



SGS Award Announcement

To: Graduate Chairs/Directors; Graduate Coordinators; Graduate Administrators
From: Margaret Meaney, Acting Graduate Awards Officer, Graduate Awards Office
CC: Joshua Barker Dean, School of Graduate Studies and Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education; John Peever, Vice-Dean, Students; Laura Stathopoulos, Director, Graduate Awards and Financial Aid
Date: September 26, 2024
Re: **2025-2026 Autism Scholars Award**

This announcement is for internal purposes only and should not be posted on websites external to the University.

Award Overview

Student Deadline to SGS:	December 2, 2024
Value/Duration:	Master's - \$18,000 (up to two awards) Doctoral - \$20,000 (up to three awards)
Level of Study:	Master's or Doctoral
Required Legal Status:	Domestic (Canadian citizens or permanent residents)
Results:	April 2025 by agency

*** Applicants are to submit their application directly to SGS Graduate Awards Office, not their graduate unit (or the Dean of Graduate Studies as the COU announcement indicates).**

Purpose

The Autism Scholars Awards Program was established with the support of the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) to ensure that Ontario attracts and retains pre-eminent scholars studying autism. The Autism Scholars Awards Program aims to establish a research community that meets or exceeds internationally accepted standards of scientific excellence, in the creation of new knowledge concerning **child** autism, and its translation into improved health for children through more effective services and products for children with autism, and thereby adds to the province's capacity in diagnosis and assessment of autism and the quality of its treatment system.

Eligibility to Apply

- To be eligible to receive an award, an applicant must be
 - A Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada as of January 31, 2025; and
 - Registered as a full-time student in a master's or doctoral program at an Ontario university at the beginning of the award period (Fall 2025) and remain registered as a full-time student throughout the term of the award.
- A master's student remains eligible until the end of the sixth term of full-time study;
- A doctoral student remains eligible until the end of the 15th term of full-time study, **note:** applicants who transferred (fast-tracked) from a master's program to a doctoral program must start counting terms from the start of the master's program; and
- During the year an Autism Scholars Award is held, the recipient is precluded from holding any other award that offers financial support of more than \$20,000 for that same year (subject to the university's own policies).

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 (**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 those applications selected by SGS to put forth to COU**). Potential graduate students should only apply through the Ontario University where they intend to hold the award.

Any sponsoring university is permitted to endorse up to two applicants per award level (master's and doctoral) to the COU for the Ontario competition.

Applicants must submit **an electronic copy** of their completed application as a single PDF file (excluding confidential letters) via email to margaret.meaney@utoronto.ca by the application deadline, using the subject title "Autism 2025 App – NAME OF APPLICANT". Applicants should include their student number in the body of their submission email.

Application Package

A complete application package will include all of the following items in the order listed and must be submitted by December 2, 2024 to margaret.meaney@utoronto.ca:

1. The completed application form – ~~attached, and~~ available from: <https://cou.ca/resources/awards/>
2. Curriculum vitae – no page restrictions (must include information concerning the eligibility criteria);
3. A statement of no more than 1,000 words describing the research to be undertaken during the period of graduate study written by applicant;
4. A non-technical summary of no more than 500 words written by the applicant;
5. One additional page is allowed for diagrams, bibliography, etc.;
6. Official or certified copies of all undergraduate and graduate transcripts are required. Official e-transcripts are accepted, but any encryption will need to be removed before combining with the rest of the application file. ACORN print-outs are acceptable for the university-wide review; however, nominees selected to be forwarded to the COU must provide official U of T transcripts in order to be forwarded. All other transcripts must be official; and
7. Confidential letters from **two** assessors, signed and on institutional letterhead (**emailed directly from the assessor to margaret.meaney@utoronto.ca** as a PDF attachment before December 2, 2024, with the subject title "Autism 2025 Reference_NAME OF APPLICANT"). For the PDF file, please use file naming convention "Applicant last name, first name_Autism 2025 Referee last name". Letters should focus on an evaluation of the applicant's research to date and the research being undertaken during the period of graduate study for which the applicant will hold an Autism Scholars Award, if successful.

Components 1 through 6 are to be combined into a single PDF file, using the file naming convention "Last name, first name – Autism 2025 App". Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

Evaluation Criteria

Master's and doctoral applications 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 autism;
- 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 candidate's publication record;
- Written letters of appraisal; and
- Appropriateness of the choice of institution and supervising investigator.

Results

The SGS Graduate Awards Office will notify applicants 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 Autism Scholars Award competition or nomination process to:

Margaret Meaney

Acting Graduate Awards Officer

Phone: 416-978-2205

margaret.meaney@utoronto.ca

[SGS Autism Scholars webpage](#)

COU Inquiries

ExecDirectorQA@oucqa.ca

[COU Awards webpage](#)

Note: COU does not provide advice on improving an application or provide feedback on an application