



MSSU Student Awards Program Overview 2020-2021

Introduction

The Maritime SPOR SUPPORT Unit (MSSU) Student Awards provide financial support to high-caliber trainees engaged in patient-oriented health research at universities in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Patient-oriented health research is defined by CIHR as *a continuum of research that engages patients as partners, focuses on patient-identified priorities and improves patient outcomes. This research, conducted by multidisciplinary teams in partnership with relevant stakeholders, aims to apply the knowledge generated to improve healthcare systems and practice.*

All students supported by this award must be supervised by an [MSSU Associate Scientist](#).

Objective

The objective of the MSSU Student Awards is to support the development of the next generation of health research leaders and highly qualified health researchers with expertise in patient-oriented research.

Overview

Award Types	MSSU Student Awards are offered at two levels of study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's • Doctoral
Eligibility	To apply for a MSSU Student Award, the applicant must meet the following criteria at the time of application: <u>Doctoral Level Awards</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have applied to, be accepted in, or, be enrolled in Year 1, 2 or 3 of a full-time thesis-based Doctoral degree program at a university in Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island.

Master's Level Awards

- Have applied to, be accepted in, or be enrolled in Year 1 of a full-time thesis-based Master's degree program in a university in Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island.

The applicant must also:

- Be engaged in research activities related to patient-oriented research.
- Be supervised by a [MSSU Associate Scientist](#).
- Have achieved a first-class average in the last two years of full-time study.
- Be in good standing for enrollment in the upcoming school year.
- Not be employed full-time.

Funding Amount and Duration

Funding is issued to recipients in the following amounts:

- Master's Level - up to \$10,000 / year (non-renewable)
- Doctorate Level - up to \$15,000 / year, renewable for up to 1 year

Students will be eligible to receive MSSU Student Award funding as outlined below:

Award/ Degree Level	Enrollment Status at Time of Application	Maximum Eligible Funding Available
Master's Award	Applied to / Accepted in program	\$10,000 / year for 1 year
	In Year 1 of program	\$10,000 / year for 1 year
	In Year 2 of program or later	Ineligible to apply
Doctoral Award	Applied to / Accepted in program	\$15,000 / year for 2 years
	In Year 1 of program	\$15,000 / year for 2 years
	In Year 2 of program	\$15,000 / year for 2 years
	In Year 3 of program	\$15,000 / year for 1 year
	In Year 4 of program or later	Ineligible to apply

Funding Caps	<p>A student's total funding from all funding sources may not exceed the annual cap established by their institution:</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the student to notify their institution of all funding received. A MSSU Student Award recipient who holds funding that exceeds the institutional funding cap, will be named an Honourary MSSU Student Award recipient (i.e. no funding will be issued).</p>
Dates and Deadlines	<p>Application Criteria Available: March 2, 2020</p> <p>Application Deadline: April 30, 2020 2:00 p.m. AT</p> <p>Results Available: June 2020</p> <p>Funds Available: September 2020</p>

Application Process

Step 1: Confirm Eligibility	<p>Consider whether you meet the eligibility criteria (outlined above). If applicants have any questions related to their eligibility, they are encouraged to contact their institution (see 'Resources and Assistance' section below).</p>
Step 2: Review Application Requirements and Prepare All Supplementary Documents	<p>You will need to prepare all necessary supplementary documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CV • Transcript(s) • Research Proposal Form <p>Be sure to carefully review the detailed instructions in the 'Application Requirements' section below.</p> <p>Note: You are required to submit two letters of reference and all academic transcripts. Please ensure you arrange for these documents well in advance of the application deadline.</p>
Step 3: Ensure Letters of Reference are Submitted	<p>Ensure your letters of reference have been submitted by the referees to Laura Dowling, MSSU Project Manager (LauraR.Dowling@nshealth.ca) prior to the application deadline. Letters provided via the applicant will not be accepted.</p>
Step 4: Complete and Submit Application Online	<p>Visit the MSSU website to complete the online application form and upload your supplementary documents (CV, transcript(s), and Research Proposal Form).</p> <p>http://www.spor-maritime-srap.ca/mssu-student-award-application</p>

Application Requirements

Letters of Reference

Applicants must arrange for 2 letters of reference (one academic and one professional) to be emailed directly from the referee to Laura Dowling, MSSU Project Manager, (LauraR.Dowling@nshealth.ca) prior to the application deadline. Letters provided via the applicant will not be accepted.

The same person cannot provide both letters of reference. Referees should be advised that their assessments are not confidential and are subject to the Nova Scotia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Each letter is limited to a maximum of two pages. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the referees are aware of the requirements for the letters of reference and the application deadline.

Academic Letter of Reference

This letter must come from the applicant's supervisor who must be an MSSU Associate Scientist and address the applicant's demonstrated and potential academic and research abilities. Academic letters of reference must be submitted from an institutional email account. Specifically, the letter should address the following attributes:

- Critical thinking - judicious evaluation of all information, regardless of source (i.e., quality of analytical skills)
- Independence - pursuit of knowledge or acting on own initiative, seeking guidance only when appropriate
- Interest in discovery - an inquiring mind and a strong desire to pursue new knowledge
- Research ability - a natural talent or acquired proficiency for scientific investigation
- Research Impact - Demonstrated commitment to [patient-oriented research](#), patient engagement, [learning health systems](#), and/or health system impact.

Professional Letter of Reference

This letter must come from a person who can address the applicant's demonstrated and potential leadership and professional abilities. Specifically, the professional letter of reference should address the following:

- Specific leadership qualities
- Self-management - ability to prioritize and maintain a balance between work and personal life
- Integrity - acts consistently according to ethical values and accepts personal accountability for the consequences of his/her actions and decisions
- Social skills - develops positive relationships with a diverse range of people, cares about and listens to what others say, is supportive of his/her peers, is well-respected, trustworthy and dependable
- Perseverance - determined persistence in pursuit of goals despite obstacles or discouragement
- Originality - creativity or ingenuity in problem solving

- Organization skills - systematic, careful planning and coordination of activities, including ability to complete projects in timely manner
- Communication skills - effective interpersonal and verbal and written communication skills

Resume / Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Applicant must upload a resume / CV. The resume / CV must be formatted according to the following Guidelines:

Identification

Provide your name, student identification number, mailing address, phone number, email address

Details of Academic Background

Indicate all research training, university degrees obtained and those in progress (where applicable), starting with the most recent. If you hold a degree from more than one institution, enter each institution separately.

Degree Type	Degree Name and Specialty	Institution/Organization and Country	Supervisor Name	Start Date (MM/YYYY)	End Date (MM/YYYY)
-------------	---------------------------	--------------------------------------	-----------------	----------------------	--------------------

Work Experience

Starting with the most recent, indicate your current and other academic and non-academic work experience since the beginning of your university studies. Leave the end date blank for current positions.

Position	Institution/Organization and Country	Department/ Faculty/School	Start Date (MM/YYYY)	End Date (MM/YYYY)
----------	--------------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------	--------------------

Distinctions/Awards/Credentials

Starting with the most recent, indicate any recognitions received, including awards, fellowships, scholarships, licenses, qualifications, professional designations or credentials. Do not include academic appointments here, as they are detailed under work experience. Maximum 20 entries.

Name/Title and Type	Institution/Organization and Country	Start Date (MM/YYYY)	End Date (MM/YYYY)	Specialty	Total Amount (\$)
---------------------	--------------------------------------	----------------------	--------------------	-----------	-------------------

Recent Funding

List all sources of support applied for in the last 12 months (both funded and unfunded). Include the funding source, program name, total amount requested and received (in Canadian dollars), and the period of support.

Funding Source	Program Name	Start Date (MM/YYYY)	End Date (MM/YYYY)	Total Amount Requested (\$)	Total Amount Received (\$)
----------------	--------------	----------------------	--------------------	-----------------------------	----------------------------

Contributions

Provide details regarding your key contributions (publications, patents/intellectual property rights, other activities or administrative, professional and social contributions).

Provide this information under the three headings outlined below. If you have no pertinent information for a specific heading, indicate "N/A".

1. Publications (no page limit)

Using discipline-appropriate formatting, list your principal publications and other research and creation contributions for the past 5 years, according to the categories below.

- Peer reviewed publications
- Books and Chapters
- Abstracts
- Research Reports
- E-Journals
- Posters

2. Patents and Intellectual Property Rights (maximum: one page)

List descriptions of patents/copyrights for technology transfer, products and/or services. Include the title, patent/copyright number and date, country(ies) of issue, as well as the relevance or impact of this item and any inventor name(s) pertaining to it.

3. Activities and Contributions (maximum: one page)

Include both academic and non-academic achievements relevant to the award application and their impacts. Examples of entries are outlined below. (This is not necessarily a complete list, and is intended to provide guidance only.)

- Career development (e.g., evidence of leadership)
- Committee membership
- Consulting/contract activities
- Research development
- Research or technical reports
- Technology transfers (specify the nature of the activity and the target audience)
- Involvement in public, private or non-profit sector activities
- Policy papers
- Presentations as guest speaker (public or invited lectures)
- Editorships (specify if editor-in-chief or member of the editorial team)
- Evaluation of articles for scientific, literary or artistic journals (specify title of journal and number of articles evaluated)
- Knowledge translation/dissemination activities
- Development of graduate seminar program, journal club or similar activity

Interruptions and Delays (maximum: ½ page)

Outline any factors that have resulted in a delay or interruption in your academic studies or training, career, research activities, dissemination of results etc. Common examples of an interruption/delay are a bereavement period following the death of a loved one, maternity/parental leave, a change in field of study or relocation of your research environment. Your description might include the start and end dates, the impact areas, and a brief explanation of the reasons for and nature of the absence.

Transcripts

Applicants must upload PDF transcripts from all current and past post-secondary academic institutions. Scanned copies of official transcripts or direct download from the institution's website are acceptable. Upon offer of an MSSU student award, applicants may be required to submit official transcripts or to have copies validated by the institution to ensure authenticity.

Research Proposal

Applicants must upload a completed [Research Proposal Form](#).

Review Process

1. Applications will be reviewed to determine whether they are complete and meet the eligibility criteria.
2. Complete and eligible applications will be reviewed by a committee of MSSU Associate Scientists in accordance with their review practices and the assessment criteria outlined below.
3. The Committee will submit to the MSSU a list of applicants recommended for funding and a list of alternates, if applicable.

Applicants will be notified of funding decisions and the process for award acceptance and payment for funding recipients will be implemented.

Assessment Criteria

The following criteria will be used to assess MSSU Student Award applications:

Criteria		Weighting Master's	Weighting PhD
Academic Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strength of academic record• Quality of academic abilities outlined in academic reference letter• Funding, duration and prestige of received scholarships and awards• Clarity of explanation for any academic interruptions and delays	50%	30%
Research Expertise and Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extent to which past and current employment, volunteer, extracurricular experiences and research contributions demonstrate leadership skills	20%	20%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and potential impact of research and leadership abilities outlined in professional reference letter • Relevance of academic training and work experience to research activity • Relevance of future plans to career in health research 		
Contribution to Patient-Oriented Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and potential impact of research abilities outlined in academic reference letter and Research Proposal • Demonstrated understanding of patient-oriented research methods and approaches (patients are highly engaged in project design, development, analysis etc.) • Potential for impact of research activity on the health of Nova Scotians / Prince Edward Islanders, and the economy, clinical practice, health policy and/or health services in Nova Scotia / Prince Edward Island 	30%	50%

Resources and Assistance

Application Support

Applicants should contact their institution well in advance of the application deadline with questions related to application content and eligibility:

Institutional Contacts	
Acadia University	Graduate: Theresa Starratt Graduate Studies Officer 902.585.1914 theresa.starratt@acadiau.ca
Cape Breton University	Zuzana Ištvanová Research Administration Officer: Major Initiatives Scholarships Liaison Officer 902.563.1832 zuzana_istvanova@cbu.ca

Dalhousie University	Niki Power Scholarships Liaison Officer 902.494.6246 fgs.slo@dal.ca
Mount Saint Vincent University	Cathy Lantos Administrative Assistant to the Dean of Graduate Studies 902.457.6129 cathy.lantos@msvu.ca
Saint Mary's University	Heather Gray Graduate Studies Officer 902.420.5069 heather.gray@smu.ca
St. Francis Xavier University	Jacqueline MacDonald Research Administrative Coordinator Research Services Group 902.867.2393 jmacdo@stfx.ca
University of Prince Edward Island	Colleen Gallant Faculty of Graduate Studies 902.620.5120 cgallant@upei.ca

Appendix 1: MSSU Student Award Application Checklist

- Confirm you meet the eligibility criteria of the award level for which you are applying.
- Confirm your institution is offering the award level for which you are eligible to apply.
- Carefully review the application requirements and note the application deadline.
- Contact your institution to confirm any internal processes and/or assistance available for completing your application.
- Arrange copies of all academic transcripts from your past and current institutions.
- Confirm appropriate referees to write your letters of references. Be sure they have the contact details for submitting the letters, and are aware of the letter requirements and application deadline. (Sending them a reminder a week in advance is always a good idea.)
- Confirm whether your supervisor is already a MSSU Associate Scientist. If not, ensure that they have applied and received confirmation of their MSSU Associate Scientist status before the deadline, so that you may name them on your application.
- Download and complete the Research Proposal Form.
- Submit application, including all attachments, prior to the application deadline.

Good luck!