

Department of Chemistry

NSERC/OGS Application Informational
Session – September 13, 2011

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Departmental Deadline

- NSERC and OGS – Monday, October 3, 2011

WEBSITES

NSERC: www.nserc.ca/index.htm
(click on “For Students and Fellows”)

OGS: <http://osap.gov.on.ca>
(Log into the OSAP website)

ABOUT OGS...

The Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) program is designed to encourage excellence in graduate studies at the master's and doctoral levels

Value of the OGS: \$5,000 per term

2 Term award: \$10,000

3 Term award: \$15,000

Scholarship must be held for a **minimum** of 2 consecutive terms

OGS awards are not automatically renewed - must submit a new application **each year**

Must be held at a university **within** Ontario

Award may begin in May 2012, September 2012, or January 2013

OGS ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Canadian citizen or permanent resident (*or admitted to Canada with a student visa*)
- Academic record:
 - If entering the *first* or *second* year of grad studies must have average of at least A- (80% or 3.70/4.00 or 7.0/9.0) on the *last 20 one-term/semester courses* (or 10.0 full credits)
 - Applicants entering the *third year* or beyond of graduate studies must have an average of at least A- (80%) on *all graduate courses completed*.
 - Applicants **MUST** meet the academic criteria of 80%; there are no exceptions. Students who do not meet the minimum requirement are automatically disqualified and are excluded in the departmental ranking. Applicants may contact Denise Ing to assist them in determining if they meet the minimum required academic standing.
- Number of awards:
 - M.Sc. – up to 2 awards. Awards tenable during 1 or both of the first 2 academic years of a master's degree program, but not after the 2nd year.
 - Ph.D. – up to 4 awards. Awards tenable during any of the first 5 academic years of Ph.D. program, but not after the 5th year.
- Lifetime maximum of only 4 years of government funded awards (OGS, SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR)

Criteria for OGS Rankings

- Background preparation
- Originality
- Present ability at research and/or research potential
- Industriousness
- Judgement
- Oral and written skills
- Overall ability

In other words, they look at academic merit (transcripts, awards, distinctions), reference letters, departmental rankings, and the Plan of Study / Statement of Interest

Review Process

- OGS applications are no longer reviewed and ranked by the Graduate Studies Committee
- OGS applications are forwarded directly to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for further review and selection

OGS - Words of Advice

All university transcripts must be original.

Please order your university transcripts NOW!!

OGS will not accept photocopies or faxes for Academic Assessment Report 1 or Academic Assessment Report 2

- Give your referees plenty of time and let referees know the deadline
- Provide the referees with the form for this year's competition with your information completed. Referees must use Page 1 of the PDF-fillable form provided by the ministry.
- Reference letters on university letterhead (maximum of one page) can be attached in place of Page 2, but they must follow font and spacing guidelines and be signed by the referee.
- Reference letters may forward directly to the Chemistry Graduate Office.

OGS - More words of advice

Read program description and follow OGS application instructions explicitly: Font size, margins, page limits etc.

- **Do not exceed page limits or send more information than the instructions require**
(Extra pages will not be read and will be removed!)

All Permanent Residents, Protected Persons or Visa Students must provide a copy of the appropriate documentation at time of application.

Applicants may apply online from the OSAP main page at <http://osap.gov.on.ca>, but they must print off the application and submit it to the department by the internal deadline (Oct. 3rd)

- **Students who do not have a social insurance number must apply using the paper application. See the OGS website for more details at:**

http://osap.gov.on.ca/eng/NOT_SECURE/Plan_Grants_full_sepapp_OGS_12345.htm#Paper%20Application

OGS - More words of advice

- **Statement of Interest (masters students) or Plan of Study (doctoral students)** - This is one of the most important parts of your application. Take the time to write a clear and precise statement (or plan) and ask your research supervisor to review your submission and provide you with feedback.
- **List of Scholarships or Awards**
 - *Highlight scholarships and awards that are competitive and include their value.
 - *Include all awards that you have won, even if you later declined the offer.
 - *Do not include secondary school awards unless they were graduating awards for use at University.

About NSERC...

- The purpose of NSERC is to promote and support research in the natural sciences and engineering
- To apply for NSERC you MUST be a Canadian Citizen or Permanent Resident of Canada
- VALUE **NSERC PGS and CGS Master's:**
PGS - \$17,300 for one year, CGS - \$17,500 for one year.
NSERC PGS and CGS Doctoral: PGS - \$21,000/year for 2 or 3 years, CGS - \$35,000/year for 2 or 3 years.
- There is a single application process (using form 201) for PGS (Postgraduate Scholarship) and CGS (Canada Graduate Scholarship). Everyone applies for a PGS, and a percentage of those are awarded a CGS by NSERC.
- NSERC has a maximum 4 years of support (total meaning Master's plus Ph.D.) for any combination of PGS, CGS, or IPS (Industrial Postgraduate Scholarship).

Eligibility for a PGS/CGS M

- You must have completed, as of December 31 of the year of application, between **zero** and **12 months** of studies (full-time equivalent) in the master's program for which you are requesting funding;
- **or**
- if you were admitted into a doctoral program directly from your bachelor's program, you must have completed, as of December 31 of the year of application, between **zero** and **12 months** of studies (full-time equivalent) in the doctoral program for which you are requesting funding; and
- **you must not hold or have held a CGS M from CIHR.**
- “First class” (min. A- or 3.50 or 80%) average in **EACH** of last two years of study (M.Sc. counts as 1 year)
- Award must be held in the 1st or 2nd year of graduate study (support will not extend beyond the 28th month of a M.Sc.)

Eligibility for a PGS/CGSD

- You must have completed, as of December 31 of the year of application, between **zero** and **24 months** of studies (full-time equivalent) in the doctoral program for which you are requesting funding;
- **or**
- if you were admitted into a doctoral program directly from your bachelor's program, you must have completed, as of December 31 of the year of application, between **four and 36 months** of studies (full-time equivalent) in the doctoral program for which you are requesting funding;
- you must not have previously taken up an NSERC PGS B, PGS D, or IPS 2, or a CGS D; and
- you must not hold or have held a CGS D from CIHR.
- “First class” (min. A- or 80% or 3.50/4.00) average in **EACH** of last two years of study. All graduate work counts as the ‘last year’, and the final year of a B.Sc. counts as the ‘second last year’.
- Award must be held in the first five years in the program.

PGS/CGS Selection Criteria and Weightings

	Master's	Doctoral
Academic excellence	50%	30%
Research ability or potential	30%	50%
Communication, interpersonal and leadership abilities	20%	20%
Total	100%	100%

N SERC - Selection criteria

Academic Excellence

- academic record (transcript)
- scholarships/awards held

Research Ability & Potential

- publications and professional contributions to research
- research-related work experience
- proposed research
- reference letters and departmental comments

Oral & Written Communication Skills

- quality of presentation of application (watch typos, grammar!)
- conference presentations
- teaching/tutorial experience
- awards for oral presentations, papers, posters, teaching
- reference letters and departmental comments

Interpersonal & Leadership Abilities

- evidence of professional and extracurricular activities
- reference letters and departmental comments

Your Proposal – some general guidelines

- Make it easy for the reviewer to find key information
- Use headings, strategic boldface font
- Be clear, succinct, scholarly but understandable
- **Introduction / Background** – what is it you want to achieve with the work? Give the importance, context & background
- **Progress to date** – **your** results if possible
- **Experimental Approach** – explanation of the experiments to be undertaken, including timeline, indicating relevance to addressing hypotheses
- **Expected Outcomes** – results, tangible presentations, publications and/or patents including timeframe
- **Significance** – what is the importance of proposed research? What will it reveal / do? What value?

Your Contributions - more guidelines

- Make it easy for the reviewer to find key information
- Use headings, strategic boldface font
- Be straight forward, emphasis strengths, not a time to be shy
- **Research Contributions** – your role, the research significance, & impact of the work
- **Academic Achievement** – highlight recognition of excellence, including awards and honours
- **Research Achievement** – highlight research background, including undergrad projects, research awards (NSERC USRA, for example)
- **Communication Achievement** – highlight oral and written public pieces and presentations, volunteerwork involving communication
- **Leadership** – Volunteerwork, elected positions, clubs, sports, other achievements that indicate just how totally awesome you are

NSERC - Advice / Tips

- Reviewers spend 6-8 minutes on each application. You have a short period of time to sell yourself on paper.
- Reviewers give applications a score on a specific scale, and the top-ranked applicants will receive a CGS.
- Follow instructions on font size, margins, page limits, etc. (Extra pages are discarded, and NSERC will give an applicant 24 hours to resubmit if they find small font size or expanded margins)
- Writing has to be clear and concise.
- **Significance of research** – Emphasize in your proposed research project the “big picture”, how you will do it, where you want to do it, and why.

NSERC - More tips

- Write clearly enough for someone who is not an expert in your sub discipline. Avoid excessive technical language.
- ENGAGE the reviewers. Make the project easy to read by being clear and concise. The key point is to describe the research to a diverse audience.
- Give evidence of your participation in and contributions to research and development (summer research jobs, undergrad projects, theses, papers, posters, talks)
- Discuss your communication skills and your leadership & interpersonal abilities (extracurricular activities are appropriate here).
- Academic background should be in chronological order and should match transcripts (explain any gaps in education/work history)

NSERC - More tips

- Differentiate scholarships. KNOW the award, and what it is all about. Is it departmental, institutional, organizational, or governmental? Elaborate on the prestige/value/scope/rationale of the award (e.g. leadership awards).
- NSERC looks heavily at **PROGRESS**. Ongoing graduate awards look good. Publications, historical grade trends, and PRODUCTIVITY (for example, was anything significant accomplished while enrolled in a Master's program?).
- Stress contributions to multi-author presentations and/or papers. WHERE was it presented? At meetings? Is it in a journal?
- Leadership – Are there diverse/unique experiences? Stress the scope and the commitment, and WHY you were involved to begin with.
- With personal statement objectives, you can use figures. These can be a great tool to explain things, as long as they are not too big. References go at the bottom of the figure.

NSERC - More tips

- All university transcripts MUST be up-to-date and official transcripts are required including the 2011-2012 academic year, even if no grade is listed. Photocopies or ROSI printouts are not acceptable. Submit transcripts directly to the Chemistry Graduate Office, preferably as a package with your NSERC application. When prompted to enter the university designate on the NSERC on-line system, type Denise Ing (gradasst@chem.utoronto.ca).
- Applicants must forward a paper copy to the Chemistry Graduate Office by October 3 for the departmental ranking. Graduate units will not be granted access to print your applications. Applicants can click on the "Preview" button and will be given a link to click on. This link will lead the applicant to another screen which will show Form 201 and will allow to print a paper copy.

NSERC - More tips

Proofread for spelling and grammar...and do it more than once. Give your proposal to as many people as possible to review.

Ask for feedback / advice from a faculty member (your supervisor, or the GSC representative for your field)
AND/OR from other students who have been successful in the past

Appendix 1 – Report on the Applicant

- **Choose your referees carefully.** Only include your “proposed” supervisor if s/he has already acted as a supervisor.
- Referees **MUST** now upload their appendix 1 using the NSERC online system by October 3. SGS will print out all the letters for the departmental ranking.
- In Form 201, the applicant will be asked to provide the name and e-mail address of the two academic referees they have selected to complete the Report. The reviewers will then receive an e-mail inviting them to fill in the report. If they accept, they will be provided with a link that will allow them to view the application and complete their section. The applicant will be able to see if the Report has been attached but will not be able to view it. Referees must use the NSERC form and no other formats are acceptable. It is the student's responsibility to follow-up with their referees.

Keywords / Research Subject Codes

- Choose the primary research subject code that most closely corresponds to your proposed research. Consult the **List of Research Subject Codes for Scholarships and Fellowships**.
- To further identify your area of research, you have the option of selecting a secondary research subject code that most closely corresponds to your proposed research. **Consult the Research Subject Codes**.

Reminders

- Please do not staple anything together on any application. Copies are made for the selection committees.
- Submit the applications on time. They will get processed and go to the GSC for assessment soon after the deadline.
- Sign everywhere a signature is required.
- Final results for NSERC come out around the third week of March. OGS results are known around the middle of April.
- If applying for both OGS and NSERC, applicants can submit one official copy of all university transcripts, including transcripts without grades.
Applicants must print both NSERC and OGS applications and submit to the Chemistry Graduate Office by **October 3** for the departmental ranking.
- No one can hold TWO external major scholarships at the same time (NSERC, CIHR, OGSST, OGS)