

Where Can I Get More Information?

For additional information...

Concerning the **awards covered in this guide**

Concerning the **deferral** of an award and
the transfer of an award to another university

Telephone Numbers

PGS Awards in Engineering, Computing and
Mathematical Sciences, Physics and Chemistry

PGS Awards in Earth Sciences and Ecology,
Cellular and Molecular Biology, Life Sciences
and Psychology

Payments

Facsimile

E-mail

For acceptance or refusal of awards accept@nserc.ca

For policy questions schol@nserc.ca

For application forms and guides distribution@nserc.ca

For questions relating to payments and financial issues scholfin@nserc.ca

Mailing Address

NSERC
Scholarships and Fellowships Division
350 Albert Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1H5
Canada

Contact...

the **Graduate Studies Office** at the
university where you will hold your award.

the **Scholarships and Fellowships Division**
at the address below. When communicating
with NSERC, indicate your Council
application number and specify the type of
award.

(613) 996-3769, 992-2246

(613) 996-3762, 992-9169

(613) 995-5799

(613) 996-2589

Award Holder's Guide

for

Postgraduate Scholarship (PGS) Holders at Canadian Universities

**Julie Payette – NSERC Research
Scholarship Holders at Canadian
Universities**

Attention:

Postgraduate Scholarship and Julie Payette – NSERC Research Scholarship holders at foreign institutions, postdoctoral fellows and holders of NSERC 1967 Science and Engineering Scholarships and NATO Science Fellowships must use the guide entitled

***NSERC Award Holder's Guide 2001 – for Postgraduate Scholarship (PGS) Holders
at Foreign Institutions and Postdoctoral Fellows.***

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and the
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

More copies of this document and/or forms can be obtained from:

Distribution Centre:
350 Albert Street
PO Box 1610
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6G4
Canada

Telephone: (613) 992-4265
Facsimile: (613) 992-5337
E-mail: distribution@nserc.ca

www.nserc.ca

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- Form 3 Request for Deferment of Award

Introduction

NSERC (the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council) and SSHRC (the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) have harmonized their policies and procedures for the payment and administration of the councils' awards for postgraduate study. Award holders will receive payment of their awards through their university, which will also be responsible for managing the awards according to the councils' regulations.

The information in this guide is valid for the duration of your award.* It supersedes previous statements on Fellowships/Scholarships regulations by NSERC and by SSHRC. It is intended for use by students holding one of the following awards at a Canadian university:

- **NSERC – PGS A and PGS B**
- **Julie Payette – NSERC Research Scholarship**
- **SSHRC – Doctoral Fellowship**

Please read this guide carefully on receipt of your Notice of Award. It contains important information regarding the payment and administration of your award.

Note: All personal information collected by the councils is subject to the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy Act*, as described in Appendix 2 of the *NSERC Scholarships and Fellowships Guide* and in the “Regulations Governing Applications” section of the *SSHRC Fellowships Guide*.

In this guide

- “your university” refers to the university at which you are registered as a full-time student during tenure of your award.
- “council” refers to the council, either NSERC or SSHRC, that is funding your scholarship or fellowship.

* The councils reserve the right to change award regulations and to interpret the provisions of this guide and any conditions attached to an award.

1. General Regulations

To hold an award, you must:

- have been unconditionally accepted into a recognized graduate studies degree program in a field supported by the council;
- be registered full-time and progressing satisfactorily in a graduate studies program at an eligible university;
- abide by the regulations governing awards, as described in this guide, in the Notice of Award and in the program description found in the *NSERC Scholarships and Fellowships Guide* or the *SSHRC Fellowships Guide*, as applicable;
- abide by regulations regarding animal care, ethical considerations in the use of human subjects in research, and biohazards (see the *NSERC Scholarships and Fellowships Guide* or the *SSHRC Fellowships Guide*, and the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* for more information);
- comply with the council's integrity policy (see the *NSERC Scholarships and Fellowships Guide* or the *SSHRC Fellowships Guide* for more information);
- acknowledge, wherever possible, the council's funding assistance for the research; and
- agree to have your university administer your award.

In addition,

- the date of degree completion is the date on which all requirements for your degree have been met, including successful defence and submission of the corrected copy of your thesis (in accordance with your university's regulations); and
- awards may be cancelled without notice if the conditions under which they are granted are violated.

2. Value and Duration of Award

- The value and duration of your award are detailed in your Notice of Award.
- The value and duration of your award may be adjusted to take into account a change in your registration status, e.g., early completion of your degree, termination of your graduate studies program, etc.
- **NSERC PGS A holders:** PGS A holders should note that their scholarship support will not extend beyond the 28th month of their master's program. If you have completed more than 4 months' full-time equivalent in a master's program **at the time you take up your award**, the normal 24-month duration of the award will be decreased by the number of months in excess of 4 that have been completed at that time.

Request for balance of the PGS A support if the duration of your award is less than the maximum of 24 months: You can request the balance of the PGS A support if you transfer to a doctoral program during the term of your PGS A, or if you complete your master's degree prior to the termination of your PGS A and continue immediately into a doctoral degree program.

Request for a stipend increase to the PGS B level: PGS A holders who transfer from a master's into a doctoral program, who complete their master's degree in less than 24 months and proceed into a doctoral program, or who enrol directly in a doctoral program following completion of their bachelor's degree are eligible to have their stipend increased to the PGS B level for the balance of the award. You must have completed a minimum of 12 months of postgraduate studies and have been admitted **unconditionally** into the doctoral program. This increase in stipend is not automatic; you must request it by contacting your university. Students who receive the increase must still apply for a PGS B if they wish to receive continued support beyond the term of the PGS A.

To request the balance of the PGS A or the increased stipend level:

- If you are pursuing your doctoral program at the same university where you held your PGS A, you must inform the Graduate Studies Office at your university that you wish to receive the balance of your PGS A and/or the increased stipend.
- If you plan to undertake your doctoral program at a university other than the one where you hold your PGS A, see Section 11 – Change of University.

3. Acceptance and Refusal of Award (New Award Holders Only)

- You must notify the council **within six weeks** of the date on the Notice of Award of your decision to accept or refuse the award.
 - To accept the award, submit an e-mail **or** fax to the council containing the following information: 1) the expected start date of your award; and 2) the university and department of tenure (if known).
 - To refuse the award, submit an e-mail **or** fax to the council specifying the reason for refusal, e.g., employment, acceptance of another award.
- **The council will cancel any award not accepted by the above deadline.**
- Notification by telephone is **not** acceptable.
- The council must receive the above-mentioned notification even if you plan to request a deferment of your award (see Section 6 – Deferment of Award).

4. Start Date

- If you have already begun the program of studies for which funding was awarded, you must take up your award on the first day of the May or September academic term following the announcement of the results.
 - If you have not yet begun the program of studies for which funding was awarded, you may take up your award on the first day of the May, September or January academic term following the announcement of the results.
 - If the appropriate council does not receive your duly completed Form 1 (Payment Activation Form) by November 1 of the year following announcement of the results, your award may be cancelled.
 - If you anticipate that you will not be able to complete your degree requirements by December 31, you must decline the award. However, you may apply again in the following competition as long as you remain eligible.
- ***SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship holders:*** A change in the start date from that indicated on your application may affect your eligibility for the award or the award value or duration. Please consult the council accordingly.

4.1 Change in Start Date

- If you wish to change your start date, see Section 9 – Change of Start Date.

5. Activation of Payment (For New Awards and Awards Transferred to Another University)

- You will be required to provide some information to your university and to the council in order to receive payment of your award. You must complete Form 1 – Payment Activation Form – and submit Part I to your university and Part II to the council at least **eight weeks** before your start date, otherwise your payment will be delayed.
- Your award payment will be activated based on the information contained on your Payment Activation Form, provided you have met all general award conditions applicable to all recipients, as well as any specific conditions that were indicated on your Notice of Award.
- If any of the information that you provided to the council changes prior to your start date, contact the council and your university immediately; this will reduce the likelihood of a delay in the payment of your award.
- Your university will verify that you have met all the conditions of your award before activating your award.
- If you are uncertain whether all conditions have been met, please contact your university.
- If you wish to transfer to a different university, see Section 11 – Change of University.

5.1 Payments

- You will receive payment of your award from your university.
- The payment schedule will be based on your university's schedule, and acceptance of this schedule is a condition of your award.

6. Deferment of Award

- Before commencing your award, you may request permission to defer it for up to three years, but only for reasons of maternity, child rearing, illness, or health-related family responsibilities. You may not defer your award in order to take up another award or to accept or hold employment.
- You must complete Form 3 – Request for Deferment of Award – and send it to the council as soon as possible, but no later than October 1 of the year of the original award. Supporting documentation (e.g., birth, adoption or medical certificate) confirming the reason for deferment must also be included with the request.
- **Furthermore, if you are currently registered in the program for which funding was awarded, you must obtain approval from your university to defer your award.** Deferments will not be approved if they are in conflict with your university's policies.
- Even though you intend to defer your award, you must submit confirmation to the council that you have completed – by December 31 of the year of the original award – all requirements of your previous degree (if not already submitted with your application), or your award will be cancelled.

7. Interruption of Award

- You may interrupt your award for the reasons described below.
- You must obtain approval from your university prior to any interruption of your award.
- For approved interruptions, your university will suspend payment of your award for the duration of the interruption and will resume payment when all the conditions of your award are met (generally, on your return to full-time studies).
- You may not interrupt your award in order to take up another award.

7.1 Unpaid Leave for Reasons of Maternity, Child-Rearing, Illness, or Health-Related Family Responsibilities

- You are eligible for a leave of absence of up to three years, in accordance with your university's policies, for reasons of maternity, child-rearing, illness, or health-related family responsibilities only, **provided your university permits such leaves.**
- You must obtain approval from your university prior to interruption of your award.
- Contact your university to find out what documentation it requires to approve the interruption. This may include birth, adoption or medical certificates.

7.2 Paid Parental Leave

- If you will be interrupting your studies/award within six months of a child's birth or adoption in order to be the primary caregiver for the child, you may request a paid parental leave supplement at your current stipend level for up to four months, **provided your university permits parental leaves.**
- You may not receive this supplement while your award is being deferred.
- You must obtain approval from your university prior to interrupting your award.
- The maximum period of paid leave is four months, even in cases of multiple births or adoption of more than one child at the same time.
- If both parents are supported by the council, each parent may take a portion of the leave, for a combined maximum duration of four months.
- Contact your university to find out what documentation it requires to approve the paid parental leave. This may include birth, adoption or medical certificates.

- If leave is approved, your university will administer the supplement and notify the Council.

In addition, you must certify in writing to the university that:

- you are not eligible for and will not receive employment insurance or other maternity/parental benefits from other sources;
- the other parent has not received and will not receive employment insurance or other maternity/parental benefits before or during the period that the parental benefit is paid by the council;
- you will be the primary caregiver of your child during the parental leave; and
- during the parental leave, you will not be engaged in your studies/research activities or employed in any capacity.

7.3 Leave for Relevant Work Experience

- You may interrupt your award to obtain relevant work experience. The interruption will not reduce the total amount of support available to you.
 - You are not entitled to receive your award payments during such interruptions.
- ***NSERC PGS A holders:*** You are permitted one four-month interruption for this type of leave during the term of the award.
 - ***NSERC PGS B holders:*** You are permitted two four-month interruptions for this type of leave during the term of the award.
 - ***SSHRC 1st and 2nd year Doctoral Fellowship holders:*** You are permitted one four-month interruption for this type of leave during the 1st or 2nd year of your doctoral program.

- **SSHRC 3rd and 4th year Doctoral Fellowship holders:** You are permitted two four-month interruptions for this type of leave during the 3rd and/or 4th years of your doctoral program.
- No two periods of leave for work experience can be consecutive.
 - You must obtain approval from your university prior to interrupting your award.
 - For the purpose of determining eligibility for future NSERC scholarships, these interruptions will not count when the number of months spent in graduate studies is being calculated, regardless of your registration status.

7.4 Vacation Leave

- Your university's regulations apply with respect to vacation leave.

8. Reinstatement of Award

- To reinstate a **deferred** award, you must notify the **council** in writing at least eight weeks before resuming your studies, confirming the exact date you intend to reinstate your award. See also Section 5 – Activation of Payment.
- To reinstate an **interrupted** award, you must notify your **university** in writing at least eight weeks before resuming your studies, confirming the exact date you intend to reinstate your award.
- Awards will be governed by the regulations applicable at the time of reinstatement.

9. Change of Start Date

- If, after you have sent your Payment Activation Form, you change your start date, you must immediately notify:
 - the university; and
 - the council.

- See also Section 2 – Value and Duration of Award – and Section 4 – Start Date – for additional information on the change of your start date.

10. Change of Program of Study/Supervisor/ Research Project/Degree

- Requests to change the program of study, supervisor, research project or the degree will be evaluated by your university. Contact the office at your university that administers your award for further information.
- In the case of disciplines that fall under the mandate of more than one federal granting agency (e.g., psychology, management studies, geography, physical education, optometry, or health sciences), the university is required to consult the relevant agency for a ruling.
- If you modify your research project to the extent that the field of study is not supported by the agency that funds your award, you will no longer be eligible to hold the award and it will be cancelled.

11. Change of University

- To change your university of tenure, you must obtain prior approval from the council. Such requests for change of university should be made as soon as possible, preferably at least eight weeks prior to your start or transfer date, to give the new university time to activate payment of your award.

➤ **SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship holders:** To change your university, you must complete Form 2 – Request to Change University – and send it to SSHRC. A transfer will not be approved unless full credit for all prior doctoral studies is granted towards the new degree. When the council notifies you that your request to transfer has been approved, you must submit a new Payment Activation Form to the new university.

➤ **NSERC PGS holders:**

- To change your university **before taking up the award:**

You can simply indicate the new university on Form 1 – Payment Activation Form. If you have already submitted your Payment Activation Form, you must complete Form 2 – Request to Change University – and send it to NSERC. You must also advise the university of your intent to transfer. When the council notifies you that your request to transfer has been approved, you must submit a new Payment Activation Form to the new university.

- To change your university **after having taken up the award:**

You must send the following documentation to NSERC:

- the duly completed and signed Form 2 – Request to Change University (Parts I and II) – supported by the heads of the department of the original university and the proposed university, and
- a letter justifying your reasons for the change.

If you are a PGS A holder who has completed your master's degree in less than two years and you want to use the balance of the award to commence your doctoral program at another Canadian university and receive the increased stipend, complete Form 2 – Request to Change University (Parts I and III) – and submit it to NSERC. You do not need to include a letter justifying the reasons for the change.

The council will notify you and the university if your request to change university has been approved. You must then submit Form 1 – Payment Activation Form – to the new university.

11.1 Changing to a Foreign University

➤ **All NSERC PGS holders:** If your award has been approved for tenure at a Canadian university, you are not permitted to transfer to a foreign university.

➤ **NSERC PGS A holders:** If you anticipate that you will complete your master's degree 6 to 12 months prior to the termination of your PGS A and wish to hold the remainder of your award abroad (while undertaking doctoral studies), you must apply for tenure-abroad consideration in the next competition. Please contact NSERC as soon as possible for application details. Even if you are successful in the competition and receive approval to hold the remainder of your award abroad, if you do not complete your master's degree at least 6 months prior to the termination of your PGS A, you may not be allowed to hold the remainder of your PGS A award abroad.

➤ **SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship holders:** Your award may only be held at a university outside Canada if one of your previous degrees was obtained at a Canadian university.

- If you intend to hold your award at a university outside Canada, you must contact the appropriate agencies for immigration and taxation regulations. The councils cannot advise award holders on such matters.

12. Other Sources of Income (Employment and Other Awards)

- Councils expect award holders to devote the majority of their time to the timely completion of their degree program. As a guideline in this context, the councils strongly suggest that award holders limit the number of hours of employment per 12-month period to 450. Universities may, however, set their own guidelines. Please contact your university for further information.
- Payment of the award during paid internships and co-op work terms is permitted, regardless of your registration status, provided that they are a requirement of your program of studies.
- You may not concurrently hold an award from another federal granting agency (CIHR, NSERC, or SSHRC). You may, however, accept awards from other sources, regardless of value, e.g., foreign sources, provincial awards, private organizations, your university.
- **NSERC PGS holders:** You may not accept remuneration or supplements paid from other NSERC grants, whether paid as a scholarship or salary.

13. Annual Progress Reports

- Your university will administer an annual progress report, on behalf of the councils. This report must be completed in conjunction with your supervisor and submitted to your department head.
- The council may cancel the award if your progress is judged unsatisfactory.

14. Termination of Award

- If you are planning to terminate your award early, contact your university as soon as possible.
- In accordance with its policies, your university will determine the end date of your award based on information pertaining to your termination.
- Your registration status may change in certain circumstances; e.g., when you complete your degree, start another program of studies, terminate your studies, change to part-time status, and/or accept full-time employment. If you are uncertain whether your registration status has changed, please contact your university.
- If your registration status changes, the final value of your award will be prorated based on the end date as determined by your university.
- If you accept full-time employment, regardless of whether you have completed your degree or not, your award will be terminated as of the effective date of your contract of employment. The value of the award will be prorated.
- Either your university or the council will contact you to reclaim any overpayment of your award.

15. Degree Completion (For SSHRC Award Holders Only)

- Award holders must use Form 4 – Notice of Receipt of Degree – to inform SSHRC once they have obtained their doctorate.

16. Taxation and Other Issues

- **Taxation:** Your university will issue the T4A form. You are not permitted to defer an instalment to the next taxation year. **Scholarships and fellowships are taxable.** Although they may not be taxed at source, you will be responsible for paying income tax on the award, if applicable. All inquiries related to tax regulations must be addressed to the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Taxation. For information on taxable income, please obtain the appropriate Interpretation Bulletin from your district taxation office.
- **Insurance:** The councils are unable to assume liability for accidents, illnesses, or losses that may occur during the tenure of an award. You are responsible for ensuring that you have appropriate insurance.
- We encourage you to read the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy Act* as they pertain to application information (see the NSERC *Scholarships and Fellowships Guide* or the SSHRC *Fellowships Guide*).