



Graduate Students' Association Annual Award - 2026

Nomination Process, Terms of Reference, Awards & Awards Criteria

(reviewed and updated January 14, 2026)

Award finalists will be expected to attend the annual gala, that will be communicated at a future date. By applying to the below awards, you accept the expectation to attend the event if you are a finalist in the category.

Nomination Process

1. **Those awarded at a previous GSA Awards Gala, for one of the GSA Annual Awards as described below, are ineligible to be nominated.** A list of previous Award winners shall be maintained on the Association's [website](#).
2. Candidates can nominate themselves for an award **except for the advisory excellence category.**
3. The nomination period is from **January 26 to March 13, 2026.**
4. Applications will only be accepted in electronic form through [SurveyMonkey](#). Neither physical nor email applications will be considered.
5. **Applications must include:**
 - a. A cover page with the name of the award and contact information (email addresses) for the nominee, nominator(s) and all referees.
 - b. A nomination letter (maximum two (2) pages).
 - c. Two (2) reference letters (maximum two (2) pages each).
 - d. A maximum of three (3) pages of supporting documents, to provide further evidence of why the candidate is deserving of the award. Supporting documents cannot include further letters of reference. Examples include an updated CV (Maximum 5 pages), a teaching philosophy statement etc.
 - e. Letter of Enrolment (Except for Advising Excellence)
 - f. **REMARKS:** Depending on the application form and criteria, you need to upload some specific documents. Please check each category's criteria before submission. If you have any inquiries, please contact the VP-External Affairs at gsa.external@usask.ca



GSA Annual Awards Categories and Terms of Reference

1. Advising Excellence

The Award:

This award shall honour a graduate student advisor who has shown excellent supervisory and mentoring skills as well as exceptional support for their advisees' ideas, scholarly work, and financial needs. The honored advisor shall embody the capacity to stimulate graduate students to think critically and creatively, while enhancing their graduate student learning experience.

Eligibility:

A current University of Saskatchewan faculty member who is advising a graduate student enrolled in a graduate program at the University of Saskatchewan during the Fiscal Year of the Awards Gala to which they would be honoured at.

Who Can Nominate:

Nominations shall be accepted from any graduate student enrolled in a graduate program at the University of Saskatchewan or an alumni graduate student of the University of Saskatchewan.

Criteria:

Excellence in advising graduate students has many dimensions. Among the elements to be considered by the Selection Committee are:

- Positively impacting the academic success of students.
- Create opportunities for students to make the most of their educational journey.
- Engages proactively in professional development activities to contribute knowledge and improve the academic advising community's overall quality.
- Builds and strengthens connections with coworkers, faculty, staff, administrators, and other collaborators within the campus community.
- Improves the quality of advising and work-life through a positive demeanor.
- Readily accessible for students and colleagues.
- Identifies creative and innovative solutions to problems or challenges.
- Maintains a positive atmosphere in the research group.
- Commits to continuous training, feedback, and collaboration with supervisors/supervisees, colleagues, and campus partners to improve the quality of advising at the university.



2. Excellence in Community Service

The Award:

This award shall honor a graduate student who has made significant impacts and positive contributions to the local community in Saskatoon and beyond. This shall be awarded to a student who has shown extensive initiative and significant achievements in serving the community in addition to excelling in their academic studies. This shall be awarded to a student who has contributed a minimum of seventy-five (75) hours of volunteer work during the Fiscal Year of the Awards Gala to which they would be honoured at.

Eligibility:

Any graduate student enrolled, during the Fiscal Year of the Awards Gala, in a graduate program at the University of Saskatchewan.

Who Can Nominate:

Nominations shall be accepted from any graduate student enrolled in a graduate program at the University of Saskatchewan, any current faculty or staff member at the University of Saskatchewan or alumni of the University of Saskatchewan.

We encourage letters of reference for this category from community organizations in which the nominee has volunteered with.

Criteria:

Excellence in Community Service has many dimensions. Among the elements to be considered by the Selection Committee are:

- Engagement in on-campus activities and participation in student organizations and communities.
- Volunteering in community activities (Minimum 75 hrs of volunteer work during the previous year is required).
- Demonstration of leadership during service and taking initiatives.
- Academic performance, which should include GPA, publication record, artistic performances or other forms of demonstrating academic excellence.
- Promoting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion during community service. This may be represented as engaging in activities related to underserved communities/groups.



3. Mark Kroeker Exceptional Student Leadership

The Award:

This award honours a graduate student who has shown strong leadership and exceptional initiatives at the University of Saskatchewan, going above and beyond their call of duty, whilst carrying out the mission of the GSA. This student shall have shown outstanding involvement and collaboration with graduate students in their unit of study, as part of an Academic Council, or the GSA Council.

This award does not involve community service in the local community and places greater emphasis on leadership within the University campus. Candidates should show readiness to take charge, and an apt for creating new initiatives, and opportunities for their graduate student peers.

Eligibility:

Any graduate student enrolled during the Fiscal Year of the Awards Gala, in a graduate program at the University of Saskatchewan.

Who Can Nominate:

Nominations shall be accepted from any graduate student enrolled in a graduate program at the University of Saskatchewan, any current faculty or staff member at the University of Saskatchewan or alumni of the University of Saskatchewan.

Criteria:

Excellence in Mark Kroeker Exceptional Student Leadership has many dimensions. Among the elements to be considered by the Selection Committee are:

- Demonstration of leadership and engagement in on-campus activities.
- Being accessible and responsible to the student's community and seeking to address their concerns.
- Academic performance, which should include GPA, publication record, artistic performances or other forms of demonstrating academic excellence.
- Promote collaboration among students and employees, which may include efforts to unite students across different departments, disciplines, or interest groups.
- Taking new initiatives within the university that can be in the form of the development of projects, programs, or activities that have a positively impact on the graduate student community.



4. Professional Excellence

The Award:

This award shall honour a non-thesis-based graduate student who has made significant academic achievements in their field of study and who has made outstanding non-academic contributions to their department of studies. The awarded graduate student shall be a favorable member exemplifying scholarly achievements and community involvement.

Eligibility:

Any graduate student enrolled, during the Fiscal Year of the Awards Gala, in a course-based and/or project-based graduate program at the University of Saskatchewan.

Who Can Nominate:

Nominations shall be accepted from any current University of Saskatchewan faculty member. Self-nomination is also accepted.

Criteria:

Excellence in the profession has many dimensions. Among the elements to be considered by the Selection Committee are:

- Demonstrates exceptional academic performance in coursework and examinations.
- Engages in research activities, projects, or internships that demonstrate a commitment to the application of academic concepts.
- Shows innovation and creativity in utilizing academic knowledge beyond the classroom.
- Actively participates in departmental activities, events, or committees.
- Collaborates with peers and faculty members to enhance the academic and social environment within the department.
- Demonstrates leadership and initiative in organizing or participating in non-academic initiatives.
- Engages in community service, outreach, or volunteer work that positively impacts the local community or society at large.
- Acts as a positive ambassador for the academic institution, fostering positive relationships between the university and the community.
- Displays professionalism, integrity, and ethical behavior in academic and non-academic settings.
- Demonstrates dedication to personal growth and a commitment to lifelong learning.



5. Research Excellence in Humanities, Arts, Social Science, Law or Education

The Award:

This award shall honor a graduate student who has made significant impacts in the field of humanities, arts, social sciences, law or education and who has produced outstanding research results throughout their course of study. The awarded graduate student shall be a favorable member in the research community, shall exemplify scholarly achievements and shall have contributed to positive collaborations amongst researchers and the community.

Eligibility:

Any graduate student enrolled, during the Fiscal Year of the Awards Gala, in a thesis-based graduate program at the University of Saskatchewan.

Who Can Nominate:

Nominations shall be accepted from any current University of Saskatchewan faculty member. Self-nomination is also accepted.

Criteria:

Research Excellence in Humanities, Arts, Social Science, Law or Education has many dimensions. Among the elements to be considered by the Selection Committee are:

- Demonstration and engagement in on-campus or off-campus activities related to personal and peer research dissemination. Such as volunteering as a peer reviewer, GSA conferences, and other activities.
- Academic performance which includes GPA, internal and external scholarships, awards, merit or other forms of demonstrated academic excellence (grants and funding).
- Demonstration and engagement in the peer-review process and the publication of peer-reviewed articles, book chapters or scholarly monographs.
- Demonstration and engagement in non-peer-reviewed publication opportunities. Such as conference papers, book of abstracts, technical papers, etc.



6. Research Excellence in Indigenous Studies

The Award:

This award shall honor an Indigenous graduate student who has made significant impacts in Indigenous study and research while positively contributing to the Indigenous community. The awarded graduate student shall be held in high regard by the Indigenous and research community, shall exemplify scholarly achievements, and shall have participated in positive collaboration between researchers and the Indigenous community.

Eligibility:

An Indigenous graduate student enrolled, during the Fiscal Year of the Awards Gala, in a thesis-based graduate program at the University of Saskatchewan.

Who Can Nominate:

Nominations shall be accepted from any current University of Saskatchewan faculty member. Self-nomination is also accepted.

Criteria:

Research Excellence in Indigenous Studies has many dimensions. Among the elements to be considered by the Selection Committee are:

- The research addresses a significant issue or gap in Indigenous Studies, contributing new insights or perspectives.
- The research demonstrates a high level of cultural competence, respecting Indigenous perspectives and involving community collaboration appropriately.
- The research has clear, positive impacts on Indigenous communities, contributing to their well-being and empowerment.



7. Research Excellence in Interdisciplinary Studies

The Award:

This award shall honor a graduate student who has made significant impacts in two or more separate, but related, fields of study and who has produced outstanding research results throughout their course of study. The awarded graduate student shall be a favourable member in the research community, shall exemplify scholarly achievements and shall have contributed to positive collaborations amongst researchers and the community.

Eligibility:

Any graduate student enrolled, during the Fiscal Year of the Awards Gala, in a thesis-based graduate program at the University of Saskatchewan.

Please note the graduate student does not have to be enrolled in Interdisciplinary Studies to be considered for this award.

Who Can Nominate:

Nominations shall be accepted from any current University of Saskatchewan faculty member. Self-nomination is also accepted.

Criteria:

Research Excellence in Interdisciplinary Studies has many dimensions. Among the elements to be considered by the Selection Committee are:

- Demonstration of the nominee's ability in interdisciplinary studies. This can be scored by the extent to which the nominee has effectively integrated two or more separate but related fields of study in their research. It includes the novelty and creativity in combining different disciplines.
- Significance and impact of the nominee's research results. This includes contributions to academic knowledge and potential applications.
- Academic performance, which should include GPA, publication record, artistic performances or other forms of demonstrating academic excellence.
- Demonstration of the ability to collaborate effectively with other researchers and members of the community and forming research partnerships.
- Awards, scholarships, and recognitions received by the nominee.
- Communication of the outcomes of the research effectively to both academic and non-academic audiences.



8. Research Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM)

- 8.1. **STEM Medical Science and Public Health** (examples include but are not limited to, Human Medicine, Nursing, Public Health, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, etc.)
- 8.2. **STEM Natural Sciences** (examples include but are not limited to, Chemistry, Biology, Math, Agriculture, Physics, Ecology, Geology, etc.)
- 8.3. **STEM Technology and Engineering** (examples include but are not limited to, Computer Science, Chemical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, etc.).

The Award:

These awards shall honour graduate students who have made significant impacts in the field of science, technology, engineering or math and who have produced outstanding research results throughout their course of study.

The awarded graduate students shall be favorable members of the research community, shall exemplify scholarly achievements and shall have contributed to positive collaborations amongst researchers and the community.

Eligibility:

Any graduate student enrolled, during the Fiscal Year of the Awards Gala, in a thesis-based graduate program at the University of Saskatchewan.

Who Can Nominate:

Nominations shall be accepted from any current University of Saskatchewan faculty member. Self-nomination is also accepted.

**Criteria:**

Research Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) has many dimensions. Among the elements to be considered by the Selection Committee are:

- The significance of the nominee's contributions to their specific field of study. Consider the impact of their research on advancing scientific or technical knowledge in the respective field.
- Demonstration of innovation and creativity in research. It includes the development of new technologies, methods, or theoretical frameworks.
- Awards, scholarships, and recognitions received by the nominee.
- Academic performance, which should include GPA, publication record, artistic performances or other forms of demonstrating academic excellence.
- Demonstration of the ability to collaborate effectively with other researchers and members of the community and forming research partnerships.
- Participation in student groups and organization and demonstration of leadership skills.
- Communication of the outcomes of the research effectively to both academic and non-academic audiences.

***(In addition to the above criteria, the following criteria will be considered for STEM Medical Science and Public Health)**

- Student's involvement in community service, relevant conferences, workshops, seminars, health advocacy initiatives or public health campaigns.
- Consider experiences in public speaking, patient education, or interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Evaluate the integration of interdisciplinary perspectives in addressing health-related challenges.
- Student's commitment to continuing education and staying updated on advancements in medicine and public health.