

Scholarship Application Workshop

UBC Department of Linguistics

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Introduction

- The Faculty of Grad Studies organizes an integrated competition for “Tri-council” Scholarships and UBC’s “Affiliated Awards”
 - Tri-council:
 - SSHRC = Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
 - NSERC = Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council
 - CIHR = Canadian Institutes of Health Research
 - Affiliated Awards = All UBC-based scholarships that are not awarded by the graduate programs themselves

Introduction

- Who should apply?

Everyone who is eligible!

- How do I know if I'm eligible?

Check the Grad Studies website!

<http://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/affiliated-fellowships>

PhD Scholarships

- When are the applications due?

Deadline for the **department** to forward ranked applications to Grad Studies: mid-October

Deadline for **students** to submit complete applications to the department: **Friday
September 26**

PhD Scholarships

- What happens next?
 1. The linguistics department ranks the applications and forwards them to Grad Studies with brief recommendations (subject to department quota).
 2. Several university-level committees rank the applications per group of disciplines. Linguistics is in a committee together with Psychology, Education, Speech Sciences, and a few smaller fields.
 3. The top-ranked applications from eligible applicants are forwarded to SSHRC and NSERC in Ottawa.
 4. Adjudication by SSHRC/NSERC is again done by interdisciplinary committees.
 5. The winners get SSHRC/NSERC awards; the rest go back into the UBC pool with the applications that weren't forwarded.
 6. Affiliated awards are assigned on the basis of the original Grad Studies ranking (plus eligibility criteria for each award).

MA Scholarships

Deadline for students to submit their applications: **December 1**

Note: Applications for Master's scholarships (both tri-council and affiliated awards) are no longer forwarded to Ottawa, but are adjudicated solely “in house” by UBC.

- Where can I find more information about the application process?

Grad Studies' Two-Minute Guide:

https://www.grad.ubc.ca/sites/default/files/materials/awards_two_minute_guide.pdf

and talk to Shaine and Gunnar about your individual situation.

- So when should I start preparing my application?

NOW!!

- What should I be doing?
 1. Check eligibility (assume you're eligible until you have clear evidence to the contrary)
 2. Check out the appropriate application form/website and carefully go over all the instructions
 - 3. Immediately** start the process of requesting:
 - Transcripts
 - Letters of recommendation
 4. Start thinking about a research topic
 5. Approach a faculty member who can mentor you in putting together your proposal (within the next week)
 6. Write a first draft, get feedback, and then revise, revise, revise
 7. Repeat until finished

Writing an effective research proposal

- Keep in mind that the people who judge your proposal are non-linguists.
- So spell out your background assumptions and explain technical vocabulary.
- But don't dumb it down too much – make clear that you're an expert and know what you're talking about.
- Clarity of writing and organization is very important.

Elements of a good research proposal (1)

- A clear **research question** and/or **hypothesis**
- **Background**: Situate your proposal in the existing literature (with **references!**)
- Make clear what is **new** about your proposal – What will your research contribute to our knowledge about this topic?
- Make sure your proposed research project is **realistic** and **doable** within the given timeframe.
- Address the wider **relevance** of your research.

Elements of a good research proposal (2)

- Explicitly discuss your research **methodology** and make clear that you're following procedures that are appropriate and standard in your subdiscipline (with references to the literature).
- Include brief description of **specific details** like:
 - type of data sources (experiments, fieldwork elicitation, texts, corpora, etc.)
 - number of participants / consultants and recruitment method
 - method of data collection, storage, and analysis
 - timeframe and location of research

Elements of a good research proposal (3)

- Make explicit that you have **expert supervision** and **institutional support** that enables you to carry out this research – Why is UBC the best place to do this project?
- Describe your relevant **research skills** and **training**.
- Show how your project builds on or is a natural continuation of **previous work** you've done (where relevant).

Elements of a good research proposal (4)

- Make sure that all the parts of your application (proposal, bibliography, CV, letters, transcripts) are **consistent** and **reinforce each other**.
- Try to include at least something in your list of **research contributions**. These may be “grey” area publications such as oral presentations, research reports, Honours or MA theses, etc. They don’t need to be related to your proposal and they don’t even have to be in linguistics. If at all possible, avoid having a blank page (this is more crucial at the PhD than the MA level).

Form of the proposal

- Professional look and easy on the eye – first impressions count!
- Clear organization and style
- Divide proposal into sections with informative headings.
- No typos – proofread a million times! (also have someone else proofread it for you)
- Use standard formatting for references (use APA or stylesheet of a journal like *Language* or *Linguistic Inquiry*).
- If you're not a native speaker, have someone else edit it for English.
- Leave sufficient amounts of white space – the proposal should not look cluttered or cramped.
- Efficient and consistent use of typography (use a larger font size for section headers)
- Make appropriate use of bold, italics, small caps, etc. in the text (but don't overdo it)
- Proofread, proofread, proofread!

The writing process

- Decide on your research topic as soon as possible.
- Choose a topic that you already know something about (for instance, something you've already written a paper on).
- Consult with faculty member(s) about your choice of topic and how to narrow it down to a manageable project.
- Keep in mind that you're free to change the direction of your research later – the proposal is not a contract!
- Start writing early!
- Rewrite, rewrite, rewrite.
- Get feedback at all stages, especially from faculty members, but also from fellow students.
- Have an intelligent non-linguist read a draft of your proposal to see if it makes sense to an outsider.
- Show your letter writers a draft of your proposal.
- Revise, revise, revise!
- Don't leave things to the last minute.

Helpful resources

- Grad Studies website
 - <http://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/affiliated-fellowships>
 - https://www.grad.ubc.ca/sites/default/files/materials/awards_two_minute_guide.pdf
 - <http://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/gps-graduate-pathways-success/hot-tips-scholarship-applications>
 - <http://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/scholarships-awards-funding/resources-award-applicants>
- Grad Studies workshops
- Gunnar and Shaine (read all their emails!)
- Any faculty member in the department
- Fellow students