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Selection Committee Guide for Postgraduate Scholarships—Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships Programs

2017–18

Foreword

This document is a guide for members of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) Scholarships and Fellowships selection committees that are responsible for the evaluation of Postgraduate Scholarships— Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships. It describes the activities carried out by members and chairs of these selection committees, as well as the policies, guidelines and deliverables for each of these activities.

Applicants who refer to this document should note that the content is intended to guide members and outline principles rather than provide them with a set of rules.

For more information regarding scholarships and fellowships programs, policies, and guidelines contact [NSERC staff](#).

This document is updated every year.

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1. Overview of scholarships and fellowships

1.1 Doctoral scholarships

Alexander Graham Bell Canada Graduate Scholarships–Doctoral (CGS D) and NSERC Postgraduate Scholarships–Doctoral (PGS D) programs provide financial support to high-calibre scholars who are engaged in doctoral programs in the natural sciences or engineering. This support allows these scholars to fully concentrate on their studies and seek out the best research mentors in their chosen fields.

There is a single application and review process for the CGS D and the PGS D programs. The top-ranked applicants are awarded the CGS D (\$35,000 per year and tenable only in Canada) and the PGS D (\$21,000 per year, tenable in Canada and abroad) is awarded to the next tier of highly-ranked applicants. The duration of these scholarships¹ is either 24 or 36 months, depending on the number of months of graduate studies the applicant has already completed in the degree program for which funding is requested and on the federal support they have received previously. Determining the duration of a scholarship is the responsibility of NSERC staff and is based on the information provided in the application.

1.2 Postdoctoral fellowships

The Postdoctoral Fellowships (PDF) program provides support to a core of the most promising researchers at a pivotal time in their careers. These fellowships² offer doctoral graduates an opportunity to increase their research experience at an eligible Canadian or foreign university or research laboratory. The PDF program is also intended to secure a supply of highly qualified Canadians with leading edge scientific and research skills for Canadian industry, government, and universities. These fellowships are valued at \$45,000 per year for a duration of 24 months.

¹ The term *Scholarships* refers to both the CGS D and PGS D programs throughout this document.

² The term *Fellowships* refers to the PDF program throughout this document.

2. Membership

2.1 Overview

Expert scientists and engineers from academia, industry, and government form the membership of [13 discipline-based selection committees](#). Members review and score scholarship and fellowship applications assigned to them according to policies and guidelines established by NSERC. For a complete list of members, refer to the NSERC [Selection Committees and Evaluation Groups](#) webpage.

2.2 Selection process

NSERC regularly solicits nominations for members of its selection committees from universities, industry, and government within Canada and abroad. Candidates are recruited based on expertise, stature in the research community, experience, and suitability, while taking into account diversity and equity considerations. For more information about the recruitment of members, consult the [Guidelines Governing Membership of Selection Committees](#).

2.3 Term of membership

Membership terms are usually limited to three years and approximately one-third of the membership changes each year. The rotation of members allows for broader representation of universities, complementary expertise, and vitality of the selection committees. The presence of experienced members on the selection committees promotes consistency and continuity in the selection process and assists in the orientation of new members.

Members and chairs must adhere to NSERC's regulations and policies on [conflict of interest](#), [confidentiality of recommendations](#), and [gender equality in science and engineering](#).

2.4 Roles and responsibilities

2.4.1 Members

Members participate in the review of applications and provide recommendations based on the selection criteria. Specific responsibilities include:

- completing the following two training modules: [Gender-based Analysis Plus \(GBA+\)](#), produced by Status of Women Canada; and [Unconscious Bias in Peer Review](#), produced by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR);
- reading the [instructions for completing an application](#) for the scholarships and fellowships programs;
- participating in orientation meetings or discussions;
- submitting comfort ratings for all applications received;
- reading, scoring, and providing in-depth evaluations for a subset of applications;
- reading, participating in deliberations for, and scoring all fellowship applications discussed during the [review meeting](#);
- notifying NSERC staff of research proposals that are outside NSERC's mandate;
- providing feedback to NSERC staff and the chair on policy and procedural issues in preparation for the chairs' meeting; and
- recommending potential new members.

2.4.2 Chairs

The selection committee chairs ensure the orderly and complete review of applications and the transmission of recommendations to NSERC. They lead the selection committee's efforts to maintain the highest quality of evaluation, ensure consistency and equity of approach, and ensure that all important aspects of applications are considered. Chairs play an important oversight role, represent their respective selection committees, and provide policy advice and guidance on the delivery of the program. Chairs also share the roles and responsibilities of members.

2.4.3 Group chair

The group chair is appointed by NSERC to act as liaison among the 13 selection committees listed on the [Selection Committees and Evaluation Groups](#) webpage and the [Committee on Discovery Research \(CDR\)](#), of which the group chair is a member. CDR is responsible for making policy recommendations to [Council](#) for various NSERC programs, including those related to the training of highly qualified personnel. In this capacity, the group chair acts in the best interest of all selection committees. The group chair is not considered a member of any of the selection committees and does not review or score applications.

2.4.4 NSERC staff

NSERC staff are not members and do not discuss or score applications. Staff oversee membership, provide advice on NSERC policies, guidelines, and procedures, determine application eligibility, and help ensure consistency in the review of all applications assigned to a selection committee.

2.5 Orientation sessions and meetings

Throughout their term, members are required to attend virtual orientation sessions and review meetings. Depending on the selection committee and discipline, the frequency, format, and lengths of these meetings may vary.

2.5.1 Orientation session

Once the membership slate has been approved, an orientation session is held for all members. This session provides an overview of the review process and NSERC's policies and guidelines. It also provides an opportunity for new members to ask questions and for returning members to share best practices and provide advice to new members.

2.5.2 Fellowships review meeting

After the initial [scoring](#) of fellowship applications, members participate in a virtual review meeting. During this meeting, a subset of applications is discussed and scored by all members who do not have a [conflict of interest](#).

Members have the opportunity to provide feedback on the review process through a policy discussion at the end of the meeting or by email.

2.5.3 Chairs' meeting

After the review process, each selection committee chair and the group chair are invited to participate in a virtual meeting with NSERC staff to discuss policy-related issues. A summary of the major policy issues discussed is made available to [CDR](#).

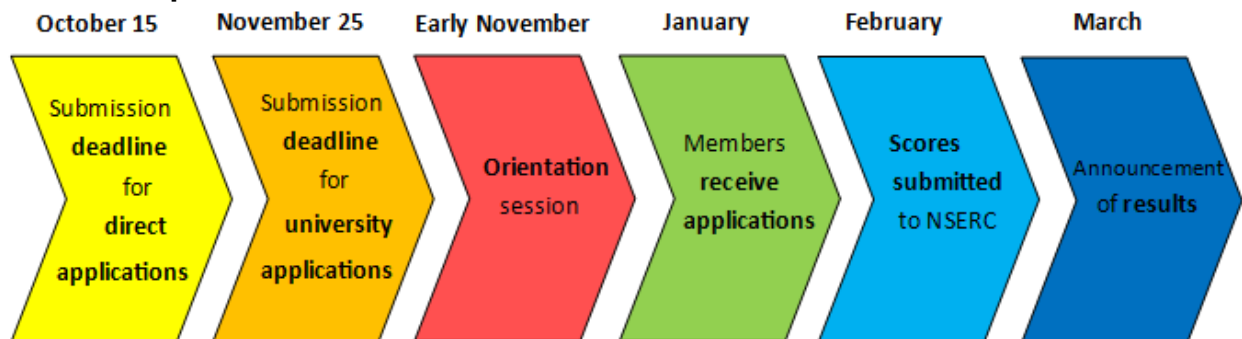
2.6 Time commitment

Participation of experts in the review of scholarship and fellowship applications is crucial to the success of the programs; serving in this capacity involves a significant

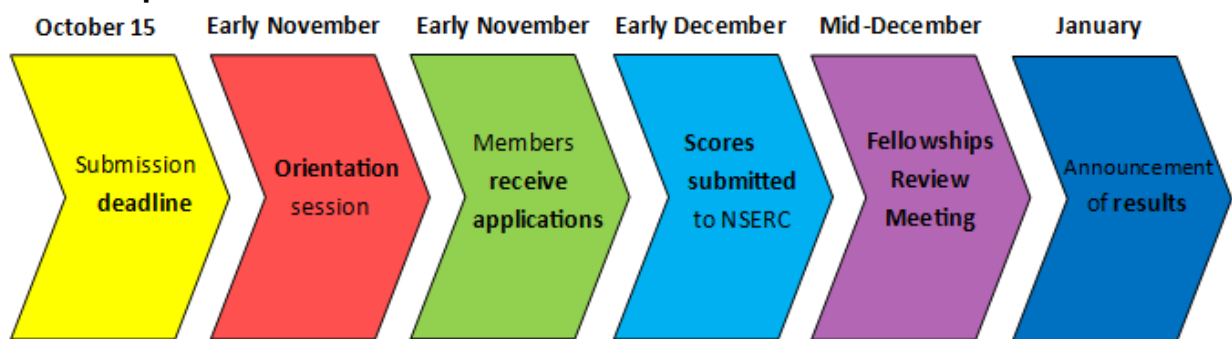
time commitment. Contributing as a member demands periods of activity that may interfere with normal responsibilities. It is recommended that an appropriate amount of time is set aside for the thorough review of applications.

3. Review process

Scholarships



Fellowships



3.1 Receipt of applications

Scholarship applications are submitted to NSERC either through a Canadian university or directly by the applicant. Each Canadian university is assigned a quota of applications for the scholarships programs that can be forwarded to NSERC. Fellowship applications are submitted directly to NSERC by the applicant.

3.2 Assignment of applications to selection committees

Scholarship and fellowship applications are reviewed by one of the 13 selection committees listed on the [Selection Committees and Evaluation Groups](#) webpage. Each application is assigned to a selection committee based on the applicant's chosen [research subject code](#). If appropriate, NSERC staff may transfer an application to a different selection committee based on the research proposed. Applicants are notified if their application is transferred. Members should notify NSERC staff if they feel that an application should be reviewed by another selection committee.

3.3 Assignment of applications to members

To assist in the assignment of applications, members are asked to provide individual expertise comfort levels (high, medium, low) and identify conflicts of interest for applications received by their selection committee. The program officer responsible for each selection committee uses this information to assign applications to members, balancing workload while taking into account potential conflicts of interest, language considerations, and members' expertise. Members are responsible for reviewing a subset of the applications; each application is assigned to two members. Given the broad range of topics covered by each selection committee, members may be asked to review applications outside their primary area of expertise. Members should advise NSERC of any potential issues with the assignment of applications as soon as possible.

3.3.1 Conflicts of interest

Members are responsible for declaring any conflicts of interest prior to the review of applications. In the context of scholarship and fellowship applications, NSERC adheres to the following guidelines:

- If an applicant is, has been, or will be under the direct supervision of a member, or if there is a personal link, the member must withdraw from the discussion and scoring. The member may not act as a reviewer for such applications.
- If an applicant is, or will be, in the same department but not working directly with the member, the member must withdraw from the discussion and the scoring. The member may not act as a reviewer for such applications.
- If an applicant is, or will be, at the same university but in a different department, the member is permitted to participate in the discussion and scoring. The member may act as a reviewer for such applications.

Guidelines of this nature cannot foresee all possible situations and NSERC relies on the judgement of members. In cases where these guidelines do not clearly describe a situation, or where a member has difficulties making a decision about a particular situation, NSERC staff decides.

3.4 Review of applications

The review of applications must be based solely on the information provided in the application. Members are asked not to obtain extra information (such as updates to the publication status of applicants' research papers) for the applications they are reviewing.

Members are reminded that, according to the [Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Agreement for Review Committee Members, External Reviewers, and Observers](#), they must ensure that all review materials are stored in a secure manner to prevent unauthorized access. When no longer required, review materials must be destroyed in a secure manner.

Members have access to the following documents in a secure electronic environment:

- all scholarship and fellowship applications for the given selection committee;
- scoring spreadsheets for assigned applications;
- blank scoring template³ to assist in reviewing applications;
- scoring instructions and procedures; and
- university grading systems table.

Members can also refer to the following documents available on the NSERC website:

- [Program Guides for Students and Fellows](#); and
- [Instructions for Completing an Application – Form 201 – Postgraduate Scholarship–Doctoral or Postdoctoral Fellowship](#).

Applicants are expected to follow the instructions set out in both of these documents. Members' scores should reflect whether the requirements outlined in these resources have been followed (e.g., a Report on the Applicant cannot be completed by a proposed supervisor unless that person is currently the applicant's supervisor or has been the applicant's supervisor in the past).

If any of the information listed above is missing or cannot be accessed, members may contact NSERC staff.

3.5 Selection criteria and indicators

³ The scoring template is provided only as a tool to help ensure that all selection criteria are taken into account when reviewing applications; NSERC does not collect this information.

Scholarship and fellowship applications are evaluated based on selection criteria including:

- [academic excellence](#);
- [research ability or potential](#); and
- [communication, interpersonal, and leadership abilities](#).

Table 1 illustrates the applicable selection criteria and relative weightings for each program.

Table 1: Relative weightings of selection criteria

Selection criterion	Weighting %	
	Scholarships	Fellowships
Academic excellence	30	–
Research ability or potential	50	70
Communication, interpersonal and leadership abilities	20	30
Total	100	100

Members should refer to [Appendix A](#) for a summary of selection criteria indicators and respective locations of evidence within the application.

3.5.1 Academic excellence

In the assessment of scholarship applications, the following elements are considered in the evaluation of academic excellence:

Academic record

Academic excellence is exemplified by a number of indicators, an important one being the applicant's academic record. Although NSERC uses the grades from each of the last two completed years of study to determine eligibility, members should consider the entire academic record when assessing academic excellence. Members should favourably consider situations where an applicant has demonstrated an improving trend or provided an appropriate explanation for their academic record. The experience of members plays a key role in this evaluation. It is important to note that members are not expected or required to calculate GPAs manually.

For assistance in interpreting and comparing academic transcripts, members are provided with the *University Grading Systems Table*, which summarizes the undergraduate and graduate grading systems at the various Canadian universities. This document also shows the approximate conversion to a percentage scale, the maximum grade attainable, and the minimum requirements for a first-class average as defined by the university. The information contained in this document is verified annually by each university.

Scholarships and awards

- competitive awards and/or prizes based on academic excellence

3.5.1.1 First-class average

Scholarship applicants are expected to have an overall first-class average in each of the last two years of completed study. In some cases, the university may provide a justification for an applicant that does not meet this requirement; the student may also provide an explanation in the *Applicant's Statement* section of the application. Members should take this information into account when reviewing.

3.5.1.2 Work experience

In some instances, an applicant may return to university for graduate studies after obtaining work experience. Members should place an increased emphasis on relevant work experience and a decreased emphasis on academic record in these situations. The number of years of work experience should be factored into the evaluation of academic excellence.

3.5.1.3 International studies

If an applicant has completed previous studies at a university outside of Canada and is applying through a Canadian university, the university may provide NSERC with a supporting statement describing the applicant's academic strength and the foreign university's reputation. This additional information is provided to assist members in evaluating academic excellence.

3.5.2 Research ability or potential

The following elements are examples of what should be considered in the evaluation of research ability or potential:

Research proposal

- specific, well-focused, and realistic statement(s) of objectives
- clear and detailed description of the proposed methodology
- significance and expected contributions to research

Contributions to research and development

- publications, conference presentations and/or proceedings, poster presentations, technical reports, or patents

Members should consider the stage of the applicant's academic career and any relevant research or work experience in the assessment of the contributions to research and development. The assessment must be based on the quality and impact of all contributions, not only on the number of publications or conference presentations. Members must be mindful of the different publication practices in different disciplines. Where publications are prepared in collaboration with other students, postdoctoral fellows, or researchers, the applicant should describe their role and involvement in both the research and the preparation of contributions.

Academic training and relevant work experience

- complementarity of the applicant's expertise and the proposed research
- applicant's capacity to undertake the proposed research (technical skills, lab techniques, experience, etc.)

Scholarships and awards

- awards and/or prizes based on research ability or potential

Researcher attributes

- critical thinking, application of knowledge, judgment, originality, initiative, autonomy, and enthusiasm for research

Justification for location of tenure (fellowships only)

- appropriateness of the location for the research proposed
- accessibility of necessary equipment and resources

In most circumstances, applicants are not permitted to hold a fellowship at their PhD-granting institution; however, an exception can be requested. The request

must be based on medical reasons (e.g., proximity to required health care facilities), family reasons (e.g., a spouse's career) or scientific reasons (e.g., availability of specialized equipment) that would make it extremely difficult for the applicant to leave a particular institution. Applicants are encouraged to propose an alternate location of tenure in case their request for an exception is not granted by the selection committee. Applicants will not be granted permission to hold the fellowship with their PhD supervisor, even if the PhD supervisor changes research institutions.

If an exception is requested, members must be prepared to discuss the strength of the justification during the review meeting. The selection committee votes on the decision.

Ability to complete projects within an appropriate time period

- if applicable, the applicant's explanation of any [special circumstances](#) must be taken into consideration

3.5.3 Communication, interpersonal, and leadership abilities

The following elements are examples of what should be considered in the evaluation of communication, interpersonal and leadership abilities:

Professional, academic, and extracurricular interactions and collaborations with supervisors, colleagues, peers, students and members of the community

- teaching, mentoring, supervising and/or coaching
- managing projects
- participating in science promotion, science/community outreach, volunteer work and/or civic engagement
- chairing committees and/or organizing conferences and meetings
- participating in departmental or institutional organizations, associations, societies and/or clubs
- industrial work experience

Awards for papers, reports, posters, oral presentations, teaching, and/or volunteer/outreach work

Participation in publication writing

When publications have been prepared in collaboration with other students, postdoctoral fellows, or researchers, the applicant should describe their role and involvement in both the research and the preparation of contributions.

Quality of presentation of application

- adherence to [NSERC On-line Presentation and Attachment Standards](#)
- grantsmanship
- proper spelling and grammar

The onus is on the applicant to provide a clear and complete application that demonstrates attention to detail and permits a comprehensive assessment. For applicants whose mother tongue is neither English nor French, members should consider the length of time the applicant has been in Canada.

3.6 Additional factors in the review of applications

All applications are reviewed with the same expectations in terms of the quality and potential of the contributions that have been, or will be, produced or undertaken. Some additional factors that may influence the review of any or all three selection criteria are detailed below.

3.6.1 Subject matter eligibility

NSERC supports research whose major challenges lie in the Natural Sciences and Engineering (NSE), other than the health sciences. Research primarily in the NSE that advances NSE knowledge is eligible for NSERC support, even if it may have potential future applications in human health—such as diagnosis or treatment. Proposals that include the use of methodologies, tools, techniques, and knowledge from the NSE are not automatically considered eligible. Members who have doubts as to whether the research proposed is eligible for support by NSERC should review the application on the same basis as all others, but should alert NSERC staff to the potential problem(s) as soon as possible. For more information, members can consult the following documents:

- [Selecting the Appropriate Federal Granting Agency](#);
- [Addendum to the guidelines for the eligibility of applications related to health](#);
- and
- [Eligibility Criteria for Students and Fellows](#).

Final decisions on subject matter eligibility are the responsibility of NSERC staff. Applicants whose proposals are deemed ineligible by NSERC staff are informed in writing.

3.6.2 Implicit or unconscious biases

NSERC expects members to consistently guard against the possibility of unconscious bias influencing the decision-making process, whether these biases are based on a school of thought, fundamental versus applied research, certain sub-disciplines, areas of research or approaches (including emerging ones), size or reputation of an institution, age, gender, and/or other personal factors of the applicant. NSERC cautions members against any judgment of an application based on such factors.

NSERC is actively engaged in increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in its review process to contribute to improved diversity and equality in science and engineering fields. For reference, see NSERC's [Policy Statement on Gender Equality in Science and Engineering](#) and available resources such as [Strengthening Canada's Research Capacity: The Gender Dimension](#).

Members are asked to complete the following two training modules: [Gender-based Analysis Plus \(GBA+\)](#), produced by Status of Women Canada; and [Unconscious Bias in Peer Review](#), produced by CIHR. Members are also encouraged to complete one of the [Sex and Gender](#) training modules produced by CIHR.

3.6.3 Special circumstances

Members must consider any special circumstances that have had an effect on the performance or productivity of the applicant. This includes delays in disseminating research results, health problems, family responsibilities, parental leave, disabilities, or other applicable circumstances. Members are to recognize delays and assess the quality of the applicant's performance and/or productivity during their active period (i.e., excluding the period of special circumstances).

3.6.4 Applications in engineering and applied sciences

Research in engineering can involve the creation of fundamental new knowledge; novel design or innovative approaches to improve existing processes, products and services; or major improvements in performance. The same is often true for research in the applied sciences. The indicators of excellence and contributions to research in

engineering and the applied sciences reflect the different nature of that research and may be significantly different from those in the natural sciences. Specific guidelines have been issued by NSERC for use in reviewing applications in these areas. For additional information, consult the [Guidelines for the Preparation and Review of Applications in Engineering and the Applied Sciences](#).

3.7 Scoring applications

3.7.1 Initial scoring

Members provide an initial score between 1 and 100 (where 100 is the highest possible score) for each selection criterion for their assigned applications. Members should not apply weighting factors to their scores, as these are applied by NSERC. For each criterion, members must place 20% of their assigned applications into each of the following quartiles: 1–25, 26–50, 51–75 and 76–100. The remaining 20% of their assigned applications can be placed into any quartile. It is very important that members use the full range of scores and that they be consistent in their scoring of applications.

Applications are scored relative to the other applications within each member's assigned list. For this reason, scores placed in the lower quartiles may not be indicative of poor quality. Instead, they may represent a worthy application within a group of exceptional applications.

3.7.2 Compilation of scores

For scholarship applications, once the two reviewers' initial scores have been returned to NSERC, they are compiled and the applications are ranked accordingly. In the event that there is a significant discrepancy between the scores and the discrepancy lies in an area where an application could move from the non-funded category to the funded category, a third reviewer is assigned. The third reviewer's score is averaged with the other two reviewers' scores and a final ranked list is produced. There is no review meeting to discuss scholarship applications.

For fellowship applications, once the two reviewers' initial scores have been returned to NSERC, they are compiled and the applications are ranked accordingly. The top-ranked applications are discussed at the fellowships review meeting by the entire selection committee. For larger selection committees, a subset of top-ranked applications may be pre-awarded without being discussed. Applications that have

been flagged by members or NSERC staff, for any reason, may also be discussed by the selection committee during this meeting.

3.7.3 Scoring applications at the fellowships review meeting

All members meet virtually to discuss the fellowship applications that are brought forward to the review meeting. Before the meeting, NSERC staff provides members with a list of the applications to be discussed. All members must read these applications prior to the meeting as they are expected to discuss and provide a score for each one.

With the exception of members with a conflict of interest, the entire selection committee is present for the discussion of each application. The first reviewer assigned to the application summarizes its strengths and weaknesses. Following this assessment, the second reviewer highlights areas of agreement or disagreement with the first reviewer's analysis. Comments or questions may be raised by the other members and a general discussion follows as required. After the discussion, each member confidentially provides a score for each criterion.

3.7.4 Final fellowship scores

NSERC applies the relative weighting for each criterion and calculates the final score for each application based on either the two reviewers' scores or the scores allocated by the entire selection committee, depending on whether or not the application was discussed at the review meeting. Based on these scores, a final ranked list is produced. The final ranked list consists of up to three distinct parts: pre-awarded applications, applications discussed at the meeting, and those neither pre-awarded nor discussed.

3.8 Communication of results

Scholarship and fellowship applicants are notified of their results in March and January, respectively.

The selection committee's final score on each criterion for an individual application is made available to the applicant. This provides feedback to the applicant on the relative strengths and weaknesses of their application. Due to the large number of applications received, members do not provide written comments.

4. Legal and ethical information

4.1 Confidentiality of application material

Members appointed to the selection committee are asked to read and sign the [Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality for Review Committee Members, External Reviewers, and Observers](#), describing NSERC's expectations and requirements.

All application material (electronic copies of applications, print-outs, notes, etc.) is provided to members in confidence and must be used for review purposes only. Such material must be kept in a secure place, not accessible to colleagues or students. In addition, material that the member no longer requires must be destroyed in a secure manner (i.e., shredding). All personal notes and documents must be securely destroyed at the conclusion of the review process. All applications and documentation provided to members electronically must be deleted. If NSERC requires assistance in providing additional information for particular cases after the review process, new copies of relevant material will be provided.

4.2 Confidentiality of recommendations

All funding recommendations are subject to approval by NSERC. Outcomes may be changed for reasons such as budget, administrative error, or lack of full adherence to NSERC policies.

All matters discussed during the fellowships review meeting are confidential and must not be divulged to others. Notifying applicants of the results of deliberations is the responsibility of NSERC staff, following official approval. Results must not be disclosed by members. If approached by an applicant or other individual concerning a decision or any other matter, members must decline discussion and refer the person to NSERC. Staff will act as the liaison between the selection committees and the applicant.

4.3 Privacy Act and Access to Information Act

NSERC must adhere to the [Privacy Act](#). Personal information provided by applicants must be used only for the purpose of assessing applications and making funding decisions. The use or disclosure of such information for any other purpose is forbidden.

The information collected for this purpose must be collected directly from the individual. It may be collected from other sources only as part of the formal review process. For this reason, members must not use or consider information about an applicant that has been obtained in any other way (e.g., by a member by virtue of their involvement in other activities).

Members are not asked to submit written comments to NSERC about an applicant or application. As per the [Access to Information Act](#), applicants have a right to access information about themselves that is held by NSERC. A written opinion of a reference about an application (e.g., Report on the Applicant) is available to the applicant, the name of the reference is not.

[Lists of members](#) are published regularly by NSERC on its website.

4.4 Canadian Human Rights Act

The activities of NSERC are subject to the [Canadian Human Rights Act](#). For all purposes of the Act, the prohibited grounds of discrimination are race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, disability, and conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted. Where the ground of discrimination is pregnancy or childbirth, the discrimination shall be deemed to be on the ground of sex.

4.5 Official Languages Act

NSERC, like all other federal institutions, has a key role to play in the implementation of the [Official Languages Act](#). NSERC has an obligation to ensure that the public can communicate with, and receive services from, the agency in either official language.

Selection committees must ensure that all applications receive a full and detailed review, regardless of the official language of presentation. On occasion, this may entail consultation with NSERC staff to identify members with adequate linguistic capability.

4.6 Other considerations

Applicants must adhere to a number of [requirements for certain types of research](#), all of which are available on the NSERC webpage.

Reviewers must alert NSERC to any potential concerns or problems related to the above items that are observed in information sessions or during the evaluation process. Here are some examples:

- Inadequate sensitivity to the potential concerns of human subjects and/or inadequate provisions for the participation of human subjects in experiments, as required by the [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#).
- Use of animals in experiments when the significance of the proposed research does not appear to justify either the use of animal subjects or the proposed experimental protocol inclusion of controlled information in an application.
- Inadequate training of graduate students in the handling of hazardous chemicals or biological substances.
- Potentially harmful effects on the environment, or an inaccurate or incomplete assessment of these effects.
- Research that involves the use of human pluripotent stem cells where the applicant has checked the “yes” on their application.

Concerns should be presented to NSERC staff to determine whether there is a means of resolving any apparent problems quickly, or whether the awarding of a scholarship or fellowship should be delayed pending resolution of the problem.

4.7 Responsible conduct of research

Canada’s federal granting agencies—the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council—are committed to fostering and maintaining an environment that supports and promotes the responsible conduct of research. The [Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research](#) sets out the responsibilities and corresponding policies for researchers, institutions, and the agencies that together help support and promote a positive research environment.

4.7.1 Member concerns about the responsible conduct of research

The agencies expect the highest standards of integrity in the research that they fund and in the review process they manage. The electronic submission of an application to the agencies commits the applicant(s) to a number of principles, including compliance with the [Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research](#). Should members identify, during the review process, any apparent lack of integrity (e.g., possible misrepresentation in an agency application or related document; providing incomplete,

inaccurate or false information in a grant or award application or related document), they should bring their concerns to the attention of agency staff at the earliest opportunity. The agency will then refer any allegations to the Secretariat on responsible conduct of research for follow-up. Such allegations should not be a consideration during the review process, nor should they be part of the selection committee's discussions.

Members who raise concerns should rest assured that the matter will be addressed by the Secretariat in accordance with [Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research](#); however, members will not be privy to the outcome of the matter, as the findings are confidential and no personal information is shared.

4.7.2 Member responsibilities in regard to the responsible conduct of research

Members of an NSERC selection committee who find themselves in the position of having to respond to formal allegations concerning the responsible conduct of research will not participate in the work of the selection committee while an investigation is underway.

In addition, members should notify the agencies of any conflict of interest—financial or otherwise—that might influence the agencies' decision on what applications the members can review. Members and reviewers are responsible for respecting the confidentiality of application material and for declaring conflicts of interest. Should members become aware of a situation that violates the integrity of the review process, they should discuss this immediately with agency staff.

Appendix A: Selection criteria and indicators for scholarship and fellowship applications

CRITERION (weight %)	INDICATORS	EVIDENCE
Academic excellence (Scholarships 30%) (Fellowships – N/A)	Academic record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University transcripts
	Scholarships and awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 4 – Scholarships and other awards offered
	University comments (e.g., for justification of exceptions or to explain international degrees)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free-form document
Research ability or potential (Scholarships 50%) (Fellowships 70%)	Research proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline of proposed research
	Contributions to research and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 5 – Thesis most recently completed or in progress • Contributions and statements – Part I, II and III • Reports on the applicant
	Academic training and relevant work experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 2 – Academic, research and other relevant work experience • Contributions and statements – Part III, applicant’s statement • Reports on the applicant
	Scholarships and awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 4 – Scholarships and other awards offered
	Researcher attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions and statements – Part III, applicant’s statement • Reports on the applicant • Outline of proposed research
	Justification for location of tenure (fellowships only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 6 – Justification for location of tenure (fellowships only)

CRITERION (weight %)	INDICATORS	EVIDENCE
	Ability to complete projects within an appropriate time period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 1 – Academic background • Page 5 –Thesis most recently completed or in progress • Reports on the applicant
Communication, interpersonal, and leadership abilities (Scholarships 20%) (Fellowships 30%)	Professional, academic and extracurricular interactions and collaborations with supervisors, colleagues, peers, students and members of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 2 – Academic, research and other relevant work experience • Contributions and statements – Part III, applicant’s statement • Reports on the applicant
	Awards for papers, reports, posters, oral presentations, teaching and/or volunteer/outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 4 – Scholarships and other awards offered (e.g., best paper award at a conference) • Reports on the applicant
	Participation in publication writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions and statements – Part II, most significant contributions to research and development • Reports on the applicant
	Quality of presentation of application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline of proposed research • Contributions and statements – Part III, applicant’s statement • Page 6 – Justification for location of tenure (fellowships only)