Important Disclaimer!
What is said (or not said) at this info session does not supersede the material contained in the agencies’ guidelines or application packages.
Agenda

1. Overview – The Federal Tri-Councils
2. NSERC PGS Competition
   - Overview
   - Eligibility
   - Competition Evaluation Criteria & Weightings
   - Tutorial Videos
   - Application Process & Components
   - Previous Results & 2018-19 Competition Specifics
3. Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement
4. Questions
The Federal Tri-Councils

The major federal source of funds for research and scholarship in academic institutions

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

Please Note: You may submit only one application per year to only one granting agency (NSERC, CIHR or SSHRC), with the exception of Vanier. Applications to multiple agencies will be disqualified.
NSERC Basic Criteria

• The program of research must be primarily in the natural sciences and engineering;

• The intended objectives of the research must be, primarily, to advance knowledge in one of the natural sciences or in engineering.

• Selecting the Appropriate Federal granting agency
  http://www.science.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=FEE7261A-1#NSERC1
• NSERC has clarified its section of the guidelines for Selecting the Appropriate Federal Granting Agency to help applicants better identify the appropriate agency when applying for funding.

• Applicants with questions on subject matter eligibility or those whose subject matter has a link, overlap, or future application to health (in particular drug discovery, disease diagnosis or treatment/prevention, development of medical devices, and collaboration with pharmaceutical companies), should contact NSERC with a one page summary of their research proposal in advance of submitting an application to seek clarification or a ruling.

• The Addendum to the guidelines for the eligibility of applications related to health has additional information and specific examples relating to subject matter eligibility.
PGS Competition

1. Alexander Graham Bell Canada Graduate Scholarship (CGS)

2. Postgraduate Scholarship (PGS)
   - 2 Awards Available: CGS D, PGS D
   - Single application for both programs
   - Highest-ranked CGS D applicants will offered a CGS D, next highest ranked will be offered a PGS D
## PGS/CGS Award Details

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<tr>
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<th>PGS D</th>
<th>CGS D</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Value (Per Year)</strong></td>
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<td>$35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
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Basic PGS Eligibility Requirements

• Canadian citizen or permanent resident
• Intend to pursue full-time graduate studies and research at the doctoral level in the natural sciences and engineering
• First-class average (a grade of "A-") in each of the last two years of study is no longer an eligibility criterion
• Joint programs with a professional degree (e.g. MD/PhD) are eligible, provided they have a significant research component (i.e. award would be held during the PhD portion of the program)

Applicants are responsible for consulting the FULL eligibility requirements outlined by NSERC and available at:
PGS D/ CGS D Eligibility

- As of December 31, 2019 completed **between zero and 24 months** of studies in the doctoral program for which you are requesting funding
- Direct entry – as of December 31, 2019 completed **between four and 36 months** of studies in the doctoral program for which you are requesting funding
- Not hold or have held a CGS D or Vanier CGS from CIHR or SSHRC or previously taken up an NSERC PGS B, PGS D, CGS D, IPS 2 or a Vanier CGS for the program of study to which you are applying for funding

*NSERC PGS D can be held abroad if you hold a degree from a Canadian University*
## Application Weighting

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<td>Research Ability/ Potential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relevant experience and achievements obtained within and beyond academia</td>
<td>50 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selection Criteria

Research Ability or Potential

✓ Research proposal: focused, feasible, clear methodology, and significance of the project
✓ Relevant training: academic, research, lived, and work experience
✓ Quality of contributions to research and development i.e. publications, patents, reports, posters, etc.
✓ Critical thinking, sound judgment, originality, initiative, autonomy, and enthusiasm for research
✓ Ability to communicate theoretical, technical and/or scientific concepts clearly and logically in written & oral formats
Selection Criteria

Relevant experiences and achievements obtained within and beyond academia

- Scholarships, awards & distinctions
- Academic record (entire record)
- Professional, academic and extracurricular activities and collaborations with supervisors, colleagues, peers, students and members of the community
  - mentoring, teaching, outreach, chairing committees, participating in organizations, and/or clubs, etc.
The Application Process

Step 1 Determine where to apply:

• If you have been registered in a degree program at U of T at any time since January 2019 you should apply through a graduate unit at U of T.

Step 2 – If applying through U of T, consult your graduate unit regarding their application deadline, the method of submission, and the contact details for the ‘University Designate’ representative.
• Create an online account on NSERC’s website
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
Security, Privacy and Use and Disclosure of Information

Before using NSERC's On-Line System, please read the following documents and register your acceptance below:

- NSERC's Security Statement and details on the retention periods of the data;
- NSERC's statement on the federal Access to Information Act and Privacy Act;
- For applicants and co-applicants: Use and Disclosure of Personal Information Provided to NSERC; and
- For Referees: Instructions to Referees on the Privacy Act, Confidentiality and the Use and Disclosure of Information.

When you login and use this system, it means that you understand and accept that these policies and conditions apply.

Login

You will be automatically logged out of the system if there has not been any activity (e.g., Save, Preview, etc.) for an extended period of time. To avoid having to login again, we recommend that you select Save every 10 to 15 minutes.

Account name (User ID) (30 chars)

Forgot your Account name?

Password

Forgot your Password?

Must be 8-16 characters long, must contain at least one special character (@#$%^&*(){}[]\)-/.? and no spaces, may contain numbers (0-9), lower and upper case letters (a-z, A-Z). Please note that your password is case sensitive. (10 chars)
• Begin working on PGS application (Form 201) – Make sure you follow the “Presentation Standards” defined by NSERC – font size, etc. Click “Save” each time you complete a page.
**Person Profile** – full name, citizenship, email, etc.
*NSERC PIN – can leave blank if you don’t already have one.
*Self-Identification - Aboriginal students are forwarded automatically to NSERC

• **Addresses** – current, previous, etc. – NSERC uses this info to contact you. If you move or change email addresses, before the results are out, update your online profile and contact them directly.

• **Academic Background** – all degree studies, college programs can be included under “Other” – transcripts not required.
Collection of Self-Identification Data

**NEW** - Beginning in August 2018, NSERC (in coordination with SSHRC and CIHR) are asking all applicants to self-identify with information on age, gender, Indigenous identity, disability and visible minority status.

A harmonized self-identification data collection process allows the granting agencies to monitor the equity performance of its programs and design new measures that achieve greater equity, diversity and inclusion in the research enterprise.

Completing the new self-identification form will be mandatory for applicants and co-applicants but for each category there is an option “I prefer not to answer.”
Indigenous Applicants

Applicants who are Indigenous [First Nations (North American Indian - Status and Non-Status), Métis, or Inuit] are encouraged to self-identify their status on their NSERC CGS and PGS D application form as universities are permitted to recommend an unlimited number of self-identified Indigenous applicants above their application quota to the national competition.

In order to be considered for this, Indigenous applicants must provide consent within the application form to share this information with their institutions and NSERC. Self-identification data are not seen or used by NSERC’s selection committee members or by the applicant’s references.
Indigenous/Woman Applicants

In addition to Indigenous applicants providing consent, a similar consent will also be required so that NSERC may increase equity and diversity among qualified applicants by giving award priority to meritorious applicants who self-identify as Indigenous and/or as a woman if sufficient funds become available.
Form 201 - Person Profile

This information was transferred from the New User Registration Information screen. If you need to update these fields, use the Maintain User Profile function under Account Management on the eConsole screen.

- Family name
- Given name
- Initial(s) of all given names
- Previous family name
- NSERC PIN
- Email address

Date of landing as stated on official immigration document: [MM] [DD] [YY]

Citizenship:

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
• **Experience** – paid or unpaid work, research, projects, etc. Applicants must indicate if work contributed to their degree(s).

• **Awards** – competitive (i.e. not needs based) can include Dean’s lists, non-monetary, and declined awards.

• **Location of Tenure** – must list at least one choice, up to three (justification for PDF only)
• **S&F Information** – months of graduate studies; months of study in program funding is being requested for; even if taking up at foreign university, should choose yes to be considered for CGS
• **Thesis** – all theses in progress or completed; do not duplicate info in Outline of Proposed Research
• **Research Subject Code** – important for determining your Selection Committee!!
• **Key Words** – up to 10 to describe proposed area of research/research project – also important for specific committee member selection
NSERC Scholarships and Fellowships
Selection Committees

- **168 – Earth Sciences** (Competition 2019)
- **169 – Evolution and Ecology** (Competition 2019)
- **177 - Mathematical Sciences** (Competition 2019)
- **178 - Physics and Astronomy** (Competition 2019)
- **179 - Chemistry** (Competition 2019)
- **187 - Cellular and Molecular Biology** (Competition 2019)
- **194 - Chemical, Biomedical and Materials Science Engineering** (Competition 2019)
- **195 - Plant and Animal Biology** (Competition 2019)
- **196 - Psychology** (Competition 2020)
- **197 – Electrical Engineering** (Competition 2019)
- **198 - Computing Sciences** (Competition 2019)
- **201 – Civil and Industrial Engineering** (Competition 2019)
- **202 - Mechanical Engineering** (Competition 2019)
- **1078 - Collaborative Research and Training Experience Program** (Competition 2020)
Outline of Proposed Research

• Summary of future research endeavours included as a .pdf attachment

• See the presentation standards provided by NSERC

• Specific, clear, enthusiastic, without being too jargon-laden
  ✓ Background, Objectives, Hypothesis, Experimental/theoretical approach/Methods ((citing literature pertinent to the proposal)
  ✓ Address the methodology and rationale for including sex, gender and diversity considerations in your research.

• Do not repeat information from Thesis section (you can refer to it)

• Focus on what you will be working on during the tenure of the award

• Clearly explain the significance to the NSE

• Maximum of 2 pages in length

• Detailed instructions: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/OnlineServices- ServicesEnLigne/instructions/201/pgs-pdf_eng.asp
Bibliography

• Max 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.
Justifying the eligibility of your research (as per NSERC)

- Complete the *Justification for Eligibility of Proposed Research* section if your research has any potential overlap with health or social sciences.
- This section is used by NSERC staff to determine the eligibility of your proposed research; it is not seen by the selection committees.
- Use plain language to explain why you believe that your research is intended to advance knowledge in NSE.
- It should not be another description of your research project.
- It should be a short explanation (a paragraph is fine, you do not need to use the whole page).
Common mistakes when writing proposal / contributions / statement (as per NSERC)

- Lack of focus or coherence
- Repetitiveness
- Failure to cite important work in the area
- Failure to cite recent relevant work
- Citing too many irrelevant articles
- Relying too much on secondary sources (lack of understanding)
- Too much detail on minor issues; too little detail on major issues
- Research contributions not properly highlighted
- Impact / importance of research not explained
Graduate Centre for Academic Communication

Welcome to the Graduate Centre for Academic Communication (GCAC). GCAC provides graduate students with advanced training in academic writing and speaking.

We are now located on the first floor of the McMurrich Building (12 Queen's Park Crescent West).

Graduate students need to be able to communicate sophisticated information to sophisticated audiences. As you prepare to attend your first conference, to write your first proposal, or to publish your first paper, you will need stronger communication skills than those needed in undergraduate work. By emphasizing professional development rather than remediation, GCAC can help you cultivate the ability to diagnose and address the weaknesses in your oral and written work.

https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/resources-supports/gcac/
Registration for September 2019 GCAC courses opens on Friday August 30th at 10:00 a.m.

Students may register in a maximum of two GCAC courses in the September session

Note: If you need to know the location of a course in which you are registered, please check your registration confirmation email. That email is sent to the address that is listed in your official U of T profile.

Registration Instructions & Attendance Policies

September 2019 Course Schedule

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<th>Section</th>
<th>Day and Time</th>
<th>Duration Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>*Writing CIHR Proposals (Physical and Life Sciences)</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tues. 5:00 – 7:00</td>
<td>Sept. 10 – Sept. 24</td>
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<td>*Writing NSERC Proposals (Physical and Life Sciences)</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mon. 10:00 – 1:00</td>
<td>Sept. 9 – Sept. 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Writing SSHRC Proposals (Humanities and Social Sciences)</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fri. 10:00 – 12:00</td>
<td>Sept. 20 – Oct. 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/resources-supports/gcac/current-terms-courses/
Contributions and applicant’s statement (max 2 pages total)

• Part 1: List articles published, accepted, submitted

• Part 2: Most significant contributions to R&D
  – Comment on the importance of your top three contributions to the research area.

• Part 3: Applicant’s statement:
  – research experience
  – relevant activities (describe what leadership role you took, not just position title)

• No updates accepted once application is submitted to NSERC
Special Circumstances (new)

• Was previously within Contributions & Applicant Statement section.
• Optional attachment – ½ page max
• Describe any special circumstances that have had an effect on your performance or productivity, e.g. health problems, family responsibilities, parental leave, disabilities or other applicable circumstances.
• Explain any gaps in the chronology of your experience (including relevant employment).
• The selection committee members are asked to recognize delays and assess the quality of the applicant’s performance and productivity during their active period (that is, excluding the period of special circumstances).
• If your supervisor is unable to provide you with a Report on the Applicant, you may use this section to provide an explanation.
Transcripts

- Up-to-date official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate studies
- Up-to-date defined as dated or issued in the current fall session or after the last term during which you were registered, even if no grades- to determine eligibility)
- Official – No ACORN print-outs
- Transcripts from outside North America - certified copies
- Identify appropriate graduate unit “University Designate”
- Check with your unit to see what transcripts are already on file and can be used
- Official transcripts required for graduate unit deadline
- You are responsible for ensuring all transcripts have been uploaded according to the guidelines and are readable
Form 201 - Transcripts - University

The university designate is appointed by the university. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the designate has all official and up-to-date transcripts relating to their application. The applicant must provide a transcript for all programs listed in the "Academic Background" module.

Enter the Family name, Given name and E-mail address of the university designate who will scan and upload your university transcripts.

Transcripts

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<td>Organization</td>
<td>Toronto</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Aerospace Studies, Institute for</td>
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Preview Application

This page allows you to view and print individual sections of the application. View an individual section by selecting it.

Form 201 - Application for a Postgraduate Scholarship or Postdoctoral Fellowship

Transcripts - University
Report on the Applicant

- **Report #1**: Your Thesis Supervisor
- **Report #2**: Person sufficiently familiar with your research and other abilities.
- Cannot be from a proposed supervisor unless they have already supervised you before
- Ensure you set an early deadline for their report – do not list it as the day applications are due to your graduate unit
- You will not have access to the reports, but will be able to see when it is completed, and have ability to “unlock” allowing referees to make amendments
Report on Applicant (cont’d)

- Contact your proposed referees early to ensure they are willing to complete a positive & enthusiastic report for you.

- Feel free to remind them of your contributions and information you would like to have in the letter (screenshot available in this presentation);

- Referees are asked to review your Form 201 on the report so be sure to complete as much of it as you can before sending the reference request.

- Follow-up prior to the deadline (note you must have both references completed before you can submit your application); and

- Remember to give them a big thank you.
Form 201 - Reports on the Applicant

Provide information on the two referees who will each complete the Report on the Applicant. The reports must be completed by persons capable of making an informed assessment.

After the data is saved, the system will automatically generate an e-mail to each referee inviting them to complete a Report on the Applicant.

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Form 201 - Reports on the Applicant

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Report 1 of 2

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Organization: Toronto
Department: Astronomy and Astrophysics (St. George Campus)

Report 2 of 2

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Organization: Toronto
Department: Anaesthesia

Date Modified: 2015/09/01
Report on the Applicant – Referee View
Tutorial Videos

### NSERC Results - Canada Wide

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<td>1586</td>
<td>1542</td>
<td>1687</td>
<td>1693</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Awarded</strong></td>
<td>662</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>713</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Success Rate</strong></td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>39%</td>
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## NSERC Results - UofT

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applications Reviewed at SGS</strong></td>
<td>255</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applications Forwarded</strong></td>
<td>199</td>
<td>194</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Awards Received</strong></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>108</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Success Rate</strong></td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>53%</td>
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2019-2020 PGS D Competition

Quota = TBA

REMEMBER:
Consult your graduate unit regarding their internal deadline – this is not the same as the University or NSERC deadline
MSFSS Objective

- To support high-calibre graduate students in building global linkages and international networks through the pursuit of exceptional research experiences at research institutions outside of Canada.
- Available to active CGS Master’s, CGS Doctoral or eligible Vanier CGS holders
- Up to $6,000
Eligibility to Hold an Award

- hold an active CGS at the time your study period abroad starts;
- be registered full time in a graduate research studies program at a Canadian institution for the duration of the time abroad;
- take up the award within one year of receiving the notice of award for the CGS Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement; and
- return to complete your degree in Canada.
MSFSS Key Dates

• Deadline for universities to submit applications to the granting agencies: June 10\textsuperscript{th} and October 10\textsuperscript{th}

• Students submit application and all required documents to the School of Graduate Studies for consideration
Additional Tips
What Makes a Great Merit Based Application?

Advice from Graduate Awards Office & Prof. Malcolm Campbell - Former Vice-Principal Research, UTSC

• Reviewers spend 6-8 minutes on each application. You have a short period of time to sell yourself on paper.
• Selection/Evaluation Criteria – make sure you “hit” them all
Academic Achievements

• Reviewers look heavily at PROGRESS. Ongoing awards look good. Publications, historical grade trends, and PRODUCTIVITY

• Your contributions/role in a project, impact of the work, awards, presentations, research background, communication achievements, leadership roles (volunteer, elected positions, clubs, sports, etc.)

• Limit to university level achievements
Research Proposal/Plan of Study

• Write a clear and concise research proposal that an educated non-expert could understand
• Give your proposal to as many people as possible to review – ideally a professor/ senior graduate student who can critique it
• Read the proposal out loud to yourself and others. If it doesn’t sound natural, then it needs more work
• Engage the reviewer
• Importance/Significance – you want your reviewer to advocate for your application
Writing Style/Formatting

• Make it easy for the reviewer to find key information
• Use headings
• Apply boldface or underlined text strategically
• Be clear, succinct, scholarly but understandable
• Be straight forward, emphasize strengths, not a time to be shy
• Follow formatting standards
Questions

NSERC Scholarships & Fellowships:
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