

**Canada Graduate Scholarship – Master’s (CIHR,
NSERC and SSHRC) Scholarship Information**

Land acknowledgement

Ontario Tech University acknowledges the lands and people of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. We are thankful to be welcomed on these lands in friendship. The lands we are situated on are covered under the Williams Treaties and the traditional territory of the Mississauga, a branch of the great Anishinaabeg Nation, including Algonquin, Ojibway, Odawa and Pottawatomi. These lands remain home to a number of Indigenous nations and people.



KEY ASPECT 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

- For your Tri-Agency application, **official 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 CGS-M you will scan and upload all transcripts via the application portal

TRANSCRIPTS

- Some institutions are experiencing delays in processing transcript requests. Ensure you submit your request **early** to allow adequate time for printing and mailing.
- Unofficial transcripts will not normally be accepted for the CGS-M competition unless despite every efforts, official ones cannot be obtained.
- You are responsible for requesting all transcripts required to complete your application.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

what to write

- For the tri-agency applications, your research proposal **MUST** fall under the mandate of the agency to which you are submitting your application (refer to Selecting the Appropriate Federal Granting Agency)
 - You should **review your proposal with a faculty member** for advice and to ensure adherence to the agency mandate
- 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

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

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

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

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

COMMON CV

- Common CV system for establishing your research and leadership record.
- This is where your research publications (if any) and other relevant experience will be listed.

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.”

DEMONSTRATE YOUR ABILITIES

- List all publications – be sure to consistently use a standard reference format
- If your list is quite short, include lectures you gave, especially significant projects (i.e. a literature review), internal reports, etc.
 - Be clear what is peer-reviewed and what is not!
- Organize the section clearly using the lettering provided in the application package

RELEVANT ACTIVITIES

Part of applicant statement

- This section often doesn't get enough attention!
- Highlight volunteering, elected positions, etc. Don't go back too far – start with your undergraduate degree.
- Indicate a timeline to avoid the appearance of “padding”:
 - “After just two months of serving on the Council of the Graduate Students' Union, I was elected the 2002-2003 President.”
 - “Since moving to Toronto in August 2001, I have volunteered for two hours each week with the LGBT Peer Support phone line.”
 - “For the fall 2001 term, I participated in twice weekly meetings of the steering committee for conference X, hosted by my department.”
- NOT: “I attended the walkathon in 1999 for cause X.” or “I was captain of my grade 10 hockey team.”

RELEVANT ACTIVITIES

- Use only activities which support the criteria of the award: communication skills, creativity, leadership.
- If you cannot fill this section with relevant volunteer or elected activities, use employment or leisure activities:
 - Working as a TA
 - Working in your department as a host for visiting lecturers
 - Mentoring new students
 - Working in a customer-service position like retail or restaurant
 - Participating in clubs or organizations, orchestras, etc.
- **Indicate your position, the time commitment involved, and why you think your participation is relevant to this application.**
- Don't underestimate this section – it can set you apart from all the other academically outstanding applications. It can make you the “well-rounded” candidate who gets noticed.

FORMATTING ATTACHMENTS

- Communication skills count in the final evaluation: the appearance of your application is a good indicator of your communication skill
- Don't use fancy fonts! Don't disobey font size requirements – you might fit more info on the page, but the judges will not read it
- Do not exceed allotted space for each section
- Maximize space – fill every space on the page, but avoid clutter. Use headings, indentation, etc.

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. I ask my mother.
 - 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 tri-agency 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 UOIT 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
- 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 – make sure you are applying to the correct agency (if applicable).

Canada Graduate Scholarship – Master's (CGS-M) CIHR / NSERC / SSHRC

- Eligibility:
 - Canadian citizen / permanent resident
 - Intend to pursue a Master's program with a significant research component
- Deadline: **December 1**
- Value: \$17,500 per year
- Quota: 11 (1 CIHR), (5 NSERC) and (5 SSHRC)

Tri- Agency 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
- Personal Characteristics & Interpersonal Skills (20%)

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.

Acknowledgement

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