



NSERC USRA Summer 2021 | Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- **What will the NSERC USRA program look like for Summer 2021 term?**

The NSERC USRA program will proceed, with NSERC providing the full value of each award (\$6000), even in the event of a shortened work term. UBC NSERC USRAs may proceed with specific accommodations for remote work, where possible, and/or shortened work terms. Shortened work terms may be less than 12 consecutive weeks.

For faculty members who intend to apply to the NSERC USRA, please ensure that COVID-19 safety measures and considerations as well as contingency plans are included when submitting their application. Questions for consideration: *Will the USRA be feasible given the COVID-19 safety plans as per their Faculty/School/department? Can the USRA be done safely?*

- **Can research projects take place remotely?**

Yes. If the student and supervisor want to pursue a remote research project, NSERC will support this. There are specific restrictions as to where students may reside while working remotely (please see the next FAQ).

Proposed research projects that cannot be carried out remotely (e.g. lab work) may be modified to something that is suitable for remote work (e.g. analysis of existing data, literature reviews). Supervision is expected to occur via video chats, telecons, and email. Please inform the UBC Liaison Officer (nserc.usra@ubc.ca) before the start of the project if you plan to proceed with a remote research project and/or if the proposed research project changes significantly for Summer 2021.

Please refer to [UBC's HR guidance](#) for managers and supervisors, which includes a [Telecommuting Checklist](#), and UBC IT's [online guide to working remotely](#). The guide outlines resources when working remotely, including: how to access emails and files, tools for virtual meetings, and security requirements. When considering the use of personal devices, it is important to ensure that security and privacy requirements are met.



- **Where may students live while working on remote research projects as part of the NSERC USRA program?**

NSERC USRA students are permitted to work remotely, in Canada, from a different province or territory. Those students who will be working remotely outside of BC must be registered as a worker in the province or territory where the work will take place. To do so, your HR Advisor/Department should alert UBC's WSBC Claims Associate Aidan Gregory by email at aidan.gregory@ubc.ca. **If students are residing outside of Canada, they will not generally be eligible to work remotely, as part of NSERC USRA. Please contact the UBC Liaison Officer (nserc.usra@ubc.ca) in these circumstances.**

For more information, please refer to UBC HR's guidance [here](#).

- **What if the research project is not conducive to remote work?**

If the research project is not conducive to remote work, a shortened work term (less than 12 consecutive weeks full-time) is permitted. Regardless, NSERC will honour the full value of the award (\$6000). For the student's salary, the minimum Faculty Supervisor top-up of 25% the award value (\$1500) is in effect and BC's minimum wage requirements must be met (to meet BC's minimum wage requirements, for full-time, 16-week award durations, the typical top-up for UBC is at least \$2321.60).

- **Where can I learn about my student's eligibility to hold a USRA?**

For information on your student's eligibility, Faculty Supervisors can review the NSERC USRA [Supervisor Info sheet](#) and the [NSERC USRA Student Services website](#).

- **Where can I learn about how to submit my application to NSERC?**

For information on to submit your application to NSERC, Faculty Supervisors can review the NSERC USRA [Supervisor Info sheet](#). Instructions on how to complete the forms can be found on the [NSERC USRA website](#). You can also refer to an [NSERC USRA Video Tutorial](#) for how to submit your application.

- **Is there a minimum number of weeks for shortened work terms, in order to receive the full value of the USRA (\$6000)?**

No. NSERC has not specified a minimum number of weeks for a shortened work term in order to receive the full value of the USRA.

- **If the student and Faculty Supervisor decide to pursue a shortened work term for Summer 2021, will I need to submit my Form 202 Part I and II application now?**



Yes. Students and Faculty Supervisors are expected to complete and submit their Form 202 Part I and II now, even if they plan to pursue a shortened work term.

- **What happens to the USRA if the student and Faculty Supervisor submit their application for the Summer 2021 term now (with the plan on pursuing a shortened work term) but then decide to defer the award to the Winter 2021 term?**

Please contact the UBC Liaison Officer at nserc.usra@ubc.ca as soon as possible should you decide to defer the summer award to one of the Winter 2021 sessions (Term 1 in September 2021; Term 2 in January 2022).

- **Will projects be allowed to continue part-time into the Fall 2021 term?**

NSERC does not permit students to continue their USRA research projects part-time into the Fall 2021 term. If students and supervisors wish to continue the project, this will have to be outside of the USRA program.

- **Can NSERC USRA Summer 2021 awards be deferred?**

Yes. Students and supervisors who receive an award for the 2021 - 2022 competition cycle may choose to defer their award to the Winter 2021 session only (Term 1 in September 2021; Term 2 in January 2022) (provided all eligibility requirements are met at that time). As in the summer term, students are permitted to take a maximum of one course while holding a Fall or Winter USRA, and must devote full-time hours to the USRA project. Awards received from this year's competition cycle cannot be transferred from one fiscal year to another.

- **What is the deadline to submit a hire business process on Workday?**

For UBCV NSERC USRA student appointments, the deadline to submit a hire business process is May 14, 2021. For UBCO NSERC USRA student appointments, the deadline to submit a hire business process is May 21, 2021.

- **What information do I need to provide to my finance/HR/administrator for setting up the NSERC USRA student appointment on Workday**

Please send the **NSERC USRA 2021-22 Appointing Students information sheet** (available in March 2021) which can be found on the [Faculty and Staff NSERC USRA webpage](#) to your finance/HR/administrator. Please ensure the following format is used when including the student number in the first comments field of this BP: **{{999999; 12345678}}**. This ID allows our office to verify that the information submitted in this



BP is what was approved and to confirm student eligibility. For non-UBC students, use the following format in the comments field: **{{999999; nonubcid}}**.

- **What happens if I submit my student appointment under the incorrect job profile?**

Selecting the correct job profile ensures that the hire BP is routed to the Work Learn Office Coordinator on Workday. If the incorrect job profile is selected, your student appointment will not be confirmed in our databases and thus, would not be set up to be reimbursed for hours worked. Please be sure to submit your student appointments under the correct job profile to ensure that you receive the reimbursement: **Student Salaried – NSERC USRA UBC-V (Vancouver Campus)** or **Student Salaried – NSERC USRA UBC-O (Okanagan Campus)**.

- **When will my student get paid?**

For information on when your student will get paid, please review the [UBC Finance 2021 Pay Schedule](#).

- **What are the steps for NSERC to approve my application?**

Our office is not authorized to provide the approval of applications - we're only in charge of ensuring applications are complete for submission to NSERC. The process works like this:

1. Once we've verified their applications are complete and the students are eligible, the forms will be submitted to NSERC. Supervisors will have to appoint the students in Workday and students will start work according to the proposed start date in May 2021. It's usually the case that students will start work on their USRA before awards are actually confirmed by NSERC. Supervisors must start payments to students without waiting for approval of the awards from NSERC. Supervisors must also continue to employ any students whose applications are rejected by NSERC for the remainder of the work term.
2. NSERC will make the final funding decision and send award letters for summer awards directly to students in **July**.

The above information can also be found in the NSERC USRA [Supervisor Info sheet](#).

If you have additional questions, please email nserc.usra@ubc.ca or phone 604-827-2937, from 9 AM - 4 PM, Monday through Friday.