To: Graduate Assistants in eligible programs
From: Monica Corbett
Date: July 1, 2023
RE: **2024-2025 Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship (Vanier CGS) Competition**

DEADLINE TO SGSPA: OCTOBER 5, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time)

Background: The Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships (Vanier CGS) program is designed to attract and retain world-class doctoral students by offering them a significant financial award to assist them during their studies at Canadian universities. Vanier Scholars demonstrate leadership skills and a high standard of scholarly achievement in the social sciences and humanities, natural sciences and engineering, and health-related fields. Canadian and international students are eligible to be nominated for a Vanier CGS, which is valued at $50,000 per year for up to three years.

General Overview: The Vanier CGS can be held by doctoral students only. Applicants must be nominated by Queen's University to be sent forward to the national competitions. Both domestic and international students who meet all eligibility criteria may be considered. Nominees must have an overall average of at least A- or the equivalent in each of the last two years of full-time study or equivalent. Students who currently hold, or have held, a doctoral-level scholarship or fellowship from one of Canada's three federal granting agencies (also known as the Tri-Agencies), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (**CIHR**), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (**NSERC**) or the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (**SSHRC**) to undertake or complete any doctoral degree, are not eligible to apply.

Vanier CGS program news and reminders: Along with the details of this year's competition, universities have been asked to provide staff, faculty and applicants with information about CHANGES (under NEW) to the competition for this year, as well any REVISIONS to processes/documentation and REMINDERS about the competition.

NEW: Attach Other applications materials (Option)
a. PART TIME STUDIES: If an applicant has been enrolled as a part time student, they must now upload information about Part-time studies in this section. The information must be reflected in the transcripts.

b. JOINT PROGRAMS: Applicants 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.

In order to maintain equitable application requirements for all nominees, no information other than that outlined in a. and b., 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 tri-agencies have reaffirmed their commitment to excellence in research evaluation and the importance of knowledge translation. Considering other ways to meaningfully assess research quality, including assessing different types of research outputs, allows researchers' work to be better assessed on its own merits. More information can be found here: https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/51731.html

REVISED: Special Circumstances: The Vanier 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. 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.

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 the 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 section (see above).

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.

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, applicants must indicate the supervisor's name and Institution at the beginning of the lay abstract.

REMINDER: International Transcripts: for any and all nominees with international transcripts, Queen's must attach a 250-word summary provided by the applicant, to describe the variations in the grading system from the country of the transcript and the Canadian level equivalents, and/or explain international credentials and equivalencies. The summary will be a PDF document attached at the beginning of their transcripts. This information is requested by the Vanier selection committee

REMINDER: International recruitment: In keeping with the aim of attracting doctoral students to Canada, universities are encouraged to continue to strengthen efforts to recruit new foreign doctoral students. By attracting top international doctoral candidate, universities can help achieve the goal of building strong brand recognition for the Vanier CGS program as Canada's most valuable, prestigious and sought-after doctoral scholarship. Please keep this in mind when you are considering potential Vanier applicants.

REMINDER: Self-Identified Indigenous (First Nation, Inuit and/or Métis) applicants: Universities may choose to recommend applications from self-identified Indigenous (First Nation, 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 in ResearchNet. Applicants who self-identify as Indigenous must   complete the ***Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship (Vanier CGS): Voluntary Self-Identification Form*** and upload it within their application. This form will be used by the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (SGSPA) to identify Indigenous applicants.

REMINDER: Format of documents: Applicants must use either Arial, Calibri or Time New Roman font size of 12-point black type. Do not use condensed/narrow font sizes, type density, or line spacing. Smaller text in tables, charts, figures, and graphs and references (format at discretion of candidates) is acceptable as long as it is legible when the page is viewed at 100%. Failure to comply with these requirements can negatively impact the status and evaluation of an application.

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

An important component ensuring EDI is the careful consideration of any career interruptions and personal circumstances. The review of an applicant's record will take into consideration the availability of research

and leadership opportunities. Applicants should identify any circumstances that may have delayed or interrupted their academic and/or career advancement (if applicable) in the *Personal Leadership Letter* attachment of their application.

REMINDER: Sex- and Gender-based Analysis Plus (SGBA+): Vanier applicants are expected 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 section(s) of the application.

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](#)

Applicants and their supervisors must describe how respectful collaborations with Indigenous communities have been or will be developed in the research proposal.

REMINDER: Eligibility: Calculating months of doctoral studies: Regardless of disciplines, all current and prior doctoral-level studies in Canada and/or abroad are counted when calculating applicant eligibility. All doctoral- level studies are assumed to be continuous, full-time, and uninterrupted studies unless otherwise denoted on the official transcript(s). The calculation will include the summer months/terms of each academic year of doctoral-level studies. Months of an official leave of absence will not be included in the calculation. The Vanier-Banting Secretariat will count two months of part-time studies as one month of full-time studies.

This table outlines some possible calculations of months of doctoral studies counted:

Eligibility of Months of full time doctoral study completed as of May 1, 2024	Calculation used
0-20 months, IF completed Master's before starting PhD.	The months of study completed are calculated from the doctoral program enrolment date.
0-32 months, IF enrolled in a combined program with a PhD component (eg. MD/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 combined program BUT only months of enrolment in the PhD component are counted.
0-32 months IF promoted to the PhD without completion of Master's.	The months of study completed are calculated from the *original Master's enrolment date*.
0-32 months IF direct entry from the Bachelors to the PhD.	The months of study completed are calculated from the doctoral enrolment date.

Note these categories are mutually exclusive and only one such exemption is permitted for any given applicant.

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, based on the research area. For more details, please consult the *Application/nomination Instruction – Task 6: Identify area of research*

- If an applicant chooses "health", the application will be considered a CIHR Vanier application.

- If an applicant chooses "natural sciences and/or engineering", the application will be considered an NSERC Vanier application.

- If an applicant chooses "social sciences and humanities", the application will be considered a SSHRC Vanier application.

Applicants can find more information on which agency to submit their application to in the document *Selecting the Appropriate Federal Granting Agency* (http://www.science.gc.ca/eic/site/063.nsf/eng/h_FEE7261A.html?OpenDocument).

For SSHRC applicants, there is additional information on SSHRC's website here: http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/apply-demande/background-renseignements/selecting_agency-choisir_organisme_subventionnaire-eng.aspx

REMINDER: Deadline for submitting referee assessments: By default, the Referee Assessment Deadline Date in ResearchNet is set for two days (48 hours) before the university's deadline. However, applicants can adjust this to any date prior to the university's deadline. It is the applicant's responsibility to follow up with referees to ensure the assessments are submitted in sufficient time prior to the applicant's deadline.

Applicants will be able to check on the status of the assessment in ResearchNet and should follow up with the referees if the assessment is not completed shortly before the deadline.

Note that this process refers to the mandatory two non- leadership references only. For the two required Leadership references, the applicant collects and uploads the 2 page letters to their application in ResearchNet, before the university's deadline and before the application can be successfully submitted in ResearchNet.

REMINDER-: Multiple applications regulations: Eligible candidates can apply to both the Vanier CGS program and one other agency-specific doctoral-level scholarship/fellowships program (whether to the same or a different federal granting agency as the Vanier CGS application) 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. Students must apply to the Vanier CGS competition AND the "regular" doctoral-level competition, separately, by each competition's deadline. Candidates who are successful in both competitions will have to choose which award to accept.

THIS YEAR'S COMPETITION: Here are the details of the 2024-2025 competition and application processes.

Online Application: The online application to the 2024-2025 Vanier CGS competition is now available. Applicants should go to the following websites for complete instructions:
https://vanier.gc.ca/en/home-accueil.html
https://vanier.gc.ca/en/nomination_process-processus_de_mise_en_candidature.html
Applications to the Vanier CGS competition must be submitted online through *ResearchNet*. ResearchNet is an online system that provides a secure web portal to collect certain scholarship applications.

Applicants must have and use both a ResearchNet account, and a Canadian common cv (CCV) account, in order to complete and submit a Vanier CGS application. Full instructions are on the website
http://www.vanier.gc.ca/en/nomination_process-processus_de_mise_en_candidature.html

Eligibility and Conditions: For complete details on:
- who is eligible to apply,
- minimum academic eligibility standards for applicants,
- selecting the appropriate granting agency
- review process
- selection criteria
- all acceptance and eligibility conditions to **hold** a 2024-2025 Vanier CGS,

 go here: http://www.vanier.gc.ca/en/eligibility-admissibilite.html

Only one university can submit a candidate's nomination to an agency. If more than one university is interested in nominating a particular candidate for an award, the candidate must choose the university that

will submit their nomination. Multiple nominations will not be accepted and such applications will be withdrawn from the competition. Nominations that are withdrawn for any reason will count towards the university's Vanier CGS allocation. Applications submitted by candidates directly to one of the federal research granting agencies, instead of submitted through a Canadian university, will **not** be considered.

DEPARTMENTAL INFORMATION, 2024-2025 VANIER CGS COMPETITION

1. Queen's University Vanier CGS quota, 2024-2025: This year, Queen's University may nominate the following number of applications to each agency's Vanier CGS competition:

CIHR Vanier CGS	NSERC Vanier CGS	SSHRC Vanier CGS
maximum of 3	maximum of 6	maximum of 6

Nationwide, only 166 Vanier CGS will be awarded between all 3 agencies in 2024-2025. This means the competition will be intense. Department/programs should ensure that their most competitive, eligible students complete and submit applications, according to the required processes and by the deadline of October 5, 2023.

2. Eligibility

a. Minimum Academic Standards for Vanier CGS applicants: Applicants must have a first class average (A-at Queen's) or the equivalent, **in EACH of the last two completed years of full time studies** or equivalent.

b. Calculating months of doctoral studies: See also, **REMINDER: Eligibility: Calculating months of doctoral studies** section above.
All prior doctoral-level studies, regardless of location or 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, excluding months on official leaves). The Vanier-Banting Secretariat (the Secretariat) will count two months of part-time study as one month of full-time study.

3. Selection Criteria: Our nominees for the national competition will be evaluated and selected based on these three equally weighted selection criteria: Academic Excellence, Research Potential and Leadership. See this website for details: http://www.vanier.gc.ca/en/selection_criteria-criteres_de_selection.html.

Table 1 sent with this memo is a copy of the information on that website.

4. Highlighting Leadership in a Vanier CGS Nomination: There are five opportunities in the application package for leadership to be highlighted:

> Common CV
> Personal Leadership Statement
> Referee Letters
> Leadership Reference letters
> Departmental nomination letters

5. Nomination Letter from Head of Graduate Department/Program of the nominee: After October 5, 2023, the SGSPA will contact the departments/programs of each applicant, to request the departmental/program nomination letter, for each applicant. The letter must be no more than 2 pages long, on letterhead, and signed, and must provide the information outlined in Appendix A (below).

Departments/Programs can choose not to submit a nomination letter for any applicant. However, the SGSPA will not forward applications to the national competition unless this letter is provided.   Letters can be hard copy documents sent by campus mail, OR as PDFs of signed letters on letterhead, sent by email directly to Monica Corbett (corbettm@queensu.ca).

6. Transcripts: Applications must include hard copy official versions of **ALL** university transcripts, including college level and CEGEP transcripts if applicable **AND including an official Queen's transcript for studies for this current term year at Queen's University, for students enrolled in a graduate program here currently.** Universities are responsible for uploading the official transcripts of their nominees via ResearchNet. **Therefore the SGSPA must receive all transcripts of all Vanier applicants by October 5, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.**

Hard copy official transcripts are to be sent by the issuing university or universities to the SGSPA, Room 425 Gordon Hall, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario CANADA K7L 3N6, to the attention of Monica Corbett.
       OR
Official transcripts could be sent as PDF documents via email to Monica Corbett (corbettm@queensu.ca) by the issuing university or universities.

If international transcripts are issued in a language other than English or French, applicants must make arrangements for a certified translation to be received by the SGSPA.

7. Adjudication Process: Members of the SGSPA Fellowship Committee and/or Graduate Councils' Award Subcommittees will review and rank the applications received from their Council/Committee. Then, the Associate Deans and Dean of the SGSPA will review the ranked applications and make the final decisions of which applications to send forward.

8. Contact information: Email: vanier@cihr-irsc.gc.ca
ResearchNet technical support: Tel.: 613-941-9080
Email: support@researchnet-recherchenet.ca
Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time).

Thank you for your continued cooperation and assistance with this important process. Please contact me by email (corbettm@queensu.ca) if there are problems or questions.

Yours sincerely,
Monica Corbett
Director, Admissions and Student Services
SGSPA

APPENDIX A: Vanier CGS Nomination letter (maximum 2 pages)

(must follow the specifications found in the instructions provided in the Presentation standards for documents section)

Nomination letters – to be completed/signed by the Department Head nominating the candidate

Universities must provide a nomination letter, along with the application form, for each student nominated for a Vanier CGS.

This nomination letter must be completed and signed by the **Department Head** (equivalent or designate) nominating the candidate and **must be on the Department's letterhead**. If signed by someone other than the Department Head, it should be clearly indicated in the letter that the signee has authority to nominate candidates to the Vanier CGS program.

The nomination letter must be a maximum of two pages in length, and is the university's opportunity to outline for the selection committee what makes the nominee unique. This is the primary purpose of the nomination letter.

The rationale for choosing the candidate should be emphasized in the letter. It should provide context for the nominee's achievements – outline how the nominee is exceptional and how the university both fosters and benefits the student (e.g., what kind of benefits or advantages the university will offer). Address the following points:

1. Rationale for the choice of candidate:

   o Highlight the factors used to determine why the student is deserving of a Vanier CGS. Clearly articulate the excellence of the candidate according to the three selection criteria: Academic Excellence, Research Potential and Leadership (potential and demonstrated ability). Ensure that the letters focus on leadership potential and demonstrated abilities.

   o Highlight the candidate's achievements

2. Research training environment:

   o Elaborate on the appropriateness of the supervisor in terms of resources, funding, publications and other research outputs, their research and training environment. Elaborate on the funding, facilities/resources and personnel that will be made available to support the candidate as they carry out their proposed research and develop their leadership potential.

   o Discuss how the research interests/background of the student and supervisor align with the university's priorities. (Ensure that claims about the uniqueness of the research environment are accurate.)

   o Elaborate on the university's resources regarding any established research-related policies and protocols (e.g., OCAP® for First Nations or any established protocols by Inuit and Métis

Peoples of Canada; approvals for research involving the use of humans, animals or biohazards).

- In the case of applications in which the proposed research respectfully involves and engages Indigenous communities, describe how relationships are being developed with relevant Indigenous communities to engage their collaboration in the proposed research and to promote reciprocity in terms of the benefits derived from the research process and outcomes. Describe any support provided to facilitate collaborations between the applicant, the university and Indigenous communities/partners.

  The following key concepts should also be substantiated in the supervisor's statement if applicable:

  - Indigenous or traditional knowledge

  - Reciprocity

  - Community

  - Respect, relevance and contributions

  For more information, see Vanier's [EDI page](#).

- o Discuss how the supervisor's commitment will be available to support the candidate in furthering their professional and leadership development.

- o If known, comment on the research group and/or faculty with whom the candidate will interact and how the Queen's University will support the development of the candidate's leadership potential. If unknown, address the reasons behind why the candidate has not selected a supervisor and research environment.

3. Rationale of recruiting the candidate:

- o Outline how the university's research environment will foster the student's research interest and leadership skills.

- o Elaborate on the commitment from the department or university as to what kind of benefits they will offer the potential scholar.

4. Recruitment:

   o Comment on how the nomination of the candidate promotes the recruitment of new foreign or Canadian candidates to Queen's.

   o If the candidate has completed a previous degree at Queen's University, provide an explanation as to why it is in the candidate's best interest to stay at the same institution (i.e., research/paid institution (or its affiliate), supervisor or co-supervisor, availability of specialized equipment).

5. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:

   o Highlight how the candidate's personal circumstances, including the impact of gender, race, diversity, ability, sexuality, health disparities, educational access, etc., have played a role in the student's career path and contribute to the excellence of the candidate's profile.

   o Comment on how the university's nomination of the candidate promotes the recruitment of groups underrepresented in research and on the university's commitment to fostering equity, diversity and inclusion as part of the recruitment and nomination processes.

   o Refer to the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion section of the Vanier website for further information.

Achieving a more equitable, diverse and inclusive Canadian research enterprise is essential for creating the excellent, innovative and impactful research necessary to seize opportunities and for responding to global challenges.

The creation of this equitable, diverse and inclusive research community is the responsibility of every member of the community, including applicants, selection committee members, referees, institutions, and the tri-agencies.

Institutions can contribute to the tri-agencies efforts to counter systemic barriers, explicit and unconscious biases, and inequities by promoting the recruitment of groups underrepresented in sciences and by ensuring a strong level of institutional support is provided to these candidates in their application process.

The Secretariat acknowledges that certain circumstances may legitimately affect a nominee's record of research achievement. Universities are encouraged to highlight in the *Nomination letter* how the candidate's personal circumstances have affected the student's path and how this nomination will lead to a more equitable, diverse and inclusive research community.