



University of Calgary Graduate Students' Association
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GSA Emerging Leader Award Terms of Reference

2025 – 2026 Academic Year

Intake Period: February 18 – March 02, 2026

Fall Intake Deadline (including reference letters): **Monday, March 02, 2026, 11:59 PM MT**

[Submit applications online](#)

Applications and/or letter of reference received outside of the intake period will **NOT** be evaluated. Late applications will **NOT** be evaluated. Incomplete applications (unanswered questions or additional information) will **NOT** be evaluated. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure completeness of the application.

This document and application link are available on the GSA's [website](#). Questions regarding this application should be directed to the GSA Awards Committee Chair or Vice Chair at awards.gsa@ucalgary.ca

This information is collected following the standards set by the Personal Information and Privacy Act (PIPA). It is required to determine your eligibility for the award and may be used for research and statistical analysis. If you have any questions about the collection or use of this information, please contact the Awards Committee Chair at awards.gsa@ucalgary.ca.

Purpose

This award was established by the Graduate Students' Association of the University of Calgary in recognition of newly-admitted graduate students who are within the first 18 months of their program and have demonstrated outstanding leadership potential benefiting the University of Calgary community and especially the graduate student community.

Value

One (1) \$2,000.00

Eligibility

To be eligible for this award:

1. Applicants must be **within the first 18 months** of their first graduate degree at the University of Calgary. Students more than 18 months into their first graduate degree at the University of Calgary should apply for the Leadership Award.
2. Applicant must not have received this award previously during any degree at the University of Calgary;
3. Applicant must be an active member of the GSA
4. Applicant must be in **Good Standing** with the GSA
5. Applicant must be in **Good Academic Standing** with the University of Calgary

These criteria take into account the four (4) possible start dates in the [Graduate Calendar](#): September 1, January 1, May 1, and July 1.

Documents Required

The following documents are required to apply for this award:

1. **Most recent University of Calgary transcript;**
 - o A recent unofficial transcript (less than a month old from the date of application) is acceptable. For information on how to download the most recent unofficial transcript, please see **Supplemental Information** at the end of this document.
2. **Admission letter** to the University of Calgary (access through UofC student portal - see images below) that includes the program **start date**;
3. **A Curriculum Vitae (CV)** highlighting leadership and volunteer contributions, with emphasis on the activities since the **start of program**;
4. **A personal statement (500 words)** outlining contributions to the University of Calgary community and especially the graduate student community **during the first 18 months of your graduate program**. This statement must describe the impact the applicant's leadership work has had on the University of Calgary community. **The personal statement in the online application must not exceed 500 words.**
5. **Two reference letters** supporting the applicant's leadership experience and involvement in the University of Calgary community.

Please note - Incomplete applications (missing information, extra information/documents and incorrectly filled out) or applications received after the intake deadline will NOT be considered.

Application Specifications

When applying for this award, the following process must be followed:

1. Completed applications **MUST** be submitted using the [online awards portal](#);
2. Applications **MUST** be written and signed in **English**;
3. Reference letters **MUST**:
 - Be from Graduate Supervisor/Volunteer/Supervisor/Manager/Team lead etc.
 - Be received by the application deadline.
 - *References should speak specifically to the applicant's leadership and volunteer contributions during the first 18 months of their program, with particular emphasis on service to the University of Calgary community and, especially, the graduate student community. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their referee understands this is a leadership award, particularly if the referee is more accustomed to providing academic references.*
4. Applications **MUST** be submitted with a **University of Calgary email address**;
5. **Incomplete applications (missing information, extra information/documents and incorrectly filled out) or applications received after the intake deadline will NOT be considered.**

Adjudication Criteria

Applicants must meet eligibility and submission requirements as described above. All eligible applications will be assessed using the following criteria:

Leadership (potential and demonstrated ability) as demonstrated by the candidate's personal statement, reference letters, and CV. Leadership may include, but is not limited to, the following qualities:

- Personal achievements;
- Active involvement in campus groups and organizations;
- Leadership recognitions (awards, distinctions, etc)
- Contribution to university committees and councils; and
- Off-campus community service where the activity has a direct impact on the University of Calgary graduate student community.

Please note that this list is not intended to include all possible categories and is provided for guidance only.

Additional Regulations

- All applications will be prescreened for completeness before being forwarded for review. Incomplete applications will not proceed to the review stage.
- The Association's Elected Council will evaluate all complete application packages based on the selection criteria stated above.
- Only the activities during the **first 18 months of your program** are considered. If activities **outside the 18 months** are included then the application will not move on to the review process. Only activities completed within the first 18 months of the applicant's program will be considered. Applications that include activities outside of this 18-month period will not proceed to review.
- The top five (5) applicants will be shortlisted for the award. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to the Awards Gala where the award recipient will be announced. All applicants will be notified of their shortlist status no later than (2) weeks prior to the Awards Gala.
- **Students may not apply to both the GSA Emerging Leader Award and the GSA Leadership Award during the same academic year.**
- Award decisions will be made 10 – 12 weeks from the intake deadline and application feedback will not be provided;
- The GSA will not be responsible for any tax liability incurred from awarding funds; The GSA is not responsible for any tax liabilities that may result from the receipt of award funds
- Questions about the application process must be directed to the VP Academic at vpa.gsa@ucalgary.ca. The VP Academic is committed to answering questions regarding this award when possible. **Questions that arrive less than 72 hours before the Intake Deadline may not be answered.**

Committee Approval Date: February 09, 2026

Elected Council Approval Date: February 10, 2026

Revised Date: February 10, 2026