EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Urgent Need For Increased NSERC Scholarship Funding for Graduate and Post-Doctoral Researchers

Request: Increase government funding to NSERC awards for graduate (hereafter "Grads") and post-doctoral researchers (hereafter PDFs) as described in the Open Letter (https://bit.ly/3vWWDQt).

Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Researchers are Essential to Canadian Science:

- Grads and PDFs drive Canada's research and innovation. Discovery and productivity would be markedly reduced without them, and economic growth would be negatively impacted
- NSERC Grad and PDF scholarship recipients are among Canada's best scientists and engineers
- Grads and PDFs are Canada's future leaders in science and engineering

NSERC Funding for Graduate and Postdoctoral Researchers has Stagnated:

- Dollar amounts of NSERC scholarships for Grads have not increased in 19 years, and those for PDFs have increased only 11% over the same period
- NSERC scholarship funding levels are insufficient for Grads to meet the basic cost of living and pay tuition, and do not appropriately compensate highly trained PDFs
- Grads and PDFs are leaving or not coming to Canada because of opportunities in other countries (e.g., USA, UK, EU, Israel, Switzerland, Australia) where stipends are higher[1]
- Individuals from underrepresented groups in science are especially affected by low funding, which perpetuates systemic financial barriers for marginalized groups[2]

Recommendations for Funding Increases to Support and Retain Top Talent:

1) Increase the dollar value of CGS-M and PDF by 48% to match inflation since 2003[3]. Increase PGS-D and equalize with CGS-D at $35,000.
2) Index all awards to inflation moving forward or to long-term average of 2.1%[2]
3) Double number of PDF awards; increase number of Grad awards by 50%

Estimated budget increase in year 1 = $46M (5 years = $239M)

Estimated total budget in year 1 = $86M (5 years = $450M)

Increased NSERC Funding for Grads and Postdocs will Benefit Canada:

- Increasing funding to Grads and Postdocs will establish Canada as one of the top countries in the G7 for training early-career scientists, enhancing attraction and retention of top talent
- Over the next 5 years, support training of nearly 13,000 highly qualified scientists and engineers at the M.Sc., Ph.D. and PDF levels for Canada's workforce and innovation economy
- Promote equity and inclusion in science by reducing systemic financial barriers[2]
- Contribute to advancing scientific discoveries across diverse research areas, including national priority areas such as climate change, pollution reduction, natural resource use, low-carbon technologies, disease prevention, vaccine development, digital technologies and cybersecurity
- Long-term economic growth by stimulating industry through enhanced funding to training scientists, which will enhance competitiveness of Canada's economy post-covid

[1]International: Postdoc Fellowships; USA: NSF Graduate Fellowship, UK: PhD Studentships; Germany: Grads/PDFs; Australia: PhD scholarships; Israel: PhD and Postdoctoral fellowships

[2]https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0038040719876245; https://www.ousa.ca/report_financing_fees

[3]Bank of Canada inflation calculator