



# Nova Scotian Institute of Science

## STUDENT SCIENCE WRITING COMPETITION 2021

### INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

In 2021, the Nova Scotian Institute of Science (NSIS) is again sponsoring its annual Science Student Writing Competition. The competition has two categories: undergraduate and postgraduate.

- 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 postgraduate student.

Any student registered at a university or college in Nova Scotia in 2021 is eligible to participate.

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 editorial and peer review process.

#### **Guidelines:**

The competition is open to any topic of a scientific or technical nature. A few possible topics are: ocean science, geology, forest science, agriculture, mathematics, psychology, medicine, environmental science, etc., but note that these are only suggestions.

Note! You should assume that your potential readers have a general scientific knowledge but are not acquainted with, or specialists in, your specific subject. Your essay should be directed to a general, albeit educated, audience. Avoid 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*, *The New Scientist*, etc. can serve as models for the level of writing.

Entries submitted to the Competition should be either:

#### 1. Original Essay:

- (a) A substantive, original essay on any aspect of science. It should be more than a mere cataloguing of extant material; rather, it should incorporate a new analysis or perspective. Your own comments and insights on the significance of the topic and its relevance are particularly important.
- (b) Examples of original essay topics might include subjects such as: challenges for pollinators in N.S., sustainable forestry in N.S., new battery technologies, etc.
- (c) Students wishing feedback or suggestions on a possible essay topic are encouraged to contact the Coordinator(s).

#### 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 derived from a previously-prepared report/thesis/scientific paper, it should nonetheless be re-written, such that it can easily be understood by, and appeal to, a non-specialist reader. (Note that re-use of previously-prepared material can raise authorship and/or copyright issues.)
- (c) Include insights into the significance and relevance of the research and its application.

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

Aim for about 3,500-4,000 words, not counting the abstract, figure captions and references. Please number all pages. Diagrams and graphs can be included and are usually printed across the width of a page. Black and white photos are fine, and figures in colour can be considered. Use a line spacing of 1.2 to 1.5 with an easy-to-read, 12-point font, and proper formatting.

It can be helpful if the paper is divided into sections such as: Title/Author/Affiliation, Abstract (brief), Introduction, Methodology (if applicable), Results (if applicable), Discussion, Conclusions, Acknowledgements, References. No separate title page is needed. 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. (See below.)
- Scientific and technical correctness, value, significance, and relevance. (See below.)
- Clarity of presentation: clear, comprehensive, concise, logical, well-explained, readable. Free of spelling, grammatical and typographical errors.
- Overall impression of the paper.

Note that while we work to a grading template, we use a panel of Judges with different scientific backgrounds and perspectives. Some may favour an essay with some relevance to N.S., although that tends not to be weighted heavily. In any case, decisions of the panel of 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 acknowledge 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 to the text should be kept to a minimum, and explicitly noted in the Acknowledgements. Also, indicate if the paper has been, or is likely 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 any co-workers involved in the work) have agreed to the inclusion of the data in your paper. All personal or scientific information that you provide will be held in confidence.

Registration Deadline: The author must indicate intention to enter the contest to the Competition Coordinator at the e-mail address below by: **Friday, 29 January 2021.**

This notification should include the following information:

- Your name, with e-mail and 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 or subject of your proposed entry, and a provisional title.
- Your motivation for selecting your topic.

Submission Deadline: Submit the final manuscript to the Coordinator by: **Friday, 19 February 2021.**

Electronic submission is strongly preferred. Please submit an electronic copy of your article as a Word (.doc or .docx) or Adobe (.pdf) attachment to the 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 2021, 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, at 7:30pm on **Monday, 12 April 2021**.

**Competition Coordinator:** [nsiswritingcompetition@gmail.com](mailto:nsiswritingcompetition@gmail.com)