SSHRC Doctoral Information Sheet/FAQ's

Before starting the application process, applicants are strongly encouraged to first read all sets of instructions (application form, CV, and program eligibility).

SSHRC has multiple Joint Initiatives with external partners. Applicants are encouraged to review the list of supplements and joint initiatives and indicate their interest in applying should their research align with the objectives of the initiative(s). Select the desired supplement or joint/special initiative from the drop-down list within the SSHRC application portal while applying for doctoral funding.

For the internal University merit review, all applications, <u>including</u> those from applicants who **self-identify** as Indigenous, are reviewed by the internal University selection committee. Graduate Studies will forward all meritorious applications, including meritorious applications from those who self-identified as Indigenous, to SSHRC for the national competition. ***The meritorious applications from applicants who self-identify as Indigenous will not count towards the institution's quota.*** SPECIAL NOTE: Applications involving indigenous research count towards the institution's quota unless the applicant has <u>also</u> chosen to self-identify as Indigenous.

Make sure your application is complete, clear, concise, consistent, and error-free:
- → Check spelling and grammar.
- → Use concise and complete sentences.
- → As the application will be evaluated by a multidisciplinary committee, avoid jargon, excessive use of acronyms and highly technical terms.

How to make your research proposal strong?
-Don't write in generalities;
-Spend the majority of the 2 pages describing the methodology – what are you going to do, how are you going to do it, what are you going to use to obtain your answers, how often are you going to do it, why are you doing it this way, what are you hoping to get out of it.
-Clarity of research question and methodology. Is the research proposal feasible?
-As this is a national competition, you must indicate how the research is significant regionally, nationally, and internationally.

When writing the 2-page proposal, please keep these percentages as a guide:

> **Proposal (The What?): Focus 25% -**
> >Clearly state your objective(s), purpose, research questions, and/or hypotheses!
> >Brief description of your research area and its position within a broader research context
> >Identify the research/theoretical gaps that have led to your proposal
> **Proposal (The How?): Methodology 50% -**
> >How are you going to achieve your objective(s)?
> >Explain your methodology or theoretical approach in detail, but limit/avoid jargon.
> >If relevant, mention the specific techniques/analyses you plan to utilize
> **Proposal (The Why?): Significance 25% -**
> >What is the potential impact?
> >Is there a direct or indirect impact on society?
> >Will your research stimulate future research?
> >Is it relevant to the world --- it helps humanize your proposal if it is.

Did you know?
You can include in your application any special circumstances (Allowable Inclusions section) that may have had an impact on your research, professional career, record of academic or research achievement, or completion of degrees.

Choosing your referees:
→ Communicate with your referees early in the process.
→ Provide them with the institutional deadline for the application well in advance.
→ One (1) referee should be very familiar with your research and abilities (ie. current or previous research supervisor). The 2nd referee should be sufficiently familiar with your research and abilities to provide a meaningful commentary.

Content of the reference letters:
→ Letters must support the information contained in the application.
→ Remind referees of your skills and past achievements
→ Highlight your strengths:
  o For example, your participation in academic activities, your role as a mentor, etc.
→ Demonstrate why you are a high-calibre candidate and why you should be awarded a prestigious national scholarship.

Attaching documents to your application
Many application modules will require you to attach or upload a PDF document. You must follow the specified requirements for margins and font size, or your application may be rendered ineligible.

Application Title
Use upper case only for the first word of the title, proper nouns and acronyms.

Refereed vs non-refereed publications:
Identify refereed publications with an "R" in the left margin. For mature students who have worked in the field, it is recommended that you add non-refereed contributions in the form of tech reports, newsletter contributions, bulletins, etc., particularly if relevant to the research topic. The year of study becomes important --- If it has taken you 5 years to complete your Master's degree, you should have some publications. When the committee thinks of research potential --- *"The best predictor of behavior, is past behavior".*

Bibliography and Citations
Include a bibliography of your proposed research and bibliographical details for all citations included in your research proposal.

How does the University receive the application?
The University Scholarship Liaison Officer (SLO) in Graduate Studies will receive an automated email from SSHRC *once your application has been submitted*. They will download it from the secure portal to share with the university internal adjudication committee. The SLO can see when an application has been started (ie. in progress) but doesn't have access to view it until the application is submitted. The SLO will contact applicants after the committee has made their decision. If applications going forward to the National competition need to be revised (per the committee's recommendations), the SLO will be in touch with the applicant(s) with detailed information. The SLO will forward applications to SSHRC that are going forward to the National competition.

What you should know about the National Competition process if you are selected

Where do I find the National success rate (results) from previous competitions?
Please do a google search for "SSHRC Doctoral Results". You will find competition statistics for the last competition or previous competitions in an excel file (e.g., awards granted per province; awards granted per discipline, etc).

How important is the academic record if an applicant is chosen to go forward to the National competition?
The full academic record (undergraduate and graduate) is reviewed by the committee. It is normal to see some low marks in the first 2 years of the undergraduate record, but after that, the committee likes to see that there has been significant improvement. International records are not discredited, but a committee member might make a note of it. Academic records normally are very strong (A's or higher). If there were extenuating circumstances for not obtaining an A in each course, the applicant should consider using the 'Allowable Inclusions' section to outline any special circumstances.

How many committee members review the application at the National level?
A SSHRC committee is comprised of 8 members/reviewers; only 2 will read your application. You're not always being reviewed by someone who knows your research. The reviewer may spend approx. 20 minutes reviewing your application. Having a clean application (e.g, free of spelling errors, the proposal well defined, CV completed according to SSHRC's guidelines – refereed vs non-refereed publications, titles correctly formatted) is very important! Community presentations are important particularly if it's related to the research topic. Life experience is also significant. The reviewers rate an applicant out of 6 in the two categories (Research Ability & Potential [50%]; and Relevant Experience and achievements obtained within and beyond academia [50%]). They add the two scores together for a score out of 12. If the reviewers disagree on the rating by a certain number of points, the application is discussed. The top applicants are the ones that are offered an award.

SSHRC will inform applicants of their results via the applicant portal by April 30th. If an application is unsuccessful the applicant will receive the following details:

Within the assigned Committee:
The score for Research Ability & Potential – Score out of 12;
The score for Relevant Experience and achievements obtained within and beyond academia – Score out of 12;
Total % Score out of 12; and Rank is also provided
How many applications were received
How many awards were offered; and percentage
How many were not offered; and percentage
Score of last application funded out of 12
The overall competition results are provided as well.

Applicants are not provided with detailed feedback on how to improve an application if they choose to reapply in future.

There is almost a 50% chance of being funded. There is a waiting list to take into consideration if any of the first round of offers are declined.

Top-ranked applicants eligible for the CGS D will automatically be offered the CGS D award first.