

Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies

Reviewer perspective on Graduate Funding Applications

<https://www.mcgill.ca/gps/funding>

Rodrigo Reyes

About me

- Associate Professor at Biology
- Served as reviewer for 1 MSc and 3 PhD studentship competitions

Application deadlines

- PhD studentship _ Sometime in the Fall (have to be sent to NSERC at mid-October)
- MSc studentship_ Final deadline early December

Review Process

- A team of 3 reviewers forms a reviewing committee
- In the past I have reviewed between 11-17 applications per competition
- Reviewers evaluate students based on 3 criteria
- Reviewers will rank students individually and send ranking to GPS
- GPS collates rankings and flag disagreements between reviewers
- A discussion between the 3 reviewers to resolve conflicts and produce final ranking

Selection Criteria (PhD studentships)

Research Ability or Potential (50%)

- Quality of research proposal. The ability or potential to communicate theoretical, technical and/or scientific concepts clearly and logically in written and oral formats
- Relevant training and research experience and achievements relative to the applicant's stage of study
- Quality of contributions and extent to which they advance the field of research (publications, patents, reports, posters, etc)
- Demonstration of sound judgment and ability to think critically, of responsible and ethical research conduct
- Enthusiasm for research, originality, initiative, autonomy, relevant community involvement and outreach

Relevant experience and achievements obtained within and beyond academia (50%)

- Scholarships, awards and distinctions (amount, duration and prestige)
- Academic record
- Professional, academic and extracurricular activities as well as collaborations with supervisors, colleagues, peers, students and members of the community,

Advice when preparing applications

- Make sure to read the selection criteria and to include any evidence that supports your application. Try obtaining as many points as possible to help you in the ranking
- Work on the content and flow of your proposal, ask for advice, and make it aesthetically pleasant
- Do not forget extracurricular activities
- Do not feel sad if you do not get the studentship. The competition is tough and the selection difficult. Work hard, update your cv and try again

Resources

- **Workshops and Webinars**

- Offer support in all aspects of the external funding application process and help maximize your chances
- <https://www.mcgill.ca/gps/funding/maximize-my-chances>

- **SKILLSETS**

- Suite of workshops designed for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to complement research training
- <https://www.mcgill.ca/skillsets>

- **Tips for writing a research proposal**

- <https://www.mcgill.ca/gps/students/research-tracking/proposals>