

Application Guide and Frequently Asked Questions

Fall 2019

Thank you for your interest in the UBC Sustainability Scholars program. This document outlines important program information, eligibility criteria, and the application procedure. Many people find the answers to frequently asked questions helpful. Please review the information outlined below before applying.

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UBC SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

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Program Information

The UBC Sustainability Scholars Program is open to all **full-time graduate** students (including JD students) currently enrolled at UBC.

The fall Sustainability Scholars Program runs for **21 weeks from October 21, 2019 to March 15, 2020**. Project work is part time for a total of **250 hours** (please read the project description for exceptions to the number of hours). Scholars receive **\$21 per hour** up to a maximum of **\$5250** for a 250-hour project.

The successful candidate commits to:

- Attend a program orientation session within a week of your start date.
- Work the specified number of project hours (part-time*) between the dates specified on the project description.
- Develop a Project Plan (template will be provided) outlining the tasks to be undertaken, including a list of objectives to be achieved and associated deliverables. The Project Plan is developed in consultation with the successful candidate's mentor from the supervising organization and is due to the UBC Sustainability Scholars Program Manager within two weeks of the project start date.
- Complete the agreed upon deliverables by the project end date specified in the project description.
- Participate in any mandatory workshops, including the end-of-program presentation event(s).
- Complete an exit survey to help us improve the program for the next incoming student cohort.

Successful candidates will be provided with an orientation package outlining further details of the program once they are hired.

*Successful candidates will work directly with their project mentor to determine an appropriate work schedule, including any balance of on- and off-site work hours. Please take note of the time commitment section of the individual project descriptions, which provide an indication of the balance of on- and off-site hours (where applicable) and any preferred work schedules put forward by the supervising organization.

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Application Procedure

The online application form will ask the following:

1. Provide your contact information and UBC graduate program details.
2. Review and affirm that you meet the Eligibility Criteria (outlined below).
3. Upload a file containing your cover letter, resume, and the contact information for two references for each position you are applying to.
 - Your resume, cover letter and references must be **saved together in one PDF file** in the format: **Project number_Last name_First name.pdf** (e.g., 2019-70_Smith_Jenny.pdf). You can find the project number listed on the Scholars Opportunities web page and in the file name of the pdf version of the job posting.
 - Your cover letter should identify the position you are interested in, and how your background, skills, and experience align with the project objectives and the requirements of the position (maximum one page formatted as a letter addressed to the USI Program Manager).
 - Provide the name and contact details of at least two references—one academic, one professional.
4. You may apply for **up to three positions**. Each position requires a separate cover letter, resume, and list of references saved together in one PDF file. **You may use the same references for each project.**
5. Details about the application deadline are posted on the website.
6. **NOTE:** If the posting asks for a writing sample, please do not submit it with your resume, instead take it with you to the interview.
7. **NOTE:** If you are not shortlisted for one of the three projects and would like to be considered for other projects, you have the option of identifying three more projects you feel best qualified to complete. You will not need to provide a resume or other application materials for these positions at this time.

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IMPORTANT: Program Eligibility

Applicants to the Sustainability Scholars Program must meet the following conditions in order to participate in the Program. Please review the list below to confirm your eligibility:

- 1) **ENROLLMENT:** Must be a full-time UBC graduate student (i.e., you must be registered as full-time in the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies).
- 2) **ACADEMIC STANDING:** Be in good academic standing, and not on academic probation.
- 3) **GRADUATION:** A student is no longer considered a student after his/her convocation date. Students who graduate before May 2020 are not eligible.
- 4) **AWARDS/FUNDING:** Most funding agencies have clearly defined policies regarding additional funding for award recipients. This can include restrictions on the number of hours students can spend on work unrelated to their research. It is the award recipient's responsibility to comply with the rules and regulation of their award/s. Before applying, please confirm your eligibility to work the required hours by checking the guidelines of any graduate student funding you hold.
- 5) **SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER:** All students, including international students, must have a SIN before they can be paid by UBC. Successful candidates are responsible for ensuring they have a valid SIN prior to the commencement of the internship period.
- 6) **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:** In addition to the above, international students must hold a valid student visa in order to work at UBC. Successful candidates are also responsible for ensuring they have a valid student visa for the duration of the internship.
- 7) Students employed as scholars cannot hold full-time employment elsewhere (read the FAQ below for more information about restrictions on concurrent employment).

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is an academic referee, and what is a professional referee?

A: An academic referee could be your supervisor, or another member of your faculty who knows you well and would be able to comment on your academic ability and perhaps personal attributes as well. A professional referee is typically a previous employer for whom you have worked, or someone who supervised your work in some way (this could even be in a volunteer capacity).

Q: What if I don't have a professional referee?

A: Please list the referees that you do have, if you do not have both.

Q: Can my graduate supervisor be my professional referee? I am an international student and do not have any local work experience.

A: The categorisation of your referees can be at your discretion. In addition to your supervisor, if you have any international work experience that you would like to list a referee for, you are also welcome to do so.

Q: Can I submit my referees after the application deadline?

A: Yes. We only contact references if you are the preferred candidate and the mentor intends to hire you. If you are unable to finalise your referees by the application deadline, please bring them with you to the interview.

Q: Do I need to provide two different references with each application?

A: No, you may provide the same referees each time.

Q: When you ask for a reference, do you want a reference letter?

A: If you already have a letter of reference, you are welcome to include it in your application, but you do not need to provide one. Applying to the Scholars Program is not like applying to a graduate program. We want references that we can contact by phone or by email to help determine if you are the right candidate for the job.

Q: Can I still apply if I have limited availability?

A: We expect you to commit to completing the required number of project hours during the Program term. As each Scholar will need to work around their various other commitments over the term, the work schedule of the successful candidates will be negotiated between each Scholar and their project mentor directly. In the application form there is a place where you can comment on particular limitations on your availability.

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- Q: I have restrictions on how many hours per week I can work due to scholarships and other funding source. What should I do when I apply?**
- A:** Please indicate your restrictions in your application. If your application is successful, you and your mentor will need to discuss your working hours in due course. Your availability might have an impact on the hiring decision; however, not disclosing relevant information can cause problems after you are selected as a Scholar.
- Q: Am I eligible to apply if I am an international student on a study permit that does not allow employment off campus?**
- A:** Yes, a current international graduate student with a valid study permit is eligible to apply. Because the student is hired by UBC to work with the partner organization on the specific project, it is considered employment on campus. If you don't have one yet, please be sure to get your social insurance number as soon as possible.
- Q: I have applied for a UBC graduate program, but have not yet been admitted. Am I eligible to apply?**
- A:** Scholar positions are only open to current UBC graduate (Master and PhD) students. You can apply once you are enrolled and have commenced your program.
- Q: Can I provide additional supporting documents in my application?**
- A:** You may provide additional documents electronically, however only a resume, cover letter, and list of references are required. Please ensure these are included in your application document (pdf). If you are contacted for an interview, you have the option of bringing additional documents with you.
- Q: I have been awarded a fellowship/funding which prohibits accepting other funding, am I still eligible?**
- A:** You will be paid \$21 per hour. You will need to contact your other funding source to confirm that this is acceptable.
- Q: Are there any requirements about minimum GPA?**
- A:** No. However, there are UBC HR rules around academic standing for student appointments. Potential candidates cannot be on academic probation.
- Q: What is the criteria for being a successful applicant?**
- A:** Applicant requirements vary depending on the needs of the project, but generally, we are looking for bright, articulate students who can bring their education, experience, research, and writing skills to the work at hand.

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Q: One of the requirements to be eligible for the program is to be in good academic standing. In that sense, do you want the applicants to include in their resume a summary of their grades, or would you check this information afterwards?

A: A student's Academic Standing is only a concern with respect to our Scholars Program if their standing has been changed to *On Academic Probation* or *Failed*—the student is ineligible due to UBC HR rules. You do not need to include your grades on your application.

Q: Are there any online resources or documents to help me learn about the program?

A: The best way to get a sense of the program is to have a look in the [Projects Library](#). There you will see the array of sustainability projects that students have worked on in the past.

Q: I am a law student, am I eligible to apply to the program?

A: Yes, students doing J.D. (Juris Doctor) studies are welcome to apply to the program.

Q: Who should I address my cover letter to?

A: Please address your cover letter to the UBC Sustainability Scholars Program Manager.

Q: Can I use my project to meet my academic internship requirements?

A: If you are the successful candidate for a Scholars position, your primary obligation is to meet the expectations of the project as outlined by your mentor. If you choose to do more work outside the scope of the project and the hours assigned to it in order to meet course requirements, that would be your choice, but any additional work must not affect the core project requirements in any way. In other words, your course requirements should not drive the project requirements or outcomes.

The UBC Sustainability Scholars program does not directly support students to meet their academic internship requirements, although many former participants in the program have been able to use their project to meet their internship requirements. Unfortunately, we cannot confirm in advance that you would be able to meet your academic requirements through participation in the program.

Q: Can I be employed elsewhere and work as a Scholar at the same time?

A: **If you are applying to the summer program:** Students in *full-time* jobs are not eligible to participate in the program; however, you are welcome to hold a part-time job that doesn't interfere with your ability to participate in the program during standard business hours. Most of the projects take 250 hours of part-time work to complete, which makes it possible to have other commitments such as taking a short vacation, writing your thesis, or working elsewhere part-time.

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Some projects require more hours to complete. Projects of 500 hours in duration are considered to be fulltime. Scholars working on these projects should avoid taking on other commitments.

If you also work part-time at UBC your total hours of work per week (part-time UBC job plus Scholars position) cannot exceed 40 hours per week during the summer, or average more than 12 hours per week during the academic term. Information about the number of project hours is listed in the project description.

If you are applying to the fall program: You may not hold another UBC appointment while also working as a Scholar. This is because Scholars are UBC employees and our policies restrict students from working more than an average of 12 hours per week during the academic term. Information about the number of project hours is listed in the project description.

More questions? Please email sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca

Link to project listings and application submission portal

<https://sustain.ubc.ca/teaching-applied-learning/ubc-sustainability-scholars-program>

Below are some links to useful resources to help you with your resume and cover letter (there are many more online). Some of these resources also provide information on preparing for your interview.

<https://students.ubc.ca/career/career-resources/resumes-cover-letters-curricula-vitae>

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/graduate-pathways-success>

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/cover-letter-cv-resume-templates-ubc-career-services>