



# Office of Graduate Studies

## Tips for Writing an Award Winning Scholarship Application

### **AWARDS**

2013/14

M: Master's

D: Doctoral

### **EXTERNAL AWARDS**

#### **Vanier**

D: due online Sept. 17, 2012

#### **Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC)**

M/D: due online Oct. 3, 2012

#### **Canadian Institutes of Health Research**

D: due online Oct. 15, 2012

M: due online Jan. 9, 2013

#### **Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)**

M/D: due to dept. Nov. 1, 2012

#### **Trudeau Foundation Doctoral Scholarships**

D: due to dept. Oct. 15, 2012

See all external awards at:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/graduatestudies/finance/extawards>

### **INTERNAL AWARDS & FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

See all university-wide and college awards at:

[www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/graduateawards/index.shtml](http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/graduateawards/index.shtml)

### **GENERAL**

- Start preparing your application early! Know deadlines and application requirements for each scholarship for which you plan to apply. Make a simple spreadsheet to keep track of award deadlines.
- Give yourself time. Completing the application takes a lot of time and effort. If you do not take the time, it will be reflected in the quality of your application.
- Don't get discouraged if you are not successful. Each competition is different so apply each year if eligible.
- Make sure that the application is complete. If not included with the application, make yourself a check list and use it!
- Only provide what is asked for. Respect page limits and word counts. Additional pages will be removed.
- Read the application instructions and follow them carefully. If you have questions, ask!
- Use 12 point font size and a plain font such as Times New Roman or Arial. Set margins. No part of the application should be handwritten!
- Pay close attention to grammar and spelling. This can make or break your application.
- Have someone who knows you well review your application, like your Advisor or a peer from your program. Since they know you academically, they may notice inaccuracies or omissions.
- Have a friend or relative who knows you, but not necessarily your research. This person will be able to evaluate your application in an objective way, without any prior assumptions.
- Take a break! Look over your application a few days later with fresh eyes and a refreshed mindset.

### **TRANSCRIPTS**

- Order transcripts from all post-secondary institutions that you have attended and ensure they are forwarded to the appropriate contact.
- Allow time for mailing. Rush transcripts are expensive and delays could result in missing application deadlines.



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### LETTERS of REFERENCE

- Choose your referee carefully. Request letters from referees who know you well and who you know will provide a positive reference. Some scholarships require letters from specific types of referees. Reference letters from faculty tend to carry more weight.
- The endorsement from a referee is a huge part of any awards application and can help you to stand out from everyone else. Letters that seem like templates, or do not substantiate their claims about your abilities and experience can be harmful to your application.
- Choose a referee who has strong communications skills. If you know the referee, you will know from experience if they communicate well.
- Provide the referee with all required information including a list of your research contributions, the appropriate form or link to the referee form if applicable, a copy of your program of study, the deadline to submit the letter. The more tools you give the referee to work with the better!
- If the reference letter must be mailed, give each referee an envelope, postage paid, so they can easily mail the letter by the deadline.
- Most importantly, give them time! The best referees are probably very busy people so be cognizant of their time.

### RESEARCH PROPOSAL/ SUMMARY

- Carefully read the application instructions regarding the research proposal/summary section. You want to provide the adjudicators with the information they are looking for. No more, no less.
- Write in a clear, concise way, avoiding use of jargon. Say what you mean in an accessible and dynamic way so that anyone reading it will be engaged and understand your point.
- Organize your ideas efficiently. You don't have a lot of space to work with, so make every word count. Make sure you are relating your research to the mandate of the specific award, providing evidence of your connection to that mandate.
- Emphasize what makes your proposal special/original, and how it will contribute to your specific field of study.
- Take the time to write, and re-write. This is the part where you sell yourself to the adjudicators. Every applicant will have a top notch GPA, but if you can sell yourself on paper, you will stand out from the pack.

### PROGRAM AWARDS CONTACTS

[http://www.uoguelph.ca/graduatestudies/finance/awards\\_contacts](http://www.uoguelph.ca/graduatestudies/finance/awards_contacts)

### OFFICE of GRADUATE STUDIES

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