How to be successful in your NSERC fellowship application

http://static-p3.fotolia.com/jpg/00/13/98/14/400_F_13981445_vjKJJpxJfYiB9rBvb8NJkZiN0ZFWi4iT.jpg

Justin Deme, M.Sc.

Ph.D. candidate

Dept. of Microbiology and Immunology

Coulton lab

September 8, 2010

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Credentials

- Summer 2006
  - **NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA)**
- Summer 2007
  - **NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA)**
- 2007-2008
  - **NSERC Postgraduate Scholarship, Master's (PGS-M)**
- 2008-2009
  - **NSERC Canada Graduate Scholarship, Master's (CGS-M)**
- 2009-2011
  - **NSERC Canada Graduate Scholarship, Doctoral (CGS-D)**

Outline

Virtual completion of application form 201

Writing style

Editing

Make a timeline for yourself!

Filling out online application forms

Direct yourself to: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/index_eng.asp

Great instructions on how to fill Form 201 are found here:
http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/OnlineServices-ServicesEnLigne/instructions/201/e.asp

Or

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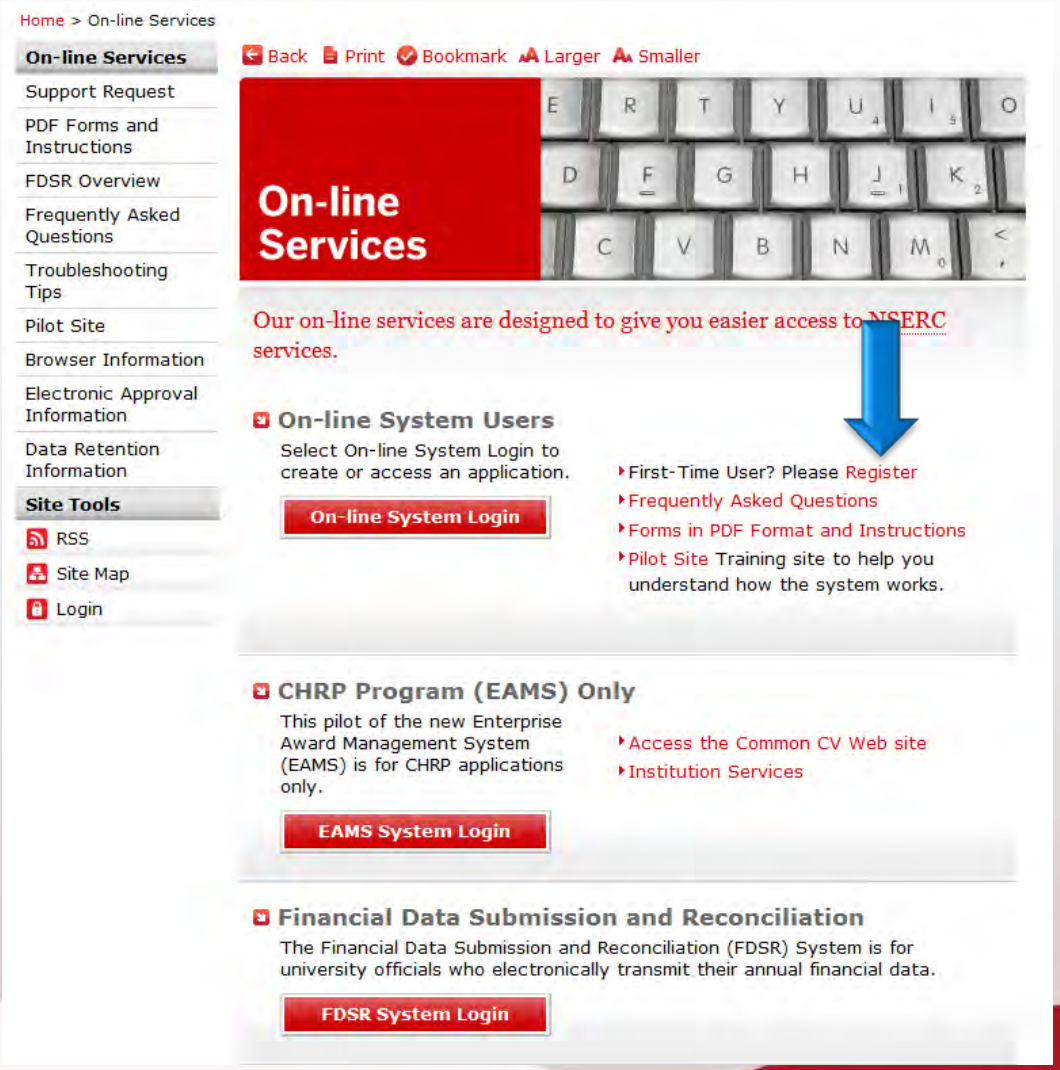
First time applicants

New registrants will obtain an NSERC PIN, required for the application procedure



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Registration

NSERC PIN (if known) (6 chars)

Family name (30 chars)
(Mixed case, for ex. Roy)

Given name (30 chars)
(Mixed case, for ex. Paul)

Initial(s) of ALL given names (4 chars)
(Uppercase no periods or spaces, for ex. initials for Paul M. Roy would be PM)

Previous Family Name (30 chars)
(If you have changed your name since you last applied to NSERC)

E-mail address (100 chars)

Preferred language of correspondence English French

Daytime phone number Country Area Number Extension

Account name (User ID)
Begin with a letter, and use only letters (a-z), numbers (0-9), the underscore (_), and **no spaces**. (30 chars)

Password
Must be **8-10 characters long, must contain at least one special character (! @ # $ % ^ & * ( ) + = { } | < > \ _ - [ ] / ?) and no spaces**, may contain numbers (0-9), lower and upper case letters (a-z, A-Z). Please note that your password is case sensitive. (10 chars)

Password confirmation (10 chars)

Authentication question
Choose a question to which only you know the answer and that has nothing to do with your password. If you forget your password, we will verify your identity by asking you this question. (200 chars)
Tips on writing an effective authentication question

Answer to authentication question (30 chars)

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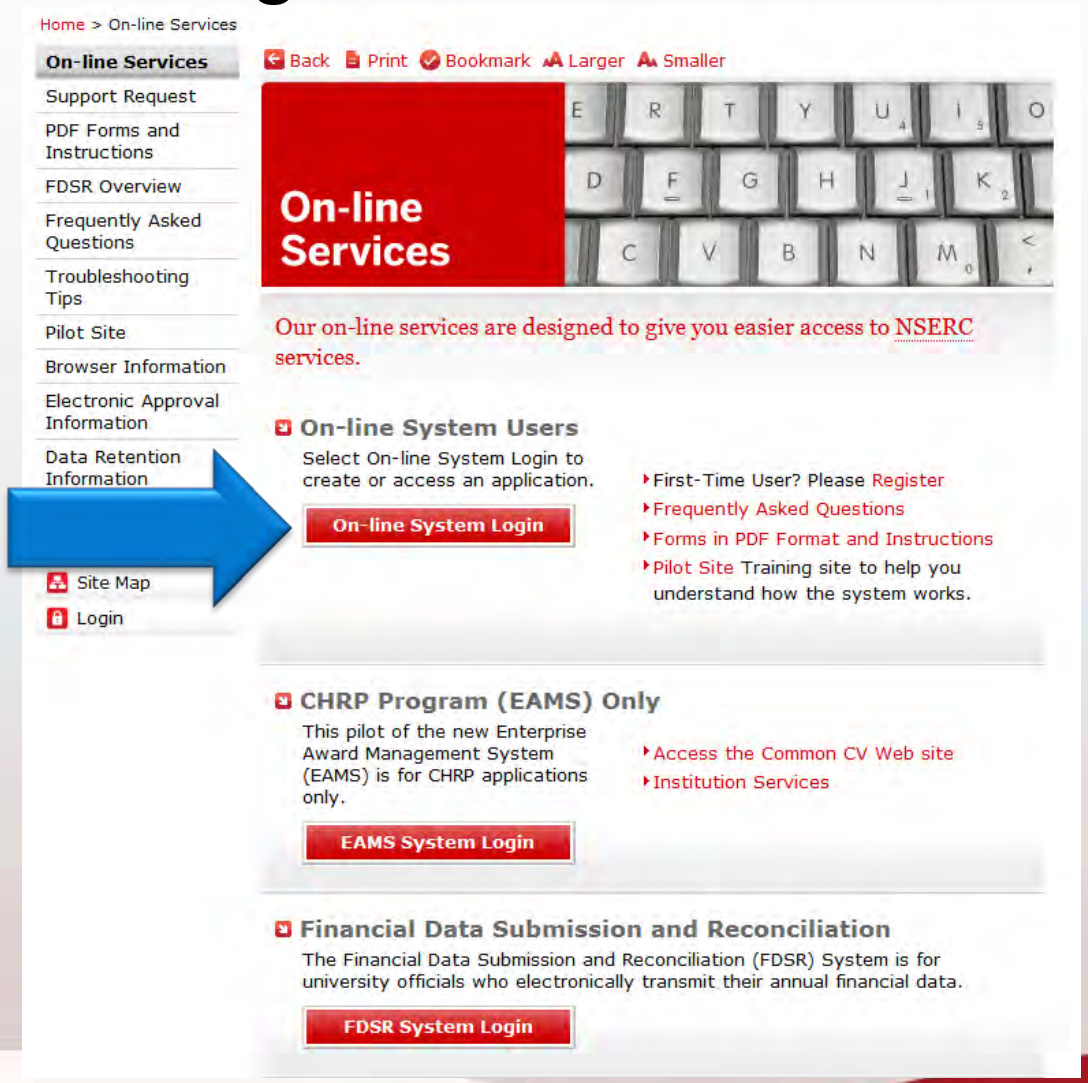
Once you are registered



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Automatically logged out after "extended period of time"

- **SAVE OFTEN**

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Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada | Conseil de recherches en sciences naturelles et en génie du Canada | Canada

NSERC
www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca

Contact Us | Help

eConsole >

Main Menu
Logout

Proactive Disclosure
Proactive Disclosure

eConsole

Version 5.18

Welcome JUSTIN DEME

Users of the eSubmission system will no longer be required to periodically change their passwords. However, for their own protection, users are encouraged to change their passwords regularly. Keep your password safe and confidential; do not divulge it to anyone. NSERC will not be held liable for any loss of your data should you neglect to protect your password.

Account Management
- Change Password
- Maintain User Profile

Forms Management
- Forms - Researcher
- Forms - Student
- Forms - Reviewer
- Forms - Partners
- Forms - Department Head

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My Portfolio

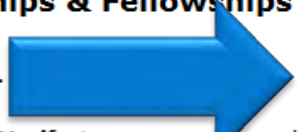
Applications

Your in-progress and completed applications are listed in the table below (see Security/Privacy Act Statement for details). To create a new application, select the appropriate form from the drop-down box below. To edit, preview/print or verify the completeness of a given application, click on the appropriate button below. Note that the Scholarships & Fellowships applications cannot be submitted electronically. A paper copy **must** be submitted by the appropriate program deadline. However, Form 201 - Scholarships (PGS M, PGS D & PDF) can ONLY be submitted electronically to NSERC.

Select form to be created | Create

Scholarships & Fellowships

Form 201



Replaces Form 200 used in past years

1. Select **Verify** to ensure your application is complete (status will appear as Completed).
2. **Submit** your application to your institution for approval (status will appear as Submitted). This action is the equivalent of you signing the application. Refer to Electronic Submission of Applications.
3. Your institution submits your application to NSERC for consideration (status will appear as **Approved**).

As of today, all PGS M, PGS D and PDF applicants must use Form 201 - Application for a Postgraduate Scholarship or Postdoctoral Fellowship. If you have already created an application using Form 200, your data will be transfered into Form 201 EXCEPT all electronic attachments. Since those attachments may not meet the file attachment specifications, you will need to upload those files again.

Form 200

Upon verification of your application, the system will assign it a reference number. Once your application is complete, you must forward this number to your proposed referees to enable them to complete the Report on the Applicant. You must click "verify" to ensure that your application is complete.

Program	Application Title	Reference Number	Status	Last Updated	Edit Form	Verify Completeness	Preview/ Print	Submit
Postgraduate Scholarships - PGS D	How to win NSERC fellowships	125499628	In Progress	2009/09/09	Edit	Verify	Preview	Submit

My Portfolio

Applications

Your in-progress and completed applications are listed in the table below (see Security/Privacy Act Statement for details). To create a new application, select the appropriate form from the drop-down box below. To edit, preview/print or verify the completeness of a given application, click on the appropriate button below. Note that the Scholarships & Fellowships applications cannot be submitted electronically. A paper copy **must** be submitted by the appropriate program deadline. However, Form 201 - Scholarships (PGS M, PGS D & PDF) can ONLY be submitted electronically to NSERC.

Select form to be created | Create

Select form to be created
Form 200 - IPS, IRDF, VF, NPRINT
CGS - Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplements
Form 201 - Scholarships (PGS M, PGS D & PDF)
Form 202 - USRA (Part 1)

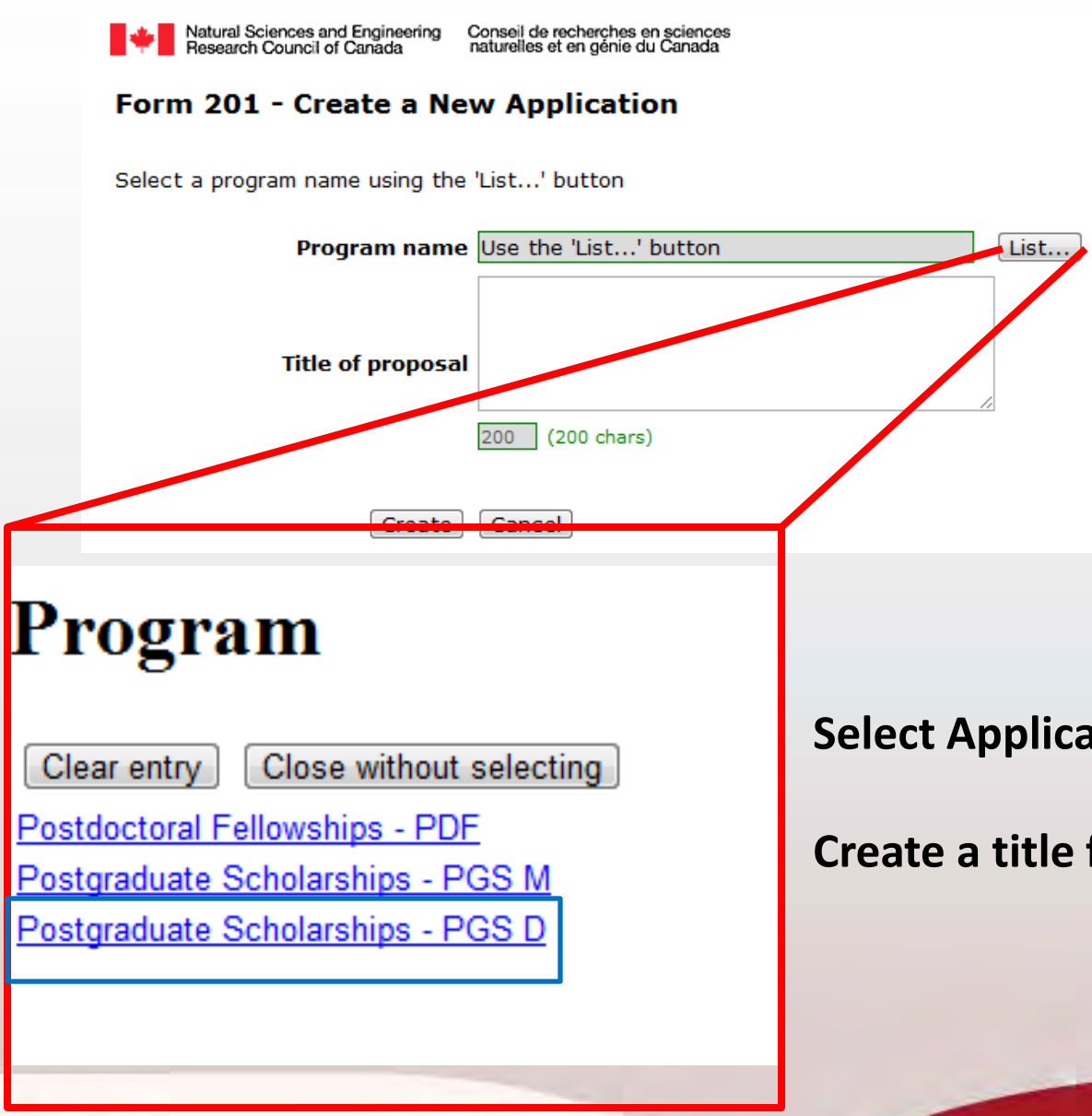
1. Select **Verify** to ensure your application is complete (status will appear as Completed).
2. **Submit** your application to your institution for approval (status will appear as Submitted). This action is the equivalent of you signing the application. Refer to Electronic Submission of Applications.
3. Your institution submits your application to NSERC for consideration (status will appear as **Approved**).

As of today, all PGS M, PGS D and PDF applicants must use Form 201 - Application for a Postgraduate Scholarship or Postdoctoral Fellowship. If you have already created an application using Form 200, your data will be transfered into Form 201 EXCEPT all electronic attachments. Since those attachments may not meet the file attachment specifications, you will need to upload those files again.

Form 200

Upon verification of your application, the system will assign it a reference number. Once your application is complete, you must forward this number to your proposed referees to enable them to complete the Report on the Applicant. You must click "verify" to ensure that your application is complete.

Program	Application Title	Reference Number	Status	Last Updated	Edit Form	Verify Completeness	Preview/ Print	Submit
Postgraduate Scholarships - PGS D	How to win NSERC fellowships	125499628	In Progress	2009/09/09	Edit	Verify	Preview	Submit



Select Application form

Create a title for your proposal

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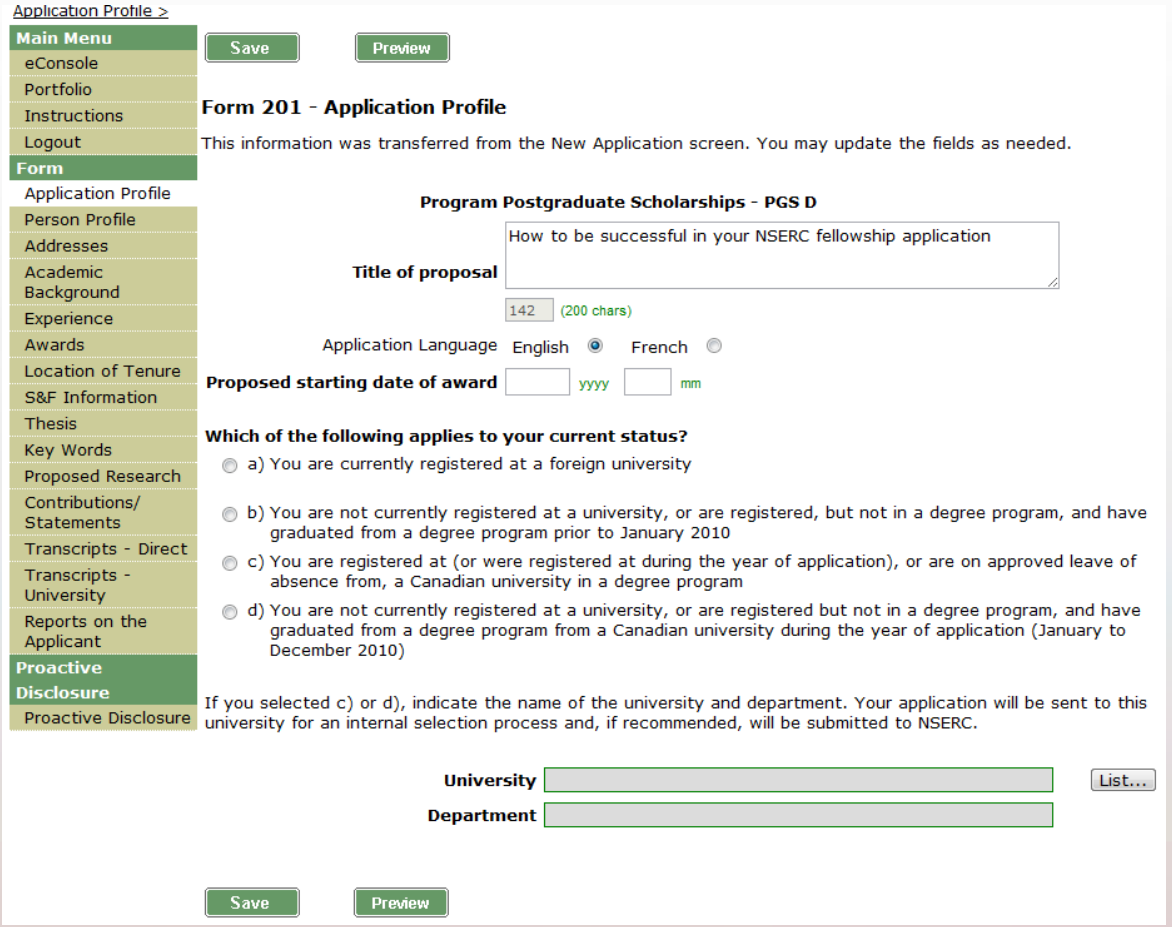
Overview of your Application

Access any part of the application

- After filling out each form section, always **SAVE**

- You can preview your information after filling
  - •best to do this when application is complete



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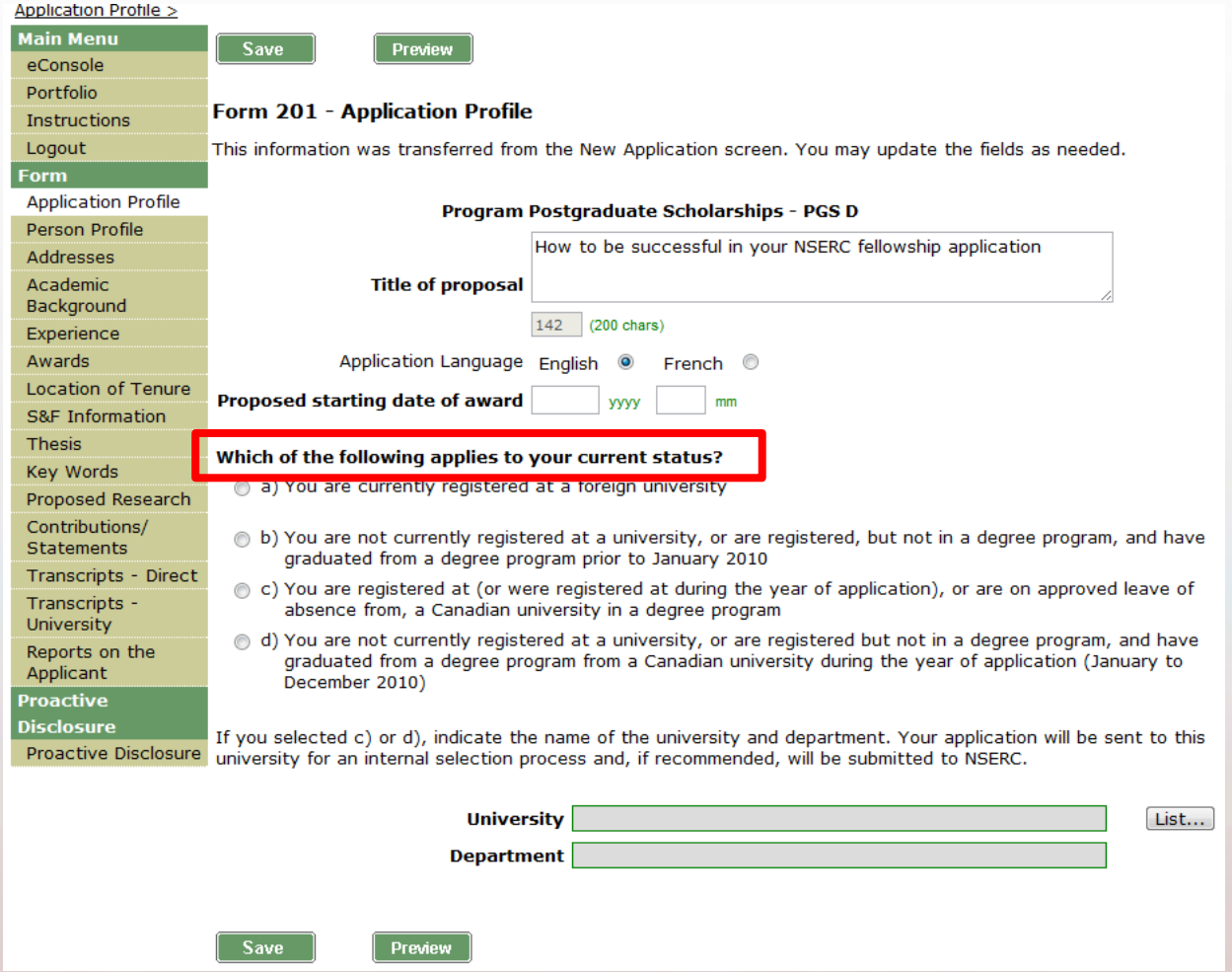
Application Profile

Your status will determine how you submit your application:

a) and b) – submit directly to NSERC with transcripts attached to application

c) and d) – submit application and transcripts to your Department



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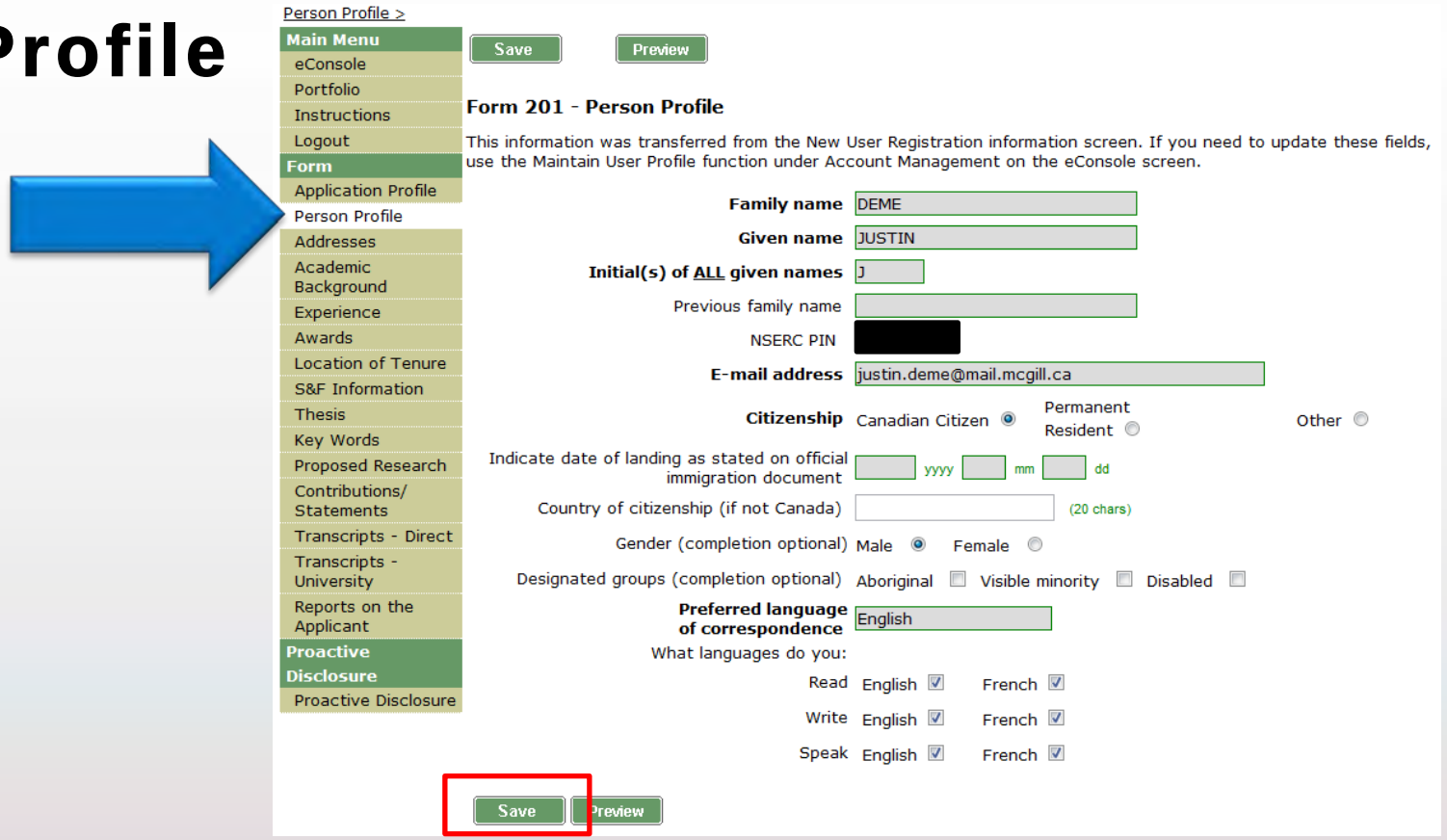
Person Profile



Information should be automatically completed based on your registration

- **Fill out everything else**

After completing every section, SAVE

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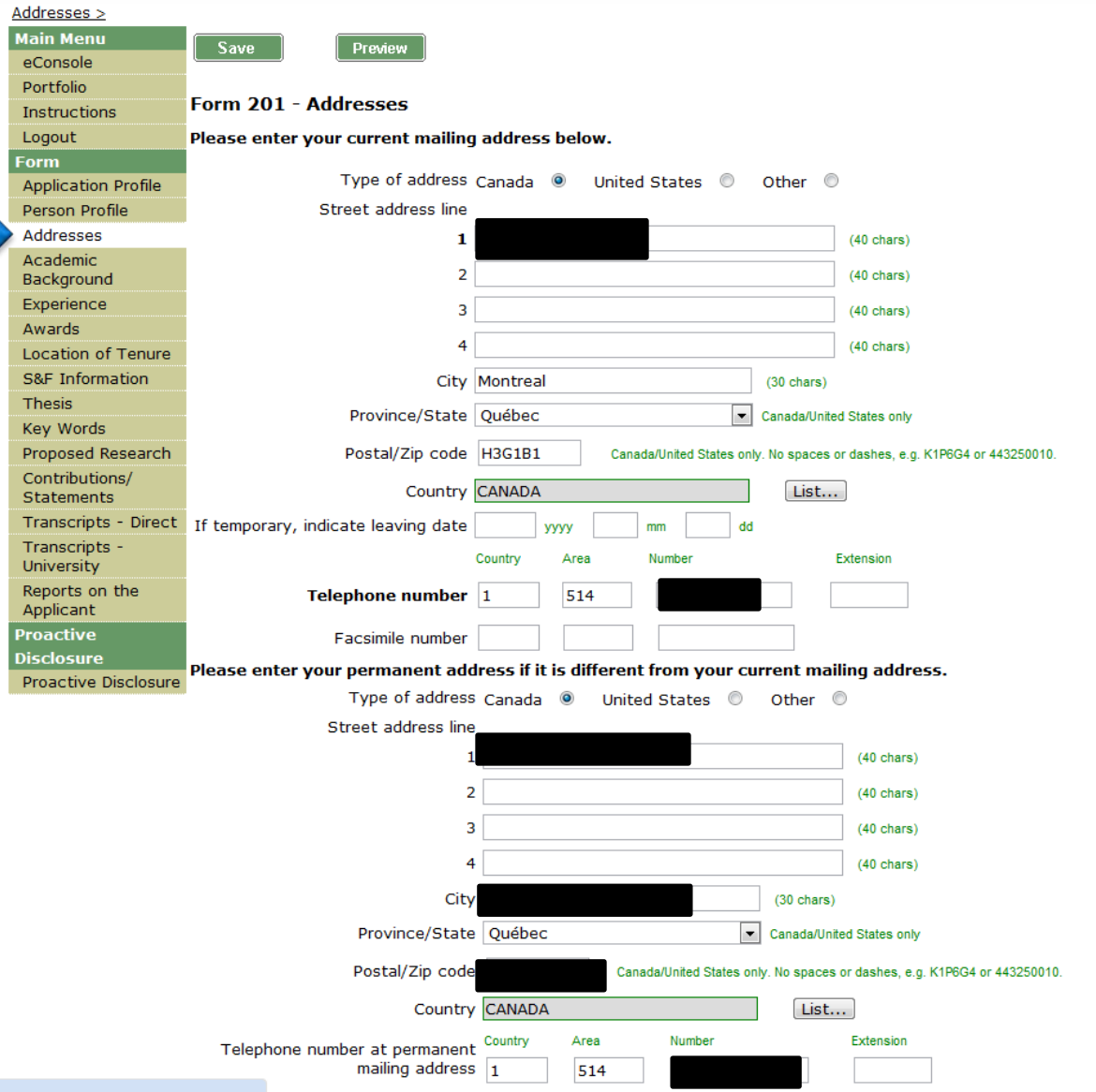
Addresses

Complete as “Person Profile” section



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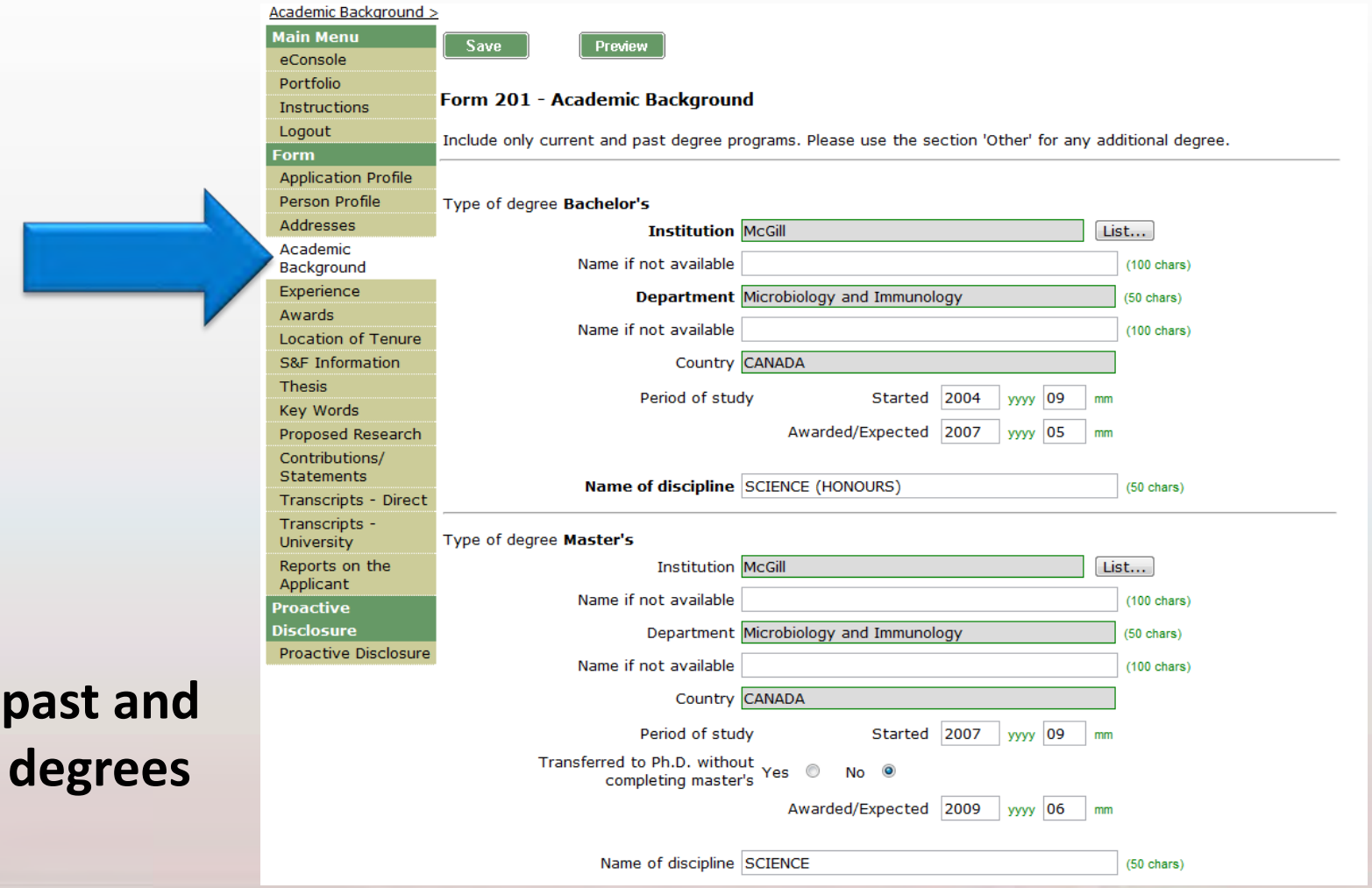
Academic background



Include past and present degrees

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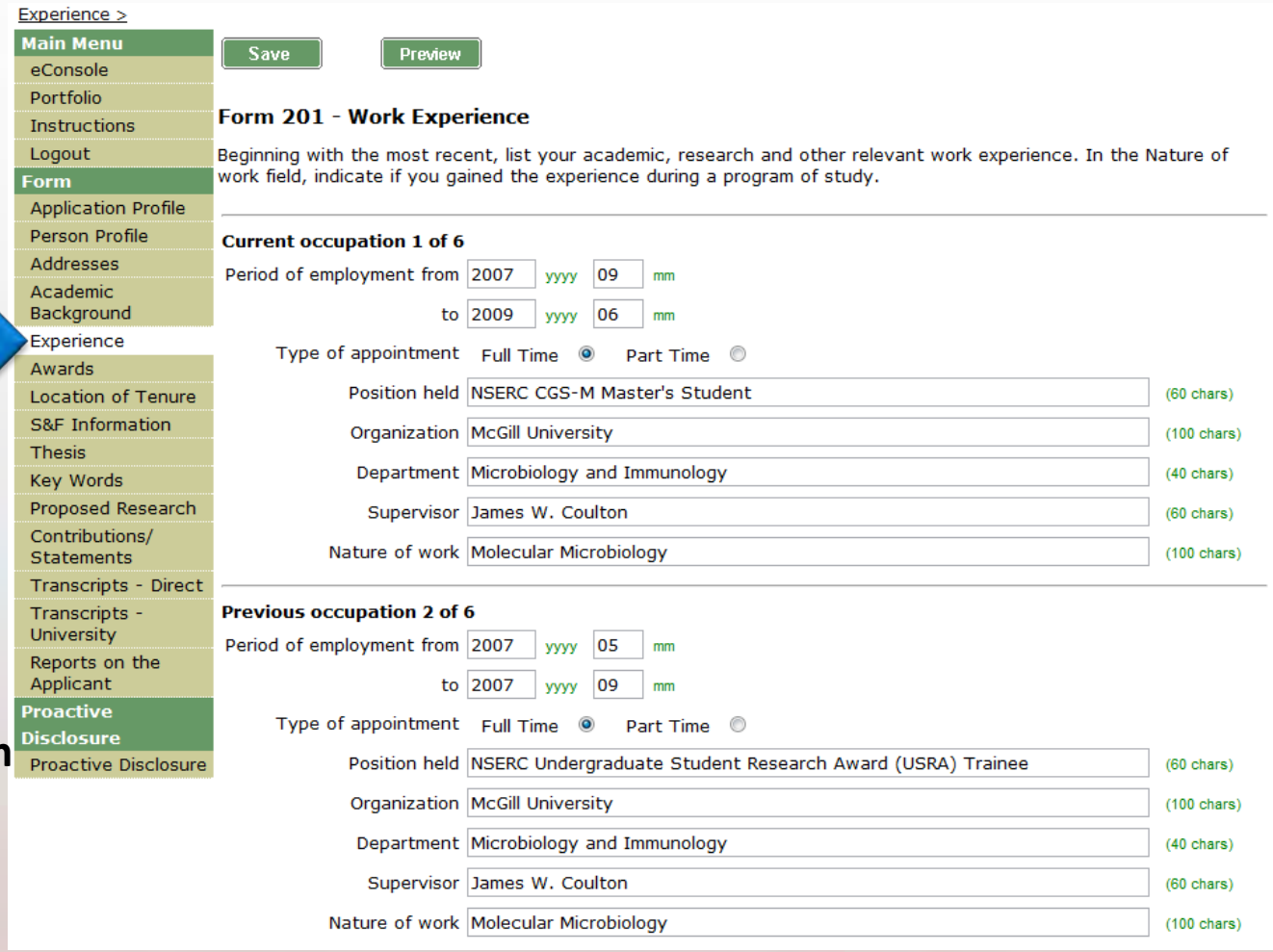
Work Experience



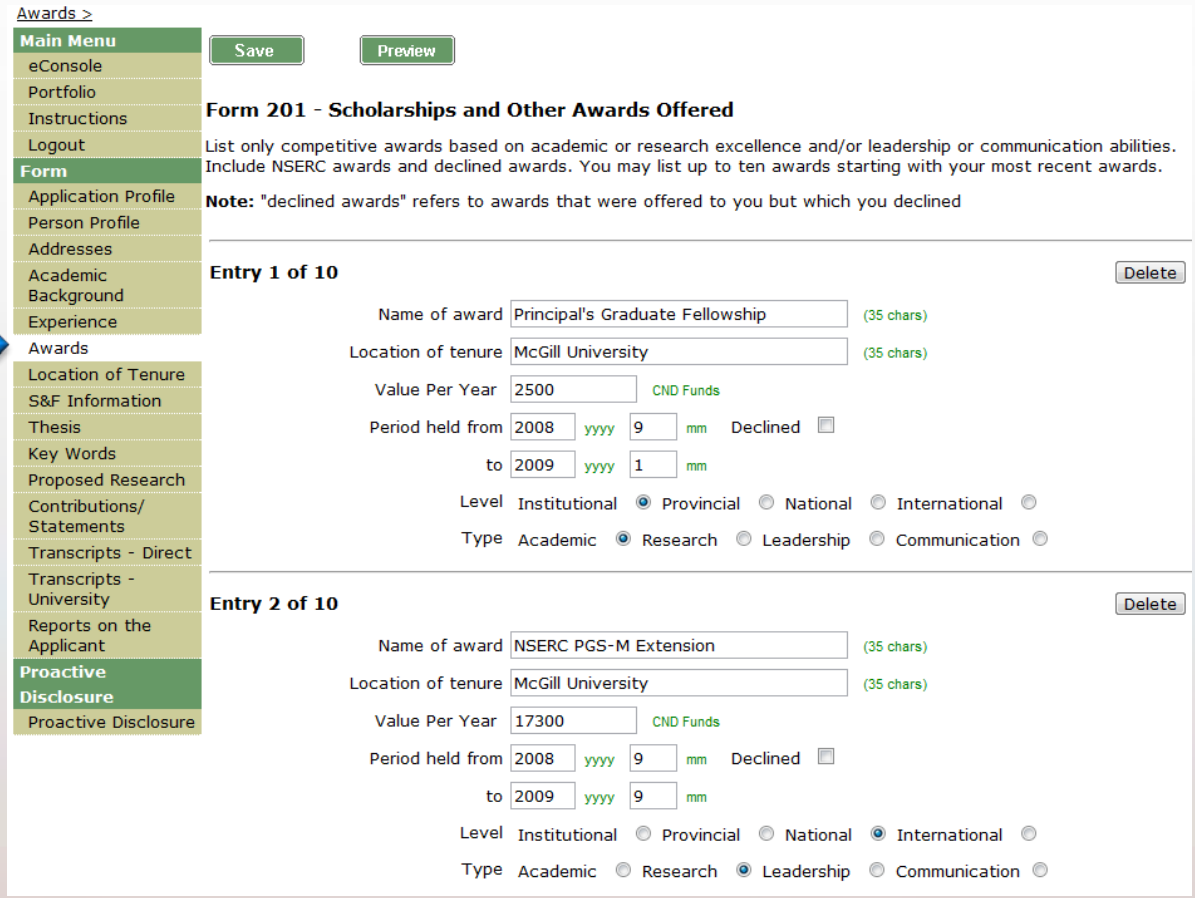
Indicate all relevant work experience

- **Academic, research**
- **Past work you've held with NSERC awards**
- **Relevant to the program you're applying for**

Awards

List up to 10 awards

- If you've received >10 awards, list most prestigious (i.e. international > institutional)
- Include awards you've declined
- For postgraduate awards (esp. Doctorate), important to include awards that reflect research excellence and leadership/communication since they're valued more and harder to show than academic



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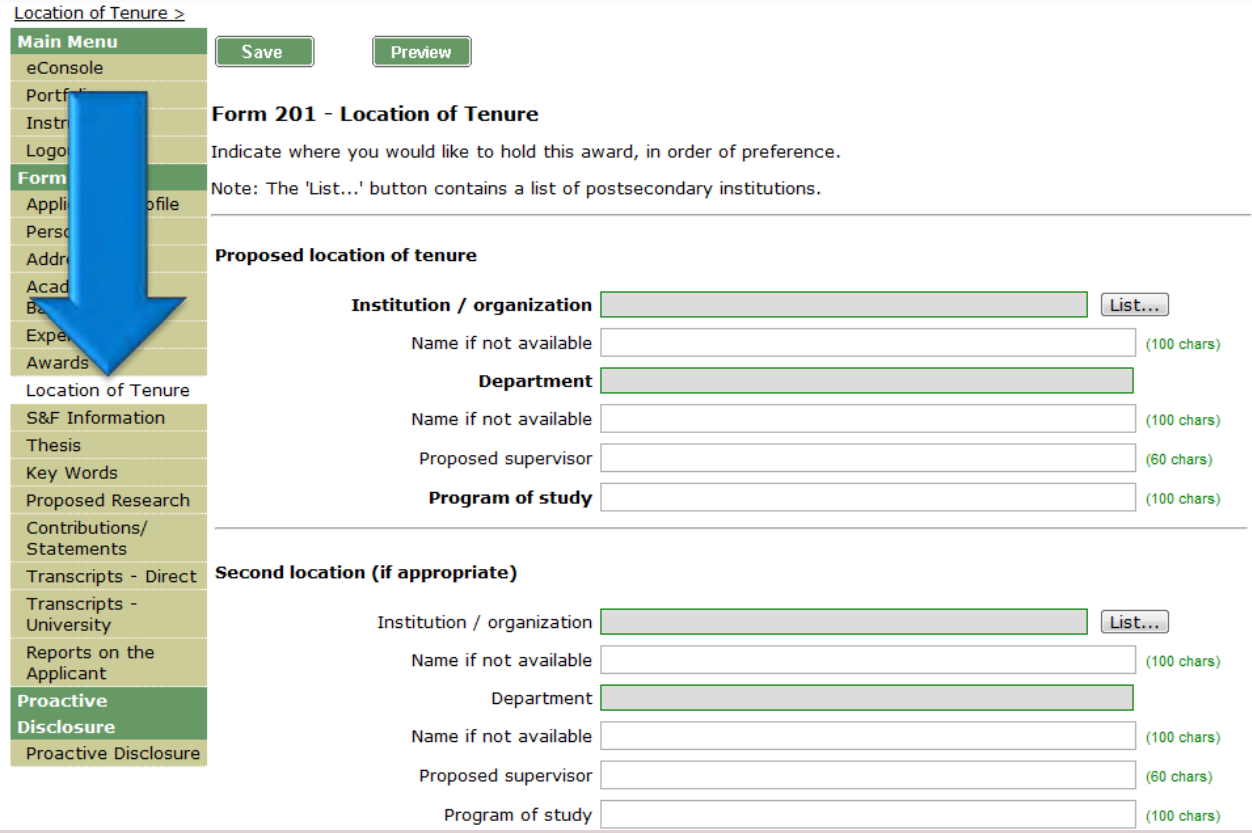
Location of Tenure

Before applying, you should know

- Where you wish to hold your fellowship
- a supervisor willing to take you
- a project you will be researching



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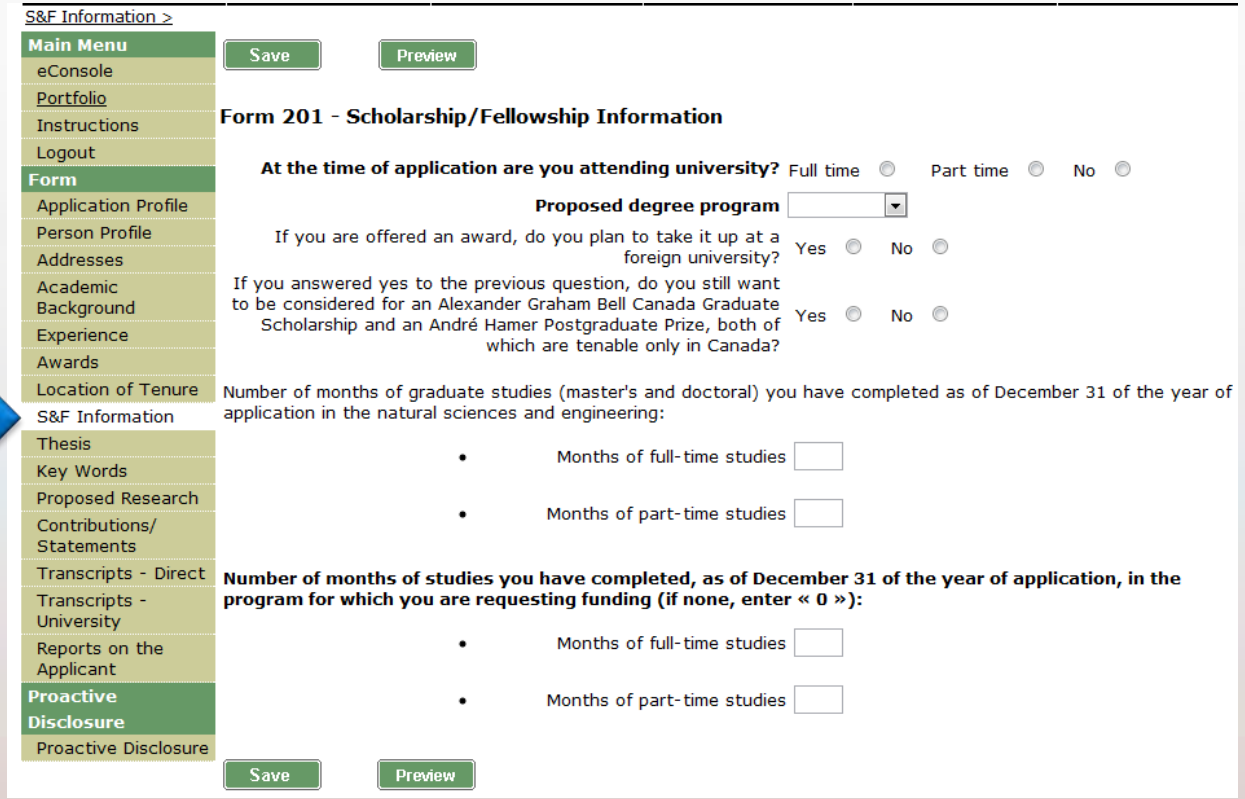
S/F information

This section will determine your eligibility



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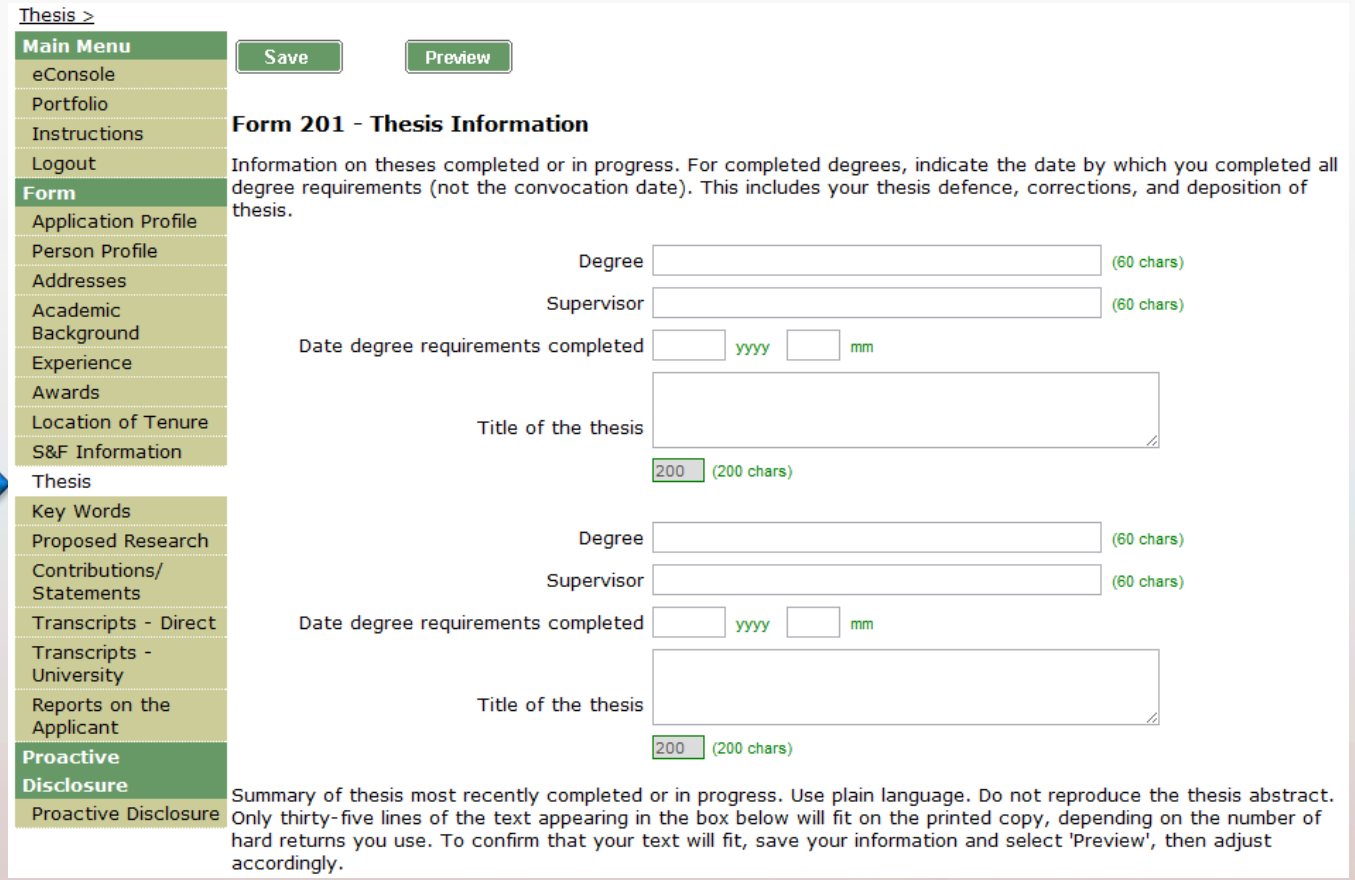
Thesis

Do not copy/paste your abstract verbatim, use plain language



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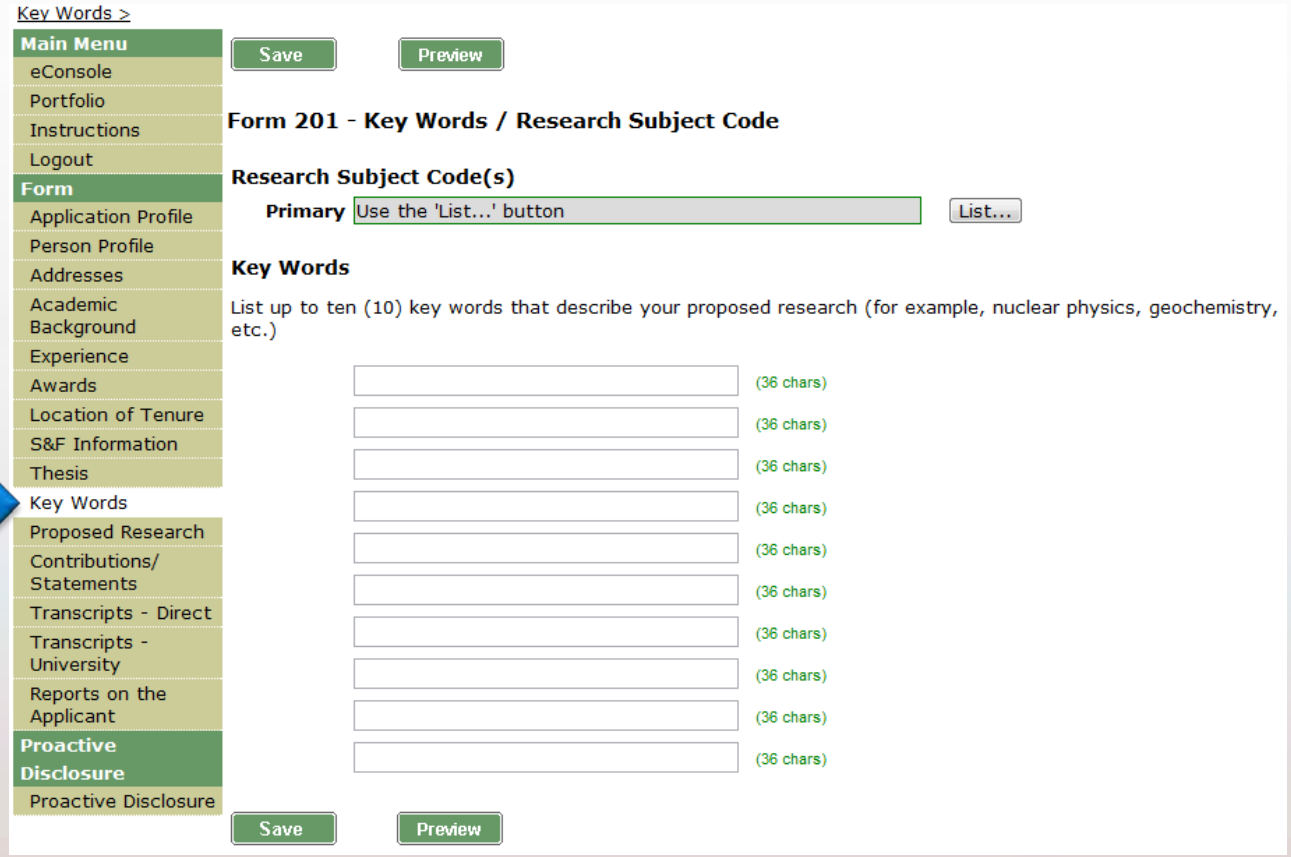
Key Words

Will help in determining application evaluation committee

Choose themes that represent your proposed research

Codes can be found here:
http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Help-Aide/ScholarshipCodes-CodesPourBourses_Eng.asp



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Proposed Research

Proposed Research >

Main Menu
- eConsole
- Portfolio
- Instructions
- Logout

Form
- Application Profile
- Person Profile
- Addresses
- Academic Background
- Experience
- Awards
- Location of Tenure
- S&F Information
- Thesis
- Key Words
- Proposed Research
- Contributions/ Statements
- Transcripts - Direct
- Transcripts - University
- Reports on the Applicant

Proactive Disclosure
- Proactive Disclosure

Form 201 - Proposed Research

Click on the "Instructions" button for details concerning this electronic attachment. For detailed instructions on the attachment process and attachment presentation, consult the Electronic Attachment Instructions.

Your electronic file attachment must meet the following specifications:

- PDF format
- Maximum file size is 3 Mb
- 8 ½" x 11" (216mm x 279mm)
- Maximum 1 page(s)

If you do not have a PDF conversion program, download a free version of PrimoPDF available at www.PrimoPDF.com or convert the document using an online system at http://online.primopdf.com/. Mac users have a PDF conversion functionality built into the Macintosh system "print" functionality.

Proposed Research

Type: File

Document Description: (50 chars)

Filename: Choose File No file chosen

Status: Document missing (You must retrieve your document and select Attach)

Attach

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Proposed Research (2)

- **Proposed Research and Contributions/Statements must be saved as .pdf and uploaded**
- **General formatting for freeform sections:**
  - –Times New Roman or comparable, size 12, black ink
  - –Text single spaced
  - –Paper size : 8.5 x 11 inches
  - –Margins: ¾ inch all around
  - –Left Justified Paragraphs
  - –Enter name and PIN at top right of every page (header)
  - –Single sided only
  - –Number pages sequentially
  - –Abide the page limits
  - –Describe abbreviations and acronyms

Proposed Research (3)

Limited to one page for PGS-M and PGS-D

Applicant (not supervisor) must write this section

Tips:

- **Write in plain language**
  - Chances are evaluators are not perfectly familiar with your proposed research field. Make sure they understand
- Provide brief **introduction** to research background
  - Puts your work into context
  - You can cite important papers, but do not refer them to a paper
- State **objectives** and **hypothesis** of your project
- Take a paragraph and explain **methodology**
- How your science will influence natural sciences and engineering
  - The big picture - **IMPORTANT**

Contributions / Statement

Contributions/ Statements >

Main Menu
- eConsole
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Form
- Application Profile
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- Transcripts - University
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Proactive Disclosure
- Proactive Disclosure

Form 201 - Contributions/ Statements

Click on the "Instructions" button for details concerning this electronic attachment. For detailed instructions on the attachment process and attachment presentation, consult the Electronic Attachment Instructions.

Your electronic file attachment must meet the following specifications:

- PDF format
- Maximum file size is 3 Mb
- 8 ½" x 11" (216mm x 279mm)
- Maximum 2 page(s)

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Contributions/Statements

Type: File

Document Description: (50 chars)

Filename: Choose File No file chosen

Status: Document missing (You must retrieve your document and select Attach)

Attach

Contributions / Statement (2)

PGS-M: One page limit

PGS-D: Two page limit

Parts

I : Contributions to research and development

II: Most significant contributions to research and development

III: Applicant's statement

Contributions / Statement (3)

Part I: Contributions to research and development

List all contributions, starting with most recent, in this order:

a. Published or accepted articles in refereed journals
b. Submitted articles to refereed journals (must have submission #)
c. Other refereed contributions (communications, conference proceedings, **posters**)
d. Non-refereed contributions (publications, reports)
e.Technology transfers
f. Contributions from industrially relevant R&D activities
g. Patents and copyrights awarded
h. Patents and copyrights submitted

Helpful to include heading, or heading letter (i.e. “a.” for published articles)

Contributions / Statement (4)

Part I: Contributions to research and development

Format:

- Full authorship w/ applicant's name in **bold**
- Year
- Title
- Publication name and volume
- First and last page numbers
- Indicate nature of work

Example:

I. Contributions to research and development

a. Articles published or accepted in refereed journals

Li, H., **Applicant, X.X**., and Kay, M. (1994) Protein-structure interactions in cell membranes. Journal of Biological Chemistry. 269: 1120-1124 (PhD work).

Contributions/Statement (5)

Part 2: Most significant contributions to R & D

•Not for PGS-M

List top 3 contributions and:

- •Describe role in research, clarify contributions and writing contributions
- •Discuss journal selection
- •Provide details and discuss significance of science reported in books or tech reports
- •Discuss relevance of work to engineering practice or industrial processes

Contributions / Statement (6)

Part 3: Applicant's Statement

a) Research experience

- Describe abilities learned through thesis, honor's programs
- Don't repeat information from other sections

b) Relevant activities

- show communication and leadership skills
- Examples: oral presentations, mentoring, teaching, project management, committees, supervisory experience, elected positions, volunteer work, society memberships etc.

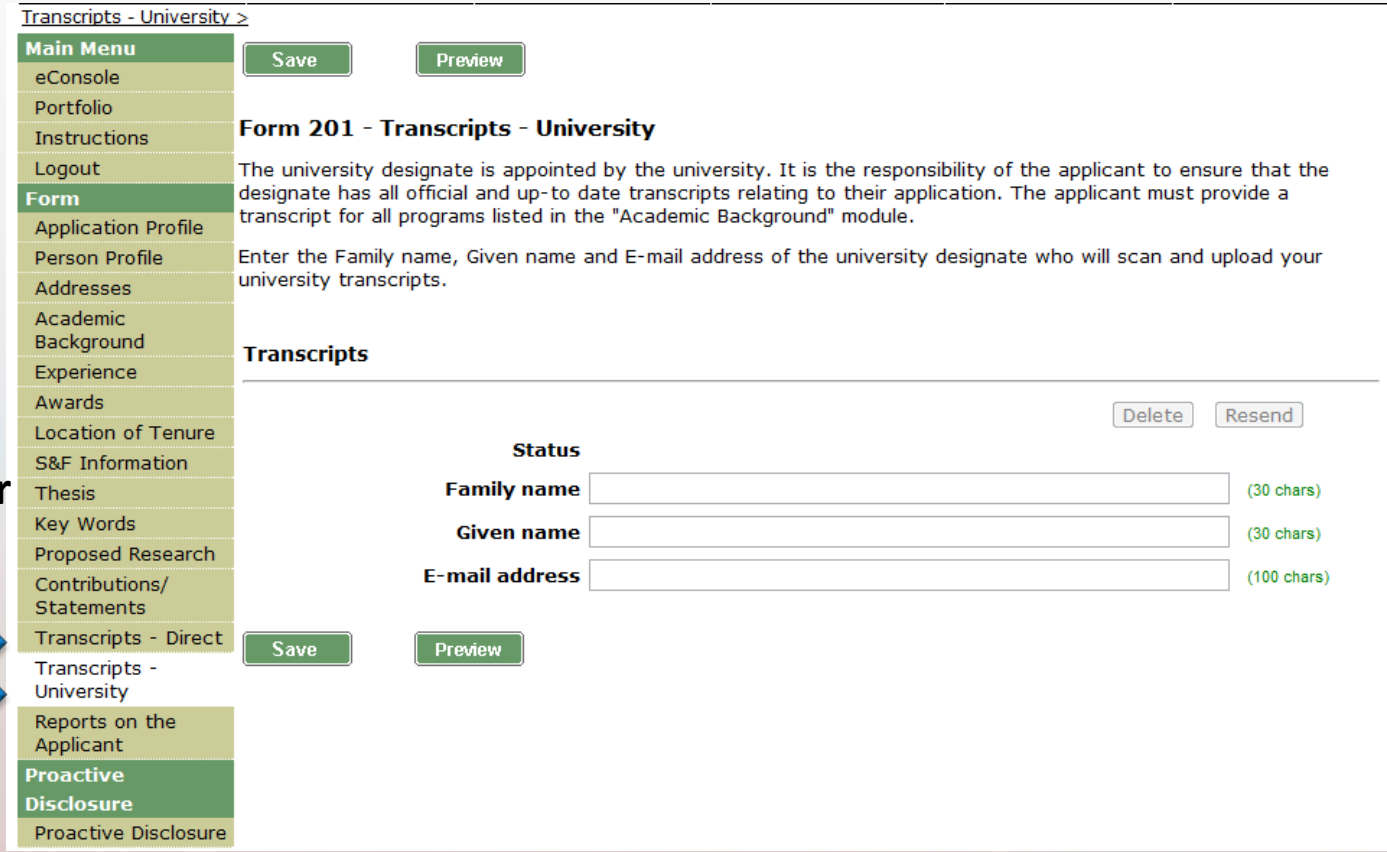
c) Special circumstances

- Describe any issues that may have affected your performance, such as health issues, taking time off, disabilities, supervisor not willing to write you reference letter, etc.

Transcripts

Transcripts – Direct:
Only if you selected a) or b) options under "Application Profile"

Transcripts – University:
Most of you will use this option – you selected c) or d) under "Application profile"



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Transcripts (2)

Order them now!

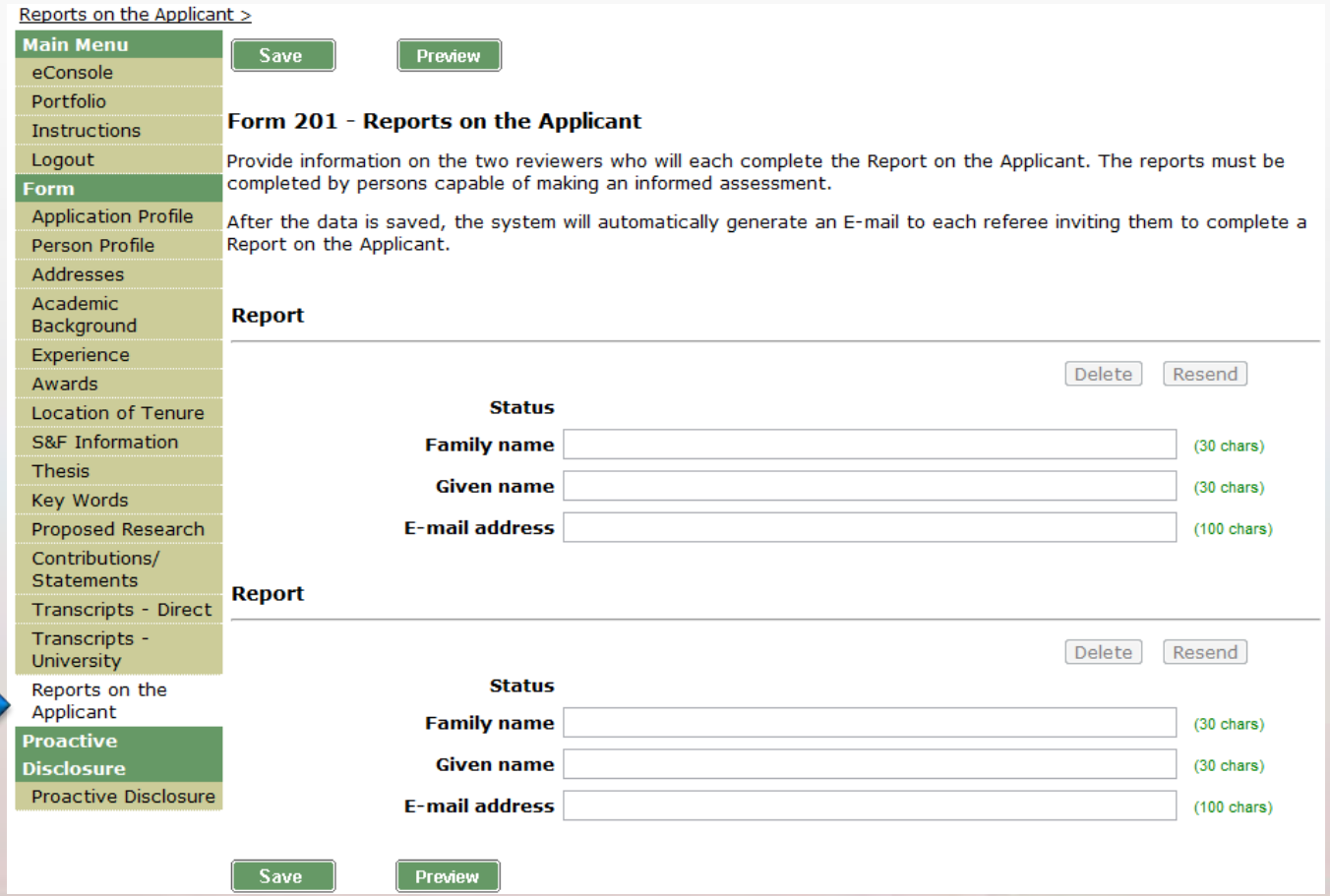
If applying through Dept., can get them sent directly to the Dept. by Minerva

Or you can pick up sealed transcripts

Must be up-to-date and sealed in envelope

Reports on the applicant

Indicate name and affiliation of referees



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Reports on the applicant (2)

Give referee enough time to write you a letter

- Shows lack of organization if last minute

Choose people that will write you a GOOD letter

Need 2 letters for PGS-M and PGS-D:

- One should be previous supervisor
- One should be someone that knows you enough to provide “meaningful commentary”
- Can’t have proposed supervisor write you a letter unless he was your previous supervisor

Give them your application reference number so they can deposit “Appendix 1 – Report on the applicant” into your NSERC application

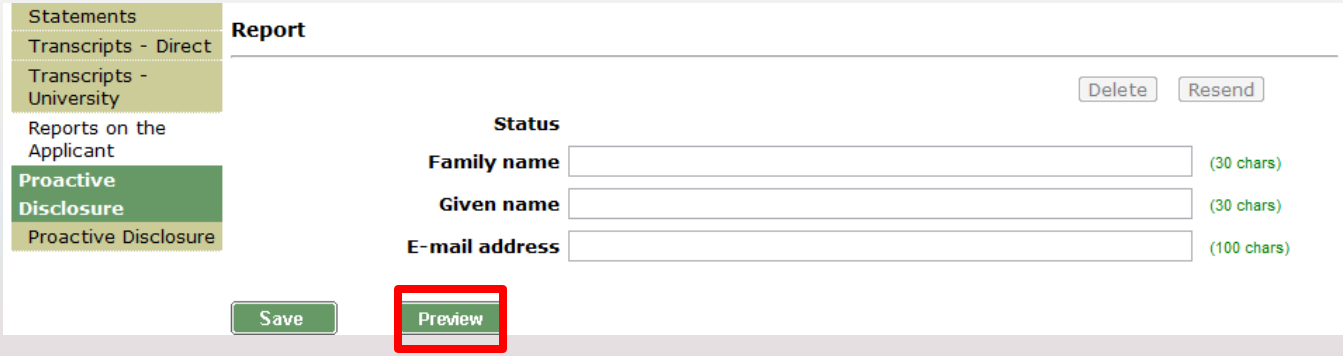
Completing the application

Once you complete each section, useful to preview to make sure formatting is correct and no grammatical errors

Previewing the application

Preview entire application by hitting “preview” in:

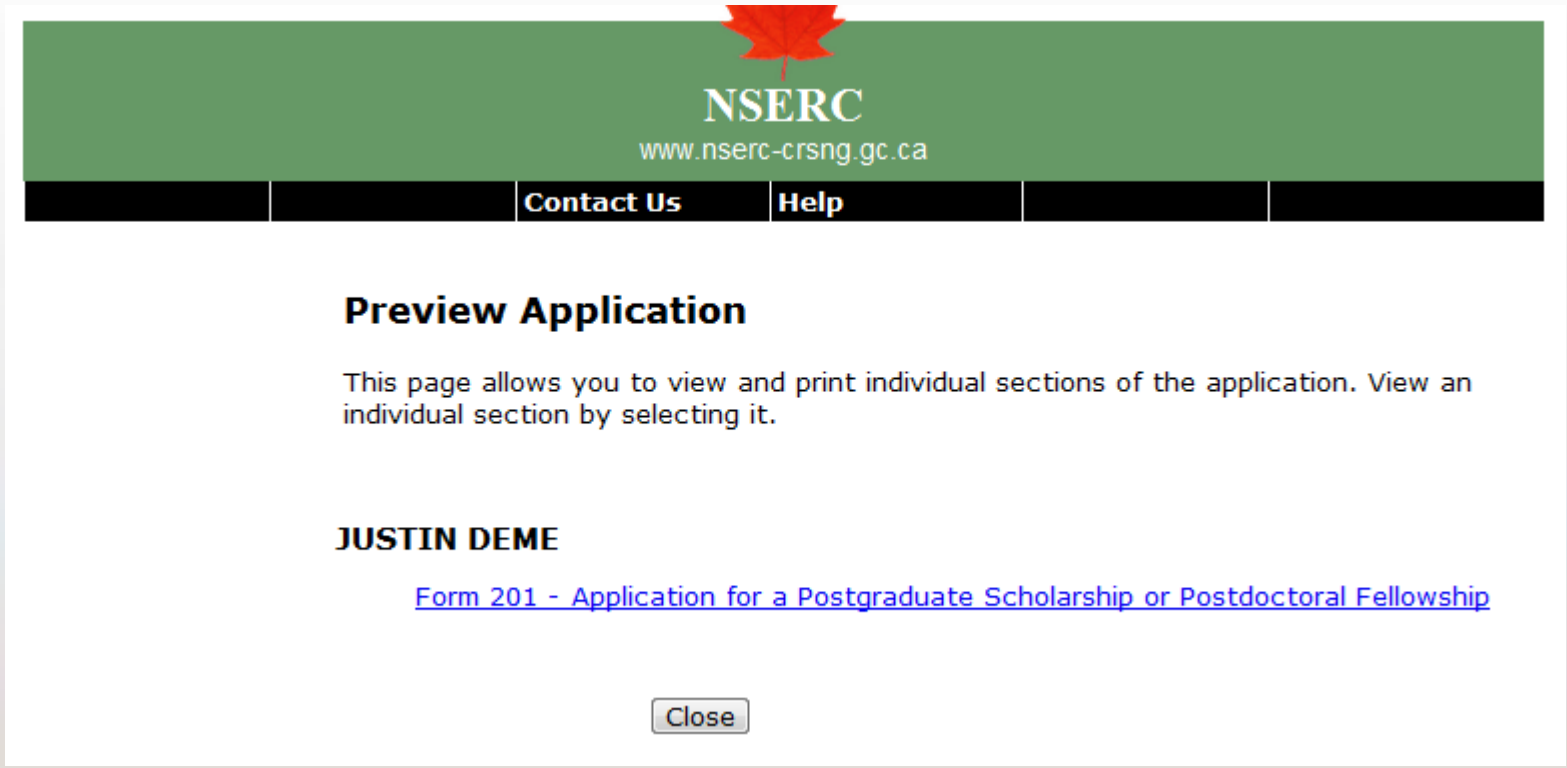
- **Each application section**
- **Your portfolio**



Upon verification of your application, the system will assign it a reference number. Once your application is complete, you must forward this number to your proposed referees to enable them to complete the Report on the Applicant. You must click "verify" to ensure that your application is complete.

Program	Application Title	Reference Number	Status	Last Updated	Edit Form	Verify Completeness	Preview/ Print	Submit
Postgraduate Scholarships - PGS D	How to be successful in yourÂÂÂ NSERC fellowship	145583849	In Progress	2010/09/03	Edit	Verify	Preview	Submit

Previewing the application (2)



Can preview entire form, or just freeform sections

Verifying the application

Once application is edited and previewed, you must verify the form to ensure all sections are properly filled out

Upon verification of your application, the system will assign it a reference number. Once your application is complete, you must forward this number to your proposed referees to enable them to complete the Report on the Applicant. You must click "verify" to ensure that your application is complete.

Program	Application Title	Reference Number	Status	Last Updated	Edit Form	Verify Completeness	Preview/ Print	Submit
Postgraduate Scholarships - PGS D	How to be successful in yourÂÂÂ NSERC fellowship	145583849	In Progress	2010/09/03	Edit	Verify	Preview	Submit

Verifying the application (2)

Successful verification will result in “COMPLETED” in footer of application form

Applications MUST be verified prior to submission

If you edit your application after verification, you will need to re-verify prior to submission

After completion, print and submit!

Submitting the application

Required documents:

PGS

- Form 201
- Signed cover page
- Outline of proposed research (free-form)
- Contributions and statements (free-form)
- All official and up-to-date academic transcripts (undergraduate and graduate)
- Appendix 1, Report on the Applicant, in a sealed envelope (two required)
- Appendix 3 (optional)

Number of copies: 1

If you are applying through your university, submit your application to the head of the department.

Submit to Head of Department by:

OCTOBER 1ST, 2010?

Writing Style

Applicable to freeform sections

Audience: general background in your science, but with no specific knowledge

Write concisely, make every word count

- **Stay away from adjectives and filler words**

Use all the space allotted

Have your application edited prior to submission!

Editing

Have all these people edit your application:

- **Fellow labmates or students**
- **Friends or family that have absolutely no knowledge of science**
- **Your former or proposed supervisor**

Each person should be able to read your application and clearly understand each section

Remember to re-verify your application after editing

Timeline

Make a timeline: only 3 weeks till deadline

Things to do:

1) **Order transcripts ASAP**
2) **Get reference number by creating application**
3) **Ask referees to write letters on your behalf by providing application reference number**

   •Referees may want to see your application before submitting form

4)
5)
6)
7)
8)

Scholarships & Fellowships

Upon verification of your application, the system will assign it a reference number. Once your application is complete, you must forward this number to your proposed referees to enable them to complete appendix 1. You must click "verify" to ensure that your application is complete.

Program	Application Title	Reference Number	Status	Last Updated	Edit Form	Verify Completeness	Preview/ Print
Postgraduate Scholarships - PGS D	How to win NSERC fellowships	125499628	In Progress	2009/09/09	Edit	Verify	Preview

Thank you and good luck!