

# A few Tips on Preparing Your UMGF Application

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## UMGF Details

- University of Manitoba Graduate Fellowship (UMGF)
- Highest level internal graduate award at UofM
- \$18,000 (PhD), \$14,000 (MSc)
- Maximum 4 years of award
  - Across MSc and PhD, if applicable
- Manitoba Graduate Scholarship (MGS) top up awarded to best UMGF applicants received
  - \$7500 (PhD), \$3,000 (MSc)
- **Minimum** 3.75 GPA on last 60 credit hours
  - most recipients have higher GPAs



## UMGF Adjudication in Science

- Applications from each department considered
- **Interdisciplinary** committee adjudicates
  - Write accordingly
    - Not an expert review panel
- One member on committee from each department
  - Review done by members from **other** departments
  - Member from your department acts to clarify questions but does not correct problems or mistakes
- Committee ranks applications and then forwards to FGS for awarding based on a quota provided



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## The Form - Directions

- FACULTY OF SCIENCE UMGF APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS
- Directions for Completing the Form (Applicant)**
- The applicant completes Part 1 of the form (which is pre-defined formatting). This formatting must not be changed.
  - If the name on the application differs from transcripts and/or other documents enclosed with the application, the applicant is required to identify the discrepancy. Documentation of change verification may be requested.
  - When describing your relevant work experience (page 2) describe only research relevant work experience. If necessary, briefly clarify how the experience was relevant when describing the "nature of the work".
  - When listing your publications and other contributions to research (beginning on page 3) you must use the following headings in order and contributions should be listed under each heading from most recent to first:
    1. Articles Published or Accepted in Refereed Journals
    2. Articles Submitted to Refereed Journals
    3. Articles Published or Accepted in Other Refereed Venues (e.g. conferences, workshops, etc.)
    4. Articles Submitted to Other Refereed Venues
    5. Other Contributions (patents, copyrights, contributions from industrial R&D activities, technology transfer, etc.)
  - For all publications, please indicate the number of pages and for publications submitted in a year, indicate the date acceptance/submission as well. For multi-author papers, briefly indicate the significance of authorship order.
  - Provide a copy of your completed application to your two referees together with the instructions and a blank copy of Part II and ask them to forward the completed form and attached letter of support directly to the department you are applying through and return the form. Particularly for foreign referees, this time may be significant. Also, be sure your referees have the address of the department to which they must return their letters.
  - Submit your application to the department you are applying through prior to their application deadline.
  - What does my signature on the application mean?
    - o You accept the terms and conditions of the award as set out in the UMGF regulations and the Award Holder's Guide available at [www.manitoba.ca/science/graduate\\_students/holding\\_forms.html](http://www.manitoba.ca/science/graduate_students/holding_forms.html)
    - o You will acknowledge, wherever possible, UMGF's funding assistance (e.g. in publications)
    - o You certify that the information provided in your application is complete, accurate and consistent to the best of your knowledge. The provision of false or inaccurate information may result in sanctions, including termination of funding and disqualification from eligibility for future funding.
  - The form is in PDF and may be completed using the free PDFt Reader software (for Windows) or Preview (comes with Mac OS) or Adobe Acrobat (not free). The free Acrobat Reader software cannot save PDF files and is therefore tedious to use.
- Directions for Completing the Form (Referee)**
- Referees complete Part 2 of the form and also a single page letter of support as described in part 2.
  - The applicant should have provided you with a copy of their application. Please review it.
  - Whenever possible, refer to specific general comments, assess the applicant's strengths and limitations for each criterion. Please include specific examples of the applicant's accomplishments and contributions to support your assessment.
  - Ratings that are inconsistent with the application as a whole without justification will diminish the report's credibility.
  - Please submit your reference to the department the applicant is submitting through.
  - Please note that this report will be accessible to the applicant with obvious identifying information blocked out.
- Directions for Completing the Form (Department)**
- The department completes Part 3 of the form.
  - Please consult the applicant's application and transcripts as well as the referees' reports.
  - The primary responsibilities of the department are to rank the applicants, explain the ranking and compute the applicant's GPA according to FGS submission rules (see part 3 of UMGF). A secondary responsibility is to draw any critical information to the selection committee's attention.
  - Please discuss the factors that led to the department's ranking of the applicant commenting on the applicant's strengths and limitations in comparison to other applicants in terms of Academic excellence, Research ability/potential, Communication skills and also Interpersonal and leadership skills.
  - Please be sure to indicate why the applicant was ranked as they were relative to adjacent applicants in the ranking and explain any discrepancies between the application package and departmental ranking.
  - If possible, please provide additional information about the applicant beyond that provided by the referees.
    - o Information about the appropriateness and interest of publications versus a particular field.
  - Finally please be sure to provide a calculation of the applicant's GPA on their last 60 hours of study.
  - Please do not recommend applicants:
    - o whose GPA over the last 60 credit hours is below 3.75
    - o who will exceed 24 months in a Master's program as of September in the competition year
    - o who will exceed 48 months in a Ph.D. program as of September in the competition year
- Last Updated: Friday, 6 January 2012


- Please make sure you read the directions! 😊
  - They're provided for a reason – to help you!
  - First part is for the applicant but other parts should probably be read too
  - Also read instructions on each page in the form
  - These provide specific information on what is needed



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# The Form – Page 1



Application for  
**UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP**  
For Submission to Faculty of Science (Contact Department For their Deadline)  
**PART I – TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT**

Title (Mr., Mrs., Mx.)	Last Name of Applicant	First Name	Middle Initial
<b>ADDRESSES</b>		Permanent mailing address (if different from current address) (street name & number/City/Province/Postal Code)	
Current address (street name & number/City/Province/Postal Code)		Telephone number at permanent mailing address	
If current address is temporary, indicate leaving date		E-mail address	
Telephone number	Facsimile number		
<b>SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC INFORMATION</b>			
U of M student #	Present Department	Present Institution	
Program (MSc/PhD) during award	Department	Name of Proposed Supervisor	
<b>CITIZENSHIP – select one</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Canadian Citizen		<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent resident of Canada	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Visa student	
<b>SIGNATURE</b>			
I hereby agree that any award made in result of this application will be subject to the general conditions governing the USGFP. These conditions are outlined in the regulations attached to this application form, as well as the regulations outlined in the Award Holder's Guide.			
I hereby certify that I have read and understood the instructions attached to this application form and that all statements made in connection with this application are true and complete.			
I authorize the university to verify any information, transcripts, or reference letters provided as part of this application.			
I understand that my application will be regarded if I have not disclosed my complete academic record or have submitted false information in support of my application. In such an event, I understand that false applications from me will not be considered.			
Date	Signature of Applicant		
<small>This personal information is being collected under the authority of the University of Manitoba Act and will be used for the purpose of assessing your application for the USGFP competition. It may be shared with other educational institutions. Information regarding graduation and awards may be made public. Upon your graduation, name, address and degree information you have provided will be given to and maintained by the Alumni Records department in order to assist in the University's advancement and development efforts. This information is protected by the Protection of Privacy provisions of Manitoba's Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. For more information about the collection contact the PPRPA Coordinator at: Office 204-944-4742 ext. 4200.</small>			

- Form is PDF fillable
  - Use Adobe Acrobat, Preview (on a Mac) or FoxIT <http://www.foxitsoftware.com/downloads/>
- This page is easy to do
  - Don't forget the name of your **proposed supervisor**
- Your name and student number will carry forward to other pages

# The Form – Page 2

Name of Applicant (Last, First)		Student Number	
<b>ACADEMIC BACKGROUND (current and past degree programs including programs in progress)</b>			
Degree	Name of discipline	Department, institution and country	Status (Full/part time)
Bachelor's			
Master's			
Doctorate			
<b>ACADEMIC, RESEARCH, AND OTHER RESEARCH-RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE</b>			
Position held and nature of work (order from most recent/current to oldest)	Organization & department	Supervisor	Period (month – month)

- The section on academic background is obvious
- The section on academic/research experience is important
  - Don't forget to describe the **nature of the work**
    - If necessary, explain how the work was research relevant

## The Form – Page 3

Name of Applicant (Last, First)		Student Number		
AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS RECEIVED (order from most recent to least recent)				
Name of Award	Value (\$)	Name of Sponsoring Organization or University	National, Provincial or Institutional	Period (month - year)

- Your list of awards and scholarships provides evidence that others think you have merit
- Specify **value** of the award (\$0 is an option) and whether it was national, provincial or institutional
  - Other options can be specified if needed
    - Explain the scope of the award



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## The Form – Page 4

Name of Applicant (Last, First)		Student Number	
AWARDS CURRENTLY APPLIED FOR (Do not consider for the NSERC PGS-A unless you have a current PGS-A or PGS-B; if you are eligible to do so)			
Name of Award	Value (\$)	Name of Sponsoring Organization or University	Date applied for

**Extenuating Circumstances**  
Indicate if you are currently applying for an award that you believe should be waived if you have extenuating circumstances that have affected your performance to date that the selection committee should be aware of.

Indicate if you are attending university at the time of application (check one)

Attending part-time     Attending full-time     Not attending

- List all awards that are **currently** applied for
  - If you are a Canadian citizen or permanent resident there should be an NSERC PGS application
- Indicate any **extenuating circumstances** (e.g. sickness) that might have affected your record



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## The Form – Page 5

Name of Applicant (Last, First)	Student Number
<p><b>PUBLICATIONS</b> is all papers published, accepted or submitted to refereed journals, books and conference proceedings from most recent to oldest within each category. Refer to specific instructions for presentation order and handling of other types of contributions.</p>	

- This is where you list all your publications to demonstrate the impact of your prior experience
  - List all publications in the order prescribed with suitable headings
  - Discuss quality of venue if potentially unclear
  - Other contributions (e.g. patents) should also be listed

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## The Form – Page 6

Name of Applicant (Last, First)	Student Number
<p><b>PUBLICATIONS (continued)</b></p>	

- Continue your list of publications and other contributions here
  - Describe significance of author order as well

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## The Form – Page 7

Name of Applicant (Last, First)		Student Number
<b>THESES COMPLETED OR IN PROGRESS</b>		
1. Degree	Supervisor	Date degree requirements completed
Title of thesis		
2. Degree	Supervisor	Date degree requirements completed
Title of thesis		
<b>PROPOSED RESEARCH</b>		
<small>Please provide a brief statement of your proposed research. Identify your research objectives, methods, or approaches to be used, expected outcomes and the significance of your proposed work. This statement must be authored and written by the applicant. This statement should be understandable to someone outside of your area as the reviewer committee is multi-disciplinary. Use plain language where possible and be sure to make the uniqueness and contribution of your proposed research clear.</small>		

- Here you list your theses completed or in progress and your supervisor(s) for those theses
- Next, you describe your **proposed** research
  - Written for non-experts
  - In your own words
  - Describe What, How & Why
  - Explain significance

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## The Form – Page 8

Name of Applicant (Last, First)		Student Number
<b>PROPOSED RESEARCH (continued)</b>		

- The rest of your research proposal
  - Provide detail but avoid too much jargon that might be unclear
  - You will normally have one reader of your proposal from an “allied” discipline so some detail is alright
  - The challenge is to strike the right balance!
    - Ask people to proofread

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## The Form - Page 9

Name of Applicant (Last, First)		Student Number
<b>REFEREES</b> Provide contact information for two referees. Only the University of Manitoba who will complete Part 5 of the application and submit a letter of support on your behalf. As much as possible, the referees should be individuals who can comment on your academic work.		
Last Name		First Name
Position	Department	
Institution		
Telephone No.	Facsimile No.	E-mail address
Last Name		First Name
Position	Department	
Institution		
Telephone No.	Facsimile No.	E-mail address
<b>LIST OF UNIVERSITY TRANSCRIPTS</b> List all university transcripts appended to the application. This must include all undergraduate and graduate transcripts. Official transcripts, student histories issued by the Registrar's Office and certified programs are acceptable. Web printouts and Student Access printouts are not acceptable. Attach documents showing the relevance to the application to the end of this list.		

- Provide contact details for **two referees** (at least one local to UofM):
  - Who will respond
  - Who will respond favourably
  - Who know you well and can comment on your abilities from experience
- List **transcripts/certified histories** included

## The Form - Page 10

**PART II - TO BE COMPLETED BY REFEREE**

This report is **CONFIDENTIAL** and is to be completed by the student's proposed advisor or a faculty member from any academic institution with knowledge of the student's academic abilities.

Last Name of Applicant		First Name				
The information provided in your reference is very important to the selection committee in evaluating the suitability of the applicant for receiving the UMIST. Our thanks go to you for agreeing to provide a reference. Please give as detailed information as possible both now and on the candidate. Your reference will include both this form and an attached letter of support (single page please).						
2.1 I have known this applicant for _____ (0) years in my capacity as his/her _____ (professor, advisor, committee member, etc.). On the basis of my experience with _____ (0) students at a similar level over _____ years, I would give this student the following ratings:						
<b>2.2 RATINGS</b> Your ratings should be consistent with information in the rest of the application (including the transcripts) and with your letter of support.						
	EXCEPTIONAL	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	SUB-AVG	UNABLE TO JUDGE
	Upper 5%	Upper 15%	Upper 30%	Upper 50%	Lower 20%	
Academic Preparation						
Demonstrated scholarly ability						
Communicated Research ability						
Student's Research Potential						
Communication Skills (written)						
Communication Skills (oral)						
Industry/Research/Management						
Creativity						
Originality						
Judgement						
<b>2.3 RECOMMENDATION</b> Please check one of the following: I refer: Strongly Recommend ( ) Recommend ( ) Recommend with Reservations ( ) Not Recommend ( ) the applicant.						
PLEASE ELABORATE ON THE ABOVE RATINGS IN YOUR ATTACHED LETTER OF SUPPORT						
Name of Referee (Print)		Signature				
Position		Institution				

Referee reports may be returned by mail or e-mail (the applicant should have provided you with the appropriate mail and e-mail addresses to use).

- This is the part that your referees must complete
  - Make sure that the referees you select can provide the needed information
  - Provide them with pages 1-9 of your application and, if needed, a copy of your transcripts
  - Make sure they know how to return their reports and follow up to be sure they do

## The Form - Page 11

**PART III - TO BE COMPLETED BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT**

This report is CONFIDENTIAL, and should be completed by the appropriate representative of the department the student is applying from. (This is normally the head, the grant chair or the chair of an awards committee). Please explain any discrepancies between the student's application (including academic record) and the department's ranking and also explain any special criteria used to arrive at the ranking.

Last Name of Applicant	First Name
Among the _____ students from this department who are recommended, this student ranks _____	
This student will be in the _____ year of the _____ (MSc/PhD) program as of the start of the coming fall term and is expected to complete all degree requirements by _____. For students applying for the first year of Ph.D. study please indicate whether the student will complete the Master's program prior to entering the Ph.D. or transfer to the Ph.D. program without completion of the Masters.	
<small>Please provide evidence of the quality and merit of the student and describe how the student rates in comparison to teacher peers and other applicants. Whenever possible, please provide any additional information that is not available in the application and letters of support.</small>	
The applicant's GPA on their last 60 credit hours is: _____ (Please use the FDS administrative rules for calculating GPA - available at <a href="http://www.fds.manitoba.ca/fdsrules/gpa.html">www.fds.manitoba.ca/fdsrules/gpa.html</a> .)	
The candidate is: <input type="checkbox"/> RECOMMENDED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT RECOMMENDED	
<small>(Please do not recommend candidates whose GPA as calculated above is below 3.70)</small>	
Name of Representative (Print)	Department
Signature	Date

- This is the part that the department head or awards committee completes
  - Again, be sure they have all the necessary information to do so

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## Common Problems

- We have seen a number of common problems with applications submitted in previous years
- Be sure your application doesn't suffer from any of these problems:
  - 1. Failure to provide complete information:** This should be obvious but is nevertheless a recurring problem
    - Read the instructions – if you don't you may not know what all is needed
    - Don't leave the application to the last minute – if you are rushing you're more likely to miss something

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## Common Problems (cont'd)

### 2. **Failure to Explain Relevance of Earlier Work:** This applies both to research experience and to your contributions (e.g. papers, etc.)

- For example, you should tell the committee how your prior work experience is relevant to doing research for your degree
  - This may be directly relevant or just general skills development but it all speaks to preparedness to do your thesis research

### 3. **Failure to Explain Contribution Details:**

- Tell the committee what role(s) you played in a paper published.
- You might also tell them what contribution the paper makes and why the venue for publication was important
- Be sure to explain other, atypical contributions (e.g. reports prepared for industry)

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## Common Problems (cont'd)

### 4. **Failure to Explain Importance of Awards:** Sometimes the importance of awards is hard to judge

- If an award is particularly selective make this clear
  - If you were at the top of your class was this a class of 20 or 500?
  - Is an award only given to a single individual? (you!)

### 5. **Failure to Have a Research Plan:** you must convince the committee that you are ready to do the research

- Explain how you will do the research. While you may not have specific methodologies or tools in mind, you should have a general idea and be able to communicate it clearly!

### 6. **Failure to Explain why your Research Matters:** “new” and “interesting” are two different things – you want **both!**

- Explain why your research is interesting/important
  - This doesn't have to be a practical application
    - » How does the work advance the field is fine!

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## A Couple of Tips About Writing

- Write carefully and think about flow in your proposal
  - Get friends to proofread for you to see what you missed
- Follow the rules for organizing and presenting information (e.g. publication lists)
  - The people reading and ranking your application will be tired from reading many others – try to make it easy!
- Be concise – its harder to write a short note than a long one but it is almost always clearer in the end
- Make your enthusiasm and excitement for the research clear in what you write

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## Getting Additional Information

- Faculty of Science UMGF web page has a couple of useful documents and is located at:  
[http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/science/graduate/UMGF\\_Intro.html](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/science/graduate/UMGF_Intro.html)
- Graduate Studies UMGF web page describes post-award details and is located at:  
[http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate\\_studies/funding/585.html](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate_studies/funding/585.html)
- E-mail can be sent to the chairs of departmental graduate studies committees (check department web sites) or to myself at:  
[sciadr@umanitoba.ca](mailto:sciadr@umanitoba.ca)

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## Questions?

- Anything you're unsure about?
  - If so, now is the time to ask!

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## Questions?

- Anything you're unsure about?
  - If so, now is the time to ask!

**Happy writing and good Luck!**

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