Graduate Scholarships—Master’s Level

Attending graduate school to complete a Master’s program can be expensive. Many research-based Master’s programs offer different funding packages depending on the program of study. Students applying for graduate school will have the opportunity to apply for various scholarships and awards.

Canada Graduate Scholarships (CGS-M)

The most prestigious scholarship for MSc students is the Canadian Graduate Scholarship—Master’s Program (CGS-M).

Many professors encourage students entering a research-based Master’s program to apply for the CGS-M. It is designed to support students and is administered by Canada’s three federal granting agencies: the Canadian Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). The application process has changed in recent years so it is important to go through the details outlined below making sure applicants are up-to-date on current eligibility requirements.

Details

- Valued at $17,500 for 12 months, non-renewable.
- Supports roughly 2,500 students annually across Canada.
- Must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents.
- Must be entering, have applied for, or will be applying to an eligible graduate program at the master’s or doctoral level at a Canadian institution with a CGS-M allocation.
- Have achieved a first-class average (minimum of A- or a 10.0), as determined by the host institution, in each of the last two completed years of study (20 semester courses).
- Is based on academic excellence (50%), research potential (30%), and personal characteristics and interpersonal skills (20%).
- Applicants can select up to 5 universities which they wish to hold the award and are not able to carry the award to other schools.
- Each school has a committee which will review your application to determine if you should be considered for the CGS-M, as there are a limited number of scholarships available at each school.
• Applicants will be required to write a research proposal, one page in length, with one additional page allowed for references.
• Two letters of reference are needed for a complete application.
• Deadlines for the CGS-M will be December 1.

For more information regarding eligibility and application procedures please go to http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/CGSM-BESCM_eng.asp

Hints for successful CGS-M applications

• Remember that 20% of the score for the application is based on “personal characteristics and interpersonal skills”. Make sure that you include volunteer experiences, evidence of leadership, teaching experience, participation in relevant non-academic activities, etc. in your Canadian Common CV. Also make sure that your letter-writers know about your non-academic activities and can say something about them in their letters.
• Your research statement needs to be applicable to up to 5 different schools. Write it in a general way, without tying it directly to a particular professor’s research at a particular school (unless that is the only school that you are applying to). You are not tied to that exact project when you start graduate school. The evaluators are looking to see if you understand what is involved in a research project, and if you can articulate an interesting problem and a possible approach to investigate it.
• Your application will be assessed by scientists & engineers outside your field of research. Avoid jargon and too many technical details. Concentrate instead on the big picture, and making your explanation accessible to a scientifically literate non-expert audience. Make sure you answer the question ‘why should we care?’

Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) and other university scholarships

In the case where a student is not granted a CGS-M, they will have the option to apply for the OGS Program, a merit-based scholarship awarded to students in all disciplines of academic study at a master’s or doctoral level. It is valued at $5,000 per term ($15,000 for one year). Most universities also have other scholarships that range in value. Students should contact the Graduate Studies Office at eligible Ontario institutions to learn more about completing the institution’s OGS and other applications. At McMaster, students who are not granted a CGS-M will automatically be considered for a McMaster OGS using the same application.