



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

College of Graduate
and Postdoctoral Studies

GRAD.USASK.CA

CGPS
Canada Graduate Research Scholarship
(CGRS D)
Student Information Session
September 2026

BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS



Agenda

- Overview
- Why This Matters
- Processes and Timelines
 - Eligibility
- Application Components
 - Selection Criteria
- How to Craft a Strong Application
 - Resources
 - Questions

CGRS D Overview

Award value and duration	• \$40,000 per year for three years
Online systems	• NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR
Institutional internal submission deadlines	• Set by institution; USask’s internal deadline is 6pm, Monday, Sept. 28th
Direct applicant submission deadline	• October 17, 2026 (SSHRC); October 19, 2026 (NSERC & CIHR)
Selection criteria	• Research potential (50%) • Relevant experience and achievements obtained within and beyond academia (50%)
Recent changes	• Eligibility window has increased from 24 to 36 months of full-time equivalent study completed in program. • Open to international students that are currently enrolled in a doctoral program of study at an eligible Canadian institution by the application deadline. • Up to 15% of all doctoral awards will be available to international applicants, and they may only hold the award in Canada. • Institutions are able to submit applications from Indigenous students above their quota.

Why This Matters

- **Builds your research profile early:** working with a Tri-Agency-funded supervisor and publishing early makes you more competitive — research potential is 50% of the CGRS D score.
- **Strengthens your relationship with your supervisor:** working through the application together sets a strong foundation for the rest of your program.
- **Frees up research funds for supervisors:** support for equipment, conference travel, publications, and networking.
- **Opens doors:** positions you for further scholarships and awards and can help launch your academic or research career.
- **Matters to USask too:** scholarship success supports the university's rankings and recruitment, and future doctoral quotas are based on recent years' success — so it's a team effort (current quotas: SSHRC = 18; NSERC = 22; CIHR = 4).

Timeline at a Glance

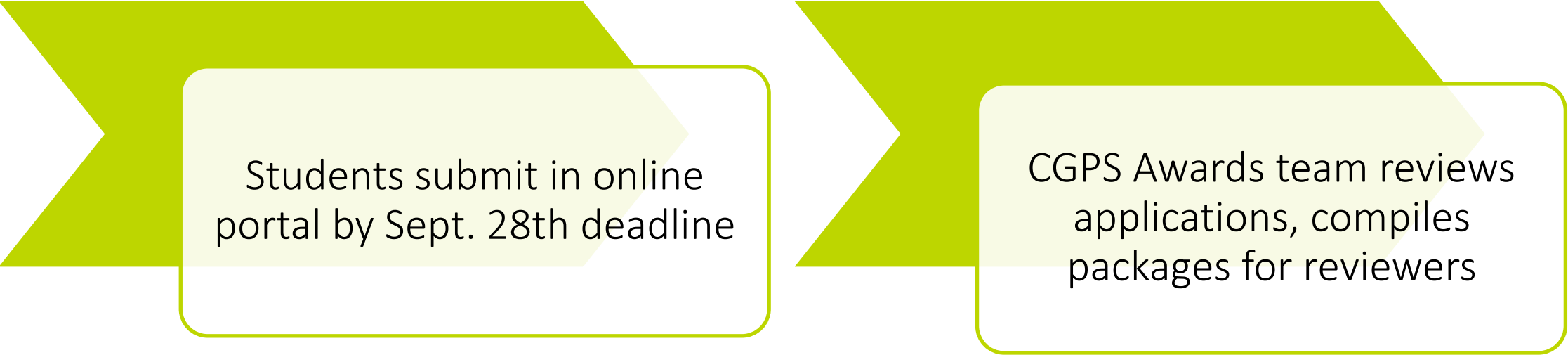


*All applications must be completed and submitted by the internal deadline, **September 28 at 6 pm**. Incomplete applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.*

Processes and Timelines

1. Register for Full Application account
 - CIHR [ResearchNet](#)
 - NSERC Online Portal [Electronic Application Process](#)
 - SSHRC [Webapp Portal](#)
2. Register for CV
 - CIHR Canadian Common CV
 - NSERC CV incorporated into application (no registration required)
 - SSHRC web-based curriculum vitae (SSHRC web CV)
3. Complete & submit full application electronically through the relevant agency platform

Processes and Timelines



Students submit in online portal by Sept. 28th deadline

CGPS Awards team reviews applications, compiles packages for reviewers

Note: late submissions cannot be accepted. Applications will most likely not be returned for revisions, corrections so applicants need to ensure the application is complete and free of errors.

Processes and Timelines

Awards Committee adjudicates, ranks, selects top applicants to move to national.

Selected applicants may have their applications returned for final revisions; all applicants have their status updated by CGPS in the portal.

CGPS forwards applications to agencies by deadline.

Eligibility

For complete eligibility requirements, please visit

- SSHRC – [Subject matter eligibility](#)
 - NSERC – [Addendum to the guidelines for the eligibility of applications related to health | Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada](#)
 - CIHR – [Canada Graduate Research Scholarship – Doctoral \(CGRS D\) Program: Application instructions – CIHR](#)
-
- You must have completed no more than 36 months of full-time equivalent study in the doctoral program, the PhD portion of the joint professional undergraduate/PhD program, or the joint program for which you are requesting funding by December 31 of the calendar year of your application.
 - International students must be registered in their doctoral program of study at an eligible Canadian institution by the application deadline.
 - The program must be predominantly research-oriented, leading to the completion of a thesis, major research project, dissertation, and/or scholarly publication

Eligibility

- Fast-track programs: If you were registered in a master's program and subsequently transferred to a doctoral program (fast-track), the months of study completed are calculated starting from the date on which you transferred into the doctoral program. (i.e when you started registering in 996)
- Months of study are calculated as follows:
 - all months of full-time study, including summer months, count toward the degree for which you are requesting funding
 - the agencies count all studies toward the doctoral degree for which funding is requested, whether or not they were completed in the same program or at the same institution
- **SSHRC ONLY!** *Optional Special Circumstances section*: if applicable, provide information about interruptions to your academic career and an official letter confirming a leave of absence, and upload it with your application.

Eligibility — Other Restrictions

- **One application per year:** you may submit only one CGRS (Master's or Doctoral) application per year, to only one of CIHR, NSERC, or SSHRC.
- **No prior doctoral-level tri-agency award:** you're not eligible if you've already held a doctoral-level award from CIHR, NSERC, or SSHRC.
- **No concurrent tenure-track role:** holding a tenure or tenure-track position at the same time is not permitted (see the Tri-Agency Research Training Award Holder's Guide for exceptions).
- **Limited number of forwards:** an application can only be forwarded to the national competition a limited number of times across your studies

These rules apply Tri-Agency-wide, not just at USask — if any of this affects you, email gradstudies.awards@usask.ca before you start your application.

Components in all Tri Agency Applications

- Application portal
- Research proposal
- Significant Contributions
- References
- CV
- Transcripts

** Each Tri Agency online application differs in format and components!*

Components in all Tri Agency Applications

Application portal and CV

- CIHR ResearchNet
 - Canadian Common CV – CIHR Academic
- NSERC Online System
 - Contribution and Statements Section on **Form 201**
- SSHRC Webapp Portal
 - Make sure to select CGRS D when the application form is submitted
 - SSRHC web CV

- Start early — CIHR's Common CV and SSHRC's web CV both take longer to complete than usually expected.
- Make sure your CV matches your transcripts and application exactly — reviewers cross-check these, so make every entry count.

Components in all Tri Agency Applications

Research Proposal

- Briefly establish the research area and enough context for a multidisciplinary reviewer to understand the project.
- Ensure it's a clear, concise plan for the research intended to be carried out during PhD studies and what it aims to accomplish.
- Make it clear what work is already complete and what is yet to be completed
- Each agency has its own standards, page limits, formatting requirements, and instructions for bibliography
- Write for reviewers who may not be specialists in the applicant's exact area; define specialized terminology and avoid unnecessary jargon.

Components in all Tri Agency Applications

Research Contributions, Relevant Experience, and Activities

➤ Separate attachment for SSHRC, 2 page max

Part I—Research contributions

Part II—Applicant's statement

Two sub-sections;

- Relevant experience
- Relevant activities

➤ In Form 201 for NSERC, 2 page max

Part I— Contributions to research and development

Part II—Most significant contributions

Part III – Applicant's statement (sub-sections: Relevant Experience and Relevant Activities)

➤ In the CV for CIHR, up to 10 activities and contributions. You should include both academic and non-academic achievements and their relevance and impacts

Research Proposal: Agency-Specific Requirements

CIHR

- Training Expectations — max. 2 pages: your professional/academic achievements, how your training supports your career and research goals
- Research Project Summary — max. 1 page: your role, written in general scientific language for a multidisciplinary audience

NSERC

- Outline of Proposed Research — max. 2 pages: clear, jargon-free background, objectives, methods, and significance; note what's new if continuing thesis work
- Bibliography — max. 5 pages: only cited, relevant references

SSHRC

- Research Proposal — max. 2 pages: study level, program & rationale, question, context, objectives, methods, significance; supervisor if known
- Bibliography & Citations — max. 5 pages: any clear, complete referencing style

Components in all Tri-Agency Applications

References

- 2 references are required.
- Each referee completes a one-page Letter of Appraisal form — additional letters or pages will not be accepted.
- One referee should be very familiar with your research and abilities (e.g., current or previous research supervisor).
- They don't HAVE to be a supervisor, but it is recommended.
- Students are advised to provide supervisors with their application, their CV, and the evaluation criteria they want the reference to address.

Components in all Tri-Agency Applications

Transcripts

- Up-to-date official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate studies should be included in the application, including official transcripts for any transfer credits. Each transcript must include one copy of the transcript key
 - Up-to-date official transcripts are defined as transcripts issued by the Registrar's Office and dated or issued in the fall session of the year of application (if currently registered) or after the last term completed (if not currently registered)
 - CGPS can assist with retrieving transcripts that were submitted at the program application stage
 - Transcripts not in English or French need a certified translation. If your institution doesn't issue transcripts, submit an official letter confirming program of study, registration status, dates of initial registration, and degree obtained.
- Students are responsible for ensuring transcripts are correct, complete, legible, and in the right format for your specific Tri Agency. Always review uploads in the Tri Agency system before submission. Transcripts must include a USask fall semester transcript for the current term, even if no grades or degree completed

Components in all Tri-Agency Applications

Transcripts

- When you applied for admission to USask, we received copies of your transcripts from the previous institutions you attended. If we have a copy of your transcript on file, you can submit a request through this form to obtain a copy, and we will email it to you. <https://teamdynamix.usask.ca/TDClient/33/Portal/Requests/Service/337/Transcripts-For-Funding-Opportunities>

The screenshot shows the USask portal interface. At the top is a dark green navigation bar with links: Home, Projects, **Services**, and Knowledge Base. Below this is a lighter green bar with links: Project Requests, Ticket Requests, My Favorites, My Recent, My Approvals, Services A-Z, and Search. A breadcrumb trail reads: Service Catalog / College & Department Services / College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS) / Graduate Students / Applying for Awards and Scholarships / Transcripts For Funding Opportunities. The main heading is 'Transcripts For Funding Opportunities' with a red arrow pointing to a green button labeled 'Submit Transcript Requests'. Below the heading are tags for 'transcripts' and 'funding'. A 'Service Overview' section contains a blue information box stating that CGPS cannot provide official USask transcripts and that users must order them through their PAWS account, with a link to <https://students.usask.ca/academics/grades.php>. To the right of the main content are three green buttons: 'Submit Transcript Requests', 'Share', and 'Add to Favorites'. At the bottom right, a 'Related Articles (1)' section lists 'Canada Graduate Research'.

Selection Criteria

50% Research potential

- quality of research proposal
- demonstration of potential to carry out proposed research relative to the stage of study, lived experience & knowledge systems
- quality of contributions and extent to which they advance the field of research
- demonstration of sound judgment and ability to think critically
- demonstration of responsible and ethical research conduct
- demonstration of originality, initiative, autonomy, relevant community involvement and outreach
- ability to communicate theoretical, technical and/or scientific concepts clearly and logically in written and oral formats

Selection Criteria

50% Relevant experience and achievements obtained within and beyond academia

- relevant training, such as academic training, lived experience and traditional teachings
- scholarships, awards and distinctions (amount, duration, and prestige)
- academic record: transcripts, duration of previous studies, program requirements and courses pursued, course load, relative standing in program
- professional, academic, and extracurricular activities, as well as collaborations with supervisors, colleagues, peers, students and members of the community

How to Craft a Strong Application

- Start early in the portal.
- Address all evaluation criteria.
- Be specific and evidence-based.
- Know your audience.
- Make sure all transcripts and keys are included and uploaded.
- Seek feedback from mentors, supervisors, and other faculty.
- Follow your agency's instructions carefully

How to Craft a Strong Application

- Make sure your CV is up to date, accurate and matches your transcripts and application. Reviewers go through CVs in detail!
- Include any/all information that is relevant to the award (scholarships, previous work/research experience, conference presentations and awards, publications, etc.) [*Note: presentations for a class do not count.*]
- Ensure the summary of the thesis, whether completed or in progress, includes only the most recently completed or in-progress thesis. (Do not include information in the outline of your proposed research.)
- Carefully read instructions, especially when it comes to specific formatting requirements (headers, font, required sub headings). Also, each agency has guidelines on where to put bibliography and page limit. (Cite only what is in the application stage; not to be used as a place to include future sources.)

How to Craft a Strong Application

- Use the Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) considerations in the research process section whenever possible and take it seriously.
- Reference letters are critical in the evaluation process. Choose references wisely. References need to write a compelling reference for a very competitive pool; between both references, all evaluation criteria should be covered.
- Leverage AI responsibly. Ensure you use Gen AI appropriately and responsibly when developing your application, in accordance with Tri-Agency policy.
- Make sure you know where to submit your application in the portal. In the Application Program Information section, ensure that you apply to USask by selecting either option A or B (SSHRC), options C and D (NSERC). Ensure you do not apply directly to the Tri-Agency. Remember, **USask is an institution with specific quotas.**

Common Application Errors to Avoid

- Leaving out a current program you just started in your CV or listing a program you haven't started yet.
- Continued repetition of information and lack of focus in your application
- Having spelling or grammatical errors
- Mixing up categories in CV: RA/TA positions go under work experience, not awards; bursaries (need and merit-based) don't count as awards either.
- Count "months-in-program" wrong — double-check this against Dec. 31 of the application year; it directly affects your eligibility.

Common Application Errors to Avoid

- Applying to the wrong agency for your research area — check the Government of Canada's guide on Selecting the appropriate Federal Granting Agency before you start.
- Not asking your supervisor (or graduate chair) for honest input and edits on your application.
- In the most significant contributions section, don't just list your favourite publication or be too modest; ensure you list your most impactful work, and always ask your supervisor for honest input.
- Ensure you provide your supervisor with your CV and other important supporting documents when asking them for a reference letter. Don't assume they know you well enough to provide a strong reference
- Don't wait until the last minute to submit your application in the online portal. Submit it early to avoid potential system glitches and high traffic on the portal.

Reminders:

- Quotas

SSHRC = 18; NSERC = 22; CIHR = 4

- USask internal deadline = Monday, September 28, 2026, at 6 pm CST

- Amount - \$40,000/year for up to 3 years + \$7,500/year from CGPS

- Students need to apply for a CGRS D to be considered for a Dean's Scholarship. Those ranked high internally and sent to national but are not funded are then re-evaluated by the Awards Committee and Dean. The value is 30,000/year for 2 years.

Resources

- CIHR [Canada Graduate Research Scholarship - Doctoral \(CGRS D\) Program: Application instructions - CIHR](#)
- NSERC [Canada Graduate Research Scholarship – Doctoral program | Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada](#)
- SSHRC [Canada Graduate Research Scholarship-Doctoral](#)

FAQs

[CIHR CGRS D Application Flow Chart](#)

[NSERC CGRS D Application Flow Chart](#)

[SSHRC CGRS D Application Flow Chart](#)

Questions?

gradstudies.awards@usask.ca