



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Deans and Associate Deans of Graduate Studies  
Vice-Presidents and Associate Vice-Presidents (Research)

**C.C.:** Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships Institution Contacts  
Institution Scholarships Liaison Officers  
Institution Research Grants Officers  
Peggy Borbey, Executive Director, Vanier-Banting Secretariat  
Serge Villemure, Director, Scholarships and Fellowships Programs, NSERC  
Valérie Laflamme, Acting Director, Research Training Portfolio, SSHRC

**FROM:** Julie Conrad, Manager, Vanier-Banting Programs and CIHR Awards

**DATE:** June 15, 2016

**SUBJECT:** 2016-2017 Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships (Vanier CGS) and competition update

---

**Please distribute to all parties at your institution who would benefit from this information.**

The 2016-2017 Vanier CGS competition has been launched! This memo is to inform you of program news for this competition.

## I) 2016-2017 Vanier CGS Competition Timelines

The timelines are similar to the last competition. Please find some important competition timelines below:

	<b>2016-17 Vanier CGS Competition Timelines</b>
<b>Competition Launch</b>	<b>June 15, 2016:</b> Posting of updated program literature on program website, including application guide and activation of ResearchNet (electronic application system)
<b>Application Deadline</b>	<b>November 2, 2016 (8:00 pm EDT)</b>
<b>Funding Decision Release</b>	<b>March 31, 2017</b>

## II) Vanier CGS program news

### NEW – Foreign Transcripts

For students including foreign transcripts, the institution must include a standard table or record that outlines the institution's understanding of the foreign transcript. Student explanations of grades will not be forwarded to the committee for evaluation.

### REMINDER – Eligibility: Calculating months of doctoral studies

All prior doctoral-level studies, regardless of discipline, are considered in the evaluation of eligibility. The Vanier-Banting Secretariat (the Secretariat) will count two months of part-time study as one month of full-time study.

For students who are enrolled in the following programs, the Secretariat will not include the first 12 months of graduate level study:

1. Those enrolled in a combined MA/PhD or MSc/PhD, program,
2. Those enrolled in a direct-entry doctoral program,
3. Those who are accelerated from a master's program into a doctoral program without obtaining the master's degree

In the case of students who are registered in a joint undergraduate/graduate research degree program, the undergraduate (MD, DVM, JD) portion will not count towards the number of months at the doctoral level. Because the Secretariat only includes the PhD portion of joint undergraduate/graduate degrees when calculating the number of months of study, these programs are not considered to be direct-entry programs, and as such all PhD level studies will be included in the number of months completed as of May 1, 2017.

All interruptions, delays, part-time studies and undergraduate studies undertaken as part of a joint undergraduate/graduate degree program must be indicated by the student in the special circumstances attachment.

### **REMINDER – Revised changes to the nomination letter**

In our continuous efforts to improve and simplify the nomination and review processes, changes were implemented in the 2015-16 competition:

Nomination Letter:

- Nomination letter must **now** be completed and signed by the **Department Head** nominating the candidate instead of the institution.
- Outline how institution's research environment will foster the student's research interest and leadership skills.

### **REMINDER – Mobility and choice of nominating Institution**

To help students benefit from diverse experiences and research environments, we encourage you to support the mobility of all nominees to pursue their doctoral studies at institutions different than those where they completed a previous degree. Nominees who chose a nominating institution which is the same as the institution where they completed their previous degree(s) **must** provide a strong justification for this exceptional circumstance which will be assessed as part of the selection committee review process under Special Circumstances. The more similar the proposed research environment is to that of the previous degree environment, the stronger the required justification.

In the *Nomination Letter*, the Department Head is required to provide justification for the lack of mobility and an explanation as to why it is in the candidate's best interest to stay at the same institution. This will include further elaboration on the appropriateness of the supervisor in terms of resources, funding, publications, their research and training environment. Examples may include (but are not limited to) funding, facilities/resources and personnel that will be available to support the candidate as they carry out their proposed research and develop their leadership potential

In the *Research proposal*: Candidates must **now** describe the incremental benefit conferred by undertaking their research at the nominating institution (e.g. supervisor/departmental specialization, lab facilities, funding opportunities, support structures offered/in-place).

### **REMINDER – Transcripts**

Institutions must ensure that all post-secondary transcripts (including college and CEGEP) are included as part of the nomination package.

### **REMINDER - Internal deadline at institution**

It is strongly recommended that institutions adjust the internal deadline date in Research Net for the Vanier CGS competition in order to allow enough time for the internal review of nominations. Currently, the internal deadline date is the same as the final submission deadline for the Vanier CGS competition.

Instructions can be found in the Electronic Approval for Research Institutions- Administrator's Guide attached. Institutions are also recommended to update the ResearchNet Electronic Approval Tool Users to avoid any further delays to the submission of nominations.

## **REMINDER - Important changes to Institutional Quotas for 2015-16 to 2017-18**

Last year, in an effort to enable the Vanier CGS program to better meet its objective of attracting and recruiting world-class doctoral students to Canadian institutions, the agencies implemented equal annual targets within the existing three year allocation period with restrictions placed on carrying forward unused quotas. As a result, the following changes to the quota distribution were made:

1. All Canadian institutions are provided a yearly quota within the existing three year quota allotment.
2. Any unused annual quotas will not be carried forward for future years.
3. Floating quotas can be used in either of the three years.

Please refer to the Institutional Quotas for 2015-16 to 2017-18 Vanier CGS competition to find out what the institutional quota for this year's competition is.

## **REMINDER - Institutional endorsement: selectivity and diversity**

With the competitive nature of the program in mind, we would like to remind you to continue to be highly selective in your endorsement of nominations. In this way we can work together to control the quality of candidates to help ensure that the program is indeed supporting world-class doctoral scholars who will become the research leaders of tomorrow and without adding undue strain on the review system.

In the endorsement process, institutions are reminded that proposals from all research areas and in both official languages are encouraged. In addition, gender equity is important in the endorsement process.

## **REMINDER - International recruitment**

In keeping with the aim of attracting doctoral students to Canada, we encourage you to continue to strengthen your efforts to recruit new foreign doctoral students to your respective institutions. Your collaboration is essential in achieving the goal of building strong brand recognition for the Vanier CGS program as Canada's most valuable, prestigious and sought-after doctoral scholarship. By attracting international candidates to Canadian institutions, we will enrich our campuses now and into the future.

## **REMINDER — Subject matter eligibility (research area)**

The candidate and their supervisor must carefully consider which selection committee should review the application. For more details, please see the application/nomination instructions - Task 6: Identify area of research. If there is uncertainty please send an email to [vanier@cihr-irsc.gc.ca](mailto:vanier@cihr-irsc.gc.ca) with a one-page summary of the proposed research to receive clarification.

## **REMINDER – Applications to agency specific doctoral programs**

Since eligibility, evaluation criteria and competition deadlines are different; applications submitted to Vanier CGS are not considered in agency-specific doctoral award competitions. Nominees must apply to agency-specific funding opportunities individually.

## **UPDATE – Electronic Approval for Research Institutions – Admin guide Quota**

We are in the midst of updating the E-Approval guide to better serve our institutional partners. This year, we will be sending the guide in a separate email shortly after the memo has been sent out.

**NOTE – Accessing Updated Webpage**

If you have not cleared your cache since the last time you accessed the Vanier CGS webpage, your browser may display a cached version of the page. In order to see the updated webpage, simply hit the “refresh” logo in your browser (or hit the F5 key)

For any questions, please contact the Vanier-Banting Secretariat at [Vanier@cihr-irsc.gc.ca](mailto:Vanier@cihr-irsc.gc.ca)