**Covering Letter**

RE:

How you meet the financial criteria outlined in Part A; and

How you meet the scholarship criteria outlined in Part B.

Dear Superstars in STEM team,

I’m really excited to apply for the Superstars in STEM program for 2020.

I’m also writing to request to apply for the scholarship if I’m accepted in the program.

This is to state that I’m currently only working part-time due to loss of my full-time role earlier in the year during the Covid-19 pandemic breakout and going through financial hardship currently.

I’m attaching a copy of my current CV below and a statement that outlines my merit for the grant of the scholarship.

I look forward to further steps and update on the application process.

Kind regards

Astha

**Dr. Astha Singh**

Science Communication | Strategic Marketing and Communications

PhD (Science) | University of Sydney

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**SUMMARY**

*With a tertiary degree in Science and 14+ years of experience in science communication, I am looking for a challenging STEM communications role where I can provide strategic insight & support to achieving meaningful outcomes and creating impact.*

**Qualifications:**

2018 Certificate in Digital Marketing (TAFE, NSW)

2018 Certificate in Project Management (University of Sydney)

2013 Diploma in Communications and Marketing, India

2007–12 PhD, Plant Science (*with faculty scholarship*), University of Sydney

2004–06 Master of Science (*with merit scholarship*) CSA University, India

2000–04 Bachelor of Science (Honors), CSA University, India

**HIGHLIGHTS**

* Delivered prolific **STEMM based campaigns** collaborating with Student Services, Development Office, Global Challenges, and various Faculties at the University of Wollongong
* I have been **training** innovators, entrepreneurs, scientists and early career researchers to develop key science communication, media, broadcast interviewing and PR skills to highlight their own innovation
* Produced Diversity in STEMM Australian wide campaign and video in conjunction with 30 leading scientists, **Australia’s Science Channel** and other Scicomm partners
* Led digital marketing and strategic communications for Australia’s largest Tech Start-up initiative called **Spark Festival** to highlight over 100 events across NSW to boost innovation and entrepreneurship
* Strategic communications and outreach for **FameLab Australia 2018**, world’s leading Science communication program managing its stakeholders, partnerships, events and more than forty program participants nationally
* Delivered training sessions for Australian Scientists at the **Soapbox Science Sydney 2019** UK based program
* Conceptualised and executed major events for **Sydney Science Festival 2017** at Neuroscience Research Australia, UNSW
* Advisory committee member of AFL NSW to extend their **multicultural outreach**, 2015-17

**Recognition**

* STEM Youth Ambassador 2020, India Australia Business and Community Awards
* TEDx Sydney Fast Ideas Finalist, Opera house 2018
* Finalist – Young Professional, India Australia Business and Community Awards 2017 Awards
* Community Engagement Award – Hindu Council of Australia, Deepavali Fair 2014
* Rowen Thornett Faculty Merit Scholarship, USyd (2008–10)
* Post Graduate Teaching Fellowship, USyd (2009–10)

**PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT**

**President | Australian Science Communicators, NSW**

**Marketing and Communications Consulting (June’17 - Present)**

* Clients: STEMM Programs, Festivals, Technology Incubators, Institutes and Universities
* National Women in STEM reporting for the University of South Australia (Jan - Mar 2020)
* Short-term consulting with City of Sydney for their current Climate Change project in 2020
* Delivered Science Communication training for Scientists at various research groups within Australian Universities
* Marketing consulting and advice for Small Businesses – Allotrac (SAS based software), Me3D (3D Printing smart solutions)

**Marketing and Communications Manager, (May – Dec’19)**

**Innovation and Commercial Research, University of Wollongong**

* Managed a team of three to create and implement the digital and social marketing strategy for all programs, events, and campaigns in 2019 including the prestigious Act 4 Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Australia.
* Strategic planning for STEM based innovation and startups at iAccelerate, special campaign during National Science Week.
* Managed the digital content for marketing and communications through website and social media and liaised with stakeholders and partners to successfully managed their requirements and foster collaborations
* Created media releases in conjunction with the University media team to highlight special campaigns – remarkable news items were – Channel Nine News, ABC Radio, ABC Illawarra,
* Liaised with University, government and private commercial stakeholders, partners to ensure maximum visibility

**Communications Projects (July – Dec 2018)**

**Spark Festival 2018 | Sydney Science Festival 2018**

* Created the digital strategy for all 100+ events during Spark Festival
* Managed the digital content for marketing through website and social media for both Festivals
* Liaised with stakeholders, partners, and vendors during the festival to ensure maximum visibility
* Produced strategically conceptualised events for the Science Festival
* Liaised with partners and vendors for the event production and to meet the needs of stakeholders successfully

**Communications Manager FTE (Nov ’17- Jul ’18)**

**FameLab Project Management, The British Council, Australia**

FameLab is an international training programme designed to equip young STEM researchers to advocate for their work to industry, employers, and grant bodies, inspire future STEM students and engage the public.

* Lead liaison with FameLab semi-final, national final and VIP events Australia-wide venues, suppliers and partners
* Lead the digital initiatives through a wide variety of platforms for FameLab and British Council programs
* Create and update the FameLab strategic communications plan for 2017-18
* Manage delivery of FameLab national training and international masterclass training of researchers
* Liaise with education programme and delivery of school’s presentation at the FameLab final and with partners to identify eminent guests, VIPs, stakeholders and their presence and the ‘live’ events
* Rigorously review program to ensure relevance and effectiveness for BC and stakeholders using the evaluation framework and develop FameLab 2018 Evaluation Report. Manage surveys of participants/partners for evaluation report
* Liaise with media partner, Australia’s Science Channel to promote FameLab 2018
* Liaise with PR contractor for FameLab 2018 on outreach outcomes as outlined in communications strategy and appoint photographer to ensure adequate documentation of major events
* Liaison with FameLab partners regarding logo, marketing and event listings, distribution of application materials and digital media content.

**Communications Officer (Apr-Sep’ 17), FTE**

**Neuroscience Research Australia, UNSW**

* Developing strategic campaigns for NeuRA researchers to highlight their work
* Creating digital and Social media strategies to gain overall uplift in NeuRA’s profile
* Writing media releases for special events, medical stories and pioneering research
* Organising media tours, radio interviews, television interviews and media liaison for researchers
* Managing digital content including website, researcher profiles, social media and NeuRA Blogs
* Creating digital content such as videos, photos, blogs etc for sharing across all channels
* Leading major campaigns in the Communications hub achieving targeted success
* Manage and create analytics reports for campaigns, social media and digital numbers for outreach
* Internal communications across all NeuRA academic staff with important events and media information

**Research and Insights Executive (Nov ’15-Apr ‘17), FTE**

**Marketing and Communications Division at Seven Network**

* Developing strategic information and data-analysis for Marketing, Publicity and Communications teams
* Internal communications with Publicity, News, Marketing, Sales and Sports departments
* Collaborating with media research organisations to develop projections, current trends and audience measurement data
* Working across social media platforms including Facebook to analyse program reach to social media audience and engagement
* Designing and implementing Inside7 campaigns with up to date weekly insights about Channel 7 highs
* Reporting insights on audience, shares against other competitor Channels and creating media releases
* Managing media software: eTAM, IBMS, and marketing tools: Emarsys, Silverstripe and MailChimp
* Backing the Publicity team with issues management by providing analytics

**Science Communication Ambassador, STEM Outreach at the University of Sydney (Mar ’09-Jun ’15; FTE)**

* Collaborative projects with Inspiring Australia, a federal government initiative, including stakeholder briefings and workshops, and networking with many Australian science communication professionals
* Coordination of the Sydney South-East Asia Centre (USyd), Veterinary Science and Agriculture collaborative workshop at the Office of Global Engagement (October–December 2014)
* Provided science marketing content and articles for the University website
* Assisted in writing media articles and releases and delivered scientific promotional presentations at various events on campus and off campus
* Conducted experiment-based science workshops at University science events and open days and Workshops on DNA extraction, photosynthesis test and PH indicator experiments.
* Supervised other casual staff (postgrad students) as a team leader

**Professional Officer, Climate Change Cluster (June – Dec 2012), FTE casual full-time role**

* Managed a large team (42 members) of researchers, post doctorates, PhD, and Honours students
* Liaised with other research institutions, external partners, clients, and government departments (APVMA, Australian Quarantine and Inspection Services (AQIS) and Australian Customs, DPI, NSW, and Queensland)
* Assisted the communications manager to ensure that the climate change cluster website is updated and facilitated relevant information and photos
* Assisted in preparation of competitive grant application (ARC Linkage, ARC Discovery etc.)
* Developed Standard Operating Procedures, compiled milestone reports and stenographic support

**OTHER EXPERIENCE**

**STEM Ambassador | India Australia Business and Community Awards 2010**

Encouraging and inspiring STEM talent from the India Australia domain and increase nominations to STEM categories

**Mentor | CSIRO’s OnAccelerator program 2019-20**

Mentoring Research teams and assisting them to commercialise their research based scientific projects as a Startup

**President, Australian Science Communicators (Nov 2017 – Present; Member since Jun’14)**

Leading a team of Science Communicators to achieve organisation goals through the annual campaigns

**Volunteer at MAAS (Powerhouse) Museum (since July 2015 – Nov 2016)** average one day/week

Community liaison at the museum during special events, weekend tours and community campaigns

Organisation and assistance in Sydney Science Festival events 2015-2017

**A group of people standing in front of a crowd

Description automatically generated**

**A statement of my contribution to diversity and inclusion in Australia**

I come from a conservative middle-class family in India, where conversations about career were seldom held. However, I had some aspirations early on and going through under-privileged childhood paved a path for me to help others and motivated me to empower other people to aim for bright careers. It is not easy to be a brown female from India in Australia and lead to make a mark in your field of expertise.

Driven by equity and diversity, I have passionately worked towards multicultural harmony, nurturing diversity, and driving STEM engagement in the community for 14 years. From being a scientist, international student ambassador, media writer to being public speaker and STEM outreach professional, I have targeted several aspects of making science accessible to the community and positively contributing to the life of young people from diverse backgrounds in Australia.

1. **Contribution to Diversity, Inclusion, and multicultural initiatives**

I have the passion and experience of liaising with people from a diverse range of religions, cultures, backgrounds, and ethnicities. Since 2008, I have worked with the Je wish, Tamil, Hindi, Nepalese, and Punjabi communities in NSW closely and have been involved with various multicultural initiatives at my current and previous workplaces. I currently have well established networks within the Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and South Asian communities, and bodies. I have previously also been involved with the [Indian advisory at Multicultural NSW](http://publictelegraph.com/premier-hosts-deepavali-celebration-at-nsw-parliament/), NSW Government [Deepavali committee](http://indiandownunder.com.au/2014/10/sydney-opera-house-lights-up-for-deepavali/), Deepavali at University of Sydney, Indian committee at Australian Football League (AFL) and the Diversity and Inclusion committees of most of my workplaces. Working through a range of multicultural and diversity issues within a range of sectors and industries can be challenging and therefore it is important to be objective and create connections that lead to a streamlined strategic outcome. At my previous experiences with advisory at the Indian consulate, Indian high commission youth committees, Deepavali event committee at Multicultural NSW, Deepavali advisory at University of Sydney, Indian advisory committee at AFL and the Diversity and Inclusion committees of most of my workplaces, I have learnt to deal with serious and critical issues. I have also learnt how to target niche and a wide variety of audiences and communities through various multicultural campaigns I have created and worked at within the STEM domains.

I have been in Australia for about 14 years and have built an understanding of cross-cultural issues since my student days when I experienced and dealt with the India/South Asian student issues and participated in mitigation committees in 2008-09. Ever since then I have been engaged and involved in understanding and building my interest in these cross-cultural issues with different faiths and communities. Here are examples through articles I published in media –

1. <http://www.indianlink.com.au/backup_old/a-question-of-faith/>
2. <https://www.indianlink.com.au/rethinking-empowerment/>
3. <https://www.indianlink.com.au/forum-confronts-gender-and-racism-issues/>
4. <http://www.indianlink.com.au/oneness-with-all/>
5. <http://www.indianlink.com.au/embodying-the-spirit-of-community-work/>
6. <http://www.indianlink.com.au/dancing-for-harmony/>
7. <http://www.indianlink.com.au/living-with-hindu-values/>
8. Indian Link Juice Controversy - <http://www.indianlink.com.au/does-fruit-juice-contain-meat/>

I am currently the Youth Ambassador for STEM at the India Australia Business and Community Awards 2020 fostering and inspiring up and coming young STEM professionals and researchers to take part in the nominate for the awards. <https://www.iabca.com.au/iabca-2020-ambassadors>

1. **Independent Mentoring of Young STEM professionals from Diverse backgrounds**

Since 2007, I have mentored, counselled, and supported more than 150 individuals of multicultural and diverse backgrounds in Australia. Some of these individuals come from under-privileged backgrounds in India and have found a direction through my guidance and support for their careers.

Currently I am a mentor for the CSIRO (The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) [OnPrime program](https://www.csiro.au/en/Do-business/Programs-funding/CSIROs-ON-program/Prime/Wollongong) (is an innovation and entrepreneurship program designed to help equip researchers and their teams with the skills and knowledge to innovate better and faster). I have been assisting, mentoring and equipping young researchers with entrepreneurial ideas through this program. My team in the year 2019 was [Emergent Neural Systems](https://www.csiro.au/en/Do-business/Programs-funding/CSIROs-ON-program/Prime/Wollongong).

Since 2018, I have mentored and supported entrepreneurs from multicultural backgrounds at the [Spark Festival](https://www.indianlink.com.au/women-innovators-better-world/) (Australia’s largest festival for entrepreneurship in NSW) and iAccelerate, (University of Wollongong’s commercial research unit business incubator). I have trained them with basic science marketing principals and ideas and have assisted them to get media attention through ethnic media interview opportunities and multicultural PR prospects.

1. **Contribution to STEM initiatives for the community**

I led a nation-wide campaign on [Diversity in STEMM](https://australiascience.tv/vod/diversity-in-stem-boosts-australia/) (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine) with Australia’s top 30 scientists and communications and media partners such as Franklin Women, Australian Science Communicators featured on Australia’s Science Channel.

Through my professional career roles, I have created and implemented robust communications marketing strategies for programs and festivals with a pure agenda of taking Science, Technology & Innovation to the public. Examples of such initiatives are: [FameLab Australia](https://inspiringnsw.org.au/2018/02/01/apply-for-famelab/), [Soapbox Science](http://soapboxscience.org/sydney-local-organising-team/), [Spark Festival](https://www.asc.asn.au/blog/2018/10/03/leading-the-stem-entrepreneurship-events-in-nsw-sparkfest/) and [Sydney Science Festival](https://twitter.com/asthasingh/status/1025176172634693632).

I independently created and produced the first Sydney Science Festival event for South Asian young people called [“Science Fun Day”](https://theindiantelegraph.com.au/fascinating-experiments-mark-science-fun-day/) that gained vast media coverage pre and post event and was rated one of the top events out of the 200 events in NSW in 2015.

<https://theindiantelegraph.com.au/fascinating-experiments-mark-science-fun-day/>

<https://www.indianlink.com.au/science-can-be-cool/>

As a special Keynote speaker, I visited the University of Sydney’s Science graduation ceremony where I was invited to deliver an inspiring address to all the Honors, Masters and PhD students who graduated from the University. A Video of [Astha’s address can be found here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3m9rt5Nv26U&t=1s) and article on Indian Link can be found here: <http://www.indianlink.com.au/taking-science-wider-audience/>

I was invited to pitch her novel Science Communication idea at the TEDx Sydney 2017 Opera House to talk about an App that can communicate complex scientific research to the public. Astha was interviewed by several media outlets in India and Australia about my TEDx presentation such as here: <https://www.sbs.com.au/language/english/audio/dr-astha-singh-argues-that-her-app-dr-simple-might-just-be-the-solution>

**Here are a few media stories and articles that I have initiated and help produce as part of the multicultural campaigns at my previous roles:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | ITEM PUBLISHED | Diversity Marker |
| 1 | [PitchX news with the winning candidate from India](https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/hindi/en/audiotrack/terrible-idea-indian-australian-madhavi-wins-pitchx-competition?fbclid=IwAR3-CEmr63xrd7EWOtxI2CzZKanEE6XfAYv1-eJmRpvYM7K-b424giP_yx8) (Madhavi) | Hindi |
| 2 | [Global Renewable Energy solutions news with a Bangla CEO](https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/bangla/en/audiotrack/dr-mohammed-sohel?language=en) | Bangla |
| 3 | [Ingeteam CEO Juan from Spain talks about their latest wins](https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/spanish/es/audiotrack/un-espanol-entre-los-lideres-del-sector-de-energias-renovables-en-australia) | Spanish |
| 4 | [Instashred Punjabi CEO talks about music-tech guitar learning solutions](https://www.iaccelerate.com.au/resident-index/instashred/) | Punjabi |
| 5 | [Hasti Hayati a Persian scientist speaks about Soapbox Science](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.sbs.com.au%2Fyourlanguage%2Fpersian%2Ffa%2Faudiotrack%2Fskhnrny-pjwhshgr-yrny-dr-hfth-mly-lwm-drbrh-hmyt-lwm-mhndsy-w-rydyt%3Flanguage%3Dfa%26fbclid%3DIwAR0Y7EUqxYiGx-VE2U9MjtevaiOUmjcbtby5fAfUlQcxqYctmlZ_d) | Persian |
| 6 | [STEM Diversity - ASC Conference](http://2018conf.asc.asn.au/the-missing-link-for-stem-diversity/) | Indian/Iranian/Venezuelan |
| 7 | [Women innovators from India for a better world](http://www.indianlink.com.au/women-innovators-better-world/) | Indian - Australian |
| 8 | [Empowering Migrant women in NSW - workshop session](https://twitter.com/yuvaaus/status/1040814986191224832) | South Asian women |
| 9 | [Women's rights and safety at UTS](http://www.indianlink.com.au/backup_old/rethinking-empowerment/) | Multicultural women |
| 10 | [Muthu Vignesh reaches finals - FameLab](https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/hindi/en/audiotrack/indian-australian-reaches-finals-prestigious-science-competition-australia) | Indian Australian |
| 11 | [FameLab finalist Muthu Vellayappan](https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/tamil/en/audiotrack/meet-muthu-vignesh-vellayappan-2018-famelab-finalist) | Tamil |
| 12 | [Indian Australian recognised in Science Award](https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/hindi/en/article/2018/05/12/indian-australian-recognised-science-award-fixing-broken-heart) | Hindi/Indian |
| 13 | [Diversity at Spark Festival](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/diversity-sparkfest-you-joining-us-astha-singh/) | Multicultural |
| 14 | [Spark Festival Story with Jessie Wong](https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/mandarin/en/audiotrack/spark-festival-and-tropfest-australia) | Mandarin |
| 15 | [Pitch event - Bollywood Style](http://www.indusage.com.au/meet-some-of-indias-most-innovative-women-at-australias-first-ever-bollywood-style-pitch-event/) | Indian |
| 16 | [Sukham Saini - Women Entrepreneurs](https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/hindi/en/audiotrack/women-entrepreneurs-dont-get-much-funding-investors-men) | Indian - Hindi |
| 17 | [Noushin - FameLab runner up](https://www.sbs.com.au/topics/science/fundamentals/article/2016/05/11/meet-noushin-nasiri-famelab-australia-runner-2016) | Multicultural |
| 18 | [Riti Mann - Superbugs - FameLab](https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/hindi/en/audiotrack/superbugs-could-kill-more-people-cancer-2050) | Indian - hindi |
| 19 | [FameLab - applications](https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/hindi/en/audiotrack/do-you-want-become-famous) | Hindi |
| 20 | [Ronald Yu - FameLab](https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/mandarin/en/audiotrack/ronald-yu-famelab-finalist-interview) | Mandarin |
| 21 | [Talking about India - Bilateral discussions](http://www.indianlink.com.au/talking-about-india/) | Indian Australian |
| 22 | [Religious ceremony in Liverpool](http://www.indianlink.com.au/ganpati-bappa-morya/) | Hindu - Indian |
| 23 | [Taking Science to a wider audience](http://www.indianlink.com.au/taking-science-wider-audience/) | Multicultural |
| 24 | [Paul Magni - FameLab](https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/italian/en/audiotrack/dr-paola-magni-wins-famelab-australia-2019) | Italian |
| 25 | [Soapbox Science Line-up](https://inspiringnsw.org.au/2019/06/26/science-busking-at-circular-quay/) | Multicultural Women |

**International and Multicultural Initiatives led by Astha Singh**

* [Youth Ambassador 2020](https://www.iabca.com.au/iabca-2020-ambassadors) | India Australia Business and Community Awards – 2020
* Concept to Delivery of a conference session by Expat Scientists in Australia, “Missing Links to Diversity in STEM” in 2018: <https://www.asc.asn.au/blog/2019/08/18/the-missing-link-for-stemm-diversity/>
* Presentation to delegates from 31 other countries at the British Council 2018 FameLab strategy meet in Cheltenham and London, UK.
* Brand Champion and Lead Consulting with the Asia Pacific (12 Countries) and Australia/New Zealand teams of the British Council for the Brand Management (2017 – 18)
* Young Professional Finalist | India Australia Business and Community Awards – 2017
* Nominated as Delegate at the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas by Consulate General of India (International Ambassadors Meet) 2019
* Advisory to the Indian High Commission, Canberra on International Youth Affairs with Ministry of External Affairs, 2016, India
* Advisory to Indian Consulate General about issues relating to International Students in NSW – 2010 onwards
* Multicultural Advisor to NSW Government body – Multicultural NSW (2015-17)
* Science Ambassador for International Students at the University of Sydney (2010-12)