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Roles and Responsibilities for Universities and the Agencies Managing the Canada Graduate Scholarships-Master's Program

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Definitions

Agencies means CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC

Agreement means the  [Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions](#)

Award means funding provided by an Agency through a CGS

CGS means Canada Graduate Scholarships

CGS M means Canada Graduate Scholarships-Master's

CIHR means the Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Framework means the  [Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

NSERC means the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada

Recipient means an award holder

SSHRC means the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

TCPS 2 means the second edition of  [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#)

Universities means eligible Canadian universities which have an agency allocation of CGS M awards

Foreword

CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC are agencies of the Government of Canada and are charged with promoting and funding research and research training in Canada.

The purpose of this document is to outline the general terms and conditions governing the administration of the CGS M Program by the Agencies and Universities starting in September 2013.

The CGS Program was introduced by the Government of Canada in 2003, injecting

\$105 million per year to support Canada's best and brightest graduate students to study in Canada. The initial investment increased by \$27 million in 2007, adding 500 Master's and 500 doctoral awards; bringing the totals to today's level of 2,500 Master's scholarships and 2,500 doctoral scholarships.

The federal government 2009 budget provided an additional \$87.5 million over three years to temporarily expand the CGS Program. This particular additional investment ended in 2012.

The CGS (Master's and doctoral) aim to develop research skills and assist in the training of highly qualified personnel by supporting students who demonstrate a high standard of scholarly achievement in undergraduate and graduate studies. They are available to Canadian students and permanent residents while studying in Canada at Canadian universities. Scholarships are awarded based on academic excellence.

The distribution of CGS M across the Agencies is as follows:

Agency	Master's Scholarships (annually)
CIHR	400
NSERC	800
SSHRC	1,300
Total	2,500

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Roles and Responsibilities

The Agencies are responsible for delivering federal government programs of support for research training and setting the guidelines related to the administration of programs and awards supporting research training of graduate students.

In 2013, the Agencies implemented a new harmonized model of delivery of the CGS M Program. Each eligible University will receive an award quota from the Agencies and the selection process will move from a two-stage process to a one-stage process. The Universities receiving the CGS applications will manage their own selection process and award the CGS. The Agencies will no longer conduct centralized, national selection processes for the Master's program. In this new context, the Agencies' and Universities' respective roles and responsibilities have been redefined.

Agencies' Role and Responsibilities

The Agencies' role and responsibilities are:

- Deliver the CGS program;
- Provide Universities with a framework of policies and guidelines that govern the CGS program;
- Provide Universities with allocations of CGS M awards;
- Provide Universities with harmonized tools to manage the selection process and the awards for CGS M Program, including:
 - A common Web-based application portal (the Research Portal);

Guidelines for the selection and administration of the awards at the Universities;

The Terms and Conditions of the Awards to provide to successful candidates;
Provide distinct Agency reports to the Canadian Parliament on the use of CGS funds and outcomes related to the program;

Reserve the right to interpret and enforce the policies and guidelines governing the CGS M Program set out in their published materials.

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Universities' Role and Responsibilities

Participating universities are responsible for:

Administering the selection process to award the CGS M;

Abiding by the policies and guidelines that govern the CGS M Program;

Agreeing to the roles and responsibilities described in this document;

Informing applicants of results;

Managing and administering the awards;

Using the Agencies' tools in support of the delivery of the CGS M Program;

Reporting to the Agencies on the use of CGS M funds and outcomes related to the program, by each Agency's mandate area;

Complying with the Agreement, including the Framework.

Privacy

The personal information provided through the Research Portal is collected by the Agency or Agencies under the authority of the [Canadian Institutes of Health Research Act](#), the [Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council Act](#) and/or the [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Act](#), and stored in a series of CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC data banks, described in [Info Source](#).

The collection, use and disclosure of personal information provided to the Agencies are outlined in the policy documents found on the Agencies' respective Web sites ([CIHR](#), [NSERC](#), [SSHRC](#)). The Universities must follow all applicable laws, including privacy laws, or policies within their jurisdiction. Refer to the Agreement and to the Framework for more details. The Agencies expect the Universities to store CGS information in a secure manner, not to use or disclose it for any other purpose without the applicants' consent, and to destroy it in a secure manner in accordance with any applicable laws or policies within their jurisdiction. Universities are also expected to report any privacy breaches to the Agencies.

The Official Languages Act

Under the *Official Languages Act*, federal institutions, including the Agencies, must ensure respect for the rights of individual Canadians to receive services from federal institutions and organizations that provide services on their behalf, in the official language of their choice.

The Agencies are committed to promoting equitable access by:

Ensuring that their funding opportunities enable the participation of both official

language communities;

Providing applicants with equitable access to the information and resources in the official language of their choice;

Monitoring and promoting the participation of Official Language Minority Institutions, researchers and students in their programs.

Applications can be submitted to the Agencies in either official language; therefore, Universities should have mechanisms in place to review both English and French applications.

Terms and Conditions for Applicants

Students submitting applications to the CGS M Program are required to agree to comply with certain terms and conditions, including the Consent to Disclosure of Personal Information, as described in the [Signatures](#) section of the Canada Graduate Scholarships-Master's Program Instructions for Completing an Application. The Agencies keep a record of the consent, therefore, Universities are not required to do so. When accepting an award, successful applicants agree to comply with the terms and conditions of the award.

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Research Ethics and Other Tri-Agency Policies

The Agencies have joint policy statements to promote the ethical conduct of research and adhere to the ethical principles and articles of these policies, including research involving humans, animals, human pluripotent stem cells, and others. The following questions relate to certification requirements which may apply if the research meets certain conditions.

1. Does the proposed research involve humans as research participants?
2. Does the proposed research involve animals?
3. Does the proposed research involve human pluripotent stem cells?

Consult [Section 2.4](#) of the Framework for additional details.

Research Involving Humans

Consult the [TCPS 2](#) for additional details.

Research Involving Animals

Consult [Section 2.4](#) of the Framework for additional details.

Research Involving Human Pluripotent Stem Cells

New or ongoing human stem cell research that is: a) funded by the Agencies; or b) conducted under the auspices of an institution that receives any Agency funding, whether on site or off site; or c) conducted elsewhere with any source of funding, by faculty, staff or students from a University that receives Agency funding, must conform to the [Updated Guidelines for Human Pluripotent Stem Cell Research](#). As well, all such research must be in conformity with the [TCPS 2](#).

Subject Matter Eligibility, Health, Psychology and

Anthropology Related Research

The subject matter of the research proposed must be aligned with the legislated mandate of one of the Agencies and must meet the eligibility guidelines of the Agencies. Additional information on subject matter eligibility is available on the [Science.gc.ca](#) Web site. Universities are required to refer to these guidelines when assessing the eligibility of the applications and when selecting the area of research the applications falls under, i.e., health (CIHR), natural sciences and engineering (NSERC) or social sciences and humanities (SSHRC). The Agencies will conduct an oversight of the eligibility of applications of award recipients.

Public Communications

Universities and Agencies both benefit from positive public awareness of federally funded research and research training, and from promoting the value of this investment for Canadians.

In order to maximize mutual benefits and fulfill responsibilities, Universities and Agencies must collaborate to inform the public about Agency grants and scholarships awarded, programs of research support and research training, and the impact of research conducted at their Universities or facilities funded by the Agencies. This includes promoting announcements in the media, on each others' Web sites, in corporate materials and social media; exchanging visual materials and sharing media coverage.

In addition to written acknowledgement of funding contributions and appropriate use of logos on promotional and media materials (e.g., news releases, Web sites and other Web assets, social media tools, advertising, research profiles, publications, equipment or facilities, and any other communications tools), communications activities about federally funded research must comply with Agency communications guidelines, where applicable. For additional information, consult the [Public Communications Policy of the Federal Research Funding Organizations](#).

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CGS M Competition Process

In an effort to assist Universities in obtaining consistent results with the selection process, the Agencies propose the guidelines outlined below.

Award Allocations

Each participating Institution is assigned a separate allocation of CGS M awards for CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC (refer to the [Canada Graduate Scholarships-Master's Award Allocations](#) for the number of awards available to Universities for each of the 2014 to 2016 competitions). Universities must respect the agency-specific allocation.

Eligible Canadian universities receive agency-specific allocations based on the 2,500 CGS M awards available each year. There are 400 CGS M awards available from CIHR, 800 from NSERC and 1,300 from SSHRC. These allocations have been determined for the 2014-2016 competitions.

The calculation is based on the current average distribution of the number of CGS M

awards held at each institution (location of tenure of awards) from recent competition years. The allocation will be in effect for the next three years.

Universities must award the scholarships according to their agency-specific CGS M allocations by year and by agency. Allocations are not transferable to a subsequent year nor to another agency (see exceptions in the [Conditions of the Award](#) section of the program description).

Application Process

Applicants to the CGS M Program must complete their application using the Research Portal. The University must ensure that the applicant is eligible once the application is submitted and received. For information regarding applicant eligibility, consult the [Canada Graduate Scholarships-Master's Program](#) description and its [instructions](#).

Applicants can select up to five Universities where they wish to hold the award. Applicants may select universities on the application where:

- they are currently enrolled in an eligible program of study and wish to pursue their studies; or
- they intend to apply for full-time admission to an eligible program of study if not currently enrolled at a university of their choice.

Deadlines and Competition Results

Universities cannot set their own deadlines, either for the submission of applications or for announcing competition results.

The deadline for the submission of applications to the CGS M Program is December 1 of every calendar year.

For each competition year, the CGS M announcements of results will be made by all Universities during the first week of April. The results and offers of awards will be made by the University, on behalf of one of the three agencies, via the Research Portal. Following the one week window that university administrators will have to post their offers, applicants will have three weeks to accept or decline the offers. Universities may make subsequent offers should some of the offers be declined, until it has no scholarships remaining.

Postings of results (offers of awards) will be made available by the Universities on the Research Portal where students will be required to submit their responses by the deadline date. The onus to check the Research Portal for results of the selection process lies with the applicants.

Selection Process

The applications will be available to Universities through the Research Portal in electronic format (PDF).

Appointment of University Selection Committee(s)

Each University must establish the number of selection committees required to conduct the selection process which will determine the CGS M award recipients. It is anticipated that committees will be interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary in nature and by field of research (health, natural sciences and engineering and social sciences and

humanities), where appropriate and where warranted (depending on University allocations).

It is the Agencies expectations that a rigorous and transparent merit review selection process will be conducted to identify candidates to whom an award should be offered. The selection process should be managed by the Faculty of Graduate Studies or its equivalent. Names of selection committee members, as well as clear conflict of interest guidelines and selection processes should be established and published on University's Web sites.

It is permitted to have individuals unaffiliated with the host University as members of the selection board. This may be considered by some Universities as a way to overcome issues pertaining to Official Languages, or to overcome subject matter gaps caused by conflicts of interest. In all cases the members of the selection committees must agree to respect the confidentiality and privacy rules.

Review of Applications by University Selection Committee(s)

Applications must be assessed according to the [Selection Criteria](#). The purpose of the review is to identify those who will be offered a CGS M scholarship, and to establish a ranked list of alternate recipients who would be offered a scholarship should there be any remaining after the initial or subsequent rounds of offers.

Conflicts of Interest

Universities are expected to apply their own conflict of interest policies to the review and selection of CGS M recipients. In particular, the Agencies expect that faculty or staff members with a personal, family or research connection with a particular applicant not participate in the review of that candidate's application. Universities may also choose to adopt the Agencies guidelines (see the [Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy of the Federal Research Funding Organizations](#)).

Selection Criteria

The merit review of CGS M applications will be carried out by participating Universities, and must be based on the evaluation criteria listed in the Selection Criteria table below. Particular weights are assigned to the criteria and committee members are expected to take each into consideration when assigning an application a global score. Universities may use their own marking scheme to assign scores to applications so long as the proportional weight of each criterion is respected. Universities cannot add criteria to this list.

Selection committee members should carefully consider each element of the application, including academic transcripts, research history, proposed research, personal characteristics and interpersonal skills and references.

In applying the evaluation criteria, it is important to take into account the individual applicant's stage in his or her academic program. Committee members should also take into consideration special circumstances that may have interrupted or delayed the completion of an applicant's current or previous degree, as described in the application.

Universities may offer to award a CGS M to a student without a first-class average if

there is a strong rationale, however, it must be documented and reported to the Agencies.

Criteria	Description	Weight
Academic Excellence	<p>As demonstrated by past academic results, transcripts, awards and distinctions.</p> <p>Indicators of Academic Excellence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic record (first class average) Scholarships and awards held Duration of previous studies Type of program and courses pursued Course load Relative standing (if available) 	50%
Research Potential	<p>As demonstrated by the applicant's research history, his/her interest in discovery, the proposed research, its potential contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the field, and any anticipated outcomes.</p> <p>Indicators of Research Potential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality and originality of contributions to research and development Relevance of work experience and academic training to field of proposed research Significance, feasibility, and merit of proposed research Judgment and ability to think critically Ability to apply skills and knowledge Initiative, autonomy and independence Research experience and achievements relative to expectations of someone with the candidate's academic experience 	30%
Personal Characteristics and Interpersonal Skills	<p>As demonstrated by the applicant's past professional and relevant extracurricular interactions and collaborations.</p> <p>Indicators of Personal Characteristics and Interpersonal Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work experience Leadership experience Project management including organizing conferences and meetings The ability or potential to communicate theoretical, technical and/or scientific concepts clearly and logically in written and oral formats Involvement in academic life Volunteerism/community outreach 	20%

Award Administration

Announcement of Competition Results

The national deadline for the announcement of results to applicants by Universities is April 1st of every calendar year. No results can be made available to applicants before April 1st. Applicants will have three weeks to accept or decline the offers of awards made by the Universities. A University may make subsequent offers if some of the offers are declined, until the University has no scholarships remaining.

Postings of results (offers of awards by Universities) will be made available on the Research Portal where students will be required to submit their responses by the suggested deadline dates.

Lists of Recipients and Alternates

Universities will be required to draw up a list of applicants to whom awards will be offered in the first round of competition results to be published on April 1st of every calendar year, as well as a list of alternate applicants to whom awards will be offered in subsequent rounds, if applicable.

A student may only accept one CGS M offer. If they accept an offer, they will be deemed to have declined any other pending offers (if applicable). Applicants are not eligible to receive or accept a CGS M offer from a University where they are not enrolled in, or where they have not applied for admission to, an eligible program of study.

Payment of Awards

Universities will administer the awards throughout their lifecycle. Awards will be paid out by the Agencies to the Universities that will select the recipients, make payments, and administer them.

Awards must be held at the University where the offer of award originates. Awards are not intended to be portable; however, exceptions may be made in extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the host University, according to their academic and administrative regulations. Awards are portable within a University (example between departments), at the discretion of the host University.

The total dollar amount paid out to the Universities by the Agencies will be equivalent to the Universities' total share of allocations.

Awards cannot be carried over from one year to the next. Unused scholarships in one year cannot be added to the next year's allocation.

The Agencies must ensure that the full amount allocated for the CGS M Program is used for the purposes for which it is intended.

Financial Management

Universities will be responsible for the financial management of the awards based on

an annual fiscal framework. Detailed guidelines are currently being developed and will be shared with the Universities in fall 2013.

Financial Reporting

Detailed guidelines are currently being developed and will be shared with the Universities in the coming months.

Financial Monitoring

Officers of the NSERC/SSHRC Finance and Awards Administration Division's Financial Monitoring Team and CIHR conduct periodic monitoring of Canadian Universities to ensure that appropriate and sound financial practices are in place and that the Agencies' guidelines are followed. The Agencies will continue this practice.

Post-Award Administration

Universities will be responsible for the post-award administration of awards, including declines, terminations, leaves of absences due to illness, parental leaves, and deferments of payments. Detailed guidelines are currently being developed and will be shared with the Universities in fall 2013.

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Reporting and Monitoring

Award Reporting

A reporting tool will be available to University administrators through the Research Portal to notify the Agencies of the names and other pertinent information of the recipients of CGS M awards.

Monitoring

The Agencies reserve the right to monitor the allocation of awards, for example in order to ensure that the subject matter of awarded scholarships is consistent with their respective mandates. They will also be conducting periodic reviews of the selection processes implemented at the institutional level. Detailed guidelines are currently being developed and will be shared with the Universities in the coming months. Agencies may contact Universities to request corrective action if they deem it necessary.

Appeals

Universities are expected to apply their own appeal policies to the review and selection of CGS M recipients. Detailed guidelines are currently being developed and will be shared with the Universities in the coming months.

How to Reach Us

The Agencies encourage student liaison officers/research grant officers to use the following dedicated e-mail addresses when corresponding with the Agencies on all application and award related matters:

CIHR

CGS M Award Program Delivery Coordinator

Tel.: 613-952-0763

E-mail: cgsma@cihr-irsc.gc.ca

NSERC

[Contact List](#)

E-mail: schol-slo@nserc-crsng.gc.ca

SSHRC

Tel.: 613-943-7777

E-mail: uni.liaison@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca

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[Important Notices](#)



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