

# GSA Recognition Awards information

## **General**

- Every year the GSA confers awards on grad students who distinguish themselves in research, teaching, academics, leadership, and service to the University and wider community.
- The GSA also recognizes University faculty and staff for their contributions to graduate education and acknowledge those alumni and benefactors who continue to support and champion graduate students at the University.
- funding for these awards comes from the Graduate Student Support Fund, which the GSA receives from the University and disperses to grad students as GSA Recognition Awards and the GSA's grants and bursaries.

More information can be found on the GSA website:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-students-association/funding/recognition-awards/index.html>

## **Deadlines and Requirements**

Deadline to submit application packages for all GSA Recognition Awards is Monday, January 15, 2024 at 4:00 PM MST. This is a strict deadline to allow time for the committee to adjudicate the awards. If you have a concern about the deadline, contact me immediately at [gsaad@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsaad@ualberta.ca). Do not wait until the last minute!

Nomination forms for each award can be downloaded from the website. Required documents vary slightly for each award; go to the webpage for the particular award to see the specific requirements. GSA staff will review your application for completeness; you will receive an email confirmation of receipt. If you email your package, please keep an eye on your email in case we contact you with questions or concerns.

Electronic applications should be in PDF format, preferably in a single file. If you are submitting multiple applications, a single file for each award is preferred. Applications must be complete when submitted. GSA staff will not accept incomplete packages, hold incomplete packages, or accept partial packages.

## **GSA Recognition Awards**

### ***Faculty and Staff Awards***

These are the three awards available for University staff and faculty. None of them have a monetary component and they all require student nominations. We do not accept group nominations and can only accept one nomination per person so please confer with your fellow students. In past years, two students nominated their supervisor

separately so the second application was rejected. Talk to your peers in your department!

Also please note that we require the nominee's signature and contact information so they must be made aware of their nomination prior to submission.

1. The Academic Staff Award is for faculty members who are not necessarily your own supervisor but who go above and beyond to help graduate students. They must be a member of the Association of Academic Staff: University of Alberta.
2. The Non-Academic Staff Award is for University staff members who go above and beyond to help students. Past recipients include grad program administrators, lab techs, and administration assistants. They must be a member of the Non-Academic Staff Association.
3. The Supervisor Award is for graduate student supervisors. We typically distribute one each for the three Tri-Council research areas: SSHRC, NSERC, and CIHR, although holding a Tri-Council grant is NOT a requirement.

### ***Graduate Student Group Award***

If your departmental group has hosted lots of events and activities, put in an application! The application is fairly straightforward and your group could receive \$500.

Letters should be from someone who can speak to the award criteria listed in the Adjudication Criteria section.

1. Advocacy on behalf of graduate student members
2. Promotion of graduate student engagement through academic and social activities

Description of activities over the past year – make this straightforward and organized for the adjudicator. Can add in up to 4 pages of supporting docs, such as conference programs or posters.

### ***Individual Awards General Information***

The following awards are available for individual graduate students and are described in greater detail below. All include a monetary component and most are self-nominated (so no nominator is necessary) ***except for one***.

You can nominate yourself for as many awards as you are eligible for but can only receive one award per year. We are asking multiple award applicants to **rank their award preferences**. If the applicant is ranked high in multiple categories, the committee can take their preference into consideration.

The Graduate Student Spirit Award has slightly different requirements than the other student awards so we will look at that award in greater detail.

All individual awards **require the following** (some have additional components)

1. a CV that is 4 pages maximum
  - a. tailored to the award you're applying for
  - b. read the description on the award page to look for any specifications
  - c. ordered in reverse chronology
    - Make your CV pleasant to read and straightforward for the adjudicator – don't bury the lede
2. an enrolment verification document - can be printed from Bear Tracks – Go to the Academic section to find Verification Documents. Instructions can be found in the Awards Q&A on our webpage.
3. Letters – must be signed, electronic sigs are fine; do NOT need to be sealed and MUST all come together with your package. We cannot accept letters separately – your letter writer cannot email them to us separately.
  - If they'd prefer, they can give you a sealed envelope that you bring to us.
  - Tips for letters - Provide the Adjudication Criteria from the award webpage to your referee.

Completed Nomination Information Form

***Graduate Student Spirit Awards - 2 awards valued at \$750 each***

The purpose of this award is to recognize graduate students who go above and beyond to create a positive graduate experience for their peers. Our intention in creating this award was to recognize an aspect of grad student life that isn't typically awarded by recognizing individuals who enrich your emotional, mental, and social well-being. We set it up so that recipients would be nominated by their peers; this type of leadership is not often recognized but can be critical for success.

Adjudication on:

- commitment to a collegial atmosphere through peer connection;
- leadership in creating a positive experience or environment for others; and
- evidence of meaningful support for their peers.

Three letters required– must be signed, electronic is fine; do NOT need to be sealed. Two of these letters must come from graduate student peers; the third letter can come from anyone affiliated with the U of A. This could be another grad student peer, an undergraduate, a professor, the nominee's supervisor, the department Chair (anyone who can speak to how the applicant meets the criteria). Provide the Adjudication Criteria from the award webpage to your referee.

CV – should provide adjudicators with a general idea of who the nominee is. Weigh the length of 4 pages with the description of activities.

Enrollment Verification

***Service Awards - 4 awards valued at \$1,000 each***

Service can be either as an individual or with a University student group; Only activities undertaken during a graduate student's current program will be considered.

Adjudicated on:

- Duration, length, and breadth of community service and/or outreach activities with communities;
- Leadership in community involvement
- Significance/impact of community work and/or leadership in non-academic community engagement

Letters – must be signed, electronic is fine; do NOT need to be sealed. The letters for this award in particular should not come from your supervisor. This is frustrating for adjudicators – supervisors often don't focus on service enough and instead focus on general qualities or academics. This award is not about academics. Provide the Adjudication Criteria from the award webpage to your referee.

CV – should outline the significance and duration of service activities undertaken during the nominee's current degree program. Weigh the length of 4 pages with the description of activities.

Enrollment Verification

***Graduate Student Principal Instructor Teaching Awards - 3 awards valued at \$1,000 each***

Only U of A courses that were taught as a Principal Instructor during a graduate student's current academic program will be considered.

Adjudicated on:

- quality of teaching evaluations;
- effort to build a constructive rapport with students, and
- evidence of dedication to teaching and students.

Letters – must be signed, electronic is fine; do NOT need to be sealed. At least one letter MUST come from a student taught by the nominee (both can). The second letter writer is up to the applicant's discretion. Both letters should describe the nominee's role as course instructor. Provide the Adjudication Criteria from the award webpage to your referee.

Teaching Evaluation Summaries – In the event evaluations from the department are not available, a letter from the department confirming the teaching activities and, where possible, any evaluations of the student as a PI must be provided. If you don't have official evaluations results, is there something preliminary that your department can provide? Can anyone in your department speak to the requirements or expectations of you as a PI? Ideally, the document in lieu of evaluations should be more fulsome than a

two sentence confirmation letter from your department administrator. What would you want to see if you were an adjudicator?

CV – should include PI Activities undertaken during the current degree program.

Enrollment Verification

***Martha Piper Awards - 3 awards valued at \$500 each***

Established in 1997 to commemorate the significant contribution Dr. Martha Piper made to the research community at the U of A; only research communication activities undertaken during a grad student's current program will be considered.

Adjudicated on:

- quality of research or creative activity
- conference participation record (or exhibition, performance, or equivalent) during current program
- Publication record (or record of original artistic works produce, ie plays, compositions) during current program
- Overall contribution to the University of Alberta research or creative community

Letters –The letters for this award MUST come from your supervisor; should focus on the research communication record.

CV – should include a list of publications, scholarly or creative activity, conference presentations (or equivalent) undertaken during the nominee's current program, and all awards received.

Enrollment Verification

***TD Insurance Meloche Monnex Outstanding Community Service Award - 1 award valued at \$500***

Only activities undertaken during a graduate student's current program will be considered.

Adjudicated on:

- Excellence of service to graduate student and the University community,
- Leadership in service to the graduate students and the University community,
- Contribution to graduate students, the University, and to the greater Edmonton and Alberta community.

Letters –The letters for this award in particular should not come from your supervisor.

CV – should outline the significance and duration of service activities undertaken during the nominee's current degree program.

## Enrollment Verification

### ***Graduate Student Teaching Assistant Awards - 7 awards valued at \$500 each***

Only GTA Appointments held for U of A Courses during a graduate student's current academic program will be considered.

Adjudicated on:

- quality of teaching evaluations;
- effort to build a constructive rapport with students, and
- evidence of dedication to teaching and students.

Letters – At least one letter **MUST** come from a student taught by a nominee (both can). The second letter writer is the supervising Course/Lab Instructor. Both letters must describe the nominee's performance as teaching assistant.

Teaching Evaluation Summaries – In the event evaluations from the department are not available, a letter from the department confirming the teaching activities and, where possible, any evaluations of the student as a TA must be provided. If you don't have official evaluations results, is there something preliminary that your department can provide? Can anyone in your department speak to the requirements or expectations of you as a TA? The Chair?

CV – should include TA Activities undertaken during the current degree program.

## Enrollment Verification

### ***Graduate Student Research Assistant Awards - 7 awards valued at \$500 each***

Only GRA appointments held during a graduate student's current academic program will be considered.

Adjudicated on:

- excellence of contribution to the conducted research,
- leadership in innovation and versatility within research, and
- overall contribution to the University research community.

Letter – the letter **MUST come from the research supervisor** and include a description of the nominee's contribution to applicable projects.

GRA Contract - this award is intended to reward students undertaking quality research for someone else's project, not their own (GRAF). If you do not have a copy of your contract, your department should. If you are unsure of what this is, please contact [gsa.grants@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsa.grants@ualberta.ca) so we can help you.

CV – should include RA Activities undertaken during the current degree program.

Enrollment Verification

***Graduate Student Rising Star Awards - 3 awards valued at \$500 each***

These graduate students will have the ability to serve as role models to fellow grad students through their vision, determination, and academic contributions. Nominees must be graduate students in the first year or year and a half of their graduate program.

Adjudicated on:

- Excellence in teaching and scholarly or creative activities,
- Leadership in teaching and research,
- Overall contribution to the University community, and
- Quality as a graduate student role model.

Letters – must be signed, electronic is fine; do NOT need to be sealed. Provide the Adjudication Criteria from the award webpage to your referee.

CV – that includes academic achievements within the first year or year and a half of the nominee's program.

Enrollment Verification

***International Graduate Student Award - 1 award valued at \$500***

This award recognizes international grad students who exemplify excellence in contribution to the U of A and the community in teaching, research, and service. Nominees must be current international grad students.

Adjudicated on:

- Excellence in teaching,
- Contribution to research,
- Leadership in University and community involvement.

Letters – Should address how the nominee meets the criteria.

CV – that includes teaching, research, and service activities undertaken during the current degree program.

Enrollment Verification

***General tips!***

Make sure your letter writer knows YOUR deadline, not the award deadline. And that they cannot submit the letter separately or directly, YOU have to submit it with the other components of your application.

Set yourself a deadline a day or two ahead of the actual deadline – apply early to avoid any issues with your submission.

PLEASE contact the GSA if you are confused about any aspect of the application or submission process. We want to help you and it's our job. Questions asked or applications submitted close to the deadline run the risk of going unanswered or unaccepted.

- if submitting in person, we will go through each part of your application to ensure it's complete
- If submitting electronically, don't consider your application as received until you get an email from us confirming receipt. Keep an eye on your email in case we have questions or concerns. Don't submit at noon on the deadline day and then go to a 3 hour seminar without checking your email.

***GSA Contact***

If you have any questions, please contact Cindy at [gsaad@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsaad@ualberta.ca).