Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
For NSERC Postgraduate Scholarships–Doctoral (PGS D)
and Postdoctoral Fellowships (PDF) applicants

1. **How and when can I apply for a PGS D or PDF?**
   In order to apply for an NSERC PGS D or a PDF, you must complete Form 201. Read the instructions carefully to ensure that the form is completed properly and that the required free-form attachments are provided. The opening of the online system is scheduled for **August 7**.

2. **Where do I submit my PGS D or PDF application and who do I contact if I have questions?**

Registration Status at Time of Application	Where to Submit the Application	Point of Contact for Enquiry
PGS D		
You are currently registered at (or were registered at during the year of application), or are on an approved leave of absence from, a Canadian university in a degree program.	The Canadian university at which you are currently or were registered in a degree program, or from which you have taken an approved leave of absence	University
You are currently registered at a foreign university.	Directly to NSERC	NSERC
You are not currently registered at a university, or are registered, but not in a degree program, and have completed all requirements for a degree program from a Canadian university since January 1 of this year	The Canadian University where you were registered in a degree program for which you completed all requirements since January 1 of this year	University
If none of the preceding options apply to you, only then may you consider the following		
You are not currently registered at a university or are registered, but not in a degree program and you have completed all requirements for a degree program prior to January 1 of this year.	Directly to NSERC	NSERC
PDF		
N/A	Directly to NSERC	NSERC

3. **What is the university deadline for a PGS D applicant submitting an application to a Canadian university? Why are the deadlines different?**
Most Canadian universities have two deadlines; a departmental and a university deadline that are different from one university to the other. Contact your School (Faculty) of Graduate Studies to confirm the deadline dates for submission of your application. University deadlines are different from the NSERC deadline because universities must go through a selection process before they submit their quota of applications to NSERC.

4. **I am applying for a PGS D at a Canadian university and I have missed the department and/or the university deadline. Can I apply directly?**
Applications sent directly to NSERC that should have been submitted through a Canadian university will be rejected. There are no exceptions.

5. **I am applying directly to NSERC and may not be able to submit my application by the deadline of 8:00 PM (ET) on October 15. Is it possible to get an extension?**
In fairness to other applicants who will have submitted their application on time, NSERC will not approve an extension to the deadline date or time.

6. **What is the deadline date for providing my proof of citizenship?**

You must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada by the application deadline. NSERC will ask award recipients for proof of citizenship or residency status upon acceptance of the award.

7. **How many pages can I use for the free forms attachments?**
The page limitations are strict, and the online system will not allow you to attach additional pages.
Outline of proposed research: PGS D and PDF, 1 page, including citations
Contributions and Statements: PGS D, 2 pages and PDF, 4 pages

8. **How do I complete the *Outline for Proposed Research*?**
The Outline of Proposed Research is a free form attachment and must be converted to Portable Document Format (PDF) before it can be attached to the electronic application. You must provide the following:
- A detailed description of your proposed research project for the period during which you are to hold the award. Be as specific as possible;
- Background information to position your proposed research within the context of the current knowledge in the field. State the objectives and hypothesis, and outline the experimental or theoretical approach to be taken (citing literature pertinent to the proposal), and the methods and procedures to be used;
- State the significance of the proposed research to a field or fields in the natural sciences and engineering (NSE).

9. **Do I need to complete the *Justification for Eligibility of Proposed Research*?**
- If your research has any link with, or overlap or relevance to, health or social sciences and humanities, you must complete the "justification" and it must accompany your application at the time of application.
- If in doubt, complete the "justification".
- It will be used by NSERC when evaluating the eligibility of your proposed research; it will not be communicated to Selection Committee members.
- Candidates whose application is rejected because of ineligible subject matter will not be allowed to submit the "justification" afterwards.

10. **What format do I need to use for my contributions to research and development?**
Begin with your most recent contributions, use the following format:
- Full authorship as it appears/will appear in the original publication (**with the applicant's name in bold**);
- Year, title, publication name and volume;
- First and last page numbers.

11. **Can I submit the attachments separately from my application?**
NSERC will not accept attachments separately from the application. You will not be able to submit your application online until all documents are attached and your application has been verified for completeness on your Portfolio page ("verify completeness" button). Once verified successfully, the "submit" button will appear and only then you will be able to submit your application.

12. **Can NSERC provide further guidance regarding transcripts and how they are submitted?**
It is imperative that you consult the *Transcripts* section of the [instructions](). Applications that do not meet the requirements will be rejected.

13. **When and how do I contact my referees in order for them to complete a *Report on the Applicant*?**
- Contact your proposed referees early to ensure that they are willing to complete a report for you;
- Ensure that the deadline given to complete the report is not the NSERC or the university deadline;
- Both reports must be completed and verified successfully (Portfolio page - "verify completeness" button). before an application can be submitted online;
- It is your responsibility to follow up with your referees to ensure that the reports are completed on time;
- In the Report on the Applicant page of your application, follow the steps below on how to contact them:
  o Enter the names and email addresses of each of the referees who will be completing a report;
  o Enter the deadline date on which you need the report to be completed. Remember **not to use** the NSERC or the university deadline date as this will not give your referees and yourself sufficient time to successfully complete and submit your application by NSERC's deadline date and time;
  o Once the information is saved, an email containing the appropriate links will be forwarded to the referees so that they can view your completed application and prepare the report;
  o Once the report is completed and submitted electronically by the referees, it will be attached to your application. You will not be able to view the report, but the status of the request can be verified on the *Reports on the Applicant* page of the application.

14. **I am having problems contacting my referees (unavailable/out of country/one report missing) and the deadline is fast approaching. Can I get an extension to the deadline date?**
It is your responsibility to communicate with your referees ahead of time and to follow-up with them to ensure that the *Reports on the Applicant* are completed on time. In fairness to other referees who have completed their report on time, no extensions to the deadline will be granted.

15. **My referee is confirming that the Report on the Applicant has been completed. The status of the report in my application is "Document Created". How can I confirm that it has been completed?**
    If your referee has completed the report and the status on your Portfolio is not showing "Document Completed" it means that your referee has not verified completeness ("Verify" button) in their portfolio. You are required to contact the referee and ask that the report be verified in order for it to be attached to your application. Once verified successfully, the status of the report will change to "Document Completed".

16. **How are grades converted?**
    In order to assist committee members in interpreting and comparing academic transcripts, NSERC has prepared a summary table of the undergraduate and graduate grading systems at the various Canadian universities, with the approximate conversion to a percentage scale.

    If you are submitting foreign transcripts, you may ask the university to provide a document confirming the meaning of each grade. This document could serve as a tool for Selection Committee members and can be submitted along with your transcript.

17. **I am ready to submit my application but the "Submit" button is greyed out. How can I submit my application?**
    The "Submit" button will not appear until you select "Verify" on your Portfolio. Once your application is complete and verified successfully, the "Submit" button will appear and you will be able to submit your application.

18. **My application has been submitted to NSERC before the deadline and needs to be updated. Can it be returned?**
    With the exception of personal contact information, NSERC will not accept any changes or updates to your application once it has been submitted. Personal contact information may be updated by sending an email to schol@nserc-crsng.gc.ca.