UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES & RESEARCH

2019 NSERC Doctoral Competition
Overview of NSERC Awards

**Alexander Graham Bell Canada Graduate Scholarship**
- Doctoral (CGSD): $35,000/year; 2 or 3 years

**NSERC Postgraduate Scholarship**
- Doctoral (PGSD): $21,000/year; 2 or 3 years

**Other NSERC Awards:**

**Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement**
FGSR Deadline: September 25, 2018
- Up to $6,000 for a period of research study abroad

**Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship**
FGSR Deadline: September 17, 2018
- Doctoral: $50,000/year; 3 years
- **NOTE:** If you accept a doctoral-level Tri-Agency scholarship (CGSD, PGSD), you become ineligible for a Vanier scholarship
Applicant Eligibility

• Canadian Citizen or Permanent Resident of Canada
• As of December 31 of the year of application, must have completed between 0-24 months in a doctoral program (unless, you have never been registered in a master’s level program, in which case the limit is between 4-36 months).
• Have not received any other Tri-Agency doctoral-level funding
• Research falls within the NSERC Mandate
• Are or will be registered in a full time Doctoral program
Applicant Eligibility

New for the 2019 Competition:

1. First-class average in each of the last two years of completed study is no longer an eligibility criterion. Universities will recommend the top-ranked applications to NSERC.

2. Joint programs with a professional degree (e.g., MD/PhD, DVM/PhD) are eligible, provided they have a significant research component.
Subject Matter Eligibility

- the research subject code included in the application corresponds to the applicant’s proposed field of study (this determines the NSERC selection committee in which the application will be evaluated); and
- the justification for eligibility of proposed research attachment should be completed if the research has any link, overlap, or relevance to the health or social sciences and humanities disciplines. Applicants 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. They must clearly explain why their proposed research is predominantly NSE and should be considered research that is directed to an NSE audience. This document must not exceed one page and is not evaluated by the university or by the NSERC scholarships selection committee.
Application Process: How to Apply?

• Verify whether or not you should apply through U of A, or directly to NSERC by reviewing the Program Guide; there are separate deadlines in each scenario.

• Your application form (Form 201) must be prepared electronically.

• Important dates if applying through U of A:
  - Department Deadline: please contact your department for deadline and submission requirements (ensure that you submit any necessary official transcripts to your department)
  - FGSR Deadline: October 15, 2018 (4:00pm)
NSERC Doctoral Application Process – Before October 15, 2018

Applicants

- Fill out the U of A University Designate in your application so that your transcripts can be attached to your application after the deadline

  First Name: Ling
  Last Name: Jiang
  Email: grad.awards@ualberta.ca

At this time, you cannot click “submit” yet. You will need to click “verify” first. Other than transcripts, Applicants must ensure that their application is complete.

Departments submit

- An alphabetical list of their students who are applying for the NSERC doctoral competition. Students who apply to the competition but are not included on the department’s list will not be considered.

- Any required, up-to-date transcripts required by NSERC that are not already held at FGSR.
Doctoral Application Process – After October 15, 2018

**Application at FGSR:**
- In November, FGSR will upload copies of all required, up-to-date transcripts to your application.
- After this is done, your application status will change to “Complete”, and you can “Submit” your application online.
- FGSR will also contact departments once all applications are complete (transcripts uploaded); they will be asked to notify their students to “Submit”.
- Failure to submit when directed by your department/FGSR may result in your application being marked ineligible.

**Selection Process:**
- FGSR Awards Services reviews all applications for eligibility and completeness.
- Graduate Scholarship Committee (GSC) selects the U of A quota of applications to be forwarded/nominated to NSERC for the national competition. Unsuccessful applicants at the U of A competition-level will be notified.
- FGSR Awards Services forwards successful applications to NSERC for the national competition on November 25, 2018.
- NSERC notifies forwarded nominees of results by the end of March 2019.
Transcripts

- Up-to-date transcripts are defined as official transcripts dated or issued in the fall session of the year of application (if currently registered) or after the last term completed (if not currently registered).
  - This includes transcripts from institutions where you have not completed a degree and may have only taken a few courses.
- Official transcripts are defined as transcripts issued by the Registrar's Office. Transcripts from other sources (websites, online student accounts) are not official.
- You **do not** need to provide up-to-date University of Alberta transcripts for this competition.
- If FGSR already has up-to-date and official transcripts on file for you, you do not need to resubmit them for this competition.
- Please contact grad.awards@ualberta.ca to confirm which transcripts FGSR has (include your Student ID number, name, and a list of transcripts you need us to verify).
- For complete Transcripts requirement, please also visit NSERC application instructions (under Transcripts/proof of registration)
Other NSERC Resources

• Applicants must follow the Presentation and Attachment Standards

http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/OnlineServices-ServicesEnLigne/pdfatt2_eng.asp
Selection Criteria for PGSD/CGSD

**Academic excellence**
- Weight: 30%

**Research Ability or Potential**
- Weight: 50%

**Communication, interpersonal and leadership abilities**
- Weight: 20%
2018 Competition Results:

University Quota: 84

Alexander Graham Bell Canada Graduate Scholarship (CGSD) winners: 11

NSERC Postgraduate Scholarship winners: 29
Important Considerations in Completing Forms

The Student’s View
Important Considerations in Completing Forms

The Reviewer’s View
Research Proposal: NSERC instructions (paraphrased)

- Check for eligibility (must be in a field that NSERC supports, and part of an overall research program in a field that NSERC supports).
- Maximum length: 1 page (follow the formatting standards).
- Proposal must be your independent work (ideas/text belonging to others must be referenced appropriately).
- Proposal must be detailed and specific, must provide background with respect to the state of the art in the field.
- State the significance of the proposed research to a field/fields in NSE.
- Objectives and hypothesis, experimental/theoretical approach, methods and procedures to be used must be reported.
- If considerations of equity, diversity and inclusion in research design apply, describe how these will be addressed.
Research Proposal: Things to consider

• Proposal will be evaluated by multiple people with diverse backgrounds in NSE – must be specific enough for an expert and provide enough context for a non-expert.
• Context is established by three things: identifying originality, feasibility and significance.
• Internal consistency (between motivation, background, objectives/hypotheses and methods) is important.
• A (small) picture (or flowsheet/schematic) may be worth a thousand words, since space is at a premium.
• Must convince evaluators that the objectives are original and meaningful, i.e. solving them has value (e.g. benefits to society) in addition to novelty.
• Do not repeat the information found in the “Theses completed or in progress” section, though you can refer to it. The proposal must be looking to the future.
2019 NSERC: Reference Letters

Dr Manisha Gupta
Assistant Professor
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
NSERC Adjudicator
NSERC: PGS-D Referral letters

Reports on the Applicant

• PGS-D application – requires two references. (Your application will remain incomplete until both reports have been submitted.)
• The reports must be completed by persons capable of making an informed assessment.
• One report should be from a person very familiar with your research and other abilities, e.g., current academic research supervisor or industrial supervisor (in the case of co-op students); previous academic research, industrial or USRA supervisor.
• The second report should be from a person sufficiently familiar with your research and other abilities to provide a meaningful commentary.

Note: A Report on the Applicant cannot be completed by a proposed supervisor unless that person is currently your supervisor or has been your supervisor in the past.
NSERC: PGS-D Referral letters

What you should do?

• Ask your references if they are willing and can provide a reference for you by the deadline of the application – you can set the deadline on which you would like the report to be completed, which you select from a pop-up calendar. Use a date well before the deadline to ensure that you receive the letters.

• They will receive an email requesting a reference for you once you complete their information on the NSERC website – let them also know via email that you have sent a request for the reference (report).

• PGS D: Limit is approximately one half of a page.

• Your references will have access to your “in progress” or completed application

• Provide your reference with a detailed updated CV so that they know about your achievements – GPA, awards, volunteering, industrial experience, science/community outreach, mentoring to name a few
Questions?

Contact NSERC

• NSERC On-line System:
  ➢ webapp@nserc-crsng.gc.ca

• NSERC Program Information:
  ➢ schol@nserc-crsng.gc.ca

Contact FGSR, Awards Services

➢ 780.492.9460
➢ grad.awards@ualberta.ca