides a clear distinction between you and other applicants

Reference Letters

- How to ask for a Reference Letter
  - Ask for confirmation if they are willing to write a letter
    - Ask politely and early, and ask weeks before the deadline!
    - Explain what the letter is for and say you will provide more detail via email
    - Ask if they want a draft to help them and save them time.
  - Follow up with a formal request via email:
    - Provide the link to the call
    - Provide most updated CV and transcript
    - Provide the proposal (or a draft)
    - (If requested) provide a draft
      - Draft should match with your CV and transcript
      - Should include any related information that you wish it would appear in the letter
  - Send a gentle email reminder as the deadline approaches

Reference Letters

- Qualifications of a good Referee
    - Known in the field
    - Credible
    - Knows you, your skills, achievements, and potential
- Who can you ask?
    - Professors or academic advisors
    - Mentors or coaches
    - Supervisors or managers
    - Volunteer coordinators or project leaders
- Avoid asking casual acquaintances, friends, etc.
- Do not forget to:
    - thank after the letter is provided as a good ref letter takes ~2 hours to write
    - provide the outcome of the application (positive or negative)

Reference Letters

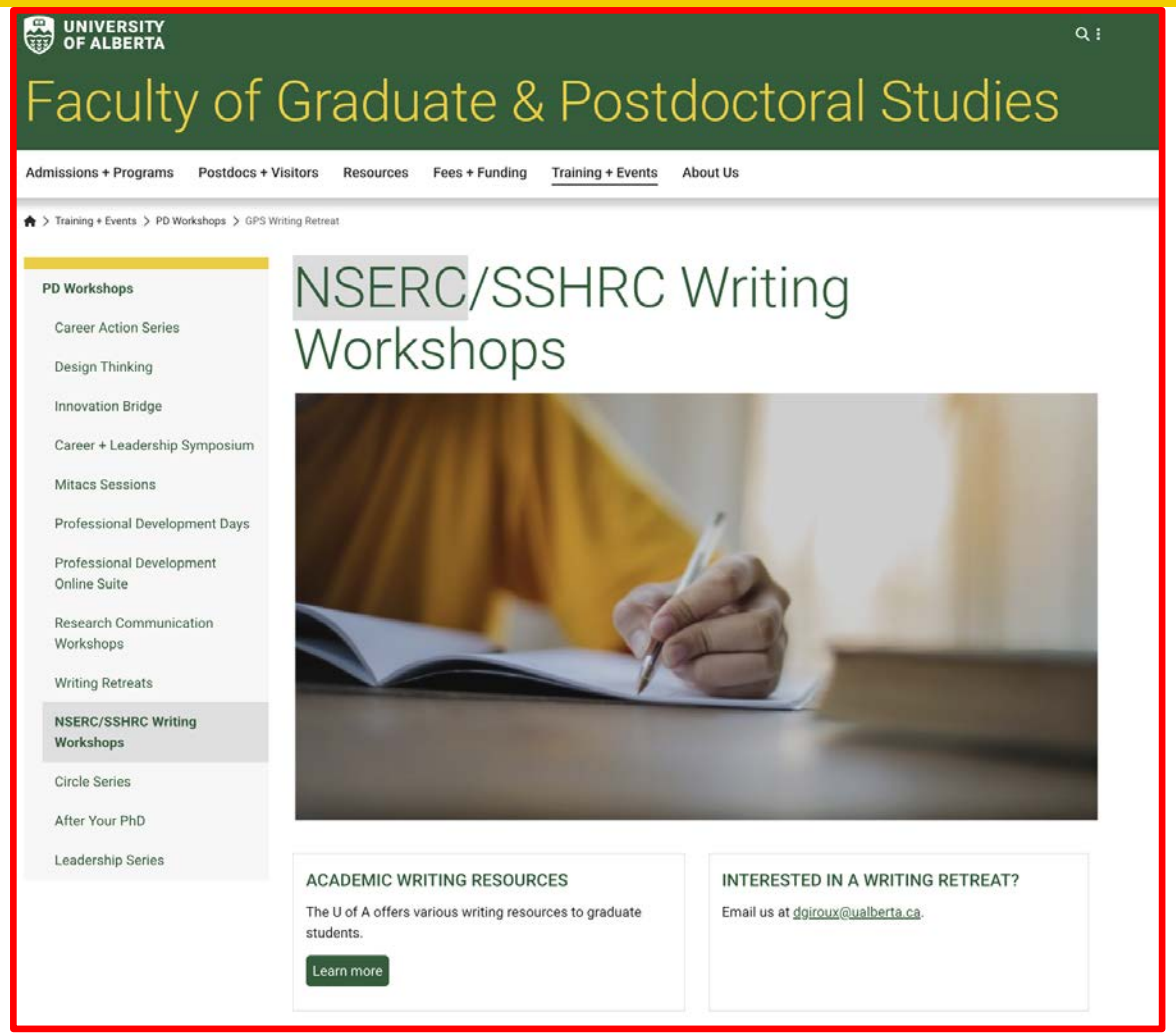
A few hints to remember if you are providing a draft:

- a detailed and personalized letter
- should not just say *they are good*, but instead, *they are good because …..* , or *they handled this challenging problem using this unexpected method*.
- must highlight the you are independent, strong researcher with great potential
- should indicate the importance of the proposal you are putting forward
- should say, for example: *I read the proposal and it is important because it will close …….. gap in the literature……*
- should talk about EDI aspect, if applicable
- **If you need more than one draft for multiple people make sure the drafts are different as they may submit something very similar to what you provide.**

Final reminders!

- ***Start early*** on your applications.
- **Order transcripts now**, if external transcripts are needed.
- Start asking for reference letters now!
- Ask your cohort to review successful past applications.
- Experienced review can help to avoid easy mistakes. Research group meetings are a great way to request review from fellow students.
- Proofread all material pre-submission.
- Ensure application is **complete, eligibility criteria are met,** and **application instructions are followed.**
- **SUBMIT AHEAD OF THE DEADLINE**

Further available resources!



https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/training-events/workshops/writing-workshops.html



https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/fees-funding/scholarships-awards/resources.html



Contact us

https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/about/contact-us/index.html

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(3:00 PM – 4:00 PM)

Killam Centre for Advanced Studies
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Thank you!



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Q & A



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