In order to assist the Vanier academic referees, we have created a reference tool that includes information and links from Vanier's website. Please email this document to your referees.

Information for referees

The Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship (Vanier CGS) program provides funding to world-class doctoral nominees, both nationally and internationally, who will positively contribute to the country's economic, social and research-based growth. For more information about the program, refer to the About Us section of the Vanier website.

The objectives of the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship program are to:

- attract and retain top-tier doctoral talent, both nationally and internationally;
- develop their leadership potential;
- position them for success as research leaders of tomorrow.

Nomination for this scholarship includes an assessment from two (2) academic referees. Refer to the application/nomination instruction for more details.

Referee Assessment

Vanier CGS nominations are reviewed by one of three multidisciplinary selection committees based on broad discipline areas: Health (CIHR), Natural Sciences and/or Engineering (NSERC), or Social Sciences and Humanities (SSHRC).

Selection committee members consider referee assessments as part of their overall review and to corroborate their own evaluation of the application. Since referee assessments therefore play a critical role in the review process, referees should be mindful of using them to evaluate (versus advocate for) the nomination. ResearchNet will ask referees to address each of the selection criteria in the following manner:

- **Academic excellence**: (max. 2250 characters) Provide an assessment of the candidate’s academic excellence as demonstrated by past academic results and by transcripts, awards and distinctions. Since the review committee is multidisciplinary, please provide an assessment that references the norms and expectations of the student’s discipline. If applicable, please also comment on results achieved outside of the university environment.
- **Research potential**: (max. 2250 characters) Provide an assessment of the candidate’s research potential as demonstrated by their research history, interest in discovery, the proposed research and its potential contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the field and any anticipated outcomes. Include examples to support your assessment in comparison to the norms particular to the research area(s) (e.g. publication norms for the discipline etc.)
- **Leadership**: (max. 4500 characters) Provide an assessment of demonstrated and potential leadership ability. Because there is no opportunity to interview the students, please elaborate for the committee how the candidate has gone above and beyond the opportunities presented in order to achieve a goal, contribute to their community, or how they have taken on responsibility for
others. Note that high achievement, while admirable, does not necessarily constitute leadership. Be sure to provide context for the committee that illuminates how the candidate’s participation in activities (e.g., volunteer or work, sport or art, and any other participation) goes above and beyond active participation and becomes leadership.

Because the selection committees are multidisciplinary in nature, providing evidence and examples to support the assessment in comparison to normal expectations for PhD students in the research area(s) is very useful. In particular:

- Identify existing knowledge gaps within the discipline related to the proposal
- Outline avenues for research dissemination, according to disciplinary norms and/or the needs of knowledge users
- Explain authorship norms for publications within the discipline
- Describe the impact of the applicant’s various research and leadership contributions (e.g., impact on the discipline and/or community, significance for collaborating partners and/or knowledge users, prestige of publication venue)
- In the case of applications in which the proposed research respectfully involves 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 nominating institution and Indigenous communities/partners.

**Note:** It is the applicant’s responsibility to provide referees with the information that they need in order to complete their assessments.

Referees must complete all sections of the assessment online via ResearchNet. They will not be able to upload documents in ResearchNet or submit assessments off-line. Only once all sections (including the section requiring information about the referee) have been completed will the submit button be available.

**Limiting Unconscious Bias**

The Tri-agencies are actively engaged in promoting equity and diversity, as well as decreasing unconscious bias in their review processes. To that end, the Secretariat has curated a list of resources for referees to consult regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion considerations. Before beginning your assessment, we strongly recommend that you review these resources.

Biases may manifest themselves in several ways and could be based on a school of thought, fundamental versus applied or translational research, areas of research or approaches (including emerging ones), size or reputation of a participating institution, age, cultural background, language, personal factors or gender of the applicant.

Referees are cautioned against using any inappropriate judgment of an application based on such factors, and are asked to constantly guard against the possibility of implicit bias influencing their assessment or the review of the application by the selection committee.
Request for an assessment

Referees will receive a request via email from ResearchNet (an application platform used by the Vanier CGS program) with instructions on how to link to the assessment form. This email is automatically generated by ResearchNet, so be sure to check your spam/junk folder.

The email sent by ResearchNet will include a unique URL that allows you access to the referee form. You will not receive access to the application package; speak to the candidate to receive the information that you will need to complete this task.

If the email requesting assessment is misplaced, the student may generate another unique URL by resending the invitation (see Task 8 – Identify Referees in the instructions for applicants). If the student resends the invitation, or deletes and re-invites you as a referee, this action will render all previously sent URLs inactive.

Deadline for the assessment

The referee assessment must be submitted via ResearchNet no later than the Assessment Required Deadline Date displayed on the online referee assessment page. Please contact the nominee if you have any questions about the deadline.

Note: If the referee assessment is not submitted on time, the applicant will not be able to submit their application.

Selection Committee Guide

More details are available in the Selection Committee Guide on Vanier’s website.