

Guidelines and Procedures for the StFX Outstanding Graduate Student Research Award

(Updated July 2025)

Overview

One StFX Outstanding Graduate Student Research award will be made available for the Faculty of Arts & Faculty of Science and one award for the Faculty of Education (up to two awards annually). The awards will consist of a certificate, a letter of commendation from the President of the University, and a cash prize of \$500.00. The awards are presented at Spring convocation. All nominees receive a letter of commendation signed by the President and mailed directly to them.

Award Criteria

Eligible students must have completed a thesis. The thesis should represent the highest level of scholarship and represent a significant contribution to fostering the understanding of current issues, problems, or interests in the field. The conclusions of the research should advance theory, knowledge, and/or professional practice. The scope of the research should be adequate for the problem or issue under consideration. The thesis should demonstrate a high calibre of writing.

Award Procedures

The thesis should be nominated by the faculty advisor with a letter of support from one other faculty member and an external evaluator. The faculty advisor should ensure that the Committee is supplied with (i) a summary (not to exceed 500 words) concerning the significance of the thesis, (ii) the Table of Contents, and (iii) a representative chapter from the thesis. External assessors of theses will be requested to indicate on their evaluations whether the thesis meets the criteria for the award.

Deadline

Nominations and supporting documentation will be received throughout the year, though they will be held for adjudication in advance of Spring convocation. Nominations of graduate students who are conferred degrees at Fall convocation will be adjudicated the following Spring.

The Associate VP Research and Graduate Studies must receive complete nomination packages no later than 15 April of each academic year.

Adjudication

Nominations will be considered by a committee of judges consisting of:

1. The Dean of the Faculty in which the student is a degree candidate.
2. The Associate VP Research and Graduate Studies, as chair of the Committee on Graduate Studies
3. One member from each Faculty offering graduate programs, selected by the Committee on Graduate Studies.

Guidelines for Adjudication

To be considered for an award, the thesis must normally be judged to be in the top 10% of recent theses in the field. The judges may solicit an additional external evaluation. The judges will have access to recent theses in the discipline should it be useful in arriving at a decision.

Judges will be encouraged to consider the following questions in reviewing the application:

1. Is this a significant contribution to the field (e.g., would the thesis rank in the top 10% of Masters theses you have examined)?
2. Is there reason to conclude that this thesis could be built upon either by the author or by future researchers? Does it hold long term potential for further systematic investigation?
3. Is the methodology and theory used appropriate and well applied?
4. Are the findings, conclusions, recommendations, or emergent questions both clear and significant to the field?
5. Does the thesis indicate mastery of the literature relevant to the topic?
6. Does the thesis demonstrate a high calibre of writing?

Award

The recommendation of the judges will be forwarded to the Committee on Graduate Studies for approval in time for Spring Convocation.

If possible, nominated candidates will be notified of the Committee's decisions prior to Spring Convocation.

Announcement of the awards will be made at Spring Convocation.

