

Connect with NSERC: Community Engagement Visit

Spring 2014



Natural Sciences and Engineering
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en sciences
naturelles et en génie du Canada

Canada

Overview

- Connect with NSERC Engagement Visits:
 - Hear from you on a range of NSERC activities and programs
 - Answer any questions/address comments
- The floor is open throughout the session – ask questions or comment throughout
- Share your insight on what we are doing



Contents

- Federal Budget 2014
- Discovery Grants – Evaluation and Budget Allocation
- Program News
- Scholarships and Fellowships
- Women in Science and Engineering
- Policies and guidelines - update
- Research Portal and Common CV



Budget 2014: The Highlights

- **\$15 million** per year to NSERC to support advanced research in the natural sciences and engineering
- Industrial R&D Fellowships program funds redeployed to other priorities within NSERC: **\$7 million**
- **\$9 million** per year for the Indirect Costs Program
- Canada First Research Excellence Fund: **\$200 million** per year by 2018-19



Discovery Grants Program Evaluation

- **Key question:** is the program achieving its 3 objectives and outcomes given changes to peer review process?
- Multiple lines of evidence: surveys, consultations, interviews, bibliometric data analysis
- Recommendations by International Committee
- **Key finding:** Discovery Grants continue to be Canada's most important support mechanism for foundational research



Discovery Grants Program Evaluation

No major changes recommended— all recommendations reflect refinements to the existing system:

- Refine intent and nature of the Discovery Accelerator Supplement
- Consider allowing early-stage researchers to apply for a first renewal sooner than 5 years
- Better communicate how the conference model works and consider further refinements to the review process
- Retain use of application budget information and of the research cost factor
- Maintain the three criteria currently used, but consider revising the HQP criterion
- Explore options to reduce the workload of Evaluation Group members.



Discovery Grants Budget Allocation

- NSERC plans to allocate the **\$15M investment** (Budget 2014) to Discovery Grants
- An opportunity to introduce new factors to allocate funds among the 12 Evaluation Groups



Discovery Grants Budget Allocation

- **Parameters** to allocate funds have been under review:
 - CCA advice to NSERC published in July 2012
 - NSERC consultations ending spring 2013
- **Goal:** to ensure that the program remains effective, accountable and that funds are used optimally
- **Discipline comparisons and allocations** are to be informed by quantitative indicators and expert judgment



Discovery Grants Budget Allocation

CCA advice and consultations led us to the following:

- Funding allocations based on indicators of Research **Quality** and Research **Capacity** (demographics)
- An Expert Panel would also be informed by Research **Trends**
- NSERC to produce a fact-based report on indicators; discipline communities will have an opportunity to provide context for interpretation of data



Over to you....

- Questions?
- Comments?
- Advice?



Program News

- Discovery Frontiers: Exploring Big Data
 - **Advancing big data in genomics** project recently announced
- Discovery Frontiers – defining next theme
- Collaborative and Thematic Resources Support in Mathematics and Statistics (CTRMS): results June 2014



Research Tools and Instruments

- 2014 was the first year of having institutional quotas.
- Quota is 500. Minimum of 2 per institution. Based on NSERC-funded NSE researchers at institution.
- New quotas to be distributed when the system opens in the Spring



Research Tools and Instruments

- Smaller national competition with quota of applications per university

	2014	2013
Budget	\$18M	\$25M
# Appl.	468	1,262
# Funded	157	295
Funding Rate	34.2%	23.9%



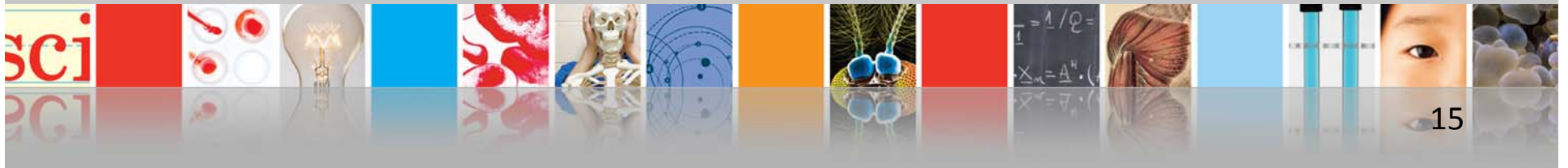
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Strategy for NSERC's Training Initiatives

- Initiation of a strategic planning exercise for NSERC Training Initiatives
- Graduate education has evolved over time; several components serve as a trigger:
 - Federal budget balanced in 2015-16
 - Government's emphasis on job creation/readiness
 - Positive reviews of NSERC 's initiatives related to students
- Currently identifying issues but student preparedness for careers outside academia will be key
 - How can NSERC position its training initiatives in this changing environment?



Harmonization of the Canada Graduate Scholarships – Master's

- CGS M transfer to universities completed
- Universities able to make CGS M offers as of April 1st; potential recipients have three full weeks to respond
- As of April 30th, 95% of the offers were accepted
- Process of offers went smoothly with few glitches in the Research Portal
- Workload considerations
 - 72% of applications were directed to one institution
 - 7,300 applications translated into 13,000 reviews



Harmonization: Next Steps

- Internal and University Student Liaison Officers to complete post-mortem and address lessons learned
- Review the allocation of CGS M awards to universities
- Complete the financial aspects of CGS M awards via the Research Portal
- Reporting and « quality control »
 - Ensuring the program meets its excellence standards
- Complete the design of CGS D and CGS-MSFSS harmonization



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Women in Science & Engineering

- Third Gender Summit: Washington, November 13-15, 2013
- The Summit had two main objectives:
 - To convey evidence that gender consideration in STEM can no longer be ignored
 - To translate existing evidence into action items, i.e. a Roadmap
- Developing a Tri-Agency Action Plan with respect to gender related policies



Gender Summit Highlights

- Gender needs to be a corporate priority
 - For universities, granting agencies, industry
- Gender needs to be embedded in the research content
 - Diverse research groups, i.e. collaborators, students
 - Consideration of sex/gender in research results
 - Hiring boards, peer review committees need to be sensitized and trained about unconscious bias
- Role modelling and mentoring activities
- What should be the roles of granting agencies?



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Eligibility of Applicants

- Criteria will be clarified
 - RGOs will be updated in late May
 - Revised document will be posted in early June
- Eligibility process will be more consistent and clear
 - communication with RGOs will be copied to the applicant
 - deadlines will be in place
 - applicants who do not meet the eligibility criteria will be informed by mid-December



NSERC Appeal Process

- Changes to the NSERC appeals process in response to an internal audit conducted last year
- Aligned more closely with CIHR and SSHRC
- **Key change:** Focus now on demonstrating a procedural or administrative error



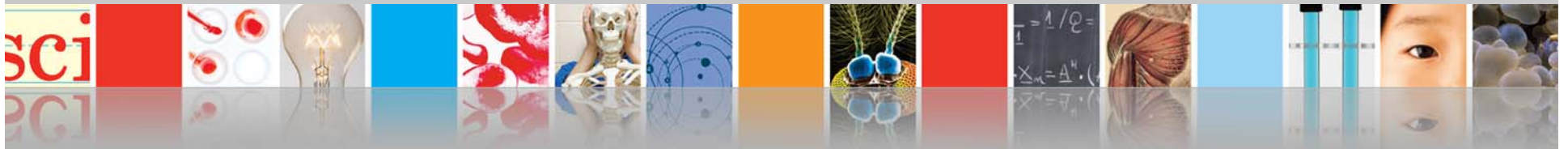
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NSERC's Mandate (2)

- Current Resources
 - Selecting the Appropriate Federal Granting Agency
 - Discovery Grants Document: How NSERC determines whether a Discovery Grant application fits its mandate
- Next Steps
 - Clarification of NSERC guidelines, with help from external advisory committees



Open Access

- Tri-agency harmonized approach (Green route)
- **Fall 2013:** Online consultation of the policy
 - Received 201 submissions from various individuals and groups
- **Spring 2014:** Summary of consultation results will be posted on NSERC's website
 - Feedback from the consultation will be used to shape the policy and its implementation
- **Fall 2014:** Final version of the Open Access Policy will be made available



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Research Portal

- **Single point of entry** for applicants, reviewers, committee members, institutions and partners
- **33,000 active users** for 10 funding programs (NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR) currently using the Research Portal
- **Over 12,000 applications** submitted through the Portal



Research Portal Enhancements

Ready now

- Users can unlock their Research Portal accounts

Coming soon

- Application review and assessments submitted through the Research Portal, including improved PDF documents
- Clearer instructions for completing the NSERC program applications
- Improved RGO/SLO functionalities
- Clarify instructions regarding uploading of transcripts (CGS-M)
- Allow referees to save a draft report (CGS-M)
- Reword subject line of e-mail from the portal to avoid SPAM filters



Common CV - Challenges

- Need to enhance the applicant experience
 - Allow applicants to import publication data from existing sources
 - Shorten the NSERC CCV template by eliminating irrelevant fields
- Better organize output for peer reviewers
 - Reduce length, clutter and unnecessary elements
 - Improve the ‘Highly Qualified Personnel’ and ‘Publications’ sections
 - Remove some sections and fields



Common CV - Enhancements

Ready now

- Transfer of CCV directly to the Research Portal
- Simplified navigation for the selection of the CV template
- Elimination of unnecessary required fields in the NSERC CCV template
- Clearer instructions for completing the NSERC CCV template
- Shorter and more appealing layout of CCV data in the NSERC template

Coming soon

- Ability to import publication data directly from databases



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- Advice?



Wrap-up

- Final questions comments?
- Further engagement visits planned at campuses across Canada
- Other suggestions, questions can be directed to connect@nserc-crsng.gc.ca
- Thank you!

