



Dr. Alain Beaudet  
President  
Canadian Institutes of Health Research  
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March 15, 2011

Dear Dr. Beaudet,

In recent months, the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) has been in discussion with CIHR regarding two issues.

*Advancing  
Psychology  
for All*

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de la  
psychologie  
pour la  
collectivité*

The first issue has to do with the timing of CIHR's notice regarding Master's scholarships and awards, which at present is mid-July. This date is later than the date by which SSHRC and NSERC notify students. CIHR has informed the CPA that the timelines for the Doctoral Research Awards and Master's Awards review processes are slightly staggered because they use the same peer review committees for both, and have only sufficient internal resources to accommodate the current operational requirements.

The second issue has to do with the length of time Master's students can defer their awards. At this point in time, students are able to start their award in September or January following the notice of decision; Master's students can request to defer starting their award by a further 4 months until May. With respect to this policy, we understand that start dates of awards have a significant impact on CIHR's budgets, so any major changes in your policy would have to be examined further in the context of CIHR's operational planning.

CIHR has noted that they do not have evidence that these are widespread issues and have asked the CPA to provide any such data we may have. In response, the CPA posted a survey to its members in January of this year. Survey results are highlighted below.

With respect to the first issue – timing of CIHR's notice regarding Master's scholarships and awards – responses were as follows:

- 62% affirmed that the date by which CIHR notifies its award winners poses a problem in their department or at their university. For new graduate school applicants, this can delay starting their Masters by one year as funding increases the probability of getting accepted into a program. In addition, the notification date is often in conflict with universities' acceptance dates and offers of internal fellowships.
- 76% of respondents felt that CIHR should move its Master's award notification date so that it is consistent with the other funding agencies. Some respondents (both faculty and students) noted that students had difficulty getting accepted into a graduate program because they had not found out about their funding award until late July.

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With respect to the second issue – length of time Master's students can defer their award – responses were as follows:

- 41% of respondents indicated that the length of time students can defer their awards is a problem in their department or at their university. Respondents noted that students who are not accepted into a Masters program but do get funding from CIHR will not be able to use the funding to compete for the subsequent September entry spots.
- Although some respondents noted that deferring funding for 1 year should be reserved for exceptional circumstances only, 59% noted that CIHR should extend its Master's deferral period to the following September; these respondents noted that doing so would enable students to compete for a September entry spot in a Masters program.

Core funding of the Councils is not only essential to the advancement of knowledge but it also provides the platform within which all graduate student research takes place. Ensuring that Canada's emerging researchers are appropriately supported is fundamental to the advancement of scientific research and innovation.

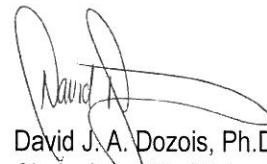
We ask that you consider the issues we have raised in this letter and work with the other tri-council funding agencies to streamline procedures to maintain consistency regarding notification dates and deferral policies.

CPA will continue to collect data regarding this matter and welcomes the opportunity to discuss the matter with you.

Sincerely,



Lisa Votta-Bleeker, Ph.D.  
Associate Executive Director  
Director, Science Directorate  
Canadian Psychological Association



David J.A. Dozois, Ph.D., C.Psych.  
Chair, Scientific Affairs Committee  
President-Elect  
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**About the Canadian Psychological Association**

*The Canadian Psychological Association's (CPA) was organized in 1939 to improve the health and welfare of all Canadians; to promote excellence and innovation in psychological research, education, and practice; to promote the advancement, development, dissemination, and application of psychological knowledge; and to provide high-quality services to members. For more information about CPA, please visit: [www.cpa.ca](http://www.cpa.ca). To speak to someone about this letter, please contact Dr. Karen Cohen, Executive Director or Dr. Lisa Votta-Bleeker, Associate Executive Director, CPA, at [executiveoffice@cpa.ca](mailto:executiveoffice@cpa.ca).*