



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans and Associate Deans of Graduate Studies
Vice-Presidents and Associate Vice-Presidents (Research)

C.C.: Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships Institution Contacts
University Scholarships Liaison Officers
Julie Conrad, Manager, Vanier-Banting Programs and CIHR Awards
Denis Godin, Director, Scholarships and Fellowships Programs, NSERC
Melissa Dubreuil, Director, Research Training Portfolio, SSHRC

FROM: François Zegers, Lead, Vanier-Banting Secretariat

DATE: June 22, 2023

SUBJECT: 2023-2024 Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships (Vanier CGS) launch and program update

Please distribute to all parties at your institution who would benefit from this information.

The 2023-2024 Vanier CGS competition has been launched. This memo is to inform you of program news for this competition.

I) 2023-2024 Vanier CGS Competition Timelines

Key dates are highlighted below:

	2023-2024 Vanier CGS Competition Timelines
Competition Launch	June 22, 2023 - Posting of updated program literature on program website.
List of Indigenous applicants for Institutions	October 18, 2023

Application Deadline	November 1, 2023 (8:00 pm EDT)
Funding Decision Release	Early April 2024

II) Vanier CGS program news and updates

REVISED: Special Attention document

The Secretariat acknowledges that certain circumstances may legitimately affect an applicant's record of research achievement. Applicants are encouraged to explain any personal circumstances (including gender, race, diversity, ability, sexuality, health disparities, educational access, etc.) that have played a role in shaping their path in order to allow for a fair assessment of their research productivity.

Committee members are entrusted with the responsibility to assess the impact and significance of research contribution while taking into account the impacts of career interruptions as well as interpersonal, community, and career responsibilities.

Applicants can describe circumstances such as administrative responsibilities, health problems, family responsibilities, disabilities, trauma and/or loss, cultural or community responsibilities, socio-economic context, pandemic impact or other circumstances (for example, the time necessary to complete a monograph or research project, file a patent, or academia and/or career advancement, scientific research, other research, dissemination of results, training, etc).

They should include the start and end dates; the impact areas; and the reason(s) for or a brief explanation of the absence. Applicants may explain any gaps in the chronology of their experience. However, they are not required to justify circumstances when noting considerations related to personal identity considerations. Should they choose to include this information, please note that it will be reviewed by selection committee members.

Please note that in order to maintain equitable application requirements for all nominees, no information other than that outlined above will be forwarded to the committee. Any information that does not conform to the requirements will be removed with no further notification to the applicant and/or Nominating Institution.

REVISED: Personal Leadership Statement

The Personal Leadership statement has been revised to only include elements of what personal experience have shaped the doctoral research of an applicant. The statement should go beyond a list of accomplishments. Applicants should outline to the committee the ways in which these accomplishments demonstrate their leadership abilities and skills.

Circumstances that may legitimately affect an applicant's record of research achievement should be written in the Special Circumstance document.

NEW: Attach Other applications materials (Option)

Part-time and joint research graduate program information

Students must now upload information about Part-time studies in this section. The information must be reflected in the transcripts.

Students registered in a joint program (e.g., MD/PhD), must upload the timeline of their undergraduate/graduate versus doctoral program studies, broken down by semester in this section.

This calculation must be consistent with the transcripts provided. For purposes of this calculation, the undergraduate/graduate portion will not count towards the number of months completed.

Note: In order to maintain equitable application requirements for all nominees, no information other than that outlined above will be forwarded to the committee. Any information that does not conform to the requirements will be removed with no further notification to the applicant.

NEW: San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)

[San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#) is a global initiative whose purpose is to support the development and promotion of best practices in the assessment of scholarly research. DORA recognizes the need to improve the ways in which research is evaluated, beyond widely used journal-based metrics.

As a signatory of DORA, the agencies have reaffirmed their commitment to excellence in research evaluation and the importance of knowledge translation.

The agencies recognize and value a broader range of contributions, including outreach and mentoring, and emphasize their quality and impact. Please note that these are examples/not an exhaustive list.

Quality indicators include:

- Novelty, creativity, and/or innovation in the methodology and/or application of the research
- Transparency, accessibility of results, and appropriate data stewardship
- Exposure for trainees to non-academic work environments.

Impact indicators include:

- Increases to EDI in the research ecosystem, including enhanced engagement and retention of underrepresented groups in the Natural Science and Engineering (NSE) and Social Science and Humanities (SSH) and Health Research (HS).
- Advances to reconciliation and the decolonization of Indigenous research
Contributions to economic development or to environmental or social innovations, at the local, regional, national, or international level(s).

NEW: First-Class average

The Vanier CGS program will allow institutions to apply the first-class average requirements at their discretion. The following note (in red below) will be added to the eligibility criteria to apply that states: "...have achieved a first-class average, as determined by your institution, in each of the last two years of full-time study or equivalent. Candidates are encouraged to contact the institution for its definition of a first-class average;"

Note: Institutions may, at their discretion, accept Vanier CGS applications from individuals who have not obtained a first-class average; contact your proposed host institutions to determine their use of this eligibility criterion.”

REMINDER (updated): Equity, diversity and inclusion

The Vanier CGS program encourages equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), as part of [the Tri-Agency’s broader commitment](#) to excellence in research and research training in Canada. EDI considerations must be taken into account throughout the Vanier CGS competition, including during the selection committee member recruitment process and during the selection, endorsement and review processes of an application.

The [EDI page](#) of the Vanier CGS website provides guidelines and resources geared towards applicants, host institutions, referees, and reviewers and readers, and addressing the following topics: research respectfully involving Indigenous communities; reducing unconscious bias, and promoting equity, diversity and inclusion.

An important component ensuring EDI which is reflected in our selection process is the careful consideration of each applicant’s career interruptions and personal circumstances. The review of an applicant’s track record will take into consideration the availability of research and leadership opportunities. **Applicants are thus encouraged to identify any circumstances that may have delayed or interrupted their academic and/or career advancement (if applicable) in the [Special Attention](#) attachment of their nomination.**

Tri-Agency Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council are committed to excellence in research and research training. Achieving a more equitable, diverse and inclusive Canadian research enterprise is essential to creating the excellent, innovative and impactful research necessary to advance knowledge and understanding, and to respond to local, national and global challenges. [Read more...](#)

REMINDER: Integrity of nominations submitted

Submission of an application via ResearchNet will serve as a formal attestation that the applicant has provided true, complete, and accurate information in the application and its related documents.

REMINDER: French Applications: Personal Leadership Statement and Research Proposal Page Limit

In order to ensure an equitable amount of space for the personal leadership statement and the research proposal written in either official language, the Personal Leadership Statement and the Research Proposal attachments for nominations submitted in French are now permitted to be a maximum of 2.5 pages. This is due to evidence demonstrating that documents written in French require approximately 20% more space than similar documents in English.

NOTE: Any pages over the allotted page limit for the Personal Leadership Statement and the Research Proposal (maximum of 2 pages for English applications and maximum of 2.5 pages for French applications) will be removed with **no further notification** to the Applicant.

REMINDER: Lay Abstract

To help the selection committee members identify the supervisor, nominee are asked to indicate the supervisor's name and Institution at the beginning of the lay abstract. If yet to be determined, nominee can mention "to be determined".

REMINDER: International Transcripts

If a nominee has international transcripts: Institutions **must** provide a 250- word summary explaining the grading system in effect at the Institution concerned. Institution may use the grading scale available at the [World Education Services](#) The summary/grading scale should be a PDF document attached at the beginning of their transcripts. This information is being requested by the selection committee.

REMINDER: College or CEGEP (college of general and professional education) transcripts should be submitted **only if** credits earned at a college or CEGEP have been transferred and the grade does not appear on the university transcripts.

REMINDER: International recruitment

In keeping with the aim of attracting doctoral students to Canada, we encourage you to continue to strengthen your efforts to recruit new foreign doctoral students to your respective institutions. Your collaboration is essential in achieving the goal of building strong brand recognition for the Vanier CGS program as Canada's most valuable, prestigious and sought-after doctoral scholarship. By attracting international candidates to Canadian institutions, we will enrich our campuses now and into the future.

REMINDER: Self-Identified Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis) applicants

Institutions may recommend applications from self-identified Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis) to the Vanier CGS competition above and beyond their institutional quota. Indigenous applicants must agree to their personal information being used for this purpose by making the appropriate selection in the application form by attaching the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship (Vanier CGS): Voluntary Self-Identification Form to their application in ResearchNet.

For those who choose to self-identify as Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis) they have been instructed to complete the [Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship \(Vanier CGS\): Voluntary Self-Identification Form](#) for Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis) Applicants and upload it within their application. This form may be used by Research Administrators to identify self-declared Indigenous applicants.

Should the institution wish to request a quota above and beyond the institutional quota, it is the responsibility of the Research Administrators to submit the list identifying Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis) applications and send it via email to the Vanier-Banting Secretariat (vanier@cihr-irsc.gc.ca).

Institutional Deadlines

- **REMINDER:** (Optional) The deadline to submit the list identifying Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis) applicants from above and beyond the institutional quota is no later than **8:00 p.m. (ET) on October 18, 2023**.
 - Create a list to identify Indigenous* applicants above and beyond the institutional quota, and send via e-mail (Subject line: Nominations beyond institutional quota- Institution Name) to vanier@cihr-irsc.gc.ca
 - Institutions are permitted to recommend an unlimited number of self-identified Indigenous* applicants above their institutional quota. To be considered for this, Indigenous applicants must provide consent within the [Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship \(Vanier CGS\): Voluntary Self-Identification Form](#) to share this information with their institutions and the tri-agencies.
 - The Vanier CGS program will not accept a modified or updated list (identifying Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis) applicants) after the deadline.
 - Institutions cannot submit all their nominations (including those from self-identified Indigenous* applicants) until a confirmation has been received that the institutional quota has been increased.
- The competition deadline for Institutions is no later than **8:00 p.m. (EDT) on November 1st, 2023** using the Electronic Approval Tool on ResearchNet.
 - Submitting a nomination to the Vanier CGS program using the Electronic Approval Tool is final; this action cannot be undone.

Note: Substitutions for ineligible or rejected nominations will not be permitted.

*“Indigenous Peoples” is a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. “Aboriginal Peoples” is also sometimes used as a terminology. For the purposes of this program, the tri-agencies use the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982 definition of Aboriginal Peoples as including the First Nations, Inuk (Inuit) and Métis Peoples of Canada.

REMINDER: Nomination Letter

The rationale for choosing the candidate should be **emphasized** in the letter. This is the primary purpose of the nomination letter.

REMINDER: Format of documents

Candidates must use either Arial, Calibri or Time New Roman font size of 12-point 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, graphs and references (format at discretion of candidates) is acceptable as long as it is legible when the page is viewed at 100%. Note: failure to comply with these requirements can negatively impact the status and evaluation of your nomination in a competition.

REMINDER: Sex- and Gender-based Analysis Plus (SGBA+)

In order to ensure the research we fund is impactful and relevant to the diversity of the population, we now require applicants to systematically examine how differences in identity factors (such as sex, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age and mental or physical disability) affect the outcomes of research and the impacts of research findings. Applicants are now encouraged to take SGBA+ principles into account in their proposed research (see Application/nomination instruction-[Task 10](#)).

REMINDER: Research respectfully involving and engaging Indigenous communities

The proposed research must be in accordance with the policies and principles outlined in the following three main documents:

- [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#)
- [SSHRC Guidelines for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research](#)
- [CIHR's Research Involving First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada - Webinar](#)

Nominating institutions must describe how collaborations with Indigenous communities have been or will be developed and provide details corroborating information included in the research proposal.

In order to be funded, research involving and engaging with Indigenous communities must fulfill the pillars for respectful research engaging with Indigenous peoples.

REMINDER: Eligibility: Calculating months of doctoral studies

Regardless of disciplines, all prior doctoral-level studies that started in Canada or abroad, are considered in the evaluation of eligibility, and are considered to be continuous, full-time, and uninterrupted unless otherwise confirmed by the institution (including the summer months, unless on official leave). The Vanier-Banting Secretariat will count two months of part-time studies as one month of full-time studies.

Number of months of doctoral studies:

- have completed **no more than 20 months** of full-time study in their doctoral program as of May 1st, 2024;
 - The doctoral program would begin after the completion of a master's degree. The months of study completed are calculated from the doctoral enrolment date.
- have completed **no more than 32 months** of full-time study in their doctoral program (i.e. joint graduate research program, directly from bachelor's, previously enrolled without obtaining master's degree), by May 1st, 2024 if:
 - enrolled in a joint graduate research program, e.g., MD/PhD, MA/PhD, MS/PhD, DVM/PhD. Applicants in this category have access to the 32-month window whether or not they were previously enrolled in a master's program;

- The months of study are calculated starting from the date on which an applicant is officially registered in the joint graduate program (For MA/PhD or MS/PhD this will be the master's registration date).
- enrolled directly from a bachelor's to a PhD program (without having been previously enrolled in another graduate program);
 - The months of study completed are calculated from the doctoral enrolment date.
- Previously enrolled in a master's program **without obtaining the degree** and subsequently transferring to a doctoral program.
 - The months of study completed are calculated from the original master's enrolment date.

REMINDER - Internal deadlines at institutions

Nominating institutions should adjust the internal deadline date in ResearchNet as soon as possible for the Vanier CGS competition. Remember to allow enough time for the internal review of nominations. Currently, the internal deadline date is the same as the final submission deadline for the Vanier CGS competition.

Instructions can be found in the *Electronic Approval for Research Institutions - Administrator's Guide*, available in the support section in ResearchNet, under the **Manage Internal Deadline task**.

Institutions are also reminded to **update** the ResearchNet Electronic Approval Tool Users to avoid any further delays to the submission of nominations. If the Access Administrator (AA) of the Vanier CGS program on ResearchNet has changed since the last competition (2022-2023), please send an email to vanier@cihr-irsc.gc.ca so that we can update our system with the new AA. Please note that it may take up to 5 days to complete the change in the AA.

For more information on user roles and responsibilities, please refer to the updated Electronic Approval Guide.

REMINDER - Subject matter eligibility (research area)

The onus is on the applicant and their supervisor to carefully consider which selection committee should review the application. For more details, please consult the [Application/nomination Instruction – Task 6: Identify area of research](#)