

2021 Graduate Studentship Award Program Guidelines

Updated February 2021

These guidelines are reviewed annually and may be subject to amendment. Participation in this funding opportunity requires guideline compliance for the duration of the participation, commencing at application access and where funding has been awarded, through to completion of reporting requirements.

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1.0 Award overview

Graduate students currently pursuing Master or PhD degrees in a program of study related to the health and well-being of women and/or children may apply for the WCHRI Graduate Studentship Award. This award offers 24 months of stipend support. Students may receive this award once per graduate program. Primary funding criteria is scientific merit and relevance to the WCHRI vision, mission and strategic plan.

2.0 Eligibility

All applications to WCHRI must align with our [relevance criteria](#) in order to be eligible for funding.

Eligibility criteria for the WCHRI Graduate Studentship program:

- All applicants must be actively working on the proposed research.
- Applicants must be physically attending the University of Alberta and participate in the proposed research activities as per [University of Alberta guidelines and policies](#) supporting graduate student engagement in research.
- Applicants must be registered in a full-time, thesis-based, graduate program in a health-related discipline leading to a Master's or Doctoral degree at the time of application.
- Applicants may not hold or be on leave from a faculty position.
- Projects must be supervised by a WCHRI [academic member](#).
- Supervisors may submit only one application per competition as primary supervisor; no more than two graduate students will be supported simultaneously for any faculty member as either a supervisor or co-supervisor.

Program eligibility is established upon submission of the completed application access request and application forms.

2.1 Application restrictions

Unsuccessful applicants may apply a maximum of two additional times for the WCHRI Graduate Studentship Award. WCHRI will consider a total of three applications for any given applicant.

Trainees who have been enrolled in graduate school for *four years or more at the time of application are not eligible to apply*. Candidates who have interrupted their training for parenting or other reasons and who have consequently exceeded this time limit must contact WCHRI Grants prior to application for an eligibility ruling.

3.0 Award funding

The WCHRI Graduate Studentship award is paid as a bursary. Refer to the Income Tax Act and Regulations of the Government of Canada. The value of the full WCHRI Graduate Studentship award is \$18,000.00 per year (disbursement is provided monthly; pro-rating may apply, refer to 3.2).

The WCHRI Graduate Studentship Award may be held for a maximum of 24 months. Should the awardee defend their graduate level studies during the tenure of the period of this award, the awardee and/or their supervisor must inform WCHRI. This award will be terminated on the last day of the month in which the defense examination occurs.

Successful applicants must implement this award on September 1 of the award year.

WCHRI Graduate Studentship awards are tenable at the University of Alberta only. Funding is non-transferrable.

3.1 External/other funding and WCHRI top-up or incentive funding

A student may NOT hold another stipend award at the same time as a full WCHRI Graduate Studentship award. It is the responsibility of the awardee and/or the supervisor to inform WCHRI if they receive another award within 30 days of receiving notification of the award. WCHRI awardees are required to accept alternate funding. Top-up and incentive funding are available under this program and these policies will be applied to WCHRI Graduate Studentship Awardees holding another qualifying trainee support award. The Graduate Student must send formal evidence of the other offer of award to WCHRI to determine incentive eligibility. Formal evidence includes but is not limited to the formal offer of award. Program terms and conditions and/or application information may also be required.

Top-up funding provides awardees holding another (external or internal) graduate stipend below the value of the WCHRI Graduate Studentship Award with funding that brings them to the same funding level as trainees currently supported by the fully-funded WCHRI Graduate Studentship.

Incentive funding provides awardees holding another (external or internal) qualifying graduate stipend with a yearly salary incentive of \$3,000.

WCHRI Graduate Studentship Awardees are required to apply for other external competitive trainee funding opportunities during the term of their WCHRI Graduate Studentship (refer to section [11.0 Reporting](#)).

Examples of cost-share/top-up and incentive payments (*pro-rating may apply)

Scenario	WCHRI Award	WCHRI Incentive	Student receives
WCHRI award only	\$18,000	0	\$18,000
Other award of \$30,000	0	\$3,000	\$33,000
Other award of \$24,000	0	\$3,000	\$27,000
Other award of \$18,000	0	\$3,000	\$21,000
Other award of \$12,000	\$6,000	\$3,000	\$21,000
Other award of \$10,000	\$8,000	\$3,000	\$21,000
Other award of \$8,000	\$10,000	\$3,000	\$21,000

3.2 Payment schedule compliance

Awardee implementation is confirmed by payment schedule; institutional sponsors assume responsibility for timely disbursement of funding from the awardees RSO account.

All awardees are required to report funding changes and delays with their payment schedule within 30 days. Non-compliance with program requirements and/or the payment schedule for a period exceeding 60 days will result in award withdrawal and all financial commitments will end.

3.3 Premature award cancellation

Past awardees who have not exhausted their program eligibility may re-apply to the WCHRI Graduate Studentship Award, provided the candidate continues to meet the eligibility criteria. The total period of support a re-applicant is eligible to receive will be calculated by reducing the total allowable maximum support period of 24 months by the period of support already received.

3.3 Award limitations by area of research

WCHRI may limit awards by area of research; where limitations apply, up to one (1) application (maximum) may be considered for funding based on committee recommendation and availability of financial resources. For the Graduate Studentship Award Program, funding contributions to global health and breast cancer research are limited.

Excluded from this limitation, is breast cancer research done under the supervision of a WCHRI academic member at the Allard Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer Clinic (HBOC) at the Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH).

3.4 Targeted and priority award calls

WCHRI may offer either targeted or priority award funding calls to build and/or attract applications in specific areas of research. These opportunities are determined annually by WCHRI. All applications that fall within the targeted or priority area must evidence scientific merit and relevance with WCHRI to be eligible for funding.

4.0 Supervision

All trainees are required to complete their training under the supervisor who sponsors their application. A supervisor must have a record of productive health-oriented research and sufficient resources to ensure the satisfactory conduct of the research. He/she must provide direct supervision.

Under special circumstances, consideration may be given to a change in supervisor. This will be assessed on a case by case basis. To request a change in supervisor the trainee must obtain prior written approval from WCHRI. In the event that a change in supervisor leads to significant project changes, the candidate and proposed supervisor may re-apply to the Graduate Studentship program provided that eligibility is satisfied.

In the event of co-supervision, all award management and correspondence involving the supervisor will be executed by the primary supervisor. WCHRI may, under exceptional circumstances only, seek the involvement of the co-supervisor.

5.0 Application

5.1 Research and scholarship integrity

WCHRI supports the University of Alberta's efforts to ensure the highest standards of research and scholarship practice and behavior. By submission of the signed application, the applicant and their supervisor(s) asserts that the information provided in the document(s) adheres to all research policies and procedures in place at the University of Alberta. WCHRI reserves the right to request institutional confirmation of assertions contained within this application.

Misrepresentations of authorship, credentials or research support may result in disqualification of the candidate from this competition. Further actions may include: disqualifying the applicant and/or supervisor(s) from future competitions for a time period determined solely by WCHRI, withdrawal of any remaining installments of support for any existing WCHRI grant or award for which misrepresentation appears in the submission, and seeking partial or full repayment of any past financial support under any WCHRI grant or award for which misrepresentation appears in the submission.

Please refer to [UAPPOL](#) for further information on the University of Alberta's [research and scholarship integrity](#) policy.

5.2 Application process

Submission of the WCHRI Graduate Studentship Application Access Request is required to establish access for the applicant, supervisor, co-supervisor (as required) and referee. All applications must be completed and submitted through the application platform.

Refer to the [WCHRI Graduate Studentship Award Program](#) information for deadlines; application access requests and/or applications are not accepted after submission deadlines

5.3 Letters of Reference

Letters of reference are confidential and solicited directly by WCHRI from the referee. Letters of reference may be authenticated by WCHRI. Letters of reference will be solicited a maximum of 3 times on the applicant's behalf.

5.4 Changes to a funded research project

If funded, the research project may not be substantially altered from that proposed in the original application. If changes become necessary, the trainee must seek WCHRI's approval prior to making any significant change. The supervisor must agree with the proposed changes and the original aims and conditions of the award must be satisfied. In the event that the necessary changes significantly alter the funded research, the awardee will be required to re-apply to the Graduate Studentship Committee for assessment and evaluation of the application.

6.0 Review process

The WCHRI Graduate Studentship Advisory Committee is broadly composed and representative of the application demographic for this program opportunity. All eligible applications are forwarded to the WCHRI Graduate Studentship Advisory Committee and undergo peer-review using the Graduate Studentship grading grid. For access to the current grading grid, please refer to the [website](#).

7.0 Competition results

Successful applicants will be posted on the WCHRI website in June. Official result letters and competition feedback will be emailed to the applicant, supervisor and institutional sponsors 1 week following the competition result posting. In the event of discrepancy between the website posting and the formal outcome letter, the formal outcome letter constitutes our notification of outcome.

Institutional sponsors also receive notification of application outcome.

8.0 Funding implementation

WCHRI Graduate Studentship offers of award must be implemented on September 1 of the year in which the offer is made as stipulated in the formal award letter. Any offers of award not accepted within the acceptance period will be withdrawn and the offer of award void.

9.0 Institutional sponsorship

Application sponsorship confirms that adequate support exists at the institutional level to achieve the proposed/ funded research and that all signees have reviewed and agreed that: 1. the application meets research scholarship and practice requirements and 2. is consistent with UAPPOL policies and procedures. Please refer to the [Meaning of Signatures](#) for details on sponsorship responsibilities. Institutional sponsors also agree to the public release of information and/or support of any WCHRI communication initiatives subsequent to award funding.

Institutional sponsors agree to administration of award funding to awardees in a timely manner following fund transfer. All award disbursements are processed by the sponsor according to the WCHRI payment schedule from RSO established accounts. Where program interruption, and/or human resources concerns arise that necessitate changes to the payment schedule, WCHRI must be contacted without delay.

All supervisors must create a new RSO studentship project for the applicant and obtain institutional sponsor approval from the applicant's graduate program department chair and/or faculty dean as well as the Research Services Office. Submission of the approved RSO "Request Page" is required as per eligibility requirements. Refer to [2.0 Eligibility](#).

10.0 Time commitment

WCHRI Graduate Student awardees must be engaged in full-time research under the direction of the sponsoring supervisor for the duration of the award. Research is to be completed at the primary research location as provided in the application form. The Graduate Studentship is an award/bursary therefore vacation time or vacation pay are not accrued. Any time off during the term of the award must be arranged between the student and the supervisor.

10.1 Leaves of absence

Awardees may be granted up to twelve (12) months of leave following a formal request to WCHRI. An approved "[Application for Leave of Absence](#)" (less supporting attachments) must be provided with the formal request. WCHRI will consider requests on a case by case basis and reserves the right to terminate the award if the required approvals are not met. Refer to [10.2 Reimplementation following an approved leave](#).

10.2 Reimplementation following an approved leave

In order to request award re-implementation, the awardee must notify WCHRI of the intent to return to the program of study/ research no less than 6 weeks prior to the anticipated date of return. Notification of the intent to return to the program of study/ research must be supported by the sponsoring supervisor. WCHRI may consider extending the award by an amount of time not exceeding the duration of the approved leave. A request for award extension must be provided at the time of the request to re implement the award.

At no point will WCHRI provide more than twenty four (24) months of funding to any awardee.

11.0 Reporting

11.1 Awardee information session

Awardees are required to attend the WCHRI In-training Awardee information session held annually (each fall).

11.2 Progress report

Awardees are required to submit a progress report prior to completion of the first 12 months of funding in order to be considered for renewal of the WCHRI Graduate Studentship Award. Criteria for successful renewal of year 2 of the award includes evidence that:

- Adequate research progress has been made by the awardee since implementation. The awardee has executed or made arrangements to complete the community presentation requirement.
- An application has been submitted to an additional qualifying peer-reviewed funder for salary/stipend support within the first year of the WCHRI period of support.
- The awardee has remained compliant with the terms and conditions of the Graduate Studentship Guidelines.

11.3 Community involvement & presentation

WCHRI funded Graduate Students are required to present their research to students at a high school, junior high school, or elementary school of their choosing. The awardee should consider the following items in their presentation: discuss their interest in science, how their science "works", the opportunities that have enabled them to continue on in their chosen field (including funding and any teachers/mentors they have had), and how their science is relevant to children's and/or women's health.

Presentation (or arrangements made to present) in a community school will be required prior to the submission of the progress report and sufficient evidence should be available to WCHRI to assess the quality/ impact of the presentation provided. All awardees are encouraged to contact the principal at a school of their choosing to discuss presentation.

WCHRI will require prior notification of the awardee's intention to present their community presentation in order to allow for sufficient opportunity for a WCHRI delegate to attend. The awardee's (primary) supervisor, and if applicable, co-supervisor, is/are strongly encouraged to attend the presentation.

11.4 Acknowledgement of WCHRI support in email communications

All implemented awardees are required to acknowledge the support received through this program on email communications. This acknowledgement may follow the awardees name and degree candidacy. The accepted standard for this acknowledgement is "WCHRI Graduate Student".

11.5 WCHRI Research day presentation

Awardees must present their research at [WCHRI Research Day](#) in either the first or second year of the WCHRI Graduate Studentship Award. Students are strongly encouraged to present in both years.

11.6 Final report

The awardee and their supervisor must satisfy final reporting requirements within one month of the termination or completion of the WCHRI Graduate Studentship award. Both the awardee and supervisor will receive a link to an online report with a submission deadline date.

12.0 Communications

All publications, including public messages, arising from research supported by WCHRI grants and/or awards must acknowledge the support of WCHRI. Funding acknowledgement is provided in the formal offer of award letters and can be found on our [website](#).

Awardees are asked to inform WCHRI in advance if their research will be published in a major journal and/or receive media coverage. WCHRI reserves the right to publish and/or disseminate information relevant to grants and awards.

13.0 Award termination

WCHRI reserves the right to terminate any award if the conditions of the award are not met, or if there is evidence of unsatisfactory progress.

The awardee and/or supervisor must immediately notify WCHRI of any changes to the training status that may affect the recipient's eligibility to hold an award. This includes termination of enrolment, completion of degree requirements or leaves of absence.

14.0 Contact information

If you have any questions regarding the WCHRI Graduate Studentship Grant Program, please contact WCHRI grants administration at wcgrants@ualberta.ca.