

Application Guide: Summer 2020

Thank you for your interest in the UBC Sustainability Scholars Program. This document outlines important program information, eligibility criteria, and the application procedure. Please review the information outlined below before applying.

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

Program Information

About the Sustainability Scholars Program

The Sustainability Scholars Program is an innovative paid internship program offered through the [UBC Sustainability Initiative](#). We match UBC graduate students with on- and off-campus sustainability partners throughout the lower mainland to work on applied sustainability-related research projects.

Scholars work under the broad guidance of a mentor and are immersed in real world learning where they can apply their research skills and contribute to advancing the partner organization's sustainability goals. The program provides a unique educational experience for UBC graduate level students (including JD) from all academic disciplines.

The summer program runs for **15 weeks from May 4 to August 14, 2020**. Most projects can be completed on a part-time basis over **250 hours** (check the project description for exceptions). Scholars receive **\$5500** for a 250-hour project (a rate of \$22/hour).

Commitment

Successful candidates commit to:

- Attend a program orientation session on May 4.¹
- Work the specified number of project hours (part-time²) between the dates specified on the project description.
- Develop a Project Plan 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 using the supplied template.
- Complete the agreed upon deliverables by the specified project end date.
- Participate in any mandatory workshops, including the end-of-program presentation event(s).

¹ Students on exchange or with a pre-existing commitment may be excused from attending.

² Successful candidates will work directly with their project mentor to determine an appropriate work schedule, including the balance of on- and off-site work hours. Please take note of the time commitment section in the individual project descriptions, which provides details on the number of hours, the duration, and preferred work schedule.

- 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.

Application Procedure

The online application form will ask you the following:

1. Provide your contact information and UBC graduate program details.
2. Review and affirm that you meet the eligibility criteria (outlined in the next section).
3. Upload **one file** containing your cover letter, resume, and the contact information for two references **for each position** you are applying for.
 - Your cover letter, resume, and references **must be saved together in one PDF file** in the format: **Project number_First name_Last name.pdf** (e.g., 2020-02_Jenny_Smith.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).
 - Please keep your **resume** to under three pages. We prefer resumes, although CVs are acceptable as long as they are less than three pages.
 - Provide the name and contact details of at least **two references**—one academic, one professional.
4. You may apply for **up to three projects**. 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. 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 additional projects that you feel best qualified to complete. You will not need to provide a resume or other application materials unless requested.

Program Eligibility (this is important!)

To be eligible to participate in the Sustainability Scholars Program you must meet **ALL** of the following criteria:

1. Full-time UBC graduate student.
2. In good academic standing (not on academic probation).
3. Convocate/graduate May 2020 or later
4. Confirmed that you can work the required hours by checking the guidelines of any graduate student funding you hold.
5. Have a valid Social Insurance Number (SIN).
6. Have a student visa that is valid for the duration of the internship (if you're an international student).
7. Be available to perform your work during standard business hours Monday to Friday. (This mean you cannot hold full-time employment elsewhere and cannot be employed more than 0.5FTE in other positions at UBC).

List of Opportunities

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

Resources

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>

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 list of referees by the application deadline, please bring it 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: 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.

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 by the beginning of March.

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).

Q: **I have been awarded a fellowship/funding which prohibits accepting other funding, am I still eligible?**

A: You will be paid \$22 per hour (\$5500 for a 250-hour project). 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.

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 (as are those doing Masters level studies).

Q: Who should I address my cover letter to?

A: Please address your cover letter to the 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: 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, attending classes, or working elsewhere part-time.

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

Q: Where can I get assistance preparing my application?

A: UBC has many great resources available to grad students.

Information and samples of resumes and cover letters:

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

General career preparation information and workshops:

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

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