

SGS Award Announcement

To: Graduate Chairs/Directors; Graduate Coordinators; Graduate Administrators
From: Debbie Chau, Graduate Awards Officer, 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: September 12, 2023
Re: **2024 Adel S. Sedra Distinguished Graduate Award**

This announcement is for internal purposes only and should not be posted on websites external to the University.

Award Overview

Student Submission Deadline to SGS: **November 24, 2023 (4:30pm)**
Value/Duration: Up to \$25,000 for 1 year; finalists receive \$1,000 each
Level of Study: Doctoral – second or third year (see below)
Required Legal Status: Domestic or International
Results: Communicated in early-February

Purpose

In honour of the significant contributions made by Professor Adel S. Sedra, former U of T Vice President and Provost, the University of Toronto Alumni Association (UTAA) has established this award to recognize a doctoral student who demonstrates outstanding academic and extracurricular leadership.

Eligibility to Apply

Candidates across all divisions, including humanities, social sciences, and sciences, are warmly encouraged to apply. Please see UTAA's website for complete [eligibility requirements](#).

Applicants:

- Must be registered and in good standing in the second or third year of a doctoral program (third or fourth year of a direct-entry doctoral) at the University of Toronto, as of the student submission deadline date. The scholarship is not open to students who are pursuing a master's degree;
- Will have an outstanding academic record and be making exceptional progress in their doctoral program, as demonstrated by academic records, letters of recommendation, and other measures of scholarship according to their discipline;
- Should be involved in work that reflects a concerted effort to understand and respond to the changing intellectual landscape in their field of study; and
- Should have demonstrated a commitment during their doctoral program to enhancing the student experience of their peers through extracurricular leadership within the University and involvement in the life of the University. Of equal importance will be the candidates' commitment to community outreach and involvement, as demonstrated by extracurricular activities outside of the University and their discipline. Community outreach often relates to disciplinary background. Therefore, outreach not specifically related to one's research or

academic field is highly valued and should be emphasized in the application). *NOTE: Only achievements/contributions during the doctoral program will be considered.*

Application Process

Applicants must complete an [online Adel S. Sedra Distinguished Graduate Award application](#). Applications that are incomplete, ineligible or are submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Note:

- A Curriculum Vitae, Statement and transcripts are to be uploaded as a single PDF file to the online application.
- Supporting letters of recommendation are not submitted through the online application. Letters must be emailed by each referee as a PDF attachment directly to debbie.chau@utoronto.ca by the application deadline.

Application Package

A complete online application package will include all of the following items (please see [UTAA's website for complete requirements](#)):

1. Completed [online application form](#);
2. **Curriculum vitae** outlining academic achievements, scholarships and awards received, plus publications, work experience, and extracurricular involvement both inside and outside the University **in the following three categories**:
 - i. **Academic Performance** – scholarships & awards, contributions to research and development (e.g., publications, articles, book chapters, patents, presentations, creative outputs). Applicants should indicate their role in their most notable research contributions explaining the rationale or practice for any unusual ordering of authors. For multi-authored publications, use a percentage to approximate the portion of the contribution.
 - ii. **Leadership and Engagement within the University** (Departmental, Faculty, or University-wide)
 - iii. **Leadership and Engagement Outside of the University** (e.g., including volunteering or community work within and beyond the limits of the field of study)

Note:

- Only achievements/contributions during each applicant's doctoral program will be considered.
- Applicants are encouraged to provide details for two to three of their extracurricular activities on their CV to demonstrate commitment to enhancing the student experience through extracurricular leadership within the University, involvement in the life of the University, and community outreach/involvement outside the University during their doctoral program.

3. **Statement** of no more than 500 words about each applicant's future academic and career goals;
4. Scans of original or certified/validated copies of up-to-date **official transcripts** from master's and doctoral level studies. Direct-entry or "fast track" doctoral students must also supply original or certified/validated copies of their official undergraduate transcripts;

For U of T transcripts:

- Although official transcripts are preferred, ACORN academic histories (web "Print to PDF") are accepted for U of T transcripts only.

For transcripts external to U of T:

- Certification/validation of unofficial transcripts or web print-outs may be performed by the graduate unit. If the graduate unit is not able to certify/validate a transcript, it is each applicant's responsibility to obtain and provide within their application package a scan of an original official transcript that was issued by the appropriate institution.
- Official e-transcripts are acceptable, but any encryption may need to be removed before uploading or combining with other transcript files. Students may use freely available PDF software such as Adobe Acrobat Reader or their internet browser (e.g., Chrome) to "print to PDF" in order to create an unencrypted "copy" of the file, which remain acceptable.

- Grading legends must be provided with every transcript.
 - Transcripts should not be mailed to the Graduate Awards Office.
5. **Three or four supporting letters of recommendation** from the following list of people (please see UTAA's website for [complete requirements](#)). Letters must be emailed by each referee as a PDF attachment directly to debbie.chau@utoronto.ca by the application deadline:
- One (1) letter of recommendation from the thesis supervisor or supervisory committee member who can comment on the applicant's academic progress.
 - One (1) letter of recommendation from a "member of the teaching staff" from a faculty member or instructor of the applicant's graduate unit who can comment on the student's academic progress and/or involvement in university life.
 - Up to two (2) additional letters of recommendation that attest to the student's extracurricular leadership and community involvement.

Note:

- The letters should be sent from each referee's institutional email address (i.e., not a gmail address) with the subject title "Sedra 2024 Ref – APPLICANT LAST NAME" by the application deadline. Please use file naming convention of "Sedra 2024 Ref – APPLICANT LAST NAME" for the PDF attachments.
- Letters of recommendations should use strong positive language and measure the candidate in comparison to others in the same discipline and stage in their academic program. In addition, describe the applicant while providing information relevant to the field of study, degree or culture of the department (e.g., publishing norms, degree requirements, grading practises, unusual accomplishments, or special outreach activities) that would otherwise not be known outside the discipline. Referees are encouraged to speak about opportunities for service that is normal for the discipline, highlighting how the student has gone above and beyond the expected norms.
- Each letter should be on institutional letterhead, signed, and the name and contact information of each referee must be clearly stated.
- There is no particular formatting standard or page limit but each letter must be written specifically for the Sedra competition and should be addressed to the "SGS Adel S. Sedra Distinguished Graduate Award Committee".
- A letter of support signed by multiple individuals will count as one letter towards the total.
- Referees' letters must remain confidential and not be reviewed by applicants.

Results

All applicants will receive an email with their result via their U of T email address in early-February 2024.

The Sedra Scholar and the three next-highest ranked candidates will be honoured at the annual Awards of Excellence ceremony held each spring.

Contacts & Resources

[Visit the University of Toronto Alumni Association's website](#)

For questions about this competition, please contact:

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