



## GENERAL QUESTIONS

**Q: How long has the Ontario Science Centre had a Science School?**

A: The Science School celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007! It is one of the Science Centre's longest running programs.

**Q: What are the semester dates?**

A: The Fall semester begins on the first day of classes for the Toronto school boards in September and runs until the end of January (with a break for the holidays in December). The Spring semester runs from early February to June with a break for March Break and Easter.

**Q: How many students are in each class?**

A: The entire school consists of 28 students each semester. However, enrollment in any particular class can range from 12 to the full 28 depending on subject popularity.

## THE APPLICATION PROCESS

**Q: Is acceptance to the Science School based on grades exclusively?**

A: No, we do not base acceptance to the Science School on marks alone. In addition to your grades, we consider the additional information in your application package to help determine if you are a student who would benefit from our program and succeed here. A complete application includes a short personal essay, two teacher references and a list of extracurricular/volunteer activities in which you have participated. Sometimes, we ask applicants to attend an interview.

**Q: Is there any way of choosing which semester to attend?**

A: Yes. On your application you may note which semester(s) you are available to attend the Science School. You should only choose semesters that you are prepared to attend if accepted. However, your chance of being accepted may be higher if you note you are able to attend either semester. Acceptances are given for a specific semester (Fall or Spring).

**Q: I am from outside of Toronto. Can I still apply?**

A: Absolutely! We take students from any Ontario Catholic or public school board. Students from as far away as Red Lake Ontario (1900 km from Toronto) have attended the Science School. We have guidance counsellors from the Toronto public and Catholic boards to oversee the transfer of your enrollment, your university applications and provide you with general guidance support.



**Q: How competitive is acceptance to the Science School?**

A: The program is competitive, but not unreasonably so. We attempt to select students with high enough academic standing that they will benefit from the enriched environment of the Science Centre. We also choose students whose application demonstrates to us that they are confident and mature enough to handle moving to a new environment for a semester. Your short personal essay is important, as are your marks.

**Q: I attend a non-semestered school. Can I come to the Science School?**

A: Due to the nature of our program's schedule, only semestered school students are accepted. You may choose to transfer to a semestered school in your hometown for the upcoming school year upon acceptance to the Science School, and take one semester with us and one at the semestered school. Please be advised, this will require a lot of commitment on your part! You should discuss this option fully with your parents and your guidance counsellor.

**Q: I'm from a non-semestered school – I don't get midterm marks. How can I provide them with my application?**

A: The application provides an area where your teachers can indicate the level at which you are achieving at the date of your application.

**Q: I don't have any midterm marks yet – can I just send in first semester marks?**

A: No. The application provides an area where your teachers can indicate the level at which you are achieving as of the date of your application.

**Q: Can I send my application form separately from the teacher recommendations?**

A: Yes. We will make sure everything matches up at this end. Please make sure the forms are properly completed with your full name.

**Q: Can I send the midterm marks separately from my application?**

A: Yes. We will make sure that everything matches up at this end. Please make sure all parts of the application have your name on them.

**Q: It says one page will be read - is that both sides?**

A: No. 'One page' refers to one side of 8.5 by 11 inch paper.

**Q: What size of font should I use for the essay?**

A: Make it easily readable. Generally 11 point or bigger.



**Q: My essay is 5 pages long – is that ok?**

A: As it says on the application, only one page will be reviewed. Extra pages will not be read – no matter how interesting.

**Q: What are you looking for in the essay?**

A: We want to know about you – what you are involved in, what you want to do in life – anything you want us to know that may not have been indicated in the rest of the application. Remember though, this is an essay, not a resume and therefore not just a list of your achievements. Tell us what it is that excites you about science!

**Q: The teacher I want to write my recommendation is my Grade 6 teacher – is that ok?**

A: All teacher recommendations must be from secondary school teachers. One of the two can be from a non-science or math teacher if you wish.

**Q: Is an interview part of the application process?**

A: We sometimes ask students to attend an interview. We will send you more information on this once we have received all the applications.

**Q: When will I be informed if I am accepted?**

A: Complete applications are due in April. Offers of acceptance are communicated in May. You will hear from us in time to choose your courses for next year with your home school's guidance department.

## **COURSES AND SCHOOLWORK**

**Q: I've already completed several of my grade 12 science credits – can I retake one of them at Science School?**

A: No. To be considered for the Science School, you must be able to take three of the four courses without repeating any courses for which you have already gained a credit.

**Q: I'm not sure of the courses I will want to take at the Science School, can I change this later?**

A: Yes, your course selection does not become final until you are registered by guidance counsellors here at the Science Centre. You need to carefully plan your grade 12 year so that you are eligible to take 3 courses here at the Science School.



**Q: How many subjects can I take at the Science School?**

A: You **MUST** take 3 of the 4 subjects offered. No more. No less. We require students to be full time, taking three subjects. All four courses can overburden students given other activities around the Science Centre in which they are involved. All prerequisites must be met before your term here, and the courses in which you register cannot be repeats of courses already taken.

**Q: I am in Grade 10 now. Can I attend the Ontario Science Centre Science School next year?**

A: No. The Science School only offers Grade 12 University Preparation credits. To be eligible you must have completed the Grade 11 pre-requisites.

**Q: AP courses are offered at my school. Can I take AP courses at the Science Centre?**

A: We do not offer AP courses. Depending on which term you come, and how you plan your courses, you might be able to do your AP courses at your home school in your non-OSCSS term.

**Q: What are the pre-requisites for the courses?**

A: For Grade 12 Biology (SBI4U) the pre-requisite is: Grade 11 Biology (SBI3U).

For Grade 12 Chemistry (SCH4U) the pre-requisite is: Grade 11 Chemistry (SCH3U).

For Grade 12 Physics (SPH4U) the pre-requisite is: Grade 11 Physics (SPH3U).

For Grade 12 Advanced Functions (MHF4U – offered Fall semester) the pre-requisite is: EITHER Grade 11 Functions (MCR3U) or Grade 11 Functions and Relations (MCF3M).

For Grade 12 Calculus and Vectors (MCV4U – offered Winter semester) the pre-requisite is: Grade 12 Advanced Functions (MHF4U).

**Q: I have not completed the pre-requisites, but I am taking them now. Is that OK?**

A: Yes! Please submit your midterm marks for those courses with your application.

**Q: I am applying for University – who handles my application?**

A: Guidance counsellors from our partner schools – Don Mills Collegiate Institute in the public school board and Senator O'Connor College School in the Catholic school board – visit the Science School once a week. They will handle your University applications, submission of your grades and provide general guidance support. They are also available by phone or email when they are not at the Science Centre.



**Q: What is the Science School daily schedule?**

A: Students are at the science centre between 8:30 AM and 3:45 PM and have four instruction periods per day. Those periods will consist of Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Biology, Homeroom and Spare periods. Please see a sample schedule below.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30   10:00	<b>CHEMISTRY</b> WET LAB	<b>BIOLOGY</b> WET LAB	<b>HOMEROOM</b> DRY LAB	<b>MATHEMATICS</b> DRY LAB	<b>PHYSICS</b> DRY LAB
10:05   12:00	<b>PHYSICS</b> DRY LAB	<b>MATHEMATICS</b> DRY LAB	<b>BIOLOGY</b> WET LAB	<b>CHEMISTRY</b> WET LAB	<b>HOMEROOM</b> DRY LAB
12:05   1:10	<b>L</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>H</b>
1:15   2:15	<b>MATHEMATICS</b> DRY LAB	<b>CHEMISTRY</b> WET LAB	<b>PHYSICS</b> DRY LAB	<b>SPARE</b>	<b>BIOLOGY</b> DRY LAB
2:20   3:45	<b>BIOLOGY</b> WET LAB	<b>PHYSICS</b> DRY LAB	<b>CHEMISTRY</b> WET LAB	<b>HOMEROOM</b> DRY LAB	<b>MATHEMATICS</b> DRY LAB

**THE UNIQUENESS OF THE ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE SCIENCE SCHOOL**

**Q: How are the courses at the Science School different from my high school?**

A: The courses are part of the Ontario curriculum and therefore the same as would be followed in your high school. The difference is that you are in an environment with other motivated, able students which often makes the pace faster with a greater emphasis on group work, real problem solving and labs. Some students find this difficult at first – the teachers know this and provide support and assistance as needed. Students have reported back to us that they find the experience prepares them for university studies very well.

You will have the challenge and opportunity to apply your knowledge of science to robust questions, and to produce thoughtful, well-communicated solutions. The Science School also provides you with the opportunity to take part in a well-respected, long-standing program that has produced graduates who have gone on to remarkable careers in science, math, engineering, medicine, art, music and more.



**Q: What will I do when I'm not in class?**

A: The Science School gives students the opportunity to be involved in many activities. Some of these include:

- Communicating with Ontario Science Centre visitors. You will have an opportunity to engage visitors with puzzles and activities that communicate science concepts. You will be trained by our experienced floor staff for this 'practicum' experience. All students must complete 15 hours of practicum while at the Science School, which can be counted towards the 40 hours of Community Service that all Ontario students require before graduating from secondary school.
- Working with young students. At the Science School we emphasize science communication – to all ages. The Ontario Science Centre has a long-standing partnership with a local elementary school. Science School students will choose whether to produce a curriculum correlated science storybook or science lesson for the young students at this school. This activity counts as an additional 5 hours of Community Service.
- Special Events. From time to time there are special events in which Science School students participate. In the past students have: tested Science Centre exhibit prototypes; participated in a video conference with NASA; attended a David Suzuki event; and facilitated the Toronto District School Board Space Day event for Grade 6 students.
- Graduation. On a Saturday at the end of each semester we have a graduation ceremony. This special event is planned, organized and produced by the graduating class. The graduation consists of presentations, skits, slide shows, the awarding of certificates, followed by a reception. Family and friends are encouraged to attend.

**Q: Is there a dress code?**

A: Yes. The dress is business casual – no jeans, no running shoes, or baseball hats. Because classes are held in a lab environment, no sandals or other open toed shoes are permitted for health and safety reasons.

**Q: I'm from out of town – where will I live?**

A: Sometimes students arrange to live with extended family or friends in Toronto. We can provide you with a list of people in the area that offer accommodations to students. This list is made available to you once you have been accepted to the Science School. In general, most accommodations are approximately \$400/month for a furnished room in a family house with access to kitchen and laundry facilities. Some housing arrangements include meals and can be up to \$600 per month.

Please note the Science School does not screen these accommodations or the people offering them. It is up to you and your families to make sure that the facilities are suitable.



**Q: Does the Science School charge tuition?**

A: No. The program is funded by the Ontario Science Centre and supported by the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board. The only financial commitment for students is for field trips and your own Ontario Science Centre Science School student lab coat (total cost of approximately \$150/semester). Other costs you may need to consider in your budgeting are housing and/or transportation.

**Q: What type of field trips will we take?**

A: Past field trips have included attending university lecture series on biology, chemistry, physics and math; museums visits, and the like. We also try to have some social trips each term for stress relief and fun! Examples of social trips would be going to see a taping of Air Farce at the CBC; attending a Blue Jays game; or skating in Nathan Phillips Square. Consistent with Ministry of Education policies, permission forms for field trips must be signed by parents.

**Q: Do we have to go on the field trips?**

A: Yes. Field trips are an important part of the academic and social aspect of the school. Any exceptions to students attending are discussed with parents.

**Q: Does the Science School offer any financial aid?**

A: Yes. We have the Biovail Bursary, which offers 2 students per semester \$1250 to help offset HOUSING costs in Toronto. Out-of-town students can apply to this bursary only after they are accepted to the program. The bursaries are awarded based on financial need and academic standing.

**Q: Do you have an alumni group?**

A: Yes. Our graduates feel a very strong affinity to the Science Centre and the Science School. The strong alumni group, comprised of students and teachers from all semesters – from the last one to the first one 25 years ago – has its own website at [www.oscssalumni.com](http://www.oscssalumni.com).

**Q: Where do the teachers come from?**

A: Our teachers are seconded from the Toronto District or Toronto Catholic District School Boards.

**Q: Are the teachers qualified?**

A: They are very qualified! Teachers apply for the opportunity to work at the Science School and are selected through an interview process. They have a wealth of experience and knowledge and are excited to teach in a different environment and focus on a smaller number of students.

**Q: Who can I get more information?**

A: Please call us! The Science School Coordinator can be reached at 416-696-4620.