
2018-2019 CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: QUEEN ELIZABETH ADVANCED SCHOLARS (QES-AS) PROGRAM - STATISTICAL ALLIANCE FOR VITAL EVENTS (SAVE)

BACKGROUND

Most deaths in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) occur at home and without medical attention. As a result, causes of death are unknown, which limits evidence-based resource allocation, misses identifying new diseases or outbreaks (such as Ebola or Zika), and reduces accountability over health expenditures as well as progress towards the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Since 2002, the Registrar General of India, supported by the University of Toronto (U of T), has adopted the novel [Million Death Study](#) (MDS) to address this gap in knowledge on causes of death in India. Building on the MDS, researchers at U of T formed the [Statistical Alliance for Vital Events](#) (SAVE) with the mission to reduce premature mortality through investments in health and mortality information systems. The program's ultimate goal is to expand the global understanding of mortality statistics and their uses.

SAVE is offering a **research scholarship** program to engage doctoral, postdoctoral and early career researchers in the work of strengthening health and mortality information systems in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to support innovative multi-disciplinary research on maternal and child health (MCH) in order to improve access to health services. The program is funded by the [Canadian Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Advanced Scholars Program](#) (QES) and supported by the [Office of Global Public Health Education & Training, Dalla Lana School of Public Health](#), University of Toronto and the [Centre for Global Health Research, St. Michael's Hospital and University of Toronto \(CGHR\)](#).

For more information about QES alumni scholars and the Summer Institute 2018 Program, please visit [here](#)

THE PROGRAM

The main goal of the QES-SAVE program is to build exceptional research capacity among scholars to use mortality evidence to address premature mortality outcomes.

For 2018-2019:

- Each scholar will be connected with a Research Placement Partner (RPP) – Canadian scholars will be connected with LMIC partners and LMIC scholars will be connected with a Canadian institution.
- Each scholar will be matched with a research mentor from the RPP, who will support the scholar in drafting their learning and mentoring plan and will serve as a resource and facilitator for the duration of the program.
- Each research placement will be aligned with the partner institution's needs and with the individual scholar's learning objectives, as outlined in their customized learning and mentoring plan.
- Scholars will complete a pre-placement training program and participate in a research-intensive mentoring workshop focused on mortality measurement in Toronto (date to be confirmed)
- Each scholar will receive a consolidated remuneration package that includes a research stipend and accommodation costs in Toronto, visas, economy fare travel to/from Toronto, workshop fees, and other costs, which will be covered directly by the QES-SAVE program.

QES-SAVE Scholars will be expected to:

- Conduct quantitative research, using mortality data from existing datasets
- Develop competencies and skills in quantitative data analysis and in areas like sex and gender analyses, grant and manuscript writing, knowledge translation, leadership, networking, and community engagement
- Spend a minimum of 90 days in a LMIC conducting research (Canadian scholars only)
- Disseminate research results to different stakeholders via high-impact journals.

RECRUITMENT:

Between 2017 and 2020, the program will train and support the research of 20 scholars to strengthen health and mortality information systems in LMICs. For 2019, we are recruiting up to **eight scholars**:

- **Doctoral:** one student from India, Ethiopia, Mexico, Mozambique, Colombia **or** Brazil
- **Postdoctoral:** one scholar from Canada and three scholars from India, Ethiopia, Mexico, Mozambique, Colombia, **or** Brazil
- **Early career:** one scholar from Canada and **up to** two scholars from India, Ethiopia, Mexico, Mozambique, Colombia or Brazil

TIMELINE:

- November 2018: launch of Call for Applications
- December 15, 2018: application deadline
- February 2019: applicants notified
- February-June 2019: pre-workshop preparation and development of mentorship plan (this includes mandatory completion of the edX/U of T online MOOC entitled “Death 101: Shaping the future of global health” <https://www.edx.org/course/death-101-shaping-future-global-health-university-torontox-d101x-0>)
- One-week intensive research workshop in Toronto (date TBD)
- Post-workshop – research project, compile research results into paper for publication, and post-workshop knowledge translation activities
- Participants will continue to engage with QES-SAVE as program alumni

ELIGIBILITY:

APPLICANTS FROM INDIA, ETHIOPIA, MEXICO, MOZAMBIQUE, COLOMBIA OR BRAZIL

- Must be a citizen or permanent resident of India, Ethiopia, Mexico, Mozambique, Colombia **or** Brazil
- Applicant be a doctoral student, postdoctoral fellow, or early-career scholar
- Applicants’ research must fill a relevant mortality measurement gap identified by one of the LMIC partner institutions.

CANADIAN APPLICANTS

- Must be a citizen or permanent resident of Canada
- Applicant must be a doctoral student, postdoctoral fellow, or early-career scholar
- Priority will be given to students and alumni of the Collaborative Specialization in Global Health (doctoral stream), University of Toronto, as well as postdoctoral and early career scholars connected to Canadian hospitals with global health departments (e.g. St. Michael’s Hospital, Hospital for Sick Children).
- Applicants’ research must be relevant to global premature mortality measurement

- Canadian applicants must be able to spend a minimum of 90 days in an LMIC conducting research

HOW TO APPLY

Applications must include:

- A completed application form
- Graduate transcripts (scholars must have at minimum an A- average in coursework)
- Curriculum vitae or resume, which specifies applicants' current quantitative skills in epidemiology, economics, demography, biostatistics, or related areas.
- Letter of recommendation from your direct supervisor, or in the case of early career researchers, a past supervisor (1 page max)
- A 200-word expression of interest statement outlining:
 - why you would like to be part of the SAVE Scholar Program
 - the alignment between the SAVE-QES program and your quantitative research interests
 - a description of an existing dataset that you would like to analyze.
- Co-funding from supervisors for doctoral and postdoctoral scholars is encouraged, but will not be required.
- **Short listed** applicants may be asked to submit writing samples (a first-authored peer-reviewed publication is preferred, but dissertation chapters, course papers, technical reports and other examples of scholarly writing in quantitative research are acceptable) **or** examples of quantitative work (statistical programs) (maximum 10 pages). All applicants are encouraged to have these ready at the time of application, but do not need to submit them **until asked**.
- **Short-listed** applicants may also be invited to take part in a Skype interview.
- **Please also review the FAQs below**

Please send all application materials in one .pdf or .doc file to Vadim Levin (ghoffice.dlsph@utoronto.ca) by midnight EST on December 15, 2018

Please include all your application materials in one .pdf or .doc file with the following name First Name Last Name – QES Scholar 2019 Application (for example “Vadim Levin – QES Scholar 2019 Application”)

ABOUT

THE CANADIAN QUEEN ELIZABETH II DIAMOND JUBILEE SCHOLARSHIPS (QES)

The Canadian Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarships aim to activate a dynamic community of young global leaders across Canada and the Commonwealth to create lasting impacts both at home and abroad through cross-cultural exchanges encompassing international education, discovery and inquiry, and professional experiences.

OFFICE OF GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION & TRAINING, DALLA LANA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO (OGPHET)

The Office is the knowledge hub of global health educational activities at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto and views global health in an integrative manner. Its programs focus on the relationships among local, regional, national, and international forces that influence health and health equity as well as on the development of effective interventions and policies.

CENTRE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH RESEARCH, ST. MICHAEL'S HOSPITAL (CGHR)

The Centre for Global Health Research (CGHR) is an independent, not-for-profit organization co-sponsored by St. Michael's Hospital (Toronto) and the University of Toronto. Founded in 2002 on the principle that effective health initiatives must be supported by reliable, evidence-based research, CGHR was created to conduct large-scale epidemiological studies in developing countries. CGHR's mission is to lead high-quality public health research that advances global health for all, with particular attention to the world's poorest populations.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How are “doctoral”, “postdoctoral” and “early career” defined?

- **Doctoral:** an individual conducting research at the PhD level.
- **Postdoctoral:** “An individual who is conducting research after the completion of their doctoral studies. Fellows usually work under the mentorship of a lead researcher or a principal investigator.”
- **Early career researcher:** An individual who has demonstrated strong evidence of work as an independent researcher, has led his/her own laboratory or research project for **4-7 years** or is in a tenure-track position at a degree-granting institution

I am a Canadian, how much time should I expect to spend outside of Canada?

- Canadians are required to spend a minimum of 90 days conducting research in LMICs.

What does the pre-research training involve?

- Pre-research training includes completing the online course Death 101: Shaping the future of global health” <https://www.edx.org/course/death-101-shaping-future-global-health-university-torontox-d101x-0> as well as a one-week institute covering a variety of topics related to advanced statistical methods, knowledge translation, and issues in global health.

We do not use letter grades in my institution. What is the equivalent?

- Please see the University of Toronto tool to verify that your grades align with the A- minimum <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/prospectivestudents/Pages/International-Degree-Equivalencies-Tool.aspx>

What does alumni engagement involve?

- Scholars are encouraged to stay connected to their mentor and may be invited to participate in the planning and/or delivery of future events (e.g. summer institute).

Do I need to identify a specific Research Question in my application?

- At the time of application, we encourage you to identify your research interests, and preliminary research questions that demonstrate relevance to the goal and objectives of the QES-SAVE program

Are you able to take a look at my application ahead of time to let me know if I would be a good candidate? Does my research interest fit this scholarship program?

- We cannot review your application ahead of time and provide you with feedback about whether your research fits with this scholarship program. Please review the eligibility criteria and goals and objectives of this scholarship program carefully.

How much is the stipend?

- In 2017-18, stipends ranged from \$7,500-13,500 CAD depending on whether scholars were doctoral, post-doctoral or early career.