ONTARIO AGRI-FOOD INNOVATION ALLIANCE

HIGHLY QUALIFIED PERSONNEL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM GUIDE

December 20, 2019

DEVELOPING LEADERS FOR THE AGRI-FOOD AND RURAL SECTORS
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HQP Scholarship Program Overview

The Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance, through the OMAFRA – University of Guelph Agreement, offers the Highly Qualified Personnel Scholarship (HQP) program to support the development of highly skilled graduates who can meet the changing demands of the agri-food and rural sector. The health of these sectors depends on a vibrant talent pool of skilled, forward-thinking leaders. The Alliance is dedicated to supporting advanced skill development and learning to enhance the intellectual capacity of our citizens to solve current and future problems.

The Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance is committed to reaping social, economic, environmental and public health benefits through its programs. Through the Alliance, HQP scholarships are awarded to support future generations of researchers, policy-makers and innovators in agri-food. Masters and PhD students complete research that meets OMAFRA’s research priorities and learn firsthand how forward-thinking research can be mobilized to have a positive impact on society.

The HQP program is also supported by Food from Thought, a research program at the University of Guelph funded through the Canada First Research Excellence Fund (CFREF).

2020 Programming Details

Timelines

- Program launch: December 20, 2019
- Full proposals submission deadline: February 20, 2020 at 1:00pm ET
- Anticipated award notifications: March 12, 2020
- Scholarships start as early as May 1, 2020

What is New for 2020

There are significant changes in the focus and administration of the Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) Scholarship Program. These include:

- New OMAFRA research priorities
- Development and submission of applications in the new ‘Next Generation’ Research Management System (NG-RMS)
- Faculty advisor invitation process

Please read this document carefully to understand these changes as you prepare an application for the HQP Scholarship Program.
**RESEARCH PRIORITIES**

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) undertook a new approach to research priority setting in 2019. Research priorities for the Alliance Research Programs are aligned within the Ministry’s core businesses and objectives: Protection and Assurance, Stewardship, and Economic Development as illustrated below.

Each of these research priorities has a set of goals and research focus areas, in addition to five cross-cutting focus areas. Research priorities and focus areas are outlined in greater detail in the OMAFRA Research Priorities document.

Scholarship applicants must demonstrate that their research proposal is within scope of OMAFRA’s research priorities and focus areas. However, *scholarship applicants are not required to select or focus on a research priority question.*

**PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND GUIDELINES**

**APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

The HQP Scholarship Program provides financial support for students entering a University of Guelph graduate program or students enrolled in a University of Guelph graduate program. In-course applicants must be in semesters 1, 2, or 3 of their graduate program when applying.

All applicants must meet the following eligibility:

- be a Canadian citizen, landed immigrant, or studying under an international visa;
- have a minimum GPA of A- (>80%) or equivalent;
- be entering your first semester of a Master’s (thesis-based) or Doctoral program at the University of Guelph **OR** be in semesters one, two or three of a Master’s (thesis-based) or Doctoral program at the University of Guelph;
- have a University of Guelph faculty advisor confirmed;
- not be an OMAFRA employee; and
- not concurrently hold other major awards such as NSERC, OGS, SSHRC or CIHR. A major award is considered a funding source that is awarded across the full program (please see Supplemental Funding for more details).

**FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND GUIDELINES**

Funding amounts are determined by the type of graduate program and when the applicant begins the HQP Scholarship Program.

**Entrance Scholarships**
(Students Entering Semester One of their Graduate Degree Program)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Funding per Year</th>
<th>Total Funding</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters (thesis-based)</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>6 semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
<td>9 semesters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Entrance Scholarships will start in Semester One of the Graduate Degree Program. This may be in the Summer semester of 2020, the Fall semester of 2020 or the Winter semester of 2021, depending on the student’s enrollment plans.

**In-Course Scholarships**
(Students Currently in Semester One, Two or Three of their Graduate Degree Program)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Funding per Year</th>
<th>Total Funding</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters (thesis-based)</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>3 semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>6 semesters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In-Course Scholarships will start in the Summer semester of 2020.

**PAYMENT OF FUNDS**

The dissemination of scholarship funds will be via Student Financial Services at the University of Guelph. Funds will be transferred three times per year (at the beginning of each semester) upon confirmation of continued enrollment and the faculty advisor’s attestation that the student’s progress is on-track.

Transfer of funds for years two or three (if applicable) for each student will be subject to satisfactory performance as demonstrated through the required Annual Student Progress Report from the faculty supervisor.

Funds are only to be made payable to students and may NOT be transferred internally to other trust funds or departmental funds.

There is no provision for additional funding should the student not complete their degree within the allotted time.
SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Students cannot hold the HQP Scholarship and another major award such as NSERC, OGS, SSHRC, CIHR, or MITACS at the same time. However, students can be recipients of other minor awards and scholarships in addition to an HQP Scholarship. These minor awards will not reduce the amount of funding students are eligible to receive from the HQP Program. Students may also hold Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs) or Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs) without impacting their HQP Scholarship.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITMENT

COURSE REQUIREMENT

Those who receive an HQP Scholarship are required to enroll in UNIV*6050 Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Agri-Food Systems. The course includes 70 contact hours and contributes 1.0 credit. Note: some departments have specific course requirements, but applicants are advised to consult with the Chair or Graduate coordinator of their Department to request if the course could substitute those that are mandatory.

ATTENDANCE AT HQP RECOGNITION EVENT

During the Fall semester, a recognition event will be held to enable scholarship holders to interact with government, industry and academic representatives.

POST-GRADUATION EMPLOYMENT SURVEY

Scholarship recipients will participate in a post-graduation employment survey, used to help evaluate the impact of the Program on the early career development of Program participants.

HOW TO APPLY

ONLINE APPLICATION SYSTEM NG-RMS

The HQP Scholarship Program awards funding annually via a competitive call for applications process. The application will take place entirely in the “Next Generation” Research Management System (NG-RMS).

REGISTERING IN THE NG-RMS

For Students: A new login in NG-RMS is required to apply to the HQP Scholarship Program. To register an account in NG-RMS, select register on the login page
If you are a current UofG student, please register under “University of Guelph”. If you are NOT a current UofG student, please register under “Universities, Colleges, Research Institutes”.

**For Faculty:** UofG faculty contact records have been migrated from the current RMS system, but for security reasons passwords have not. If you have not logged into NG-RMS, enter your uoguelph.ca email address on the NG-RMS login page ([https://omafra2.smartsimple.ca/](https://omafra2.smartsimple.ca/)) and select “Forgot Password”. Enter a new password at the prompts. If you have not used the current RMS system previously, you can simply register a new account. Please be aware that faculty existing within the current RMS system must follow the “Forgot Password” option in order to be properly affiliated with their previous projects once these projects have migrated to NG-RMS.

Please contact rescoord@uoguelph.ca if you experience any difficulties logging in. Registering and logging into the NG-RMS will bring you to your Portal where you can apply to open calls.

To open an application, select the HQP Scholarship program and click on “Determine Eligibility”. Confirm your eligibility to apply to access an application.

NG-RMS works in a variety of web browsers, but we do not recommend that you use Internet Explorer as some functionality does not work well.

**HQP Application Template**

The HQP application consists of several sections that are navigated via tabs across the top of the on-line application in the NG-RMS. All tabs must be completed, including the faculty application section. Only the faculty advisor can view and edit the faculty application section.

A validation process will take place upon submission to ensure all mandatory fields are complete, including the faculty application section. Also, the student and faculty advisor must complete the declaration tab in order to submit.

The majority of the application instructions are provided in the NG-RMS, but some additional guidance is provided below.

**Note:** Allow your advisor enough time to complete their section of the application before the submission deadline. You cannot submit an incomplete form. Also, only one person can edit the application form at a time.

**Faculty Invitation Process**

Inviting faculty advisors is a new process in NG-RMS. This process is described in the application template. Faculty advisors must confirm their participation in the project, be registered in NG-RMS, and complete their section by the due date.
To invite your faculty advisor to the application, select ‘Invitations’ on the left sidebar to identify and invite your faculty advisor as a Co-Applicant. This is the only way your faculty advisor can be associated with your application. Once your faculty advisor has accepted the invitation and is registered in the NG-RMS, they will appear in the team table and your faculty advisor will be able to complete their portion of the application.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

The following documentation is required in PDF format with your application:

- Student resume or curriculum vitae (CV); and
- Scanned student transcript and related grading key if your previous institution is outside of Canada.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Submitted applications will be reviewed by a committee including University of Guelph and OMAFRA representatives. All reviewers are required to sign a confidentiality agreement or declare a conflict of interest prior to accessing and reviewing submitted applications.

The following aspects of your application will be evaluated:

- Academic performance;
- Alignment of the proposed project with OMAFRA’s research priorities and focus areas;
- Experience and interest in the agri-food sector, research, leadership, entrepreneurship, and business innovation (note: include any experience including that outside previous degree programs); and
- Envisaged future career path upon graduation.

The faculty application section will provide information to assess the student’s research and innovation potential, along with how the proposed project will fit into the OMAFRA’s priorities. The faculty advisor should explain how the student will benefit from holding an HQP Scholarship and how they plan to help the student achieve those benefits. Also, confirmation that the student will be provided with the resources required to undertake the project for the duration of the scholarship should be provided.

**SUPPORT FOR APPLICANTS**

The following supports are available to assist applicants in the application process:

- This program guide;
- Instructions and tool tips (denoted by 🔄) in the NG-RMS Application Template;
- If you have questions related to the funding program, please contact Keith Warriner at x56072 or kwarrine@uoguelph.ca;
- If you experience technical difficulties in the NG-RMS please contact rms@ontario.ca
- For support completing the NG-RMS application template please contact our Research Program Coordinators at rescoord@uoguelph.ca or at x56863 (Vanessa Knox) and x56877 (Zach Telfer).