



CAGS ACES

Canadian Association
for Graduate Studies

Association canadienne
pour les études supérieures

2025 CAGS Award for Excellence and Innovation in Enhancing the Graduate Student Experience (GSE Award)

Call for Nominations

Purpose

The purpose of the Graduate Student Experience Award is to recognize and reward programmatic excellence in enhancing the experience of graduate students from recruitment through degree completion.

An innovative graduate school holds the potential to make a transformative impact on the lives of its students. In addition to granting degrees, modern graduate schools are responsible for providing a supportive, accessible, and inclusive learning environment, and for fostering creativity and research excellence at the highest levels. Graduate schools that embrace new methods and approaches to learning will empower students to reimagine our world, now and into the future.

Eligibility Guidelines

- The application must be submitted by a graduate school that is a member of CAGS.
- The GSE Award focuses specifically on co-curricular or administrative innovations and excellence. Applications may relate to any facet of the graduate education process, including programs and initiatives that address accessibility, financial issues, physical and mental health, inclusion, prejudice and violence.
- CAGS will accept only one application from each member institution. The internal selection process at each institution is the responsibility of the Graduate School Dean or comparable official.





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Judging Criteria

Application packages will be reviewed by an adjudication committee comprised of 5-7 senior administrators. The committee will be managed by the CAGS National Office under the direction of the Awards and Prizes Committee.

Each application package will be judged according to the following criteria:

- Excellence
- Innovation
- Impact

Application Instructions

All application packages for the 2025 Graduate Student Experience Award must include:

- An application letter from the Graduate School Dean or comparable official. The letter should describe the program or initiative being nominated and explain in broad terms the innovation(s) that it makes to graduate education;
- Comments on the internal process used to select the program or initiative are also encouraged;
- A word document (500–1500 words) or short video that showcases the program or initiative being nominated. The document or video should describe all pertinent innovation(s) in graduate programming and provide information about challenges and successes that have been encountered;
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to include relevant data and performance metrics in their document or video.
- Applicants may include additional documentation in their packages, including but not limited to:
 - i. Testimonials from current and former students;
 - ii. Publicity materials related to the program or initiative being nominated;
 - iii. Websites; videos; photographs; local media coverage; social media campaigns, etc.

Prize

The 2025 GSE Award includes an official certificate of recognition and a complementary registration for one individual to attend the 63rd Annual CAGS Conference in November 2025 (Ottawa). The winning program or initiative will also be offered an opportunity to conduct a workshop at the annual conference.

Submission

CAGS is accepting nomination packages for the 2025 Graduate Student Experience Award during the period 1 June – 31 August 2025. Complete nomination packages must be submitted electronically in a single file with materials ordered as listed above to awards.prix@cags.ca no later than 4:00 PM (ET) on 31 August 2025. Please include “CAGS/ACES GSE Award” in the subject line.

