



# SGS Award Announcement

**To:** Graduate Chairs/Directors; Graduate Coordinators; Graduate Administrators  
**Re:** 2025-2026 Ontario Women's Health Scholars Award

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## Award Overview

<b>Student Deadline to Graduate Unit:</b>	<b>Date set by Graduate Unit</b>
<b>Graduate Unit Deadline to SGS:</b>	<b>December 6, 2024*</b>
<b>Value/Duration:</b>	2 Master's - \$25,000 plus \$1,000 research allowance (for one year) 3 Doctoral - \$35,000 plus \$2,000 research allowance (renewable) (for one year) 2 Postdoctoral - \$50,000 plus \$5,000 research allowance (for one year)
<b>Level of Study:</b>	Master's, Doctoral or Postdoctoral
<b>Required Legal Status:</b>	Domestic (Canadian citizens or permanent residents)
<b>Results:</b>	April 2025 by agency

**\*Applicants must submit their application to their graduate unit, not the Dean of Graduate Studies as the COU announcement indicates.**

## Purpose

The Ontario Women's Health Scholars Awards Program aims to establish a research community that meets or exceeds internationally accepted standards of scientific excellence in its creation of new knowledge about women's health and its translation into improved health for women, more effective health services and products for women, and a strengthened health care system.

## Eligibility to Apply

- To be eligible for an Ontario Women's Health Scholars award, an applicant must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada as of January 31, 2025.
- To be eligible for a **master's or doctoral award**, applicants must be registered full-time in a master's or doctoral graduate program at an Ontario university at the time of taking up the award (i.e., Fall 2025), and must remain registered full-time throughout the entire duration of the award. Master's students remain eligible to the end of their 6th term of full-time study, and doctoral students to the end of their 15th term of full-time study.
- To be eligible for a **postdoctoral award**, applicants must be engaged in full-time research at an Ontario university at the time of taking up the award (i.e., September 1, 2025), and must have completed all requirements for the doctoral degree by May 31, 2025 and normally no earlier than January 31, 2022. In cases where an applicant completed all requirements for a doctoral degree before this date, an explanation (e.g., childrearing responsibilities) must accompany the application for the delay in application.
- While holding an Ontario Women's Health Scholars Award, a recipient is precluded from holding any other award with a value of more than \$30,000 for the same academic year (subject to the university's own policies).
- Publications of any kind, written or oral, related to the research undertaken by a recipient while holding an Ontario Women's Health Scholars Award shall acknowledge the support of the work from the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care with the following notation:

“The Ontario Women’s Health Scholars Award is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Ministry of Long-Term Care”

This acknowledgement shall precede all similar acknowledgements of financial support for the work of equal or lesser amounts, and shall also indicate that the views expressed in the publication are the views of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Long-Term Care.

## Application Process

Nominees must be sponsored and endorsed by the Dean of Graduate Studies at the Ontario university at which they are undertaking graduate study or postdoctoral research. **(Applicants do not need to obtain the Dean’s signature or endorsement when submitting the application. The Graduate Awards Office will provide this endorsement to applications that are selected by SGS to be sent forth to the COU.)** Prospective graduate students should only apply through the Ontario university where they intend to hold the award.

The University of Toronto is permitted to put forth two applications per award category to COU. Therefore, each graduate unit may nominate one candidate per award level to SGS for central adjudication.

Applicants must submit to their **graduate unit** (not Dean of Graduate Studies) an **electronic copy** as a single PDF file (excluding confidential letters) via email by the graduate unit application deadline, using the subject title “OWHSA 2025 App – NAME OF APPLICANT”. Applicants should include their student number in the body of their submission email. Please use the file naming convention “Last name, First name – OWHSA 2025 App”.

1. The completed application form from the [COU website](#)
2. A curriculum vitae – no page restrictions (must include information concerning the eligibility criteria)
3. A statement of research written by the candidate (maximum 1,000 words; must describe the research to be undertaken during the period of graduate or postdoctoral study and any progress already made in this research; one additional page is allowed for diagrams, bibliography, etc.)
4. A non-technical summary written by the candidate (maximum 500 words)

An application for a **master’s** or a **doctoral** award must also include:

- The applicant’s undergraduate and (if appropriate) graduate transcripts, which may be either:
  - Official transcripts issued by the university’s Registrar’s office (legends must be included for all transcripts including those from U of T); or
  - Copies verified and certified as accurate by the Registrar’s office of the nominating university. ACORN print-outs are acceptable for the departmental and university-wide review; however, nominees selected to be forwarded to the COU must provide official U of T transcripts in order to be forwarded.
- Confidential letters of appraisal of the applicant from **two** assessors\*\*\*

An application for a **postdoctoral** award must also include:

- A brief summary of the doctoral thesis of no more than 300 words
- Confidential letters of appraisals of the applicant from **four** assessors, signed and on letterhead\*\*\*
  - **Mandatory arm’s length assessors:** Postdoctoral applications must have two arm’s length assessors from among the four assessors. The arm’s length assessors cannot be:
    - A relative or close friend, or have a personal relationship with the applicant
    - In a position to benefit from the funding of the application
    - Affiliated with the applicant’s current and/or proposed institutions
    - Professionally affiliated with the applicant, as a result of (but not limited to): being their supervisor or trainee; being a member of the applicant’s supervisory committee; collaborating, publishing or sharing funding with the applicant, or having plans to do so in the immediate future

\*\*\*The letters of appraisal for all awards (master’s, doctoral, or postdoctoral) should focus on an evaluation of the applicant’s research to date, and on the research the applicant proposes to undertake during the graduate or postdoctoral period, paying particular attention to the criteria for selection described below. Assessors should also provide a short description of the relationship, if any, with the applicant.

The applicant must ask for the appraisals to be **emailed** directly from the referee to the **Graduate Administrator at the graduate unit/department** by the student deadline, with the subject title “OWHSA 2025 Reference – NAME OF APPLICANT”). For the PDF file, please use file naming convention “Applicant last name, first name – OWHSA 2025 Referee last name”.

## Renewals

Current OWHS Doctoral Award holders may apply for a renewal of the award for 2025-26. Applicants should visit the [COU website](#) for information regarding their eligibility for renewing their award and to download the renewal application form.

Renewal application packages and letters of appraisal may be submitted directly to SGS at [janine.harper@utoronto.ca](mailto:janine.harper@utoronto.ca) by December 6, 2024 for endorsement. Note that renewals are competitive and are based upon available funding.

## Evaluation Criteria

Applicants for **master's and doctoral awards** will be assessed on their talent, the excellence of their work, the vision that they bring to their endeavours, and the impact that the committee expects to result from the applicant's work, as indicated by:

- The program of study and research and its potential contribution to the advancement of knowledge about women's health;
- Past academic results, demonstrated by transcripts, awards and distinctions;
- Relevant professional and academic experience, including research training, as evidenced by papers presented at conferences and the applicant's publication record;
- Written letters of appraisal; and
- The appropriateness of the choice of institution and supervising investigator.

Applicants for **postdoctoral awards** will be assessed on their talent, the excellence of their work, the vision that they bring to their endeavours, and the impact that they foresee resulting from their work, as indicated by:

- The program of study and research and its potential contribution to the advancement of knowledge about women's health;
- The degree of originality and expected contribution to the advancement of knowledge about women's health;
- Significance of the research for women's health, understood to encompass scholarly or intellectual significance as well as social and cultural significance;
- The suitability of theoretical perspectives;
- The appropriateness and expected effectiveness of the research strategies or methodologies;
- The suitability and expected effectiveness of plans to communicate research results both within, and, as appropriate, beyond the academic community;
- Where appropriate, the nature and extent of research training;
- Written letters of appraisal; and
- The appropriateness of the choice of institution and supervising investigator.

## Results

The Graduate Unit will communicate the results of the internal competition to their applicants. The SGS Graduate Awards Office will notify those forwarded to SGS the University competition results in late January. The Council of Ontario Universities will announce the Ontario competition results in April 2025.

## Contacts & Resources

Please direct all questions regarding the Ontario Women's Health Scholars Awards competition or nomination process to:

Janine Harper  
Graduate Awards Officer  
Phone: 416-978-3555  
[janine.harper@utoronto.ca](mailto:janine.harper@utoronto.ca)  
[SGS OWHSA webpage](#)

COU Inquiries  
Phone: 416-979-2165, ext. 235  
[ExecDirectorQA@oucqa.ca](mailto:ExecDirectorQA@oucqa.ca)  
[COU OWHSA webpage](#)