



## Nova Scotian Institute of Science

### STUDENT SCIENCE WRITING COMPETITION 2017

### INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

In 2017, the Nova Scotian Institute of Science (NSIS) is again sponsoring its annual Science Student Writing Competition. The science writing competition has two categories: graduate and undergraduate.

A prize of \$500 will be awarded to the best paper prepared by an undergraduate student.

A prize of \$750 will be awarded to the best paper prepared by a graduate student.

Any student registered at a University in Nova Scotia is eligible.

The winning submissions will be posted on the NSIS website and those authors will be invited to submit the paper to the *Proceedings of the Nova Scotian Institute of Science*. All articles published in the *Proceedings* are subject to the normal review process by the Editor.

#### **Guidelines:**

Entries submitted to the Competition should be either:

##### 1. Original Essay:

- (a) A substantive, original essay on any aspect of science. For such an essay to be prize-winning, it should incorporate a new analysis or perspective. Your paper could take the form of an up-to-date literature review but, if so, it should be more than a mere cataloging of extant material.
- (b) Your own insights and comments on the significance of the topic and its relevance are particularly important.

##### 2. Original Research:

- (a) A submission involving original research findings (your own research, or research in which you have substantially participated).
- (b) If your paper has been excerpted from a previously-prepared thesis/scientific paper, it should nonetheless be largely re-written, such that it will be understood by and appeal to a non-specialist reader.
- (c) You should include insights into the significance and relevance of the research and its application.

**Note:** You should assume that your potential readers have a general scientific knowledge but are not acquainted with and are not specialists in your particular topic. Accordingly we expect that your essay will be directed to a general, albeit educated, audience. Avoid unnecessary jargon and acronyms. If you must use specific technical terms or acronyms they should be defined or explained, preferably in a Glossary. *Scientific American*, *The Smithsonian* or *The New Scientist* can serve as models for the level of writing.

Some papers might benefit by following the sequence: Title/Author/Affiliation, Abstract (brief), Introduction, Methodology (if applicable), Results (if applicable), Discussion, Conclusions, Acknowledgements, References.

#### **Format of Manuscripts Submitted:**

You should aim for about 3,500-4,000 words, not counting the abstract, figure captions and references. Diagrams and graphs can be included and are usually printed across the width of a page or column. Black and white photos can be considered.

Your essay must include page numbers and ideally should have a line spacing of 1.2 to 1.5 with an easy-to-read, 12-point font, and should be properly formatted. No separate title page is needed, but your name must appear prominently on the first page of the essay. References should be presented in a readily accessible form, such as that used by a prominent, generalist, science journal (e.g.: *Nature*).

### **Judging:**

All submissions will be judged according to the following criteria:

- Appeal to a broad audience; i.e.: able to be understood by non-specialists in the area.
- Originality of the subject, treatment, findings, methods and techniques.
- Scientific and technical correctness, value, significance, and relevance (incl. to Nova Scotia, if applicable).
- Clarity of presentation: clear, comprehensive, concise, logical, well-explained, readable. Free of spelling, grammatical and typographical errors.
- Overall impression of the paper.

Decisions of the Judges are final, and are not subject to appeal.

### **Submissions:**

This being a writing competition, you should be the sole author and creator of the manuscript. You must indicate that the writing is wholly your own, and the role any others played in preparing your submission (e.g.: minor editorial suggestions from your professor or advisor, provision of photographs, etc.). If the paper includes work done in collaboration with others, their contributions should be kept to a minimum and be noted in the Acknowledgements. Also, indicate whether or not the paper has been, or is to be, used substantially elsewhere,

Note: if you are submitting original data, include the name of your research supervisor and provide a statement that your supervisor (and if applicable, any co-workers involved in the work) have agreed to your including the data in your article. All personal or scientific information that you provide will be held in confidence.

“Notification of Intent” Deadline: The author must indicate intention to enter the Competition to the Competition Coordinator at the e-mail or postal address below by:

**Saturday, 31 December 2016.**

This notification should include the following information:

- Your name and current address (home or departmental), with e-mail and/or telephone number.
- The name of your University and home department.
- The name of your degree program and your current year in that program.
- The field of your proposed entry.

“Final Entry” Deadline: The author must submit the final manuscript to the Coordinator by:

**Friday, 17 February 2017.**

Electronic submission is strongly preferred. Please submit an electronic copy of your article as a Word (.doc or .docx) or Adobe (.pdf) file as an attachment to the Competition Coordinator at the e-mail address below. (If electronic format is unavailable to you please contact the Coordinator for advice.)

### **Winners:**

The winners of the Competition will be contacted before the end of March 2017, and the winning entries will be announced on the NSIS website. The presentation of the awards will take place at the Museum of Natural History auditorium, 1747 Summer St., Halifax, **Monday, 3 April 2017.**

### **Competition Coordinator:**

Dr. H.M.B. Bird, NSIS SSWC Coordinator  
c/o 15 Amber Drive  
Williamswood, NS B3V 1E8

(902) 404-4366  
[hbird@eastlink.ca](mailto:hbird@eastlink.ca)