How to be successful in your NSERC fellowship application

Justin Deme, M.Sc.
Ph.D. candidate
Dept. of Microbiology and Immunology
Coulton lab
September 8, 2010
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)
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
First time applicants

New registrants will obtain an NSERC PIN, required for the application procedure.
Once you are registered
Automatically logged out after “extended period of time”

• SAVE OFTEN
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
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 transferred 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.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Application Title</th>
<th>Reference Number</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Last Updated</th>
<th>Edit Form</th>
<th>Verify Completeness</th>
<th>Preview/Print</th>
<th>Submit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Scholarships - PGS D</td>
<td>How to win NSERC fellowships</td>
<td>125499628</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
<td>2009/09/09</td>
<td>Edit</td>
<td>Verify</td>
<td>Preview</td>
<td>Submit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form 200 - IPS, IRDF, VF, NPRINT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form 201 - Scholarships (PGS M, PGS D &amp; PDF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form 202 - GSRAD (Part 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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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.

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Form 201 - Create a New Application

Select a program name using the 'List...' button

Program name: Use the 'List...' button

Title of proposal: [200 (200 chars)]

Select Application form
Create a title for your proposal

Program

Clear entry  Close without selecting

Postdoctoral Fellowships - PDF
Postgraduate Scholarships - PGS M
Postgraduate Scholarships - PGS D
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
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
Information should be automatically completed based on your registration
• Fill out everything else

After completing every section, SAVE
Complete as “Person Profile” section
Academic background

Include past and present degrees
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
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
This section will determine your eligibility
### Form 201 - Thesis Information

Information on theses completed or in progress. For completed degrees, indicate the date by which you completed all degree requirements (not the convocation date). This includes your thesis defence, corrections, and deposition of thesis.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>(50 chars)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>(50 chars)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date degree requirements</td>
<td>yyyy  mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of the thesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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Summary of thesis most recently completed or in progress. Use plain language. Do not reproduce the thesis abstract. Only thirty-five lines of the text appearing in the box below will fit on the printed copy, depending on the number of hard returns you use. To confirm that your text will fit, save your information and select 'Preview', then adjust accordingly.

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

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 1/2" 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
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

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)

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.

Contributions/Statements

Type: File
Document Description: 
Filename: [Choose File] No file chosen
Status: Document missing (You must retrieve your document and select 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
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”

Form 201 - Transcripts - University

The university designate is appointed by the university. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the designate has all official and up-to-date transcripts relating to their application. The applicant must provide a transcript for all programs listed in the “Academic Background” module.

Enter the Family name, Given name and E-mail address of the university designate who will scan and upload your university transcripts.
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
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.
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.
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:

- 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) Complete your application ~ one week in advance
5) Print out application and distribute out to editors, letting them know you have a deadline
6) Edit your application with editors suggestions
7) Reread application before verifying completeness
8) Submit application
Thank you and good luck!