The Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships Doctoral awards are very prestigious and, as such, are highly competitive competitions. Award winners are selected according to criteria with a higher level of achievement than a typical doctoral scholarship. A two-stage internal review process is in place at McMaster to help identify the strongest applications and to select the most competitive candidates in each mandate area of CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC.

**Important Deadlines**

- **Tuesday, September 10, 2019, 10:00 am.** *Stage 1* Letter of Intent (LOI) package is due to SGS.
- **Thursday, October 10, 2019, 10:00 am.** *Stage 2* endorsed candidate applications are due to SGS.
- **Wednesday, October 23, 2019, 11:59 pm** McMaster Internal ResearchNet deadline (for students): *Stage 2* endorsed candidates will submit a complete application on ResearchNet.
- **Wednesday, November 6, 2019 (8:00 pm Eastern Time)** Vanier Deadline McMaster must forward their selected nominations to the Vanier CGS program.

Please refer to the Vanier Web Site for complete details.

**McMaster's Vanier application quotas**

- CIHR - 10 applications
- NSERC - 7 applications
- SSHRC - 4 applications

**IMPORTANT: Before beginning your application, please read ALL instructions as there are many updates and new procedures this year.**

**Selection Criteria**

- Candidates are evaluated and selected on the basis of the following three criteria, which are weighted equally: Academic Excellence, Research Potential and Leadership (potential and demonstrated ability).

**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).
Determining the area of research before you begin your application

Please refer to Selecting the Appropriate Federal Granting Agency. If you are applying to SSHRC, consider the information found on SSHRC's website.

The choice of area of research will determine the values available in the drop-down list. If your research does not fall under any of the listed categories, choose the closest research area. Be sure to add the field of research to the keywords section of the application/nomination form.

If in doubt, applicants should consult with the Secretariat by sending an e-mail to vanier@cihr-irsc.gc.ca in advance of submitting a Stage One LOI package to McMaster. This also applies to applications involving interdisciplinary fields of research or research areas that span the mandates of two or more of the federal granting agencies.

- Information on CIHRs mandate and subject matter eligibility is available on the CIHR website;
- Information on NSERCs mandate and subject matter eligibility is available on the NSERC website;
- Information on SSHRCs mandate and subject matter eligibility is available on the SSHRC website;
- Additional information on selecting the appropriate federal granting is available at science.gc.ca website

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.

NEW: Vanier Referee Reference Document

This reference tool is included with the Vanier documents in this package and is for the candidates to send to their referees. It contains pertinent information that will assist the referees in preparing effective assessments.
Stage 1: Letter of Intent (LOI) package must include the following documents:

Due date: Tuesday, September 10, 2019, 10:00 am

Applicants must have the graduate administrator from their department submit the complete Letter of Intent (LOI) package, to the School of Graduate Studies. Please have them supply all documents as one pdf (in the order of the application checklist) to graduatescholarships@mcmaster.ca. McMaster’s email system only delivers messages whose total size is less than 25 megabytes. If your pdf exceeds 25 megabytes, please divide package into 2 pdf files and email each file in a separate message.

Notes: Applications must be scanned in black and white (ensure the package is single-sided prior to scanning). Submit only one application per email with the following naming convention: LASTNAME_VANIER_2019. Please ensure each nomination package is compiled and scanned in the order listed below.

1. Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship Application Checklist
   The checklist is included with the Vanier documents in this package

2. Graduate Studies Approval Form:
   To be completed by the proposed supervisor, the applicant and the department
   The Approval Form is included with the Vanier documents in this package.

3. Research Proposal:
   To be completed by applicant in conjunction with proposed supervisor
   Maximum of 2 pages including graphs and images and must follow Vanier’s Presentation standards for attached documents.
   This document does not include your project references. That is a separate document that is not required at Stage 1.

Provide a detailed description of your proposed research project for the period during which you are to hold the Vanier CGS.

- Provide background information to position your proposed research within the context of the current knowledge in the field.
- Be as specific as possible while keeping in mind that Vanier CGS selection committees are multi-disciplinary. Wherever possible, use non-technical terms and avoid jargon. Define any technical or discipline-specific terms.
- State the objectives, hypothesis, research question and the roles and responsibilities of the applicant, the supervisor and/or other collaborators in the proposed research. If you are involved in a lab, be sure to outline your specific contributions to the overarching group project. (McMaster’s Vanier review committee suggests using headings to clearly identify each section of your research proposal)
- If your potential or current PhD supervisor is unable to provide you with a reference letter, briefly explain why.
• Describe the benefit conferred by undertaking your research at the nominating institution (e.g. supervisor/departmental specialization, lab facilities, funding opportunities, support structures offered/in place).
• Outline the experimental or theoretical approach to be taken (citing literature pertinent to the proposal), the methodology to be used, and the contribution of the project to the advancement of knowledge.
• Provide as much detail as possible to the committee regarding projected timelines for the research, including community consultation, plans for collaboration, and knowledge translation strategies.
• Where applicable, address how your research complies with established research-related policies and protocols (e.g., protocols for conducting research respectfully involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada; approvals for research involving the use of humans, animals or biohazards)
  o If your research proposal includes interviewing human subjects, you must still address how you have / will comply with your institution’s Ethics Review Board processes.
  o If you are proposing to conduct research that respectfully involves Indigenous communities, the research proposal should reflect that you and your nominating institution are aware of and are referring to the relevant principles and protocols established for this type of research, regardless of which council’s selection committee will be evaluating your nomination package.
  o Indicate how diversity (gender, sex, age, race, culture, religion, etc.) has been taken into account in your proposed research; doing so has the potential to increase the rigour and usefulness of the research.

The Secretariat has curated a list of resources to help applicants, institutions, referees, reviewers and readers consider equity, diversity, and inclusion in the application they prepared or evaluate. As you write your research proposal, employ the citation style common to your field of research. Do not use more than one citation style. Footnotes or endnotes should be employed for citation purposes only, and should not elaborate on the information contained in the 2-page research proposal. For guidance on how to best present your Research Proposal to the selection committee, we recommend consulting with your supervisor, mentor, department, or faculty.

Note: All information about interruptions to your academic career and choice of nominating institution should be included either in the Personal Leadership Statement or the Research Proposal.

4. **UPDATE—Personal Leadership Statement**  
   *To be completed by applicant*

   Maximum 2 pages and must follow Vanier's [Presentation standards for attached documents](#).

   The goal of this document is 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. Vanier will return submitted documents back to McMaster that do not properly follow the instructions 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.

**Note:** 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.
5. **Official Academic Transcripts:**

Applicants must include copies of all official undergraduate and graduate transcripts and legends.

6. **Canadian Common Curriculum Vitae (CCV):**

*To be completed by applicant*

If you don’t have a CCV account, register for one.
When creating your CCV, select the Vanier-Banting academic template.
For further information or to register for an account, go to the [CCV website](#).

7. **Special Circumstances (optional):**

*To be completed by applicant*

**Maximum 1 page** and must follow Vanier's [Presentation standards for attached documents](#).

If you are registered in a combined undergraduate and doctoral program (e.g., MD/PhD), use this document to provide a [timeline of your undergraduate versus doctoral program studies](#), broken down by semester. This calculation must be consistent with the transcripts provided. For purposes of this calculation, the undergraduate portion will not count towards the number of months completed. If you have been enrolled part-time during your PhD studies, specify which semesters.

**Note:** In order to maintain equitable application requirements for all nominees, no information other than that outlined above will be forwarded to the committee. All information about interruptions to your academic career and choice of nominating institution should be included either in the [Personal Leadership Statement](#) (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) or the [Research Proposal](#) (which may include additional training taken outside of a degree-granting program, relevant work experience, co-ops and internships, etc).

8. **Nomination Letter:**

*Nomination letter to be completed/signed by the Department Chair nominating the candidate*

**Maximum of 2 pages** and must follow the specifications found in [Presentation standards for attached documents](#). The letter MUST also be on McMaster institutional letterhead and signed by the Department Chair. Please contact the School of Graduate Studies if an equivalent or designate is required to complete the letter for the Department Chair.

The nomination letter is the Institution’s opportunity to outline for the selection committee what makes the nominee unique. It should give the committee context for the nominee’s achievements – outline how the nominee is exceptional and how the institution both fosters and benefits the student (e.g., what kind of benefits or advantages the institution will offer).

**The nomination letter should 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.

2. Research training environment:
   - Elaborate on the appropriateness of the supervisor in terms of resources, funding, publications, 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.
   - Discuss how the research interests/background of the student and supervisor align with the institution’s priorities. (Ensure that claims about the uniqueness of the research environment are accurate.)
   - Elaborate on your 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).
   - Discuss how the supervisor’s commitment will be available to support the candidate in furthering their professional and leadership development.
   - If known, comment on the research group and/or faculty with whom the candidate will interact and how the Canadian institution 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:
   - Outline how the institution's research environment will foster the student's research interest and leadership skills.
   - Elaborate on the commitment from the department or university as to what kind of benefits they will offer the potential scholar.

4. Recruitment:
   - Comment on how the institution’s nomination of the candidate promotes the recruitment of new foreign or Canadian candidates to Canadian institutions.
   - If the candidate has completed a previous degree within your institution, 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:
   - Comment on the university's commitment to fostering equity, diversity and inclusion as part of the recruitment and nomination processes.
   - Refer to the [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#) section of the Vanier website for further information.

**Week of September 23, 2019**
- SGS (LOI) Internal Adjudication Meeting
- Notifications sent to Stage 1 Endorsed and Non-Endorsed candidates.
**Fall 2019 Vanier-CIHR, NSERC & SSHRC CGS**

**Doctoral Scholarship Application Process**

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**Stage 2 - For Applicants**

**Stage 2:** pdf of full application package due to Graduate Studies  
**Due Date:** Thursday, October 10, 2019, 10:00 am  
**Note:** An invitation to complete a full application on ResearchNet does not guarantee the University will give the candidate final endorsed approval for nomination to the national competition.

1. Register for a [ResearchNet account](#) if you don't have one.  
2. Link your CCV to your ResearchNet account.  
3. Complete the application on ResearchNet and also create and upload all the required documents to your application. Please ensure all your attachments to your application are prepared according to Vanier's [Presentation standards for attached document](#). If you were required to make any changes to the documents you submitted at Stage One, please do so before you upload them to your application.  
4. Please collaborate with your graduate administrator who will assist you in uploading your transcripts and legends. For students including foreign transcripts, the institution must include a standard table or record that outlines the institution's understanding of the foreign transcript. Student explanations of grades will not be forwarded to the committee for evaluation. The transcripts can be uploaded by your department administrator only after you have submitted your application on ResearchNet by McMaster's Internal ResearchNet Deadline of Wednesday, October 23, 2019 11:59pm.  
5. Nomination Letter - The School of Graduate Studies’ Associate Dean from your faculty will contact your Department Chair with any feedback or suggested changes to your letter. You are not required to resubmit this letter at Stage 2.  
6. Please remember to identify your referees as soon as possible and follow the instructions on ResearchNet in order for each referee to receive the email with the link to complete the reference letter, instructions, and due date. ResearchNet does not grant the referees access to view the application. You will not be able to submit your application to ResearchNet until the reference letters are uploaded to your application. **NEW:** Applicants can manage the deadline by which referees must submit their assessments. By default, the Assessment Required Deadline Date in ResearchNet is set for two days before the applicant’s deadline. However, applicants can adjust this to any date prior to the applicant’s deadline which at McMaster is Wednesday, October 23, 2019, 11:59. (We recommend 2-3 days prior to the Internal Deadline to allow for follow-up if necessary). **For more information please consult Task 8 of the application/nomination instructions.** [Information for Referees](#) is also available on Researchnet.  
7. The **two** leadership reference letters are separate from the two assessments uploaded to ResearchNet by your referees. You, the applicant, are responsible for procuring and uploading the leadership reference letters in PDF format to your ResearchNet application. It cannot be submitted by the letter-writer via ResearchNet.

Please print all the documents from your application on ResearchNet (excluding ANY of your reference letters) and submit it as one pdf to graduatescholarships@mcmaster.ca no later than Thursday, October 10, 2019, 10:00 am. Please ensure the application is scanned in black and white. The School of Graduate Studies will contact the endorsed and non-endorsed Stage 2 candidates by Friday, October 18, 2019. All Stage 2 endorsed candidates **must** have their Vanier ResearchNet application complete, including reference letters, by McMaster's Internal ResearchNet deadline of Wednesday, October 23, 2019 11:59 pm.
Nomination Letter

The Associate Dean from the applicant’s Faculty will contact the applicant’s Department Chair with any feedback or changes to the letter after the Stage One meeting. The Associate Dean may assist the Department Chair in the redrafting of the letter.

The revised nomination letter is to be submitted by the Department Chair or Associate Dean to the School of Graduate Studies at graduatescholarships@mcmaster.ca by Tuesday, October 22, 2019.

Transcripts

Transcripts can be uploaded by the Graduate Administrator (or equivalent) only after the applicant has submitted their application on ResearchNet by our internal deadline of Wednesday, October 23, 2019 11:59 pm.

In order for a Graduate Administrator to be able to upload the transcripts, he/she must create an account in ResearchNet to receive access as a “Secondary User”. Upon account confirmation from ResearchNet, please notify The School of Graduate Studies at graduatescholarships@mcmaster.ca and include the name and email address that was used to create the ResearchNet account;

Note: Graduate Administrators (or equivalent) who already have an existing account with ResearchNet for Vanier are not required to create a new account for this year’s Vanier Competition.

ResearchNet link: ResearchNet
Tips and References

General Comments

- Proofread your application for spelling, grammar, and formatting.
- Have someone else proofread your application.
- Make sure to update your papers on your CCV.
- Use strong action words in the leadership section of your CCV and in your Leadership Statement.
- Use the maximum page allowances given for any documents required for your application.

Presentation Standards for Attached Documents

Documents prepared by the nominee that do not follow the instructions provided may render a nomination package ineligible.

If you have supporting documents written in a language other than English or French, you are required to submit a certified translation of these documents. Please insert a blank page to separate the official translation from the original document.

Formatting instructions to prepare your documents:

- Pages must be 8½” x 11” (216 mm x 279 mm).
- Insert a minimum margin of 2 cm (3/4 inch) around the page (top, bottom and sides).
- Use a minimum font size of 10-point Arial font, black type. Maximum of six lines per inch. Do not use condensed/narrow font sizes, type density, or line spacing. Smaller text in tables, charts, figures, and graphs is acceptable as long as it is legible when the page is viewed at 100%.
- Photo-reduce the supporting documents if the originals are larger than 21.25 x 27.5 cm / 8.5” x 11”.
- Any images, diagrams, technical drawings, or any other image must be contained within allowable page limits.
- Attachments must be uploaded in PDF format (unprotected).
- The size of the attached document(s) cannot exceed 30 MB per document.
- For documents prepared by the applicant: At the top of each page, indicate your name and the title of the document as it appears in the instructions.
- For multi-page attachments, number the pages sequentially.
- For more information about converting documents to PDF, please refer to Help with Accessibility page.

ResearchNet application process: general information and contacts

1. In ResearchNet, complete all tasks listed for the Vanier CGS application.
2. Preview the Full Application Package version of your application in ResearchNet, using the "Preview Application Materials" task, to ensure that your application is complete. **Note:** What you see previewed is exactly how your application will look when submitted electronically to the Canadian nominating institution and to the Vanier CGS program.
3. Print the entire application.
4. Save the PDF version of the entire, completed application.
5. Submit the completed electronic application through ResearchNet by completing the "Consent and Submit Application" task. **Note:** The nominating institution cannot accept your application until you complete this task.
6. For technical help, call 1-888-603-4178 or 613-954-1968 or email support-soutien@cihr-irsc.gc.ca from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time.
7. For program-related help, contact vanier@cihr-irsc.gc.ca.

Please contact graduatescholarships@mcmaster.ca if you have any questions about McMaster’s application process.