

Jonathan & Joshua Memorial Graduate Scholarship in Mental Health Research

Criteria

Awarded annually to full-time graduate students in a Doctoral program at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry who are specializing in the neuroscience of mental health disorders and/or neurodegenerative disease. To be eligible, candidates must have at least one year remaining for the completion of their degree. Candidates must apply online by May 1. Applications are available through the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry Awards' application website. A committee within the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, with representation from a current member of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, will select the recipients, based on academic and research excellence. Recipients are eligible to reapply on an annual basis. This scholarship was established by Mr. Robert McKinnon along with many friends and relatives in memory of his sons Jonathan and Joshua (BA'04, Sociology).

Value: 4 at \$25,000 (dependent on availability of funding each year)

Effective: May 2019 - April 2024

Recipient Information for 2022-2023

Neil Donison

Ph.D. Neuroscience

Interdisciplinary Programs

\$25,000.00

Hayley Shanks

Ph.D. Neuroscience

Interdisciplinary Programs

\$25,000.00

Alice Zheng

Ph.D. Neuroscience

Interdisciplinary Programs

\$25,000.00

Esmine Unaran

Ph.D. Neuroscience

Interdisciplinary Programs

\$25,000.00



Western

Neil Donison

How has this award made a difference to you?

This award has made a significant difference, as it has helped support my ability to learn, progress towards my degree, and gain opportunities that may have not been otherwise available. Specifically, I have been able to travel to multiple international conferences, where I was able to present my work and develop as a researcher. In a more general sense, this award has helped support me as a student with respect to general living costs.

I have been able to commit extra time to extracurricular activities, including volunteering within the Neuroscience graduate program and being the President of the Concussion Legacy Foundation Canada-Western University chapter.



Describe how you felt in the moment you learned that you would be receiving an award.

Once I was notified that I had received the J & J Memorial Graduate Scholarship, I immediately was excited, honoured and humbled by the recognition. Receiving awards such as this, in which it was a competitive distinction, gave me a sense of pride of being recognized by my institution for the work I have done and the potential of my research.

What are your goals and plans after graduation?

At the current time, I plan on pursuing a career in academia, with an emphasis on research. Following graduation, I plan on completing a post-doctoral fellowship and eventually opening my own laboratory.

If you had the opportunity, what would you like to say to donors?

I would like express my deepest thanks and gratitude for the honour. Especially when receiving an honour which is connected with such a deep and personal cause, such as the J and J Memorial Fund, it is a humbling distinction. I will do my best to proudly represent the J and J Memorial Fund in the highest regard as I continue with my research.

Thank you for supporting student awards at Western.



Hayley Shanks

How has this award made a difference to you?

This scholarship has greatly increased my financial security. This has allowed me to focus fully on my research without the added stress of worrying about saving for rent payments and other expenses. This increased ability to focus on my work will be instrumental in my ability to complete my PhD project, which aims to investigate the longitudinal spread of Alzheimer's disease pathology in a very large ($n > 1000$) cohort of older adults.

Describe how you felt in the moment you learned that you would be receiving an award.

I was working at my computer and saw an email come in with the scholarship results. I was immediately nervous, but felt very excited once I saw I was awarded the scholarship. I felt very honored to be chosen!



What are your goals and plans after graduation?

Throughout my Masters and PhD research, I have become very interested in working with big data and learning new analytical techniques (advanced statistics, machine learning, etc.). Therefore, after I complete my PhD, I aim to work in data science. I would be particularly interested in data science jobs which have health or biomedical applications such as working with hospitals, universities or pharmaceutical companies.

If you had the opportunity, what would you like to say to donors?

I would like to sincerely thank donors for their generous support of graduate students like myself. Graduate school can be a very stressful time with the large academic workload, and the financial support from this scholarship has relieved my financial stress, allowing me to focus on my research.

Thank you for supporting student awards at Western.



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Alice Zheng

How has this award made a difference to you?

This award helped me feel more secure financially and allowed me more mental energy to pursue my research projects.

Describe how you felt in the moment you learned that you would be receiving an award.

I felt happy and relieved when I learned that I would be receiving this scholarship/award, and immediately shared the news with my family and PhD supervisor.



What are your goals and plans after graduation?

I plan to pursue clinical research.

If you had the opportunity, what would you like to say to donors?

Thank you so much for your generosity and I hope you know the positive impact that you are making on students who receive awards.

Thank you for supporting student awards at Western.

Jonathan & Joshua Memorial Graduate Travel Scholarship

Criteria

Awarded annually to a full-time graduate student in a master or doctoral program at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry specializing in mental health research, based on academic achievement and research merit. This scholarship will be used to support students attending scholarly conferences or meetings in order to present their research. Applications are available through the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry Awards' application website. A committee within the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, with representation from a current member of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, will select the recipient. This scholarship was established by Mr. Robert McKinnon (as well as many other family and friends) in memory of his sons Jonathan and Joshua.

Value: 1 at \$1,400

Recipient Information for 2022-2023

Matthew Jones

Ph.D. Neuroscience

Interdisciplinary Programs

\$1,400.00



Matthew Jones

How has this award made a difference to you?

I received a travel award of \$1,000, which helped pay some costs associated with attending the Society for Neuroscience 2022 conference in San Diego. This conference was an amazing experience, where I was able to connect with other researchers in the field and learn about their research. Further, I was able to present a group research project to other researchers, and received some helpful feedback.

This award allowed me to fully immerse myself in the Society for Neuroscience conference without having to worry about the financial side. This allowed a focus on research and learning and took away the stress of worrying about money.



Describe how you felt in the moment you learned that you would be receiving an award.

I was very happy to receive this award! I knew right away what it would go towards, and it was a pleasure to receive. I am very proud to have received the Jonathan and Joshua Memorial Travel Award.

What are your goals and plans after graduation?

I am not sure, but I would love to either continue in academia or pursue a career in the industry of pharmaceuticals.

If you had the opportunity, what would you like to say to donors?

Thank you so much!! This award was very generous and further facilitated my ability to attend the prestigious international conference, Society for Neuroscience 2022. Here, I was able to present my research on the novel drug developments for anxiety disorder research, in hopes of improving treatment options in the future. This award made a difference, both to me and to the field of mental health research. Thank you!!

Thank you for supporting student awards at Western.



Student Awards: Schulich Medicine

We asked our award recipients in Schulich Medicine, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, how receiving a student award in 2022/2023 helped shape their Western experience. Here's what they said:

"Because of this scholarship, I have been able to thrive throughout medical school. I was able to take on research jobs during the year and summers in my field of interest—machine learning and surgery—without worrying about pay. When I learned about my scholarship, I initially thought it was a joke—spam of some sort—and didn't want to tell my parents in case I was mistaken. When I realized it was real; I cried. The weight of the world on my shoulders suddenly seemed manageable. When I finally told my parents, they teared up as well. This scholarship has made a world of a difference for me and my family."

Michelle Wing-Sze Kwong

MD Fourth Year

"This bursary has lessened much of the stress and worry I had towards how I would be paying for school fees. Managing the difficulties that have come with school have been hard, but this bursary has helped every part of that journey. When I received the email that I got a bursary, a wave of relief came over me. I was so happy and felt very grateful that I got this chance. I plan to become a pediatrician after graduation. I'd love to help people and provide care to the children who would eventually become our future leaders."

Cecile Le

BMSc Medical Sciences, Second Year

"Growing up as a child of Afghan refugees, educational empowerment has been a lifelong goal of mine that I've strived to pursue despite the many barriers I have faced. With the generosity of donors like you I have been able to pursue higher education and achieve a Bachelor of Health Sciences and a Master of Social Work prior to entering medical school. Bringing this into my classroom and future medical practice, I will be sure to provide a patient-centered and socially just approach to healthcare. Your generosity has inspired me on my journey to serve the London community, and when I am a physician, I will help students achieve their goals just as you have helped me."

Hamza Furmli

MD First Year

"My scholarship has greatly increased my financial security. This has allowed me to focus fully on my research without the added stress of worrying about saving for rent payments and other expenses. This increased ability to focus on my work will be instrumental in my ability to complete my PhD project, which aims to investigate the longitudinal spread of Alzheimer's disease pathology in a very large ($n > 1000$) cohort of older adults. I would like to sincerely thank donors for their generous support of graduate students like myself."

Hayley Shanks

PhD Second Year

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