

Haskayne School of Business

PhD in Management Application Guide

Applying to a PhD program is a significant commitment of time and effort. This guide is designed to help prospective applicants assess readiness, understand what makes an application competitive, and plan effectively for submission.

The Haskayne PhD program is research-intensive and highly selective. Strong applications demonstrate research readiness, intellectual focus, and alignment with faculty expertise, in addition to meeting formal admission requirements.

1. IS A PhD THE RIGHT FIT?

A PhD is not a general graduate degree. It is a multi-year commitment to independent scholarly research. Applicants who are a good fit for the Haskayne PhD program typically:

- Are motivated by curiosity and unanswered research questions
- Enjoy reading, analyzing, and critiquing academic literature
- Are comfortable working independently over extended periods
- Intend to pursue an academic or research-intensive career

If your primary goal is professional advancement, skill acquisition, or career exploration, a professional or course-based graduate program may be a better fit.

2. DEVELOPING CLEAR RESEARCH INTERESTS

You are not expected to submit a finished dissertation proposal at the time of application. However, competitive applications demonstrate:

- Clearly articulated research interests
- Familiarity with relevant academic conversations
- An ability to explain *why* particular questions matter

Strong research statements are:

- Focused rather than broad
- Grounded in scholarly literature
- Open to refinement through coursework and supervision

Applicants should avoid overly vague interests or proposals that are purely applied without a research contribution.

3. ALIGNING WITH FACULTY EXPERTISE

Supervisory alignment is central to doctoral success.

Before applying, prospective students should:

- Review faculty research profiles and recent publications
- Identify faculty members whose expertise aligns with their interests



- Consider how their research fits within Haskayne's broader scholarly community

Applicants are encouraged to contact potential supervisors to introduce themselves and discuss research interests. A confirmed supervisor is **not required** at the time of application, but evidence of alignment strengthens an application.

4. PREPARING A STRONG APPLICATION FILE

Admissions committees review applications holistically. Strong applications are coherent, focused, and internally consistent.

STATEMENT OF INTEREST

A strong statement:

- Explains your research interests clearly
- Articulates why a PhD is necessary for your goals
- Demonstrates fit with faculty expertise
- Shows awareness of what doctoral training involves

ACADEMIC PREPARATION

Competitive applicants typically demonstrate:

- Strong performance in relevant coursework
- Preparation in theory and research methods
- The ability to engage critically with scholarly material

LETTERS OF REFERENCE

Strong references:

- Come from academic referees familiar with your research ability
- Speak to intellectual independence, perseverance, and analytical skill
- Provide concrete examples rather than general praise

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Where required, GMAT or GRE scores are considered alongside transcripts and references as indicators of readiness for doctoral-level work.

5. PLANNING AHEAD: TIMELINE CONSIDERATIONS

Applicants are encouraged to begin preparing well in advance of the January deadline.

Common time-intensive components include:

- Preparing for standardized tests (GMAT or GRE)
- Obtaining official transcripts, especially from international institutions
- Securing academic references
- Refining research interests and identifying potential supervisors

Early planning improves both application quality and completeness.



6. FINAL APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Before submitting your application, confirm that you can answer **yes** to the following:

Research Readiness

- ☐ I can clearly explain my research interests and why they matter
- ☐ I understand what doctoral research entails
- ☐ My interests align with the expertise of Haskayne faculty

Academic Preparation

- ☐ I meet the academic and degree requirements
- ☐ I have prepared for or completed required standardized tests
- ☐ My academic record supports doctoral-level study

Application Materials

- ☐ My statement of interest is clear, focused, and well written
- ☐ My CV reflects academic preparation and research experience
- ☐ My referees can speak meaningfully to my research potential

Logistics

- ☐ All required documents will be submitted by the January deadline
- ☐ I have allowed time for transcripts and references to be received
- ☐ I understand that only complete applications are reviewed

Applicants who are uncertain about readiness or fit are encouraged to explore faculty research, review program expectations, or contact the PhD Office prior to applying.

FINAL NOTE

Strong PhD applications reflect careful preparation, intellectual focus, and genuine research motivation. Taking the time to assess fit and plan ahead improves both the quality of applications and the doctoral experience itself.

