

FGSR GUIDE FOR EQUITABLE ADJUDICATION OF SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

The FGSR at the University of Alberta is committed to the equitable adjudication of all graduate scholarship applications. Our aim is to review graduate scholarship applications in a manner that recognizes academic achievement while being inclusive of all research areas, eligible programs, and individuals, and in so doing removes barriers to diversity in our graduate student award recipients.

GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP REVIEW COMMITTEES (GSCs)

- Large units should form a GSC chaired by a Faculty member with experience in scholarship adjudication
- At least two adjudicators should review each application
- GSC size, composition and expertise should reflect that of the unit and represent equity seeking groups
- Members should complete [unconscious bias training](#), be familiar with [principles for the adjudication of Indigenous research](#), and sign a confidentiality agreement (See Appendix A).

BEST PRACTICES FOR REVIEWERS

- Evaluate explicitly on eligibility and adjudication criteria, define “short-listing” process
- Be aware of and report any potential conflicts of interest (COI)
- Review all materials, but no extraneous ones; spend same amount of time on each application
- Avoid relying more heavily on one part of the application over another, except where eligibility criteria dictate otherwise
- Use a scoring system or rubric and keep notes for use at adjudication meetings
- Take into account leaves of absence or other interruptions of study
- Consider discipline-specific differences in how contributions are valued
- Evaluate the individual’s contributions and their impact on end-users of the knowledge
- Examine the nature and quality of presentations and contributions
- Take into account the applicant’s type of, and time in, graduate program; evaluate relative to other applicants at similar stage
- [Evaluate Indigenous research](#) to ensure that it accounts for the involvement of relevant communities, including the co-creation of knowledge, and the governance and knowledge management needs of each partner
- Be aware of language reflecting unconscious bias in reference letters and impact on ranking
- Focus on objective evidence of achievement and accomplishment
- Avoid evaluation based solely on a pedigree (i.e. well known supervisor, referees, or institutions) or previous recognitions
- Avoid stereotypical or interpersonal terms when assessing applicants, focus on skills and achievements
- use formal titles or non-gendered pronouns to refer to applicants

PROCEDURAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHAIRS AT ADJUDICATION MEETINGS

- Begin with introductions, describe the competition and eligibility criteria, state commitment to EDI principles, confirm unconscious bias training, remind adjudicators of confidentiality
- Ask reviewers to declare conflicts of interest and establish necessary management strategies
- Direct reviewers to discard all materials used in the adjudication in a confidential manner at the conclusion of the meeting
- Ask adjudicators to briefly describe their adjudication process
- Define process for determining Awardees and/or ranked lists of Awardees
- Ensure that all members have equal opportunities to contribute to the process
- Ask for feedback on process to guide improvements

Appendix A

Statement of Commitment and Confidentiality for the Graduate Scholarship Committee

As a member of a University of Alberta Graduate Scholarship Committee, I understand that I am considered a representative of the University of Alberta and that the activities of the Committee are subject to relevant University policies and procedures.

I recognize that Committee members must be able to express their opinions freely within the Committee about the materials they have been asked to review and that they must be able to do so in confidence. I also recognize that as a member of the Committee, I will have access to confidential information and materials related to the adjudication process. With full knowledge of the critical importance of confidentiality to the integrity and success of the process, I hereby agree to the following terms:

1. I will maintain the confidentiality of the deliberations of the Committee and any and all information relating to such deliberations;
2. I will maintain the confidentiality of all documents relating to the process and the work of the Committee and ensure that such information in my possession is secure;
3. I will raise any concerns about the adjudication process during committee meetings or through private communications with the Chair of the Graduate Scholarship Committee, or with the person designated to provide support to the Committee, or to the Office of Safe Disclosure;
4. I will respect the [Statement of Ethical Conduct](#) as approved by the Board of Governors and will endeavour to create and support an adjudication that supports the “principles of integrity, respect and accountability, supported by awareness of and compliance with relevant University policies and procedures, staff agreements, government legislation and relevant professional standards.”;
5. I will return and/or securely destroy any review-related documents and records in any form or format (e.g. paper, emails, etc.) that is entrusted to me upon the conclusion of the process;
6. I agree that all communications on behalf of the Committee will be through the Chair of the Committee, or their designate, and I will not discuss or disclose any information to any person or entity on my own initiative; and
7. I acknowledge that the obligation to maintain confidentiality described in this document exists both during the period that the Committee is active and thereafter.

I understand and acknowledge that I may be subject to removal from the Committee if I fail to honour my confidentiality commitments.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Faculty/ Department hosting the adjudication*: _____