

Indigenous Student Graduate Award

Purpose

The purpose of this award is to recognize graduate students who are First Nations, Inuit, or Métis persons of Canada (as defined in the Constitution Act, 1982, Part II, Section 35[2]) for their academic excellence, leadership, and meaningful contributions to community wellness, advocacy, cultural revitalization, and Indigenous Knowledges at the University of Alberta and beyond.

Funding

Two awards*, each valued at \$750, may be conferred annually. One award is funded by the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) and the other by the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association (IGSA).

Funding for this award has been donated by the GSA to First Peoples House for an eight-year term ending in 2027.

**For the 2025 GSA Awards in March 2026, there will be one additional GSA-funded award to recognize that the award was not offered in 2024. This will result in a total of three awards: two funded by the GSA and one funded by the IGSA.*

GSA Policy

The Indigenous Student Graduate Award is a standalone agreement between the GSA and First Peoples' House. It is not governed by GSA policy.

Eligibility

All First Nations, Inuit, or Métis persons of Canada, in accordance with the Constitution Act, 1982, Part II, Section 35(2), who are currently registered in a Master's or Doctoral program at the University of Alberta and in satisfactory academic standing. Both full-time and part-time students are equally eligible. Community contributions, both inside and outside academia, are fully recognized and valued.

Nominees cannot be the current Vice President Indigenous Relations (VPIR) or a current member of the IGSA Core Council.

Adjudication Criteria

The Indigenous Student Graduate Award is adjudicated based on three (3) broad areas.

Applicants do not need to demonstrate all areas; strength in any one area is sufficient.

a. Community and Cultural Contribution

Contributions that uplift Indigenous communities, cultures, languages, or wellness on or off campus. This may include mentorship, volunteering, cultural or ceremonial work, peer support, advocacy, or community engagement.

b. Leadership and Impact

Any form of leadership that creates positive change. Leadership may be formal or informal, quiet or visible, grassroots, relational, land-based, or collaborative. This includes supporting peers, organizing initiatives, and contributing to safer, more inclusive spaces.

c. Academic Strength and Indigenous Approaches

Demonstrating curiosity, commitment, or excellence within one's academic program, including integrating Indigenous Knowledges, values, or community-based approaches in coursework, research, or practice.

This award explicitly recognizes Indigenous Cultural Labour, including (but not limited to): ceremonial responsibilities, caregiving and kinship roles, language revitalization, land-based learning and teaching, cultural or spiritual responsibilities, and other relational forms of labour often unrecognized in academic settings. These forms of labour are valued equally alongside institutional forms of leadership and service.

Tell us about yourself, your background (where you are from, your nation, and your relationship to community), and your graduate program.

Reviewers will score each application on a scale of 1-20 based on how strongly the applicant demonstrates one or more of the above areas.

There is no expectation to meet all three areas.

Nomination Requirements

Self-nomination.

A complete nomination package must include the following components and no others:

a. A written personal submission from 1-2 pages, single-spaced text, 1-inch margins, and a standard 12-point font, unless accessibility needs require alternatives. Applicants are encouraged to share personal stories, reflections, and experiences in whatever format feels most comfortable and meaningful to them.

b. 1 Letter of Support

The letter must:

- Address how the nominee meets the adjudication criteria with examples.
- Be signed and dated.
- References can be provided by supervisors, Elders, mentors, Nation or University staff or anyone who can speak meaningfully to your strengths, contributions, or impact in academic, community, cultural, or campus contexts. References cannot be from other students or immediate family members.

c. Official Enrollment Verification Document

Obtained from Bear Tracks, confirming current registration in a graduate program at the University of Alberta.

d. Indigeneity

Students must be listed with First Peoples' House as an Indigenous student.

Submission Process

Applicants must submit their completed packages to gsavpir@ualberta.ca, fph@ualberta.ca, and igsa@ualberta.ca in a single email.

The subject line must include: 'Last Name, First Name – Indigenous Student Graduate Award.'

Incomplete or late packages will not be accepted or adjudicated.

Policy and Procedure

- a. Nominations will be reviewed for eligibility and completeness by the current GSA Vice President Indigenous Relations (VPIR), one representative from FPH, and one representative from the Core Council (likely the Vice President Finance) of the IGSA.
- b. Eligible nominations will be adjudicated jointly by the VPIR, the FPH representative, and the IGSA representative.
- c. Results will be communicated via email to nominees.
- d. The VPIR will present the awards at the GSA Awards Night in March.

Timeline

Applications open: same as GSA Recognition Awards

Applications close: same as GSA Recognition Awards

Awards presented: GSA Awards Night