

RAREvolution Scholarship Program

Application Guide

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Program Overview

The **RAREvolution Scholarship Program** is a national scholarship program of the [Canadian Rare Disease Network \(CRDN\)](#) that supports young people living with rare disease as they pursue post-secondary education in Canada. It is made possible thanks to the generous support from [Alexion Canada](#).

Rare diseases collectively affect millions of Canadians, and many young individuals experience challenges when navigating education, including financial pressures, health-related disruptions, and accessibility barriers. The RAREvolution Scholarship Program recognizes both these challenges and the strengths that come from lived experience, including resilience, adaptability, and leadership.

Scholarship – At a Glance

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Who | Students aged 17-29 living with any rare disease |
| Field of Studies | Any discipline |
| Value | Up to \$5,000 CAD for full-time students ¹ Up to \$2,500 CAD for part-time students ² |
| Number of awards | Minimum of 15 scholarships |
| Location | Canada-wide |

Who Can Apply

You are eligible if you meet **all** of the following:

- Are 17-29 years of age.
- Are a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.
- Are living with a diagnosed or suspected rare disease*.
- Are enrolled (or have applied to enroll) full-time¹ or part-time² in a recognized undergraduate or graduate program at an accredited Canadian post-secondary institution (for more details see *Appendix B: Enrolment or Acceptance Letter Guidance*).
- Will use the scholarship funds for education-related expenses (for more details see “*Scholarship Benefits and Use of Funds*” section).
- Are able to comply with scholarship program’s “*Terms and Conditions*”.

¹ A **full-time student** is registered in a post-secondary program and meets their institution’s full-time course load requirements. This is usually defined by the school and may vary by program or term.

² A **part-time student** is registered in a post-secondary program but is taking fewer courses than the institution’s full-time requirement. Part-time enrolment may be chosen due to health needs, caregiving responsibilities, or other personal circumstances.

***Important:** You do **not** need proof of diagnosis when applying. If selected, you will be required to provide documentation.

Key Dates

Application Opens: April 29, 2026

Information Webinar: May 27, 2026 at 12PM MST/ 2PM EST

Application Closes: June 12, 2026, at 3PM MST/ 5PM EST

Notification of Awards: August 2026

Funds Released: within 60 days of award acceptance.

Scholarship Benefits and Use of Funds

Scholarships are awarded up to \$5,000 CAD, based on enrolment status:

- Full-time students¹: up to \$5,000 CAD
- Part-time students²: up to \$2,500 CAD.

Scholarship funds must be used to support education-related expenses.

Eligible expenses include:

- Tuition and student fees
- Required textbooks or materials
- On-campus housing
- Accessibility supports not covered by other programs.

Funds cannot be used for:

- General living expenses such as rent, groceries, etc.
- Medical care
- Non-accredited programs.

If you are unsure whether an expense is eligible, please contact CRDN **before** using scholarship funds.

More Than a Scholarship

RAREvolution Scholars become part of a national community of young people living with rare diseases to connect, learn, and contribute in ways that align with each scholar's interests and capacity.

You may have opportunities to:

- Connect with peers through virtual gatherings
- Access mentorship and learning opportunities
- Share your story
- Participate in events or initiatives organized by CRDN or partners

Participation is optional and flexible, recognizing that health, schedules, interest, and capacity vary.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

The RAREvolution Scholarship Program recognizes that rare disease experiences – and educational journeys – are diverse. We encourage applications from people of all backgrounds, identities, regions, and fields of study to apply.

We are committed to a fair, accessible, and respectful application and selection process that values lived experience alongside academic engagement. We do not expect a “perfect” academic record, nor do we compare applicants based on the severity or type of condition.

Francophone Applicants

You are welcome to submit materials in French. French-speaking reviewers will review these applications. If you have any additional questions or needs, please contact us – we are happy to support you.

How to Apply

All applications must be submitted online through a secure platform called [Good Grants](#). Please do not email documents separately. See *Appendices A, B, C* for detailed guidance on personal statement, enrolment proof, and reference letters.

Step 1: Create your account

Create a [Good Grants](#) account using your email. For more details on how to register your account, refer to *Appendix D: How to register for a Good Grants account*.

Step 2: Start your application

Log in and select the “RAREvolution Scholarship Program” to complete all required sections. You may save and return to your application anytime until the deadline.

Step 3: Submit required materials and information

You will need to submit the following:

- **Terms and Conditions:** Review and agree to the *Terms and Conditions*.
- **Personal information:** Your name, contact details, and province or territory of residence etc.
- **Proof of enrolment or acceptance letter:** Upload a letter from your post-secondary institution confirming enrolment or an offer of admission. For more details, refer to *Appendix B: Enrolment or Acceptance Letter Guidance*.

- **Personal statement** (English speaking: maximum 750 words; French speaking: maximum 850 words): Uploaded directly as a PDF in Good Grants. For more details, refer to *Appendix A: Personal Statement Guidance*.

Step 4: Add one (1) referee's contact

Provide the name and email address of one (1) referee who can speak to your character, achievements, and potential. Your referee will receive an automated email from Good Grants with instructions to submit their reference letter separately. We strongly recommend contacting your referee early to ensure they submit their letter before the deadline. For more details, refer to *Appendix C: Reference Letter Guidance*

Step 5: Review and submit

Review your application carefully and submit before the deadline. No changes can be made after submission. You will receive a confirmation email. Please check your spam folders. Only complete applications will be considered.

Note: You do **not** need proof of diagnosis when applying. If selected, you will be required to provide documentation.

Tips for a Strong Application

- Be authentic – focus on your journey and growth
- Be clear about your educational goals and motivations
- Be clear about how the scholarship will help you
- Explain your journey and goals clearly
- Start early and ensure your referee submits before the deadline

Selection Process

All eligible and complete applications are reviewed anonymously by a diverse committee, which may include individuals with lived experience of rare disease, caregivers, community representatives, healthcare professionals, researchers, and educators.

Funding decisions will be informed by review evaluations, the availability of funds, and alignment with the objectives of the RAREvolution Scholarship Program. Meeting eligibility criteria does not guarantee funding. **All decisions are final and cannot be appealed.**

Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assess your personal statement and reference letter using established evaluation criteria. Your personal statement is the most important part of your application.

Reviewers look for:

- Lived experience, impact of your disease, and your resilience, growth, and reflection
- Educational and career goals and motivation
- How the scholarship will help you
- Contributions to others, leadership or engagement (formal or informal)
- Clarity and authenticity of your writing

Notification and Next Steps

Successful applicants will be contacted by email to schedule a meeting to confirm details before receiving an offer, including:

- Confirm eligibility
- Verify enrolment
- Provide proof of diagnosis
- Review award

All other applicants will be notified by email (through the Good Grants portal).

Disbursement of Scholarships

Scholarship funds are disbursed on CRDN's behalf through a trusted third-party partner. Recipients may be required to submit receipts or proof of payment to confirm appropriate use of funds. Instructions will be provided after the award is accepted.

Terms and Conditions

Acceptance of Scholarship

Successful applicants must accept the offer within twenty (20) business days of receiving a notice of award from CRDN. A funding acceptance form will be provided and should be returned with supporting documentation. Scholarship offers are conditional on official enrolment verification and proof of diagnosis. Failure to accept the offer within the specified timeframe may lead to withdrawal of the scholarship offer and the reallocation of funds to another applicant.

Public Recognition and Communications

By accepting the scholarship, recipients agree to be acknowledged publicly as RAREvolution Scholars. This includes sharing of information such as name, photo, province, field of study, etc. through communications or promotional materials designed by CRDN and its partners. Any additional participation in public recognition activities, such as testimonials, in-depth sharing of stories, or events is optional and subject to recipient's consent.

Participation and Engagement

By accepting the scholarship, recipients acknowledge that they will be provided with opportunities for engagement beyond financial support, such as occasional virtual peer gatherings, mentorship activities, or events organized by CRDN or its partners.

Participation in these activities is voluntary and flexible but highly encouraged.

Program Feedback and Follow-Up

Recipients are required to complete brief follow-up surveys or engage in feedback activities during and for up to three (3) years after the award period to support program evaluation and improvement. These activities are designed to be respectful of recipients' time and circumstances.

Confidentiality and use of information

All information collected through the application and administration of the scholarship will be handled in accordance with applicable privacy and data policies. Applications are reviewed in a manner intended to support fairness, including the removal of identifying information where possible. Information is accessed only by authorized CRDN staff and members of the selection committee for the purpose of administering the scholarship.

CRDN may use aggregated, de-identified information for reporting, evaluation, and program improvement purposes. Limited identifying information (such as name, photo, province, etc.) may be shared in communications or promotional materials.

Accuracy of Information

All information provided in the application must be true, complete, and accurate. CRDN may verify information provided and withdraw an award if any information is found to be false, misleading, or incomplete.

Changes to Enrolment Status

If an applicant's enrolment status changes at any point after applying or after receiving a scholarship offer, they must notify CRDN as soon as possible. CRDN will review the change on a case-by-case basis to determine whether the applicant remains eligible. This may result in an adjustment, deferral, or withdrawal of the scholarship offer, or changes to the award amount or disbursement timeline.

Non-Renewal and Reapplication

The RAREvolution Scholarship is a non-renewable award and is granted for one academic year only. Applicants who were not selected in a previous year are welcome to reapply, provided they continue to meet eligibility requirements. Previous scholarship recipients may also reapply, but renewal is not automatic. Each application is reviewed independently as part of the annual competition.

Changes to the Program

CRDN may amend the scholarship program, including eligibility criteria, application timelines, award values, or administration processes, as required. Any significant changes will be communicated to applicants and recipients in a timely manner.

Questions?

We are here to help. Contact us at info@canadianrdn.ca with the subject line “Scholarship program” for any questions you might have.

Partners

Generously funded by:



Alexion, AstraZeneca Rare Disease is focused on serving patients and families affected by rare diseases and devastating conditions through the discovery, development and delivery of life-changing medicines. A pioneering leader in rare disease for more than three decades, Alexion was the first to translate the complex biology of the complement system into transformative medicines, and today it continues to build a diversified pipeline across disease areas with significant unmet need, using an array of innovative modalities. As part of AstraZeneca, Alexion is continually expanding its global geographic footprint to serve more rare disease patients around the world. Alexion has been operating in Canada since 2009 and is guided by a steadfast commitment to innovation, and dedication to health equity and access. Through partnerships, scientific collaborations and clinical trial investments with partners across the Canadian rare disease ecosystem, Alexion is helping to improve outcomes for more people impacted by rare diseases in Canada.

The program is delivered by:



The Canadian Rare Disease Network (CRDN) is a pan-Canadian network working to improve diagnosis, care, and research for all rare diseases. We connect clinical, scientific, and patient expertise across the country to close gaps, accelerate progress, and ensure that no patient or family is left behind because their condition is rare.

Appendices

Appendix A: Personal Statement Guidance

What this is: Your personal statement is the most important part of your application. It helps reviewers understand your experiences, goals, and what matters to you.

What to submit:

- Maximum 750 words (English) or 850 words (French)
- Uploaded directly as a PDF in the Good Grants platform

How to approach your statement: Use the prompts below to guide your story and ensure you address **each of the five areas** in your personal statement, as reviewers will assess your application using these criteria.

What reviewers are looking for:

Your lived experience

- How has living with, or being affected by, a rare disease shaped your life?
- What challenges have you faced?
- How have you grown, adapted, or persevered?

Your educational and career goals and motivation

- What are your educational and career goals?
- Why are they meaningful to you?
- How have your experiences shape influenced your path?

How would the scholarship help you

- How would receiving the RAREvolution Scholarship help you achieve your education goals, overcome barriers, or access opportunities that would otherwise be difficult?

Your contribution to others, leadership, or engagement

- How have you contributed to your community or supported other (ethic can be formal or informal, such as peer support, advocacy, helping family or friends)?
- How do you hope to contribute in the future, and how does education help you do this?

Clarity and authenticity in writing

- What is the most important for reviewers to understand about you?
- What do you want them to remember about you?

Appendix B: Enrolment or Acceptance Letter Guidance

What this is: You must provide proof that you are enrolled in or have applied to attend a Canadian post-secondary program during the upcoming academic year.

Who this includes:

- Current students (full-time or part-time) at an accredited public Canadian post-secondary institution (college, university, or trade school)
- High school students with an offer of admission, including conditional offers
- Students who have deferred admission or are returning to studies

What counts as acceptable documentation:

You can submit:

- A current proof of enrolment letter
- An offer of admission (including conditional offers)
- Confirmation of deferred or upcoming enrolment

Enrolment or acceptance letters are typically available through your college or university's student portal or admissions office. Applicants are responsible for requesting and submitting this documentation.

Important notes:

Scholarship funds will only be released once proof of enrolment has been submitted. If you are applying with a conditional offer, funding will be finalized once enrolment is confirmed.

Tips:

- Request your document early
- Ensure it clearly shows:
 - Your name
 - Institution
 - Program (if available)

Appendix C: Reference Letter Guidance

What this is: You must provide *one reference* who can speak to your character, experiences, and potential.

How it works:

- You enter your referee's name and email in Good Grants
- They receive an automatic email with a secure link
- They submit their reference directly in the Good Grants platform

You do **not** upload the letter yourself.

Once you submit your reference information, your reference will automatically receive an email with a secure link to upload the reference letter.

Choosing a reference:

Choose someone who knows you well and can comment on your strengths, values, and contributions in an educational, professional, or community setting. Appropriate references may include:

- A teacher, professor, or academic advisor
- A workplace or volunteer supervisor
- A healthcare provider, counselor, or mentor
- A community or faith-based leader

Important guidelines:

- Your reference cannot be a family member or close friend.
- Inform your reference in advance that they will receive an email request from Good Grants
- Make sure their email is correct and that your reference regularly checks their inbox (and spam folder).

Important: Your application will only be considered complete once the reference is submitted. Late or missing references may result in your application not being reviewed.

What your referee will be asked:

The reference form will ask your referee to briefly comment on:

- Your motivation and commitment to education
- Your resilience, leadership, or advocacy experience
- Your contribution to your community or peers
- Any other qualities that make you a strong candidate for the RAREvolution Scholarship

Referees will not be asked to disclose personal medical or health.

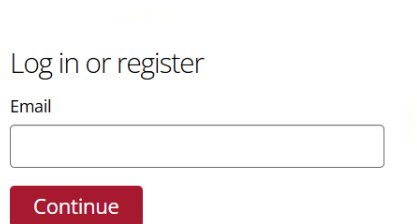
Appendix D: How to register for a Good Grants account

What this is: This section helps you create and access your application account.

Step-by-step instructions:

Step 1: Go to the application portal: universityofcalgary.grantplatform.com

Step 2: Navigate to the general page, scroll down to the login or register section, and enter your email:

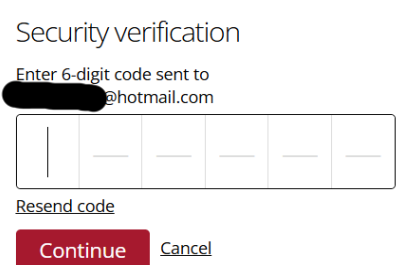


Log in or register

Email

Continue

Step 3: After entering your email, you'll be directed to a page where you need to enter a 6-digit verification code sent to your email.



Security verification

Enter 6-digit code sent to [redacted]@hotmail.com

Resend code

Continue Cancel

*If the 6-digit code is not working or you took too much time to enter it, please click on **“Resend code”**.

**If the issue persists, please contact Good Grants directly at: help@goodgrants.com

***The Good Grants team typically responds within three hours.

Step 4: You will have to set up multi-factor authentication (MFA). You will need to use an app such as:

- Microsoft Authenticator (recommended): If you select that option, you can open the app and scan the QR code directly from it.
- Google Authenticator
- Okta
- OneLogin Support

If you have issues with MFA:


- Common issues include lost backup codes, syncing problems, authenticator app glitches, or even network connection snags.

- Try restarting the app, rescanning the QR code, checking your internet connection, or check out the help documentation below (based on which app you are using):
- [Google Authenticator support](#)
- [Okta end user support](#)
- [Microsoft Authenticator FAQ](#)
- [OneLogin support](#)

If issues persist, please contact the Good Grants support team: help@goodgrants.com

Step 5: Once logged in, click “Start Application.”



Step 6: Complete the application form and make sure to click on “Submit application” at the end of the application form. 

**You can modify your application form until the deadline by accessing your account on Good Grants.

Questions? Please contact directly the CRDN Team at: info@canadianrdn.ca