



SGS Award Announcement

To: Graduate Chairs/Directors; Graduate Coordinators; Graduate Administrators
From: Graduate Awards Office
CC: Joshua Barker, Dean, School of Graduate Studies and Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education; John Peever, Vice-Dean, Students; Laura Stathopoulos, Director, Graduate Awards and Financial Aid
Date: February 3, 2025
Re: **2024-25 Governor General's Gold Medals, Dimitris N. Chorafas Prize, CGS/ProQuest DDA, and 2026 NAGS Thesis & Dissertation Awards**

When communicating this announcement to students, please include information specific to your graduate unit's internal competition (e.g., internal deadline(s), contact information for the submission of the applications).

Award Overview

Graduate Unit's Nomination Deadline to SGS:	April 11, 2025
Level of Study:	Master's or Doctoral
Required Legal Status:	Domestic or International
Results:	Late-May 2025
SGS Awards Webpage	SGS GG Gold Medal webpage

Purpose

The [Office of the Governor General](#) annually awards Gold Academic Medals to students who achieve the highest academic standing at the graduate level. Three (3) gold medals are available at the University of Toronto.

The assessment of highest academic standing includes an examination of the following:

- Academic performance in degree courses (first class average);
- Evaluation of the thesis and the thesis defense; and
- Originality and significance of the research.

One medal will be awarded to a candidate from Division I or II; one medal will be awarded to a candidate from Division III or IV; the third medal will be awarded to an outstanding candidate from any division. Recipients will receive a Gold Academic Medal and personalized certificate signed by the Governor General of Canada. [Read about past winners.](#)

REMINDER: All nominees for the GG Gold Medals will automatically be assessed for eligibility by the Graduate Awards Office, with recipients/nominees also being selected by the SGS Awards Committee for the following awards:

- [Chorafas Prize](#) – two \$10,000 USD to graduating doctoral students, age 32 or under, whose research benefits humanity in the following areas: Life Sciences & Medicine, Physics, Chemistry (incl. nanotechnology), Mathematics, Informatics/Computer Science, and Engineering of Finance & Risk

Management. The Chorafas Foundation confirms eligibility of the University's selected nominees and issues the awards each year.

- [CGS/ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Awards](#) – two nominees to the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) for two \$2,000 prizes for doctoral dissertations that represent original work and make an unusually significant contribution to the fields of biological sciences and/or life sciences (1 nominee), and humanities and/or fine arts (1 nominee). Fields of study awarded rotate every other year.
- [NAGS Master's Thesis and Doctoral Dissertation Awards](#) – two nominees to the [Northeastern Association of Graduate Schools \(NAGS\)](#) for a \$1,000 prize each for an outstanding master's thesis (Physical Sciences, Mathematics, & Engineering field for Jan. 2026 submission to NAGS) and a doctoral dissertation (Agricultural, Biological & Health Sciences field for Jan. 2026 submission to NAGS). Fields of study awarded rotate every year, with any discipline category recurring every fifth year within its degree level.

Eligibility

Candidates must:

- Have achieved the highest academic standing at the graduate level
- Have graduated or will graduate at one of the following convocations:
 - November 2024
 - March 2025 (in absentia)
 - June 2025

Note: Students must submit their final thesis by April 11, 2025 to be eligible to graduate at the June Convocation.

Nomination Process

Each graduate unit is invited to nominate their top student or recent graduate, either at the master's (course based or research stream) or doctoral level (i.e., 1 nomination per graduate unit). All nominees will automatically be assessed for eligibility for the other awards listed above.

- To encourage eligible nominees for the **Chorafas Prize**, if the unit's top GG Gold Medal nominee is older than 32 years (i.e., born before May 31, 1993), graduate units in Life Sciences & Medicine, Physics, Chemistry (incl. nanotechnology), Mathematics, Informatics/Computer Science, and Engineering of Finance & Risk Management may submit one (1) additional nominee to be considered for the Chorafas Prize only.
- To encourage eligible nominees for the **NAGS Master's Thesis Award**, if the unit's top GG Gold Medal nominee is a doctoral student, graduate units in Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering may submit one (1) additional nominee with a master's thesis for the NAGS Master's Thesis Award only.
- If a graduate unit wishes to nominate a dissertation for the **CGS/ProQuest or NAGS Doctoral Dissertation Awards** that was submitted to SGS prior to April 12, 2024, but is still within the window of eligibility for either of the awards, please contact the Graduate Awards Office directly to inquire.

Nomination Package

The complete nomination package will consist of one PDF file containing the following documents:

1. A nomination letter (on letterhead, signed and dated), preferably from the Department Chair or Graduate Coordinator, describing the reasons for the nomination and why the candidate should be recognized for their outstanding scholastic achievements. Using strong and positive language, this letter should focus on:
 - The nominee's outstanding level of achievement compared to other students in the same program, including information relevant to the field of study, degree or culture of the department (e.g.,

- publishing norms, degree requirements, grading practices at specific international universities, unusual accomplishments) that would otherwise not be known outside the field of study; and
 - Factors used to determine why the student is deserving of this award, clearly articulating the excellence of the work and how it makes an unusually significant contribution to the discipline.
2. Current graduate transcript(s) (ACORN/ROSI printouts are acceptable);
 3. Up-to-date Curriculum Vitae (no page limit), including professional background, publications, presentations, internships, and awards;

For research thesis/dissertation nominations (not required for course-based master's):

4. Two original letters of recommendation (signed and on letterhead) evaluating the quality of the research and describing how the dissertation represents original work which makes an unusually significant contribution to the discipline. It is recommended that these letters also communicate the nominee's outstanding level of achievement in research compared to other students in the same program or with whom the referee has encountered in the past. The letters are to be written by:
 - a. The nominee's thesis/dissertation advisor/supervisor;
 - b. A member of the nominee's thesis/dissertation committee;
5. A 300 word lay-abstract written by the candidate in non-technical language. Appendices containing non-textual material, such as charts or tables, are not required (committee members will not be reviewing the appended items);
6. A statement written by the candidate clearly addressing how the research represents original work that makes an unusually significant contribution to the discipline and, where applicable, benefits humanity (max. 1 page, single-spaced);
7. **For doctoral nominations only:** A copy of the external examiner's pre-defence report signed and dated by the examiner (or authenticated upon submission to SGS).

Results

SGS notifies nominees and graduate units of the university level results in mid-May. Chorafas confirms University nomination for awards in summer. CGS/ProQuest notifies winners in fall. NAGS notifies winners in March 2026.

Contacts & Resources

If you have questions about this competition, please refer to the [SGS Awards website](#) or contact:

Graduate Awards Office
School of Graduate Studies
graduate.awards@utoronto.ca