



FUNDING YOUR DREAMS

How to do it and still stay sane



HI, I'M KAT LORD!

Vanier Scholar,
Doctoral Candidate
ID PhD Program

THE VALUE OF APPLYING FOR EXTERNAL FUNDING

- ❖ Helps organize your research ideas
- ❖ Helps you develop a research outline
- ❖ Helps you communicate to yourself and others the purpose of your work
- ❖ Provides a template for future grant-writing and thesis chapters
- ❖ Provides a synopsis of this particular moment in the chronology of your research which is invaluable for referring back to as your research develops

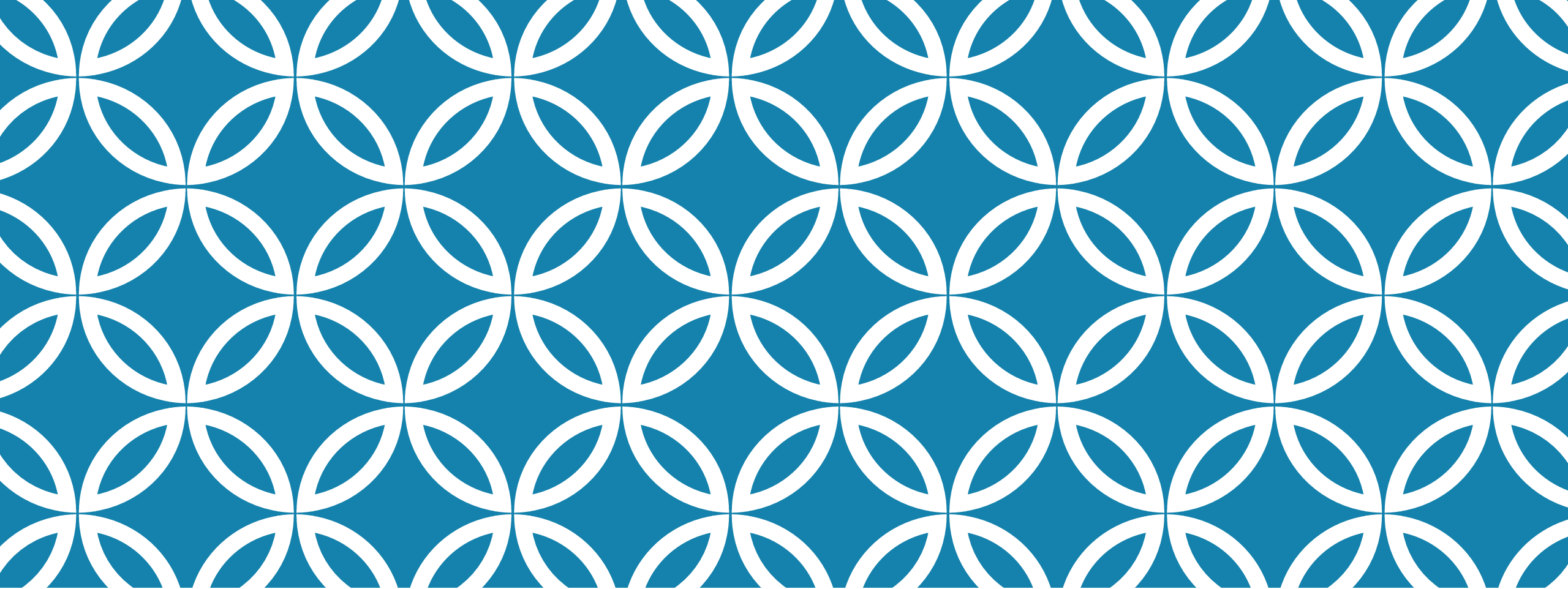
HOW TO APPLY FOR EXTERNAL FUNDING

(SOME GENERAL RULES)

- ❖ Start early
- ❖ Develop an editing process and team
- ❖ Ensure your reference letters are top-quality by selecting the right people to write them and/or providing letter ideas/templates for your referees
- ❖ Expect to be frustrated, self-doubting, and have mini meltdowns
- ❖ If applying to the tri-agency competitions DO NOT leave the Canadian Common CV to last minute – it is finicky and time-consuming to complete. Do it first. That will help you get ready for writing your application.

HOW TO MANAGE YOURSELF

- ❖ Remember academia is all about rejection, you need to learn to handle rejection without letting it rip you apart – welcome rejection during your application revisions
- ❖ There will be moments of self-doubt, continue to value and believe in your work so that is reflected in your application
- ❖ Work with who you are, not against it (i.e. if you work best at night – work at night, etc.)
- ❖ Give yourself time to actively get out of your head and take a break from your application – you must do this or you will end up too stressed to be useful to yourself



THE BIG BAD VANIER

How to ace it.

VANIER SCHOLARSHIP: AN OVERVIEW

Valued at \$50,000 per year for three years during doctoral studies

Considers three equally weighted evaluation criteria: [academic excellence](#), [research potential](#), and [leadership](#)

International students are [eligible](#)

Intricate and time-consuming [application process](#)

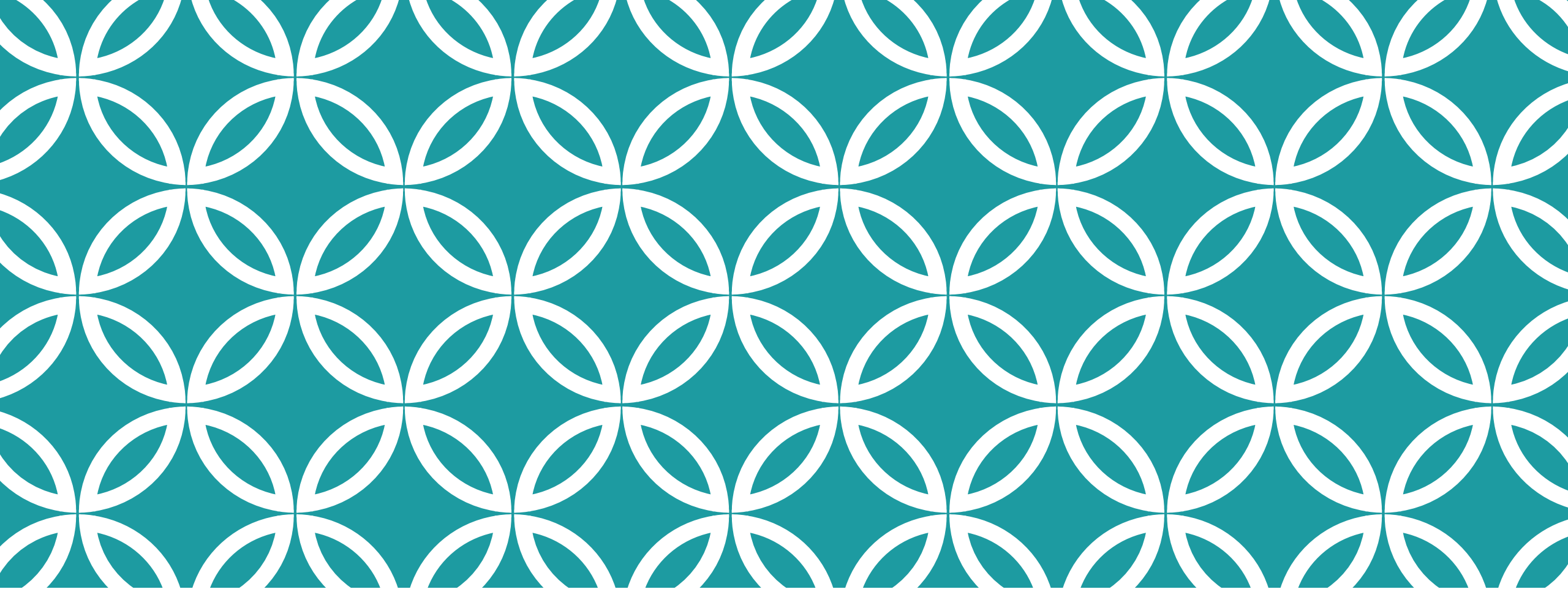
July – November

Applicants seek a nominating institution, prepare and submit application package.

Internal Deadline

Deadline to submit application to the nominating institution. Contact nominating institution for specific date.
(USUALLY IN LATE SEPTEMBER @ MUN)

November 4, 2015 (20:00 ET) Deadline for institutions to submit nominations to the Vanier CGS program.



THE VANIER APPLICATION

The nitty gritty of it all.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: MAKE IT RELEVANT

- ❖ The selection committee is not specialized in your particular field, and it will be made of diverse people with different priorities and interests. You need to show them that your work speaks to larger issues or themes.
- ❖ Look for issues or themes that are present or pressing in our national or international discourse
- ❖ Try connecting your particular research project to a particular theme
 - ❖ This also demonstrates your 'critical thinking, originality, and creativity' as you are not fulfilling the stereotype of the isolated researcher focused on minutiae
- ❖ Show how your research can either inform, change, or support this larger theme
- ❖ Chances are these larger themes are already connected to your research as they are likely the source of your passion for your research

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: WRITING PROCESS

1. Identify the large themes/ideas connected to your research. Read what other people are saying about them in the media (newspapers, think-tanks, magazines)
2. Generate ideas (try free-form writing, mind-mapping, speaking out loud to yourself)
3. Gather all the facts, quotes, sources that you might include in the proposal.
4. Write a short abstract summarizing your ideas.
5. Expand on your abstract. This should become a “Context & Literature Review” section. It should act as a compelling introduction to your research topic, as well as a concise (but comprehensive) overview of the work already done in the area and how that work effects/informs the larger issues/themes underpinning your particular research.
6. Follow with your “Research Questions & Methodology”. Be very specific and clear about your questions and methods. Do not ask question that are too broad or too demanding for you to realistically address within your research frame. Include a year-by-year timeline of what you plan to achieve. Your supervisor can help you with this.
7. Close your application with a short mention of your intended “Future Work” so the committee has a sense of your long-term goals for your work. This helps them realize you are (a) cognizant of research timelines and (b) committed to your research beyond its funding period.
 - i. Make sure you remember to show your are aware of the feasibility of your work – without eclipsing its potential significance

DESCRIPTION OF LEADERSHIP SKILLS

This is a VERY important component to the Vanier. You are expected to have an exceptional academic background, but you are really being judged on whether you have any substance beyond your intelligence and ability to jump through educational hoops. Ideally you will find it hard to cut this section down to a page, not to fill it.

- ❖ Begin by listing everything – EVERYTHING – that you have ever done that shows your leadership
- ❖ Identify what leadership positions/events/tasks you think represent you most positively
- ❖ Tell the story of each of those leadership moments; make sure you note what skills you learned from each moment.
- ❖ Although this is also a 'communication skills' section, I would focus on demonstrating your communication skills by not only telling a compelling narrative about your leadership development, but also showing how that leadership required you to have good communication skills AND if possible: **HOW IT CONNECTS TO YOUR CURRENT RESEARCH**
 - ❖ The committee wants to know that you can actually DO things as a leader, which is why they're asking about your communication abilities.

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

1. List EVERYTHING that you have ever done that qualifies as research
 - i. I included my undergraduate research projects and conference presentations as I didn't have any formal papers published to include, but I also included a rationale as to why I didn't have a publication record that was related to my research objectives.
2. Choose the strongest items on your list. Try and select something from each category (institutional, regional, national, international) if you can.
 - i. Everything you didn't choose goes somewhere in your Canadian Commons CV.
3. Concisely discuss its role, impact, and significance. Try and connect this to your current work.

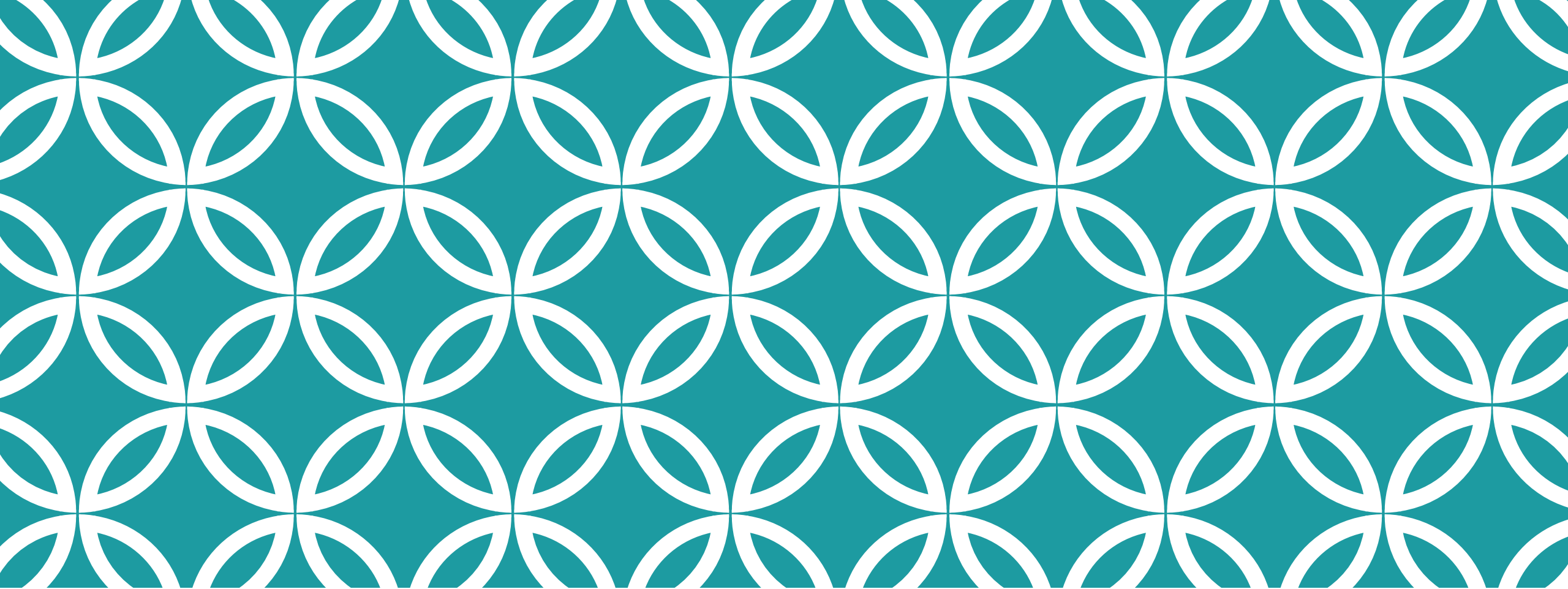
REMEMBER: Your research is a narrative. There is a beginning – that is your prior work – and you need to show how this connects to the middle – your current/anticipated research – and how this will lead to an end – your PhD.

PROJECT REFERENCES

- ❖ Fill the entire 5 pages if you can
- ❖ It doesn't matter if you haven't read everything yet – what matters is that you **KNOW** what to read/who to read and that you do/will have a strong theoretical/evidence-based foundation for your research.
- ❖ Get your supervisor to help you with this
- ❖ Kill two birds with one stone and make your reference list your comprehensive reading list and/or the methods section of your project proposal

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- ❖ Because I stayed at Memorial to do my PhD, having already completed a Masters here, I needed to explain my rationale for staying
- ❖ You might be in a similar situation, or you might have different circumstances to explain
- ❖ Either way, you need to provide a convincing and extensive explanation for those circumstances
- ❖ I used my special circumstances letter as a further opportunity to demonstrate the qualities the selection committee will be looking for: academic background, leadership skills, and research originality/creativity/feasibility, etc.



SOME FINAL WORDS

You can do it!

MISCELLANEOUS TIPS

- ❖ Make sure your referees have a full draft of your application to work with, plus all selection criteria requirements (this goes for your editors as well), well in advance of the deadline
- ❖ Make sure your leadership referee can write a strong letter for you – ideally this should expand on your biggest leadership story in your application letter
- ❖ Have a back-up referee for both categories. No one needs to know that you didn't use their letter. It's better to have an additional letter beyond the requirement so you have a fail-safe and also a choice if one letter seems weaker than another

MISCELLANEOUS TIPS

- ❖ Don't worry if you don't win – rework your application and apply to other competitions

Other funding sources:

- [MUN SGS Funding Database](#)
- [Government of Canada: Scholarships for Non-Canadians](#)
- [International Council for Canadian Studies Graduate Scholarships](#)
- [Trudeau Foundation Doctoral Scholarships](#)

- ❖ Never forget funding is like fishing – it has nothing to do with you, your research, or your worth as a human being if you don't reel a grant in – that doesn't mean you can't keep practicing your technique!

- ❖ GOOD LUCK!



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