



2018 Breakthrough Graduate Scholars Guidelines and Criteria

Rationale

Each spring, the Office of the Vice President for Research names selected graduate students as Breakthrough Graduate Scholars. These graduate students have excellent academic records, have made significant contributions to research and scholarship in their field of study, and have clearly demonstrated the potential to make exceptional professional contributions to research and scholarly activity. The Breakthrough Graduate Scholar Award recognizes these graduate students for their achievements and celebrates their potential for further success.

Award Description

The recipients of this non-cash award are featured in a supplement to *Breakthrough* magazine, and may be featured on USC websites and other publications. Additionally, they are invited to attend the annual Breakthrough Awards Dinner, held each spring. The award raises awareness of the importance of commitment to research and scholarship both during and beyond graduate study. *Breakthrough* magazine and its supplement are widely distributed to all faculty and administration, peer institutions, program managers, legislative representatives, and selected alumni and donors.

Award Review Criteria

The Breakthrough Awards Committee will evaluate the nomination materials based on the strength of evidence for the following criteria:

- The nominee should have an excellent academic record with a minimum cumulative graduate GPA of 3.3.
- The nominee should have made significant contributions to research and/or scholarly activity in their field of study.
- The nominee should demonstrate the potential to make exceptional professional contributions to research and scholarly activity.

Eligibility

- Current graduate students from any discipline in their second year or later.
- December graduates are eligible.
- Nominees who were not selected in previous years are eligible for re-nomination.
- Past recipients of the award are not eligible.
- Nominations are submitted by the graduate program director or equivalent.

With prior approval from the Vice President for Research, certain eligibility criteria may be waived in unusual circumstances.

Nomination Procedures

Complete nomination packets should be compiled into a **single PDF** file that includes the following **in order**:

1. A completed [nomination form](#).
2. A completed [nominee biographical sketch](#) (2 page limit).
3. A letter of recommendation from the nominator (2 page limit).
4. An unofficial graduate transcript.

Arrange all nomination materials in the order shown above, and save as a PDF file named: NOMINEELASTNAME_2018 Breakthrough Scholars.

Complete nomination packets should be emailed to deb.gipson@sc.edu with the subject: NOMINEELASTNAME_2018 Breakthrough Scholars.

Complete nomination packets are due no later than 5PM EST, October 20, 2017.

For questions or difficulty submitting nomination materials, please call **Debbie Gipson** at (803) 777-5458.

Notes and Exceptions

- Nominators may submit only one 2018 Breakthrough Graduate Scholars Award nomination.
- The nominator is responsible for collecting, verifying completeness and accuracy, and submitting nomination materials.

Selection Process and Timeline

Nominations that are complete and responsive to the requirements of this announcement will be evaluated by the Breakthrough Awards Committee. The committee will evaluate nominations using the award review criteria. The committee will provide a prioritized list of recommended recipients to the Vice President for Research (VPR). The VPR will have final determination of recipients based on the committee's recommendations. Nominees and their nominators will receive notification of their selection or declination on or before **December 8, 2017**.

For questions regarding this award, contact **Debbie Gipson** in the Office of the Vice President for Research.

Debbie Gipson

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