

Government of Canada launches pilot initiative to further support Indigenous master's students

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Removing barriers to postsecondary education is integral to having a representative and diverse research community in Canada. To advance Indigenous training and build Indigenous research capacity in Canada, support for First Nations, Inuit and Métis students is key.

Today, the Honourable François-Phillipe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, announced the launch of the [Indigenous Scholars Awards and Supplements Pilot Initiative](#) to provide financial support to Indigenous master's students in social science, humanities, natural science, and engineering programs. Qualifying Indigenous applicants will receive a \$17,500 award as well as a \$5,000 supplement as part of the current Canada Graduate Scholarships—Master's program offered by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC).

The pilot initiative was developed in response to the government's commitment to strengthen Indigenous research capacity and provide dedicated funding to support promising graduate students, foster the mentorship of young researchers, and increase opportunities for Indigenous Peoples in Canadian postsecondary institutions. Through its "[Setting new directions to support Indigenous research and research training in Canada](#)" strategic plan, co-developed with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples, the Canada Research Coordinating Committee made it a priority to create new funding opportunities, tools and resources, and streamlined administrative processes for Indigenous students.

This launch follows sustained engagement and discussion with national-level Indigenous organizations, Indigenous advisory bodies at the federal research funding agencies, as well as Indigenous students, professors and university administrators across the country with expertise in providing support to Indigenous students.

NSERC and SSHRC are committed to upholding the values of equity, diversity and inclusion. Both agencies hope this additional funding will encourage more Indigenous students to enroll in master's level studies and pursue research in the social sciences and humanities or in the natural sciences and engineering.

Quotes

"A diverse, inclusive and equitable research community is critical for Canada to reach its full potential. That means providing support to help lift barriers holding back Indigenous students. Increasing the accessibility to higher education for First Nations, Inuit and Métis students will increase the impact of research and lead to better science and a better Canada."

– The Honourable François Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry

"Every great advancement in science and engineering is achieved through the pursuit of new knowledge and inclusion of new perspectives. NSERC is committed to supporting and strengthening research training experiences for Indigenous students to develop their skills and talent in science, technology, engineering or mathematics. Today's funding creates opportunities for First Nations, Inuit

and Métis students that will strengthen the capabilities of the next generation of research leaders and enhance the quality of discovery and innovation in Canada."

—Alejandro Adem, President, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council

"Strengthening Indigenous research capacity and actively working toward reconciliation are top priorities for SSHRC, as is investing in social sciences and humanities research training and talent development. Through this pilot initiative, the agency is taking steps to bridge the gap in access to postsecondary education and funding for First Nations, Inuit and Métis students and to build an inclusive postsecondary research system and culture in Canada."

—Ted Hewitt, President, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

Quick facts

- Strengthening Indigenous research capacity is among the formal priorities of the Canada Research Coordinating Committee, whose mandate is to advance federal research priorities and coordinate the policies and programs of Canada's research funding agencies and the Canada Foundation for Innovation.
- The pilot initiative is open to all qualifying First Nations, Inuit and Métis students conducting research in social sciences and humanities or natural sciences and engineering.
- The newly announced Indigenous Scholars Awards and Supplements Pilot Initiative relates to the current competition of NSERC and SSHRC's Canada Graduate Scholarships—Master's program and will top up support for those slated to receive the scholarships as well as provide new additional support for meritorious Indigenous scholars.
- The \$5,000 supplements offer flexibility to Indigenous students, who can use the funds for travel to northern and remote communities, honoraria for Elders, childcare, eldercare and more.

Associated links

- [Indigenous Scholars Awards and Supplements Pilot Initiative funding opportunity description](#)
- [Canada Graduate Scholarship—Master's program](#)
- [SSHRC's Indigenous Research page](#)

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