



The VADA Program

Visual and Automated Disease Analytics
Graduate Training Program

University of Manitoba & University of Victoria

Terms of Reference for PhD Students Participating in Program for a Second Year
October 2, 2019

What is the VADA Program?

The Visual and Automated Disease Analytics (VADA) Program is a graduate training program funded by the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) as part of its Collaborative Research and Training Experience (CREATE) Program.

The goal of the VADA Program is to train Master's and PhD students to develop and use automated techniques and tools to collect, analyze, and visualize chronic and infectious disease data. The objectives of the VADA Program are to:

1. Advance student **technical skills** in the development and integration of interactive data visualization, visual analytics, and automated approaches for data mining, mathematical and statistical modeling, and predictive analytics;
2. Improve student **knowledge of applied problems** relevant to the detection, prevention and management of infectious and chronic diseases;
3. Develop student **professional skills** in communication and relationships, entrepreneurship, responsible conduct of research, and project management.

In brief, the VADA Program will assist students to develop technical and problem-solving skills to address the challenges of working with complex health data, as well as professional skills that focus on collaboration, project management, career development, ethics and privacy, and entrepreneurship.

What Funding Support is Available?

PhD students can receive support from the VADA Program for a maximum of 2 years. In order to be considered for funding in Year 2, PhD students must:

1. have attained a minimum grade of B in all courses taken in Year 1;
2. submit a interim progress report detailing their accomplishments to date and an original transcript;
3. submit a year-end progress report detailing all accomplishments in Year 1; AND
4. fulfill all requirements of the VADA program in Year 1.

Students who are renewed for a second year of funding who have not received a major funding award will receive a maximum stipend of \$19,000. These stipends do not include benefits. Students who have received a major funding award (e.g., CIHR, NSERC, university graduate fellowship), defined as an award worth \$10,000 or more per year, will not receive the full VADA Program stipend. Instead, they will receive a top-up award to a maximum of \$9000. The amount of the top-up award will depend on (a) the total amount of other awards, and (b) any requirements from the funder of the other award(s). The amount of the top-up will be determined by the VADA Program Application Review Committee.

The VADA Program stipend will cease prior to the end of the funding year if at any time the student's status has changed (e.g., withdraw from the graduate program; move from full-time to part-time student status) during the course of that year.

What are the PhD Requirements of the VADA Program for a Second Year of Funding?

To receive a second year of funding PhD students must agree to fulfill each of the following requirements:





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- Attend the VADA Program orientation session in the fall of each year.
- Participate in a minimum of 5 of 6 one-hour journal club sessions for returning doctoral students and lead one of the sessions. Each session should focus on a current methodological research paper on automated analytics (e.g., machine-learning) or visualization in health sciences. The student leader will be responsible for introducing the paper in the first 20-25 minutes of the session, and then leading discussion of the paper for the remaining 35-40 minutes of the session.
- Give a presentation about their Internship/Lab Exchange experience in a Foundations of Disease Analytics class session;
- Undertake outreach activities (e.g., present their research/internship/lab exchange to a non-academic audience or an academic audience outside of their home department; or develop content for the VADA Program website about their research/internship/lab exchange);
- Demonstrate satisfactory research progress in the form of publications, presentations or progress in their degree program. Faculty supervisors must concur that satisfactory progress has been made and will be asked to provide feedback on this metric. Unsatisfactory research progress could be the basis for withdrawal of funding
- Continue to maintain a faculty supervisor who is a member of the VADA Program and at least one other member of the advisory committee who is a member of the VADA Program.

In addition, students in the VADA Program must:

- Acknowledge VADA Program support in all publications and presentations;
- Submit a final progress report prior to August 31st of the academic year in which funding is received;
- Must not work more than 15 hours per week in paid employment as a research assistant, teaching assistant or other University or non-University employee during the period from September to April of the academic year(s) in which they are funded.

Contravening any of the above requirements is a basis for a reduction or withdrawal of funding and possible removal from the program pending the decision of the program leadership.

