

# GSMS Awards

## Department-specific and Interdepartmental Awards



UNIVERSITY  
OF ALBERTA

Faculty of Graduate &  
Postdoctoral Studies (GPS)

### Purpose of this guide:

**For Departments and Faculties** – Learn about **Department-specific and Interdepartmental Awards** administered by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS).

The [GSMS Awards Portal](#) allows department and faculty nominators the ability to search for awards, nominate students and receive decisions about nominations for GPS-administered awards.

- GPS oversees over 500 Department Awards, valued in thousands of dollars, endowed or annually funded by donors to the University of Alberta. To be considered for Department Awards, students must be admitted to or currently enrolled in a graduate degree program.

The two Department Award funding categories are: Department-specific and Interdepartmental Awards.

- Department-specific and Interdepartmental competitions are available to view through the [searchable Awards Database](#) on the [GPS Awards site](#). Funding opportunities based on registration status, residency status, faculty, program, term, etc. can be reviewed in the Awards database.

**Note:** All award numbers and values are projections, and are subject to change at any time.

- Refer to the [Scholarships and Awards Manual](#) for regulations outlining the management of awards, eligibility, required registration status, payment schedules, etc. The majority of awards administered by GPS are governed solely by the regulations published in this manual.
- Each Department Award category requires a specific set of mandatory questions and documents to be uploaded with the nomination in GSMS.
- Please review the *Prepare GSMS Nomination* and *Submit GSMS Nomination* guides on the [Awards Resources](#) site for detailed instructions.

### Sections:

Nominating a Student for a Department Award

Department-specific Awards

1. *Overview*
2. *Nomination Requirements*

Interdepartmental Awards

1. *Overview*
2. *Nomination Requirements*

## Nominating a Student for a Department Award

- To be considered for Department Awards, students must be admitted to or currently enrolled in a graduate degree program.
- As soon as GPS-administered awards are funded and open for the year, the award information is made available in GSMS (including current eligibility, value and nomination deadlines).
- Departments or faculties may use their own internal application and selection process to determine candidate(s) to nominate.
- **No Nominees:** Departments/Faculties may notify GPS (via the GSMS portal) that they do not have a nominee for an award. *No Nominee* notifications can be sent to GPS from when the award opens in GSMS up until the GPS deadline for the award.

- **Competition Results:**

- *Award Tenures:*

- September 1 – August 31: The majority of awards have a tenure of September 1 – August 31 whereby students must be registered and working full-time on their graduate program during this period (unless otherwise stated in the award Terms of Reference). Note that eligibility criteria must be met effective the September 1 start date that immediately follows submission of the nomination.

*Example:* An award criterion stating that nominees must be in the 2nd year of a graduate program means that candidates must be in the 2nd year of the program effective September 1, 2024 (for a nomination submitted in 2024 with an award tenure start date of September 1, 2024).

May 1 – April 30: There are a select few awards that have a tenure of May 1 – April 30 (e.g., Travel awards); in these cases, students may be eligible during this period. Contact GPS Awards if you have eligibility questions.

- *Award Offers:* GPS informs the nominee and department of the award offer.
- *Unsuccessful or Ineligible candidates:* Departments are responsible for informing their nominees of the outcome; the nominee does not receive a notification from GPS.
- Departments may inform their students they have been nominated to GPS but are not to confirm or commit to the level of funding, nor inform them of an award offer prior to GPS's final notification.

## Department-specific Awards

### 1. Overview

- Department-specific awards are designated to one department or faculty in which the Graduate Chair, Coordinator or delegate nominates a student(s) to GPS. For faculty nominations, specific or all departments within a faculty may be eligible to provide nominee(s) from which the Faculty can then select candidates to nominate to GPS.

- There is a limited number of Department-specific awards shared among departments. For example, departments alternate between odd/even years; two awards available and one award offered to two specific departments. These awards will appear in the Departments’ dashboards for the eligible year.
- Once the nomination is received at GPS, GPS reviews the nomination for eligibility and completeness, and the candidate does not compete among other university peers.
- **Number of nominations that can be submitted:** When searching for an award in GSMS or when reviewing the award information and eligibility, be sure to check the **# Awards** or **Number of Awards** fields, respectively, as they indicate the maximum number of awards for the competition. Please refer to the *Department/Faculty Portal* and *Search for Awards* guides ([Awards Resources](#)) for more information.
- **Timelines:**
  - *April/May:* Majority of Department-specific awards are opened in GSMS (once funding is confirmed and becomes available) for awards to start September 1 – August 31 (unless otherwise stated).
  - *June/July:* GPS processes eligible award renewals for recipients who have been offered a multi-year award (September 1 – August 31 tenure).
  - *August 31:* GPS Deadline for department or faculty-nominated awards to submit nominations in GSMS. Departments/Faculties may request an extension to the nomination deadline, but must note that GPS review, award offer, and subsequently payments will also be extended.
  - *September:* GPS Awards processes and offers as many awards as possible; disbursements begin in the September 1-15 pay period (majority of awards paid out by the end of the fiscal year).

## 2. Nomination Requirements

Please review the Department-specific Nomination Requirements below:

Nomination Requirement	Additional Notes
<p><u><i>Nomination question (mandatory):</i></u></p> <p>Confirm that this nominee/ candidate's Area of Research meets that which is stated in the Terms of Reference*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Response length: 500 characters</b></li> <li>- Provide a brief description/statement of the nominee’s current or proposed (for newly admitted candidate) area of research. Thesis/capping project topic titles may be used.</li> <li>- Area of Study criteria include specific areas of research the student is engaged in (e.g., study in civic government, cancer research, petroleum research, etc.)</li> <li>- Descriptions of areas of research are provided to the award donor at the request by the university’s Donor Relations, External Relations</li> </ul>

<p><i>Nomination question (mandatory):</i></p> <p>Please address how this nominee/ candidate best meets the Eligibility Criteria for this award*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Response length: 500 characters</b></li> <li>- Provide a brief description of how the student meets specific criteria. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residency (ex. must be an Alberta Resident, must be studying in the NWT, etc.) – provide details</li> <li>• Community engagement/leadership - organizations involved in, volunteer activities, demonstrated leadership skills, etc.</li> <li>• Research potential –innovative research, promising scholar, publications under review, future research activities, etc.</li> <li>• Awarded to an outstanding nominee – what set the nominee apart from other applicants in the department?</li> <li>• Department travel awards - the name, dates, location of conferences/research locations are to be listed in this section.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- <b>Preference Criterion:</b> if the nominee does not meet the Preference Criterion as stated, the department/faculty must state that they had no other candidates that met this criterion.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Required Document:</i></p> <p><b>Transcript</b> - An up-to-date unofficial record of a student's academic work, showing both courses taken and grades obtained at the University of Alberta</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Uploaded Document: 1 file, PDF only</b></li> <li>- <b>Current UofA students:</b> The transcript must be the most up-to-date copy at the time of nomination, showing the most recent term grades available. All grades from the most recent preceding term must be posted.</li> <li>- <b>Newly admitted students:</b> Transcripts from institutions other than the UofA are not required to be uploaded. Upload a current UofA transcript whether or not there is an academic record for the student (i.e. if there is no prior or future term registration, upload the blank transcript with “no University of Alberta record” annotation).</li> </ul>

## Interdepartmental Awards

### 1. Overview

- Interdepartmental awards are designated to multiple departments in which the Graduate Chair or Coordinator nominates one student to GPS.
- Once the nomination is received at GPS, the candidate competes among peers from other university departments. A competitive review and adjudication process is conducted by GPS’s Graduate Scholarship Committee (GSC) and only select recipients (or the number of recipients based on the award’s Terms of Reference) are offered the award.
- **Number of nominations that can be submitted:**
  - Each department may submit only one nominee per award competition.
  - When searching for an award in GSMS or when reviewing the award information and eligibility, be sure to check the # **Awards** or **Number of Awards** fields, respectively, as they indicate the maximum number of awards for the entire competition across all departments (not the number of nominations allowed per department).

Please refer to the *Department/Faculty Portal* and *Search for Awards* guides ([Awards Resources](#)) for more information.

▪ **Timelines:**

- *April/May:* Majority of Interdepartmental awards are opened in GSMS (once funding is confirmed)
- *June 30:* GPS Deadline for departments to submit nominations in GSMS. As nominations are received from multiple departments, requests for deadline extensions cannot be accommodated.
- *July to August/September:* GPS nominations review and GSC adjudication.

## 2. Nomination Requirements

Please review the Interdepartmental Nomination Requirements below. As the mandatory questions are reviewed by GSC adjudicators, it is important to provide concise statements to support the candidates for the final review of the award competition:

Nomination Requirement	Additional Notes
<p><u>Nomination question (mandatory):</u></p> <p>Confirm that this nominee/ candidate's Area of Research meets that which is stated in the Terms of Reference*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Response length: 500 characters</b></li> <li>- Departments are encouraged to use the space provided to express how the candidate's Area of Research clearly meets the Terms of Reference.</li> <li>- The response must be written by the department and not in first person by the candidate.</li> <li>- The nominee's <i>Outline of Proposed Research/Capstone Project</i> on the <i>Interdepartmental Award Application</i> form (below) will be reviewed to determine eligibility for the specified award</li> </ul>
<p><u>Nomination question (mandatory):</u></p> <p>Please address how this nominee/ candidate best meets the Eligibility Criteria for this award*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Response length: 500 characters</b></li> <li>- Provide a brief description of how the student meets specific criteria; describe what sets them apart from other applicants: innovative research, rationale for nominating them, and other information that would not be included in the student's Interdepartmental Award Application form</li> <li>- <i>Preference Criterion:</i> the nominee should meet the Preference Criterion as stated. Those who do not meet the Preference Criterion may not be considered in adjudication compared to other nominees who meet all criteria.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Required Document:</u></p> <p><b>External Application –</b>  <a href="#">Interdepartmental Award Application</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Uploaded Document: PDF only</b></li> <li>- This Interdepartmental Award Application form must not be replaced with a department's internal application form</li> <li>- The questions and content within this form was designed by the Graduate Scholarship Committee (GSC) to ensure an equitable and streamlined review process</li> <li>- Students should use Adobe software to complete the application form.</li> </ul>

Required Document:

**Transcript** - An up-to-date unofficial record of a student's academic work, showing both courses taken and grades obtained at the University of Alberta

- **Uploaded Document: 1 file, PDF only**
- **Current UofA students:** The transcript must be the most up-to-date copy at the time of nomination, showing the most recent term grades available. All grades from the most recent preceding term must be posted.
- **Newly admitted students:** Transcripts from institutions other than the UofA are not required to be uploaded. Upload a current UofA transcript whether or not there is an academic record for the student (i.e. if there is no prior or future term registration, upload the blank transcript with "no University of Alberta record" annotation).