To: Department/Program Heads, Graduate Coordinators, and Graduate Assistants, NSERC departments/programs

From: Monica Corbett
Date: September 2, 2017
RE: 2018-2019 NSERC PGS/CGS DOCTORAL COMPETITION

DEADLINE TO SGS: OCTOBER 19, 2017

Guidelines, complete instructions, and the online application form for the 2018-2019 NSERC Postgraduate Scholarships (PGS) and Canada Graduate Scholarships (CGS) Doctoral competitions are now available at the NSERC website: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/BellandPostgrad-BelletSuperieures_eng.asp

Please inform your students of this competition and the university deadline as soon as possible.

All information is also available in French from NSERC’s website. Under the Official Languages Act, federal institutions, including SSHRC, NSERC, and CIHR, must ensure respect for the rights of individual Canadians to receive services from federal institutions and organizations that provide services on their behalf, in the official language of their choice.

UPDATES and REMINDERS, from NSERC

1. REMINDER: Harmonized Award Holder’s Guide: In September 2016 the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) released a harmonized award holder’s guide, the Tri-Agency Research Training Award Holder’s Guide. It is available on this website: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/Guides-Guides/TriRTA-TriBFR_eng.asp. This guide replaced the award holder’s guides currently in use by each funding agency. All other agency-specific regulations continue to apply.

2. NEW: “Must start May rule removed”: as of the 2018-19 competition NSERC has discontinued the rule that PGS D/CGS D holders must take up the award in May following the announcement of the results if, as of December 31 of the application year the student has completed 24 months of studies in the program for which support was requested (36 months if student was admitted to the doctoral program directly from a bachelor’s program).

3. NEW: NSERC’s Selection Committee Guide is available on the NSERC website: In preparing their application, applicants should consult the Selection criteria and indicators section and Appendix A of the Selection Committee Guide for Postgraduate Scholarships – Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships Programs (http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/_doc/Students-Etudiants/SelectionCommitteeGuide_e.pdf). This guide provides useful information on what committee members look for in assessing applications.


Here are details of the 2018-2019 CGS /PGS D Competition and application processes.

1. All information is on NSERC’s website: Up-to-date program literature and forms are now available on NSERC’s website: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/index_eng.asp
Complete instructions for completing and submitting the online application are found here: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/OnlineServices-ServicesEnLigne/instructions/201/pgs-pdf_eng.asp

2. The online application: NSERC applications are submitted online by the applicant, checked online by staff at the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), reviewed electronically by the relevant School of Graduate Studies Fellowship/Awards subcommittee members, and submitted to NSERC online by the university’s Scholarships Liaison Officers (SLO). The online application is known as Form 201. Applicants must use the most recent version of Form 201 and submit their application online. NSERC will not accept paper copies of applications.

At Queen’s University, the SLO is the Director of Admissions and Student Services, Monica Corbett. Monica, and the SGS Awards Officers, Lisa Marzano and Leisa McDonald, are the only staff people with access to the online database of NSERC applications. Therefore departments/programs will not be able to review their students’ applications in the database. SGS staff will be able to save the applications as pdfs and send them the departments/programs. SGS would do that if there was something in an application that had to be clarified, such as the proposed research, or the academic eligibility of an applicant, etc.

3. Transcripts:
   a. Applicants must submit official, up to date transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate studies, both current and past studies. Applicants who are currently registered must submit a transcript for their current program, regardless of the number of months completed in the program. This requirement also applies to students who started their programs of study in Fall 2017 at Queen’s University. Transcripts for any transferred courses taken at other universities must also be included. Note that a transcript is required for all programs listed in the application, even if a program was not completed.

   b. Official and up-to-date transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate studies must be scanned and uploaded, in the Transcripts - University page of each application, by SGS staff. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the SGS has an official hard copy and up-to-date transcript for all the degree programs listed under Academic Background section of their application, **BY THE DEADLINE OF OCTOBER 19, 2017.**

   c. The online application process requires universities to assign a university designate(s) who will upload transcripts for applicants. There is a place in the online application where the applicant has to enter the university designate’s name and email address. The name for the applicant to enter is Lisa Marzano, and the email address is marzanol@queensu.ca.

   d. OFFICIAL, ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPTS ARE REQUIRED. NSERC will accept only current and original, official transcripts for all applications. **Transcripts generated from the applicant’s personal account on the university website (i.e from SOLUS) will not be accepted.** Certified photocopies will be accepted only for transcripts from foreign locations where official transcripts would be hard to obtain. These photocopies must be signed by the SLO, or Awards Officers, School of Graduate Studies, Queen’s University.

   e. If ALL of an applicant’s previous degree(s) have been completed outside Canada/US, the Department Head, Chair, or Graduate Coordinator must provide a statement addressing:
      • the applicant’s academic strength
• Reputation of former university. Also, any transcripts that are not in English or French must be translated into English or French, and that translation must also be submitted.

4. Eligibility Criteria for Students:
Awards available, Eligibility and Conditions: For complete details on:
• the Alexander Graham Bell Canada Graduate Scholarships (CGS) and NSERC Post Graduate Scholarship (PGS)
• who is eligible to apply,
• minimum academic eligibility standards for applicants,
• selecting the appropriate granting agency
• review process
• selection criteria
• all acceptance and eligibility conditions to hold a 2018-2019 CGS or PGS, go here: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/BellandPostgrad-BelletSuperieures_eng.asp

Applicants must consult the Eligibility Criteria for Students and Fellows section of the website (http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/eligibility-admissibilite/students-etudiants_eng.asp) for important information and any updates to eligibility criteria pertaining to proposed program of study and research.

Applicants must also consult the tri-agency document, Selecting the Appropriate Federal Granting Agency, http://www.science.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=FEE7261A-1 which contains important information and guidelines of each agency, to help applicants select the one best suited to consider their application.

5. Proposed research eligibility and program of study eligibility:
a. Research Code selection: In the Key Words/Research Subject Code page of their application, applicants will select the research code that best corresponds to their proposed field of study. The research codes available to select from can be found here: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Help-Aide/ScholarshipCodes-CodesPourBourses_Eng.asp.

The research subject code entered on the application will determine the selection committee which will evaluate the application, both at Queen’s and at NSERC. However, note that NSERC may assign the application to a different committee if it determines that the subject matter is more appropriate for another committee.

b. Proposed Research eligibility: the applicant’s proposed research must be in an area of natural sciences or engineering supported by NSERC. Applicants who are unsure if their proposed research falls under NSERC’s mandate must contact NSERC for assistance, as soon as possible and prior to submitting their NSERC application.

c. Program of Study eligibility: the program of study the applicant is pursuing or intends to pursue must be eligible for NSERC support. There are very specific requirements for programs of study in health related areas. Full details are here: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/policies-politiques/Addendum-Addenda_eng.asp Applicants who are unsure if their program of study is eligible for NSERC support must contact NSERC as soon as possible and prior to submitting their NSERC application.
d. Justification for Eligibility of Proposed Research: Applicants must complete the Justification for Eligibility of Proposed Research section of Form 201 if their research has any link with, or overlap or relevance to, health or social sciences and humanities. They must describe the natural sciences or engineering (NSE) research challenges of the project on which they propose to work during the tenure of their scholarship or fellowship. They must clearly explain why their proposed research should be considered research that is predominantly NSE and should be considered research that is directed to an NSE audience. The justification will be used by NSERC when evaluating the subject matter of applications received and must accompany the application at the time of submission. Applicants whose application is rejected because of ineligible subject matter will not be allowed to submit the Justification afterwards.

Other important eligibility criteria are carefully explained on NSERC website, and applicants are responsible for reviewing this information carefully before submitting their application.

NOTES FOR DEPARTMENTS REGARDING ELIGIBILITY:

1. Applicant eligibility: To be considered eligible for support, as of the application deadline date, the applicant:

- must be a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada;
- must hold, or expect to hold (at the time of beginning the award), a degree in science or engineering from a university whose standing is recognized by NSERC;
- intend to pursue, in the following year, full-time graduate studies and research at the doctoral level in an eligible program in one of the areas of the natural sciences and engineering supported by NSERC;
- must have obtained a first-class average (an average of A-, at Queen’s) in each of the last two completed years of study (full-time equivalent);
- must not have previously taken up an NSERC PGS or IPS, or a CGS or a Vanier CGS, for the program of study to which the student is currently applying for funding;
- must not hold, or have held, a Canada Graduate Scholarship at the same level as the level to which the student is currently applying, from either CIHR or SSHRC.

Students are not eligible to receive scholarship support while in a qualifying year of study.

2. Previous graduate studies counted in Determining Eligibility: Eligibility for NSERC awards is based on the number of months in the program for which funding is requested. For example, if an applicant is applying for support for a graduate degree program that he or she has not yet begun, the number of “months of graduate studies completed” is ALWAYS 0. If the student is applying for support of a graduate degree program already in progress, we count the number of months they have been registered in that program, as of December 31, 2017.

In the evaluation of eligibility to apply, NSERC will consider all studies counted towards a graduate degree, whether completed at the degree-granting institution or not. Also, NSERC will count two sessions of part-time study as one session of full-time study.
NSERC uses the date of degree completion to determine the eligibility of applicants. This is the date on which all the requirements of the degree have been met, including successful defense and submission of the corrected copy of the thesis (in accordance with the applicant’s university’s regulations).

Any time spent in graduate studies in overlapping fields (as explained in CIHR/SSHRC Overlap, below) that the applicant has completed at the time of submitting the NSERC application will usually be counted in determining eligibility. This will be the case even if another federal granting agency supported the applicant during this period of study.

3. Total scholarship support available: Scholarship support for graduate studies through NSERC is limited to a lifetime maximum of four years (48 months) of full-time equivalency. NSERC will include any graduate-level scholarship funding provided by NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR in the calculation of previous funding support.

If an applicant had up to **12 months** of support at the M level (through an IPS 1,* PGS M, CGS M), he/she is eligible for a maximum of **36 months** of support at the D level (through an IPS 2,* PGS D, CGS D or Vanier CGS D) provided all other eligibility criteria for those programs are met (months of study, etc.).

If an applicant had between **12 and 24 months** of support at the M level (through an IPS 1,* PGS A, PGS M + PGS M extension or CGS M + PGS M extension), he/she is eligible for a maximum of **24 months** of support at the D level (through a 24-month IPS 2,* CGS D or PGS D) provided all other eligibility criteria for those programs are met (months of study, etc.).

**Note the following exceptions to this rule:**

a. If an applicant has held a 24-month IPS 1,* he/she may still be eligible to hold a CGS D for a period of 36 months provided all other eligibility criteria for those programs are met (months of study, etc.).

b. Consult the Vanier CGS Web site for information on duration of scholarship support specific to that program.

* IPS includes all NSERC industrial postgraduate scholarship programs.

4. Eligibility of Part-time students: NSERC’s CGS and PGS awards may be held by part time graduate students, if these students are restricted to part-time studies for reasons of disability, or family responsibility. For eligible part-time students, the stipend will be the equivalent of a full-time award spread over a longer period of time. All other CGS or PGS regulations apply.

5. Aboriginal Applicants: NSERC is continuing to encourage Aboriginal students to pursue university studies in the natural sciences and engineering. Any self-identified Aboriginal student recommended by a Canadian university for a PGS will not be counted in that university’s application quota.

6. CIHR/SSHRC overlap: Students are sometimes confused as to whether they should apply to NSERC, or SSHRC, or CIHR. Applicants may only submit one application per academic year to NSERC or CIHR or SSHRC. In cases where the proposed research is deemed by NSERC to fall within the mandate of either CIHR or SSHRC, NSERC will not accept the application. Additional instructions are available here: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/Eligibility-Admissibilite/students-etudiants_eng.asp
7. Eligibility to HOLD an Award:

To hold a CGS D or PGS D the student must:
- Be registered full time in a doctoral program at an eligible university;
-- Not have previously taken up an NSERC PGS B, PGS D, or IPS* 2, CGS D, or Vanier CGS.

NOTES:
1. CGS /PGS D support will not extend beyond the 52nd month of the doctoral program (64th month if the student was admitted to the doctoral program directly from a bachelor’s program).

2. Recipients will be granted a two-year CGS D or PGS D, if
- They previously held a two-year PGS A or IPS 1*;
- They previously held a one-year CGS M or PGS M plus a PGS M Extension; or
- They have completed more than the full-time equivalent of 12 months of their doctoral program (24 months if the student was admitted to the doctoral program directly from a bachelor’s program) as of December 31, 2017.

3. Scholarship support for graduate studies through NSERC is limited to a lifetime maximum of four years (48 months) full-time equivalent. NSERC will include any graduate-level support offered by SSHRC and CIHR, and taken up, in the calculation of available support. Any time spent in graduate studies in overlapping fields (as explained above) completed at the time of application will usually be counted at the time of application in determining eligibility. This will be the case even if another federal granting agency supported the student during this period of study.

NOTES FOR DEPARTMENTS REGARDING APPLICATION PROCEDURES:

1. PGS/CGS applications are the same: There is a single online application (Form 201 and required attachments) electronic submission and university selection process for the NSERC PGS and CGS. At the national level, the top-ranked applicants will be offered a CGS D, and the next tier of meritorious applicants will be offered a PGS D.

2. Registration Status at Time of Application, and where to Submit Application
   a. Applicants who are students currently registered at, or are on an approved leave of absence from, Queen’s University, or were registered at Queen’s during the year of application (January-December 2017), apply through Queen’s University.
   b. Applicants who:
      - are not currently registered at Queen’s University, or
      - are registered at Queen’s University, but not in a degree program, or
      - are not currently registered at any university,
      AND who graduated from a degree program in an NSERC-supported field from Queen’s University during the year of application (January-December 2017) apply through Queen’s University.
   c. Applicants who:
      - are not currently enrolled at any university, or are registered at a university, but not in a degree program;
      AND who graduated from a degree program in an NSERC-supported field from a Canadian university prior to January 2017, apply directly to NSERC.
   d. Applicants who are currently registered at a foreign university apply directly to NSERC.
This list does not cover ALL possible application procedures. Applicants who are unsure about how to apply must contact NSERC (schol@nserc-crsng.gc.ca).

If an applicant applied directly to NSERC when they were required to apply through a Canadian university, the application will be deemed ineligible and will be rejected.

The application deadline for applicants who must apply directly to NSERC is October 15, 2017. That is the date that the complete application must be received by NSERC.

OTHER INFORMATION:

1. Selection Criteria and Relative Weightings: Refer closely to Appendix A: Selection criteria and indicators for scholarship and fellowship applications) to understand how applications are reviewed and adjudicated by both Queen’s University and NSERC. Also, and as required by NSERC, the School of Graduate Studies Fellowship Committee members will use the following criteria and weightings when choosing applications to forward to NSERC:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>PGS D</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Excellence</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Ability/Potential</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication, Interpersonal and Leadership Abilities</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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2. Review Structure at NSERC: NSERC’s THIRTEEN PGS Scholarships and Fellowships Selection Committees are:

- Civil, industrial and systems engineering
- Chemical, biomedical and materials science engineering
- Electrical engineering
- Computing sciences
- Mathematical sciences
- Mechanical engineering
- Physics and astronomy
- Chemistry
- Earth sciences
- Evolution and Ecology
- Cellular and molecular biology
- Plant and animal biology
- Psychology

Applications are placed into one of these selection committee categories based on what the applicant indicates will be the discipline of the proposed research (See Research code selection above).
3. Queen’s Internal Review and Selection processes:

All submitted applications are reviewed by SGS staff for eligibility and completeness prior to review by the Fellowship committee/Awards Subcommittee review. All eligible applications are divided into the 13 NSERC PGS Selection Committee categories for review by the designated subcommittee group.

The Fellowship/awards subcommittee members from the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Sciences Graduate Council are responsible for the applications in the categories of Chemical, Biomedical and Materials Science Engineering, Civil, industrial and systems engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering. The Science Graduate Council’s “Life Sciences” awards subcommittee members are responsible for the applications in the categories of Evolution and Ecology, Plant and Animal Biology, and Psychology. The Science Graduate Council’s “Natural/Physical Sciences” awards subcommittee members are responsible for the applications in the categories of Computing Science, Mathematical Sciences, Physics and Astronomy, Chemistry, and Earth Sciences. The Fellowship/awards subcommittee members from the Faculty of Health Science Graduate Council are responsible for the applications in the category of Cellular and Molecular Biology.

Each subcommittee reviews and ranks the applications they are responsible for, within each of the 13 categories. Then, a meeting of the subcommittee is held either in person or via an email review, at which the applications to forward to NSERC’s national competition in fulfillment of our quota, are selected.

4. Postgraduate Supplements: These supplements provide CGS, PGS, and IPS and Vanier CGS holders the opportunity to receive additional funds from other organizations. Students should review the list on NSERC’s website http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/Supplements-Supplements/index_eng.asp to see what types of supplements are available and to determine if they are eligible. In these sections, students will also find information on supplement values, how to apply, contact information, and selection criteria.

5. CONTACTS: Find out who to contact at NSERC for assistance here: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/ContactUs-ContactezNous/index_eng.asp

Please inform your students of this competition and university deadline as soon as possible.

Thank you for your assistance. Please contact Lisa Marzano via email (marzanol@queensu.ca) or me (corbettm@queensu.ca) if there are problems or questions.

Yours sincerely,
Monica Corbett
Director, Admissions and Student Services
School of Graduate Studies