Natural Sciences & Engineering Research Council
Doctoral Scholarship Application
Fall 2019

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One application, two awards

When you complete the NSERC doctoral scholarship application you will be considered for:

• The Alexander Graham Bell Canada Graduate Scholarship-Doctoral, (CGAD) $35,000/year for up to three years, recipients must do their doctoral degree at a Canadian university

• NSERC Postgraduate Scholarship-Doctoral, (PGSD) $21,000/year for up to three years, may do their doctoral at an international university provided they have a previous degree from a Canadian university
Eligibility – Subject Matter

There are three federal research councils:

• Natural Sciences & Engineering Research Council (NSERC)
• Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)
• Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)

- You need to apply to the correct council which is determined by the subject matter of your research
- If you are not sure, talk to a Scholarship Officer
- No appeals based on subject matter
Eligibility – Applicant Criteria

• be a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada, as of the application deadline date;

• have completed no more than 24 months of full-time study in their doctoral program by December 31 of the year of application (no more than 36 months if transferred directly from Bachelors to a PhD or enrolled in a joint program, e.g., MD/PhD, MA/PhD);

• submit only one doctoral award application in a given academic year. Nominations to the Vanier CGS program do not count towards this limit;

• not have already received a doctoral-level scholarship or fellowship from CIHR, NSERC or SSHRC.
Eligibility – A Few Notes

• You do not need a first class GPA to apply for an NSERC scholarship
  • Grades are considered in the evaluation of applications but is not an eligibility requirement

• Your doctoral program must include a significant research component that leads to completion of a thesis, major research project, dissertation, scholarly publication – joint programs with a professional degree, or clinically oriented programs of study are only eligible if they have a significant autonomous research component
Selection Criteria

NSERC Selection Criteria has changed

• **30%** Academic excellence—transcripts, awards, reference letters

• **50%** Research ability or potential research proposal, previous research, presentations, publications, reference letters

• **20%** Communication, interpersonal, and leadership abilities—work and volunteer experience, communication—how well you write, reference letters

• **New Criteria** –
  50% - Research ability and potential
  50% - Relevant experiences and achievements obtained within and beyond academia
Selection Criteria – research ability and potential

• Quality of research proposal
  • specific, focused and feasible research question(s) and objective(s)
  • clear description of the proposed methodology
  • significance and expected contributions to research

• Relevant training, such as academic training, lived experience and traditional teachings

• Research experience and achievements relative to the applicant's stage of study, lived experience and knowledge systems

• Quality of contributions and extent to which they advance the field of research. Contributions may include: publications, patents, reports, posters, abstracts, monographs, presentations, creative outputs, knowledge translation outputs, community products, etc.

• Demonstration of sound judgment and ability to think critically

• Demonstration of responsible and ethical research conduct, including honest and thoughtful inquiry, rigorous analysis, commitment to safety and to the dissemination of research results and adherence to the use of professional standards

• Enthusiasm for research, originality, initiative, autonomy, relevant community involvement and outreach

• The ability or potential to communicate theoretical, technical and/or scientific concepts clearly and logically in written and oral formats
Selection Criteria – relevant experience & achievements obtained within and beyond academic

- Scholarships, awards and distinctions (amount, duration and prestige)
- Academic record:
  - Transcripts
  - Duration of previous studies
  - Program requirements and courses pursued
  - Course load
  - Relative standing in program (if available)
- Professional, academic and extracurricular activities as well as collaborations with supervisors, colleagues, peers, students and members of the community, such as:
  - teaching, mentoring, supervising and/or coaching
  - managing projects
  - participating in science and/or research promotion
  - community outreach, volunteer work and/or civic engagement
  - chairing committees and/or organizing conferences and meetings
  - participating in departmental or institutional organizations, associations, societies and/or clubs
Equity, Diversity and Inclusiveness

• Federal research councils are working on what they refer to as EDI – Equity, Diversity and Inclusiveness

• Increase diversity of NSERC award holders

• If it is appropriate and relevant, speak to how your research supports EDI

• If you have work/volunteer experience connected to EDI, note it in the Experience section of the application
The Process

UVic’s quota this year is ?? and we receive more applications than our quota so we run an on-campus competition to select nominees

- Students complete the NSERC On-line application (Form 201 - instructions) – But do not Submit right away (we will tell you when)

- Print a copy of the application you completed online and deliver it to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) Uctr A207 by 4:30 pm Weds. Oct. 2 – along with your attachments and all required post-secondary OFFICIAL transcripts Attn: Yvonne

- Scholarship Officers (SLOs) verify completeness, eligibility, and upload your transcripts and will email you if we find something you need to correct (Oct 2 – 16)

- Applications are sent to academic units for review and ranking, and then returned to FGS – your department may withdraw your application if they do not think it is competitive (Oct 16 – 23) – they will tell you if they withdraw your application
The Process

• Once your application is complete – meaning transcripts are attached and any corrections have been made, an FGS SLO will let you know when you can SUBMIT your application – **Wait to hear from one of us**

• Applications are sorted into sub-categories according to federal selection committees and ranked within the sub-category (Oct 24 – Nov 13)

• A final selection meeting takes place, at which faculty representatives from academic departments with NSERC Doc candidates select the final nominees (November 15)

• Applicants will be notified before the end of November, if you were nominated or not

• FGS Scholarship Officers will submit nominated candidates’ applications to NSERC for federal review process by November 21

• Winners are announced by NSERC in April 2020
How to Apply

• Application is a web based form accessible through NSERC On-line System
• You need to register and then you can create, edit and save your NSERC application
• Save frequently – application may time out
• Remember your password
• Use the correct application form - **Form 201**
• Ask SLO if you are not sure about any part of the application - Yvonne or Kathy can help
NSERC On-line System

Accessibility Notice
If you cannot access the following content, please contact the On-line Services Helpdesk by e-mail at webapp@nserc-crng.gc.ca or by telephone at 613-995-4273. Indicate the e-mail address and telephone number where you can be reached.

PILOT SITE NOTICE
Our Pilot Site is no longer available. The On-line System may be used for training purposes; however, test applications must not be submitted to NSERC.

For Authorized Institutional Representatives: Before you register to access the On-line System or the Financial Data Submission and Reconciliation (FDSR) System, ensure that you have completed, signed and emailed the pertinent registration form to NSERC and read the instructions and the frequently asked questions provided. You will find the forms, instructions and frequently asked questions, for one or the other system, at the On-line System Overview and FDSR Overview pages.

On-line System Users
Select On-line System Login to create or access an application.

Financial Data Submission and Reconciliation
The Financial Data Submission and Reconciliation (FDSR) System is for academic institution officials who electronically transmit their annual financial data.

Data Modified: 2013-03-07
Selecting the Correct Form
Selecting the Correct Form

Applications

Your in-progress and completed applications are listed in the table below (see Security Statement and Access to Information Act and Privacy Act for detailed information). To create a new application, select the appropriate form from the drop-down box. To edit, preview/print or verify the completeness of a given application, click on the appropriate button below. Note that the Scholarships & Fellowships applications must be submitted electronically.

Application forms and related literature are revised annually and made available a few months prior to the application deadline indicated in the program description. If the name of the program to which you wish to apply does not appear in the list upon creation of your application on the On-line System, the form is not currently available. The forms for programs that do not have set deadline dates will remain accessible at all times.

Applicants interested in applying for support at the master's level should refer to the CGS M Program description.

Form 201 - (PGS D & PDF)

Scholarships & Fellowships
Indigenous Identification - Option

Self-Identification statement:

Please note: Answers to the self-identification statement are not seen or used during the review process or by an applicant’s references.

Statement 1: I self-identify as Indigenous.
- I agree with Statement 1. I consent to this information being shared with my institution and used for my PGS D application for the purpose of being considered above my institution’s application quota.
- Statement 1 does not apply to me / I do not agree with Statement 1.

NSERC may increase equity and diversity by giving award priority to meritorious applicants who self-identify as Indigenous and/or as a woman, if sufficient funds are made available.

Statement 2: I self-identify as Indigenous.
- I agree with Statement 2. I consent to this information being used by NSERC as described above.
- Statement 2 does not apply to me / I do not agree with Statement 2.

Statement 3: I self-identify as a woman.
- I agree with Statement 3. I consent to this information being used by NSERC as described above.
- Statement 3 does not apply to me / I do not agree with Statement 3.

What languages do you:
- Read English ☑ French ☐
- Write English ☑ French ☐
- Speak English ☑ French ☐

Preferred language of correspondence: English ☑
Person Profile

• Applicants are required to complete this section

• If you do not want to indicate personal details, chose the second bullet; “Statement X does not apply to me/I do not agree with Statement X”

• Information is collected to guide federal councils EDI activities and is not visible on the application, nor is it made available to reviewers

• Students who self-identify as Indigenous, may have their applications submitted outside of the NSERC quota, as long as the application is deemed to be competitive (only FGS Scholarship Officers know if a student self-identifies for administrative purposes)

• Still based on merit
List for a Complete Application

Use the following list to make sure your Application (Form 201) is complete.

• Application profile
• Personal profile
• Addresses
• Academic background
• Academic, research and other relevant work experience
• Awards
• Proposed location(s) of tenure
• Scholarship or fellowship information
• Theses completed or in progress
• Keywords and research subject code
• Outline of proposed research (attachment; two pages)
• Bibliography (attachment; five pages)
• Justification for eligibility of proposed research (attachment; one page)
• Contributions and statements (attachment; two pages)
• *Special Circumstances* - optional
• Transcripts or proof of registration (attachment)
• Reports on the Applicant
References – Report on the applicant

Each application submitted to NSERC must be accompanied by two Reports on the Applicant (references)

• The reports must be completed by persons capable of making an informed assessment

• One report should be from a person very familiar with your research and other abilities, e.g., current academic research supervisor or industrial supervisor (in the case of co-op students); previous academic research, industrial or USRA supervisor

• The second report should be from a person sufficiently familiar with your research and other abilities to provide a meaningful commentary

• **Note:** A Report on the Applicant cannot be completed by a proposed supervisor unless that person is currently your supervisor or has been your supervisor in the past

• If your current or past supervisor is unable to provide you with a Report on the Applicant, you may use the Special Circumstances section to provide an explanation.
Referees – Report on the applicant

What you should do:

• Contact your proposed referees early to ensure they are willing to complete a report for you

• In the Report on the Applicant page of your application, enter the name and email address of each of the referees who will be completing a report, as well as the deadline on which you would like the report to be completed, which you select from a pop-up calendar. **Note that this date must be well before the application deadline to allow you to successfully submit your completed application on time**

• Once the information is saved, the system will generate an email to each referee inviting them to complete a Report on the Applicant.

• Contact your referees to inform them that you have sent them a report to complete

• The status of the request can be verified in this section of your application

• Your application will remain incomplete until both reports have been submitted
References – Report on the applicant

Provide your references with the following:
• a copy of your list of research contributions
• a copy of your research proposal
• a one-page resume of awards, conferences, etc.
• List of work or volunteer experience relevant to your degree that they may be able to comment on
• a summary of the NSERC selection criteria

*the date by which you would like them to complete the report, suggest at least a week before October 2, and no later than September 30*
Attachments - Attachments are any documents you write outside of the application Form 201 and attach/upload to your application.

Presentation Standards for Attachments

• Explain any acronyms and abbreviations fully;
• Pages must be 8 ½" x 11" (216mm x 279mm);
• Pages must be single-spaced, with no more than six lines of type per inch;
• All text must be in 12 pt Times New Roman font;
• Condensed fonts will not be accepted;
• All text should be black, and no colour images should be used;*
• Margins must be set at a minimum of ¾" (1.87 cm);
• Your name must appear outside the set margins of the page, at the top right corner of every page;
• For multi-page attachments, pages must be numbered sequentially;
• If you have supporting documents written in a language other than English or French, you are required to provide NSERC with a certified translation of the document.
Outline of Proposed Research – 2 pages

• Provide a detailed, concise description of your research project for the period during which you will hold the award
• Provide enough background to place your research in context in your field of study
• State the significance of your research to field(s), and if applicable beyond (industry, health, social benefits)
• State your objective, methods, and procedures to be used
• Write your proposal in clear, plain language and avoid jargon. Your application will be reviewed by a selection committee covering a broad discipline category.
Outline of Proposed Research – 2 pages

• You should not repeat the information found in the “Theses completed or in progress” section of the application, but may refer to it.

• NSERC expects applicants to write their own research project independently, and that ideas and/or text belonging to others are properly referenced.

• Include all relevant information in the outline. **Do not refer members to URLs or other publications for supplemental information. Such additional information will not be reviewed by members.**

• If the proposed research is a continuation of your thesis, clearly state the differences between work done for your thesis and the research activities outlined in this proposal.
If your research considers matters of biological sex, gender or details related to diversity:

• Describe how it will be addressed in your research method
• Include a rationale for including sex, gender and diversity considerations in your research
• If you research logically includes matters of equity, diversity and inclusiveness these factors will be taken into consideration during the review
Bibliography – 5 pages

• NSERC expects applicants to properly reference ideas or text belonging to others. Use this section to list references to works that are cited in or directly relevant to your application (that is, do not list additional or unnecessary references to fill up the space). Follow the citation conventions that are appropriate to your research discipline or field.

• PDF format

• Maximum file size is 3 Mb

• 8 ½" x 11" (216mm x 279mm)

• Maximum pages: 5 – new section this year
Justification for Eligibility of Proposed Research – Optional attachment 1 page

• Complete this section if your research is in a discipline that falls under the mandate of more than one research council (e.g. psychology, geography, exercise science, environmental studies, biochemistry etc.)

• Explain why you have chosen to apply to NSERC, this will only be used by NSERC staff to confirm eligibility and will not be shared with review committee

Before doing this – if you are not sure your research is NSERC talk to a Scholarship Officer – and read the subject matter guidelines available on the NSERC website
Transcripts/Proof of Registration

• All transcript **MUST BE OFFICIAL UP-TO-DATE COPIES**
• Include your UVic transcript, even if you have not completed courses yet – *proof of registration and number of months of study*
• Official transcripts are defined as transcripts issued by the Registrar’s Office; transcripts from other sources, such as those printed from the student’s account on the institution’s website, are not official
• Order transcripts **to be sent to you**, then deliver your transcripts to FGS with your application we will scan and upload them
• You will appoint a designate who will upload them, this year it will be Yvonne Rondeau *scholoff@uvic.ca*
Other Attachments & Sections of Note

Some sections of the application provide great opportunities to highlight your experience and successes in and beyond academia

• Academic Background – current and previous degrees
• Experience – academic, research and work experience
• Awards – list of competitive awards won, bursaries and travel grants don’t count
• Thesis – chance to summarize previous research/degree
• Key words – ensure your application is in the best selection committee for your research
• Contributions Statement 2 pages – How have you contributed to research and development,
Sections of Note - Special Circumstances

Special Circumstances ½ Page

• Describe any special considerations that have had an effect on your performance or productivity – delays in disseminating your research, taking longer to complete previous degrees

• Health problems, family responsibilities, parental leave, disabilities, administrative interruptions or other applicable circumstance

• Be clear, provide time frames, and include *just the facts*

• If your supervisor is not able to complete a Report on the Applicant for you for their own personal or health reasons, you can explain that here
Your NSERC Coach

NSERC coach: Rana El-Sabaawi (Biology)

My job is to: look over your research proposal and provide feedback, as an neutral third-party, familiar with academia.
Things you should do this week (if you haven’t already)

• Go to NSERC workshop!
• Go online and start navigating NSERC application pages to get a sense of what is needed for the application
• Decide on and contact referees
• Get examples of successful past applications if possible
• Make a timeline and start outline of your proposal
Referees

• Very important!

• Choose your referees wisely and carefully – these should include at least one person who has supervised your research, and should include people who are familiar with the application system and who care about you

• Suggest to avoid grad students/postdocs/ta’s/someone who taught you in just one course

• Referees will be asked to comment/rank you on all criteria

• A strong reference will be specific, not vague

• Reference letters are great places to add/emphasize ‘extra’ things that are not easy to put in other places in the applications

• Help your referees by providing them with specific information and by involving them in the process – don’t be shy about communicating with them throughout the process
Research proposal

• Give yourself plenty of time – write and re-write, read and re-read, get feedback
• **Follow all instructions** re: length, headers, font etc...
• You are expected to write your own proposal – ideas and words should be your own
• Don’t worry if things end up changing down the road (i.e. different project etc...)
Research Proposal

• Remember that your reviewers will come from very different fields and will be reading lots and lots of other applications
• Avoid jargon, avoid getting bogged down in minutiae
• Should be understandable to experts & non-experts
• Need to show that you can formulate an interesting question and convince the reader that it is interesting and that you are using the right approach to tackle the problem
• **What** is the question? What has been done before? **Why** is it interesting/important? **How** are you going to solve the problem?
Procedure for getting feedback

• Email me a complete draft of your proposal and application well ahead of the internal deadline

• I will review and make track changes

• We will then meet do discuss the edits.
General advice

• START working on your application today

• Work on some aspect of the application everyday

• Early feedback by trusted reviewers is KEY (not just me)
  • Try to get feedback from experts and non-experts
Use the Resources Available

• Scholarship Officers, Kathy McCarthy fgsaward@uvic.ca and Yvonne Rondeau scholoff@uvic.ca

• NSERC Coach Dr. Rana El-Sabaawi rana@uvic.ca

• NSERC Website – Application instructions, policy on subject matter eligibility, award holders guide

• Graduate Advisor in your academic unit

• Presentation slides online FGS Finances go to Doctoral Scholarship tab