SGS Award Announcement

To: Div III & IV Graduate Chairs/Directors; Graduate Coordinators; Graduate Administrators
From: Fong Di Caterina, Manager, Graduate Awards Office
CC: Joshua Barker, Dean, School of Graduate Studies and Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education; Charmaine Williams, Acting Vice-Dean, Students; Laura Stathopoulos, Director, Graduate Awards and Financial Aid
Date: June 10, 2019
Re: 2020-2021 Schmidt Science Fellows

Award Overview

Applicant deadline: Date set by Graduate Unit
Nomination deadline to SGS: July 15, 2019
Value/Duration: $100,000 for 14 months
University nominations due to Agency: August 12, 2019
Nominee submission deadline: October 1, 2019 - 23:59 p.m. (GMT)
Eligibility: Thesis submitted or expected to be submitted to SGS between May 1, 2019 & June 30, 2020
Required Legal Status: Domestic or International
Results: April 2020 directly from Agency

Purpose

The Schmidt Science Fellows program, is supported and funded by the Eric and Wendy Schmidt Strategic Fund for Innovation, in partnership with the Rhodes Trust and supported by many of the world’s leading scientific thinkers and institutions. The Schmidt Science Fellows program aims to develop the next generation of science leaders to transcend disciplines, advance discovery, and solve the world’s most pressing problems.

Fellows engage and co-produce with diverse thinkers in science, politics, society, and business to catalyse new ideas and connections. The Fellowship year is the beginning of their membership to a lifelong community of Schmidt Science Fellows, their partners and supporters, all of whom are committed to furthering interdisciplinary science to achieve greater global impact.

For the 2020 cohort selection process, the Program is inviting nominations from approx. 100 leading science, technology, and engineering institutions around the world; the University of Toronto may nominate nine candidates.
About the program

The program seeks the brightest minds in the natural sciences, mathematics, engineering and computing who are interested in broadening their horizons and pursuing a challenging and rewarding period of study with the world’s leading academics and institutions. The full-time year-long program is delivered through a combination of group sessions at some of the world’s leading universities and a special postdoctoral study in a field different from a Fellow's existing expertise. Fellows are awarded a stipend of $100,000 and receive personal and scientific mentoring to enable them to maximize the opportunities from their Fellowship.

The program has relationships and committed support from internationally-leading research leaders and laboratories to ensure fellows are placed into a stimulating, challenging and rewarding environment. Throughout the placement year, Fellows will have access to personal and scientific mentoring to enable them to maximize the benefits of their fellowship and to support their career development.

Schmidt Science Fellows attend four meetings as a cohort during their fellowship year. The Global Meetings Series is held around the world to enable Fellows to engage with new concepts, to visit leading science facilities and to have dialogue with internationally-renowned thought-leaders from science, business, policy, and society. The meetings cover four main themes with focused learning outcomes:

- Interdisciplinary thinking
- Science leadership development
- Future of science
- Collaborative community

By the end of the final meeting it is expected that all Schmidt Science Fellows to be able to:

- Recognize the importance of interdisciplinarity
- Demonstrate ability to take concepts from one field and apply them to a related field
- Identify ways to take scientific risks and persevere in the face of failure

Eligibility to Apply

In order to be eligible for nomination and potential selection as a Schmidt Science Fellow, candidates must meet the following requirements:

- Have conducted their PhD degree in the natural sciences (astronomy, biology, chemistry, physics, and earth sciences), engineering, mathematics, or computing at the University of Toronto;
- Have their final PhD thesis accepted by the School of Graduate Studies at the University of Toronto between May 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020; and
- Be available for the entire period of the 2020-2021 program, from July 2020 to July 2021, including attendance at each Global Meeting.

Selection Criteria

The Program is seeking those individuals with a special degree of brilliance and inventiveness, who are interested in broadening their horizons and pursuing a challenging and rewarding period of study with the world’s leading academics and institutions. Schmidt Science Fellows are expected to be future leaders and should demonstrate a keen interest in harnessing interdisciplinarity and interaction with wider society to accelerate discovery to achieve global impact.

Applications for the Schmidt Science Fellows program will be judged against the following selection criteria:

- **Extraordinary achievement** - Clear record of academic achievement during their PhD at leading institutions of higher learning.
- **Alignment with the Program** – Commitment to pursuing a year or more of postdoctoral study in a field different from the topic of study for which the applicant received their PhD.
- **Scientific curiosity** - Desire to achieve a broad level of exposure to and knowledge in cutting-edge innovations and research across the sciences.
• **Intellectual spark** - High degree of intelligence, energy, and intellectual curiosity that will drive future scientific discoveries.

• **Global ambitions** - The will to make a lasting impact in the sciences and society, pursuing knowledge that will benefit the world by engaging in ambitious research and displaying great perseverance throughout the scientific process.

• **Character** - A genuine and demonstrable interest in society and global challenges combined with a desire to use personal talents and expertise to make a positive difference in the world.

• **Collaborative spirit** - Demonstrated history of effective collaboration with diverse team members.

• **Use of innovative tools** - General interest and comfort in the use and potential of new ways of doing science, such as modern computing and data science techniques.

### Application Timeline & Process

Graduate Chairs are invited to nominate their top ranked candidate(s) by submitting a complete nomination package to SGS for consideration by July 15, 2019; the process is as follows:

1) Supervisors and/or Coordinators of interested applicants are encouraged to discuss their intent to nominate suitable candidates with the Graduate Chair/Director;

2) Graduate Chairs/Directors nominate their top candidate(s) and submit the associated nomination package(s) to SGS by **July 15th** – see Instructions for Graduate Units document for submission instructions.

   The following will serve as a completed nomination package:

   a) Nomination letter from the Graduate Chair/Director;

   b) Up to date CV (no page restrictions), including links to relevant publications and research activities. For papers underway or pending publication, applicants should attach a copy of the final abstract (1 page or less) of the paper;

   c) Up to date transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate studies (including those from U of T) – non-U of T transcripts must include grading legend;

   d) A brief abstract or 1-page summary of the doctoral thesis written by the applicant;

   e) Proposal Statement (max 1000 words) regarding potential postdoctoral research direction the applicant may wish to pursue if named a Schmidt Science Scholar. While applicants need not commit to a single postdoctoral study in order to have their application accepted, the statement should describe potential areas for postdoctoral research that could be considered. These potential areas of study must outline their planned interdisciplinary pivot (i.e. be different from the field of study for which the applicants received their doctorate) and clearly address the relevant selection criteria, especially “Alignment with the Program”.

   f) Personal Statement (max 1000 words), which must be wholly the applicant’s original work. The statement should describe the applicant’s academic, scientific, professional and personal interests, the reason for the applicant’s interest in the Schmidt Science Fellows, medium-term career path and interests, and long-term future ambitions in the applicable fields of natural science, engineering, mathematics, or computing.

   g) Three short proposals (max 500 words each) for potential postdoctoral fellowship labs.

   h) Five to seven (5-7) Reference letters (the Schmidt online application requires a minimum of 5 reference letters up to a maximum of 7): A minimum of 3 references must be from Academics. Letters from the applicant’s thesis supervisor(s) are expected. Letters may also come from other faculty, employers, supervisors, or collaborators. These letters should address the applicant’s intellectual ability and research accomplishments, but also markers of leadership and future research success.

3) SGS adjudicates the nominations, selects and invites the nine endorsed candidates to complete their nomination by August 12, 2019;

4) Individuals nominated by U of T will be sent an invitation to apply;

   • Completed applications will be due no later than October 1, 2019;
• Applications will consist of details of academic history, including transcripts, current CV with details of relevant publications, at least five but no more than seven letters of recommendation, a personal statement, a proposal for potential postdoctoral research direction, and three short proposals for potential postdoctoral Fellowship labs.

5) Completed applications will first be reviewed by a board of senior researchers who have knowledge of a wide variety of disciplines. The best applications will then be examined by a second board and evaluated on a mixture of criteria that align with the Program’s goals;

6) Short-listed applicants will be invited to face-to-face interviews in late Dec. 2019 to Jan. 2020.

7) Final selection panel interviews and announcement of 2020 cohort of Schmidt Science Fellows in April 2020.

Contacts & Resources

For information regarding the U of T selection process, please contact:
Sarah Pickering, Postdoctoral Office
sgs.postdoc@utoronto.ca
416-946-5254

More about Schmidt Science Fellows
Twitter - @SchmidtFellows
LinkedIn - https://www.linkedin.com/company/-schmidt-science-fellows/
Instagram - @schmidt_science_fellows
Facebook - @schmidtsciencefellows

Schmidt Science Fellows Selection Process
Email: info@schmidtsciencefellows.org