

Queen's University

Brief to the Standing Committee on Science and Research

**Study on the Government of Canada's Graduate
Scholarship and Post-Doctoral Fellowship Programs**

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Queen's
UNIVERSITY

**GRADUATE STUDIES AND
POSTDOCTORAL AFFAIRS**

Canada's academic institutions are pivotal in fostering research excellence, invention, and innovation, making the nation a significant generator of skills, ideas, and new knowledge. At the core of this success are the graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, whose contributions shape them into tomorrow's thought leaders. Their university experience at this critical stage equips them to tackle not only Canada's but also the world's most pressing challenges. In a dynamic world, investment in the country's future workforce will strengthen our competitive edge in the global economy.

Pursuing graduate studies and/or post-doctoral training is a commitment to knowledge creation, education, and collective growth as advancements made in the university translate to communities. Despite their invaluable contributions, graduate students and post-doctoral fellows are currently grappling with financial hardship. Indeed, there is little question that graduate funding is one of the very most pressing issues facing Graduate Studies community in Canada today. Governmental support for funding graduate studies at both Federal and Provincial levels has not kept pace with inflation, particularly in recent years. Further, many cities across Canada have been facing housing shortages, driving up the cost of rent. Without increased financial support for those interested in pursuing graduate studies and postdoctoral training, Canadian society suffers on multiple fronts: the loss of talented individuals with significant potential for mentoring future leaders, the loss of innovation and its associated benefits, and the loss of productivity with its impact on the economy, among others.

Queen's University is pleased to offer input to the Standing Committee on Science and Research's study on the country's graduate scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships. At Queen's, the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (SGSPA) supports graduate students and post-doctoral fellows throughout their academic journey. Together with Faculties, departments, and other campus partners, the SGSPA is part of a university-wide network of resources for graduate students and postdocs, all endeavouring to ensure the success of this important community.

Within Queen's, the SGSPA committed a substantial amount of \$1.2 million to bolster funding for Master's and Doctoral students in the upcoming academic year. Although academics are doing their best to help students despite their own financial challenges, it is crucial for the federal government to play a key role in ensuring that Canada maintains

its competitiveness in cultivating and attracting a highly skilled workforce. Our society can only benefit from such efforts.

Recommendations

Queen's SGSPA endorses the recommendations made to the Committee by the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS) and Universities Canada. The federal government should:

1. **Increase funding amounts distributed by the core budgets of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR), the Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships, and the Canada Foundation for Innovation by 10% annually for the next five years to improve the country's research and developmental competitiveness;**
2. **Raise the value of the Canada Graduate Scholarships and the Post-Doctoral Fellowship Awards by 50% and continue to regularly index their value in line with inflation;**
3. **Double the number of Canada Graduate Scholarships and Post-Doctoral Fellowship awards to expand the training of highly qualified researchers.**

About Queen's University SGSPA

The SGSPA embraces innovative thinking as the foundation for advancing the short- and long-term goals of graduate and postdoctoral education at Queen's. Building on the university's longstanding tradition of excellence in teaching and research, we foster a culture of bold knowledge production and reflective new thinking to inspire our community to lead the way toward a better future.

Contact

If you wish to discuss this, please do not hesitate to contact us at deansgsr@queensu.ca. We would welcome the opportunity to delve deeper into this important matter.