

Quick Tips: Finding programs

Transcript

Let's take a look at some quick tips on the topic of funding for graduate school applications. Be sure to read all of the information in the "What you need to know" and "Master's and PhD programs" sections to get you started on planning for graduate studies.

External and internal funding is available for most programs. External funding can come from government student loan programs, other funding organizations, or companies (for example, your parent's workplace). Internal funding, often in the form of scholarships, bursaries, and loans, is available from the school you will attend. Check the school's website for further information. When you are sent your offer of admission for graduate school, you will often receive a funding package with information on scholarships, Research Assistantships (RA), and/or Teaching Assistantships (TA).

Funding applications are often due before your program application. If applying to a graduate program, you should apply for external funding through a federal or provincial agency (e.g., OGS, NSERC, SSHRC). Your program application is more likely to be considered if you can demonstrate that you have received, or may receive, external research funding. While you are a student at the University of Waterloo, your application for these scholarships is submitted through your academic department, even if you are not applying to a program at Waterloo. The deadlines are in early fall.

Your graduate department scholarship coordinator is your first point of contact for scholarship information. You can find this information on the University of Waterloo's website. Contact them regardless of where you want to complete your graduate degree. Applications for scholarships require considerable effort: To apply, you must usually complete an application form and research statement, and provide three academic references. If you have already graduated from university, deal directly with the funding agency. Results of competitions are usually announced in March and April.

As with references, you want to get WAAAY out in front of this, because scholarship application deadlines are usually MONTHS before applying to the actual program. SO: pick the school that would be your first choice, and write as if you had already been accepted there (by choosing a topic, methodology, etc., you are NOT actually locking yourself into anything! The purpose is to get you additional funding so that you have flexibility to do what you want!).

Ontario has the Ontario Graduate Scholarship program that you can apply to in the early fall of each year, and other provinces have similar programs.

The Centre for Career Action cannot review your scholarship applications for you, so make sure that you connect with graduate scholarship coordinators, faculty members, and attend the scholarship information session put on by the Graduate Studies Office every fall. You can also consider having the Writing Centre review your proposal.

Many private scholarships in field-specific areas have similar requirements in terms of presenting a research proposal in a concise and clear way.

Sometimes federal funding opportunities are limited for course-based programs so you may need to rely on program scholarships and bursaries, Ontario Graduate Scholarships, OSAP, loans, and private scholarships.

Contact your bank for information about loans and/or lines of credits. Some banks have "education loans/lines of credit."