



## MEMORANDUM

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

**C.C.:** Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships Institution Contacts  
Institution Scholarships Liaison Officers  
Kelly Taylor, Executive Director, Vanier-Banting Secretariat  
Serge Villemure, Director, Scholarships and Fellowships Programs, NSERC  
Valérie Laflamme, Director, Research Training Portfolio, SSHRC

**FROM:** François Zegers, Lead, Vanier-Banting Secretariat (VBS)

**DATE:** June 19, 2019

**SUBJECT:** 2019-20 Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships (Vanier CGS) and competition update

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

The 2019-20 Vanier CGS competition has been launched! This memo is to inform you of program news for this competition.

### **I) 2019-20 Vanier CGS Competition Timelines**

The timelines are similar to the last competition. Key dates are highlighted below:

	<b>2019-20 Vanier CGS Competition Timelines</b>
<b>Competition Launch</b>	<b>June 19, 2019:</b> Posting of updated program literature on program website, including application guide and activation of ResearchNet (electronic application system)
<b>Application Deadline</b>	<b>November 6, 2019 (8:00 pm EDT)</b>
<b>Funding Decision Release</b>	<b>Early April 2020</b>

## II) Vanier CGS program news and updates

### NEW: Research respectfully involving Indigenous communities

1. The Application/Nomination guide (see [Task 10 > Overview](#)) and Selection committee guide (see [3.1 Selection Criteria](#) and [3.2.4 Review and pre-scoring of nominations\(as reviewers\)](#)) now provide a more detailed explanation of what constitutes research respectfully involving Indigenous communities.
2. For applications in which the proposed research respectfully involves Indigenous communities, the nominating institution is now asked to elaborate on the institution's resources regarding any established research-related policies and protocols (e.g., protocols for conducting research involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada; approvals for research involving the use of humans, animals or biohazards) - (see [Information for nominating Institutions > Nomination letters](#)).

### NEW: Deadline for submitting referee assessments

Applicants can now manage the deadline by which referees must submit their assessments. For more information, please consult Task 8 of the Application/nomination instructions.

### UPDATE – Personal Leadership Statement document

The goal of this document was to eliminate systemic barriers to applying for the Vanier CGS, encourage the committee to understand career interruptions as potentially beneficial to a nominee's career path, and better align the Vanier CGS with other prestigious international scholarships.

For documents submitted that do not properly follow the instructions below, staff will return those back to the institution.

Based on the feedback and suggestions provided by selection committee members, the language that will be used for the nomination package has been updated (see below):

*This document should present to the committee a clear statement of what challenges and opportunities have shaped your doctoral research.*

*Before crafting your Personal Leadership Statement, take a moment to review the [instructions for the selection committee](#) on evaluating this criterion.*

*When writing your Personal Leadership Statement, consider the following:*

- *Leadership can take many forms. Be sure to outline not just your accomplishments, but how those accomplishments required you to leverage your leadership skills to achieve your goals.*
- *When outlining leadership in volunteerism, excellence in sports or the arts, employment in Leadership positions, and other areas, be sure to **outline how you have gone above and beyond the expected norms** in order to*

*overcome obstacles, foster others, spearhead change, or otherwise demonstrate leadership.*

- *The selection committee does not consider volunteerism, excellence in sports or the arts, and employment in leadership positions as demonstrating Leadership in and of themselves.*
- *Define your career goals and trajectory, and outline for the committee the ways in which you have created opportunities for yourself and others, how you have overcome obstacles to your vision, and how your PhD research, knowledge dissemination and mentorship activities will help accomplish those goals.*
- *How have you fostered your ability to lead others, and how have you leveraged that skill?*
- *What led you to doctoral research? How have your life experiences and personal circumstances (which may include administrative responsibilities, maternity/parental leave, childrearing, illness, cultural or community responsibilities, socio-economic context, trauma and loss, or health-related family responsibilities) shaped your academic, research, and leadership choices, challenges, and successes?*
  - *In order to assist the committee evaluate the relative merits of your accomplishments, be sure to include in this document information on any hurdles you may have overcome in your life and career. Committee members are entrusted with the responsibility to assess research productivity while taking into account the impacts of career interruptions as well as interpersonal, community, and career responsibilities.*

*The VBS asks its adjudication committees to take into consideration circumstances that may have affected the record of research achievement of candidates. In doing so selection committee members will be able to more accurately evaluate the productivity of each nominee.*

- *How has your life trajectory driven you to share and disseminate your research?*
- *How does your nominating institution provide an environment that nurtures your leadership skills?*

*Your academic transcript, your CCV, and your reference letters will provide details of your commitments and accomplishments, but this essay gives you the opportunity to present the overarching narrative about your life, leadership accomplishments, and research goals.*

### **REMINDER - Internal deadline at institution**

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, attached.

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 (2018-19), please send an email to [vanier@cihr-irsc.gc.ca](mailto:vanier@cihr-irsc.gc.ca) so that we can update our system with the new AA.

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

### **Reminder: Diversity, equity 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 more generally. Of note, institutions must comment in their letter on their commitment to fostering equity, diversity and inclusion as part of the recruitment and nomination processes. Proposals from all research areas and in both official languages are encouraged.

With the competitive nature of the program in mind, we would like to remind you to continue to be highly selective in your endorsement of nominations. In this way we can work together to control the quality of candidates to help ensure that the program is indeed supporting world-class doctoral scholars who will become the research leaders of tomorrow and without adding undue strain on the review system.

### **Reminder – Multiple applications regulations**

Eligible candidates can apply to both the Vanier CGS 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.

### **REMINDER – Eligibility: Calculating months of doctoral studies**

All prior doctoral-level studies, regardless of discipline, 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). Students who studied on a part-time basis, or who interrupted their studies with their university's official approval, must outline the dates of interruption or part-time study in the Special Circumstances document.

The Vanier-Banting Secretariat (VBS) will start all calculation of the number of months completed at the beginning of the first term of PhD with the following exception

<b>If the Candidate</b>	<b>...then the secretariat will:</b>
Is registered in a combined Master's/PhD program	Remove 12 months from the original PhD enrolment date
Is registered in a direct-entry doctoral program (i.e. has not ever enrolled in, or earned, an Master's degree)	Remove 12 months from the original PhD enrolment date
Has been accelerated from a Master's degree into a Doctoral program <b>without obtaining the Master's degree</b>	Remove 12 months from the original <b>Master's</b> enrolment date
Is enrolled in a joint undergraduate/graduate research degree program	<b>Only</b> count time spent undertaking PhD work (see notes).

**Notes:**

- 1) The VBS will count two months of part-time study as one month of full-time study.
- 2) Each of these programs are considered to be mutually exclusive. No more than one of the above exceptions can be applied to each nomination.
- 3) All interruptions, delays, part-time studies and undergraduate studies undertaken **as part of a joint undergraduate/graduate degree program** must be outlined in the [special circumstances](#) attachment.
  - a. Note: No other information included in this document will be forwarded to the committee. All information about interruptions to your academic career, choice of nominating institution, and mobility should be included either in the Personal Leadership Statement or the Research Proposal.

**Example:** If you were completing full-time doctoral studies as of January 1, 2018, with no interruptions during this period, the VBS will consider you as having completed 16 months of doctoral studies as of May 1, 2019. If, during this period, you were on leave from your program for four months, the VBS will consider you as having completed 12 months of doctoral studies. If, in addition to having taken one semester off, you had been registered part-time for one semester (i.e., four months), the VBS will consider you as having completed 10 months of doctoral studies.

**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](#)

## **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.

## **NOTE – Accessing updated webpage**

If you have not cleared your cache since the last time you accessed the Vanier CGS webpage, your browser may display a cached version of the page. In order to see the updated webpage, simply hit the "refresh" logo in your browser (or hit the F5 key)

For any questions, please contact the VBS at [vanier@cihr-irsc.gc.ca](mailto:vanier@cihr-irsc.gc.ca)