2023 NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Awards

Program Guidelines and Application Procedures

Purpose: To provide research experience that complements the degree program which will encourage students to consider graduate studies and pursue careers in the natural sciences and engineering.

Award Value: $6000, plus a minimum 25% supplement ($1,500) provided by the department
- Any supplement above this level may be set at the discretion of the department or the USRA supervisor.
- Sources of supplements: can include NSERC grants, other research funds (non-NSERC) and university sources.
- Travel allowances are **no longer granted** by under the NSERC USRA program.
- The supervisor or department must cover any additional costs related to fieldwork (e.g. travel expenses).
- In addition, NSERC does not permit payment for any vacation days taken during the tenure of the award.

Duration: 16 full consecutive weeks (similar to co-op terms)
- **There is no provision for sick leave, vacation or other interruptions of awards.**
- NSERC does not permit USRA Awards to be deferred.

Tenure at Another Location: The USRA Award holder and their supervisor must both be at the same university where the student holds the USRA. USRA allocations are not transferable from one university to another. Students may apply at any eligible university.

USRA term at UofT: The University of Toronto administers this program in the <u>**summer term**</u> only, between May 1st and September 1st of each year.

Departmental Allocations and Deadlines: Contact the respective department Undergraduate Coordinators.

University Deadline for Departmental Approved MRAs: **April 19, 2023**

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR STUDENTS & SUPERVISORS

A. Student

Eligible	Ineligible
• Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada. • Registered either full-time or part-time (at the time of application) in a bachelor's degree program in at least one of the two terms immediately before holding the award. NSERC, however, expects that full-time students will hold most awards. o A student is still eligible if they already hold a bachelor's degree, as long as they are currently studying towards a second bachelor's degree in the natural sciences or engineering. • Must have obtained, over the previous years of study, a cumulative average of at least second class (a grade of B or B-, if applicable) • Must have completed, <u>at the time of application (by April 19, 2023</u>, a minimum of <u>two</u> academic terms/semesters. • Graduating students in the term immediately following the completion of their undergraduate program requirements, as long as they have not started a program of graduate studies. • Be engaged on a full-time basis in research and development activities in the natural sciences or engineering during the award tenure.	• Foreign or international students • Currently enrolled in an undergraduate professional degree program in the health sciences (e.g., MD, BScPhm, D.D.S., BScN) • Holds higher degrees in the natural sciences & engineering.

Please remember:

- First-year students are excluded from the competition. Applicants must have completed a minimum of two terms at the time of submission of the application. Results from at least two terms must be available on a student's transcript by the internal deadline of April 19, 2023
- Students who will graduate at the end of the term before the USRA begins (that is, who will graduate after the term in which they apply) are eligible, as long as they do not begin graduate studies while holding the USRA and continue to meet all other NSERC USRA eligibility requirements.
- The USRA program is intended to be over and above the academic credits needed for a degree. Award holders should not receive academic credits for research done during the USRA term
- USRA award holders are permitted to take up to a maximum of two courses during the award term.
- Thesis research during award term is not permitted.
- A USRA may be held concurrently with a co-op placement.
- A student may hold only one USRA per federal government fiscal year (April 1st to March 31st).
- A student may hold a maximum of three (3) USRAs throughout their university career.

B. Supervisor

Eligible	Ineligible
NSERC considers eligible supervisors to be those who meet NSERC's Eligibility Criteria for Faculty, **and** be able to independently supervise students as per their appointment with their university.	• Those who do not meet NSERC's eligibility criteria

Please remember:

- Supervision of two NSERC grantees at the same time is allowed as long as they are engaged on a "genuine" research project. However, NSERC does not permit students to move between laboratories on different projects over the 16-week period since the Agency believes that this would dilute the value of the USRA experience.
- The supervisor must ensure proper supervision of the USRA Awardee at all times, especially during fieldwork. One NSERC grantee has to be designated as the student's official supervisor.
- Postdoctoral fellows, graduate or Ph.D. students are **NOT** eligible supervisors.
- Allocations are not transferrable between departments. Therefore, researchers should supervise students at the department where they hold their primary appointment and/or where their grants are held.

Application Instructions

FOR STUDENTS (UofT & Non-UofT)

1. Contact the Undergraduate Office of the department through which you wish to apply and inquire about a supervisor and allocation availability. You can apply through more than one department but can only hold one USRA.
2. Complete the latest version of the application form (Form 202, Part I) online. Follow the instructions and adhere to NSERC's General Presentation Guideline. **NSERC refuses handwritten applications.**
3. Attach a PDF copy of your transcripts (or the university e-transcripts or the most recent academic history report from ACORN to the application form (Part I), after it has been opened and reviewed by the Undergraduate Office.
4. Once Form 202–Part I has been completed, provide your prospective supervisor with the reference number generated by the system so that they may complete Part II of the form.
5. Once both parts of the form have been completed and verified the supervisor can submit the USRA application.

6. If you self-identify as Indigenous or Black, make sure you select the appropriate field in form 202-Part I.
7. If any additional changes are made by either party–you or your prospective supervisor–will require the other party's verification and confirmation in the online system in order to re-submit the edited application
8. In addition, your department requires a copy of your application and your e-transcripts or most recent academic history report from ACORN, which you will submit to the department Undergraduate Coordinator.
9. Research Services can only accept the application that has been endorsed by the department.

FOR SUPERVISORS

1. Please be sure to follow the application checklist carefully.
2. Once the student has completed Form 202 – Part I online, they must provide you with the **reference number** generated by the system You will not be able to complete Part II of Form 202 online without the **reference number.**
3. Log on to the Online System using the same account you use when applying for NSERC grants. Complete Part II of Form 202.
4. Once all the modules of Form 202 have been completed, you must go back to the 'My Portfolio' page and select **Verify**, which will assess whether all required information has been entered. Once verification is complete, the status of the application will change to "**Completed**".
5. No changes should be made to the form after it has been "Completed." If you need to update any information, contact the NSERC On-Line Services Helpdesk. Once both parts of the form have been completed and verified, any additional changes made by either party–you or the student–will require the other party's verification and confirmation in the online system.
6. You must submit the form to the USRA Liaison Officer, who is a designated member by Research Services, by selecting **Submit to LO**. Completed online applications will then be submitted to NSERC by Research Services.
7. Follow the application checklist carefully.
8. MRA Submission: Successful supervisors must complete an [MRA](#) and attach only Form 202 Part I and Part II (note that the transcript is not required to be submitted in the MRA only on the NSERC on-line system. Include the name of the student and start and end dates on the first page of the MRA. The MRA must be received by RSO no later than April 19th, 2023

FOR DEPARTMENTS

Submit the electronic copies of the following to Research Services by **April 19, 2023:**
- Approved MRA only for nominated Supervisor/students that will be receiving a USRA award from the department's allocation
- For Indigenous and Black student awards, prior to approving an MRA please send an email with the "2023 NSERC USRA Summer Indigenous and Black student awards table" to Keti Dzamova at keti.dzamova@utoronto.ca we ask this to be send no later than *April 17, 2023*

- Once RSO has confirmed receipt please approve respective MRA(s) for Indigenous and Black student awards

1. It is important that you have the original documents in your files should NSERC ever request them.
2. Ensure all sections/boxes of the application form (Form 202) have been completed, using the checklists provided.
3. Verify that start dates are not earlier than May 1st or on a day that falls on a weekend. These dates should match the dates on the first page of the MRA.
4. The applications from the approved MRAs will be forwarded to NSERC by Research Services as they are received. By submitting your MRAs, the department is confirming that all applications have been verified for completeness and accuracy and that supervisors and students meet the NSERC USRA program eligibility requirements.
5. Hold all MRAs for Indigenous and Black student awards until you have submitted your table of names for these awards. RSO will then increase your department's allocation to accommodate these awards. Once you have received notification that your allocation has been increased, please proceed with the approval process.