Terms of Reference for the
Nova Scotia Graduate Scholarship
at Saint Mary's University

The Province of Nova Scotia has created a Graduate Scholarship Program to help advance the economic and social wellbeing of Nova Scotians by investing in graduate thesis research in the following defined priority research areas: Aerospace and Defense; Construction and Transportation; Financial Services; Information, Computer Science and Technology; Life Sciences and Health Sciences; Natural Resources, Climate Change and Clean Energy; Ocean Science and Technology; and Social Innovation.

These graduate scholarships are valued at up to $10,000 per year for up to 2 years at the Master's level, and up to $15,000 per year for up to 4 years at the Doctoral level for Canadian and international students (pending availability of funding).

At Saint Mary's University, there are caps on the total funds an applicant can receive from other scholarships while also holding a Nova Scotia Graduate Scholarship. The upper limit for Master-level recipients is $25,000/annum, and the upper limit for Doctoral-level recipients is $35,000/annum, based on the academic year (excluding internal stipend funds from research grants and MITACS funding). If necessary, a sliding scale will be used to determine individual NS Graduate Scholarship amounts to the maximum award amounts identified above.

At Saint Mary's University, Nova Scotia Graduate Scholarships are intended to be primarily admission awards, although they may also be awarded to continuing students.

New or continuing graduate students may apply for a Nova Scotia Graduate Scholarship through the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR). Eligibility and selection criteria for Nova Scotia Graduate Scholarships, and the criteria for retaining awarded scholarships, are given on the next page.

Students must submit their application and supporting documents (merged as one document) to FGSR (Heather.Gray@smu.ca) by **May 20**.

Priority Research Area Descriptions

Aerospace and Defense: Research broadly related to defense or aerospace, including but not limited to control systems and material development for transportation systems and unmanned vehicles, performance testing, shockwave analysis, secure communications, system integrity analysis, policy analysis, and broader activities generally linked to aerospace or defense.

Construction and Transportation: Research related to sustainable and resilient construction technology, materials science, cellular and internet networks, innovative building materials, and urban and rural transportation solutions.

Financial Services: Research related to financial modeling, management, security systems, predictive analysis and artificial intelligence, financial policy analysis and resource management, and broader fields exploring innovation within the broader financial services field.

Information, Computer Science and Technology: Research related to the management, analysis or manipulation of information, artificial intelligence, big data, communications, and the broad fields of computer science, engineering and information technology development.

Life Sciences and Health Sciences: Research related to human health and well-being, medical technology, animal and plant health and innovation, biomaterials and bioproducts, artificial intelligence in health-care settings, oceans technology and food security and self-sufficiency.

Natural Resources, Climate Change and Clean Energy: Research related to resilient and efficient supply chains; sustainable mining practices and resource management; exploration, extraction, processing and recycling of critical minerals, including lithium and uranium; renewable energy technologies; carbon capture and storage; environmental science; oceans technology; and electrification and energy storage.

Ocean Science and Technology: Research related to the science, management, health, or resources of oceans and other marine bodies. This might include activities ranging from policy development to technology creation, to impact analysis and ocean health at the provincial or global level.

Social Innovation: Research broadly related to social innovation, including but not limited to international and domestic development, legal and political systems, public policy, sociocultural constructs and institutional frameworks, and the collection of social information. Activities may also include the study of languages, cultures, and history in local, national, and global social contexts, understanding that such knowledge and advanced analysis can often support the exploration or discovery phases, as well as the implementation, of social innovation.

ELIGIBILITY, SELECTION AND RETENTION CRITERIA FOR NOVA SCOTIA GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (in order of priority):

1. Applicants must carry out thesis research in one of the **following provincial priority research areas**:

Aerospace & Defence	Information, Computer Science and Technology	Ocean Science and Technology
Construction and Transportation	Life Sciences and Health Sciences	Social Innovation
Financial Services	Natural Resources, Climate Change and Clean Energy	

2. Applicants must either be (1) **accepted for admission,** at the time of application, as a full-time research-based graduate student at SMU or (2) be a registered full-time research-based graduate student **within the minimum-time-for-completion** at SMU at the time of taking up the scholarship. For this scholarship program, research-based graduate programs at SMU include all Doctoral programs, Master of Applied Health Services Research - Thesis Program, all Master of Arts programs, and the Master of Science programs in Applied Science, Applied Psychology, and Astronomy.
3. Applicants must have a minimum GPA, over the last 60 credit hours of study, of 3.7 (based on a 4.3 scale). **Official transcripts, from all institutions attended, showing all grades received prior to the application deadline must be submitted with this application. Official transcripts must include winter grades for the year of application (if applicable). FGSR will accept an unofficial SMU transcript printed in May of the year of application.**
4. Applicants must agree to submit an annual/final report on their research.

SELECTION CRITERIA (in order of priority):

1. Overall merit of the research proposal (including clarity of presentation, and appropriateness of proposed methodology): 40%
2. Explanation of how the research can advance the **economic and/or social wellbeing of Nova Scotians**: 40%
3. Justification of how the thesis research aligns with one of the **priority research areas**: 20%

RETENTION CRITERIA:

If awarded a multi-year award, to maintain funding in subsequent years, awardees:

1. Must maintain **first class standing**
2. Must be registered as a **full-time graduate student at Saint Mary's University,** as defined in the Graduate Academic Calendar, in one of the eligible graduate programs specified in the Eligibility Criteria.
3. Must submit an **annual/final report** identifying **progress in the research program** and how the research may ultimately advance the **economic and/or social wellbeing of Nova Scotians within one of the provincial priority research areas.**
4. Must be approved by the FGSR Awards Committee for continuation of funding (based upon the evaluation of the annual progress report and availability of funding).

Updated; January 2026

Saint Mary's University

Annual / Final Report Form
Nova Scotia Graduate Scholarship

Deadline: Students must submit their annual/final report and supporting documents to FGSR (Heather.Gray@smu.ca) by **May 20**.

Student: Please fill out sections 1 to 5

1. Provide your name and contact information

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Email _____ Student Number A _____

Mailing Address _____

2. Provide information about your program and status

Program _____ ☐ Masters ☐ Doctoral

Status ☐ International Student ☐ Canadian/Permanent Resident Student

3. Identify the Priority Research Area that aligns with your research - (PLEASE SELECT ONLY ONE)

- ☐ **Aerospace and Defence**
- ☐ **Construction and Transportation**
- ☐ **Financial Services**
- ☐ **Information, Computer Science and Technology**
- ☐ **Life Sciences and Health Sciences**
- ☐ **Natural Resources, Climate Change and Clean Energy**
- ☐ **Ocean Science and Technology**
- ☐ **Social Innovation**

Title of Research Project:

4. Provide a description of your research, the progress you have made in the past year, how it fits into the Priority Research Area identified above, and how the research will ultimately advance the economic and/or social wellbeing of Nova Scotians. You may also attach an extra page and citations, if required.

5. Confirm the following and provide a signature

I understand that funding in subsequent years depends on:

- completion of the annual / final report form
- maintaining first class standing
- registering with full time status
- approval by the FGSR
- availability of funding

Select one:

☐ **I am not eligible / not requesting renewal of the Nova Scotia Graduate Scholarship**

☐ **I am requesting that I be considered for renewal of my Nova Scotia Graduate Scholarship**

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Supervisor: Fill out section 6

6. Sign the following declaration

I support the student's request for ongoing funding from the Nova Scotia Graduate Scholarship.

I confirm that the student's research falls into the priority research area identified and that they have made satisfactory progress in the past academic year.

Name _____ **Signature** _____ **Date** _____

FGSR to Complete the Checklist Below – Section 7

7. Complete the checklist to confirm ongoing eligibility

☐ Student has been registered in all terms since admission

☐ Student has a GPA of 3.7 or above (on 4.3 scale)

☐ Student has achieved a passing grade in all courses

☐ Student is registered full time

☐ Student is recommended for renewed funding

Name _____ **Signature** _____ **Date** _____

FGSR USE ONLY

Scholarship Awarded _____

Signature, Dean or Designate _____

Date _____

With this form, submit the following to FGSR (Heather.Gray@smu.ca):

- One page description of your research progress to date, how it fits into the Priority Research Area identified, and how the research may ultimately advance the economic and/or social wellbeing of Nova Scotians.
- One page of citations.
- An up-to-date unofficial SMU transcript.