Ontario Graduate Scholarship/QEII-GSST

KEY ASPECTS
of a successful application:

- Official and complete transcripts

- Well thought-out and well-written research proposal

- Strong reference letters

- Follow all steps of the scholarship and university instructions

TRANSCRIPTS

- Transcripts are required for your current and previously attended postsecondary institution(s) that are listed on your application (Best practice: if you list the institution, you need the transcript)

- A- average in each of the last two completed years of study (full-time equivalent)

- For your OGS/QEII-GSST application – download your unofficial Ontario Tech transcripts through MyCampus and submit it to SGPS through the online application form

TRANSCRIPTS

- Many universities are experiencing delays in processing transcript requests. Ensure you submit your transcript requests **early.**

- For OGS/QEII-GSST Ontario Tech will accept unofficial transcripts from Ontario Tech and other universities.

- You are responsible for providing these with your application.

Statement of Interest or Plan of Study
what to write

- A **research proposal** or **program statement** is required for your scholarsip application

- Be as **specific as possible**: If you have not yet decided on a specific project, you must still provide a detailed description of a research project that interests you

- Write your proposal in **lay language**: The committees reviewing the applications are interdisciplinary but members may not necessarily specialize in your area of research

Statement of Interest or Plan of Study Structure

- State your hypothesis and the methodology in which you will conduct your research

- Emphasize the importance of your research on society

- Ensure you follow the standards for presentation and attachments that are outlined in the application instructions for all free form pages

- Proofread and have colleagues review your proposal

Statement of Interest or Plan of Study Impact

- Contextualize your research: Why is it important to your field? to the community?

- Find a balance:
  - Do not over-generalize (i.e. "I will work towards a cure for cancer")
  - Do not over-complicate (i.e. too much jargon)
  - Pretend you are writing for a high-level general journal

Bibliography and Citations

- Bibliographic details for all citations included in your research proposal (ensure that these are clear and complete to allow reviewers to locate the sources easily). The selection committee expects applicants to properly reference ideas and text belonging to others.

- Use the section provided in the OGS application to list references to works that are cited in your application (that is, do not list additional or unnecessary refences to fill up the space). Follow the citation conventions that are appropriate to your research discipline or field.

Significant Academic Accomplishments

- List all internships, research projects, involvement in student organizations, volunteer work.

- You have many years of university experience, so tell the judges about it! Consider carefully (perhaps get a second opinion) before leaving anything out.

- Include full description of your responsibilities in any project where you worked with others – i.e. were you involved in project planning? Supervising undergraduates? Were you directly writing any co-authored works? How did your work contribute to a large multi-year project, etc.

DON'T BE TOO MODEST

- Reiterate if your research was supported by a granting agency:

    - "As an NSERC CGS-M scholar at the University of Toronto, I have begun a research program in Computational Linguistics"

    - "During my tenure as an NSERC scholar at the Alberta Research Council, I was placed in a position of high independence, early in my undergraduate career."

List of Publications and Presentations

- List publications, presentations, posters or other significant work that was submitted to an external organization.

- Be sure to consistently use a standard reference format.

- Do not include in progress or in-review.

- Be clear what is peer-reviewed and what is not!

PROOFREADING

- Proof-read your entire application
  - Start with each section individually and wait a while before going to the next section. Pay attention to how the section content fits the heading
  - Re-read the sections consecutively
    - Delete any repetition
    - Make sure you haven't forgotten anything
    - Check for consistent writing style

- Ask others (at least 3) to proof-read for you:
  - Your supervisor
  - Other professors, especially if they have sat on scholarship panels
  - Your referees
  - Ask a non-scientist who knows you well:
    - May not understand the scientific content, but this helps highlight particularly unclear sections which colleagues may not catch
    - Will likely pay more attention to the personal statement and details of overall appearance, spelling, cohesion

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

- List all previous scholarships, fellowships, etc.

- Don't assume anything is "too small" to include, unless you are constrained by space.

- Make sure to include $ amounts, and the jurisdiction (institutional, provincial, national) of the competition. Use a table if possible.

- Highlight previous scholarship support (for example, a summer research scholarship during your undergrad).

REFERENCE LETTERS
Selecting referees

- **Strong reference letters** are one of the key components to a strong application package

- Ask someone who can speak with some experience about your abilities, attributes and potential; someone who has recent knowledge of both where you have been and where you want to go (each competition will suggest examples of allowable referees)

REFERENCE LETTERS
Selecting referees

- Consider very carefully who you will ask for a reference letter – diversity is an advantage and will help avoid duplication:
  - your supervisor
  - a course instructor you know well
  - your program director if you know them well
  - a researcher from outside Ontario Tech with whom you have collaborated
  - an employer familiar with your research or leadership abilities
- Ask "can you write me a **good** reference?"
  - guard against lukewarm / unhelpful references

REFERENCE LETTERS
supporting referees

- In order for your referees to highlight your attributes, provide them with a package containing
  - an up-to-date CV
  - transcripts (no need for official copies here)
  - a list of contributions (research and leadership)
  - your research proposal (even if it's still a draft)

- Some professors will appreciate additional help. You can offer your referee (ask before providing):
  - highlights you would like them to focus on
  - examples from your interactions with them to help jog their memory

- This helps them write well and save time, and further demonstrates your organization skill

REFERENCE LETTERS
Supporting referees

- Follow up with the reference after a week or two to make sure they didn't forget you!

- Make sure they know they can contact you for more information

- **Do NOT provide a draft letter for them!**
  - If absolutely required, make it unique
  - When I sat on a judging panel for an internal award, a candidate had 2 identical references!

- Consider encouraging them to point out one *minor* "weakness", something they can say they know you are working to improve. Completely glowing letters are rarely believable.

REFERENCE LETTERS
Timing

- To further assist your referees, provide them with the **eligibility and selection criteria** of the scholarship, as well as the **instructions** for completing the assessment

- Be prepared:

  - **Know the deadline** by which you need it, clearly state it to the referee

  - Know to whom the letter needs to be addressed (if applicable) and to whom it should go

  - Provide them with enough time to write an appraisal for you (at least 2 weeks!)

KEY STEPS

- Confirm your eligibility

- Request your transcripts early

- Contact potential referees now – 2 or 3 referees required, depending on competition

- Read the website and application instructions

- Apply for admission to a graduate program at Ontario Tech by Feb. 1 if applicable

- Start your award application and submit as instructed by the firm deadline.

OGS and QEII-GSST

- Eligibility:
  - OGS: Canadian citizen/PR and international students
  - QEII-GSST: Canadian Citizen/PR, STEM disciplines

- Deadline: December 1

- Value: $15,000 per year

- Quota:
  - 23 OGS (**of which two awards are allocated Indigenous students)**
  - 6 QEII-GSST
- Master's students cannot exceed 2 years of OGS/QEII-GSST funding;
- Doctoral students cannot exceed 4 years of OGS/QEII-GSST funding
- Normally only students within their program time limits are selected

OGS/QEII Selection Criteria Weightings (Master's)

ensure your application addresses these criteria

- Academic Excellence (50%)
  - First class average
  - Duration of previous studies
  - Scholarships and award held

- Research Potential (30%)
  - Quality and originality of contributions to research
  - Significance of proposed research
  - Initiative, independence

- Communication, Interpersonal and leadership abilities (20%)

OGS/QEII Selection Criteria Weightings (Doctoral)

ensure your application addresses these criteria

- Academic Excellence (30%)
  - First class average
  - Duration of previous studies
  - Scholarships and award held

- Research ability or Potential (50%)
  - Quality and originality of contributions to research
  - Significance of proposed research
  - Initiative, independence

- Communication, Interpersonal and leadership abilities (20%)

Award Limitations

- Lifetime maximums of six (6) years of government-funded student awards must not have been exceeded by the applicant.

- Awards under the following programs will be counted toward this lifetime maximum and cannot be held concurrently:
    - Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS)
    - Queen Elizabeth II Graduate Scholarship in Science and Technology (QEIIGSST)
    - Ontario Trillium Scholarships (OTS)
    - Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)
    - Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR)
    - Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships (Vanier CGS)

OSAP Restrictions

- Please note: students with an OSAP restriction are not eligible to hold an OGS until or unless the restriction has been removed.

- If you have ever received OSAP and think you may have a restriction, check with Student Awards and Financial Aid to determine whether you have any restrictions.

Important Links

- Ontario Graduate Scholarships (including QEII-Graduate Scholarships in Science and Technology)
  - [SGPS OGS website](#)
  - [Ontario Tech OGS Application Form](#)
- [Scholarship Tips and Tricks](#)

Questions ?

- If you have any questions about this or any other scholarship competition, or to sign up for a virtual meeting, we recommend that you complete the [External Scholarships Question Submission Form](#)

- or contact gradscholarships@ontariotechu.ca.

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