How to Write Tri-Council Scholarship Applications: Staying Calm and Getting Ahead of the Competition

Georden Jones, B.A., Somayya Saleemi, & Kyrsten Grimes, B.A.
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Today's Presenters

- Georden Jones, Francophone Affairs Officer

- Somayya Saleemi, Undergraduate Student Affairs Officer

- Kyrsten Grimes, Chair Elect

Presentation Outline

- Overview of scholarships
- Criteria
- Tips and examples
- Self-care
- Other options
- Guest speaker
- Q & A

Please feel free to ask questions throughout the presentation!!

Competition Overview

Source	Master's	Doctoral
SSHRC	$17,500/year for 1 year	CGS- $35,000/year for 3 years; Doctoral Fellowship $20,000/year for 1-4 years
CIHR	$17,500/year for 1 year	$35,000/ year for2-3 years
NSERC	$17,500/year for 1 year	CGS- $35,000/year for 2 or 3 years; PGS- $21,000/year for 2 to 3 years
Vanier Graduate Scholarship	-----	$50,000/year for 3 years

Which Application?

- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research
- Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada
- Vanier

How to submit ?

Master's Students

- Single online portal for all applications
- Applications are submitted directly to your university

Doctoral Students

- **SSHRC –** To the university at which you are registered. If not registered, send directly to SSHRC.
- **CIHR –** Through researchnet where application will be sent directly to CIHR.
- **NSERC –** To the university at which you are registered or were registered within the last 12 months. If no university, send application directly to NSERC

CIHR Doctoral

Achievements and Activities of the Candidate			
Publication Activity	10%	**35%**	Publications, presentations, research awards, transcripts
Other Research Activity	10%		
Academic Performance	15%		
Characteristics and Abilities of the Candidate			
Critical thinking, independence, perseverance, originality, organizational skills, interest in discovery, research ability, leadership	40%	**40%**	Reference letters
The Research Training Environment			
Training program for the candidate	10%	**25%**	Training expectations and environment, research proposal, supervisor's publication record and awards, supervisor's experience supervision, supervisor's lab and resources
Scientific Activity	5%		
Research Resources	5%		
Training Record	5%		

SSHRC Doctoral

For applicants registered at a Canadian university	For applicants not registered at a Canadian university
Step 1: The student submits his or her completed application to the relevant department head	Step 1: On or before November 5, 2015, the applicant submits to SSHRC his or her completed application.
Step 2: Members of the department appraise and rank all applications, then forward them, in their entirety, to the university's faculty of graduate studies.	Step 2: SSHRC staff reviews all applications and forwards those eligible to one of five multidisciplinary selection committees.
Step 3: The faculty of graduate studies preselection committee evaluates all applications by dividing them into two categories: recommended and not.	Step 3: Multidisciplinary selection committees evaluate all eligible applications by dividing them into two categories: recommended and not.
Step 4: All A-list applications are entered into the national competition, where they are evaluated by one of five multidisciplinary selection committees.	

NSERC Doctoral

Academic Excellence		
Academic record, scholarships and awards held, duration of previous studies	**30%**	Transcripts and awards
Research Ability or Potential		
Quality of contributions to research and development, relevance of work experience and academic training to field of proposed research, merit and significance of proposed research, ability to think critically, ability to apply skills, jugement, originality, etc.	**50%**	Publications and research contributions, Reference letters, research proposal
Communication, Interpersonal and Leadership Abilities		
Ability/potential to communicate scientific concepts clearly, professional and relevant extracurricular interactions and collaborations	**20%**	Quality of application, publications, awards for oral presentations, CV experiences

Tri-council Master's Awards

Academic Excellence		
Academic record, scholarships and awards held, duration of previous studies	**50%**	Transcripts and awards
Research Potential		
Quality of contributions to research and development, relevance of work experience and academic training to field of proposed research, merit and significance of proposed research, ability to think critically, ability to apply skills, jugement, originality, etc.	**30%**	Publications and research contributions, Reference letters, research proposal
Communication, Interpersonal and Leadership Abilities		
Ability/potential to communicate scientific concepts clearly, professional and relevant extracurricular interactions and collaborations	**20%**	Quality of application, publications, awards for oral presentations, CV experiences

Admissibility

- To be eligible for any of these competitions, you must have first-class academic standing in your last two years of full-time study
- International students are **not** eligible for the SSHRC, CIHR, and NSERC competitions*

   *exception: Vanier Scholarships
- Each award type has restrictions on the number of months of study that you have completed by a specified date

Deadlines

Know the application deadline which applies to you

- Deadline to grad program vs. deadline to agency
- Signature deadlines

- Late applications are not accepted

Selection Criteria

Research Ability or Potential

- Quality of contributions to research and development is taken into consideration
- Relevance of work experience/academic training to field of proposed area of study
- Merit of proposed research
- Demonstration of critical thinking/problem-solving skills

Selection Criteria

Academic Excellence

- Academic record
- Scholarships and awards
- Duration of previous studies

Selection Criteria

Training Environment

- Research resources and experience of supervisor
- Resources available in the lab and extent to which environment will enhance the scientific development of the candidate
- Fit between training program and candidates training expectations/resources

Selection Criteria
Communication, Interpersonal & Leadership Abilities

• Capacity to communicate scientific concepts clearly and logically in written and oral formats
• Professional and relevant extracurricular interactions and collaborations
• Work experience, community involvement and other extra curricular activities

Common Application Materials

1. Application Form
2. Curriculum Vitae
3. Transcripts
4. Reference letters
5. Research Proposal/Program of Study
6. Additional Materials (e.g., Activities/contributions; Interruptions and Delays, etc.)

Common Application Materials

Application Form

- Fill in everything that applies to you
- Usually complete online (create username, password)
- Keep in mind:
  - The deadline posted online might not be your institutional deadline
  - CIHR has additional focus on sex/gender. Don't overlook this box and be thoughtful in what you write.

Common Application Materials

Common CV

- Lengthy process if completing for the first time

Common Application Materials

Transcripts

- All post-secondary transcripts are commonly required
  - Order early!

Common Application Materials

Reference letters

- Usually two required
- Choose your referees wisely!
- Give your referees enough time (minimum 2 weeks)
- Some other tips…

Common Application Materials

Title

- Should foreshadow what your project will look at
- Should be a statement not a question
- Include research technique employed, if applicable
- Be specific!

Common Application Materials

Lay Abstract

- State the problem and the gap in knowledge
- Explain how your research will contribute to this filling this gap
- Write in language that your grandma will be able to understand

Common Application Materials

Research Proposal

- 1-2 Page Summary of proposed research project
- Introduction and methods = bulk of your proposal
- Using headings to organize your content
- Write for non-experts
- Even if you do not have a project yet, make one up!

Common Application Materials

Hypothesis

- Hypothesis may be the only thing your reviewer reads so make it count
- Provide context
  - Since… then…
  - I have shown that… therefore…
  - Considering… then…

Common Application Materials

Proposal

Background

- The first sentence should address what, how, and why
- Do not open with a statistic

Methods

- Goal: to prove that your method is the best
- Do not just list what - list why
- Describe what your results will show

Common Application Materials

Research Proposal Significance

- Talk about the bigger picture but place YOU in the sentence
- My research will...
- How does your project fit with previous research
- Who will benefit from your research

Common Application Materials

Research Proposal

Editing

- Bold, obvious, concise
- *DO* use boosters - definitely, will, must, cannot
- *DON'T* use hedges - appears, perhaps, should, <u>may</u>
- Take out filler (e.g. "has been shown to")

Common Application Materials

Your Training Environment

Adjudicators will assess whether your training environment will foster your development as a researcher…

- Facilities/Equipment
- Personnel Support
- Researcher Interaction
- Available Funds

Common Application Materials

Your Training Environment

- State research career goals and training environment in the first sentence
- Provide examples of how your environment has already helped you and how it will help you in the future
- Start with something that you have already done and transition to what you will do for each paragraph

Common Application Materials

Activities and Contributions

Include <u>all</u> academic related activities

- Examples
  - Published/submitted/about to submit any papers or abstracts
  - Supervised students or other trainees
  - Delivered an invited talk
  - Volunteered for conferences/workshops/etc.

Common Application Materials

Publications

- Break down publications by headers
  - E.g., "Publications (Refereed Articles)", "Refereed Articles (In Press)", "Book Chapters"
- State your role in the contribution
  - Provide a percentage (e.g., Second Author; contribution 40%)
- Bold your name wherever it appears

Common Application Materials

Interruptions and Delays

- Generally, applicants are provided the opportunity to explain interruptions or gaps in their educational history-

Use this opportunity to provide justification IF NECESSARY!
  - E.g., if you experienced a drop in your grades, if it took you longer than four years to complete your undergraduate degree, etc.

Lastly…

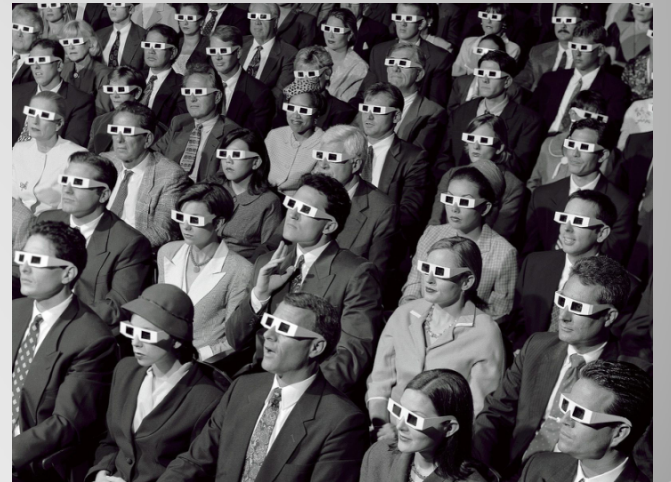Before you begin, know ….
A reviewer wants:
1. To give you an award
2. To not have to struggle to find reasons why
How to make it easy for them:
1. Follow the instructions
2. Communicate clearly
3. Ask your supervisor and/or colleagues to review your application to obtain feedback

Consider Your Audience

- Adjudicators may not be scientists in your field of study
- Written for the general public*
- Minimize jargon

Self-Care

- Exercise and self-care to keep a clear mind and stay happy
  - Applications are a lengthy and stressful process
- Don't be discouraged if you don't receive the scholarship
  - More denials than offers
  - Use feedback to improve your application
- Don't compare yourself to others

Other options

- Provincial grants
- Foundations
  - E.g. Ontario Mental Health Foundation
- Hospitals/ Research Institutes

Examples…

An Adjudicator's Perspective

We are proud to introduce
Aimee Surprenant, PhD
Professor, Memorial University, NL

Questions?
Thanks for listening!

Useful links

- http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/CGSM-BESCM_eng.asp
- http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/38887.html
- https://www.researchnet-recherchenet.ca/rnr16/LoginServlet?language=E
- https://ccv-cvc.ca/indexresearcher-eng.frm
- http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/fellowships/doctoral-doctorat-eng.aspx
- http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/BellandPostgrad-BelletSuperieures_eng.asp