

## UBC Public Scholars Initiative for Doctoral Students

In recognition of doctoral students' tremendous capacity for and motivation to make innovative and positive contributions to the public good through their scholarly work, UBC Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (G+PS) is excited to announce a new support and funding initiative geared to support 'Public Scholars' at the doctoral level.

PhD graduates are entering a wider range of careers than ever. The scholarship many can or will pursue requires breadth of understanding, insight, attributes, and competencies in areas beyond those relevant to the academic sector. While intensive scholarship is the cornerstone of doctoral education, there is an increasing recognition that such scholarship can be more broadly defined than it has been traditionally. We believe there is a critical role for doctoral education in fostering the ability of tomorrow's leaders and innovators to make positive social contributions through outstanding scholarship in a multitude of contexts.

This initiative builds on the ongoing conversation at UBC and elsewhere on reimagining the PhD, and was developed by a 28-member cross-university advisory committee.

### What is a 'Public Scholar'?

We wish to define 'public scholar' broadly, to capture the breadth of scholarship possible at the doctoral level. Public scholars may be said to engage in scholarship that entails *mutually beneficial partnerships of university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to contribute to the public good through: enriching knowledge, scholarship, creative activity, intellectual curiosity, and wonder; enhancing curriculum, teaching and learning; preparing educated, engaged citizens; and/or addressing and helping solve critical problems.*

Examples of a publicly engaged scholarship in the context of dissertation research may include:

- Collaboration with a government office to carry out research in an area of mutual interest. A policy paper may be a chapter of the dissertation, as may communication material for specific audiences.
- Collaboration with a performing arts organization, gallery, museum, archive, library or literary magazine in the preparation of a festival, exhibition or special issue. Artefacts from these activities, and their evaluation, could comprise part of the dissertation.
- Collaboration with a teaching faculty member (at UBC or elsewhere) to develop and implement course material in the student's area of study. A chapter of the dissertation could include a syllabus and student assessment results, with relevant scholarly background and reflection.
- Translation of basic research to a relevant external audience. This may involve development of intellectual property in an industrial context, or knowledge mobilization to the media, communities, or other groups standing to benefit from the research. The processes, methodologies, and end products of these activities, with their evaluation, could comprise part of the dissertation.

## What is the UBC Public Scholars initiative for doctoral students?

It is a pilot initiative intended to build connections, community, and capacity for PhD students who are interested in explicitly linking their doctoral work to an arena of public benefit and integrating broader and more career-relevant forms of scholarship into their doctoral education process. There are three main components of the initiative:

1. *Public Scholars Network.* We are seeking to germinate a network of students, faculty members and participants from a variety of disciplines and employment sectors to engage in dialogue, mentorship and collaboration on endeavours that use rigorous scholarship in non- or alternative academic settings. PhD students will benefit from interacting with like-minded others across disciplines and sectors and building networks of scholarly and professional contacts. Professional development opportunities will be offered to enhance understanding and competencies in publicly-engaged scholarship.
2. *Academic support for broad forms of scholarship.* Ideally, students' publicly-engaged scholarship will form an integral part of their PhD dissertations. Students may incorporate in their dissertations non-traditional products of scholarly work such as policy papers, business plans, teaching syllabi, and interactive websites. Support will be available to ensure students and supervisors understand and are able to navigate the standards of scholarly rigour for these kinds of work and to facilitate the appropriate supervision, assessment and examination of such work.
3. *Funding.* Up to \$10,000 per student is available to support innovative dissertation scholarship which the student would otherwise be unable to pursue. Funding can be used for:
  - Student stipend, if the student's current funding source would not allow the alternative project(s)
  - A research allowance
  - An allowance for professional development relevant to the scholarly work
  - A travel allowance for collaborative work

Funding is available for up to 50 students in 2015-16. Students may be eligible for renewal for a second year.

**Eligibility:** PhD students in years 1-5 (for both initial and second year of funding, if applicable)

### Requirements for all funded students:

- Submission of a report at the end of their first (and if applicable, second) year of funding
- Presentation of their work at a Network event

All students, faculty, and collaborators will be asked to complete a questionnaire at the end of their funding/involvement. Student dissertations and student completion and career outcomes will also be reviewed as part of the assessment of this pilot initiative.

### **Application process:**

Student applications must include the following information, for submission to Ms. Lisa Pountney ([lisa.pountney@ubc.ca](mailto:lisa.pountney@ubc.ca)) by **May 15, 2015**.

- Name, student number, contact information, PhD year, and program
- Student's statement of purpose (maximum 1 page)
- Student's CV (CCV)
- Research proposal, including summary of research to date if applicable (maximum 2 pages)
- Letter of support and engagement from supervisor. Please address student's capability to engage in the proposed work and your approach to supporting the student's goals relevant to the Public Scholar initiative.

For students requesting funding, please also include:

- Amount requested, proposed use of funds, and budget within funding period
- If stipend support is requested, please include:
  - Current funding, with source(s)
  - Indication of other scholarship applications made since start of PhD program
  - Explanation of why current stipend support is unavailable or insufficient
- If an external collaborator is involved: their name(s), organization, contact information, and a letter of support from them

Funding adjudication criteria will include:

- Student's past accomplishments and future promise. Breadth of interest and accomplishment will be important, as well as an indication of the student's fit with the proposed project.
- Quality of proposed scholarship. The following factors will be taken into account:
  - The work requires a high level of expertise in a discipline(s) and/or methodology
  - The goals are clearly defined, realistic, and identify important questions
  - Adequate preparation for and understanding of the subject is indicated
  - Appropriate methods are proposed to achieve the goals
  - Plans to document and disseminate the work are appropriate and effective
  - The work has significance and is likely to contribute positively to the public good
- Need for alternative funding sources.
- Consideration will also be given to breadth of the initiative across disciplines.

**Applicants will be notified of the results of the adjudication by the second half of June.**

For questions about this process or initiative, please contact Dr. Jenny Phelps ([jenny.phelps@ubc.ca](mailto:jenny.phelps@ubc.ca))