

---

## Outstanding High School Student - Science Award (OHSS-SA) Application Instructions

### The Application

Applicants are asked to provide a two page “photo-essay”. To start the photo essay, simply take a photograph of anything you like (for example with a camera phone) and then describe the science that is occurring in the photograph. The science can be at any level, and there are *no restrictions or guidelines* beyond the 2-page limitation (limit not including photograph). We encourage you to be creative and think independently rather than simply review the scientific literature. Choice of font, margins and content is completely at your discretion as long as the application is clearly legible. The quality of the photograph is not being judged but should be of high enough quality that could be used in a press story or release if required.

In addition, the essay must be supported by 2 reference letters: one from one of your science teachers, and one from another teacher (mathematics, programming, or science), or your school principal. These letters must be signed, printed on school letterhead and must be included in the application. In addition, please include a recent report card. It is the applicant’s responsibility to collect and include these with the application.

### Eligibility

The award is open to any Ontario high school student entering grade 11 or 12 in September 2023. If you are currently in grade 10 but will be starting grade 11 in September 2023 you are eligible. You must be willing to cover your own transportation costs to and from the campus.

### Evaluation

#### ***75% weighting will be given to the 2-page photo essay.***

This will be evaluated by a diverse selection committee, some without scientific backgrounds. Please make your essay widely appealing and do not focus solely on technical aspects. Essays that evoke emotions or are thought provoking have traditionally done very well.

#### ***25% weighting will be given to the transcript and references.***

While it is expected that the winner will have excellent academic standing, grades will not be the sole criteria for the OHSS-SA. We are especially interested in those who may not qualify for other awards that are based on academic achievement alone, but who are just as equally deserving of an award. The intent of this program is to recognize outstanding Ontario high school students who demonstrate a passion for science and an interest in research. Students should display an aptitude for original thinking, demonstrate enthusiasm for scientific exploration, and show early promise for a career in science. For example, a student may have written an outstanding essay, excelled in science fairs, or be an avid member of the high school science club. The Selection

Committee will place considerable emphasis on the reference letters in the decision process. Please ask your referees to consider this paragraph when writing their support letters.

### **Award recipients**

The value of each award is \$250 for the student, the title of “Outstanding High School Student – Science Award Winner”, and a framed certificate. The students will also get to spend a day at the University of Toronto Scarborough paired with a graduate student. This will involve a tour, lunch, and lab demonstrations, allowing the award winner to be immersed in a real-life research environment for the day. Senior university officials or the president of one of the industrial sponsors will present the awards to the students. It is important that the winning students from all schools visit on the award day. Award winners will be e-mailed (with their principle cc'd, around late June) and the award day will be on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

A signed consent form (please see attached) must be included in the application submitted to the Selection Committee. It will confirm that the high school and the parent/guardian for the student have given their permission for you to spend a day at the University if selected to receive an award.

### **Deadline**

Applications should be sent as a single, complete pdf file to [ohss.sa.utsc@utoronto.ca](mailto:ohss.sa.utsc@utoronto.ca)

Applications must be received by **April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023** to be considered. The members of the Selection Committee will meet in May and inform the principals and students from the schools of the successful applicants before the end of June 2023.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

André Simpson, PhD, FRSC  
Professor (Chemistry), Director of the Environmental NMR Center and Director of TRACES  
Chair of the OHSS-SA Selection Committee